

Spring 2015

Wittering View

The official magazine for RAF Wittering

Return to Flying



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Editor

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Wittering View. As ever, thanks to all those who have contributed.

This issue contains another good mix of operational activity conducted by the A4 Force Elements, with articles by 5001 Sqn on Op TORAL in Afghanistan and an account from 1 AMW on Op GRITROCK, the effort to stem the Ebola epidemic. There is a good overview of life in the first year as a Reservist on 504 Sqn RAuxAF, and coverage of a milestone in the life of RAF Wittering as aircraft return to the Station in the guise of the University Air Squadrons. Welcome to all newcomers; please continue to contribute to the magazine as you get your feet under the table. No 20 Works Group Royal Engineers have made their first entry and 3 Sqn RAF Regt have provided an article on what they've been up to as their departure draws nearer.

Also, having sort of promised articles in my previous foreword on dancing frogs and monkeys on horseback, after much searching of world news, you'll find what I believe are UK exclusives on such matters (I don't like to break a promise). It is with regret that this will be the Station Commander's last issue of the Wittering View in post. His encouragement to "stretch the boundaries" has been much appreciated and it wouldn't be appropriate to publish his final edition without an embarrassing photo (see opposite).

Sqn Ldr Tom Stevenson, SO2 Plans, A4 FHQ.

Foreword

Some say death and taxes are the only certain things in life. From the perspective of Station Command - a rare and fantastic privilege, especially given the limited number of Royal Air Force Stations - the certainties are, firstly, that your two years will pass in the blink of an eye and, secondly, that it will be the best tour of your Service career to date (and maybe ever, which is a bit grim if true).

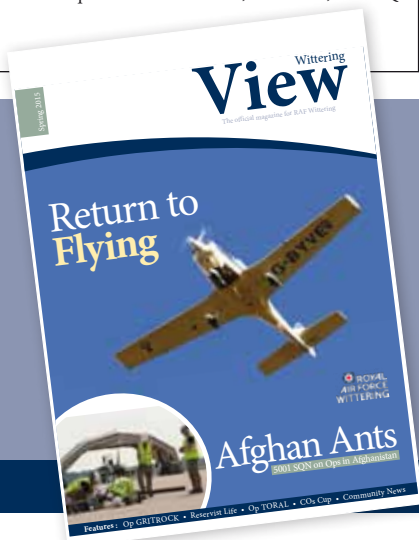
This fine publication will continue to blossom but, sadly for me, this is the last Foreword I shall pen, as the next edition will come out after I have gone (currently June 2015, but this can always change), so the pen will have passed to my successor, Group Captain Richard Pratley (just to clear up any confusion, there is no pen as such).

So, what to say in my last Foreword. Well, let's start with a huge THANK YOU!! This goes out to all of the brilliant people at Royal Air Force Wittering (and their families, of course) that make up our whole force, people that, routinely, have humbled me by their amazing achievements, personally and professionally, on and off duty. Thanks must also go out to the many friends I've made in the region, through great opportunities such as joining the Stamford Rotary Club, engagement with the Wittering Parish Council and the welcoming hand that has been extended by many local institutions and individuals that are, sadly, too many to name here (but you know who you are!). Modern Royal Air Force life really doesn't end at the wire, so the friendship, camaraderie and intertwined relationships that transcend the boundary are just as important as those within and I am truly grateful for the support the Station has received from everyone.

This edition is, as ever, full of great articles exposing the range of things we get up to at Royal Air Force Wittering and 'on the job' elsewhere. I suspect we will begin to see more regular flying features, given that our University Air Squadrons successfully arrived back in February (which was fantastic after preparing the Station for the move since my arrival) and I'm pleased to see the Army sticking their head above the parapet, as 20 Works Group are an integral part of Station life. Operationally the last quarter has taken a different shape; gone is the regular drum beat of Afghanistan deployments, replaced by a more unpredictable 'contingent' set of activities and you will get an insight into some of these in this edition. There is also a broader aspect to Service life, as preparation for difficult roles entails not just professional preparation, but also personal. Such events as the 'CO's Cup' help build teamwork, fitness and develop individuals outside the workplace and the article from the Physical Education Flight captures what this is all about (it's also great fun - not that I got to participate - but I did watch and hand out the trophy!).

To close, I would like to wish everyone well in future endeavours. I have no doubt that I will see many again (perhaps elsewhere in different roles) but, for those I may not see, it has been a real pleasure and one I will never forget.

Gp Cpt Damian Alexander



Submissions

Please direct all submissions for Wittering View Magazine to:

The Editor, Sqn Ldr Tom Stevenson
wit-fhqplansso2@mod.uk

Please try to ensure that images are in .jpeg format and as large as possible. Text should be supplied in Microsoft Word .doc format or plain text if possible.



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Lance



New Post Office For Wittering

Service with a smile marked the opening of a brand new Post Office in the village.

Wing Commander Lizzy Nicholl, Officer Commanding Support Wing, officially opened the new Post Office at the SPAR Community Store, watched by the former Wittering Postmaster David Standish-Leigh and his wife Debra.

It was a day of mixed emotions for Mr Standish-Leigh who has been the village's postmaster for over 14 years. The couple are planning to convert the former Post Office and store into a coffee shop and sandwich bar.

Representatives from ISS DS Defence, Post Office Ltd and SPAR UK also attended the opening, the culmination of months of work for Andrew Carter, ISS General Manager at RAF Wittering. He said: "For me this is all about delivering great service with a personal touch for our customers. The new Post Office will be a welcome addition to the services we have in the community SPAR shop."

The Post Office is located in the SPAR Community Store on St George's Road.

Wing Commander Nicholl said: "It's not every day you're asked to open a Post Office, so this has been a unique experience; but I think it's right that we recognise the service given by David and Debra to the village."

"I'm confident that the Post Office will be a success and a valuable amenity to the local community. The SPAR Community Store has lots to offer the village, and our partners at ISS continually enhance the service they offer."

PHOTO: From left to right: Former postmaster David Standish-Leigh, ISS General Manager Andrew Carter, Wing Commander Lizzy Nicholl and SPAR UK National Accounts Manager Adele Irlam.

Family Disco

A Families Disco is being held between 1720-2000hrs on Friday March 27, in the A1 Bar.

Attractions will include a disco and a facepainter. Parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times.

Tickets are £1 per adult and 50p per child/baby.

For more information contact the HIVE on 01780 417541 or email Sophie at WitSptHiveInfoOfficer@mod.uk

Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch At RAF Wittering

Over 70 senior citizens from Stamford and the surrounding villages sat down for a three course Christmas lunch in the Officers' Mess.

Festivities began with Christmas carols and songs, performed by children from Wittering Primary School, followed by the three courses which were leek and potato soup, roast turkey with all the trimmings and Christmas pudding with custard and brandy butter.

Mrs Kay Sanders was delighted with her first Christmas Lunch at RAF Wittering. She said: "It's been lovely, we've had such a nice time and the food was beautiful."

The Christmas Lunch is RAF Wittering's way of acknowledging the contributions senior citizens make to the community and to thank them for years of good neighbourliness.

Civil Servant Jeanette Lockwood was the event organiser. She said: "I was only too pleased to help. The Christmas Lunch has been a success, and the

team in the Officers' mess have been so helpful; they've been brilliant."

The event continued well into the afternoon as the guests settled down to enjoy prize bingo with coffee and mince pies.

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Damian Alexander said: "It's great to see such genuine goodwill as we've seen here today. The senior citizens who have made the effort to come and have lunch with us are our neighbours and have supported the Station for decades."

He continued: "Of course it's been our pleasure to host the senior citizens again, and who doesn't enjoy a special Christmas Dinner? Events like this don't organise themselves, so I want to sincerely thank Jeanette, the team in the Officers' Mess and everyone else who has helped to make this Christmas Lunch such an enjoyable occasion."

PHOTO: Children from Wittering Primary School singing at the Station's Christmas Lunch for Senior Citizens.



Ride to the Wall

Riders from RAF Wittering Motorcycle Club took part in the annual Ride to the Wall (RTTW) at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Wittering riders joined thousands of bikers from across the country to descend on the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

RTTW is a unique motorcycling event which gives the biking community an opportunity to gather together to pay their respects to serving and fallen service men and women, and in doing so, raise funds for the National Memorial Arboretum.



The event, the brainchild of Martin Dickinson, the then Director of Nene Valley Harley Owners Group, has raised thousands of pounds for the Arboretum and attracts riders from all over the UK.

PHOTO: RAF Wittering riders gather for the memorial service. From left: Andy Fretwell, Errol Robinson, Vinnie Potts, Gary Bosworth, Phil Majilton, James, Stu Newman.



