

FLASHPOINT



ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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**West Kirby Memories • Desert Island Discs Part II • Mark 6 Memories and Beyond
MT Repair Squadron RAF Driffield • RAF Stenigot • Linton-on-Ouse Memories
Association Vehicles Arrive at Scampton • Cosford Vehicle Donation**



ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

The deeds of the flying lads of WWII are well documented, but the exploits and courage of the ordinary airmen not so much. Dave Kirk (our webmaster) has collected together some awards that were made to airmen during that war while carrying out fire-fighting duties.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the GEORGE CROSS to:-

1058637 LAC Albert Mathew Osborne. RAFVR

Born: 19 Oct 1906. Died: 1Apr 1942

During a period of fierce enemy air attacks on Malta, Leading Aircraftman Osborne has displayed unsurpassed courage and devotion to duty. In circumstances of the greatest danger he was always first at hand to deal with emergencies, whether in fire fighting operations or in rescue work. The following are examples of his promptitude and gallantry:-



- Rendered safe the torpedo of a burning torpedo aircraft, working 3 feet from the main petrol tank for ten minutes.
- Extinguished a burning aircraft during a heavy bombing attack

- Attempted to save a burning aircraft and subsequently removed torpedoes from the vicinity
- Assisted in saving the pilot of a burning aircraft and extinguishing the fire
- Saved an aircraft from destruction by fire
- Attempted for six hours to extricate airmen from a bombed shelter, despite continued heavy bombing and danger from falling stone-work
- Fought fires in two aircraft, his efforts resulting in the saving of one
- Freed the parachute of a burning flare caught in an aircraft, enabling the pilot to taxi clear
- Checked the fire in a burning aircraft, the greater part of which was undamaged

The last three incidents occurred on the same day. Leading Aircraftman Osborne was unfortunately killed on 2nd April 1942. During an intense air attack he led a party to extinguish the flames of a burning aircraft. A petrol tank exploded and he was injured and affected by the fumes. On recovery, he returned to fight the fire and was killed by the explosion of an air vessel while attempting to pour water over torpedoes which were in danger of exploding.

The airman's fearless courage and great leadership on all occasions have been beyond praise. The Air Officer Commanding, Royal Air Force Mediterranean, has stated that he was *"one of the bravest airmen it has been my privilege to meet"*

(London Gazette – 10th July 1942)



Association member Harry Blunden has agreed to represent the Association at this years Shoreham Air show and has asked if ant members are prepared to help him staff a stall. Additionally if any members have any interesting RAF Fire Service information that may enhance Harry's stall please contact him at 46 Spencer Avenue Hove East Sussex BN3 8BX tel 01273441545

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Co-ordinator Vacancies - East Yorkshire - Midlands, Scotland (1), South East and other areas as necessary. It's not too arduous, just a matter of keeping in touch, and promoting the Association when able to do so. If you can help, please contact a Committee member.

HOW TO JOIN

For more information about the Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association and to request an application form contact :-

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or Visit our website at - www.rafanddfsfa.co.uk

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Members should be aware that the following positions will become vacant on the Association Committee as the present members are standing down, ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN and ASSOCIATION GENERAL SECRETARY. Any members who would like to be nominated to fill these positions please write to the **Association General Secretary** who's details are on this page (Nominations must be proposed and seconded by an Association member) As yet there has been no nominations.

Flashpoint Editorial Summer 2012

Welcome to your summer edition of Flashpoint. This is your Flashpoint editorial team's third production of Flashpoint and as ever we hope you enjoy and we thank all those who have submitted articles. We have received a very favourable response to the last edition and many thanks to all who took the time and trouble to contact us thanking us for our efforts; much appreciated. Interestingly we received communications from members as far a field as the USA Thailand New Zealand and Australia never mind those much closer to home. This edition is out on time mainly because we have had none of the technical problems we had to overcome with the spring edition. You will see from the loose leaf articles submitted by our Treasurer Trevor Hayes and our membership secretary Brian Ford that they have both been very busy trying to clarify our membership numbers and Association accounts. All credit to Trevor and Brian as they carry out their thankless but vital tasks. Since our last edition Steve and I have paid a visit to Steve Shirley's vehicle collection at RAF Scampton; something we highly recommend to any ex or current RAF Fire-fighter. Regardless of ones personal views on the merits of restoring ex RAF Fire Service vehicles one can't be any thing but impressed by Steve and his happy and committed team's dedication to the job they do (effectively preserving our old trade's history). So impressed was our co editor Steve Harrison that he has

signed on as a volunteer and spends every Tuesday night and any other free time at Scampton working on the vehicles or cataloguing the huge amount of RAF Fire Service artefacts, memorabilia AP's etc that Steve Shirley has acquired over his long and distinguished RAF Fire Service career. If you are interested in helping out either by offering your services or considering a donation please contact Steve Shirley contact details on page 3. Before completion of the editorial we would like to send our congratulations to our colleagues and friends in the RAF Regiment who celebrate their 70th Anniversary in 2012. Younger members may not be aware that RAF Fireman once wore the Regiment Flashes more commonly known as Mudguards. Many RAF Firemen did in fact complete the basic gunner's course and proudly wore a Junior Technician badge. Conversely many Rocks came over to the RAF Fire Service. Older members will well remember the uproar when the Regiment assumed control of the RAF Fire Service generally considered to be a retrograde step for our old trade none the less in our experience Gunners and Firemen shared a common bond of friendship and bonhomie and generally got on well together apart from the odd set too at the RAF Regiment Depot NAAFI bar. Rocks like us water babies always enjoyed a good laugh even if we were often the butt of jokes from other RAF tradesmen and women; but here's a few Rock Ape jokes to be getting on with.

Rock Ape walking down the road with a parrot on his shoulder; "where did you get that asked an inquisitive RAF fireman; from the Regiment Depot replied the parrot". Potential Regiment recruit walks in to his local RAF recruiting office and states he wants to join the RAF Regiment. Have you read the vacancies sign outside the office said the recruiting officer "yes" replied the potential Rock "right young man your in" and the potential RAF Regiment Officer applies for service and was asked by the recruiting Sergeant "have you been circumcised" why do you ask that because replied the recruiting Sergeant I have to inform you that you have to be a complete prick to be an Officer in the Regiment. "no offence to any Rocks who may read this edition.

Best wishes from the Flashpoint editorial team

Apologies to all those who have submitted articles which have not been included in this edition they will be carried over to future editions of Flashpoint and finally your current Flashpoint editorial team (Steve & George) have decided that due to increasing voluntary work pressures and decreasing time in the day we intend to stand down as editors after the next (the Autumn) edition of Flashpoint. We will provide any assistance / advice to the next editor editorial team; and wish the new editor every success.

FRONT COVER PICTURE



Aviation Artist Roy Layzell was commissioned to paint a trade print which reflects the role of RAF TG8 Firefighters on operations and commemorate the late WO Jim Barron in order to raise the £25,000 required for the RAF Fire and Rescue Service Memorial Stone in the National Arboretum. As a result, Roy kindly agreed that the all proceeds from the print go towards the memorial stone.

RAF Fire fighters have already raised a considerable amount of money by carrying out sponsored events etc. The aspiration is that the sale of the prints will secure this well overdue memorial stone and ensure that all who visited the National Arboretum remembered the contribution of members of the RAF Fire Service past and present.

There are 3 options you may consider before buying a trade print:-

OPTIONS

- A £20 each signed print numbered 1 to 500 signed by Roy.
- B £40 each artist proof numbered 1 to 50 signed by Roy and Gp Capt (Ret) Tony Rapson who was S01 Fire at Strike Command (2000-2001) and DACOS A3 Ops Spt Fire Branch Sponsor 2007-2009).

C £120 each Canvas print.

All options are for the print only and come with a certificate of authenticity.

Print numbers will be on a first come first serve basis apart from number 1 of 500 which will be auctioned and sold to the highest bidder. '

Please email Simon Marsh (marshy100@hotmail.com) for further details

Simon Marsh
Sgt Fire Safety Officer
RAF Fire Service
RAF Marham
Norfolk

Letters to the Editors

Letter from Association member Jimmy Newell.

George/ Steve I am trying to make contact with an ex RAF Fireman by the name of **Joe Labouchardiere**.

We met at Sutton Hull in 1958 and we were both posted from Sutton to RAF Duren Germany and then to RAF St Mawgan. We arrived at Duren on the 5 November 1958 along with Johnny Bleakley who I think came from the Manchester area.

At the section when we arrived were Jock Thompson Ralph Coomes and Sgt Bill Slattery. Duren was a cushy posting no flying just a large bomb dump supplying the whole of 2nd TAF. At first my friend Joe and I didn't get on well he didn't like being in the same billet as me and complained about the racket I used to make when I returned from the NAAFI after consuming a few beers.

We really were two opposites he was an Anglo Indian and a Roman Catholic I was a Northern Island Protestant from the Shankill Road Belfast. However after many hours spent lying on our pits talking Joe and I became good friends. I remember telling Joe that when I travelled to school I had to run through two very unfriendly areas of Belfast. Joe said when he travelled to and from school he walked past the Taj Mahal Palace.

Yes Joe and I had some great times together. However Joe married a German girl by the name of Rose Marie Peters; I was best man at Joes wedding and he was best man at my wedding. If any one has any gen on him I would be grateful to hear from you

Jimmy Newell
1 HEOL ISAF BRYN MAWR
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Firstly may I say through Flashpoint a big thank you to Mr Smith Association Chairman and Mr Hayes Association Treasurer for putting my Association records in order. There had been a mishap when I changed abode and because of the death of Mr Hanley (RIP) who I remember with great affection.

Secondly reference the article about the Mk5A in the spring edition of Flashpoint. After the Suez fiasco I was posted from RAF Lindholme to RAF Henlow. My Crew Chief at Henlow was to be Flight Sergeant Arthur (our beloved first President).

