

Wycombe World



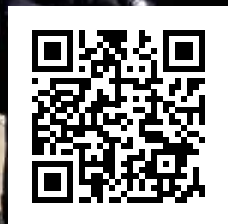


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GORDON'S SCHOOL

Boarding schools have come a long way since the tales of cold showers, uncaring, strict staff and huge dormitories filled with rows of home sick children. These days the emphasis is on patience and guiding students as they navigate social interactions, mental health issues and meeting the high expectations of the school, all that while being away from home for the first time, starting in a new school and living with 30 other peers. In an increasingly uncertain world, boarding provides a balanced, consistent constant.

Nowadays, boarding is often described as 'one big sleepover' by students, who regard it as very much a 'home from home': secure, friendly places where not only can they flourish academically, but also learn tolerance, resilience, discipline, independence - and make life-long friends in the process.

Evenings and weekends are packed with activities, both external and in-house, and as well as large grounds and facilities, children can enjoy the company of perhaps hundreds of others every day and weekend.

Gordon's School, built over a century ago at the express wish of Queen Victoria, as the national monument to General Gordon, is listed as one of Britain's outstanding schools by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. A non-selective, co-educational state day and boarding school, set in some 50 acres of Surrey parkland close to London, the School is in the top 5% of all schools in England and Wales for progress at A Level.

However, Gordon's is so much more than its academic results. The School's ethos is that high performance without good character is not true success. So it's not just the classrooms where students excel. Successes are also achieved in drama; the arts; debating; public speaking; dance and sport and in the enviable record of Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Over 70 per cent of the boarders at Gordon's are from Service or Diplomatic families, attracted to the school by its experience and expertise in looking after these children, who may have been uprooted from many schools and countries before their arrival. Boarding offers these children a constant, a place away from perhaps the worry of a parent on active service.

There are three main admission points – at 11 and 13 years old and for Sixth Form. Those coming into the school in Year 7 as residential boarders, are housed together for the first year, becoming part of the extended Woolwich family, headed by Houseparents Sam and Daisy Cooper.

The Boarding House is run as an extension of their home – the kitchen door is always open and their children and dog running around. Saturday morning pancakes in their kitchen are a weekly treat! Students feel comfortable, safe and secure - it's their term time home and their aim is to make them feel that way.

While extra support may be provided in the classrooms to make up for any gaps in their education or to stretch and challenge the children, Mr and Mrs Cooper see their job as keeping the atmosphere in the boarding house positive, upbeat and fun, as well as helping their charges to become more independent and organised.

All students are encouraged to 'have a go' at sport, whether for their House or School and the school provides every opportunity to progress in their chosen field through the extensive facilities and coaches, many of whom have played on the international arena.

A new sports hub and additional all-weather pitch have been added to the Surrey site and the school partners Harlequins, providing a pathway for talented rugby players to achieve their potential both on and off the pitch. There are also partnerships with Superleague netball club Surrey Storm, Vanarama League Football Club Aldershot Town FC and the National Shooting Centre.

As well as sport, there are over 128 co-curricular choices for students every week, from Brazilian Jujitsu to Robotics Club and every child experiences the thrill of outdoor pursuits through the Combined Cadet Force, a tri-service offering students training in the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force services or through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

While the individual is celebrated, the whole School unites for parades. Since its inception, as a national memorial to General Gordon, students have marched and there has always been a Pipes and Drums band. Dressed in their Blues uniform, the students parade around eight times a year and the school is the only one permitted to march along Whitehall - an annual tradition in remembrance of General Gordon.

The real judgement of Gordon's is the students. Visitors are struck by the friendliness, discipline and vibrancy throughout the school and by the family atmosphere, exemplified by the special rapport between staff and students.



Station Commander's Foreword

Wing Commander Dennis



others. Most recently, a team of 4 RAR Regiment Gunners, including one based at RAF High Wycombe, rowed 3200 miles across the Atlantic from Lanzarote to Antigua for some very good causes. An incredible feat!

credit going to our Station historian, Dave Brown, who continues to engage visitors who come to hear about the story of Bomber Command and the sacrifice of so many of those who served in that force.

On a more sombre note, Station personnel once again joined with various local communities for a series of Remembrance events. Whether that was the Muster on 1 Site which included children from Naphill and Walters Ash Junior School Walters, the All-Saints' Church service at High Wycombe, or the Naphill Village Hall service, all provided an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice of so many members of the Armed Forces. I was particularly touched by the participation in all of these events by younger members of our community including cadets, scouts and guides – and was reassured that together, down the generations, 'we will remember them'.

For those deployed over Christmas, I know that Station staff in the Community Support Team made a huge effort to make sure that all received a package of goodies from home and continue to provide advice and help to those deployed and to their families where needed. Many of those deployed personnel have written to me to express their thanks and to tell me how grateful they felt to have been remembered over the festive season – and so I pass those 'thank you's' on to all involved.

As last year fades into the distance, it is hard to believe that we are already well into 2024. Nevertheless, this edition of Wycombe World does provide an important opportunity to reflect on all that was achieved in 2023, as well as looking forward to the coming year.

It is perhaps a little late for New Year wishes, but I do want to take the opportunity to say that I look forward to continuing to work with you and your families over the coming year and I know that together we will continue to make a difference to those around us both near and far.

