



FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION



“THE AIREY FAIREY”

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NATIONAL FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

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Contributions for inclusion in "The Airey Fairey", the official journal of the National Fleet Air Arm Association, are most welcome and should be submitted to the Hon. Editor prior to the deadline shown below. Whilst every effort is made to include them, due to space limitations, this is not always possible. However no article is wasted as those not used are retained for possible future use. Where there are events of general interest and dates for these are after the issue of the magazine, they will of course be included. Should you wish for articles and/or photos to be returned then please enclose a S.A.E.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT (WINTER) ISSUE IS
1st October 2001

FLEET AIR ARM 2000 – A MESSAGE FROM THE
‘TRIBAL CHIEF’ REAR ADMIRAL IAIAN HENDERSON,
FLAG OFFICER MARITIME AVIATION.

Having recently sent out a signal to all elements of the Fleet Air Arm, I thought it would be useful to put together a similar ‘state of the nation’ message to the various organisations which, in one way or another, support the Fleet Air Arm, and this [of course] includes the National Fleet Air Arm Association. There is always a need for PR but, since 1 April 2000 when the FAA evolved from the singular Naval Air Command into the 3 elements of the Naval Air Command, Joint Helicopter Command and the Joint Force Harrier, its importance has increased substantially.

Taking each element in turn, I will start with the Joint Force Harrier because that’s where the FAA’s 2-Star, myself, now resides since the demise of Flag Officer Naval Aviation on 1 April. My principal job is as the Air Officer Commanding No. 3 Group RAF, one of the AOC’s under CinC Strike Command running the RAF’s combat power. Within my group are the RN’s Sea Harrier FA2s and T8 Harrier trainers together with the RAF’s Harrier GR7s and T10 Harrier trainers, Nimrod MR2s and Sea King Mk3/3a SAR helicopters. These are accompanied by the associated airfields of Cottesmore, Wittering, Kinloss, St.Mawgan plus the Sea Harrier ‘enclave’ at Yeovilton and the SAR units located at Chivenor, Wattisham, Valley, Boulmer, Leconfield and Lossiemouth. My Headquarters is at High Wycombe, collated with the other groups (1 and 2) and Headquarters Strike Command. One of my tasks is to make the Joint Force Harrier a viable force working towards convergence (whilst in no way threatening single Service identity), which includes relocating the RN’s Harriers to Cottesmore and Wittering in 2003. The ultimate aiming mark is the Future Carrier Bourne Aircraft (hopefully the Joint Strike Fighter being developed in the USA) which will replace both the RN’s and RAF’s Harriers around 2012. FCBA and the Future Carrier are central to the Government’s expeditionary policy for the Armed Forces and central to the future size and shape of the Royal Navy. The adoption of a single aircraft type for carrier and land operations lies at the heart of why an aviation Admiral is now embedded in the heart of the RAF’s combat HQ. It was cleverly conceived and I have total conviction that, whilst it may have been a bold step, it nevertheless is the right (and only) way forward. Besides being AOC 3 Group, my role as Flag Officer

Maritime Aviation entails being responsible to the CinC Fleet for all embarked standards and practices, no matter to which Service the aircraft belongs. I have also a sizeable NATO function as Commander Air East Atlantic and Commander Maritime Air North. The final, and very important part of my job is as the FAA's 'Tribal Chief'.

Turning now to the second element of the FAA, i.e. the totally 'dark blue home' of the Naval Air Command which is now under the command of a 1-star officer, Commander Naval Aviation (COMNA), presently held by Commodore Chris Clayton. The Naval Air Command consists of those aircraft which are neither in Joint Force Harrier nor the Joint Helicopter Command, so COMNA now owns ASW Sea Kings Mk.6, ASW Merlins Mk.1, AEW Sea Kings Mk.2 (and soon the Mk.7), SAR Sea Kings Mk.5, Lynx Mk.3 and Mk8, Jetstreams for Observer training, Hawks for Fleet Requirements and Air Direction duties, the Royal Navy Historic Flight and finally the 3 Air Stations at Culdrose, Yeovilton and Prestwick. COMNA's Headquarters is divided between Northwood, which is also the Headquarters of CinC Fleet, and Yeovilton.

The third element of the Fleet Air Arm is the Commando Helicopter Force, consisting of the Commando Sea King Mk.4's and the Royal Marine Lynx/Gazelle, which are embedded in the Joint Helicopter command, presently under the Command of an Air Vice Marshal who sits under Cinc Land at Wilton. The purpose of forming the Joint Helicopter Command was to bring together all the Tri-Service Battlefield and Support Helicopters, and I'm pleased to report that the FAA's 'best practice' is well recognised both there and in the Joint Force Harrier. The upshot being that the FAA's voice is heard, listened to and acted upon, no longer just within the dark blue confines of the Fleet Command, but also within the RAF and Army. Can't be bad!