After completing the arrival procedure I was told by Flt Sgt Arthur that as I had no experience of the Mk5A he was going to teach me. He handed me the Mk5A manual and told me to study the manual ready for work on the MK5A in the morning.

That night I spent most of my time reading through the manual and taking notes. The next morning I arrived at the section in denims to be met by Flt Sgt Arthur also in denims and there in its specially built bay was a Mk5A awaiting its yearly overhaul and inspection.

The Flight Sergeant seemed delighted that I had swotted up as instructed and then went on to say we were going to replace all the gadgets, foam valves and pipes with new ones which we would make ourselves. I was issued with a tool kit including ball pane hammers and off we went. After our work was completed we carried out tests pumping both foam and water through the systems. The flight Sergeant then went on to complete a Barrel test .

I had never previously carried out a barrel test but had read all about it. Unfortunately Richard has not explained what a barrel test was and I have no knowledge or experience of such a procedure

(GE co editor). Richard goes on to say he left the RAF in January 1960 but just prior to discharge he had the unfortunate experience whilst driving the same MK5A of skidding on ice turning it up side down never the less Flight Sergeant Arthur managed to repair the damaged vehicle and had it back on line in a few weeks.

Regards to all especially Mr Penfold and Mr McCann. Yours truly

Richard Callanan

Letter from Ray Preston

Flashpoint Co editors

Dear Sirs

Cenotaph Remembrance Day Parade Sunday 13 November 2011

It was with enormous pride that I attended the 2011 Cenotaph Remembrance Parade as part of the RAF&DFSA contingent. Our numbers appear to increase year on year and although many of us are now getting a bit long in the tooth we all look really smart and still put on a very good show and were ably lead in 2011 by Alan Gilchrist.

The March Past from Horse Guards Parade seems to get longer each year but I think we did a commendable job. We were lucky with the weather and as ever really well received by the public who where there to watch and of course to encourage us. It was indeed a pleasure to be part of our group again. I would also like say I was so sorry to hear of the passing of Mr John Hanley and I would like pass on my sincere condolences to the family of John Hanley.

Yours Sincerely Ray Preston member number 804

West Kirby Memories



RAF West Kirby was a Royal Air Force training camp on the Wirral Peninsula, about ten miles from Liverpool. A dedication plaque located on the Saughall Massie Road just outside the Wirral Village of Moerton was installed there in 2006. The RAF Camp at West Kirby existed from 1940 until about 1960 but according to official records the final passing out parade took place on December 20th 1957. Since then the camp has passed into oblivion and the area is now a mix of farm land and a Country Park. A book is available "West Kirby and Beyond" by Denis Tomlinson, a veteran of the camp. During the Camps' existence in excess of 150,000 young men passed through the camp either on route to foreign parts in its early days as a transit camp, or as a RAF recruit training camp.

My Memories of Royal Air Force West Kirby, March to May 1956

Being at Royal Air Force Cardington had for me, been more like a home posting, as I had visited Bedford with a close mate of mine who worked in the area on a number of occasions, and my home town of St Ives was less than 25 miles away.

Being posted for basic training to the other side of the country, to an area I had never ever been to or even heard of, came as a bit of a culture shock.

As I remember it, we were herded onto the troop train in a siding at Cardington to join the main line at Bedford, and then on to parts unknown.

All was going well and we had just started to dig into the packed lunches that we had been given, when this "Himmler" look-alike (complete with little wire glasses) Corporal, slammed open the compartment door, and demanded our

1250's. Food of course went every which way in our efforts to comply with his demand (more on this Corporal later).

By now I was in the land of the unknown, and we had arrived at Crewe Station, where the Ladies of the WVS supplied us with tea and a wad.

Back on the train again we were yet again asked to show the demanding Corporal our 1250's.

Looking back I seem to remember that there did not appear to be as many of us on the train as before, and I wonder if some had been put on to other trains to other Basic Training Camps.

Some time later, we arrived at this very small Railway Station, and were herded off by more Corporals; onto RAF blue small Bedford Coaches and 3 ton Trucks.

I felt I was lucky, as I was herded onto one of the small coaches, that was until we arrived at our destination (Royal Air Force West Kirby), as the rear doors of the coach were slammed open, and

our "Himmler" look-alike Corporal, climbed in the back and started kicking us forward through the very small side door. As you will understand, what with our Kit Bags and other kit, things got very tight and the more we were kicked and pushed, more and more of us got stuck in the doorway.

We were then herded in to this large open sided building by our "tormentors", where we were divided up into smaller parties (Flights), and marched off to our Huts. I am unable to remember the hut number after so long, but what I do remember is thinking what had I let myself into at the young age of Seventeen and a half years, and signing on for Four Years RAF Service. I clearly also well remember the look of depression on the faces of the fellow young Airmen around me, some were even in tears.

Then a new face appeared at the rear entrance of our hut sporting two stripes on this arm who we had not seen before, fearing the worst, we were pleasantly surprised to find this Corporal was a bit more human than the others we had come in contact with during the day, he introduced himself as Corporal Curtis and advised us we were in a Flight (also unable to remember the number), within "Trenchard Squadron" and issued us with a bit of "Light Blue" card and instructed us to put it behind the badge on our berets. He also went on to instruct us on what and how we should act when an NCO or Officer came into the room, and what our Basic Training would start with.

He then looked at a listing he was carrying, and called out the name of one of our number, this turned out to be a tall blond lad, somewhat older than most of us (who had also nearly been in tears on our arrival), and announced that he was to be our hut's senior man. It transpired later that first week, that this lad was also identified as a POM (Potential Officer Material), and I think he was later shunted off for Officer Training.

Like any of us going through Basic Training in the 1950's the first two weeks were hell on earth and it had filtered

down that a lad on one of the other Squadrons, had committed suicide in one of the ablution huts.

Luckily for me being an ex ATC Cadet, the orders and the Drill came very easy to me which made things that bit better, but I always tried to remember the words of one of my Uncles, who at the time was still serving in the RAF as a ground engineer “don’t know it all, just be a quick learner”. and that stood me in good stead even if I was a marked man with a ex ATC Cadet Service Number starting with 35.

From memory, I can remember being on Gate Guard in the sentry box at the main gate with my 303, and having to remember how to pay complements to officers in cars or walking in and out, I even remember “Presenting Arms” when a RAF Staff Car carrying a pennant, passed through the Main Gates during my shift, and receiving an acknowledging salute from the senior officer in the rear seat, and the week in denims on fatigues washing dirty plates in the Cookhouse and on the Dustcart emptying dustbins.

I also clearly remember our trip to the “Gas Chamber” where I said to the training Corporal, I thought my Gas

Mask was leaking, his reply was “hard Shit”, so is mine.

As out training progressed, things become a bit easier, our Flight I/c Corporal Curtis, turned out to be an up and coming Scramble Bike rider (Dave Curtis), from the Ipswich area, and used to practice over the rough ground at the rear of our huts with us cheering him on.

During the last couple of weeks of training, I again fell foul of the “Himmler” look-alike Corporal (I should remember his name after this encounter, but for the life of me I cannot). He was I/c of one of the other Squadron’s huts (think it was Churchill Squadron), which we had to pass when going to the NAFFI., I was with a lad who I had met up with from my home town and we were off for a drink.

As we marched past this Corporal’s hut, he yelled for us to stop and come

into his hut, where in front of the hut’s occupants, he proceeded to give us a severe dressing down and accusing us of being improperly dressed, as there appeared to be a minute spec of chalk dust from the lecture room we had just left. on my immaculate pressed and otherwise spotless working blue trousers.

After making us feel like bits of you-know-what, and sincerely embarrassing us in front of the other Squadron’s Trainees, he then asked me what trade group I was hoping to join, when I stated that I hoped to be an RAF Fireman, all he said was “that figures”, and sent us on our way feeling very subdued and feeling very unloved.

Soon it was the day of our pass out parade, and I clearly remember whilst on parade, one of our Drill Corporals saying under his breath, so all nearby could hear, that if that bloody band played “I’m a pink toothbrush you’re a blue toothbrush” again, he would stick the Bandmaster baton where the sun didn’t shine.

Then it was off home for the week-end, before going to Trade Training at RAF Sutton on Hull, but that’s another story.

But this story doesn’t end there, back in 1986, I was a RAFVFR (T), Officer at an ATC Camp at RAF Sealand, near Chester, and was driving a number of my Squadron’s Cadets (to RAF Woodvale for Air Experience Flying), across the “Wirral”, with us was a young Cadet from one of the local Chester Squadrons.

When I mentioned that I had done my Basic Training at RAF West Kirby, back in the 1950’s, he told me that we were just passing where the camp used to be, but all I could see was now only farm land, but when I looked at an old map on my return, the lad had been correct. If you look at Google Earth you can still see the outline of the old huts beside the road, just North West of West Kirby and Grange (on a minor road between Newton and junction 2 of the M53 motorway).

Geoff Varley - Member 221



Many thanks Geoff for your very interesting and enjoyable story. Despite the passing of a “few” years since the photograph we can clearly see the resemblance between Aircraftman Varley and the Gentleman Varley of today. Steve and I are aware that there are many Members who went through RAF West Kirkby’s Gates and we hope that this little article and Geoff’s excellent article bring back “fond” memories for you all.

Flashpoint editorial team

A mother looks back on the summer of war that killed her son

In this year of 2012 we marked the 30th anniversary of the Falklands war. A great deal has been written about it since then. Like a lot of people I saw it unfold along with my two young impressionable sons on the TV. I was at that time stationed at RAF Marham, and with it being the home of 55 & 57 Sqn Victor Tankers it was the place to be, as all the top dogs required advice on air to air re-fuelling; planning was in full flow for the 'Black Buck' missions and the station became very busy.