I cannot fail but to be impressed by all of our people who work so hard to support such a variety of charities through many different events and initiatives. Whether that be through bake sales, gaming marathons or quiz nights, I am always amazed at the energy and ingenuity of so many people in helping

As we reflect on the past, I note that the Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris room celebrated a milestone last year when I was honoured to become its 6000th visitor. An amazing record, with

Non Sibi

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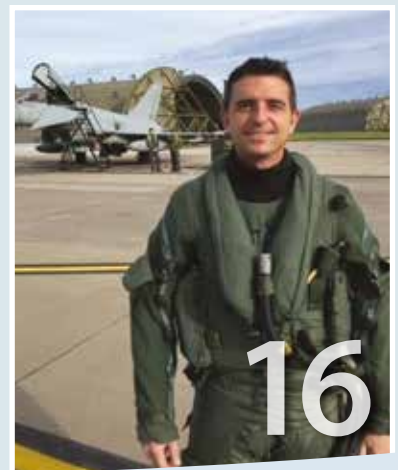
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Submission Deadline...

All articles for the **Spring Issue 1 2024** Edition to be sent to the Editor no later than 1st May 2024 to samuel.butler105@mod.gov.uk. Please send all articles as a word document with all photos and images imbedded with in the article.



Sgt Sam Butler

Good things come to those who wait, at least that's what I've been telling the printers who have repeatedly highlighted this issue of **The Award Winning** (Award Pending) **Wycombe World** was supposed to come out in early Jan.

But trust me, this will be worth the wait. Ever heard of **DAN SNOW**? We've got him. Want an interview with AVM Godfrey about space? Got that too. Oh, what's that? You're more into stories of the people? We have got that in spades!

We've got the Fabulous Four raising money for the Ghurkha Welfare Trust, we've got Cake Sales, Safety Days, Junior Leadership courses, and that's before we even get into the meaty stuff like Flt Lt Trafford's 44 Mile Ultra Marathon Challenge!

What more could you want? An overview of all the Christmas activities? Oh, go on then, our



lead reporter Laurence Parker will even do that for you! Anything for you, the avid readership of Wycombe World!

Enjoy and, as always, if you find yourself doing something good, heroic or funny, please do write into the Wycombe World and tell us about it! Here's to a wonderful year ahead. It's going to be a great one!

Vox Pop

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**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**



THANK YOU

We'd like to thank everyone for their incredible support this year.

Without you donating via Service Day's Pay Giving, completing fundraising challenges, or signposting friends and colleagues who need our help, we wouldn't be able to provide essential support to other RAF serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

Whether it's tackling financial difficulties, providing access to counselling, or offering respite holidays, we've been able to help in so many ways and we'll continue to be here for you for as long as you need.

Your continued support is deeply appreciated, and we look forward to standing side by side with you in 2024. Thank you for being part of our RAF Family!

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COULD YOU DO THE 100?



The Royal Auxiliary Air Force turns 100 years old in 2024! And RAF High Wycombe's Wg Cdr Alfie Hall has found 100 good reasons to celebrate this amazing milestone: 100 10K runs over 100 days!

"I have done marathons, even ultra ones, but people who sponsor want you to do something out of the ordinary," said the Wg Cdr. "Not many can do or have done 100 x 10K runs. I thought it was a good one... partly to get people interested in RAF Aux 100 and partly to raise funds."



The motivation for the seasoned runner is to raise interest in the theme of 100 and to get people active. "Everyone spends a lot of money on gym membership after Christmas and stops using it after a few weeks... But if you add up how far you walk each year, it easily beats 100kms," commented Alfie.

The RAF veteran is well aware that we are living in tough economic times but believes that the British people are a generous nation and want to support good causes.

Enter the one penny challenge.

"I am asking for just one penny for each of the 10Ks that I do. Literally every penny counts. If you have a penny, you can support me.....For me the target is all about participation rather than just fundraising."

Any monies raised are being split between the RAF Benevolent Fund – who support any member of the RAF family – even if they

have only served one day and The Royal Auxiliary Air Force Foundation whose job it is to record the history of reserves and signpost people to sources of help.

"If I get given one penny then you are invested in the aims – awareness of the RAF Benevolent Fund and the comradeship that we all share."

For each run the name of a person taken from the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Foundation Memorial will be on the Wg Cdr's shirt to remember those who are no longer with us.

For more information or to contribute to Wg Cdr Hall's cause, please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/team/RAuxAF100>

Laurence Parker, MCO



SOMETHING TO GET YOUR TEETH INTO...



Dracula would have been proud of the RAF HWY charity Halloween themed cake sale in Café 1 yesterday. His favourite cake was there – vein-ella of course!!!

Huge thanks to Cpl Michelle Jones who hosted the event to generate funds for the three Station Charities we support as an RAF Station (Royal Star & Garter High Wycombe, a national charity, Papyrus and a military charity named Scotty's Little Soldiers). The energetic Cpl, who is also

on the RAF High Wycombe Station Charities Committee said, "the Halloween Cake Sale went exceptionally well, many kindly donated homemade cakes and cookies on the day and everyone was very generous with their donations." The event raised £150. A ghoulish time was obviously had by all!!!



DAN SNOW VISITS THE HARRIS ROOM



It was a pleasure to welcome historian, author and television presenter Dan Snow MBE to RAF High Wycombe. Prior to giving the address at the 83rd Anniversary Dinner to commemorate the Battle of Taranto, Dan was given a guided tour of the Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris room by RAF historian Mr Dave Brown BEM.

