

	THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION Rutland Branch <i>THE FLYING HORSESHOE</i>	
Branch Newsletter	October 2011	

RUTLAND WILLOWS

At our October meeting we welcomed John & Martin from Rutland Willows. These are the two chaps who created the model Spitfire currently displayed on the Oakham Bypass. John, in addition to his willow work, is an accomplished dry stone waller and some of his work is displayed at the Ashwell cross roads. John explained how he became involved in this work. Prior to 2000 he was a gardener but following a couple of heart attacks he was told he had to take things easy and with the help of Geoff Hamilton and John's daughter he started to work with willow. He went on to explain that there were over 2000 varieties of willow plants in a number of different colours. John insisted that none of them are called pussy willow. To demonstrate the strength of the material he twisted two pieces together and invited Duncan to pull them apart. I think that perhaps the fingers would have broken before the saplings.

They explained that they currently obtain their willow from Moira near Ashby in Sandringham Estate in Norfolk however this is now a poor state from deer damage, but it may also be due to a confrontation with Prince Phillip, but that's another story. Interestingly the willow takes three years to grow into a useful commodity. The first two years are grown, harvested and discarded before the third year provides the first wood of any use. It seems that almost anything can be made out of the wood. We were shown a display of photographs and a number of willow models of Fox, Pheasant and Butterfly. The larger models have a small amount of metal in them to form a template.

The Oakham Spitfire was born from an idea by Dave Craven and a request from Oakham in Bloom. Rutland Willow was invited to the BBMF to look at a spitfire and further understand what the project was all about. They were allowed to climb all over their aircraft and "feel" the project that was before them. They discovered that there were a number of Mk's of spitfires and that there were a number of disguised shapes that would have to be taken into consideration when constructing the model. It was agreed that the model would be ¼ size of the real aircraft. We were led through the number of various stages in creating the final Spitfire.

Over the summer of 2010 some of the work was demonstrated at various shows and events that the Company attended. Apparently it was a very close call, burning the midnight oil, but was complete for the grand opening, which was graced by a flypast from a Spitfire from the BBMF.

Inevitably at Christmas it was attacked and cut from its stand, John explained how they repaired it and restored it to its former glory, but this time mild steel had been rapped

around the stand as a deterrent. The evening concluded watching the BBC's coverage of the unveiling.

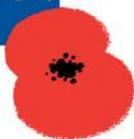
Another positive for the evening, as Martin had served in the Royal Air Force he was invited to join RAFA.

Our Speaker next month is Dan Stellmacher an ex Tornado pilot who has established a new career as a civil pilot, I understand, flying Executive Jets and has a load of interesting tales to tell.

Finally I have started to put next year's diary together, and thank you for all your ideas, but I'm still open to more. Just give me a topic and I will do the rest.

One final, final note in February we are being visited by the Principle from Welbeck Defence College. If you would like to find out something about the college please go to Defence College. If you would like to find out something about the college please go to www.dsfc.ac.uk/, my apologies to those of you that don't use computers.

Peter Hart



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CELEBRATED IN STYLE

To kick start this year's annual poppy appeal the Oakham branch of The Royal British Legion held a 90th Anniversary concert at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Thursday 20th October.

Melodies from a bygone age of music were performed by the RAF Cranwell "Swing Wing" band led by Warrant Officer Garry Stevens. The Swing Wing band performed music by Gershwin, Dorsey, Goodman, Miller, and many more from a time when mood and harmony were in vogue and music fans cherished this era.

A Solo performance of "Mr Bo jangles" and "Somewhere (A Place for Us)" by SAC Matt Walker was excellent. Joined by Corporal Beverley Kirk their rendition of "Walking my baby back home" was touching. The female trio the "Bluebells", of Corporal Beverley Kirk, JT Cara Palmer and SAC Tracey Hodgetts gave stirring performance of "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy". Warrant Officer Stevens invited the audience to do the "Lindy Hop" and although no one did volunteer a few "hand jives" were to be seen in the auditorium.

A thoroughly entertaining evening.

Derek Bury

Comfort On Parade

On Sunday 13th November many will be marching at the Remembrance Day parade. A must on that day, as with other such occasions, will be comfortable shoes or boots.

Shoes, in some form or another, have been around for a very long time. Spanish cave drawings from more than 15,000 years ago show humans with animal skins or furs wrapped around their feet. The body of a well-preserved "ice-man" nearly 5,000 years old wears leather foot coverings stuffed with straw. The history of military shoes however is different to civilian shoes

The history of military boots spans decades and these military boots have assisted the wearer in countless wars. The type and style of boot worn has changed over time to fit the needs of the

'warrior'. For example combat boots were worn during the English civil war, where the soldiers were issued with three pairs that they would change after each march. This apparently was to ensure that the boots would wear evenly and that they would be worn in and ready to be used when needed. These boots originally had buckles on them, but were switched to lace ones in the 19th century.

American soldiers in the 1820's wore ankle-high boots, but they did not have a designated foot for each shoe. In other words, there was no left or right boot. The reason for this design was so that there was no way a soldier could confuse their boots, but it resulted in a rather uncomfortable experience, and even blisters, for the poor American soldier until they could properly wear the boot in and make it fit their foot's shape! Whether you wear buckle or lace shoes on the 13th I trust that you will maximise comfort and wear them on the correct feet!

Kathryn Manderson



RAFA Rutland Christmas Dinner

Wednesday 30th November 2011



£21.00 per person (including gratuity).

MENU

Minestrone Soup

Served with parmesan croutons and crispy leeks

Or

King Prawns

*Marinated in lemongrass and ginger,
coated in tempura batter and served with sweet chilli sorbet*



From the carvery

Roast breast of Turkey

Horseshoe of Honey & Mustard baked ham

Roast Sirloin of Beef

Served with chipolata, traditional seasoning, Yorkshire pudding & Pan gravy

Or

Roasted vegetable and Roquefort cheese parcel

*Served over lime scented cous cous
and finished with a mango, basil and cream sauce*



Traditional Christmas pudding

Served with brandy sauce

Or

Baked vanilla and cinnamon tart

Served with black forest ice cream



Tea, coffee & chocolate Mints

RAFA Rutland Annual Dinner Return Slip

NAME(S)

Please complete the above with names attending (guests & friends welcome). Menu selection taken at the table. Send names with your cheque (payable to RAFA Rutland) as soon as possible, but no later than 20 Nov to: Roger Hyde, 25 The Pastures, Cottesmore, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7DZ. Or the November meeting.

Enquires: Tel No: 01572 813547 email: g3zdw@btinternet.com

Raffle prizes would be appreciated.

DATES for Your DIARY

2nd Nov 2011	Dan Stellmacher	Tornado Pilot
13 th November	Remembrance Sunday	Members to march from Oakham Market Sq
30th Nov 2011	Christmas Dinner	
4 th Jan 2012	T B A	Happy New Year
1st Feb 2012	Tony Halliwell	Principal Welbeck The Defence 6th Form College. Cadets to be invited
30 th March to 1 st April 2012.	South East & Eastern Area Conference	Southdowns Resort, Bracklesham Bay just south of Chichester

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

Branch Contact Numbers

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Wings Appeal Organiser Jim Tibbott Deputy Organiser Dave Craven

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