So that's how the FAA stands organisationally today, but how is it faring operationally? It is perhaps very appropriate that I am writing this on 11th November because the FAA has never looked back since those gallant aviators carried out their devastating raid on the Italian Fleet at Taranto 60 years ago today. Besides many distinguished actions over the intervening period, this year has seen a 'model' operation, Op PALLISTER, conducted off Sierra Leone involving a very substantial contribution from the Fleet Air

Arm. Immediately beforehand, HMS ILLUSTRIOUS with her embarked Air Group of 801 Squadron Sea Harriers, 820 Squadron Sea King ASW, 849 'B' Flight Sea King AEW plus Harrier GR7's of No. 1 Squadron RAF were exercising in the Mediterranean. In a classic demonstration of the flexibility of sea power, ILLUSTRIOUS was detached and ordered to proceed to Sierra Leone, bringing her Air Group fully up to speed on passage. HMS OCEAN, the new helicopter carrier with Sea King Mk.4's of 846 Squadron, Lynx/Gazelle of 847 Squadron plus 2 Chinooks embarked, joined the Task group. The operation was conducted extremely professionally and hailed as a great success at all levels, politically and militarily. Since Op PALLISTER the FAA has yet again been involved in operations, this time in the Mediterranean in Operation MAGELLAN.

The continued success of the FAA owes everything to its people both in the air and on the ground. In an era of scant resources, the maintenance of operational capability demands the highest order of management and leadership at all levels and I am extremely impressed by what is achieved under consistently demanding circumstances. Perhaps this is where you can lend a hand by, first of all spreading the message regarding the continued success by maritime aviation in general and the FAA in particular; second by helping to recruit high quality people to serve as aircrew, air engineers or air traffic controllers. Of note is a new initiative to recruit aircrew straight from school since, at present, following university and flying training, the average age on joining his/her first front line squadron is around 27. Gaining a degree once in the Service is being actively pursued.

Thank you very much for all your various support towards the Fleet Air Arm which I take great pride in continuing to declare as 'second to none'; we in the FAA 'tribe' intend to keep it that way.

Rear Admiral Iain Henderson
Flag Officer Maritime Aviation

EDITORIAL

This editorial is not in its usual place on page 3 but I considered that the message from Rear Admiral Iain Henderson was of much greater importance.

Once again this edition of The Airey Fairey is much later than planned despite the fact that it has been ready to go to the printers for over five weeks. It is again for the same reason as before, namely that many branches have not let either Ted Cuff or myself know of their requirements and/or have not sent their donations to the Treasurer. This is after a number of requests to those offending branches. This does cause problems and indeed does make me feel that there is no longer any interest in our magazine. I am also finding it more difficult to find enough suitable material to complete each issue yet I am sure there are many members who could submit articles.

I realise that there are some who consider that our asking for minimum donations of £2.50 per annum to cover the printing and distribution costs excessive and some suggest that we should attempt to obtain advertisers. Who is supposed to do this? Not one of those who have suggested this is willing to undertake the task. Apart from which who would want to advertise when we have a total distribution of less than 800 covering the UK and overseas?

If you wish for our magazine to continue then let's make the effort to meet the deadline which is printed on page 2 of the magazine.

AVIATION At LEE-on-the-SOLENT 1917 – 1996

The *Gosport Aviation Society* are the sponsors of a major pictorial exhibition concerning the history of aviation at Lee-on-the-Solent to be held at No. 2 Battery, Stokes Bay Road, Alvestoke from late May until the end of August 2001. The exhibition will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 26th May until 26th August between 1200 and 1800. Entrance is free. Everyone is welcome and we at the *Society* look forward to meeting you.

(Further details available from Commander Geoff Pell – Tel: 023 92588656)

ASSOCIATION REUNION,
HOTEL St. NICHOLAS, SCARBOROUGH.
OCTOBER 12th, 13th & 14th 2001.

As you are aware the proposed reunion to be held at Alveston Hall, Nantwich had unfortunately to be cancelled due to lack of support. We needed a total of about 300 in order to have exclusive use of the hotel and to be able to have a gala dinner on the Saturday. We managed a total of around 80 members and guests. Pretty poor from a membership of over 1,000. Had we have held the somewhat 'small' reunion we could not have held a gala dinner and we would have been treated the same as all other guests of the hotel during that week end.

Rather than not have any reunion we looked for alternative accommodation with suitable facilities and as convenient as possible to all branches. Such a venue was found at the Hotel St. Nicholas, Scarborough. This was inspected by yours truly and wife and is considered very suitable. Negotiations took place as to the cost. The management gave us a suitable discount and also included a free sherry reception on the evening of Friday 12th and a gala dinner on Saturday. We have exclusive use of the ballroom and bar on Saturday and we have also engaged a band for entertainment following the dinner. There is entertainment in the lounge on other evenings.

The hotel is literally less than ten minutes walk from the shops and sea.

So far we have had donations of raffle prizes and we are hoping that branches will contribute whatever they can. We are also purchasing some from the reunion coffers.

I have received a few queries regarding dress for the Saturday evening. This is somewhat flexible and I suggest that it should be either Blazer, Dinner Jacket or Lounge Suit – the choice is yours.

Hope to see you there.

Barry Simons.

MONEY PROBLEMS!

1. A STONE ?£ s d
2. AN OLD FASHIONED CYCLE ?£ s d
3. A MALE SINGER ?£ s d
4. A POORLY FISH ?£ s d
5. ONE LEGGED LADIES' UNDERWEAR ?...£ s d
6. A PORTION OF ROYAL HEADGEAR ?£ / s d
7. UP AND DOWN MOTION ?£ s d
8. LEATHER WORKER ?£ s d
9. MERCURY, URANUS & PLUTO ?£ s d
10. A TYPE OF PIG ?£ s d

(Answers see page 26)

* * * *

Daedalus Branch

The Daedalus Branch is fast becoming one of our largest branches with well over sixty members covering both UK and overseas. Now that the Branch Secretary, Len Owen, has retired he has said that he is hopeful of being able to produce a newsletter specifically for this branch. Initially he intends it to be six monthly.

