



103rd Entry Association

Issue 35
December 2012

Newsletter

Editor's comments & Editorial

It has been 6 months since I last put pen to paper and a lot has happened in that time. We have had the Queens Jubilee, the Olympic Games, a lousy summer with too much rain and cold (for me anyway) I escaped any real effect of the flooding living in the driest part of the UK, but felt very deeply for those who had suffered through no fault of their own. Having once lost all my worldly goods in a fire I can sympathise with how those people must feel. Let us hope that the relevant authorities can take steps to deal with any future happenings of this nature.

The Olympic games went off well and fair play to Her Majesty for joining in the spirit of the occasion, even as a non sporty person I enjoyed the Britishness of the whole thing and the praise of the rest of the world for this little island of ours. It would have been even better if the ticket sales had been better conducted and more members of the public had been able to attend. Perhaps we will do better next time!!!

With the announcement by HM Government of even more cuts in defence spending and our commitment to Middle Eastern matters not seeming to diminish I think we should all give an

extra thought this Christmas to our Girls and Boys serving in the hotspots of the world, I just ask how many more of them must make the ultimate sacrifice before we quit being the policemen of the world?

In this Newsletter there is an article from Barry (Spud) Spalding who after some years lying low has come out of hiding and joined the rest of us and Malcolm Watts has contributed an article on the RAFA. Thanks to both of you for making the effort

I still need more articles about your antics and lives if I am to sustain a couple of newsletters a year. I don't get much feedback at all, I can take the brickbats as well as the bouquets. After all it is your newsletter and although we can all tell wonderful stories sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction.

Finally don't forget the reunion on June 22nd and 23rd 2013, the details of which are on the next page. This looks like it is going to be a good one, lots of interest has been shown already so sign up and let's be seeing you there.

BGL

Dates for your Diary

Committee Meetings:

8th June 2013, 11.00am, at Mick Woodhouse's or the Four Pillars Hotel, Witney (tbc)

7th December 2013, 4.00pm, at Watermead, Aylesbury

Next Entry Event:

June 22nd/23rd 2013 at Three Queens Hotel, Burton on Trent, followed by a ceremony at the Halton Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs
(see following page for details)



Three Queen's Hotel



To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our volunteering to serve Queen and Country in January 1963 we will be having a Reunion at the National Memorial Arboretum (www.thenma.org.uk) over the weekend of 22nd/23rd June 2013.

The Three Queens Hotel (www.threequeenshotel.co.uk) in Burton on Trent offers an ideal base and has been booked for an informal get-together on the evening of Saturday 22nd June.

The Arboretum has, of course, the Halton Grove as one of the 'Tributes' to our heritage and the Reunion itself will be on Sunday 23rd June at 10.30am at the Arboretum when we will attend the daily Remembrance Service, followed by our own reflections at the Halton Grove.

Saturday 22nd June 2013	7.00 for 7.30pm buffet; Three Queens Hotel
Sunday 23rd June 2013	10.30am meet at the National Memorial Arboretum 11.00am Service of Remembrance, followed by visit to the Halton Grove

The National Memorial Arboretum is 10 minutes drive from the hotel, and the following rates have been agreed with the hotel:

	<i>Saturday only</i>	<i>2 nights</i>
Executive Double or Twin Room (2 guests)	£110.00	£210.00
Executive double room for single occupant	£85.00	£160.00
Standard Single (Single bedded)	£70.00	£135.00

Rates include:

- Tea, coffee or orange juice brought to the bedside before breakfast
- Complimentary morning newspaper of choice
- Freshly cooked full English breakfast
- Overnight ironing service
- 24 Hour resident bar
- Complimentary private dining area
- Saturday night buffet
- Friday or Sunday night - 3 course evening meal in "the Grill Room"
- Rooms are air conditioned

Accommodation should be booked directly with the Hotel by calling Reception on **01283-523800**, quoting the '103rd Entry Reunion'. A £20 deposit per person is payable at the time of booking and the balance is payable on departure.

For anyone coming for the Saturday evening but not staying overnight, £15 per person will be charged for the buffet.

This Association will be putting £500 behind the bar

If you have any questions please let Barry Neal know on 01805-601715; 07789-435477;
tupnce@aol.com.

A LIFE

I was asked a while ago to come up with a potted history, due to damage received in a work related car accident some years ago I can only type for 20 minutes at a time. So bear with me if it gets disjointed.