Sometime after the war I came across a letter in a newspaper about a mother's loss of her son in the Falklands, while reading it I have to admit a lump appeared in my throat. The letter is sad yet full of hope, regret, but no anger and I have kept it all these years and have from time to time read it again. I am full of admiration for this mother showing such great dignity while suffering the loss of her son. I have no idea in what newspaper it appeared and there was no name given of the author of the letter.

"As the evenings get cooler and autumn seems on its way, so many families will have cause to re-member the long summer of 1982. Our second son was killed while serving in the Falklands, so for us life will never be quite the same again.

But it's a strange kaleidoscope of impression that lingers with me and I need to set them down before the summer, they disappear.

We said goodbye to Jim in April, when the bulb were out and there was so much promise in the air. We looked forward to his return, visits from overseas friends, our youngest son was to run in the London marathon and this was to be the year I wouldn't let the garden run away from me! Then came those increasingly anxious weeks as we realised the dangers and the problems ahead with the task force

So against a background of anxiety were woven bright patches of happiness: the superb sunny days, the excitement and fun of the marathon, showing a young

American friend a little of our heritage and enjoying her wonder and enthusiasm. Then came the great spiritual uplift of the Pope's visit at a time when the whole nation was feeling a great sadness and tension as more and more young lives were lost.

Our own bereavement-not totally unexpected but it was, nevertheless, devastating. Then the great wave of love, sympathy, prayer and just incredible kindness that carried us through the first difficult weeks; sunshine, flowers, letters, the phone always ringing, endless cups of tea and coffee. Talk and more talk and the voices of Robert Fox and Brian Hanrahan who had almost become our only link with the Falklands; the very early mornings when the dawn chorus hid our private weeping, the house so full of young people who made us laugh and weren't afraid to talk of our son. And just as we beginning to get our breath, the shattering experience of the totally unexpected showing of the committal of the bodies of those killed at Goose Green.

But somehow we went on, while Wimbledon and the cricket season passed by. Prince William was born, another much bloodier war was under way in the Lebanon and at home we coped with the aftermath of a service death. Our son's last letter arrived, so cheerful and full of humour and then the return of all our mail to him-so poignant with all those birthday cards that he was never to see.

So here we are four months on, the garden needs much attention but we are planning a holiday. We feel we need to have a break before we face the next stages of this particular bereavement. The return of our son's possessions, a memorial service and then finally a re-burial later this year.

So I am left with a great feeling of gratitude to family and friends who gave me the strength and courage to cope with the traumatic events that followed the death of a soldier on the summer of 82"



Dear Steve.

My name is Len "Paddy" Mooney, Mem. Nr. 1031

I enclose a few words which I hope can be printed in the next issue of Flashpoint. They are as follows.

- There are no "ex-firemen", male or female. This word exists only in the minds of non-firemen.
- Even now, after almost "Three score and ten" years, I feel the adrenalin "rush" when I hear the
- Sirens/horns/claxons. Anyone agree?
- I have a theory that has not yet been proved. On the other hand, it has not been disproved either. As no-one can contradict my theory, I can hereby voice it. It is as follows:-

FIREMEN GO TO HEAVEN

I sometimes sit and wonder, about the years gone by.

The memories of the distant past, still fresh, pass through my mind.

The comrades/crewmates of the past, some of them passed on.

The rest of us we close our ranks, and never feel alone.

When our time has come to go, to answer the final "shout".

The Devil Doesn't want us there, we put his fires out.

Len "Paddy" Mooney

Fireman.....still



THE GAS TRUCK-Austin K6 6x4 CO₂ Tender

‘GET TO WORK’

Remember those days when we as raw recruits were introduced to the complexity and vagaries of the Fire Service Drill Book. At first I was utterly confused as to what number I was and where I should be and surely I wasn't the only one. In this reproduction of a two man drill for the gas truck I am sure I would have coped! (Pity I wasn't around when they were in service.) Can you remember on the command 'Change-round' which way it was carried out, clockwise or anti-clockwise? I know! I've just read the drill book! Ha.

DRILL C.T.5 (TWO MEN)

Using CO₂ Truck

1. **Equipment.** C.O₂ truck, equipped to scale.
2. **Preliminary.**
 - (a) The trainees having been numbered in twos, the crew detailed is ordered to “Fall-in” three paces at the rear of the truck, No. 1 on the left, No.2 on the right.
 - (b) The crew is then ordered to “Mount” the truck as No. 2 in the driver's seat, No1 on the left of the driver.
3. **Detail.**
 - (a) On the order “Get to work” No. 1 takes the handline on the nearside, “operates” the lever for the forward nearside bank of cylinders and runs into position by the “crashed aircraft”.
 - (b) No. 2 takes the handline on the offside, and runs into position by the “crashed aircraft”.
 - (c) If further banks of cylinders are required, they are opened by No. 2 on the instructions of No. 1.
4. **Knock off and Make up.**
 - (a) No. 1 and No. 2 return the handline discharge respective sides of the truck.
 - (b) No. 1 and No. 2 assist each other to re-roll the horns to their hose on to the reels.

- (c) Crew resume their “Mount” positions.
- (d) They are then ordered to “Dis-mount” and “Fall-out” as in previous drills.

I know it was only a simple drill but I hope this brought back a few memories and smiles. On a serious note, drills were the bedrock of teamwork and discipline and they served their purpose.

Steve Harrison (co-ed)



**CHECK YOUR
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE UP TO
DATE!**



Firemen cope with a blazing plane. Fortunately it was only a demonstration and the experts at Catterick had it under control within minutes.

Below are extracts from a report by Sue Nicholson of the Evening Despatch, from Saturday June 5th 1971 a Darlington newspaper which closed in 1986.

RAF's work in the area of its 'birth'

The RAF at Catterick is a bit like a sausage factory. But, as the wing commander said, "it turns out very high class sausages."

This station, older than the RAF itself, is the depot of the RAF Regiment and provides training courses for officers and airmen of the regiment and RAF Fire Service. Every two weeks a new influx of raw airmen enter the station to leave, a few weeks later a good deal more experienced and capable of doing the work they are intended to do.

In September 1914 Catterick Aerodrome was set up as part of Col Trenchard's scheme for establishing and training the Royal Flying Corp Squadron. The colonel went on to become Marshall of the RAF (Viscount Trenchard, father of the RAF) and Catterick Aerodrome became a station on April 1 1918.

In the years that have passed, close bonds of friendship have grown up between the personnel serving at the station



The Mayor of Darlington, Mrs Nellie Cottam, wearing a woman's protective helmet during her visit to S.A.F. Catterick, yesterday.

and the Borough of Richmond.

On July 1 this year RAF Catterick will be given the Freedom of the Ancient Borough of Richmond. On ceremonial occasions they will be allowed to march through

the streets with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying.

To further the ties of the RAF with the area the station was opened yesterday to a party of press and local dignitaries. We were given the warmest of welcome anyone could imagine.

And the day started with a briefing from the station's Commandant Group Capt G.E.S. Bumstead, and a tour of the training wing facilities.

At the Fire Fighting and Special Safety Section under the command of Squadron Leader Birch, we saw the very latest equipment and watched a film scripted and filmed by men on the station

The last and most exciting event was the fire fighting display. While the firemen and their appliances lined up for action the Mayor of Darlington, Councillor Mrs Nellie Cottam and the Mayor of Richmond Mrs Katherine Carr tried on a couple of helmets.

The team fired an old Canberra, they poured kerosene over the shell lit it, and then smothered

the flames with foam. The blaze was out in two minutes.

The planes they burn are no longer serviceable and at least two are burnt each week. However each aircraft can be burnt about ten times - otherwise there wouldn't be enough to go around anything that remains is eventually sold for scrap.

The RAF has had a home at Catterick now for more than 50 years and with the honour bestowed on them by the Borough it is only right that the station should at last have its own badge. Designed by the camp's Chester Herald, the badge combines the symbols of the Royal Air Force with local connections.



Those of you unable to attend reunions should be aware that we have a range of RAFDFSA and CRASH goods for sale, which are also available by mail order via us and the Association website shown at the bottom of each page. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the reunions.

Regards and best wishes Allan and Marilyn

Contact details: - Allan and Marilyn Brooke
20 Chestnut Grove, Farndon, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3TW
Tel: 01636 688 680

No personal callers please.

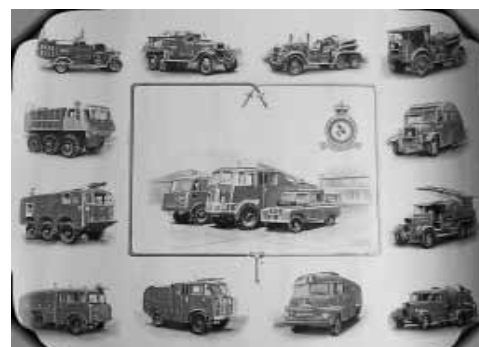
Email: allana.brooke@ntlworld.com or marilyn.brooke@ntlworld.com

Note:- For Mail Order - All items will be subject to postage and packaging, which will be calculated per individual order. A customer will be informed of the cost and, when payment is received, the order will be despatched.

Cheques & Postal Orders made payable to RAF&DFSA Shop Account.

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NOVELTY TOYS AND WHITE METAL MODELS AS PRICED	
ASSOCIATION SHIELDS AS PRICED	



Desert Island Discs - part II

Two excellent responses to the Desert Island Discs article in the Spring edition of Flashpoint. Many thanks Andy and Mick for sharing with us your desert Island Discs.

Hello George/ Steve ,

Since noting your request for a list of 3 "Desert island Discs" in "Flashpoint" (Spring 2012). I have been attempting total recall, and have come up with the following pop tunes from the 1970's, which mark some event or milestone, during my time in the mob.