If any branch member wishes for something to be included in that newsletter then please let Len have the details.

As a matter of interest two of their overseas, one from Australia and one from Canada are attending the reunion in October.

ROYAL NAVY HISTORIC FLIGHT

As those of you who take the Navy News will have read, at long last, after seven years of airframe and engine restoration, Sea Fury, VR 930, of the Royal Navy Historic Flight had, on the 1st March, it's first flight lasting some 20 minutes. The flight was cut short to make routine adjustments to the running speed of the engine. All systems were 'go' and it is now awaiting further tests.

After a Maincheck 4 inspection, Swordfish W5856 was found to have no significant problems and it is due for an annual test flight prior to its first display at Duxford.

Firefly WB271 is progressing well having been completely rewired and all pipework renewed. It remains that all the components that were removed for access or to facilitate the structural survey of the aircraft will need to be refitted and the necessary functional tests undertaken. Finally it is intended that it will be painted in 812 Squadron (HMS Glory – Korean War) colour scheme and markings. If all goes well the aircraft should be displaying again by August.

Seahawk WV908 needs some electrical rewire work in addition to the replacement of all components which were removed for repair to the engine bay. This work will proceed as the Flights' manpower resources allow, but in any event will not be completed this year.

Swordfish LS326 has now been grounded for the past twelve months awaiting repairs to wing spars. Due to manpower resource problems at BAE Systems, Brough there has been very little progress on the repair. The good news is that the restoration team has now been fully restored and repair work is again underway. It is a very big job and will take several months to complete but it is hoped to have the aircraft flying for the 2002 display season.

Swordfish NF389 (City of Bristol), this work is now progressing but at the request of the Flight priority is being given to LS326.

Reg Veale, Bristol Branch.

YOUR HELP REQUESTED.

1835 Squadron – HMS Patroller- Belfast (Sydenham July 1945 Also Donibristle 1946.

The Fleet Air Arm Museum is currently carrying out an in-depth study into the History of its **CORSAIR** aircraft **Serial No. KD 341**. However some details of its service life remain uncertain – **can anyone please help?**

The aircraft was attached to **1835 Squadron** and was engaged in training activities prior to embarking on **HMS Patroller** with the intention of sailing for the East in **July 1945**.

Anyone, especially engineering staff, fitters and maintainers who may have any recollections of preparing Corsair aircraft during this period may well hold the key to solving this puzzle. Also anyone who was involved with aircraft awaiting disposal at **Donibristle** in **1946** or who remembers preparing **KD 341** for its journey to **Cranfield** may well have vital pieces of information.

Will anyone who may be able to help please contact **Dave Morris** (Chief Engineer/Keeper of Aircraft) at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester, Somerset, B122 8NG, telephone 01935 842609 or e-mail: davem@fleetairarm.com

THE BLACKBURN FIREBRAND

By John Shoebridge.

Re printed by kind permission of The Gosport Aviation Society

I see from my Pilot's Flying Log Book that I first flew the Blackburn Firebrand on 7th September 1949. Aeroplane Number EK779 was a Mk.V TFA and the latest and final version. At the time I was CO of an RN Ferr Flight based at RN Air Station, Anthorn (near Carlisle in Cumberland). It should be stated that the Firebrand had a truly appalling reputation as a thoroughly unpleasant aeroplane being difficult, dangerous and hard work. Had I not been the CO and honour being at stake, I very much doubt if I would have agreed to familiarise myself with the 93 The Brute 94. At that

time little did I know that within four months, I was to spend two happy (yes happy!) years from January 1950 to December 1951 as a member of 813 Naval Air Squadron (a Front Line Firebrand Squadron) and to complete some 150 Deck Landings with the Firebrand.

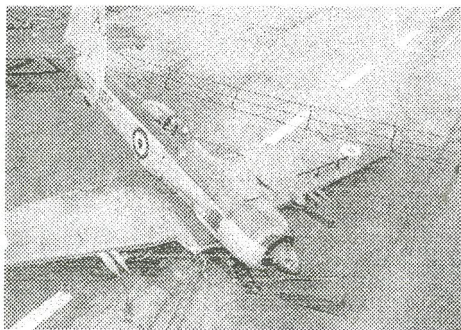
I think it would be fair to say that I was in a reasonable position to assess the qualities/faults of the Firebrand as a Naval Aircraft. My last two war years, 1943 – 1945 were spent flying Swordfish from small aircraft carriers in the North Atlantic and was followed by a two year stint as a Maintenance Test Pilot during which time experience was gained on some forty different types of aircraft.