Charity Sleep Out

Wittering's 3 Mobile Catering (MC) Squadron fed 850 people with a hot meal and a breakfast butty at the Centrepoint's annual Sleep Out.

The Squadron has supported the charity's Sleep Out in London for the last four years. The aim of the event is to give participants an experience of what it is like to sleep rough in safe conditions while highlighting the issue of youth homelessness.

Twelve personnel from the Squadron deployed with a full military field kitchen to the Old Truman Brewery in Brick Lane, working right through into the early hours serving dinner and breakfast to participants.

Squadron Leader Claire Collis, OC 3 MC Squadron, said: "The Sleep Out is a great event, the Squadron feels passionately about it and the proof is in the brilliant food they prepare and serve."



The Sleep Out, which was supported by celebrities from film, television and radio including Colin Salmon, Richard Madeley and Sara Cox, raised just over £300,000 for Centrepoint.

PHOTOS: (Main) From left: SAC Jonathan Wilkowski, WO Al Little, Wg Cdr Georgia Williams, SAC Jason Stafford, Sgt Maxine Booth (detachment cdr), SAC Monica Yost, SAC Jamie Fisher, SAC Adam Deacon, SAC Craig Hainsworth, SAC Charlotte Neathway, SAC Greg Own, SAC Scott Guntrip, Sqn Ldr Clair Collis (OC 3MCS). (Inset) Celebrity DJ Sara Cox supported Centrepoint's Sleep Out.

Top Prize for Ellie-May

Wittering Primary School pupil Ellie-May Thompson was celebrating after she won a competition to design the official Christmas card for RAF Wittering.

The youngster's winning design featured a snowman, a decorated tree and Father Christmas on his sleigh.

She was presented with a framed copy of her design by Wg Cdr Lizzy Nicholl in a special assembly at the school.

PHOTO: Wing Commander Lizzy Nicholl and Ellie-May Thompson with her winning design.



New Village Sign

WITTERING Primary School, Parish Council and RAF Station joined forces to unveil a new village sign at Wittering.

Designed by year 6 pupils at Wittering Primary School, the sign is the culmination of a project funded by the Armed Forces Community Covenant, which enables military establishments to materially contribute to worthwhile community projects.

The original design reflects the village's past and present, depicting All Saints' Church, Wittering Primary School and a Harrier. Many of the children had included a rainbow in their designs, which has been cleverly included in the finished work.

Deputy Chairman of the Parish Council, Coun Geoff Dunkley, addressed the gathering before two of the school's star pupils pulled the ribbons to unveil the new sign.

Chairman of the Parish Council, Coun



Richard Roffe, said: "This is what working together is really all about. The schoolchildren have produced a beautiful design, the RAF has funded the project and worked with the council throughout, it's been a real success."

Acting Station Commander, Wing Commander James Lapsley said: "RAF Wittering is lucky to have such a positively co-operative bond with the village and the

school. In many ways the new sign is an embodiment of that bond. For me the design is particularly poignant. It's an optimistic design which acknowledges the history of the village, the importance of the school and the positive presence of the RAF"

PHOTO: The gathering at Wittering's new village sign.



Top Award

Photographer Senior Aircraftman Gary Kearney has been named Wittering's Airman of the Year 2014. SAC Kearney received the accolade for consistently demonstrating outstanding professionalism and dedication to duty as a Station Photographer.

Any serving airman or airwoman, up to and including the rank of corporal, is eligible for the annual award. The finalist is selected from twelve personnel, each of which has received the accolade of airman or airwoman of the month.

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Damian Alexander said: "I am very impressed with Gary's work and dedication to his profession and the Station. SAC Kearney has performed to the highest professional standard and has also found time to make a significant contribution to many other aspects of RAF life. He is an asset to the Station and the Service and a fine role model for all."



Discovery of Indian Dancing Frog

Fourteen new species of tiny 'dancing frogs' have been discovered in the jungles of western India, scientists report. The spectacular haul more than doubles the number of Indian dancing frogs, to 24 species. The recent discovery has led to a spike in viewing numbers and a rapidly growing fan base within India for the amphibian version of 'Strictly Come Dancing', which is televised on Tuesday evenings on a mainstream television channel.

Wittering Makes Christmas Toy Delivery

Chefs and Air Traffic Controllers from the Station delivered a mountain of toys to Peterborough City Hospital's Amazon Ward in time for Christmas.

No 3 Mobile Catering Squadron held a series of charity events throughout the year to fund the presents, including a 10 km mud-run, cake sales, collections and even a fund raising event on deployment in the middle-east.

Meanwhile Cpl Gary Hickie and his colleagues in Air Traffic Control were also busy; collecting by the main gate, at the Station café, and persuading Morrisons in Stamford to donate some festive Cadbury's selection boxes.

In addition to the toys, Sgt Maxine Booth and her mum, Miriam Briggs, knitted 50 bonnets for the premature and poorly babies who will spend their very first Christmas in the special care baby unit.

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Damian Alexander said: "It's tough enough for a child to be in hospital



at any time of year, and probably ten times worse at Christmas. Anything we can do to brighten a child's day is well worth the effort. The teams from 3 Mobile Catering Squadron and Air Traffic Control have done brilliantly, and brought some genuine happiness to Peterborough City Hospital."

PHOTOS: From left: SAC Emma-Jo Larney, Sgt Daz Parker, SAC Chris Spicer, Sqn Ldr Liz Parker, Cpl Steve Hobson (Father Christmas), Cpl Natalie Allway, Cpl Gary Hickie, Cpl Joe Samuels, Sgt Maxine Booth, Jackie Cox (PCH Play Specialist) and Holly Brown (PCH Play Leader).



Safety Aware

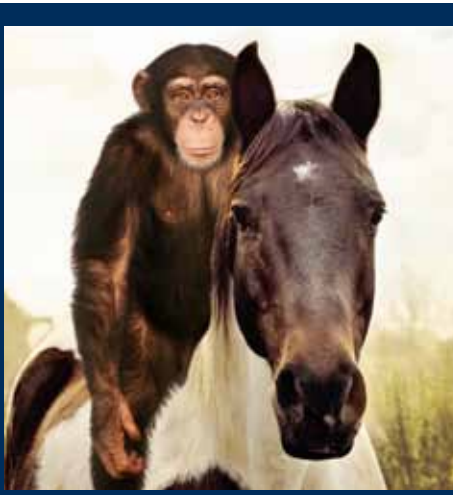
A road safety event aimed at preparing drivers for winter weather was held by 2 Mechanical Transport (MT) Squadron and the Road Safety Committee.

'Look Out for Each Other' covered various aspects of winter road safety including free pre-winter checks of vehicles by the AA. Visitors were also given the chance to experience severe winter driving in controlled conditions in a specially adapted Land Rover.

Keen mountain biker, Sergeant Marie White teamed up with Peterborough bicycle retailer CycleWright to make sure that RAF Wittering's cyclists didn't miss the "Be Safe, Be Seen" message.

Corporal Amanda Rebanks, who organised the event, said: "2MT and the Road Safety Committee have just pulled out all the stops to make today happen. I'm really grateful to the AA and everyone else who made a contribution to the day."

PHOTO: Personnel experienced severe winter driving in a specially-adapted Land Rover.



Monkey Business

Meanwhile, in the US, police in New York State continue to conduct trials into the use of monkeys on horseback as a means of riot control in built up areas. Initial trials have been described as "promising, although one simulation broke down when the crowd distracted the monkeys by throwing peanuts onto the sidewalk".

New Station Commander's Cadet Appointed

Air Cadet Bradley Setchell has been named RAF Wittering's new Station Commander's Cadet.

Cadet Warrant Officer Bradley Setchell, from 1181 (Syston) Squadron ATC in Leicestershire, was selected from a long list of candidates in cadet squadrons across Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and the South and East Midlands.

During the next 12 months Bradley will be given a unique insight into the Royal Air Force and life at RAF Wittering, accompanying the Station Commander on a series of official engagements.

Cadet Warrant Officer Setchell said: "I'm excited to be offered this opportunity to be able to witness a side of the RAF that cadets do not normally see."

Bradley has completed his A-levels and is currently taking a gap year before starting university where he will study children's nursing.

Symbolically marking the end of her year as the first RAF Wittering Station Commander's Cadet, Cadet Flight Sergeant Jess Danells placed the official RAF Wittering brassard on her successor's shoulder. Jess was presented with a



framed brassard as a memento.

Gp Capt Damian Alexander said: "Station Commander's Cadets must earn their appointment and be of the highest calibre. The minimum standards are exceptional cadetship and academic conscientiousness. Bradley embodies both these qualities; I'm certain the next 12 months will benefit him, the Station, his squadron and the cadets."

