



NEWSLETTER

Compiled by A. McRae

Autumn 2001

Annual Dinner

The final call for members and guests wanting to attend the annual dinner on the 20th October is about due, so please make your reservations as soon as possible either to myself or to George Poole. Remember to give your place card names with your booking and any seating preference you may have.

IWM OPEN @ 10.00 MEETING 13.00

As in previous years we shall make arrangements to collect people from the usual local hostelrys, therefore make sure you let Bob Hope know where you are staying. Also remember (diners and non-diners) to give Bob your car registration number, driver and passenger names for the meeting next day. The meeting/parking arrangements will follow what is now established 'meeting' procedure, always remembering of course to use the guardroom gate and not the public entrance.

Any donations for the raffle will, as always, be greatly appreciated, last year we almost had a prize per person, so thanks in anticipation.

In response to your enquires the central booking telephone number for the local Travelodge is 0870-905-6343. This is called Cambridge South and is at Abington on the Fourwentways junction of the A11/A1307. And yes, we do include it in the pick-up schedule.

President

We are pleased to announce that Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns has agreed to become the Association President in the forthcoming year. Sir Richard who served with 64 Sqn. at Duxford capped a long and illustrious career in the Royal Air Force as Chief of the Air Staff. He is now 'relaxing' in retirement after taking up the post of Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle.

AGME

One of our association members, Jim Munro, whose father, the late Group Captain 'Jack' Munro, served with the Air Gun Mounting Establishment at Duxford would like to hear from anyone who knew about this unit or served on it. Jim tells us that his father also designed the only successful British 20mm cannon.

RAF Cosford

A recent visit to the Museum at RAF Cosford confirms that it is almost on a par with Duxford in terms of visitor attractions (that's aeroplanes) including an Meteor NF14 in 64 Sqn. livery. An added bonus is that the layout is more compact so the 'old legs' don't get so much of a hammering. On the day we visited OAPs were getting in for free, I'm not sure if this is the norm-(who's he?)-so don't spread it around or Mr Brown will tax us on it.

Golf Tournament

Are there many association golfers? Would there be enough to stage a small competition somewhere. Is anyone a club member who has previous experience in organising and running such a competition? Answers please for the October meeting.

Aircrew Association

This Association is currently seeking new members and any ex-aircrew interested in finding out more should contact:

Chairman, Aircrew association
Richard M. Pinkham
61 Mill lane
Kingsthorpe
Northampton
NN2 6RU

Telephone 01604-717541

Out of Bounds

By

Mavis Baker (Nee Stupple)

I served at RAF Duxford from 1952 until 1955 on the domestic side of the camp. At first I worked in the Sergeants Mess then in the Officers Mess. For all the messing staff, apart from the guardroom and SHQ the rest of the airfield was out of bounds except for AOC's parade and open day.

All rules are made to be broken, and all the exciting stuff was always on the other side of the road. It all happened when we had a visiting Squadron in from Germany, who had their workshop under canvas on the other side of the airfield.

One day there was a buzz going round camp that an aircraft had crashed and Peggy, who worked in the airman's mess, bribed the ration truck driver with extra tea and sugar to take us over to the other side to see the crashed aircraft. So that we could get past the guardroom we had to duck down behind the tailboard of the truck. After a while, still unseen in the back of the truck, we passed the Officers tent, who were doing their normal thing, playing fighter pilots on bikes.

The ration truck driver backed up to a tent, Peggy was half way out and I was about to jump down when he drove off leaving me sprawled out under a bench much to the surprise of the airmen working there. They said "Where the hell have you come from?" to which I replied "Off the back of that ration truck". Meanwhile Peggy was hanging on for dear life as the ration truck sped off into the distance, when the driver realised what had happened, he stopped and let poor Peggy off. Well, after we had a quick look at the plane (still unnoticed by the officers), we thought it about time we returned to the domestic site.

We decided to make a quick exit by taking a short cut across the field, so avoiding the officers tent. After we had gone a few yards there lots of shouting coming from behind us, we turned and saw all the officers waving at us from their tent, we thought they had seen us and believed their luck to be in, we giggled and just waved back.

Then to our horror we realised what they were waving and shouting about for as, for when we turned around again, we saw this lone airman in the middle of the field with a large 'bat' in each hand. We looked up to the sky and saw a plane hurtling towards us at a great rate of knots. We sprinted like hell to where this lone airman was standing knowing that his bats were going to save our skins, as planes never seemed to go past men with bats! After he had marshalled the plane, the surprised airman turned to us and said "What the B**** hell are you doing out here?" After a quick explanation we headed back to other side of the road without being seen or stopped again, and thought we had got away with it. Next morning I was on duty in the Officers mess and was asked to take a breakfast to an officers room. I knocked on the door and entered to find that the officer was in charge of the visiting squadron, I said "Good Morning Sir" and set his breakfast on the table. As I was about to leave the room, those dreaded words every airman/airwoman hates to hear. "AIRWOMAN" he shouted, this could only mean one thing (trouble), my heart sank. He said "What were you doing on the airfield yesterday?". After I told him, he said "You do realise that it is a court-martial offence to be on the airfield". I thought my time with the Air Force was over, but after a good telling off, he said he was going to overlook it just this once.

I never gave it another thought that I would have been recognised, but working in the Officers Mess had its disadvantages, as Peggy got away without any telling off. So falling off the back of a lorry meant something else way back then.