Since childhood Dan has had a keen interest in, and admiration for, the 'Dambusters' squadrons. He has presented numerous shows on the men who flew in those death-defying missions. Being able to sit at the desk of 'Bomber' Harris was a particular highpoint. He commented:

"Two things hit me first. The slightly darker wood, which takes you back to an earlier

age when wood was used as a furnishing. And also, the extraordinary smell that tells you are entering such a wonderful historic space... the smell of paper, maps and wood. You can close your eyes and know you are walking into an RAF office from 80 years ago. The desk is astonishing – the size of desk you imagine you would need if you were a man with his responsibility. It feels like a time capsule."



EDITOR'S NOTE:

The station-renowned and award winning (award pending) editor of the Wycombe World was one of the few steely-nerved personnel chosen to brief Mr Snow. It is with great hurt and pain that the aforementioned editor can report that Dan Snow hasn't asked him to appear on his smash-hit podcast to do a space talk... he hasn't even followed me back on Instagram to be honest.



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GEARING UP

For Safety!

There was a great turn out for the Road Safety Day at the Oakeshott Centre.



The BARs (Bucks Advanced Riders & Drivers) group delivered a brilliant advanced-driving-techniques workshop including feedback to participants on how to drive more safely. The 'Biker Down' session was a particular favourite as seasoned biker and Road Safety Officer for Milton Keynes, Keith Wheeler demonstrated how to manage the scene of a motorcycle accident, life support & CPR, common causes of crashes and how to prevent them.

Participants were also given good advice on first aid in an accident, how to triage casualties and getting help.

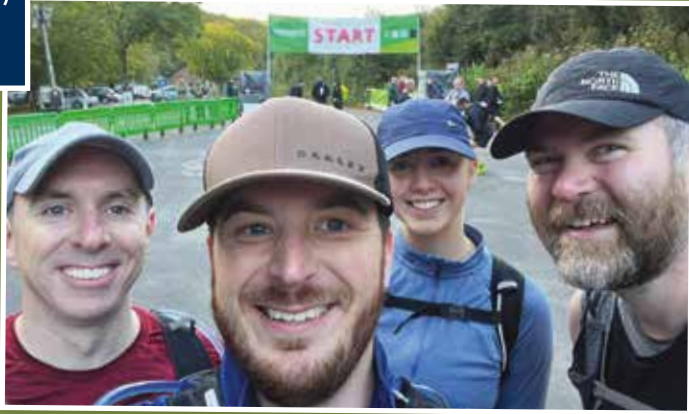
A big shout out to the Fire Section at RAF High Wycombe and the Bucks County Council Road Safety team for the Fire Safety & Drink Awareness course and fire extinguisher training that ran throughout the day.

Thanks to all who attended and for helping RAF High Wycombe stay safe.



TRAILBLAZING TO VICTORY

"I never thought about the here and now, or exactly where I was. I just visualised the end."



Are you tough enough to do a 100km race in thirty hours or less? Four from RAF HWY's Police & Security Flight certainly were and lived to tell the tale!

Flt Lt Will Thorogood, Sgt Dan McKenna, as well as Cpls Sam Dawson & Emma Grieves all took part in the 2023 *Trailwalker Challenge*, a team endurance exercise that originated in Hong Kong in 1981, having been organised by the Queen's Gurkha Signals. It hit British shores in 1997. The driving force behind the challenge is to raise money to support *The Gurkha Welfare Trust* (GWT) which funds vital work in Nepal, helping Gurkha veterans and their widows. Ninety-five per cent of the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) at RAF High Wycombe is composed of Gurkha soldiers (all of whom have served in the brigade of Gurkhas before joining the MPGS) and it is a cause that is close to team leader Will Thorogood's heart; *"With the opening of the Heritage centre last year, it seemed a good thing to do to help support the GWT and the wider Nepalese community,"* said Will, proudly.

The epic course sees competitors run (or walk... or crawl) a course across the South Downs starting at the Queen Elizabeth

Country Park and ending at Brighton Racecourse.

For both Dan & Sam the attraction was the test of endurance; *"I have never done anything like this before, the longest I have run is a half marathon,"* said Dan, whilst for Sam, *"I am not heavily into high intensity sport, but it was a personal challenge for me."* For Emma it was more to do with fitness, *"My exercise regime is normally weights, but I knew this challenge would improve the cardio side."*

Training for the teams started six to nine months before the event, gradually building up distances – ten-kilometre runs followed by short breaks before joining together as a team to do a fifty-kilometre walk. Emma increased her normal 10km walks to 20km over time to get in the zone and Will's personal best distance was a 60km run taking a little over eight hours. Group runs helped Will to get a base line of where the team were positioned, and the mileage and pace was increased a month before the event culminating in a 50km run around High Wycombe taking nine hours.

Nutrition is all important. Apart from the usual high energy foods such as bananas and flapjacks,

one food rich in fats, salts and sugars, is pizza. No complaints from the team on this one!

The challenge is broken up into nine checkpoints at regular ten-kilometre intervals where the teams can rest, eat and reset. The support team, including WO Greg Burgess, Sqn Leader Melanie Newberry and Sgt Lal Gurung offered morale and a friendly face at each stop. *"The support crew were amazing,"* commented Sam. *"They laid out chairs and food boxes, bandaged our battered feet and cheered us on."*

Two hundred and twenty-two teams took part in the race consisting of mainly civilians and army personnel. The team from High Wycombe were the sole competitors representing the RAF.