"Jess has been outstanding. It's not easy to be the first incumbent of any role, but Cadet Flight Sergeant Danells fully embraced her appointment and has been a credit to the Station and to 115 (Peterborough) Squadron."

PHOTO: From left: Cadet Flight Sergeant Jess Danells, Group Captain Damian Alexander and Cadet Warrant Officer Bradley Setchell.



Padre's Corner

There are days when I feel like Jeremy Kyle.

Sometimes I wish I had access to a lie-detector and the 'magical' Graham who seems to be able to solve everyone's problems. In fact, I'm convinced that 'The Jeremy Kyle Show' should be mandatory viewing for all padres; it would be perfect staff training.

On a regular basis, there are those priceless moments on the show (so I'm told ☺) when people come storming out of the waiting area and start pointing fingers and shouting at the partner who has just shared their story on the stage. That's great entertainment... but not without a tinge of sadness.

We all need somebody to love. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that our personal relationships are always going to be amazing. In fact, loving others is often hard and can require compromise and sacrifice. But I believe it's worth it. Christians are given the perfect example of sacrificial love in God's son Jesus; we believe that He showed us how to look towards a future joy, in order to help us get through the difficult times.

The unique demands of Service life can have a considerable impact on those whom we love. The strain of extended periods of involuntary separation, coupled with the potential stress involved in the process of reunion can affect even the strongest of relationships. Service life also impacts on family life, children's education, a partner's employment and separation from wider family and friends. It's easy to see how all of these things can contribute to conflict within a relationship.

This is why it's so important to INVEST time and energy into maintaining and strengthening our relationships; so we are prepared to face the storms when they come.

With that in mind, we're planning to hold a Marriage Course. It will be open to any couple who wish to strengthen their relationship. It's not group therapy; you won't be expected to share anything with anyone, except your own partner. Just treat it like a date, as you reflect on your life together.

So, are you prepared to invest in your relationship?

Let's face it... it's got to be better than neglecting it to the point where you find yourselves on The Jeremy Kyle Show!

Padre Ian (aka Jeremy)

For further information about The Marriage Course, or to book a place, please contact Padre Ian Brown, Ext 7430 or email wit-sptchplaincscf@mod.uk



Fit to Fly

Acting Pilot Officer Mike Reeve reports on the annual CUAS training camp.

Thirty-five members of Cambridge University Air Squadron (CUAS) took part in their annual Pre Deployment Leadership Training Camp (PDLT). The purpose of this Camp is to gain currencies in the RAF Fitness Tests (RAFFT), Parachute training Drills, to enable members to fly, to integrate new members into the Squadron and to develop leadership, followership and teamwork skills.

The Camp started at RAF Wyton with the RAFFT and Para Drills, followed by an inter-flight sports competition, creating a positive competitive spirit between A and B Flts. After this we made the short commute to our new home RAF Wittering.

Saturday consisted of a combination of High and Low Ropes, and Leadership Challenges devised by the staff and the Senior Students. The aim of the ropes course was to push students out of their comfort zones to develop personal courage and teamwork. These were conducted by our Ground Training Instructor, Sgt Jimmy Gregory, and our new OC, Squadron Leader Rich Kellett. The leadership tasks required students to promote and develop the skills mentioned previously such as followership, teamwork and communication.

Once we completed a debrief of the day, students took part in a fitness circuit session with Sgt Gregory; fitness is a very important component in Air Squadron life and something Sgt Gregory takes very seriously. After quickly showering we enjoyed more of what RAF Wittering had to offer in terms of entertainment facilities with an inter-flight bowling competition, which saw some hilarious bowling techniques to say the least.

After an early departure from RAF Wittering on a sunny but frosty Sunday morning, we returned to RAF Wyton for a Boot Run and Battle PT session, giving the new recruits a taster of military training and further developing the Squadron's team cohesion, robustness and competitive spirit.

The camp was a great success in achieving the aims of developing all the skills we set out to complete and allowing CUAS's new recruits to be integrated fully into the Squadron, ensuring that CUAS became one team. The Squadron also had a great opportunity to see its new home, RAF Wittering, for the first time and to sample its delights; all are excited for what the future holds.

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Casterton Business & Enterprise College prides itself on its work with local armed forces and the support mechanisms it has in place for forces families.

We have worked hard over the past few years to build a framework of support for all forces students and their families at the college. This revolves around our Forces Families Liaison Officer with a team of support staff to ensure a smooth transition both in and out of the college.

The Forces Families Liaison Team is headed up by Kim Quigley, as ex-forces personnel herself she fully understands

the complexities of family life within the armed forces and works closely with welfare units on all local bases.

We are also delighted to announce the provision of a free bus service for all CBEC students from Wittering for the next academic year (2015/16) and the college currently has spaces available in a number of year groups across the college should you wish to transfer your child to CBEC.

If you are interested in securing a place at the college for your son / daughter please contact Kim Quigley on 01780 762168 or kq@cbec.rutland.sch.uk



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BRIDGESTONE

FIRST STOP

RAF Wittering Returns to Flying

The arrival of six Grob Tutor aircraft in February marked the historical moment that RAF Wittering returned to full-time flying.

The aircraft, the first to be permanently based at the Station since the retirement of the Harrier in December 2010, belong to Cambridge University Air Squadron, the University of London Air Squadron and No. 5 Air Experience Flight, and are used for Elementary Flying Training.

Flying training is the hallmark of RAF Wittering's near 100-year history. The Station hosted training units in 1917, again in 1927 when it was home to the Central Flying School, and once more in 1935 with No 11 Flying Training School.

Later the Station saw fledgling Harrier pilots undergo training when they joined 233 Operational Conversion Unit, which later became 20 (R) Squadron.

Now it is the turn of units from No 3 Flying Training School, an RAF organisation headquartered at RAF Cranwell, responsible for the Elementary Flying Training of novice pilots from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

After landing, the Tutors were towed into the Gaydon hangar, which housed the V-Bombers during the 1950s and 1960s. The hangar has been extensively refitted for the new aircraft, which will eventually number around 25.

Squadron Leader Ben Plank, officer commanding of the University of London Air Squadron, and one of the first pilots to land at his squadron's new home, said: "So much of Wittering's

history has been about flying training, it feels right to be here. The new facilities are first class, and you can see just how hard the Station has prepared for our arrival, for ex Harrier guys like myself it's great."

The Station's preparations have been extensive and thorough, starting with the reactivation of the airfield and air traffic control, through to the installation of radar and the construction of two new buildings for the incoming Squadrons.

Wing Commander James Lapsley, the officer responsible for readying RAF Wittering for its return to flying, said: "This has been a massive task and it's involved almost every section on the Station, but we've done it. The measure of our success will be seen in a year's time, when the new squadrons have fully integrated with the Station and flying is as much a part of life at RAF Wittering as it was in the Harrier and V-Bomber days."

Station Commander Gp Capt Damian Alexander said: "I think we need to recognise just how remarkable this event is; not just in terms of its historical significance, but also in terms of the work that's been done to bring us to this stage."

He added: "The reactivation of a military airfield is a very rare thing, but air power is why we're here. The A4 Force enables and supports deployed air power; and the cadets and students who learn to fly here could well become the pilots we support on deployed ops in years to come."



Harrier Pilot Returns T

Former Harrier pilot Commander Neil Bing has returned to Wittering as the new Officer in Charge of Flying.

Commander Bing, a Royal Navy pilot with two decades of experience on Harriers and Sea Harriers, works for No. 3 Flight Training School, an RAF organisation which is wholly responsible for Elementary Flying

Training for the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

Working between RAF Cranwell and RAF Wittering, Commander Bing will oversee the flying dimension of the Station's return to routine aviation and define those all important procedures that ensure aircraft safety in the air and on the ground.

By the end of June 2015 around 25 Grob Tutor aircraft will be based at RAF Wittering. The first squadrons arrived during the first week of February.

Four squadrons and one air experience flight will fly from RAF Wittering.



To Wittering

Commander Bing said: "This is a rare privilege, to reintroduce flying to a Station and set the tone for flying operations. It's good to be back at Wittering, but the reintroduction of flying is a serious task so there's very little time for nostalgia."

Station Commander, Gp Capt Damian Alexander said: "Neil certainly has his work cut out but his knowledge and experience, combined with his familiarity with RAF Wittering, are huge assets in the task ahead."

PHOTO: Commander Neil Bing in his Harrier days.



Air Traffic Control Begins New Phase

Air traffic control services at RAF Wittering entered a new era as the Station began a joint civilian and military venture.

A civilian team from Babcock International is managing the Station's airfield and the visual airspace, while a Royal Air Force team runs the radar approach room and the wider radar controlled area.

Military and civilian air traffic controllers work together in key locations, such as the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) control centre at Swanwick, but arrangements such as this are extremely rare at RAF stations.

