



THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

Rutland Branch

THE FLYING HORSESHOE

Branch Newsletter

May 2009



EDITORIAL

At a committee meeting held on Wednesday it was decided that the publication cycle for the Flying Horseshoe would be changed. In future, the deadline for copy will be 15th of the month and printing/distribution will take place as soon as possible after that date. It is hoped that this will allow branch members an earlier opportunity to find out the programme for the next meeting which is always on the first Wednesday of the month. This issue is the first one that complies with the new pattern.

Following the article I wrote, about finding Sir Francis Chichester, in the last issue I was contacted by three people offering material that may be used in future issues. In deference to these individuals, I have reproduced articles from the information supplied which it is hoped will be of interest and possibly spark comment from other quarters.

Phil Marston

Call my Bluff Evening - Wednesday 1st April 2009



Call my Bluff: an event organised at the last branch meeting by Anne Preston - Bambridge and Nigel Trigg from Oakham. The venue was laid out with a raised dais for the panel made up of Nigel Trigg, Di Toy and Derek Bury. A simple format. A specific word - like "interbastion" - would be thrown out, and the three panellists would take it in turns to offer plausible explanations of it. Teams of branch members were then called upon to mark down which panellists gave the correct definition of the word. The whole evening was a success with a surprisingly lively format as each team engaged in discussion to the outcome of the words presented.

Derek Bury.



RAFA LOTTO

Playing Lift-Off Lotto Helps RAFA to Help Others



Lift-Off Lotto is a great way to support RAFA, giving you a chance to win a £1,000 top prize in our weekly draw. Money raised from the lottery will help us to offer residential caring, short welfare breaks and supportive and sheltered housing facilities throughout the United Kingdom. It will also help our volunteer Welfare Officers who provide much needed advice, care and support for serving and ex-serving RAF personnel, many of whom are elderly or suffer from long-term health problems.

How it Works. For just £1 per week you will be allocated a unique six-digit Lift-Off Lotto number, which will remain yours for as long as you wish to keep playing. Or, if you want to, you can buy more than one number. Every Friday, the Lift-Off Lotto super computer will select the lucky winners at random. The prize cheques will then be issued and posted directly to you, so there's no need to claim your prize. You must be 16 years old or over to take part.

How does my branch earn money? For each new application form submitted, providing the Branch Code is entered on the application form, the branch will have 10% of the payment returned to the branch. The commission will be paid every November, with the scheme starting in November 2008, and the first payment November 2009.

How do I find out who wins? Every week the winners will be put on the web site, alternatively you can ring the Lotto Hotline 0870 085 8844. Winners are automatically sent their winner's cheque through the post.

Find out more Application forms and leaflets can be obtained via the branch secretary.

Editors Comment – The article below is extracted from Village Voices (The local magazine of Hollesley, Boyton, Capel and Shingle Street – Feb 2009). by Laurie Forsyth. Ironically, I had just completed writing it when the same information was presented on 'THE ONE SHOW' on BBC1 TV on Good Friday 2009. The original was supplied by Bob Copping of Cottesmore.

ORFORDNESS: THE 20TH CENTURY

Orfordness, on the Suffolk coast is what the *National Trust, owners since 1993*, describes as a dynamic structure that was created by the forces of nature. Daily, it grows, shrinks, or changes shape as though it were alive and the great bulk of the 16km shingle spit is the Ness itself (Ness is a Norse word meaning 'nose'). In October 1627, a storm sent 32 ships to the bottom and the tragedy resulted in the building of the first lighthouses on the Ness: built cheaply from timber, they didn't last long. There have been many more. Some burned down, and some were just washed away. Most were privately owned: collecting tolls from each ship that passed the light was a lucrative business.



A long procession of men, and one woman, maintained the light which was a hard and lonely job. The present lighthouse was built in 1792, and the National Trust foresees it too will succumb to the sea before long.

Stepping ashore from the National Trust boat, you are hit by wind

that hisses across the shingle from the churning sea that lies just beyond the distant lighthouse. Facing you is a large area of saltmarsh that formed centuries ago in the protective lee the Ness. Most of it was drained and turned into grazing marsh in the 12th century. Beautiful as they are, the old marshes are just a footnote in the history of Orford Ness, and are completely overshadowed by what happened when this remote desert of stones collided with the 20th century.

Isolated and uninhabited, it was seen as the perfect place for *secretive military experiments, dangerous scientific research projects and other development work*. The War Department bought part of Orford Ness in 1913 and, by the end of WW1, over 600 staff lived there and conducted hush-hush research into the strange new world of military aviation. A place where boffins could work in total security, away from public gaze, during two World Wars and the Cold War of the 1960's.

The aftermath of nearly a century of their work is everywhere and you can visit many of the old buildings, including the famous Pagodas that are a landmark for miles. They were built to house *non-nuclear experiments on the atom bomb* between 1953 and 1966. *New aircraft were tested, as well as aerial combat techniques, parachutes, machine gun sights, camouflage and navigation methods*, all to the benefit of the Royal Flying Corps and its pilots. The remains of a large, 30m hanger for twin-engine

aircraft, a pre-fabricated barracks for 80 men (now used as a store, shared with barn owls) and an accommodation block all date from then. The latter was used by Robert Watson-Watt to develop the air defence system that became **RADAR**.

Amongst all this research work, high security and flying pieces of hot metal, sheep grazed the airfield and shepherds lived in a small wooden hut. Unsurprisingly, the remoteness of the place-and the need for a large resident workforce-made it the ideal place for a **German POW camp**. Prisoners were marched, from their huts and tents in a barbed wire compound, to work on the airfield and river walls.