The Firebrand originated from Naval Staff Requirement N.9/39, issued in December 1939, for a four gun single seat Fleet Fighter. The first aeroplane flew in February 1942 and the first deck landing undertaken in February 1943. Trials continued during the war but the first Squadron (No. 813, was not formed until September 1945 at RN Air Station, Ford. The final version of the Firebrand, the TF5A, as previously mentioned, differed considerably from the original prototype. The main difference was the Napier Sabre engine (2305 h.p.) had been replaced by the Bristol Centaurus IX radial engine (2520h.p.) Although the aircraft did possess four 20mm cannon it certainly could not be regarded as a fighter but rather the main (the only) torpedo bomber of the Royal Navy. In addition it could also carry bombs and rocket projectiles – not all at one time I might add! The Firebrand was also tested for use as a long range mine layer. Little more was heard of this latter role which was, I suspect, wisely left to the more suitable aeroplanes of the RAF.

The specification of the Firebrand called for a top speed of some 290 knots with a cruising speed of around 210 knots. From my own experience (and long ago memories) I would say those figures were not achieved. As I recall we used to cruise at around 180 knots although this speed would be reduced to 160 or even 140 knots if either maximum range or endurance were required. Endurance was, for a Naval aircraft, good and with a drop tank one could expect about 4 hours 'in the air'. Since sitting on a parachute and strapped in the cockpit is not the most comfortable of positions it was indeed fortunate that maximum endurance was rarely required. Deck Landing approach speed was 90 knots reducing to 85 as one approached the round-down of the carrier. Touch down would be at about 75 knots as one hopefully hooked on to the arrester wire. My own deck landings were all before the advent of the angle deck and mirror sight and would be controlled by the 'batsman'. In 1948/1949 the Navy changed to the American system of deck landing. This involved a normal deck landing at a height of say 50 feet above flight deck level and on receipt of the 'cut' from the batsman, the throttle would be closed resulting in the nose of the aircraft dropping. At the appropriate moment the control column was pulled back enabling the arrester hook (hopefully one had remembered to lower it) to engage in one of the eight arrester wires bringing the aircraft to a steady halt. Too

late or too early pulling back the control column would result in either a bounce or float both of which resulted in confrontation with the barrier and causing considerable damage to the aircraft but rarely any injury to the pilot apart from injured pride.

It must be said that Naval pilots being highly trained for the task, deck landing was a routine matter and accidents were infrequent. However a steady swell resulting in the stern of the carrier moving up and down some 20 to 30 feet was very good for the liver.



The author arriving on board H.M.S. "Indomitable" in 1951, in an alternative style! Note the dive brake extended on the port wing, and propeller blades chopped neatly at the spinner. Another job for the AA's!

The Firebrand was a very poor deck landing aircraft for two reasons. Normally heavy on the controls it became somewhat sluggish at slow speed but the principal difficulty was lack of vision. There was 16 feet of nose between the cockpit and propeller, which restricted vision enormously and meant the approach had to be made on a continual curve almost until crossing the round-down. We used to joke '16 feet between us and a crash'. Although the controls were heavy it was certainly no aircraft for those who enjoyed the fighter pilot style of flying (it was, I believe I am correct in saying 'non aerobatical') it did have a most reliable engine, was steady in flight and was a good platform for torpedo dropping and rocket firing. During my two years with the squadron there were only two cases of major engine trouble, both being caused by throttle linkage failure and resulting in the ditching of both aircraft. One ditched in Weymouth Bay and the other in the North Sea off the Moray Firth. The Firebrand was an excellent 'ditcher' and in each case the pilot was out of the cockpit and standing on the wing before the aircraft sank. These incidents gave us all considerable confidence flying, as we were, over

the sea for long periods.

As previously mentioned, the Firebrand was a steady platform for torpedo dropping although the vision (as for deck landing) was poor. We would dive down from say 6,000 ft. and, assuming the target was turning, try to attack from either the inner quarter or outer bow at a distance of 800 yards. The drop, ideally, would be made from 250 ft. and at a speed of 200 knots. This, hopefully, would ensure that the torpedo entered the water at the right angle neither diving straight to the seabed nor 'skipping' and then breaking up.

It was rumored that only experienced would be posted to Firebrand squadrons (there were only 2, 813 and 827). How true this was I do not know but in practice no inexperienced pilot joined 813 whilst I was a member.

During the two years I was with the squadron we were, when ashore, based at RNAS Lee-on-the Solent. Our carrier, either HMS Implacable or HMS Indomitable would be alongside in Portsmouth Harbour during these periods.

In conclusion, I would say that the Firebrand did not deserve its bad reputation but could be likened not to a pedigree racehorse but rather to a Shire horse – heavy, steady and reliable.

HATSTON REVISITED

Some time ago, whilst touring Scotland, my wife and I went over to Orkney for the day and looked over what remained of HMS Sparrowhawk, Hatston. As I stood in the brick factory, which had been our hangar, memories of almost 40 years before came creeping back.

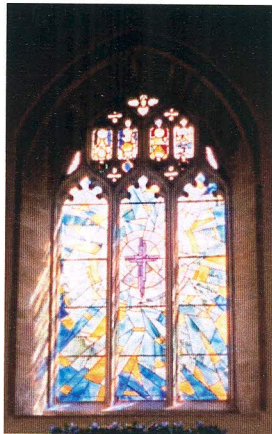
I had arrived there in December 1941 fresh from training as an Air Fitter (A) and had to report to a Flight Sergeant Rose in the Aircraft Reserve Pool. Baptism was rapid as my first DI was on a Gloster Gladiator to be flown later that day by no less than the C.O. Captain St. John Fancourt. He duly arrived and I helped him into his parachute harness, straps etc. Before donning his helmet, he handed me his cap for safe keeping. Keeping my fingers crossed I watched him take off and then proceeded to the hangar office where I could not resist putting his cap on and reprimanding the lads for failing to salute. However, the indomitable Flight Sergeant Rose was not amused and snapped

Con'td on page 16.