"Gimme Dat Ding" by the Pipkins

This quirky number from 1970, hit no.6 in the UK charts, and it had a particular use during the Saturday night Disco in the Airmen's Club at RAF Swinderby. The Disco was always popular as the WRAF trainees were brought in by bus from RAF Spitalgate (Grantham), and it was a mad rush to get in there early before they arrived, to pick out the best "lookers"! Being under basic training meant that uniform had to be worn , but that did not put any of us off, and I managed to get friendly with a lass from Accrington (Lancs.), meeting up on as many Saturday nights as we could before we moved onto trade training (RAF Catterick for me , RAF Bawdsey for her) . Needless to say there were lots of couples "fondling & fumbling" on the lounge couches between dancing, and the duty JNCO would attempt to put a stop to it. There was a particular Regt. Cpl. who took great delight in this, and we arranged for the DJ to put on "Gimme Dat Ding" if he was spotted in the club, so that's why I always smile when I hear it. I kept in touch with this attractive lass while on trade training, but drifted apart not long afterwards, happy days!

"Tears of a Clown by Smokey Robinson

A popular "Motown" song by Smokey Robinson, hit no.1 in the UK charts in 1970, and it was one of Barbara's (my first

wife) favourites. We met on a lad's night out to the Glebe Hotel in Hunstanton when I was stationed at RAF West Raynham, and after asking her for a dance, we started dating. She always asked for the song to be played by the DJ, or I would play it on the Juke box if we were in a pub. I recall being "set up" to be the "duty driver" that particular night we met, and I think being stone cold sober gave me the edge on the "chat up lines", so thanks Allan, Paddy, Spike and Scouse, you did me a great favour!

"(We Long to Be) Close to You" by the Carpenters

This lovely song by the Carpenters only got to No.6 in the UK charts in 1970, and I saved the "best until last", as this is my favourite song while serving in the RAF. We were both avid Carpenters fans, and loved to have it played as it was such a real cool "smoochy" tune to dance to. In fact we specially chose it for our first dance at our Wedding reception in Heacham (1971). Sadly, Barbara died from cancer in 1979 not long after I left the RAF, and even today I still get a lump in my throat when I hear it played, such are the happy memories we had together!

Andy Gaskell (328)

Dear George and Steve I thoroughly enjoyed the Spring edition of Flashpoint and your article Desert Island Discs has spurred me on to submit my favourite songs from my time in the RAF Fire Service.

I've often been called Whistling Rufus because of my continually pushing the air very fast through my lips, sometimes actually in tune with what someone near can recognise and one such time was when I arrived in Nicosia. I was whistling a tune little realising that one of the Fire Section lads Vince Lunt who played the guitar in a local group on was picking up the hit tune I was trying to whistle The Shadows hit Apache. He had picked up my every note and I only found out when another member

of the group came back from UK leave with the sheet music that I had one small piece hopelessly wrong. They soon sorted it out and went on to play it at every gig they did on the island. My next bit of music memory concerns not only myself but Cpl Ron Roberts again in Cyprus in 1960. Ron was already ensconced in the section when I was detached up to 113 MU and as the section was also our living quarters we had a rest room with mock fire place and a record player Ron's. I'm not sure but I think we only had one LP which was played very frequently; Sweet Nothings by Miss Brenda Lee. It grew on us me in particular and when I completed my tour and returned home I bought the record and many more of Brenda Lees .. Some years later now in civvy Street and living in Sheffield my wife took me to our City Hall but wouldn't tell me who we were going to see and yes to my great surprise it was Brenda Lee. We had a great night followed by another visit to a Brenda Lee concert some years later. When I was stationed at Salahla in the mid sixties all we had on camp was a fresh water swimming pool a cinema the camp radio And good old cans of beer. We did occasionally have a few CSE shows and of course we did our own entertaining . One night the lads from engineering section got us all creased up by wearing wigs made from floor mops and dresses made from sheets and mimed to a tape of the hit Baby Love and other Dianne Ross and the Supremes songs; it was such a scream and I can still see it in my mind .I have often talked to my family about that episode and it has always raised a laugh. The other Christmas with all my family round me I was given an envelope to open and yes when I opened it there insidew ere two tickets to see Dianna Ross and the Supremes at Sheffield Arena. I thought at the time it probably cost too much but my wife said it was worth it just to see your face. As it was the show was fantastic and e were very close to the stage

Regards Mick Hayward

Hi George

We all did the burning of Fuels throughout our careers in the RAF and all these things are now coming to light.

The main story appeared in a North Queensland newspaper today and we are following that up and if we have any more details I could let you have them.

The smaller story appeared a few weeks back and have not heard any more on that but it surely is the same thing.

I wonder if anyone has heard anything on the subject in the UK?

I can be contacted by email on b.heritage27@yahoo.com.au

Yours sincerely Colin Ellcock.

Cancer threat prompts study

FIREFIGHTERS are up to twice as likely to be diagnosed with cancers such as bone and prostate cancer, prompting an Australia-first study.

The cancer threat is expected to send shock waves through the state's 1000-plus officers. US research concluded firefighters were up to twice as likely as the general population to develop more than 10 different types of cancers.

A three-year study co-ordinated by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council and Monash University is about to start.

Townsville Bulletin

RAAF fires demand inquiry into cancer cluster

EMILY MACDONALD | March 13th, 2012

FORMER RAAF firefighters with skyrocketing rates of cancer believe it was caused by years of burning dangerous chemicals in training activities.

Townsville men Pat Mildren, Noel Lee and Doug Bower claim they are among dozens of former RAAF firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer and other associated health problems.

Mr Mildren has bowel and bladder cancer, Mr Lee is battling prostate cancer and Mr Bower bears a nasty scar where cancer was removed from the fatty tissue surrounding his kidneys.

They are demanding the Federal Government launch an inquiry into the health of fires who participated in the burns both at the Fire Training School at Point Cook in Victoria and at other "fire pits" at RAAF bases including Townsville.

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Defence Force and Defence Support, Senator Ian Macdonald has pledged to look further into the issue.

Mr Mildren co-ordinates a RAAF Fire and Rescue Group Reunion newsletter which is sent out to hundreds of former and current serving RAAF fires.

He estimates the families of between 20 and 30 firefighters aged from just their 40s until their early 70s have contacted him in the past five years alone to say they had died. Mr Mildren, a RAAF firefighter of more than 20 years, said the dangerous practice of using limited safety equipment and burning whatever left over accelearant was lying around, more than 120 different chemicals in total, was practiced in varying degrees from when the school opened in 1956 until it was shifted to Amberley in 1987.

"We weren't using just fuels, we were using all sorts of horrendous mixtures," he said.

"I remember at Point Cook my instructor used to say to us, 'Get in there you bloody cowards, it's just a bit of smoke, it won't kill you'.

"Twenty years later I went back myself as an instructor and I said those same words.

"Those words haunt me now because it was killing them. My instructor was dead by the time he reached his 50s."

While Mr Mildren and some of his friends' health care is paid for by the Department of Veteran Affairs, in many cases it is by chance. Mr Mildren has a Gold Card due to back and hearing injuries and Mr Bower has one due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder he suffered from Vietnam.

In August it was announced \$27 million would be spent on contamination remediation works at Point Cook due to the environmental impact.

A Department of Defence report on the works stated they would begin in the middle of this year and be completed by late 2013.

Mr Mildren and his mates prepared a report which they submitted to Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon demanding an inquiry similar to the F-111 Deseal/Reseal Inquiry which has paved the way for compensation for those whose health was affected by working with the fuel tanks. The reply he received on February 28 was from First Assistant Secretary Rehabilitation and Support Division Sean Farrelly who reminded Mr Mildren his Gold Card would cover his health expenses and directed him to the Fair Protection for Firefighters Bill 2011 which recognises the increased level of toxins encountered by fires may cause cancers.

However, the cancer must relate to a cumulative period of service between 1988 and 2004 and the condition must have first manifested after July 2011, counting out Mr Mildren and most of his mates.

Mr Mildren and his friends have vowed not to give up the fight.

"It's great to see they're cleaning up the environment but there's no mention of us who were contaminated along with it," Mr Mildren said.

"I take exception to that (the reply from Minister Snowdon's office) saying I have a Gold Card so I should be right." Mr Snowdon's office did not reply by the time the Bulletin went to press. Mr. Mildren can be contacted at mildrene@bigpond.net.au

MARK 6 MEMORIES AND BEYOND

Mark 6 Memories And Beyond By Colin Hall

Colin Hall is an ex RAF Fire-Fighter who after a 5 year stint joined the RNZAF in 1962. After a few years he was offered a commission and became an officer in 1968. He gained the rank of Squadron Leader in 1978 and became, Chief Fire Officer for the RNZAF. You can see his biography on the Association website.

Today I received the latest [Spring 2012] issue of Flashpoint, and there are a couple of articles in it which have stirred a memory or two!

First, the MK5A and its foam! The MK5, MK5A, and the MK6 all produced good quality foam, but possibly the best, in my humble opinion was the MK5 ; get it right and you could produce foam sausages which travelled further before breaking up on the target. The 5a was also very good quality, as indeed was the MK6, but the former two were much more reliable!

I fully appreciate that the MK6 was “iconic” although I suspect some might not have the same recollection of it in service. The first attached photo is of the Crash Bay at Tengah in 1966 when I was there attached to the RAF but as a Senior Fireman in the RNZAF. As you will note, the MK6 is missing! Sadly that was usually the case because it was so unreliable we hardly ever had it on line, and when we did have it one day on a turn out to a Javelin crash off-base, it never made it due to overheating! The MK5A's did! I was also at RAF Cottesmore for two years from 1960-62, and the MK6 there was a rare



Two RNZAF Dual Purpose Crash/Foam Vehicles: Colin Hall Sqn Ldr RNZAF Rtd on the right As you can see, the vehicles were considerably larger than the Mk6.

addition to the crash line, in fact as I recall a team from Alvis came up and reduced it to its component parts and reassembled it! I never did the MK6 course, then at Catterick, but Cottesmore was short of “6” drivers, and I had driven and operate it often enough, on the QT of course! It was pretty driver friendly I always thought. That experience had a sequel in that, at Tengah, although a member of the RNZAF, I was asked by WO Wally Hammond if I'd driven it. And of course I told him I had, so he sent me out on the airfield as a sort of test drive. He was happy with that, and

suggested to the Fire Officer that I could be utilised as a spare driver, but the idea was scuppered by an over-reactive MTO who put a stop to the idea, not because I couldn't drive it, but because I wasn't RAF! A somewhat illogical decision I thought as I was driving every other RAF vehicle! So be it!