Running or walking, the stamina required to tackle the Trailwalker is immense. The often-stony terrain is unforgiving and although the weather stayed fine, as night closed in fatigue, muscle soreness, blistered & swollen feet and lost toenails hit the crew hard. Morale was also at a low ebb. *"At the 50-60km point my legs were really tired and the blisters were terrible,"* said Dan. *"I did not prepare properly, and I paid the price for it!"*

For Sam, *"the last 24km was a real struggle and I reached a*

low emotional point." Emma echoed her teammates; *"The 70km-80km point was the worst for me. The sleep deprivation really lowered morale."*

Despite the pain, Dan was adamant that he would finish; *"I never had the thought of giving up. I am not that sort of person. I took one checkpoint at a time. One step was one step closer to the end. I never thought about the here and now or exactly where I was. I just visualised the end."*

This was seconded by Sam; *"when I got to 70km that was the point that I was not going to wimp out. At 80km I was determined to finish it.... even if I had to drag myself across the line."* Being team leader, Will knew he had to keep the troops buoyant and had one thing on his mind; *"I focussed on the why.... we were the only RAF team which gave me a sense of pride.... we were going to finish come what may."*

Showing true RAF spirit and determination the bleary eyed, but clearly emotional Fabulous Four crossed the finish line at just after 6am in the morning. Taking twenty-one hours and forty-one minutes the elated group came in 110th out of 222 teams. A team of Gurkha soldiers claimed first place, running the challenge in a little over ten and a half hours, narrowly





JUNIOR LEADERSHIP COURSE – DEC 2023

Congratulations to Cpls Tamblyn and Watton, AS1s Ford, Pickering, Holding, Helm and Williams who completed the latest Junior Leadership Course to be run at RAF High Wycombe.

missing the record of nine hours and fifty-one minutes.

“Standing on the podium at the end, knowing we had done it was a real high,” said a clearly overjoyed Dan.

The team set a target of raising £1000 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and smashed this by raising over £1800 at the final count.

And would they do the challenge again?

“At the time, no!” said Sam, grinning, “But maybe some time in the future...!”

For Dan, maybe a triathlon, but not the Trailwalker.

For Emma, *“Not again... but maybe something similar after a good break!”*

There is no hesitation from team leader Will.

“I have been asked to do it next year and I will!”

For anyone thinking of tackling the Trailwalker or any other endurance challenge there are some

wise words of advice from Sgt McKenna & Cpl Grieves:

- 1). Train early and over time increase your training to include longer distances.
- 2). Plan your food intake. (Dan burned over 13,700 calories doing the event).
- 3). Ensure you have a good mental state that allows you to focus on the end goal.

All are unanimous in their praise for the unsung heroes who are the support crew: *“You must have a good support team. We were physically broken at some of the later checkpoints, but they were there with food, clothes and a friendly face. Never underestimate the power of a good crew. They, like us were up for over thirty hours,”* commented Will.

For a brilliant achievement, well done to the **Fabulous Four** – true RAF High Wycombe legends!

For more information on, or to donate to the Gurkha Welfare Trust visit: www.gwt.org.uk

Laurence Parker, MCO



During the course, attendees learnt Welfare, Leadership styles, Service Discipline, Influencing, Briefing & Feedback and the all-important responsibilities of a JNCO.

Designed to assist those aspiring for promotion, or for

periods of acting rank, the course is delivered by amongst others, Course Supervisor WO Hopewell who commented:

“This was a very engaged and interested team. I was quizzed on my experience which I found refreshing. I hope they all do well.” Congratulations to all who attended!

RAF High Wycombe Parent and Baby Group

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AWARD FOR THOSE AT THE SHARP END



“It is a great privilege to help those at a low ebb.”

It may be someone having a heart attack, a stroke, a seizure or a burn victim. Could you be the first on the scene to help? This is exactly what being a Military Co-Responder for the Ambulance Service is all about and a local team including those working at RAF High Wycombe (HWY) have been recognised with a prestigious award for their outstanding work.

Co-Responders, are all volunteers, who provide First on Scene medical help prior to the arrival of an Emergency Ambulance. The cars they use, equipment and kit are all funded by the South-Central Ambulance Charity, in support of South-Central Ambulance Service (who also run a gold-standard medical course for its volunteer Responders). They are trained in the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), administration of some basic medications and how to deal with a myriad of medical emergencies including, chest pain, strokes, breathing difficulties, seizures and diabetic emergencies. Although teams are based around High Wycombe they will respond to situations wherever there is a need; this has taken crews to places like Windsor, Slough, Maidenhead, Aylesbury,

Amersham, Chesham, Denham and Milton Keynes.

Wing Commander Duncan Rogers, from the RAF Digital Team, has been a member of the RAF HWY Team for ten years and considers it one of the best things he has ever done: *“The sense of self-worth is immense, and it is a real privilege. It is also very sobering because when I put on the NHS uniform to help others, I may have had a bad day, but quickly realise that others are having a far worse day than me! Your feet are firmly planted in reality,”* said the Wing Commander. This is echoed by Corporal Chris Lovell from the Service Discipline team who considers it *“...something very rewarding to do in the evenings... and has a massive impact on society.”*

When called out, a First Responder vehicle may be manned by two people – a driver/medic and a medic. The driver will support the medic and often acts as a mentor to junior medics in the crew.

Inevitably the volunteers may have to attend harrowing scenes such as a major traumatic event.