St. Bartholomew's Church, Yeovilton.
"The Fleet Air Arm Church".



The Millennium Window of Resurrection Light





From: The Reverend Mark Jackson RN

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5 Dec 00

Dear Michael

The Millennium Window of Resurrection Light

May I write to express our gratitude for your kindness. Your cheque for £200 is much appreciated, and arrived fortuitously.

Today the designer visits to present his ideas and drawings. We hope to run this past the Trustees very quickly and proceed. Our hope is to unveil the window on Easter Sunday 2001. Any of your members who would like to be present are very welcome. Anyone else showing an interest (in memory of a loved one or colleague) is welcome to be involved. We are not launching an appeal, but are very happy to keep everyone up to date.

In the Spring, the office here is going into new Technology and we hope to publish our first newsletter with pictures. Watch this space!

My sincere thanks to you all.

*Yours
Mark*

“take that off boy, you’ll never wear one of those”. At nineteen I was indeed just a boy, but on that day a boy responsible for the safety of our C.O. One grew up quickly in wartime.

The AR Pool was also responsible for communications and salvage and the officer in charge was an RNVR Lt. Duncan Hamilton, who incidentally became a motor car-racing driver of some repute following the war. On one occasion he went joy-riding in an Albacore piloted by another RNVR Lt., a Lt. Galley. They had intended dropping an aluminium sea marker to use as a target to shoot at but something went wrong when it was thrown out and its contents blew back into the aircraft and they were forced to return. My oppo, Freddie Knee, and I went out to meet them. They were indeed a sight to behold – covered in silver they looked forever like a pair of Martians! Unfortunately, Freddie, a cheery Brightonian, couldn’t disguise his grin and Hamilton snarled “so you think its funny Knee – you can clean up this mess” whereupon they stormed off to the sick bay to be decontaminated. Being Freddie’s oppo, I helped him with the cleaning up but it took a long time as the stuff was everywhere.

On another occasion an Albacore force landed on the Isle of Eday and a gang of us, under a corporal Hall, were sent to try to make it airworthy. We were there about five days billeted on a farmer and his sister our rations being flown in by the test pilot in the section’s Magister. Each time he came in we had to drive the cows from the field. We ‘jury rigged’ the Albacore’s undercarriage and got it onto the road but a pilot sent in to fly it back declined so it was taken back to Hatston on a lighter.

In May 1942 the US Carrier Wasp came to Scapa and the planes and crews came to stay at Hatston whilst the ship ferried Spitfires to Malta. One afternoon they put on a mock attack against the airfield for the benefit of an American Admiral. The Wildcats came in very low with the Devastators a little higher and at right angle to them, meanwhile the Chesapeake, with wheels and dive brakes lowered, simulated dive-bombing. Quite impressive!

Later that afternoon I had been detailed to attend an RAF Pilot’s Spitfire from Skeabrae. Sitting on the wing down on the perimeter track we had had a very good view and when it was over the sergeant said “let’s go” and proceeded to start up and taxi off. I then returned the trolley acc. to the hangar. As it was tea-time, I joined a group of ‘Yanks’ walking to the dining hall. Suddenly the

'Spit' roared over our heads, just above hangar height and then proceeded to put on a superb display of aerobatics finishing with a series of rolls over the runway. With " holy cow " and other blasphemous obscenities, they asked me what it was – I replied " just an RAF Spitfire ", as casually as I was able but in reality I was rather very proud of that RAF Sergeant.

We rarely saw RAF planes, sometimes the odd Beaufort or two, so I truly believe he was there on purpose just to show the flag and this he did extremely well.

On the day that I left I went over to say goodbye to the lads and they were just going out on a salvage job. Hamilton called out " cheerio Baylis – remember me when your doing 7 days 11's" to which I replied " I've never done it yet and you never caught me out ". He laughed and said "no, but some b----r will". I didn't see him again until some time in the Sixties at his car showroom at Byfleet – he hadn't changed.

Hatston was one of those dreaded drafts, but once there the place grew on you. To paraphrase Henry V's exhortation at Agincourt, "others now in England will think themselves accursed they were not here when any speak who served with us upon those bleak and windswept Northern Hills".

Ken Baylis.

INTERPRETATION (Could be corny)

If you tell the Navy to secure a building, they will turn out the lights and lock the door.

If you tell the Army to secure a building, they will occupy it and forbid entry without a pass.

If you tell the Marines to secure a building, they will assault it with heavy fire, call for an air strike and capture and fortify the building.

If you tell the RAF to secure a building, they will take out a three year lease, with an option.

Tom Bowen

SEA VIXEN 50

September 29th 2001

Did you fly or maintain a Sea Vixen?

The Fleet Air Arm Museum will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1st flight of the de Havilland DH 110, prototype of the Sea Vixen, with a special event. To bring back memories there will be historical material, film footage and displays of weapons and equipment.

Experts will be available to answer any questions. There will also be a buffet supper and, of course, a bar.

The last flying example of a Sea Vixen has been booked for the day.

Wives/partners are welcome.