Both the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Military Aviation Authority (MAA) have been instrumental in forging this agreement, but ultimate responsibility for the safe operation of the airfield will remain with the Royal Air Force.

Wing Commander James Lapsley, Officer Commanding Operations Wing, said: "This is an innovative arrangement, and I know that the Babcock International and Royal Air Force teams will work well together to deliver first class air safety."

Leading the Babcock International team is Mrs Sally Belshaw. Sally brings her wealth of experience from RAF Wyton, where she has been an air traffic controller for 16 years.

Mrs Belshaw said: "It's an amazing time to be at RAF Wittering, and all of us are looking forward to working with our RAF colleagues as the Station returns to full-time flying."

Military and civilian air traffic controllers are qualified to equivalent standards and must ensure that procedures comply with established air safety regulations.

PHOTO: The Air Traffic Control Team in action.

Green Light For New Radar

Following weeks of testing and calibration, RAF Wittering's new Watchman radar has been declared fully operational.

Air Traffic Controllers at Wittering were given the all clear by the Royal Air Force Standards and Evaluation Team (STANEVAL) from RAF Shawbury to control aircraft movements within visual range of the airfield.

Engineers then signed off the new Watchman radar and handed the equipment into the permanent care of the Station's Ground Radio Maintenance Section in preparation for the arrival of the flying squadrons in February.

The new radar gives RAF Wittering controllers the ability to safely control aircraft far beyond the Station's visual circuit.

Controllers in the tower generally manage aircraft within airfield visual circuit, but their colleagues in the radar room control aircraft many miles beyond and can provide a service to pilots in poor weather when the ground or other aircraft can't be seen.

The radar was assembled by the Royal Air Force's 90 Signals Unit based at RAF Leeming, while construction firm Morgan Sindall, under contract to Babcock Dyncorp, built the radar tower.

Technical and project management was provided by the Air Defence & Air Traffic

Systems Team at RAF Henlow, which is part of Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S).

Group Captain Damian Alexander, Station Commander at RAF Wittering, cut the turf in a ceremony which marked the beginning of the radar installation in May 2014. He said: "Not many Station Commanders return their Stations to airborne operations, and I'm very lucky to have watched RAF Wittering grow in capability."

"RAF personnel, their civilian counterparts and contractors, have all worked very hard to bring us to this stage. It's a genuine step forward for the Station, and one that increases our contribution to Defence."

PHOTO: From left: RAF Wittering Controllers Flight Sergeant Chris Reed, Warrant Officer Simon Sherwin (standing), Sergeant Ben Marilton and Sergeant John Orme.





2 MT Squadron Garden Of Remembrance

A memorial garden in remembrance of 2 Mechanical Squadron personnel who have given their lives in the performance of their duty has been officially dedicated in a special ceremony.

RAF Wittering chaplain, Reverend Squadron Leader Ian Brown led a short service of dedication attended by over 50 squadron members.

The garden, the brainchild of SAC Paul Crawley, was designed and built by SAC Dean McAulay and SAC Crawley. Funding was provided by RAF Wittering Servicemen's Independence Fund (SIF).

SAC McAulay said: "We wanted to do something nice, but we also thought about making something that 2MT could all share and enjoy. The Squadron's been very supportive, and the SIF has been fantastic."

Squadron Leader Nick White, officer commanding 2 MT Squadron said: "I think the lads have done very well, and they've been properly supported by the Squadron throughout the project. As a result, the garden is a fitting and tasteful memorial."

2MT's Garden of Remembrance will remain tended and well cared for by volunteers from the Squadron.

PHOTOS: A wreath of poppies donated by 2 MT Squadron.



RAF Wittering Marks Remembrance Day

Wittering personnel honoured the Fallen at Remembrance Services in Stamford, Peterborough and Oakham.

A detachment from 3 Sqn RAF Regiment led the Remembrance Parade in Stamford attended by veterans and members of all three armed forces. Wreaths were laid at the town's war memorial by Stamford Mayor Coun Clement Walden and RAF Wittering Station Commander, Gp Capt Damian Alexander.

RAF Wittering personnel were also present at a parade and service at Peterborough Cathedral, while No. 504 (County of Notts) Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadron attended a service of remembrance at Oakham's All Saint's Church.

On November 11 itself, over 300 Station personnel from RAF Wittering gathered in the hangar of 2 Mechanical Transport Squadron for a special service of remembrance.

Gp Capt Alexander said: "Everybody deserves an opportunity to reflect on the Fallen. The breadth of our Remembrance Day coverage; Stamford, Peterborough, Oakham, Wittering and many other villages, demonstrates that RAF Wittering personnel feel privileged to help in that process."





Tower Of London Poppies

Wittering personnel were among the hundreds of volunteers who helped with the ceramic poppy memorial that filled the moat at the Tower of London.

The major art installation, entitled Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, marked the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. It was created by artists Paul Cummins and Tom Piper and comprised of 888,246 ceramic poppies, each one representing a British military fatality during the war.

1 EL Sqn's Tribute at the Tower

Ten personnel from 1 EL Sqn were among the army of volunteers that helped dismantle the Tower's ceramic poppy memorial.

The day, organised by Sgt Jackson, began with a visit to the Imperial War Museum where the group looked at the large exhibition on the First World War. This was very informative and showed courage of each soldier fighting and horrendous conditions they endured. There was a small display depicting the most recent War in Afghanistan.

After lunch the group joined the volunteers on a four-hour shift to help with the task of dismantling the memorial. Having seen the moat on television, the group thought they knew what to expect but on seeing the



memorial close up, the sheer size and colour blew them away and the experience really brought home the huge loss of life for those young men in the First World War.

The overriding feeling of everyone on the day was that the team must never forget the sacrifices made by all those men and women in the conflicts of the past.



Reservists Remember The Fallen At The Tower Of London

Members of RAF Wittering's Reservists 504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron helped to 'plant' commemorative poppies at the Tower of London.

The day was organised by Cpl Ritchie Curtis, a full-time reservist and chef-instructor in 504 Squadron, the first logistics unit in the Royal Air Force Reserve.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Tower on the same day, which

further added to the special sense of occasion for Squadron personnel.

SAC Andy Fretwell, an RAF Reservist for six years, said: "It was a very moving experience. Seeing it from the top it was just a sea of red but in the moat, with the poppies, you realised that each one represented a life lost and that's when the reality hit home. We placed the poppies at a reasonable rate, but they lost lives much quicker than that."

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Operation GRITROCK

Sqn Ldr Olivia Steel reports on the work being conducted by 1 Air Mobility Wing to help with the Ebola crisis.

Being prepared for that phone call that gives you minimum notice to deploy, minimum details of where you are going and what you'll be doing and no definite recovery date is routine business on 1 AMW. When the call came, I was briefed to prepare to deploy with the Joint Force Logistic Component (JFLogC) as their SO2 Air Mov to West Africa for a period of one month.

On arrival in Accra (Ghana) the British High Commission initially became our base as we sought to get into the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) HQ to make an assessment on how we could assist. It was clear that the HQ was in a state of flux and our involvement would need to be orchestrated carefully so as not to undermine or stall their efforts.

My role crystallized one morning when a representative from the German equivalent of DFID arrived at the HQ with an offer of assistance. Germany had five million euros available to purchase medical aid locally and fly it into the three affected countries, and had provided three C160 transport aircraft, pro bono, to the UN and the German government was wondering why they weren't being tasked. Apparently, they had forward based themselves in Dakar but other than flying in five tonnes of German aid direct from Germany they had been doing very little. I suggested that I could find something for these aircraft to do if I

was given the opportunity to task them on behalf of UNMEER.

What seemed to be to be a very simple Air Movements role did not sit well with the UNMEER Chief of Operations. A UN veteran of 20 years, his approach to military assistance was one of contempt and bemusement; I can only assume that his experience of working with the military hadn't always been good. Undeterred, I was sure I could convince him of the utility of the aircraft despite his insistence that he did not want his logistics CONOPS being determined by the military. The only way to convince him was to show him and I adopted the good old movements adage - act now, apologise later!

First task was to establish contact with the German C160 Det, a more difficult task than expected, pursuing several avenues before finally making contact with a German Major. He was understandably keen to get working after two weeks of doing nothing more than sunbathing. We chatted through my plan and, between us, created a flying programme running from Dakar to Accra and then into the main airports of the three affected countries. The C160s would temporarily base themselves in Ghana for the week, returning to Senegal at the weekend for a crew and frame change. Each daily sortie would move between seven to 10 tonnes of humanitarian aid from the UN Humanitarian Relief Depot in Accra.