The MK6 was in my mind some years later when I had the responsibility for writing the specification for a new crash/foam vehicle for the RNZAF and the treasury submission as well

What I wanted was something equivalent, but better than the MK6, so it had to be a chassis with permanent four-wheel drive meaning no transfer gear box changes. It could also pump while moving which of course the MK6 couldn't. I also decided very early on that, due to there being very few domestic fires on air force bases, fitting a high pressure hose reel would eliminate the need for a separate domestic vehicle. So the pump was a three-stage Darley from the US and on the hose reel alone you could produce a water fog curtain!

I deliberately located the Detroit Diesel engine at the rear for weight and balance reasons, and of course leaving the front entirely free for the crew. All the rest of it was in the centre section, so the vehicle actually handled very well. The foam making equipment and foam monitor was also American because, quite simply, they



Classic Old Line Up at RAF Tengah 1966

were far superior to the UK stuff. Shutting down the monitor for example was done hydraulically so that it was gradual and not stress inducing! All valves were opened and closed hydraulically. In some circumstances, the driver, alone, could utilise the full force of the vehicle without leaving his seat.

In the end, I got exactly what I had in mind which was a modern, uncomplicated MK6 which was designated as; *RNZAF Dual Purpose Crash/Foam Vehicle* The fleet remained in service for over 25 years so I think I got it right! They entered service in 1982, and the last one was retired only last year

A few years ago I was at an air show and got talking to a Sgt fireman on one of those vehicles in the static display area. He didn't know me and I had long since left the RNZAF. It turned out he was ex-RAF and on the subject his vehicle he reckoned "it was a Bentley of crash trucks". Exit one smug bastard! ME!



Colin Hall's 'Baby' RNZAF Dual Purpose Crash/Foam Vehicle

I might add that I also replaced the Landrover [essentially the same as the RAF version] because as a fireman I always felt they were too heavily loaded and underpowered for the role. They were replaced with a Dodge V8 Power wagon, again automatic and permanent four-wheel drive.

A great machine the MK6 and I recall many years later while visiting Duxford with my son and seeing the one that is on display there and thinking how small it looked! When it was good, it was very, very good, but when she was bad she was bloody awful.

A great story Colin and we thank you for your contribution. You should be proud of your achievements.

Steve & George



A Unique shot of 'E' Flight MT Repair Squadron RAF Driffield 1966

Alan Wardle BEM (member473) sent Flashpoint a letter and some information as regards the MK6 Crash Truck, the text of the letter is as follows;

"Having read the article in the last Flashpoint (autumn 2011) re: - the Mk6 Crash Truck it brought back many memories for me being a MK6 driver in the younger days of my 23years service. Since leaving the RAF I became a case worker for SAFFA and one of my colleagues is an ex Chief Tech MT Fitter. When I showed the article to him he told me that he was based at RAF Driffield (East York's) on the MT Repair Squadron not far from Sutton-on-Hull (fond memories) and his job was 2nd I/C of the major servicing bay for the MK6 and all other vehicles globally and nationally. He has given me a photograph of the servicing bay and an article which appeared in a local paper. It may be of interest to our readers, whom I am sure have had some experience with this vehicle on front line Crash Duties"

We must thank Alan and indeed his colleague for supplying this information which I personally found really interesting, being a MK6 driver and a Hull lad.

Steve Harrison (co-ed.)

BACK FROM RAF HOTSPOTS FOR E.R. SERVICING

A unique operation, which is the only one of its kind today, is being carried out at RAF Driffield. Alvis Mark six fire engines from all over the world are being serviced at the station in a hanger used for servicing rockets.

The engines are being repaired, serviced and thoroughly overhauled by 40 men who are some of the best trained mechanics in the RAF today.

Some of the engines are from trouble spots, Aden and Cyprus. The programme got under way on June 6 last year and the first engine rolled off the line on October 12. The aim is to service 24 engines each year.

Some of the engines which are transported to Driffield by road after arriving in this country, having been badly affected by corrosion and service fatigue but eventually look like new when they leave the hanger at Driffield.

He engines and all the fire-fighting equipment are made spick and span and the paintwork is completely re-sprayed. The main advantage of the hanger where the programme is being held is that it is equipped with two electrical cranes.

In charge of the operation is Warrant Officer J.W. Edwards, who said this week that the programme is being done on a semi-permanent basis. "The engines which are overhauled are about nine years old and are half way through their eventual life span. An engine is completed every two weeks"

"Although the programme is being run by RAF Leconfield the Driffield base has been chosen because of the equipment available.

I suspect that the article would have been in the Hull Daily Mail. (Ed)

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Reading by George Edwards (Flashpoint co editor)

As a follow up to Steve's article Recommended Reading in the spring edition of Flashpoint here's a list of books written by RAF Firemen that should be of interest to members. To the best of my knowledge four ex RAF Fireman, Steve Doran Dave Stevenson, Ray Brasier and yours truly have completed autobiographies each in their own way a unique little record of life in the RAF Fire Service.

The Diary of an RAF Fireman 1946 -1949 by Steve Doran

Book comments; this book covers my three short and mostly enjoyable years in the RAF Fire Service. I have kept the story as light hearted as possible because that is how I remember my RAF service. Although times just after World War Two were still difficult and there was resentment by some that they had to serve a period of National Service most made the best of what they had and got on with it. Some of my time was spent with men waiting for their number to come up after they had served their Wartime service and it was from these men I quickly learnt the way of the world and the way of a fireman's life. In a way I felt sorry for those who went into mundane trades like fitters armourers clerks etc; they went to work at 8am attended a work parade at 08.30a.m. and finished work at 5.30 pm. and then wondered what to do for the rest of the day whereas at the Fire section when flying finished we made our own fun as you will read in my book. To the non service reader it may seem that everything was a bit hit and miss but when there was a call for immediate action you can guarantee that Firemen would be in the lead whether it was a serious or funny affair. Very few received medals or recognition for rescuing a pilot but when a joke was played on someone the fire section personnel were usually involved. I should imagine its pretty well the same now. However I often thought we were envied by other RAF tradesmen because RAF Fire Sections were always situated close to the airfield and this kept us away from the common herd and this was to be to our advantage as we were carrying out our experiments there were few prying eyes.

*Available direct from the author at Ronal 22
Gunn Street Foulsham Norfolk NR 20 5RJ*

Safety from the from the Flames

In a career spanning the mid 1950s to the late 1970s former RAF Fireman Ray Brasier witnessed huge changes in aviation and fire fighting technology. Rays story is a colourful account of his numerous adventures written with humour compassion and sincerity. On some miraculous occasions serious accidents resulted in scarcely any injury to

pilots or crew but all too many air accidents resulted in a terrible toll of life. Ray writes about the rewarding times when he helped to save lives and the harrowing experience of recovering mutilated bodies. Although left with both physical and emotional scars Ray survived to tell a marvellous tale that is entertaining and moving. It is a wonderful testament to the remarkable skill and courage and skill of Fire fighters in the RAF Fire Fighting and Crash Rescue Service. As far as I know Rays book is out of print and I have no address for Ray. The last known whereabouts of Ray is that he was living in the Chelmsford area of Essex. If any member is in contact with Ray or knows of his whereabouts I would very much like to speak to him please pass on my contact details and ask him to make contact.

A Journey through my Life by Dave Stevenson

Looking for a good read then why not purchase Association member Dave (Stevie) Stevenson's excellent autobiography; A Journey Through My Life . I purchased a copy from Dave at our last reunion and I have to say I found the book very interesting and entertaining. The chapters on Dave's RAF career brought back many fond memories of my own time in the RAF and he so aptly captured life at RAF Swinderby and Catterick that I felt I was back in training again. His recollections of his time at Scampton Akrotiri St Mawgan and Laarbruch also reminded me of the many characters and situations that one experiences during military service. His honest assessment of some of the individuals he worked with will appeal to all ex or current RAF fire-fighters or DFS members. What followed after Dave's RAF career was a truly remarkable and compelling account of a civilian career that spanned the world and his employment experiences in places as diverse as Libya Sumatra Jeddah Nigeria Songkhal Rayong Al Khoba Malacca Al Jubail Thessalonica and Singapore must rank as one of the most diverse careers of all time. It is a great credit to Dave that he has recorded for posterity his two wonderful careers and although his second career was probably more financially rewarding than his RAF career he never loses sight of the fact it was his RAF training that so

well prepared him for his illustrious second career.

I would highly recommend Dave's book and as he states in his introduction; "whatever your age and life experiences write your life down. It may seem routine to you but think of the changes that happen to you personally and around you that affect others.

*Cost £9.99 available direct from the author
at 2 Roche Road Bugle St Austell PL26 8PW*

Out of the Blue an Airman's Tale

Adventures of a former RAF fireman at home and abroad 1965-2005

In this enjoyable and entertaining memoir, George Edwards looks back on his eventful RAF career as a RAF fireman during the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

George joined the RAF as a teenager in 1965 and the book follows his progress from naive sprog to experienced airman and senior NCO, relating his experiences at a wide variety of RAF bases in the UK and abroad, including Marham, Honington, Masirah, Mombassa, Church Fenton, Sharjah, Lindholme, Brize Norton, Gutersloh, Laarbruch, St Athan, Coningsby, Stanmore Park and RAF Stanley in the Falkland Islands. George also enjoyed and recalls vividly a very illuminating four week period of R & R in down town Mombassa

George's candid and enthusiastic descriptions of his on and off duty escapades when he was young, free and single and enjoyed an energetic social life and an equally enthusiastic love life are guaranteed to amuse and entertain readers of all ages, whilst his descriptions of life in the RAF are certain to bring back many memories for those who also served during this period.

