



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCES
ASSOCIATION
Rutland Branch
THE FLYING HORSESHOE**



Branch Newsletter

February 2011

January Meeting - Birds of Prey

Our speaker, James Wiggins from Grantham, gave a very entertaining and informative presentation about the birds of prey that he helps to look after at Belvoir Castle. While their main function is to scare away the pigeons, whose droppings rot away the lead roof of the Castle, the programme also helps to re-introduce the birds into their natural surroundings.



Although James did all the talking, Rodney was the unquestionable star of the show. He was perfectly behaved with no unplanned clearing up to be done, and Rodney was well behaved as well!

Thank you to James and his wife Pam for giving their time to entertain and inform us. And thanks to Rodney for tolerating us all.

James with Rodney (in the middle). I believe he may be 'eyeing up' his dinner!

Duncan Manderson

BOOK REVIEW

I am reading Sarah Outen's book *A Dip in the Ocean*, ISBN 978-1-84953-127-6 which we were able to order when she spoke to us last Autumn. She was an inspiring speaker, those of you who were at the meeting may recall, and her book is equally inspiring. The book is very well written and I could not put it down. People can buy it at Bookworld in Oakham for £8.99. Sarah is a local girl and is raising funds for Arthritis research. I am sure it would be nice for all readers to know that they can buy this very human story about the daughter of an ex-RAF man who had to retire early from his career because of the awful illness that struck him.

Some comments about the book:-

"A story of true grit and fierce determination and dedication" Mark Beaumont, BBC Presenter and Round the World record holder.

"Sarah's row across the Indian Ocean should be recognised as one of the most inspired and tenacious expeditions of a generation" Richard Dawkins

"Sarah Outen's writing style is as charming as she is intrepid; as zesty as she is indomitable.... her book sparkles and refreshes like the waves." Michael Morpurgo

Angie Humphreys

GIVE FOR THOSE THAT GAVE.



'A gift of precious time can mean a lot.'

'In the midst of a busy life, it is difficult to find the time to give to anyone but the very immediate family. Even with a limited circle, time can be in very short supply.'

From the poem 'The Gift of Time' by Bonnie Moss

For 10 years Jim Tibbott has been our Wings Appeal Organiser. Jim and his wife Jo are two stalwart members who have given much of their time to making our Wings Appeal effort a success.

The appeal is the main charitable aim of RAFA. The money raised offers much needed respite breaks, financial help in times of need, comradeship and advice on a multitude of subjects for our service personnel, both serving and retired. BUT for all this we need a 'squadron' of volunteers lead by our own Wings Appeal Organiser. Sadly for Rutland RAFA Jim has to relinquish his role as our Wings Appeal Organiser.

Many of our members are willing and do give their time to make our branch, Rutland RAFA, a successful branch. Who is willing to take on this important role? Will 'you' volunteer?

The Committee

TAKING THE PLUNGE at 92 yrs Young

71 years after he first joined the RAF, 92-year old veteran John Hitchmough is once again returning to the skies, to take part in his first ever skydive in aid of charity.

Having joined the RAF in 1939, Mr Hitchmough spent time serving in Sierra Leone and in Cape Town, and is now preparing to take a leap of faith on the 19th March to raise money for the RAF Association.

John said; "Since I applied to do the skydive, I have had many people asking me why I decided to do it, particularly at the age of 92, and the reason is simply that I don't feel ready to stop having adventures yet. I don't want to be someone who sits around waiting for old age to set in so doing something like this, which allows me to support a good cause at the same time, is ideal. I have been involved with the RAF Association for many years now and think the work that they do is truly admirable. I wanted to take the opportunity to actively do something to help raise money."

John will be carrying out his skydive at Grange-over-Sands in Cumbria and will officially become the oldest person ever to have done one there.

John continues; "Now that I have been given the date for the skydive I am focusing on raising as much money as possible – one of the first people to sponsor me was actually my doctor, straight after he declared me medically fit to do it.

"Obviously people are surprised that I am doing this but I am really looking forward to it, next month can't come soon enough for me."