With a workable flying programme and a warehouse full of freight, all I needed was a Mobile Air Movements Team to build and load the freight. Convinced that the German Air Force must have this capability, I asked the Det Cdr to send me a team, which was subsequently deployed to Accra. Operating as a Liaison/ Duty Air Movements Officer for the Det, I ensured that the ground handling for the aircraft and crew was in place and we began the task of loading the first pallets of humanitarian freight.



Unlike a UK task, the call forward of freight was disjointed and in some cases non-existent. The decision behind what freight was delivered sat with the UNMEER HQ and, in some respects, myself and the crew. It was clear that to enable the in-country logistics hubs to establish themselves they needed infrastructure and while the demand had been for medical personal protective equipment (PPE), the first C160 load to leave Accra was three marquee-style storage structures. Following that, we prepared and moved tonnes of tents, blankets and tarpaulins to accommodate those people who had moved from the villages into the towns to get medical aid; high energy biscuits to feed families and patients, medical PPE and 4WD vehicles that could drive on the dirt tracks.

A daily cycle of prepping freight and loading the aircraft began and the crews were often up against their crew duty hours. The biggest challenge was establishing contact with the UN reps at the airports in the three affected countries, whose experience of working with military aircraft was often non-existent.

After one month, I left Ghana and was replaced by the charismatic and energetic Flt Lt Dan Woollard, 1 AMW. In the time I was there the German C160s moved almost 80 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the countries that needed it most.



Ex FUELS ENDEAVOUR

Members of 1 EL Sqn Fuel Support Team deployed to the Falkland Islands to take part in the annual deployed fuels exercise, Ex FUELS ENDEAVOUR 14.

They were joined by fellow fuels specialists from Tactical Supply Wing (TSW), to be part of "Air's" footprint for the Exercise.

From the very beginning the different climate, which only the Falklands Islands can deliver, proved extremely challenging for the 1 ELS/TSW personnel. It was made even more treacherous by the lack of ozone layer as well as a severe shortage in supply of sun cream on the whole island! However as predicted, dealing with the wind proved to be the most testing factor, where at times (gusting 60 mph +) it made construction and operation of the Primary Bulk Fuel Installation extremely difficult. Yet despite all of this, the attitude and work ethic shown by the 1 ELS/TSW personnel was outstanding. On a daily basis the team had to work extremely long days to achieve tasks that were extended significantly by the weather. However, valuable lessons were learned and the training objectives were achieved, one of which was to construct a 650m cross-country pipeline system.

Throughout, and as with all exercises, there were extremely frustrating times, especially when equipment didn't work and when sunburnt faces began to take their toll. However, interoperability between 1 ELS and TSW was excellent with both sets of personnel learning from each others' fuels knowledge. Next year's Ex promises to be no different, with the prospect of exercising in a new climate in the form of Malaysia. Hopefully the wind will be a little more bearable.

An introduction to...

20 Works Group Royal Engineers

Back in December 2012, with the closure of Waterbeach Barracks imminent, the headquarters element of 20 Works Group Royal Engineers (Air Support) arrived at RAF Wittering. After adjusting to life on an RAF Station and working alongside their 'light blue' cousins, the Unit soon settled in and has now established itself fully within Station life.

Originally located at RAF Benson, the Unit was formed in September 1992 titled Commander Royal Engineers (Airfields). This was after a report published by the Defence Work Planning Team recommended that the RAF should incorporate Royal Engineers in its peacetime work organisation. It was decided that the Royal Engineers would provide an Establishment Works Consultant on each Priority One station. Between Sep 1992 – Dec 1996 Royal Engineers were established at RAF Ascension Island, Brize Norton, Bruggen, Coningsby, High Wycombe, Kinloss, Laarbruch, Leeming, Leuchars, Lossiemouth, Marham, Odiham and Waddington.

In 1997 the Unit was renamed Works Group Royal Engineers (Airfields). The Royal Engineers at RAF Ascension Island, Bruggen, Kinloss, Laarbruch, Lossiemouth and Waddington were transferred to Defence Estates.

By May 2009 the Unit had transferred from the Air Force to the Army and the Headquarters moved from RAF Benson to Waterbeach Barracks, in doing so they then came under 12 (Air Support) Engineer Group and inherited 529 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (STRE). The transfer presented an opportunity to combine the



Facilities Management Role in support of the UK Main Operating Bases (MOB) with support to operations on all Deployed Operating Bases; specialising in 'The Big Six', Aircraft Operating Surfaces (AOS), Bulk Fuel Installations (BFI), Explosive Storage Areas (ESA), Force Protection Works, Domestic Accommodation and Technical Accommodation.

Recently the Unit has been heavily involved in several Operations and Exercises. In 2014 alone, their soldiers have deployed to Lithuania, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, much of the Middle East, Chad, Cyprus and Kenya. In addition they supported the Commonwealth Games.

The Royal Engineers not only work hard, they play hard too! In what was an extremely busy year in 2014 they still found time to enjoy a week of skiing in Les Deux Alps, France and 10-day trek across the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. They also organised a 680-mile charity cycle ride from RAF Leuchars to RAF Odiham, raising over £4,000 in the process, which was split between the Royal British Legion and Toe In The Water. On top of all this, they still managed to fully compete in the Station Commander's Cup and were crowned champions after the final event of the year-long competition.

The Unit organisation has recently been in a state of transition, as of February 2015 the Wks Gp will consist of 529 STRE (Wittering), 531 STRE (Waddington), 532 STRE (Coningsby), 533 STRE (Wattisham) and 534 STRE (Marham). The newly formed STREs will be centrally supported by the Headquarters here at Wittering with the aim of providing a deployable air-minded team of specialist engineers in support of Air Operations worldwide.

PHOTOS: (Top) Station Commander Gp Capt Damian Alexander presents the COs Cup to Sgt Andy Lang.

(Below) 20 Works Group Royal Engineers (Air Support) organised a 680-mile charity cycle ride from RAF Leuchars to RAF Odiham and raised £4,000.



3 Sqn RAF Regiment

In the lead up to disbandment in April 2015, 3 Squadron RAF Regiment has been proactively ensuring that all of its gunners depart the Squadron this year appropriately qualified to undertake their next roles throughout the RAF FP Force.

November 2014 saw those SACs who have the potential for promotion to Lance Corporal (L/Cpl), undertake a challenging two-week pre-promotion cadre. The first week at RAF Wittering taught them tactics, command principles and how to operate as a second in command on a section. This culminated in a week's exercise at Stanford Training Area (STANTA), where these new skills were tested in a series of flight level patrols and deliberate operations, ending in the defence of a Forward Operating Base (FOB). Subsequently, several of the SACs were selected for promotion on the Squadron to fill the void left by the outgoing L/Cpls.

The Squadron have continued to fundraise for the RAF Benevolent Fund after the tragic passing of SAC Andy Hallam last year. His personal effects were very kindly donated by his family to be auctioned for the RAF Benevolent Fund. Some outstanding bidding from Andy's friends and peers

provided the majority of the £2,815.10 raised. SAC Greg Curtis also raised the significant sum of £180 competing in Spartan Beast; a Half Marathon Obstacle Race.

The year started with an excellent Live Field Firing Package for the entire Squadron. A delightful snow covered Otterburn Training Area, in Northumberland, provided the arduous conditions to test the gunner's professional capability and mettle. The range package began with gunners being assessed individually on their shooting and field craft skills. The package then progressively built up to operating at fire-team (four men), section (eight men), through flight level, culminating with a squadron level attack on the final day. The gunners performed admirably and, with continuous mentoring and feedback throughout the 10 days, developed leadership and management skills in some truly testing conditions.

Looking forward to the rest of 2015, the Squadron will be providing critical support to Hunter Guard Force at

RAF St Mawgan, where tracking and patrolling skills will be tested in pursuit of individuals on the Escape and Evade section of the Survive, Evade, Resist, Extract (SERE) course. Following this, the Squadron focus will turn to the preparation for the formal disbandment activities on April 14, 2015. These activities will include a formal parade and dinner attended by notable dignitaries and will include former Squadron Commanders, Warrant Officers and ex-3 Squadron personnel. The final formal ceremony will see the laying up of the Squadron Standard in the College Hall Officers' Mess at RAF College Cranwell, shortly after the parade in April.

Postings for Squadron personnel have already begun, and will continue throughout the Spring and Summer until all personnel have left the Station by November 2015. The Squadron will continue to actively engage in all aspects of station life, and we collectively pass on our sincere thanks to all who are involved in the sustained support during the draw-down of the Squadron.

Fg Off Mark Gleeson



Afghan Ants 5001 Sqn in Afghanistan

As the UK's combat operations in Afghanistan came to an end, the 'Ants' of 5001 Sqn were called into action.