The passing decades saw more projects and yet more buildings, including the famous Cobra Mist Radar installation of the Cold War, a rotational navigational beacon, a power house, workshops, laboratories, a police tower with a compound for their watch dogs, a coastguard lookout, a narrow gauge railway, a bomb ballistics building, a helipad, a rocket range, a rifle range and a model bombing range.

LEST WE FORGET

'This was sent to me by an ex-RN aviator, and I think it merits wide circulation – if you agree, perhaps you could help its distribution using your own channels'.

Thanks. Sir Peter Norriss

Last week I was in West London attending a conference. While I was in the airport, returning home, I heard several people behind me beginning to clap and cheer. I immediately turned around and witnessed one of the greatest acts of patriotism I have ever seen. Moving through the terminal was a group of soldiers in their uniforms, as they began heading to their gate everyone (well almost everyone) was abruptly to their feet with their hands waving and cheering.

When I saw the soldiers, probably 30-40 of them, being applauded and cheered for, it hit me. I'm not alone. I'm not the only red blooded Briton who still loves this country and supports our troops and their families. Of course I immediately stopped and began clapping for these young unsung heroes who are putting their lives on the line everyday for us so we can go to school, work, and enjoy our home without fear or reprisal.

Just when I thought I could not be more proud of my country or of our servicemen and women, a young girl, not more than 6 or 7 years old, ran up to one of the male soldiers. He knelt down and said 'hi,' the little girl then asked him if he would give something to her daddy for her. The young soldier didn't look any older than maybe 22 himself, said he would try and what did she want to give to her daddy. Suddenly the little girl grabbed the neck of this soldier, gave him the biggest hug she could muster and then kissed him on the cheek.

The mother of the little girl, who said her daughter's name was Courtney, told the young soldier that her husband was a Corporal and had been in Afghanistan for 5 months. As the mum was explaining how much her daughter, Courtney, missed her father, the young soldier began to 'tear up'. When this temporarily single mum was done explaining her situation, all of the soldiers huddled together for a brief second.

One of the other servicemen pulled out a military looking walkie-talkie. They started playing with the device and talking back and forth on it. After about 10-15 seconds of this, the young soldier walked back over to Courtney, bent down and said this to her, 'I spoke to your daddy and he told me to give this to you.' He then hugged this little girl that he had just met and gave her a kiss on the cheek. He finished by saying 'Your daddy told me to tell you that he loves you more than anything and he is coming home very soon.'

The mum at this point was crying almost uncontrollably and as the young soldier stood to his feet he saluted Courtney and her mum. I was standing no more than 6 feet away as this entire event unfolded. As the soldiers began to leave, heading towards their gate, people resumed their applause. As I stood there applauding and looked around, there were very few dry eyes, including my own. That young soldier in one last act of moment turned around and blew a kiss to Courtney with a tear rolling down his cheek.

We need to remember everyday all of our soldiers and their families and thank God for them and their sacrifices. At the end of the day, it's good to be British.

RED FRIDAYS

Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing Red every Friday. The reason? British men and women who support our troops used to be called the 'silent majority'. We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for Country and home in record-breaking numbers. We are not organized, boisterous or over-bearing. We get no liberal media coverage on TV, to reflect

our message or our opinions. Many English people, like you, me and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of Britain supports our troops. Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home, sending a deafening message that every Briton who supports our men and women afar will wear something red.

By word of mouth, press, TV -- let's make Great Britain on every Friday a sea of red much like a homecoming football team. If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family, It will not be long before Britain is covered in RED and it will let our troops know the once 'silent' majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than the media lets on. The first thing a soldier says when asked 'What can we do to make things better for you?' is... 'We need your support and your prayers'...

Let's get the word out and lead with class and dignity, by example; and wear something red every Friday.

IF YOU AGREE -- THEN SEND THIS ON

IF YOU COULD NOT CARE LESS THEN IGNORE IT.

IT IS YOUR CHOICE.

THEIR BLOOD RUNS RED---- SO WEAR RED!

Diary Dates 2009

- 6 May 2009 - Dan Hall - Berlin Air Lift
- 3 Jun 2009 - Speaker TBN
- 1 Jul 2009 - Mr Richard Profit – Polar Race –The Arctic Experience
- 5 Aug 2009 - Flt Lt C Mathews X1 Sqn - Typhoon Display Team RAF Coningsby
- 2 Sep 2009 - Wings Appeal Meeting
- 7 Oct 2009 - Branch Social Evening
- 4 Nov 2009 - Gp Capt M Heffron - Joint Services HQ - RAF Northwood
- 2 Dec 2009 - Greetham Valley Golf Club - Branch Dinner

STAMP COLLECTING

I would be obliged if you could mention in the next NL when printed that I am collecting used **British & Foreign postage stamps** all year round in aid of RAFA Wings Appeal, and would welcome members' support by bringing along to the meeting stamps with approx. one quarter of an inch of envelope left around the stamp. If not attending the meeting hand to any committee or phone me and I will happily collect.

Angie Humphreys

RAFATRAD

'RAFATRAD' is the Publishing and Trading Company of the Royal Air Forces Association. Items such as sweaters with "RAFA Rutland" logo, can be ordered through, "Balmoral Knit Wear", catalogue available at the Monthly Meetings. The catalogue can also be viewed on their website www.rafashop.com. Items can be ordered (and paid for) through the Rutland Branch representative, Mrs Sonia Sutton on 01572 813080.

Sonia Sutton

CARTRIDGE COLLECTION

The RAF Benevolent Fund can now convert your used inkjet printer cartridges into money which helps to fund our valuable welfare work. Recycling also helps to conserve our planet for the future. The Fund receives £1 for each inkjet printer cartridge we recycle! 'Empties' to **Peter Thomas** please - **No Epson or Laser cartridges thank you.**

The Branch web site is at www.rafarutland.org.uk