Cost £25 per head.

Local accommodation lists available on request.

If you wish to attend, please contact **Anna Harper, Fleet Air Arm Museum, PO Box D6, RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset, BA22 8HT.**

e-mail: marketing@fleetairarm.com

* * * * *

*THE YORKSHIRE BRANCH HAVE SPECIALLY REQUESTED
THE INCLUSION OF THE FOLLOWING*

HAYDN TAYLOR

Haydn's passing is not only a great loss to his family, friends and members of The Greater Manchester Branch but to the Association as a whole. We here in the Yorkshire Branch owe him a great debt of gratitude for when Vernon Stansfield and Jim Tuke decide to form the Yorkshire Branch, Haydn supported them in every possible way.

All who knew him have lost a very good friend.

Alex Hodgins, Branch Secretary.

TO SEA OR NOT TO SEA

In my younger days, whenever I attended a parade such as Remembrance Day or Anzac Day, I was conscious of my two lonely medals (War and defence) compared with the magnificent displays of my companions.

I am one of those, who in spite of fitness and technical ability, spent the entire war on shore bases at home and overseas. My duties were on training squadrons, storage sections, workshops, new aircraft assembly and aircraft salvage.

Passage on ships to and from war zones did not count towards sea-time for campaign medals.

Over the years I have met many such as I who, in spite of frequent requests for drafts to operational squadrons languished on shore bases. Yet there are those who spent most of their service at sea on operational squadrons. To illustrate my point, a friend who joined the FAA with me in November 1939 is one of those who can proudly display campaign stars from all theatres of war.

As we get older we lose our inhibitions and can discuss the subject. I now realise the embarrassment I would feel should I as a Leading Hand or Petty Officer have been drafted to a ship knowing little of seagoing procedures and nothing of flight deck operations. Nowhere in my service record is there any reference to seagoing or shore establishment duties.

Was it naval policy to earmark personnel for permanent shore based duties or just 'the luck of the draw'? Is there anyone out there who could comment?

Eric Mutton

Ex PO AM(A)

STOP PRESS

Congratulations to our President, Rear Admiral Iain Henderson who has been awarded a CB in The Queen's Birthday Honours.

THE ALPHABET GOES TO WAR

I cannot claim to have been awarded any medals for outstanding achievement or commendations for bravery beyond the call of duty, during my time with the Fleet Air Arm. Unless of course you can count volunteering to take part in a comedy sketch to celebrate VJ day, in front of a Pacific Fleet audience 13,000 miles from home and champing at the bit to get there? I can, however, boast of many 'letters after my name' put there on the orders of the Admiralty during WW2.

For instance, take the terms I was 'offered' when I joined up. The events of the late summer 1939 scuppered my boyhood plans of a glamorous peacetime career in the Service and I was taken on for the 'hostilities only' period. From then onwards I was Lowe *K.H./O*. I took comfort in this temporary measure knowing that the Navy required me firstly to help them win the war when we could talk terms afterwards. My service number also came with the letters *FX*- though I joined at Chatham for amongst other things a multitude of jabs. May I speak here for other new recruits as well as myself who suffered this, the first of many such 'I didn't join up for this' experiences. The pain and discomfort went on for days but it was the horrors at night-time, which live on in my memory, even today.

The battle, with only one serviceable arm to hoist myself into and out of a hammock together with the misery of blundering around trying to locate mine in the dimly lit and overcrowded mess when returning from a visit to the heads is not something easily forgotten.

Sore arms did not excuse anyone from completing trade and other tests, which turned me into an *Air Fitter*. Before long the letter *O* was added to the crossed propeller badge. This signified that I had been elevated to the honoured status of an Armourer. A profession so respected and envied by Airframe, Engine and Electrical specialisation??? The decision as to whether I was eligible for a tot had to be made and their Lordships declared that I was positively under age so when the call 'up spirits' was made I, together with the Holy Ghost, had to stand fast.

Inevitably, I did accumulate the required number of years to qualify for

T or G and I opted for 'T'. Some years passed before I became friendly with the 'demon drink') besides which three old pennies were added to my wages for every tot less day). It was not long before more bobs and tanners were pouring into my coffers, one of each daily, to be precise, following the invitation to set foot on the first rung of the ladder leading to the post of Admiral of the Fleet. This of course was dependent on whether or not I would be able to pass the Killicks trade test and exam. I got frequent advice to "get your 'air cut Lowe, if you want to be a *Leading Air Fitter*". I did succeed on both counts and gained those letters I lost just by getting older.

There are just the initials of my ships company name to complete my collection. "Ships company name" I hear you say? Perhaps it sounds a bit odd. Well it was a funny sort of ships company. We had stokers with not a boiler in sight, Signallers with no deck from which to signal, as for our Writers and Cooks, where were their desks and stoves? In the back of a lorry was the answer just like every other bit of equipment we had because our Ships Company was made up to service a Mobile Operational Naval Air Base. Number 5 of 10 formed for duty in the Pacific. It did sport a name of sorts NABSWICK but to everyone it was a *M.O.N.A.B.*

There were a few peculiarities about life in these units like sewing Naval badges and flashes on khaki battledress and stowing personal issue Sten guns and entrenching tools into already bulging kitbags.