Their primary task was to dismantle the myriad Temporary Working Environment (TWE) buildings that had been erected in support of 904 Expeditionary Air Wing at Kandahar Airfield. Simultaneously, a secondary task arose to erect new buildings in support of the emerging Op TORAL; the UK's ongoing commitment to mentoring the Afghan Security Forces. After carrying out a recce to scope the scale of the task earlier in the year, it was in early October that the first of the teams deployed to Kabul to begin the key task of building a 25 metre Rapid Environmental Shelter (RES) ready to house what became the UK Aviation Detachment for Op TORAL. This team, led by Sgts Moxam and Scott, had a difficult task, as not only were they tasked with building one hangar from the components of two that had been dismantled at Camp Bastion in an area barely bigger than the building itself, they also arrived to find the concrete base not yet completed. So in time-honoured RAF fashion they rolled up their sleeves and got to work laying concrete, repairing plant and sorting through the massive pile of metal that was to become a building.

Meanwhile in Kandahar, a further two teams, led by FS Davies, were pulling down buildings faster than they could be vacated as well as sending key components taken from the buildings at Kandahar to the team at Kabul allowing them to complete their build on time and redeploy down to Kandahar to continue the dismantling process. In and amongst dismantling the buildings, the teams found time to rub shoulders with royalty as Prince Harry visited for Remembrance Sunday, and they even held a bone crunching game of inter-team football which saw SAC(T) Jeffery CASEVAC'd back to the UK with a dislocated ankle (after two minutes on the pitch and before a ball had even been kicked).

This was not the end of the Squadron involvement in Afghanistan. Barely had the teams unpacked from the Kandahar task when a further tasking came in and a team deployed under the command of Sgt Kennel, this time to Kabul's green zone to build a bespoke building to house a REME vehicle workshop. Deploying early December, the team faced mountainous logistical challenges from the start when the building failed to arrive in theatre and the ground works at the site had yet to be completed. Frenzied efforts both in the UK and in theatre finally saw the build completed in time for the Team to travel home on the last flight before Christmas, arriving back at Wittering on December 23, marking the end of long and busy year.

Ft Lt D Phillips, OC Ops, 5001 Sqn

A Year As An RAF Part-Time Volunteer Reservist

Having completed their first year as RAF Part-Time Volunteer Reservists (PTVR) on 504 Squadron, Aircraftmen Ian Campbell and Jade Lawson share their thoughts on what they have achieved.

What was your Motivation to join as a PTVR?

Ian: "I wanted to do something that wasn't part of my day-to-day life and the RAF reserves offered me the chance to receive training in a field I knew nothing about while retaining my job and gaining extra qualifications."

Jade: "My plan was to join full time, however it was taking so long for the application process that I considered the RAF Reserves to keep me motivated until the regulars were ready for me."

What do you see as the benefits of becoming a PTVR?

Ian: "The training and extra qualifications are certainly worth joining for and the friendships that are made are for life. I have done so much at 504 Sqn, such as training courses, parades, shooting, scuba, parachuting and even took time out to go travelling in Croatia with Jade and another Sqn member. Ultimately you can do as much as you can fit in."

Jade: "I have had the opportunity to go on two parachute jumps, a five-day exercise in field crafts,

and a military skills competition at Altcar Army Barracks, near Liverpool. I attended a 504 Sqn Force Development Event; it comprised planting ceramic poppies at the Tower of London to commemorate First World War and we undertook the Battle of Britain Heritage Tour, reflecting on 504 Sqn's specific role in the historic battle."

How do you manage to balance the demands of PTVR Service with your full-time employment?

Ian: "I have found it easy enough to fit in my reserve commitment with my day job, as an independent councillor, and have found time to participate in extra activities, but I suppose it all depends on your relationship with your employer. The Sqn staff help you with employer relations and invite them on social events to get to know them. I think it's important to be upfront with your employer with what you're planning and what you'd like to do with the Reserves."

How have your achievements been recognised?

Jade: "I was presented with the Suzi Award and the Honorary Air Commodore's Cup. Both were amazing to receive. The Suzi Award was very special as it was an anonymous vote from Sqn personnel and awarded to the person who demonstrated commitment to his fellow airmen/women throughout all aspects of training. It just showed me that you are recognised for the things you do, even if it is on one weekend a month."

Ian: "The Squadron holds an Annual Awards Function in December. We were both presented

with awards by the Squadron's Honorary Air Commodore, Dr Stephen Howard. My award was the Best New Recruit, which is awarded to the Sqn member who has, displayed the greatest ability throughout Phase 1 & 2 training. I must say I was surprised but delighted and proud to win it at the same time."

Your first year is now complete. What are your Service aspirations for the future?

Ian: "I want to gain as many qualifications as possible so that I can be deployable within the supply trade. I would also like to work my way up the rank structure to eventually take a commission within the Reserves to achieve more responsibility and even greater challenges."

Jade: "This year I am seeking to join the Regular RAF. I have loved my time in the Reserves and being part of 504 Squadron; however, I think its time to spread my wings a bit further and join full time. I would like to be deployed to the Falklands in the near future."



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RAF Wittering Football Club

Since the last article went to press both teams have seen a poor run of form, with the Christmas break doing little to help.

While the A team have had success in the RAF Cup, Qualifying for the RAF Plate quarter finals, their league form has suffered, achieving only one win, one draw and three defeats in their last five league fixtures.

The B team have lost four on the bounce, possibly down to a lack of continuity of players, with a large part of the team coming from 3 Sqn RAF Regiment who are slowly being posted out of the unit. A three-week break in fixtures is an ideal opportunity to re-focus and start again.

At the time of writing this, the A team was looking forward to the Quarter final of the RAF Cup to be played in early February. This could either be a springboard to move forward and re-find our fine form from the beginning of the season, or could be a huge distraction. Having three players representing the RAF Mens

Development Squad on the evening before the game is not an ideal situation (unfortunately Sgt Tippets is not Sir Alex Ferguson and cannot withdraw these players from the RAF Squad) but it is testament to the players' abilities and attitude towards representative sport at both RAF and Station Level.

A number of players have stepped up from the B team to the A team this season, showing that our ethos of 'one club, two teams' is working, and this is not a typical station football team in which the same 11 players are selected week in week out. If you work hard and show a positive attitude to the team, you will be rewarded for it!

For those of you who are new to the Station or want to play football, training is held on a Monday evening 1730 – 1900hrs. Just turn up. Players of all experiences are welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information please contact SAC Ant Rigby on ext 6395.



The CO's Cup

2014 was an excellent year for the CO's Cup.

The competition ran from February through to December and included the following sports: unihoc, football, dodge ball, tag rugby, fun run, rounders, volleyball, basketball, bowling and the quiz. It was the first year that 3 Sqn RAF Regt joined the competition and what a start they made. They quickly became one of the key contenders for the title and made the rest of the teams really step up their efforts. The top three teams were:

Position	Team	Total points
1st place	20 Wks Gp (RE)	142
2nd place	2 MT Sqn	133
3rd place	3 Sqn	120

2015 promises to be yet another exciting year for the competition. However, a number of changes have been made to help include all abilities and engage the 'Whole Force' concept. Firstly, there can be more than one team from each section (A/B teams) although only one team can score points and this must be decided before the event starts. Secondly, a number of the regular sports have changed just to keep everyone on their toes. New sports that have been introduced are; bucketball, potted sports, superstars, kwik-cricet, sports day, adventure race and seated volleyball.

To ensure your team does well in the competition, there are a few things you can do to keep yourself in the running. Each section has a CO's Cup Rep/Deputy and they are informed of the details a few weeks prior to the event date, so ensure you make contact early and get a team to enter the event. If you don't enter a team for an event then you will get no points at all, however, if you enter a team you can gain three to 15 points. You should also use your Joker-Card wisely, this gives you double points for one event only, so if you come first and get 15 points and you played your joker you will be awarded 30 points.

For any further information regarding the CO's Cup then please make contact with your CO's Cup rep, or ask a member of the PED Flt. Keep up the training and we look forward to seeing you at the competition.

Cpl Steven Morgan



Christmas Truce Football Match

Along the Western Front on Christmas Day 1914 soldiers from Britain and Germany downed their weapons and competed in a Christmas Truce Football Match, a game that according to reports finished 3-2 to Germany.

Fast forward 100 years, change the location to RAF Wittering, and a similar match took place between a team consisting of Junior Ranks and Civil Servants versus SNCOs and Officers.

The game was organised by SACs Paul Gibbons and Becky Croker after seeing a campaign from the Football Association to remember the 100 year anniversary since the Truce. To recreate the match from 100 years ago, teams played in issued DPM trousers and boots on a non-standard football pitch, using a leather football, kindly donated by 'Something Sporty'.