I left Halton in 1965 as a S.A.C. fitter and left the R.A.F. in 1973 as a S.A.C. fitter. In that time I took the S.A.C./J.T. exam a further 6 times getting an A fail every time. I also, for practice took trade exams up to Chief Tech and technically passed with flying colours. I spent time in 10 different countries, piloted an Argosy over the Nile from Luxor to the Med, got flying pay for 6 months and was part of 74 Squadron when we earned a Squadron Good Show. Also there were Bob Proctor and Doug Palmer. A major "achievement" was that I got the sergeant in charge of section stores to spend 3 weeks looking for the part numbers for an air bottle dipstick and one in rubber for oxygen.

When I was leaving I had been accepted for a position with a trade magazine company. 4 days before leaving I had a letter telling me that due to redeployment of staff the job had gone to a current employee. After a short panic I got a job at East Midlands Airport with an aircraft servicing company, their main client operated Argosys and they also looked after a DC3. I left the R.A.F on Wednesday and started the following Monday in the hydraulic bay. The following week I was asked to change the nose wheel steering valve on an Argosy. I thought this an omen 'cos this was the last job I did before leaving and I could do it in 4 hours. I had no idea of the checks required and it took 4 days. At this point I thought it would be better if I found something else to do.

So off I went to Wimpey the builder to train as an N.D.T. tech, using x-rays and radio active sources. I spent 6 weeks training and was then sent to Nigg Bay in Scotland for on the job experience. It was good and I enjoyed until the guys we worked told us that they had done a college course, we would not be qualified to work in the U.K. and the only contract Wimpey had was in the middle of the Saudi desert. Shortly after this we found we had all had a radiation overdose, minor, because someone failed to secure a "pill" and it had been hanging in the storeroom next to the crewroom for a week. My thought was if guys with more training than the guys I'd be working with could do that I was not going. So I left.

So here we are January 1974 no job and living with my parents. By mid February I had been accepted as a Clerical Officer with Dept Of Health and Social Security Where after a year I became a visiting officer. A great job, but curtailed by damaging a cartilage whilst tenpin bowling. The annoying thing was that I was winning.

About this time, O.K. it was 3 months later, I met my wife, proposing to her within 6 weeks of meeting. We have been married 35 years. 2 weeks after getting engaged I took a scout troop to Cornwall, from Wimbledon, for summer camp. 8 chose to cycle down the week before the main body so I had to take an extra week off to provide support. 2 weeks after getting back I was in hospital for what was supposed to be repair to my cartilage, but instead it had to be removed. My wife has had to put up with similar things ever since.

After getting over the op I transferred offices where I managed to prove a manger had lied to staff and I became a Fraud officer. Once again unable to get promotion I decided to leave, on my last day I found that the lying manager had threatened people to make sure I didn't get promoted. She was moved to a position where she was unable to affect staff.

I moved to my new job at twice the salary I had been getting and found I went from no staff to dealing with 120, but no rights of hire and fire. I worked for Phillips Electrical Service London and South East Field and Workshop repairs. I was supposed to be customer complaints for the workshop, but for many reasons I had to run it and help supervise the field service as well.

After a little over 4 years with 1 son we found my wife was expecting again and needed to move. We found that by moving to the south coast we could have a larger house with no increase in mortgage so we moved. 2 months later one of the shops I dealt with offered me a job. It was only 5 miles from home not 50 and the drop in pay equated to petrol cost, so I took it.

My new boss was full of ideas for expansion, but would not deal with the basics. After 11 months when I had dealt with the workshop budget my conclusion was put up prices 10% or lose a member of staff. So he made me redundant. Within 18 months he had gone from 3 shops to one, but half the size of his original.

Whilst looking at jobs I saw a Trainee driving Instructor position and applied. Within 3 months I was trained and licensed, from later experience this was quick. What I failed to take into account was the fluctuating money and the hours so when my youngest son, then two, ran away from the strange man coming up the garden path I knew much as I liked the work I had to find something else.

Fortunately, for the first time, the Dept of Transport advertised for examiners so I applied and was accepted. I first worked in South London where the ladies dressed for the test, then in Portsmouth where sailors often appeared and finally Worthing. Unfortunately a lady whilst driving into a parking space at the end of her test floored the accelerator and hit the brick wall. There was no time for the footbrake to operate fully and as we were at an angle and I was braced it hurt. Before anyone asks she did not pass.

I was off work for 20 months but got back. However jolts caused problems, anyone who says cars won't go into reverse while going forward at 30 should try it, so after 18 months I was medically retired.

After a year of odd jobs, like delivering school meals, I got a job as an internal messenger in a D.W.P. office. In August 2003 I had a heart attack and was off work for 2 months but returned to work going up and down 5 floors and carrying heavy boxes. I started to have angina attacks and taking time off. Referred back to the cardiologist I went from just a heart attack to "You had a massive attack" and finding a left ventricular aneurysm. A year after returning to work I was at home recovering from an angina episode my boss arrived to tell me not to return to work and I should never have gone back.