“Yes, we deal with some awful situations, but an NHS team leader will always be on scene and speak to all the responders after the event to

ensure they are alright or to suggest any counselling,” said Duncan. *“As Team Leader, I am informed and I always check up on the individual; we often have a debrief session over a coffee which can get emotional, as we come to terms with the events. I personally have attended over twenty cardiac arrests, which always stay in your memory. After 10 years, I can't always remember all the 900 or so patients I have attended, but I will never forget the ones who didn't survive.”*

The BBC Three Counties Radio Annual Communities Award recognises those unsung heroes who have made a major impact in their locality. Held in Dunstable, the 'Make a Difference Award' recognises all voluntary Co-Responders in the Buckinghamshire area – including the three Military Co-Responder sections at RAF High Wycombe, RAF Halton & RAF Benson, and was collected on their behalf by the NHS Community Engagement Training Officers.

Volunteers are always required. *“It is very rewarding,”* said the Wing Commander enthusiastically

and *“unmatched by anything else,”* according to Chris. Come along for an observer shift to see what it is all about.

For those interested, Co-Responders agree to a minimum of one five-hour shift per week (or around fifty shifts over a year). All work is carried out in the evenings (starting at five or six to around ten o'clock at night) or weekends if that is more suitable for the individual. To support the station, the team will also try to respond to any medical emergencies (within the RAF HWY estate) at any time; contacted by the Fire section, they are often the first Ambulance responder crew on scene.

If you would like to accompany the team as an observer on one of the call-outs undertaken by Co-Responders, or if you have any questions, contact Wing Commander Rogers on Duncan.rogers723@mod.gov.uk where you will be assured a warm welcome.

Many congratulations on receiving the Make a Difference Award – it is richly deserved!

Could you be a Military Co-Responder? You don't need any specialist skills, just a desire to help others.

If you have any questions, contact Wing Commander Rogers on Duncan.rogers723@mod.gov.uk

WHAT DOES WORLD CANCER DAY MEAN TO ME?

The 4th of February is World Cancer Day,



Which provides a point in the calendar year when we can reflect on the work we have achieved as a network, particularly in terms of the impact we are having and how we are working together to make progress and support the wider World Cancer Day 3 year campaign to Close the Care Gap. As a network and committee, we are dedicated to working with our allies to push for the prioritisation of cancer across the MoD from policies to accessing services for all of our colleagues. We have heard so many cases of employees not being able to access the right information, or there being a lack of information available to them, and we want to change that, to ensure that everyone has access to the services they require.

The work of the Defence Cancer Support Network – achievements over the last year.

The Network grew substantially last year, and we currently have just over 100 members from an initial group of 4 which is incredible. We have worked really hard to grow and make connections across the MoD with all services, other networks and external speakers to support our staff. Over the past 12 months we have achieved so much with a whole new set of goals for 2024 to come (which are listed on our SharePoint Page: **Defence Cancer Support Network**).

Achievements for 2023 included:

- Setting up local Cancer Support Cafés across Defence
- Monthly Network Meetings have included: Information on reasonable workplace adjustments, representatives from Employers for Carers, Nona Baker, co-chair of MPN Voice, and counsellor together with Professor Clair Harrison (Professor of myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN) and Deputy Medical Director – research at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in London & Tom Teeling – Smyth, Breast Cancer Now
- Broadening the content

- of our SharePoint page
- Working with the Defence Civil Servant Wellbeing Champion, Avril Jolliffe to promote the existence and work of the network and gain agreement from MOD to sign up to the Worldwide #workingwithcancer pledge and related action plan: (<https://workingwithcancer.co.uk/>)
- Commencing work on producing a Guide to Working with Cancer and other serious illness for Service Personnel.
- Extending our links and participation with CanDiD
- Taking part in Defence's offering of talks and information during National Inclusion Week.
- Bringing the DE&S Cancer Support Network into our Network.
- Setting up our Buddy Offering and training 18 Buddies

Signposting to any sources of help (internal and external of the military)

Our Defence Cancer Support Network provides lots of internal and external links for all MoD personnel to access further information. Personnel are also welcome to join our monthly network meetings which are advertised on the SharePoint site and provide a community of support and information for anyone wishing to seek it whether that is someone with a cancer diagnosis, a line manager, colleague, friend or carer. All are welcome.

“Together, we challenge those in power”

This is the theme for World Cancer Day 2024 and as a network, the Defence Cancer Support Network will be doing just that via our Community of Interest which has been established to put into action the MOD #worldwidecancer Pledge.

For help and guidance please go to the RAF High Wycombe SharePoint page and search **Defence Cancer Support Network**.

Allison Christopher & Nikki Evans

A PRESSING ENGAGEMENT FOR ALAN!

Everyone knows someone affected by cancer. It is a debilitating disease and one in two people will contract it at some point in their lifetime.

Much work is being done to combat this terrible illness and every penny donated to conquering 'the Big C' is important.

RAF High Wycombe-based accounts manager and civil servant Alan Cook is a man on a mission – pressing for change by attempting to do one-hundred press-ups per day throughout the whole of November for Cancer Research UK.