Those wishing to sponsor John can at:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JohnHitchmough>

Spitfire memorial is flying high again



A VANDALISED willow sculpture marking the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain has been put back in place in Oakham. The sculpture was damaged after vandals sawed through the wooden pole it stood on in November, damaging the cockpit and a wing. Creator John Shone, of Rutland Willows in Ashwell, has reinforced the pole with steel wire. He said: "Hopefully it'll put people off trying to do something like this again. The repairs didn't take long but were delayed because the water I use to soften the willow for sculpting froze. It's exactly the same as it was before."

John Shone with the repaired Spitfire memorial in Oakham

Published in Rutland Times on Thu Jan 06 :17:05 GMT 2011

The RAF Cottesmore Badge

When the Royal Air Force was officially formed on 1 Apr 1918, crews had already begun to paint a variety of unofficial emblems on their aircraft. World War 1 saw the peak of this activity. The value of these symbols was recognised, and in 1935 the post of Inspector of Royal Air Force Badges was introduced to advise the Air Council to control the design and issue of these devices. The first person to hold this post was Sir John Heaton-Armstrong MVO, the then Chester Herald of Arms Extraordinary. Sir John produced the basic pattern and format to be used on all RAF badges.

The basic unit badge is an enclosed coloured Royal Air Force Blue circle, and is usually inscribed in gold lettering with the name or number of the Squadron or unit on it plus the words Royal Air Force. This in turn is encircled by a gold laurel wreath and the whole ensigned by a crown in proper colours. Below is a scroll with the unit or Squadron motto. The Tudor Crown was used prior to the Accession of the present sovereign, when it was then changed to the Edward's Crown. A badge appropriate to the squadron would be designed and approved by the unit commander, then a description and illustration of how the unit would like it to appear would be sent to the Inspector. After he had confirmed that it was appropriate and conformed with



heraldic rules, the RAF would then commission the College of Arms to paint the definitive version. The Sovereign would then section it. In May 1936 the first seven badges to be awarded were signed by King Edward VIII.

As I am sure you all know, the badge of RAF Cottesmore consists of a hunting horn, a five-pointed star and a horseshoe. The description is "in front of a horseshoe a mullet overall a hunting horn in bend". The hunting horn symbolises the location in foxhunting country and the link with the Cottesmore Hunt; the American Star recalls the time the Station was a United States Army Air Force base; the inverted horseshoe is a traditional emblem of Oakham and the County of Rutland.

The motto "We rise to our obstacles" is both a reference to the Cottesmore Hunt and is intended to convey the spirit with which the Royal Air Force confronts difficulties. The badge was granted in 1948.

From RAF Heraldry web page 16.02.2011

Annual Service St Clements Danes Sunday 3rd April 2011

Ticket sales for attendance at the annual RAF Commemoration Service have now exceeded the limit. This is due to the allotted number for RAF personnel being drastically reduced this year. Unfortunately tickets are no longer available. Negotiations are ongoing to secure tickets for those members who have already requested them however these cannot be guaranteed.

Taken from RAF Association Newsletter

Family Fun at Flowerdown

Flowerdown House in Weston Super Mare has the perfect pad for a family break this summer. Located adjacent to the main house is a self-catering apartment which is ideal for families and has its own private entrance. The apartment is available all year round, however, in August this year Flowerdown are offering a week's break for families of up to four for just £150.

For further information about Flowerdown House call Sheila Henson on: 01934 621 664 or write to Address: 55 Beach Road, Weston Super Mare BS23 1BH

DATES for Your DIARY

2 nd March 2011	AGM
11 th – 13 th MARCH	South East & Eastern Area Conference 2011
6 th April 2011	Mr Walker 'Development of the Lancaster Dart Engine'

Annual General Meeting

If you have any items for the AGM then these should be passed to me by the end of February.

Phil Marston

Meetings are 1st Wed every month Venue: Cottesmore Sports & Social Club – 7.00 for 7.30pm

Branch Contact Numbers

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TBA. Wings Appeal Organiser