At half-time there was only a one goal difference, with the SNCOs and Officers more than holding their own against their younger opponents.

Whether there was something in the soup or an inspirational half-time team talk, the Junior Ranks and Civil Servants upped their game in the second half and eventually pulled away from their opponents. Although the SNCOs and Officers

remained competitive right up to the final whistle, they were always playing catch up.

A member of the SNCOs' and Officers' team said: "This was a really hard game, playing in issued boots and full DPM on a muddy pitch. It was really quite authentic, although apart from OC Ops Wg's wayward shooting, we were not in any real danger like our colleagues were 100 years ago."

Players were presented with a bottle of Spitfire beer for their efforts before a raffle was drawn consisting of over 20 prizes from companies across the country.

A total of £250 was raised in aid of the Forces Children's Trust.

SAC Gibbons said: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to the Forces Children's Trust for supporting the event by supplying t-shirts and an even bigger thank you to the numerous companies that supported the raffle by donating prizes ranging from a two-week family pass at Virgin Active to a term of diving lessons at Peterborough Diving".

SAC Paul Gibbons

Community News



Youngsters National Memorial Arboretum Trip

Members of Wittering's Airplay paid a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum to lay a wreath on behalf of the young people of the Station.

The group of youngsters, aged 9-15 years, also decided the message they wanted to write on the wreath. It read:

'Our hearts go out to the service personnel and their families who have sacrificed so much for us. Our thanks and love, Airplay @ RAF Wittering.'

It proved an emotional, but also a positive visit. Community Development Officer Mark Davis said: "It was a thought-provoking trip for young people and adults; young people were very engaged and interested in the cruelty of war, and there was a lively and sensitive discussion.

"We came across a poppy cross that had a name of a soldier aged 19 who died in the Second World War and young people reflected on how young he was. This gave young people the reality that soldiers that lost their lives were not much older than themselves."



Find out what activities and deployed families events are happening in and around RAF Wittering.

Deployed Families Trips and Activities

- Free bowling at Wittering Café Bowl for families of deployed personnel. Come to the HIVE and pick up a voucher; contact the Bowl to arrange a time and enjoy some ten pin bowling.
- Family tickets to visit Sacrewell Farm are available from the HIVE office.
- Deployed Families Coffee Morning takes place on the first Tuesday of every month in the Real Bean Café on camp between 1000-1100hrs. Come along and meet other deployed families and some of the community support team at RAF Wittering.
- While deployed on Ops you are entitled to claim Free Leisure Vouchers which are to be used on a family orientated activity. Vouchers can be claimed from date of deployment. All personnel must be deployed for a minimum of 28 consecutive days.
- April - Whipsnade Zoo; June - Warwick Castle. Dates and times to be confirmed.

To be eligible to attend trips or any of the above events the service person needs to be deployed for 28 consecutive days. If you are interested in any of the above activities please call me in the HIVE on 01780 417541 or email Sophie at WitSptHiveInfoOfficer@mod.uk

National Families Week

A whole host of events are being held as part of National Families Week:

- A Families Picnic is being held on Tuesday, May 26 on the sports field behind the Community Centre. Attractions will include a bouncy castle, face painter and children's entertainer. In the event of wet weather, the picnic will take place inside the Community Centre.
- A trip to the seaside, open to the whole of the RAF Wittering Community, is taking place on Wednesday, May 27.
- Zoo Lab Mini Beast sessions are taking place in the Stamford Suite on Thursday, May 28. Sessions for different age groups throughout the day.

- A family bowling day will be held at the Wittering Bowl between 1100-1500hrs on Friday, May 29. It will be £1 per game, thanks to ISS.

For more information about events taking place during National Families Week contact the HIVE on 01780 417541 or email Sophie at WitSptHiveInfoOfficer@mod.uk

Mums and Tots

The Mums and Tots sessions are held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Community Centre on Welland Road, on camp from 0945-1130hrs and on Tuesday from 1300-1500hrs for a trial period. Pop in, have a natter and meet some new people. For more information contact Sophie West at the HIVE on tel. 01780 417541.

Children's Centre

The Wittering Children's Centre is based at Wittering Primary School. It is open Monday to Friday during term time only with different activities taking place daily. The baby clinic is held twice a month. For more information contact tel. 01780 782236.



HIVE Clinic Times

Legal Clinic - Buckles Solicitors visit the HIVE office twice a month to hold a 30 minute free legal clinic on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, 1000-1200hrs.

Rutland Citizens Advice visit the HIVE office on a fortnightly basis, 0930-1200hrs.



For all of the above clinics please make an appointment call 01780 417541 WitSptHive InfoOfficer@mod.uk

SSAFA Big Brew Up

Krispy Kreme doughnuts and homemade cakes with a cuppa proved popular at the SSAFA Big Brew Up.

Volunteers served up the tasty treats to personnel visiting the Real Bean Café and managed to raise £123.11.

Meanwhile a second SSAFA Big Brew Up was held in the Atrium of Peterborough City Hospital. Goody bags containing everything people needed to take part in the event - tea, milk, sugar and a cookie - were handed out for a donation and they managed to raise £215.71.

- If you need help or would like to be part of the SSAFA team do not hesitate to get in touch! All you need to do is contact Volunteer Co-ordinator Sgt Sarah Barrow on 07717 858008. You can find out more about the charity by visiting their website www.ssafo.org.uk or following them on Twitter @SSAFA.



Community Covenant

Community Development Officer Mark Davies reflects on the changes that have taken place at RAF Wittering since the signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant three years ago.

In January 2012 Peterborough City Council signed the Peterborough Armed Forces Community Covenant. Wittering is also a partner on Peterborough & Cambridgeshire Community Covenant Board and last year signed up and joined the Stamford Community Covenant Board.

So what has happened; RAF Wittering and Peterborough City Council have focused on utilising funding from the MOD Community Covenant grant fund to support projects which brings the civilian and military communities together.

So far we have been successful in securing funding for four applications totalling £67,214 with two further bids awaiting a board decision.

One of the bids, for £49,000, was to extend the service provision at the Wittering Family Centre as funding from the local authority was coming to an end. In partnership with Mr Rhys Thrower, Wittering Primary School headteacher, we worked hard to secure a valuable community resource in the heart of the village which supports both service and civilian parents. We celebrated with the grand opening of the Families Centre by Her Royal Highness, Sophie, the Countess of Wessex who took part in one of the sessions with the families.

We were also successful in securing funding for a new village wooden sign. The sign was designed by children from Wittering Primary School year 6. They took part in a design competition and were asked to reflect village life, history and the relationship with the RAF. Once a design was approved by the Parish Council a local woodcarver was employed. A prominent site was chosen for the sign so everyone entering from the A1 would see. This was very much a community project involving Wittering Primary School, the Station and Wittering Parish Council, Mr Geoff Dunkley who acted as project officer and overseeing this community project. Funding received £5,000.

Kings Cliffe Under 10s football team needed a new kit and a full tracksuit kit. After trying a number of options we were approached to see if



we could support. An application form was submitted by the Secretary Debbie Clancy with support from the head coach Flt Sgt Hodgson. The team has service children as well as a number from the village and surrounding area. The funding application of £750 was successful and the team look very smart, they feel like they are a team and are proud to play for Kings Cliffe under 10s.

A fourth successful application of £12,464 was granted to our Flying Start Childcare setting at Wittering to upgrade the outdoor area and Iwalda Steyn, the manager is currently spending the money to upgrade play equipment and enhance the outdoor facilities.

With all of our applications we have worked in partnership with our local authority partner Peterborough City Council especially, Ian Phillips, Social Inclusion Manager, who have been incredibly supportive and ensured all applications have met with the MOD criteria.

Finally, are you a volunteer, a trustee of a community group or work in a school setting? Does your project involve both service and community in bringing people together? If so can funding from the Armed Forces Community Covenant support your group? I am happy to give advice on Community Covenant funding applications and always looking for projects we can support. Please contact Mark Davis MBE, Community Development Officer RAF Wittering – tel. 01780 41 7722 or email WTT-SptCDW@mod.uk

PHOTOS: (Top) Sophie, Countess of Wessex with Ruby. (Below) Photo of Mayor of Peterborough, Wg Cdr Valentine, Debbie Clancy Secretary and coaches and the players from Kings Cliffe Under 10s football club.



Pantomime Entertains RAF Wittering Families

Families at RAF Wittering enjoyed a performance of the pantomime Dick Whittington courtesy of the Panto Bus.

Paid for by The British Forces Foundation, the company of actors was invited to the Station by the Community Support Team to perform two shows in front of families.

Both performances were well supported with about 190 in attendance on the night. Everyone who attended gave a small donation raising a total of £362 for the British Forces Foundation.