“I decided to take on the 100 Press-Ups a Day November Challenge for Cancer Research, initially because I thought this is something I could actually do. Not all at once of course (I'm no spring chicken and even when I was, the hundred would have had to be split into manageable chunks – which will be the case here). More importantly, I think we've all had friends and/or family who have suffered from, are undergoing treatment for, or sadly have died from, some form of cancer. I certainly have. But I know a number of people who have responded so well to treatment and thankfully are still with us today. Cancer research over the years has, of course, made many if not all

forms of the disease eminently more treatable and survivable – if detected in good time. There's certainly no cure yet, and too many people of all ages are still dying. Therefore, my primary motivation for undertaking this challenge is to raise as much money as possible for this most worthwhile of causes. ANY donation whatsoever will be greatly valued and appreciated,” said Alan.

Donate to Alan's page today and help bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/alans-giving-page-569>

The Just Giving link remains active for 120 days from 1 November.



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RAF BENEVOLENT FUND LAUNCHES **NEW** LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK



The RAF Benevolent Fund has recently launched a new Lived Experience Network which aims to increase inclusion in the RAF Family.

The new initiative will bring together a group of serving and former RAF personnel, and partners and spouses, from across the UK to share their lived experiences of the air force to help shape the Fund's service offering and drive innovation at the charity. The Fund is currently recruiting volunteers to take part in the Network.

Volunteers who join the Network can help the Fund in a variety of ways, from completing surveys, joining focus groups, or participating in long-term working groups for internal projects. All volunteering opportunities

will be remote roles and can be done from home.

Volunteer Manager at the RAF Benevolent Fund, Zoe Oliver, said:

"We are extremely excited to work with current serving or former RAF personnel, who would be happy to share their experiences for the Fund's new Lived Experience Network. We believe this will provide invaluable insight into the challenges and nuances of life in the RAF and will ensure we are putting the voices of the RAF Family at the centre of our decision making."

Zoe continued: "We, at the Fund, would love to hear the views of those who are currently serving or have served as well as partners and spouses. Whether you can spare 10 minutes or an hour every so often,

sharing your perspective can make a real difference."

A service person at RAF Wycombe said:

"The RAF Benevolent Fund's new volunteering initiative is a fantastic opportunity to hear individual experiences from current and former members of the RAF and will help not only the Fund but the wider RAF community in providing the best support possible. I encourage those at RAF Wycombe to get in touch with the Fund if interested in taking part."

If you are a current or former member of the RAF, or a partner of spouse you can sign up to the Network **here**, at <https://www.rafbf.org/get-involved/volunteer/lived-experience-network> and find out more about all volunteering opportunities available as they arise.

The RAF Benevolent Fund provides financial, emotional, and practical assistance to serving and retired RAF personnel and their families. This includes grants to help with financial difficulty, mental health support, Airplay youth clubs, and more.

DOWN-TO-EARTH

Blame Tom Cruise. After seeing 'Top Gun,' flying jets at supersonic speed became the dream for many children the world over. Behind the glamour the reality is more prosaic. The training is relentless, time consuming and standards are high.

Ego and arrogance may be the perceived traits of many a 'Top Gun,' but former jet pilot Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey shows not a shred of either. Friendly, approachable and as a previous Station Commander at RAF Lossiemouth, "enjoyed trying to solve people's problems," he is, in his words, currently in the most challenging role of his career. And what a career it has been – so far. I caught up with the AVM - 'Goddess' to his friends - to find out more about the man who has flown some of the fastest jets the world has to offer, before becoming the inaugural Commander of the pivotal UK Space Command.

His fascination with flight (shared with his father who built model aeroplanes) started at the age of five when Paul's parents would often accompany both him and his brother to aircraft displays near to his childhood home of Kenley, South London, where his father worked. With RAF Kenley near to his home the pull of engine oil proved irresistible.

"I recall running across the airfield and I got lost with my mate. We were always looking round the Spitfire pens and the old pill boxes for World War II treasure. Flying ace Sir Douglas Bader flew out of Kenley during the war, and gliders flew past the back of our house. I was therefore always fascinated with flying. I have vivid memories back in 1978 walking through that air show and seeing helicopters, Spitfires & Hurricanes. My dad recalls me saying, "Dad – I want to be a pilot!"

Life turned full circle in 2011 when Paul was privileged to fly an original Hurricane (there are only two airworthy ones in existence from the

1940s) for the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight over Kenley.

Well and truly bitten by the flying bug, and keen to get started, the dream to fly became a reality when he signed up to the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) – considered one of the best things he ever did - and first flew in a 'Chippie' (De Havilland Chipmunk);

"At fourteen or fifteen I decided that I wanted to join the RAF through a sixth form scholarship. I wanted to get on with it. If I did not get through the scholarship I would go to university and join an air sqn. I had leadership positions in the CCF. At sixteen I went to Biggin Hill for Officer & Aircrew selection. There were aptitude tests all day. They called me up to the counter and was told I had failed navigator and graded marginal for pilot."

Many may have been put off at this point, and some in his group left - the dream to fly over at the first hurdle. Not so Paul Godfrey. "I remember thinking at the time I have nothing to lose... I will stay on," said the AVM.



"Being part of a team and learning leadership skills gave me confidence. I was never a confident kid."

Leadership courses followed – "swinging on ropes and putting planks over 'crocodile infested' fake water" among them. The letter eventually arrived offering him a scholarship. Paul was on his way.

Part of the scholarship allowed the entrants to have thirty hours of flying time, which he undertook at Redhill, just down the road, and a bursary of £2000 to help with schooling. Wisely, he spent the money on securing a pilot's licence – obtaining this at aged seventeen before he even had a licence to drive a car!