The final chapters follow George's post RAF career as a Probation Officer and Air Cadet Squadron Commander in his native Liverpool.

*Cost £9.95 available from Woodfield
Publishers Babsham Lane Bognor Regis
PO 21 5EL. Tel 01243821757*

RAF Stenigot

When moving to a new location I have always as a matter of habit got in the car and investigated the local topography, when Liz and I moved to Louth in 2010 it was no different. It was on one of my scouting trips that I noticed this tower and discovered that it was one the remaining 4 towers which was on the site of RAF Stenigot. Later on my son Lloyd and I managed to get to the site negotiating the small roads that are prevalent in the Lincolnshire Wolds. Then low and behold some weeks later after our visit it appeared as one of the features on the BBC programme 'Coast'. It is only one of a few that are remaining in the country.

Steve Harrison (co-editor)

Based high on the Lincolnshire Wolds, approximately 5 miles South-East of Louth, RAF Stenigot opened in 1940 as a WW2 Radar station. It was part of the Chain Home* radar network to provide long range early warning for raids from Luftflotte V and the northern elements of Luftflotte II along the approaches to Sheffield and Nottingham and the central midlands (Luftflotte translates to AirFleet, which were the primary divisions of the German Luftwaffe in World War II.) The original site contained 4 giant 110m (360ft) transmitter masts, and 2 generator/receiving blocks.

*Chain Home was the codename for the ring of coastal Early Warning radar stations built by the British before and during the Second World War. The system otherwise known as AMES Type 1 (Air Ministry Experimental Station) consisted of radar



Picture taken by my son Lloyd giving a sense of the 360ft height

fixed on top of a radio tower mast, called a 'station' to provide long-range detection of aircraft. This system had shortcomings in not being able to detect aircraft at lower altitudes and thus was used in conjunction with the Chain Home Low system, or AMES Type 2 which could detect aircraft flying at minimum altitude level of 500 ft.

The Chain Home system was fairly primitive, since - in order to be battle-ready - it had been rushed into production by Sir Robert Watson-Watt's Air Ministry research station near Bawdsey. Watson-Watt, a pragmatic engineer, believed that "third-best" would do if "second-best" would not be available in time and "best" never available at all. Chain Home certainly suffered from glitches and errors in reporting. It was in many ways technically inferior to German radar developments, but the better German technology came at a cost. The simpler Chain Home stations

provided comprehensive coverage by the start of the Battle of Britain, whereas the Germans had only commissioned around 8 of their Freya stations by this time. Although simple, Chain Home could determine distance and direction of incoming aircraft formations. The method was called Radio Direction Finding (RDF), later called "radar" (Radio Direction and Ranging) in the U.S. Most stations were also able to measure the angle of elevation of the formation which, together with the range, gave the height; local geography prevented some stations from measuring elevation. Although not originally a design goal, the operators became very adept at estimating the size of



detected formations from the shape of the displayed returns.

After WW2 the site operated for this purpose until 1959 when 3 of the masts were dismantled and the site was redeveloped as a NATO communications relay site as part of the ACE High program. This resulted in the construction of four tropospheric scatter parabolic dishes. Ace High was a tropospheric scatter/microwave link system providing an exclusive communications network comprising 49 tropospheric scatter links and 40 line-of-sight microwave links. It extended from northern Norway and through central Europe to eastern Turkey and included 570 voice, 260 telegraph and 60 data circuits at 84 sites.

The site finally closed around 1991 after advances in modern technology made the facility redundant and in 1996 was finally disposed of, however many of the older structures still remain.

One original radar tower has been retained by the MOD which is a grade 2 listed structure and is used for climbing aptitude training by the Aerial Erector School at RAF Digby.

The Aerial Erector School is to move from RAF Digby and be relocated to RAF St Athan under changes announced by the Ministry of Defence as part of a recent Defence Training Review. The move is expected to be completed by 2017. This will be the 4th time the Aerial Erector School has moved since its foundation in the autumn of 1950. If the move does take place in 2017 the Aerial Erector School will have been at RAF Digby for some 58 years.

On a clear day, from the top of the tower, it is possible to see Lincoln Cathedral, the North Sea and even the Humber Bridge as well as the lines of bomb craters left by the Luftflotte.

LINTON-ON-OUSE MEMORIES

Two very interesting articles kindly given to me by a St Helens RAFA Club member and good friend Eric Barton. I hope members enjoy reading them as much as Steve and I have.

FIRE PIQUET AT CHICKSANDS

Dear George,

Thank you for the excellent magazine (Flashpoint) you gave me. Although I was not an RAF Fireman I found it a very interesting and enjoyable read. The reference to Fire Piquet Duty in the obituary to WO Ron Fairhurst brought back memories of my Fire Piquet days. I joined the RAF in August 1952 and remember the lectures we had during basic and trade training. We were taught fire drill and evacuation procedures, the various types of fire extinguisher, how they worked and how to use them to combat the fires they applied to, solid material, liquid fuel/fats and electrical fires.

In June 1952 I was posted to RAF Chicksands in Bedfordshire, just along the road from RAF Henlow, as a Ground Wireless Mechanic. Chicksands was primarily a radio station with only about one hundred RAF personnel. There was also a very large US Air force presence on the station. The Americans had their own site and facilities such as the cinema, PX Club, Medical and Dental Centre, but the RAF were responsible for carrying out fire piquet duties during the evenings. We were able to get into the cinema and PX Club free and saw films before they were released in the UK.

On one particular evening in the very cold winter of 1953/54, I was in the PX Club playing their version of Bingo. At one side of the club was a pot bellied stove similar to the ones we had in the billets but much larger. Two Americans had the lid and front panel open and were vigorously poking the fire. Suddenly, a large gout of flame shot up to the roof, whereupon the Yanks, to a man, shot out of their seats and ran in a panic for the door. The twenty or so RAF lads remained seated apart from the two on duty, who tackled the fire and had it under control within seconds, receiving a cheer from their mates. The Americans sheepishly returned to their seats and the game went on.

This incident seems to indicate that the Americans didn't have any training in fire drill, or if they did, it was all forgotten in the heat of the moment. (Pun intended).

STRANGE GOINGS-ON AT LINTON-ON-OUSE

In August 1976 I joined 1438(Prescot) Squadron Air Training Corps as a Civilian Instructor, becoming a Warrant Officer in February 1979. After serving 18 years as a WO I came out of uniform and am still with the Squadron as a Civilian Instructor once more.

Over the years I have attended many Annual Camps at RAF stations all over the country, many of which are no longer in existence. One station will stay fresh in my memory because of an unusual occurrence. In 1993 we were at Linton-On-Ouse and as usual, I was Camp Adjutant. One of my duties was drawing up the Duty Officer list and I always put myself on duty for the first night on camp. I liked to go around on the first evening having a quiet word with the cadets, particularly those who were away from home for the first time, making sure

they were settling in OK. On this occasion I was a bit later than intended, starting my rounds as the cadets were making up their beds.

The building the cadets were occupying was in the form of an "H" with the Camp Office to the right of the main entrance, the Duty Officer's sleeping quarters to the left and the male cadets upstairs with a central passageway linking the two wings. Rooms were supposed to house two cadets each, but one room had two beds and a mattress on the floor in between. I asked what was going on and was told that a cadet named Pruden had been frightening one of the others with ghost stories. After finding out which room Pruden was in I asked him what he was playing at. "Sir," he said, "when I came into the billet earlier on to get some money to go to the NAFFI Shop,

there was nobody else here, but as I was looking for my money I looked up. There was a tall thin man standing outside the room door but I couldn't see his face. I looked down and when I looked up again he had vanished." The cadet claimed he was telling the honest truth, so I told him he had probably misinterpreted a shadow as the passageway was not well lit. I also told him not to go spreading such tales and left him to carry on preparing his bed.

Later, I was in the Duty Officers room preparing my own bed as the DO had to sleep in the billet. The door was closed and just as I was putting the finishing touches to the bed I heard a man's deep voice outside my door but couldn't hear what was being said. I thought that some of the staff had come back for some reason, or maybe we had an intruder so I went out to investigate but there was nobody there. The voice then seemed to come from the Camp Office so I looked in there and found it empty. As I came out of the office I again heard it up the stairs, so off I went again in pursuit. At the top of the stairs I heard the voice coming from the right but when I got to the end all was quiet and I could see from the glass panels above the doors that all the rooms were in darkness. The wash room was upstairs off the central passageway and all was again quiet until I started getting washed, then I could hear the voice outside the door, but when I looked, nothing, so I went to bed with the voice chumming away to himself outside my room.

The next morning, not wanting to spread alarm, I didn't mention what went on the night before and none of the cadets said anything about Pruden's "ghost story" so I thought that was the end of it. Ha! Think again. We had two Civilian Instructors with us, Gerry Farley and Lee Southern, and they, like me, were accommodated in the Sergeant's Mess. That evening I was waiting in the bar for my two colleagues to come in. "No," I replied, "What did happen?" "We went into the billet at lunch time and went upstairs to the toilet. The billet was empty, but when we got upstairs there was a voice behind me and Lee asked me what I said. I told him that I hadn't said anything but there was nobody else there. We got out of there as quick as we could." I asked him what kind of voice it was and if they could make out what was being said. He described just what I myself had heard. When Lee came in he confirmed what Gerry had told me and I related my

experience. The next day we told the Camp Commandant but he shuddered and said that he didn't want to know so nothing more was said for the rest of the week.

On our last day, Gerry, Lee and myself had to breakfast in the Other Ranks mess as the Sergeant's Mess dining room was being renovated. A young WRAF girl came and sat at our table and Lee asked her if she knew of any ghost stories connected with the station. "Oh, yes," she said, "This was one of the most haunted RAF stations. They had to have SHQ and one of the WRAF blocks exorcised a while ago."