After a while I started working with a local charity but found my health going downhill. In 2010 I went in to hospital where they removed damaged tissue on my heart and finally just on my 65th birthday last year I felt fit to return to work.

So that's it I still have to be careful but I'm okay. This is only a potted history making no mention of qualifying as a cinema projectionist or turning down the invitation to join Mensa!!

You believe or not it's all true and a lot of fun.

Barry (Spud) Spalding

The answer to last issue's riddle is Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Simple when you think about it

Lets see how you do with this one?

What gets bigger the more you take away from it?

**Don't forget the Reunion on June 22nd
Your chance to spend time with people you hated for 3
years, but have never forgotten them!**

NOW FROM MALCOLM WATTS COMES A CURIOUSLY TITLED ARTICLE

A Virgin in Blackpool



I'm not going to get drawn into any discussion about virgins and the common belief that they might be a dying breed in Blackpool. Instead this is a personal account by somebody who has never been to Blackpool but was persuaded in order to attend both the RAFA European Conference and the RAFA National Conference, both for the very first time as the Jersey Branch delegate for both conferences. The Blackpool weather in mid-May was not what one associates with Blackpool. We were met by cool winds and overcast skies, with a little light drizzle to put everyone into a conference mood.

The European Conference started promptly in the Savoy Hotel at 10am on the Friday. The overriding theme was finance as RAFA is facing an annual operating black hole in excess of £600,000. There are very clear reasons for this change in fortune; as costs rise, income from investments, memberships and fund-raising is falling. Of course, with a shrinking Royal Air Force and demographics, declining membership numbers will continue to challenge. One delegate put forward the idea that if every current RAFA member recruited just one new member, the black hole would go away! However, RAFA Liaison Officers collectively put forward a long collection of ideas which I'm sure will be assessed by Council. A number of related briefings followed, including welfare and presentations by delegates on the merits of two venues for the 2013 Conference; Guernsey won the vote.

On the Saturday, the rain had gone away, but it was still a cool reception for those attending the National Conference in the Winter Gardens. This was a much larger event, well attended, but I'm told that numbers were down on last year. Again, focus was still on the financial black hole. One resolution that addressed this directly was the idea of extending RAFA membership to 13-17 year old cadets. This was passed, so we can now expect to hear more about 'junior membership'. One idea which failed to excite delegates was the proposal to make life members pay for their copies of Air Mail, which costs in excess of £200,000 to produce. It was thought that by asking life members to contribute extra funds to RAFA, our black hole might shrink. I think that it was the wrong question, but since the right question wasn't available we shall now have to wait another 12 months before a vote can be taken to reduce this costly overhead. Does UK plc work like this? The Conference contained the usual array of speakers, but maybe the most interesting was given by members of the WRAF Virtual Branch, which was launched this year. At the moment, it remains 'virtual' as it doesn't have a home; surprisingly, most of their membership has never met!



**The next Issue of the Newsletter will be during July 2013
Deadline for contributions is 1st June 2013**

Advertisements

We are now letting our front-line apartment at Las Fuentes on our own and not through the agent we have been using in the past. This means it's now available throughout the year and in the season at much lower rates than the agents charge. We would like to offer all our relatives (and their friends) 10% off the prices on our website:

<http://www.spanish-apartment-alcossebre.com/>

Where you can see a video of the place

As a further incentive we will pay you 5% of the 90% that's left if you recommend your family and friends to us and they make and complete a booking and stay. We are just setting out this new venture so bear with us while we get our act together. The website, which, our son Ben has started for us is really worth a look at and Las Fuentes is a beautiful place - as some of you already know!!! Cheers and Love,

Jen & Pete Slawson

Mick Woodhouse reminds us that he still organises very enjoyable cruises in the Greek Islands and other places and has details of his 2013 adventures available now. The picture beneath testifies to Mick's abilities and if he is good enough to crew for HM who are we to doubt his abilities?? He is the one with the rope!! You can contact Mick on **01865 340535**

Picture supplied by Peter Green of the Alaska



**Contributions, mail or abuse about the Newsletter to the Editor
Brian Lee, Omaha House, London Road, Ipswich IP2 OSS
or e-mail: steam707@hotmail.com
Entry website - <http://www.103rdentry.org.uk/>**

Committee Members

Les Shardlow, Les Garden, Chris Wales, Barry Neal, Dave Post, Ken Bannister, Malcolm Watts, Mick Woodhouse, Brian Lee