Pilot training to fly a jet started in 1991 and Paul finally secured his wings in January 1993. The Gulf War meant that all the conversion units had been shut down, so a prolonged wait meant he did not start

on the Harrier until 1995.

"All the courses are intense. You do the work, you keep up, you progress. Before you know it, you are flying a jet at aged nineteen, going supersonic when you are twenty. You gradually increase your capability. It is not being thrown in at the deep end. They do teach you what you need to know. But there is a lot of hard work involved."

In a stellar flying career, the AVM has flown the Hawk, F16, Harrier jump jet, and was one of the first pilots on the Eurofighter Typhoon. Inevitably, the age-old question comes up; what is your favourite? Which attracts a wry smile:

"It is a bit like asking who your favourite child is! During training, I was on one of the last courses to fly the Jet Provost. I was nineteen years old and going solo in a jet that reached 350mph. That in itself was a super thrill. I was then doing 600mph in a Hawk at twenty. By 23 I was on a Harrier Sqn and became involved with the Eurofighter 2000. Wanting radar experience, I applied for an exchange, and I ended up in South Carolina as the first foreign pilot on the F-16CJ with the United States Air Force. It was the experience on the squadrons I was on as well as the aeroplanes that creates the memories.... it is not just about the aircraft."

Flying at such high speeds while involved in aerial combat



BUT FLYING HIGH

takes intense concentration. It can be draining, and not for the faint-hearted. One error could be fatal. So how do you mentally prepare yourself for these situations? The former jet pilot is brutally honest;

"I tried to make sure the thought of not coming back didn't cross my mind. Once while flying missions in Iraq a Sqn Commander asked me to write a note back to the family in an envelope that he could send if the worst happened. I gave him a blank envelope. Can you imagine my family receiving that! I just couldn't countenance the fact that I wouldn't make it. I felt bullet proof at the time, and I didn't want to let any negative thoughts in."

Heightened prioritisation, management skills and staying calm are skills that in the AVM's opinion are key qualities that make an effective pilot.

"You could be in a dog fight and the fuel warning reminds you that you don't have much time. Do you keep fighting or immediately stop, which in an operational situation could be the difference between life and death, do you have reserve fuel, what are your options? All these questions come up and ultimately it is about pre-planning, running through the scenarios and above all staying calm. I was flying in Iraq when the canopy seal de-pressurised with a bang, which definitely caught my attention. You have to prioritise. In this case I was on an operational mission supporting other formations. So, I dealt with the immediate issue and decided I could continue to support for a few more minutes before I had to return to base. There are so many systems within modern aeroplanes such as the Typhoon or F35, but the management of the kit is the tricky bit. Prioritisation & management are key. Keep the panic below the Adam's apple, so that it does not go to your head."

And the advice for any budding Tom Cruises out there wanting to fly jets?

"Give it a go! You never know unless you try. Research the RAF and what it does, defence in general, and current affairs. Be your best and give yourself a chance," commented the AVM.

For the man who describes flying as 'exhilarating'; witnessed amazing sunsets at 45,000ft and the curvature of the earth in a high-performance aeroplane, he has no regrets or sadness about finally hanging up his flying helmet;

"My last trip was in a Typhoon in 2017.I have been incredibly lucky. I felt relieved when I landed that I had got this far and also didn't end up in a hedge on my last trip!" Said Paul with a cheeky smile.

Paul describes his current role as Commander of UK Space Command as relentless but rewarding in equal measure. UK Space Command's remit is to protect and defend UK and allied interests in space. There is much collaboration with other countries around the world which does allow for some travel – "I've found that you can't properly create relationships on Zoom, you can keep them going, but I do believe that you can only create them face-to-face" said the chief who has always had a fascination with space – and at one point in his current role, he even considered applying to be a European Space Agency astronaut.

"...It is one of the best jobs I have done because it is so fascinating."



And his three wishes for UK Space Command?

"Ensure the workforce growth is on track – and it is. Maintain the speed at which we procure items – and we are doing well so far... and a stargate that I could walk through so I wouldn't have to sit on an aeroplane for twelve hours!"

The relentless pressure of high-profile roles over years can take its toll, but giving up caffeine twenty years ago gave the AVM his own coping mechanism and together with working out every day, has given him a newfound physical and mental resilience.

"I always give three pieces of advice: Always be yourself, don't plan too far ahead, and do one thing every day that scares you."

Paul Godfrey is the type of person you would want at a dinner party. Anecdotes are dropped like gold nuggets into his conversation which tease the listener into wanting to know more. A future career as a raconteur, maybe? He has tasted danger, continues to push the boundaries into the fascinating world of Space and has seen the world from a great height. But with all that he is fundamentally a down-to-earth, honest and genuine man who is comfortable with his laid-back approach to life. "It will be all right in the end. If it is not all right, then it is not the end," as the little boy with big dreams from South London might say.

Laurence Parker, MCO



A Royal Air Force First Day Cover signed by Chief of the Air Staff Sir Rich Knighton could be yours if you can answer the following question; In what year did Paul fly a Hurricane as part of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight?

Answers to Laurence.parker140@mod.gov.uk by 1700hrs on Fri 29 March 24. The first correct answer selected at random after this date will win the First Day Cover.

CAPABILITY WINNERS ARE HOT PROPERTY!

The annual Government Property Awards recognise innovation and excellence in the development of programmes in the public sector property arena.