The block we had been occupying was one of the old WRAF billets!!! WHOOOOOOO, MOTHER. I bet that tale brings back a few memories for those members who have attended an Air Cadet Camp either as a member of staff or as a young Cadet but it reminded me of my scary experience at RAF Lindholme in 1972. During my Lindholme tour the camp closed down and all but one of the Fire Section lads were posted to Lossie mouth.. I was informed by the SNCOi/c the section (the enigmatic Gerry Nicholls) that I was to remain at Lindholme on my own

and categorize all first aid fire appliances as either serviceable or scrap; and on completion of the task I was to be posted to Brize Norton. Come the closure I watched as all my mates complete with vehicles departed to RAF Lossiemouth and that night I returned to my room in the barrack block that was accommodation for about a hundred airmen including the four RAF fireman who I shared a room with (Mick Greene Bob Lowe Sandy Sanderson and Rusty Aitkin.. Our room was probably the 'des res' of the block; on the top floor and furthest away from the block foyer. No noisy NAAFI cowboys returning from a late night binge in the Pigs Bar to disturb us. I had a couple or three scoops in the Pigs bar before retiring and as I climbed into my pit I thought this could be a peaceful and un interrupted nights sleep No flatulating snoring or restless fireman tossing and turning all night to interrupt my sweet dreams. However after a few hours kip I was awoken by noises coming from outside my room. Never one to be concerned about things that go bump in the night I turned over and went back to sleep. Bugger me but next thing I am sure I saw a man in wartime RAF uniform

open the door and come towards me. I seem to remember levitating myself out of bed and out of the block and pitched up at the domestic fire section dormitory. I knew that there would be no body there and I had the keys to the section. I also knew I was closer to the guardroom and that was manned 24/7. The next day I informed those who needed to know that I was no longer in the block but was now in residence at the fire section until further notice. Those who have served at Lindholme will be familiar with the tales of Lindholme bog apparently many returning and damaged Bomber Command aircraft and their crews crashed in the bog and some of the aircrew were never recovered at least that's the tale the locals used to tell well I think I may have encountered one of those missing heroes during my time at Lindholme. That scary episode apart I thoroughly enjoyed my two years at Lindholme I played football and then captained the station football team which was mainly made up of fairies (air traffic controllers) from Northern Radar. We were a very good team and went on to win the Lincolnshire Services League.

Association Cenotaph Parade 2012

This years Cenotaph Parade takes Place on Sunday the 11th November and once again our Association Vice President Ron Brown has obtained thirty tickets for use by our Association. Please try and support Ron and make an effort to participate in this unique occasion. Leading the Association contingent this year is Mark Jones. If you require any more information about the Parade Ron will be delighted to hear from you; contact details on page 3. (Ge)



My (bit) part in the Vietnam War

Or The memories of a fireman at RAF Changi 1969-71

Many people who served at RAF Changi, Singapore during my time there, 1969-1971, will remember that the Americans and Australian forces were involved in the Vietnam War that was going on in another part of SE Asia. We were not directly involved because the Wilson Government at the time had decided against it. The majority of the serving personnel on the base had no indirect involvement either, however the lads at the Fire Section did, some in a lighted hearted way and all of us in a more serious manner, let me explain.

The Americans (and for all I know the Australians, but I never met any) used to visit Singapore on Rest and Recreation (R & R) leave. There were a number of hotels and bars down town in which they stayed and socialised. We were also aware that a good majority of the white Americans had strong emotional links to the "old Country" ie the UK. On occasions we would get a "pick up" taxi from Changi into Singapore City and help the Yanks to unwind from the horrors of war and engage them in banter and stories of the "old Country", they loved it! By us; I mean there had to be at least four of us representing Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland to be able to talk (and bull s...t), about any part of the UK. That was the key to free beer all night. On entering a particular bar we would make sure that our voices were raised so that our accents would carry over the general noise. By the time one of us got to the bar an interested American would ask where we were from. When informed for example, that I was from Wales, UK, an offer to pay for the round would be made, could I refuse such an offer, of course not, it would be very impolite!! Having got our free drinks we would be invited to sit/stand and talk about where in the UK we came from and if any of us knew Manchester, Aberdeen, Belfast, Swansea, etc. Whichever place was mentioned we knew it, or knew a pal that knew it and so could fulfil a deep need of our hosts, to find out more about where their ancestors may have come from. The booze flowed generously and a good night was had by all. We had a free night and the yanks had sparkling conversations about the "Old Country" some true and some, it has to be said, tall tales. In the event it was a chance for the drafted American serviceman to switch off from the "day job" of fighting a war. However another brush with the war in Vietnam was a lot more serious.

The sound of the four turboprop engines from the RAAF C130 Hercules aircraft could be heard clearly in the 1970 Singapore night sky. The lads of D Crew would have been in the rest room or chatting outside the crash bays, with one of us on airfield watch. That's when the call came over the squawk box from air traffic control (ATC) for a crash vehicle to man up for the inbound aircraft.

Standing by or manning up as a precaution for an aircraft landing, practice crashes, actual incidents, pan washes (washing spilt fuel from an aircraft parking slot), spit and polishing the vehicles etc were all part of the daily routine at RAF Changi. I was posted out there in July 1969 from RAF Wittering and had no idea what to expect. Leaving the UK was one thing, arriving at Changi (via two refuelling stops including Gan in the Indian Ocean) was very much another. Coming into land one bright afternoon on my VC10-104, I could see blue skies, palm trees, the Eastern Dispersal (as I found out later) and a sandy beach in the distance, wow, that will suit me I thought, little realising quite how hot it was going to be in all sorts of ways

Hot, for the purpose of this story, was the crash suit we had to wear on operations. A one piece silver suit zipped up from leg to shoulder. Next to the skin we wore a string vest and string long johns, no pant allowed as they would break the air seal next to our body. This underwear formed a cushion of air that protected the wearer in a fire situation. Without this there was a real danger of skin burns as the air in the suit dried out. We also had a hard crash helmet with a silver protective neck piece and crash gloves. Sea boot socks and a sturdy pair of boots completed the outfit. When we were completed suited up it was like being in a sauna. The normal day temperature in Singapore ranges between 26 and 31 degrees; you can imagine how hot it was on a day shift if we had to suit up. There was no way we could wear this gear all day while on duty and so the suit was positioned in the boots alongside the crash vehicle we were allocated to that day. Our working dress was jungle green trousers and jacket, with the stringed underwear on underneath of course.

ATC informed the duty controller that the C130 was a Casevac, (also called Medevac) aircraft. It was full of injured service personnel; inbound from Saigon

in Vietnam, enroute to Australia, final destination RAAF Base at Richmond, New South Wales. I was familiar with the drill having done it a number of times previously. Crash 2 and crew were to deploy just off the runway in use and wait until the aircraft taxied past, then escort it to the Western Dispersal. When the C130 had taxied in and shut its engines down, our job was to stand by in case of any emergency during the refuelling of the aircraft. The Cpl i/c the vehicle would then check in with the aircrew to find out how many casualties were on board. It was important to find out where in the aircraft the seriously injured servicemen, if there were walking wounded and how many stretcher cases. The interior of the aircraft was configured with stretchers along each side and if required, rows down the middle. In the event of an emergency our job would have been to fight any fire related incident and also assist the medical team who were also on standby to evacuate the aircraft as quickly as possible.

Seeing service personnel my age and younger, I was in my mid twenties at the time, lying on stretchers, some amputees, some hooked up to saline drips and many with bandaging on their wounds was quite horrific and sad. This was as close to a war situation I had been, and I didn't like it. These would have been fit and healthy young men who perhaps not that long ago had been drafted into the Forces to fight in a war that they knew nothing or cared little about. Now they were being sent home, their lives changed forever.

The memory of the C130 Casevac aircraft and its occupants never left me and for many years I thought about the Vietnam War and in particular the carpet bombing of vast tracts of jungle, the Agent Orange dropped by the Americans and the tunnels that the Vietcong hid in while the American and Australian troops were in the area. I had a pal on 41 Sqn RNZAF who flew into Saigon on a Bristol Freighter three times a week, he used to tell me some tales and in fact offered me a trip, but that's another story. I resolved to visit Vietnam one day.

In January this year (2012) with my wife Angelene I made a short four day trip to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), (formally Saigon) from our base in Malaysia. Interestingly the local people still call the place Saigon; it seems it's only the officials that call it HCMC. I had two objectives in mind,

one to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels and the other, to travel on the Mekong River. The tunnels are a 50km, or two and a half hour coach journey from Saigon, further than I thought; in fact they are not too far from the Cambodian border, another surprise, to me at least. The tunnels are located in the Ben Dinh district and when they were all in use, consisted of an intricate network over 200km (75 miles) long. Ben Dinh was a particular fertile district at the time of the war and so attractive to the Viet Cong, because of the easy availability of food. This made it a target for the Americans and their Agent Orange; this particular chemical stripped the area of vegetation and the jungle of its foliage. Evidence of the damage can still be seen.

Lengths of the tunnel system have collapsed over the years; however there is still enough to amaze the average tourist. We were shown areas in the jungle that contained small openings in the ground, no larger than a slightly built person; these were entrances to the tunnel system below. Once the soil had been replaced on the jungle floor, no

army patrol would know where the entrance was. One particular stretch of tunnel has been widened to allow westerners to experience what it was like underground all those years ago. Needless to say I had to try it, although it was a hands and knees job

In the tunnel system, the Vietnamese would live for days at a time, especially during the periods of heavy American bombing. Parts of the system were on three levels and included workshops and hospitals. Food was cooked on an underground fire range where the smoke was cleverly channelled to the open jungle via vents that surfaced metres away from where the actual fire was thereby reducing the risk of discovery. We were shown examples of bobby traps, either in the tunnels or on the jungle tracks, which were laid for any allied service personnel to fall into. All were gruesome and must have caused horrific injuries to the patrol individual who happened to encounter them. Seeing the pictures of the destruction and weapons of war sent my mind back to standing by, while the Casevac C130 was being refuelled at RAF Changi in 1970. A

thought occurred to me that although, to me and the lads we were just doing our job, in a very small way we were playing our part in the Vietnam War. The Americans and Australians were service personnel, just like us, we were part of the military family. Thank God we did not have to put our lives on the line like they did, but at Changi, on those particular nights, we could at least make sure that although helpless on their stretchers, they were safe in that aircraft while it was being refuelled and so would come to no further harm.