HIVE officer Sophie West: "I would like to say thank you to Santa for finding time in his busy schedule to pop in to see us. I would also like to thank the SSAFA in service volunteers who helped with the setting up of the Community Centre and being there as extra helpers throughout the evening."

PHOTO: Panto Bus performers entertained families at RAF Wittering with the pantomime Dick Whittington.

Spooky Fun

Ghosts, witches, pumpkins and skeletons were out in force at Wittering's Family Halloween Party. Over 140 people attended the event with many children and adults getting into the 'spirit' of the occasion by turning up in fancy dress.

As well as a fancy dress competition at the event, which was organised by the Community Support Team supported by SSAFA volunteers, there was also dancing and face painting. Dave the Clown provided the entertainment, the face painting was done by Lollipop Entertainments.

HIVE Information Officer, Sophie West said: "This is one of the best supported events organised by

Community Support Team. Tickets sold out within a week, and we ended up with a waiting list of 40 family members. This year we will need a bigger venue!"

• Watch out for future events – National Families Week and more Family Discos to come.





TEA BREAK TIME



Spot The Difference

Can you spot the 10 differences in these two photographs? Answers at the bottom of page 25.



It's All About the Babes

As spring is about new life, this issue's quiz is offspring related. The following 20 animals have young that are known as cub, pup, kit/kitten, calf, or joey but which are which? Hint - some are known by more than one of the names!

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|------------|
| Aardvark | Gerbil | Rhinoceros |
| Antelope | Hippopotamus | Shark |
| Bat | Kangaroo | Squirrel |
| Buffalo | Koala | Wallaby |
| Camel | Mouse | Weasel |
| Dolphin | Otter | Wombat |
| Ferret | Panther | |

Room for a little one?

Some animals have more unusually named young. How many of these did you know?

- Alpaca and Llama - cria
- Hare - leveret
- Newt - eft
- Pigeon - squab or squeaker
- Platypus and echidna - puggle.

- Answers:
- Cub - Aardvark, Bat, Dolphin, Gerbil, Mouse, Otter, Panther
 - Calf - Antelope, Shark, Squirrel
 - Kit/Kitten - Ferret, Squirrel
 - Joey - Kangaroo, Koala, Wallaby, Wombat
 - Mouse - Mouse, Weasel
 - Pup - Bat, Dolphin, Squirrel, Wallaby, Wombat
 - Rhinoceros - Rhinoceros
 - Shark - Shark
 - Squirrel - Squirrel
 - Wallaby - Wallaby
 - Weasel - Weasel
 - Wombat - Wombat



Just For Fun

Springtime Wordsearch

Which of the spring flowers listed cannot be found in the grid?

S	E	N	O	M	I	L	A	I	C
G	T	N	L	E	L	S	R	E	G
W	U	I	O	I	T	U	L	I	P
F	L	R	L	M	I	P	F	E	O
Y	S	A	S	T	E	R	O	S	E
A	C	C	I	D	E	N	T	Y	N
M	U	A	I	E	Y	S	A	M	Y
K	I	C	S	T	A	E	O	L	L
P	R	I	R	I	S	L	R	A	I
N	A	R	E	B	R	E	G	F	Y

- Acacia
- Anemone
- Aster
- Freesia
- Gerbera
- Iris
- Lily
- Lilac
- Peony
- Rose
- Tulip



Egg Bean Bags

Some cracking little bean bags for you to make, and not a drop of chocolate in sight!

You will need:

Saucer
Disappearing-ink pen OR fine tip felt pen
Felt
Scissors
Needle and thread
Yellow split peas decanted into a small (clean and dry) milk carton



Instructions

1. Draw around the saucer and cut out the felt pieces. Each bean bag requires two felt pieces, plus the accent yolk.



2. Make sure that no pen marks are visible then sew the yolk onto the felt.



3. Place the felt wrong sides together (so the yolk is on the outside) and sew a running stitch ½ cm from the edge, don't forget to leave a suitable gap to fill the bag. Now turn the bag the right way.



4. Loosely fill the shape so that there is space for the peas to move around without the bag splitting.

5. Sew up the gap so that all the stitching is secure – you don't want any escapees (sorry, I couldn't resist it!).

Don't chew the bean bags; split peas should not be eaten raw – and please be careful if you're throwing them indoors.

Wordsearch Answer: Acacia



Answers



Name: Sgt Andy Lang
Role: Chief Draughtsman, 20 Wks Gp RE (Air Sp)
Age: 33
Marital Status: Answers to the long haired General!

In the Hot Seat

1. What part of your job gives you the most satisfaction?

I get great satisfaction in seeing a job through from start to finish which isn't always the case in my profession.

2. And the least?

The time that I ultimately spend away from loved ones.

3. What is the best advice you have ever received?

Everybody makes mistakes, that's why they put a rubber on the end of a pencil.

4. Describe yourself in six words?

Patient, Competitive, Sporty, Perfectionist, Trustworthy and Approachable.

5. What career would you have followed if you had not pursued your current profession?

I imagine I would have become a graphic designer as that was the direction I was heading before I stepped into the Armed Forces Career Office!

6. Is there one piece of criticism that sticks in your mind?

My college tutor didn't agree with my decision to pursue a career in the Armed Forces and she made her feeling quite clear!

7. What would be your first act as World Leader?

I'd introduce a short-term home swap scheme to enable people to see more of the world without costing you a small fortune.

8. Name your desert island essentials?

Sun block, otherwise I'd end up looking like a lobster, my leatherman (any Engineer worth his salt owns one) and my gorgeous partner Zoe Harrison to keep me company.

9. How would you change the MOD?

I'd introduce half-day leave passes rather than using a full day's leave when it isn't

necessary. I'd also investigate why some people struggle to run in straight lines but can quite easily twist, turn and run in all directions on a football pitch!

10. What food would you choose for your last supper?

For starters it would have to be scallops wrapped in streaky bacon followed by a juicy fillet steak with all the trimmings, washed down with a large glass of rioja. Did someone mention dessert?

11. Who do you most admire in the world?

There are many people that I admire in this world for several reasons but the one person I admire the most is my mother. She did a fine job of bringing my sister and I up single handed from an early age, it was a struggle at times but we got there in the end.

12. Name four people you would like as a dinner guest – and why?

My partner Zoe, she has over 180 cook books at home so I'm expecting her to rustle up something delicious for us to eat! Sir David Jason, I grew up on 'Only Fools and Horses'. Sir David Attenborough, to discuss all the weird and wonderful things he has seen. And last but not least Charlize Theron, I'd like to say it's because she's a brilliant actress but it's for other reasons!

13. What one piece of music would you like played at your funeral?

'Proud' by Heather Small. The song takes me back to my early days in basic training and the lyrics can be inspirational.

14. How would you like to be remembered?

Well apart from being the first Engineer team captain to lift the CO's Cup here at Wittering I'd like to be remembered as somebody who had no regrets in life and never looked back.



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**COMING EVENTS
IN STAMFORD**



**DIARY NOTE FOR FORTHCOMING
EVENTS DURING 2015**

- i. Stamford Mid Lent Fair Monday 16 March – Saturday 21 March on the **Meadows and in Town**
- ii. Rotary Club of Stamford St. Martin's Garden Show – Sunday 10 May on the **Meadows**
- iii. Field Dog Antique Fair – Saturday 23 – Monday 25 May on the **Meadows**
- iv. Stamford Festival Parade Saturday 27 June on **Recreation Ground**
- v. Lions Family Fun Day - Sunday 28 June on **Recreation Ground**
- vi. Stamford Burghley Rotary Club Victorian Cricket – Sunday 28 June on the **Meadows**
- vii. Summer Spectacular – Thursday 09 – Sunday 12 July on the **Meadows**
- viii. Stamford Classic Car Show – Sunday 30 August on the **Meadows**
- ix. Stamford Dog Show and Family Fun Day – Sunday 13 September on the **Meadows**
- x. Field Dog Antique Fair – Friday 18 – Sunday 20 September on the **Meadows**
- xi. Georgian Festival Friday 25 – Sunday 27 September on the **Meadows**
- xii. Christmas Festival Including Lights Switch-On - Sunday 29th November

Remember, Stamford has good **FREE car parking** facilities on **Sundays**, so make a note of these dates and be sure to come along with family and friends - and enjoy!

Further details may be obtained from: Stamford Town Hall,
St. Mary's Hill, Stamford PE9 2DR Tel: 01780 753808

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Airplay youth workers	£	50,161
CAB outreach clinic	£	5,000
	£	183,013
	£	183,013

GBP

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If you would like to get involved with fundraising or volunteering for us, please call the regional team on 01491 837 766 ext 5299 or email wittering@rafbf.org.uk

www.rafbf.org

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