Now this has not been a requiem for long forgotten wartime designations, far from it. Resurrection is at hand because these ancient letter formations provide a ready made e-mail and/or website address. We've all heard these read out on radio or TV announcements – just imagine how this would sound

Lowe dot k dot l forward slash a dot f dot o dot
F dot x dot 62241 dot h forward slash o dot t dot
www dot monabs dot uk

With such an impressive line up (if we can get it all on the paper that is) we can march into the 21st century shoulder to shoulder with our grandchildren and earn that coveted accolade "you're cool Grandad"! This would compensate more than a little for the absence of those awards mentioned earlier.

TTFN, *Kenneth Loowe, Bournemouth.*

BRANCH NEWS

Eastbourne

During April, members and friends of the Eastbourne Branch spent the weekend at Weymouth. Included in the weekend was a visit to Longleat Safari park where, despite having been told that this had been reopened following the foot and mouth restrictions, there was in fact only limited viewing. However, despite this and the rather wet weather, it made a nice break.

On Sunday, we paid our annual visit to St. Bartholomew's Church at Yeovilton for the Sunday morning service. Our first visit was in 1996 when the then incumbent, The Rev. Ian Elgin RN dedicated our Standard.

This year we were both pleased and surprised that the Padre, The Rev. Mark Jackson RN had arranged a special service to include the dedication of the refurbished font to coincide with our visit. The font was presented to the Church by its benefactor, a relative of the late Major Cheiseman RM an FAA Pilot, and, after being accepted back and dedicated, a grandson of the benefactor was baptised.

We also saw for the first time, the new 'Millenium Window' which had been installed and dedicated earlier in the year. It was very spectacular with the sun shining through it. (There is a photo of it on page 14). Present at the ceremony were The Ven. Simon Golding, Archdeacon for the RN and Chaplain of the Fleet, The Rev. Charles Howard RN, Chaplain to the Harrier Force and The Rev. Martin Poll RN, HMS Neptune.

Members have supported our various activities throughout the year. Some of our members assist the RAFA by manning the gates at the annual Shoreham Air Show. Which reminds me; there is the usual Air Show at Eastbourne this year taking place from 16th to 19th August. It is free and may be viewed from anywhere along the sea front. The Red Arrows will be displaying each day along with many others. If you are in the area you will be welcome at the RNOC Club in Beach Road at any time, and on any penultimate Thursday of the month to our Branch meeting which is held in the club starting at 2000.

Ted Cuff, Branch Secretary.

Derby

Diary dates:

July 22nd The Northern Naval reunion and Navy Day at the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, Yorkshire. Adults £5, Senior citizens and children £4.

26th July Portsmouth Festival of the Sea.

Food for thought?

Before you ask for a day off, consider the following statistics!

There are **365** days in the year. You sleep eight hours a day, making **122** days which when subtracted from 365 leaves **243** days.

You have eight hours recreation daily making a further **122** days leaving a balance of **121** days.

There are **52** Sundays when you do not work which again leaves **69** days. You get Saturday afternoon off. This gives **52** half days or **26** days in which you do not work leaving a balance of **43** days. The half hour you get for lunch totals **16** days leaving **27** days. You get at least **21** days leave each year which leaves **6** days. From this you get **5** days legal holidays leaving just **1** day. **And I'll be damned if I'll give you that day off!**

Angus

Our Branch has continued to be active in all respects of the aims and purposes of the Association. There are good turnouts at our regular monthly meetings with members travelling great distances to attend and as always there is excellent support from our members in the Dundee area.

At the regular meetings, we try to continue to combine an illustrated talk or presentation of general interest along with the usual social gathering and “*Chit Chat*”. Our raffle, of a litre of ‘Pussers Rum’, has proved to be a good revenue earner but invariably seems to be won by the same lucky so-and-so’s. Ken McConnel continues with his illustrated talks on “*An Amazing Wartime Secret*”, centered on the breaking of the German Enigma code.

After the cancellation of the proposed reunion at Alveston Hall, Nantwich, we are pleased to say that a number of our members will be attending the one at Scarborough in October.

50 Golden Years in Boxing.

We at the Angus Branch are please to add our congratulations to Jack (Geordie) Hall. Jack Hall, ex AA1(O), has recently been recognised by the International, European and Scottish Boxing Associations, Mr. Frank Henry, former chief executive of the SABA and member of the Referees and Judges commission of the IABA had this to say to Jack: "Seldom have we seen the dedication and honest endeavour you have so capably displayed in your many years of service to our sport in several categories; administration, referee, judge and coaching. As you know, I speak on behalf of the IABA, EABA and the SABA. These bodies all have good reason to appreciate the stirring service and sacrifices you have rendered to them".

Jack was presented with an honorary membership of the European Amateur Boxing Association and a lifetime achievement medal from the Scottish Amateur Boxing Association.

Jack first started boxing as an artificer apprentice at Condor in 1945. In 1951 he qualified as a referee/judge (usually the preserve of officers at that time). Jack helped to form the Arbroath ABA in 1961 and helped many a young aspiring boxer and young referee to attain their ambition

Duncan Lawes.

May I also add the congratulations of our Association.

Ed.

Bournemouth & District

In October we sadly lost our Vice Chairman Sid Foreman who will be greatly missed by all.