The refuelling was complete and the C130 cleared to resume its journey. The four turboprop engines burst into life one at a time and soon after, the aircraft began to taxi away from the Western Dispersal down to the take off point. We followed in Crash 2 at a safe distance to the point where it turned onto the runway, increased speed and raced into the warm night sky. Good bye and safe journey.

Gerry Schofield

OBITUARIES

15 April 2012:

From:

Glenn Priestley

Mike Hall

I believe Mike retired from the Air Force in 1992 at the rank of Sgt though I don't know if he served 22 or 30 years. He was from Blackpool and 58 years old when he passed away from cancer. I believe his final station was Macrihanish, though his top table/leaving do was at Cranwell.

The funeral will be held on Monday 23rd April at 1400, it will be at Carleton Crematorium, Poulton-le-Fylde, Nr Blackpool, Lancashire. FY6.

Message received from Archie Carter
WO Derek Moscrop passed away on the 15 May 2012.

A nicer man and a better boss one could not hope to work for Derek served in the RAF Fire Service for 37 years, 1963 -1990.

15 April 2012:

From:

Denise Friel

Jean Friel (Wife of Roy)

I am sad to inform you of the loss of my mother known to you all as Roy Friel's Wife, Jean. Mum passed away very peacefully at home on a sunny afternoon, 28th March 2012, at 14.10 as we were gathered in prayer and the ferry left port to Dublin with Des talking to Mum. Mum was diagnosed with cancer 6 weeks after laying dad to rest in February 2012. Apologies for the late notification. My four brothers and I are devastated at the loss of our wonderful parents and would like to join you in your next reunion in their memory. Mum was laid to rest with dad on the 11th April, the day after we had the funeral. A beautiful memorial disc has been produced from photographs of the two days and it would be fitting for an honour to place it with yourselves. Please keep in touch. Mum gave us a lovely last two weeks full with laughter, tears and poignant moments we can treasure forever. We nursed mum at home with loving care till it was time for the reunion of mum with dad.

Thank you to those I managed to contact and inform.

R.I.P Mum now happily reunited with Dad.

Sincere Regards Denise, Tony, Des, Kevin and Martin and families. xxxxxxxxx

The Flashpoint Editorial team send our sincere condolences to all the families of our recently departed members and to the Family of Jean Friel

Association Vehicles Arrive At Scampton

Many of you will have read the financial statement issued by the treasurer in the last edition of Flashpoint. In that statement the following passage was included:-

“Crash vehicles (3). I understood that spending money on these was in the past, but I find £990 (equivalent to 50 member’s £20 subs) was paid on the 14 sept 2011 to transport the vehicles to RAF Scampton.

I have no intention of paying any further monies to this lost cause”.

Without a full explanation, I thought that this might need clarifying!

I was approached last year by Gordon Smith to see if I would be in a position to help the Association with their vehicles. The vehicles, together with a quantity of artefacts and paperwork had been stored at RAF Barkston Heath for a number of years. This arrangement had been fairly ad hoc and unfortunately the RAF had decided that in the absence of a formal arrangement to occupy the premises, the Association would have to vacate the hangar. At the time, none of the vehicles were running, they weren’t insured and they hadn’t been re-registered for use on the public highway. This meant that in order for them to move from Barkston Heath to Scampton, a specialist low-loader would be needed. Due to their size, it was one vehicle



Rare DP2 comes off the Trailer

per load. Wilf Longmire organised the transportation using his contacts and secured the best price possible. The vehicles arrived at Scampton under the supervision of Lee Medley, a Museum volunteer. Members of the CRASH team were also on hand to assist. The three vehicles are now stored at RAF Scampton. The DP2, MK6 and MK7 are all located in the Museums vehicle hangar.

The vehicles are actually on loan to the Museum and can be viewed at any time by prior arrangement.

The CRASH team have done a good job with the finances and facilities available to them. Unfortunately, there is a considerable amount of work still required to bring them up to full standard. The DP2 is a non-runner. It is suspected that the fuel injection system fitted to the non-original Leyland engine is faulty. This conclusion has been reached by

one of the Museums mechanics. The MK6 is awaiting the fitting of a new starter motor. The MK7 has never run. None of the vehicles have batteries and they all require cosmetic work to bring them up to speed.

The membership can rest assured that these vehicles are now safe! Their future is a lot more secure now that they are displayed within a Museum. Unfortunately, their restoration will not go any further for the time being as the Museum cannot commit funds to vehicles that don’t actually belong to us. They will be maintained in the condition they were in when they came to us.

The transportation of the vehicles to Scampton ensured their immediate survival! Without this expenditure, they faced the real possibility of being scrapped.

The current situation costs the Association nothing! They are stored free of charge and insured under the Museums own insurance policy.

If you would like to view the appliances, visit the Museum or offer your services to help then please get in touch with me on 07912658402 or e-mail me at manstonfiremuseum@hotmail.com

*WO Steve Shirley MBE - Chairman
Manston Fire Museum*

COSFORD VEHICLE DONATION

The RAF Museum based at RAF Cosford recently donated 3 ex RAF Fire Vehicles to Steve Shirley of the Manston Fire Museum. The vehicles, 2 x MK5 Crash Tenders and a Bedford Miles Domestic had been in storage for nearly 20 years. Although non-runners at present, they are in exceptional condition and there are high hopes that a restoration to show condition will soon be achieved.

The vehicles were moved to the Museums storage facility at RAF Scampton by 2MT who used the task as a consolidation exercise following a week of intensive training by new members of the Squadron. The vehicles even have some of their original equipment stowed in their lockers. Regretfully, whilst stored outside at Cosford, the compound where the vehicles were kept was broken

into. The bell on the Bedford was stolen as were the original copper and brass foam branches from the MK5. The bell can probably be replaced in time, but the branch pipes will prove very difficult to replace. If anyone has a spare set tucked away we’d be delighted to hear from you!

The vehicles can be viewed at Scampton by prior arrangement with Steve who can be contacted on mobile number 07912658402 or by e-mail at manstonfiremuseum@hotmail.com

Steve is very grateful to Al Mclean (curator RAF Museum, Cosford) and members of 2 MT Sqn for their help in obtaining these rare vehicles for preservation.



A rare Bedford Miles Domestic

Co-Editors Note: I was at Scampton for the arrival of these vehicles and it was nostalgic for me and very exciting seeing them. The last time I was in a MK5 was at RAF Stubby 1966 it used to come over from RAF Manby when the MK6 was off line. The last time I saw a Bedford Domestic would be about 1971 at RAF Medmenham.

Steve Harrison



A very good bunch of guys and girls of 2mt



One Of The Two Mk5'S

A SHORT HISTORY FROM RAY (TED) HORREX



In front of Nicosia tower

It was 1954 when I left school at the age of 15 with no qualifications; this was due to spending quite a lot of time in hospital with polio. It was while I was working at Boots the chemist that I saw a RAF Bowser going past and my thoughts turned to joining the RAF as a Fire-Fighter.

I went to the recruiting office in my local town of Ipswich where I sat the selection test and past, they suggested I could be an assistant Control Tower Assistant. Eventually I was sent to RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire where again I pushed for the Fire Service and I signed on for 9 years the incentive was more money! If my memory is correct, in those days there were two types of Firemen, an Aero Fireman and Domestic Firemen, Aero Fireman could do both jobs but Domestic could only do that, so I opted to do Aero. So from Cardington I went on my trade training to Sutton-on-Hull and then on to RAF Weeton for driver training. I applied for a posting to Cyprus (again for more money) this was accepted and I embarked on the troop ship Devonshire.

After 10 days we arrived in Cyprus, what an eye opener! We were greeted by barbed wire barricades, armed troops and given an armed escort. As many of you will know that this was the period of time when Cyprus was trying to gain independence from the UK, this was led by the nationalist military resistance organisation EOKA. Cyprus eventually gained independence in 1960.

RAF Nicosia was a large airfield with plenty of aircraft incidents to keep us busy and at one time there was a large fire in Nicosia town but due to the troubles we only allowed to take the old water bowser.

When I left Cyprus in the early 60's I was posted to RAF Wattisham in Suffolk. On arrival the Flight Sergeant and Warrant Officer did not pay too much attention to me until they started taking my details and discovered I was a MK6 driver, cups of tea were then forthcoming. It turned out

they only had one other MK6 driver, so it was 24hrs on 24hrs off for several months after that.

In the early 60's the Fire section was civilianised and I was posted to RAF Oakington in Cambridgeshire, then with only 6 months left to do the wanted to post me to RAF Machrihanish. This was not very satisfactory as I needed to be looking for a job in my home area when I left the RAF, so I came out of the service.

I went on to work for the MOD at the USAF base at RAF Bentwaters in Suffolk where I became a Vehicle Control Officer for the Ambulance Service, a job I did for the next 29 years. Sadly RAF Bentwaters closed in 1993. I then went on to manage a caravan site and then worked in a pub/restaurant carrying out health and safety before retiring.



Mk5 23 AG 06 after an argument with a monsson ditch!



A brilliant Photograph: Ray with his mates having a 'Blast' names not remembered.



MFV seen travelling in style on the M3 (Photo courtesy of Steve Pearson)



Below a TACR2 in a different guise would have been great on air show days