As old friends go new members take their place. Dickie Henderson, recently back from the Anniversary Meeting of the Far East Veterans at the Changi Chapel and Museum, gave us an interesting insight into the event and promises to give us more details when he can. The Branch continues to thrive with 36 members who turn out even during the most appalling weather.

Our BBQ (now a cold buffet) will be held on 27th July. All are welcome but please give us a ring first.

Jo Fowler, Branch Secretary

FAREWELL SPEECH BY THE DEPARTING FLIGHT DECK
OFFICER OF HMS INDESTRUCTABLE TO THE FLIGHT DECK
PARTY.

By John Stevens (courtesy of the Aircraft Handlers Association)

“Well men, oh do stand at ease, after all there is no need for formality. Chief do give Naval Airman McKnight a knock, he’s asleep on the tractor again.

It’s been a long hard slog and we have been through some rough seas together, but we’ve come through them. Two dead, is not a bad tally really. Well here we are about to say goodbye. I leave to take up my new appointment as Chief Instructor on the photocopier at the School of Aircraft Handling. All the things I have learnt I can now commit to paper. I can assure you that being demoted to Sub Lt. has nothing to do with you. This sometimes happens to the best of us.

I know that our records on the flight deck will never be beaten. The Buccaneer that went over the round-down was, I admit, unfortunate. The pilot will soon be leaving hospital and I am assured by the observer’s family that in no way do they blame you. I still maintain that Leading Airman Jones shouted ‘stop’ and the doctor has confirmed that even though he had drunk eight tots he could still speak. The breath test on his driver almost proved negative – he will be out of DQ’s shortly.

The fire suit men have performed well. Although no one was actually rescued, the exercises were carried out most proficiently. Lt.Cdr. Crosswell’s broken shoulder is mending nicely and the AEO has forgiven the smashed canopy. As for the fork lift incident, I am informed that the Sea Vixen may fly again. I do realise that the deck was slippery but you were supposed to drive up slowly not at 25mph and with rescue men on it. Luckily they had already fallen off.

Myself I liked the Island painted **dayglow**, but commanderAir is a stickler for the old ways.

So men, once I have paid for the tractor that is still missing, I hope that if I ever meet any of you again I will be able to buy you a drink. So don’t forget our motto ‘In Vino Veritas’, (in wine in truth).

MONEY PROBLEMS (Answers)

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|--------|
| 1. | Fourteen Pounds | £14 |
| 2. | Penny farthing | 1 1/4d |
| 3. | Tenor | £10 |
| 4. | Sick squid | £6 |
| 5. | Half a knicker | 10 s |
| 6. | Half a crown | 2s 6d |
| 7. | Bob | 1s |
| 8. | Tanner | 6d |
| 9. | Three far things | 3/4d |
| 10. | Guinea | £1: 1s |

WANTED !

BY F.A.A. ASSOCIATION,

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

VOLUNTEER URGENTLY NEEDED.

APPLICANTS PLEASE SUBMIT NAME TO

TED CRISPIN, NATIONAL SECRETARY.

ONLY 4 MEETINGS PER YEAR.

**IT IS WITH REGRET THAT WE
ANNOUNCE THE NAMES OF THOSE
WHO HAVE “CROSSED THE BAR”,
MAY THEY BE GRANTED SAFE
ANCHORAGE.**

*Haydn Taylor – ex LAS (NAS), Greater Manchester Branch
& National Committee Member.*

E.L. (Ernie) Bird – ex NA(SE), Essex Branch.

Cyril Varley – ex NA, Greater Manchester Branch.

Frank Vokings – Bristol & District Branch.

George Burt – ex AM(E), Greater Manchester Branch.

Pat McCarthy – ex A/PO TAG3, Watford Branch.

J. Miller – AM(L) – Essex Branch.

Robert Pinchin – ex LSA(NAS), Bristol & District Branch.

Jim Gaskin – ex LAM(A), Hitchin Branch.

*Sid Foreman – ex CEA(A), Bournemouth & District
Branch.*

LIST OF ACCOUTREMENTS ON SALE FROM THE TREASURER.

4th March 1999.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>Cost (Incl. P&P)</u>
Ties	£7.25
Gold Wire Blazer Badges	£11.00
Silk Emb. Blazer Badges	£8.50
Life Member Lapel Badges	£1.00
Members Lapel Badges (Gilt)	£1.50
Associate Members/Spouse Lapel Badges (Chrome)	£1.25
Ladies Head Scarves	£8.50
Beret Badges	£7.00
Car Stickers	£1.25
Membership Cards	£0.15

ITEMS BOUGHT TO ORDER

Short Sleeve Pilot Shirt	£15.00
Acrylic Sweaters	£16.75
Lambswool Sweaters	£23.75
Colours Available: White, Navy, Red, Light Blue (Acrylic ONLY), Black, Grey, Bottle Green and Royal Blue.	
Sizes when ordering: 32" to 56" in 2" stages. Shirts S, M, L, XL and XXL.	

Orders to the Treasurer. **PAYMENT WITH ORDER PLEASE.** Cheques made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Association (National).

Items will be ordered by the Treasurer and sent direct from the supplier to the purchaser. The invoice will be sent to the Treasurer in order to prevent non Members of the Association from purchasing these items.

Note: Berets may be obtained from:

Uniform Clothing Store
H.M.S. Collingwood
Newgate Lane
Fareham, Hants.

Last known price - £6.71

Tel: 01705 722351

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