Both Squadron Leaders worked tirelessly to secure £200k of funding over five years to allow those in the Infra

Squadron Leader Metcalfe and Squadron Leader Hodgson from the RAF People Operations Profession triumphed, beating stiff competition from HM Revenue & Customs, Govt Property Agency & Ministry of Justice to be crowned Capability Champion Winners for demonstrating phenomenal commitment to improving skills and developing talent.

Wing Commander English, SO1 People Ops Profession Advisor commented; "These awards recognise the progress the People Operations profession is making in growing professionalisation and accreditation of Infra Specialists... the award demonstrates the importance of the Infra Function to the RAF. Infra is a critical enabler for how we fly and fight from the home base and on overseas operations."

Proud winner Squadron Leader Metcalfe added; "Before our work there was no accreditation route for RAF infra professionals. We identified that the lack of a route to accreditation could make recruiting and retaining Civil Servants harder and push Service personnel towards other functions... we identified the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as the accreditation provider of choice."

Function to gain a professional RICS qualification. "We were humbled at being nominated, and we were delighted to win, amongst other Government colleagues... The award shows that the Government Property Profession recognise that we have done our job well and that our plan to professionalise the RAF's People Operations Infra personnel is heading in the right direction."

Whilst recognition is welcome, the duo has had no time to rest on their laurels. Now the training and development programme has been put in place for experienced professionals across Whole Force, the next goal is to ensure a programme is put in place for those new to the People Operations profession, Infra Pillar in their early tours.

"The award is in an important step in recognition of the progress we are making in the RAF's People Operations Profession's core infrastructure function by growing professionalisation and accreditation in a historically niche/specialist area of the profession. There is a lot of work to come...", concluded Squadron Leader Metcalfe.

Congratulations on an amazing and significant win for both the Infra Function and the RAF!

Laurence Parker, MCO

CYCLING HER WAY TO SUCCESS

The life of 22-year-old Royal Marine John Thornton was tragically cut short in 2008, during his deployment to Afghanistan.

A high achieving student, he lived for the military and to serve his country. To honour his voracity for life The John Thornton Young Achievers Foundation (JTYAF) was set up with the sole aim to encourage young people to 'climb as high as they can dream.'

Inspired by his work, local Cadet FS Evie Collins from 332 (High Wycombe) Squadron has been raising funds for the foundation with a sponsored 24-hour cycle challenge. Held over two days at the RAF High Wycombe gym, Evie, together with three other cadets, pedalled in rotation for twelve hours each day between 20-21 Jan 24.

"I am raising money for the John Thornton Young Achievers Foundation as part of a course (Junior Leaders) which I'm currently a student on. JTYAF helps fund the JL Course, as there are very close links between the two. John Thornton was a student on JL before he joined the Royal Marines and was awarded 'Top Student' in 2004. As a way of giving back every student plans and runs a fundraiser for the charity. This year, I am one of over seventy JL students raising money for JTYAF," said the impassioned cadet.

Along with a group of other cadets, Evie took part in the recent Race For Life and in 2021 entered the Air Cadets 80 in 80 Challenge for the RAF Benevolent Fund. However, the 24-hour challenge is the first charity event that the seventeen-year-old has organised herself.

A member of the cadet forces since she was thirteen, FS Collins has the RAF in her blood. Her grandfather started his career as an engineering apprentice at RAF Halton.

"My dad found an air cadet squadron near us, and suggested I go down for one night, to see what it was like." Five years later Evie is the NCO IC at that same squadron.

"I have learnt so much from cadets, and wholeheartedly believe I am a better person for joining them."

With aspirations to enter the RAF Police after completing sixth form, the focussed teenager is an advocate of the cadets and in particular, the Junior Leaders course; "I would say the best thing about it has been the journey I have gone through in terms of learning more about myself. I know a lot of courses or opportunities say that you 'learn a lot about yourself', but with JL you really do... I have learnt how to develop myself in the future. I know where I want to be, and how to take the steps to make that happen. I would absolutely recommend Junior Leaders to every cadet I know, it's a truly brilliant course."

They say youth is wasted on the young, but this could never be applied to this tenacious teenage cadet whose zest for life and quest for personal fulfilment is palpable. Here is to a brilliant future in the RAF, Cdt FS Collins!

If you would like to contribute to Evie's 24 hour cycle challenge please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/evie-collins-1701812245521>.

For more information about the John Thornton Young Achievers Foundation please go to www.jtyaf.org

Laurence Parker, MCO



SGT KEN IVORY ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

AN ATLANTIC EFFORT FROM KEN IVORY!

In a follow up to the Autumn edition's article on Sgt Ken Ivory's Atlantic Coast Challenge, we caught up with the nimble runner to see how the "3 in 3" marathons went down.

Daunting as it might sound, well over two hundred people braved the Cornwall coastline to run seventy-nine miles over three days from Padstow to Land's End.

Although the first day was not as bad as he thought, the main issue for Ken was recovery. The body needs time to rest and repair after such a pounding and as predicted, it is the legs that feel most uncomfortable.



Every marathon runner will tell you that there is always a point in the race when the body hits an invisible wall, they run out of fuel, and it becomes a battle to continue. The twenty-mile point for Ken on the first day was his nemesis; *"It was quite an empty feeling you have. It isn't pleasant... but I knew I had to get through it,"* said the determined Sergeant.

One of the main reasons for hitting the invisible wall is not always tiredness, it could be the unfamiliar terrain, as it was for Ken.

"If you do a marathon that is all on an even road you have checkpoints and you just carry on running. The Atlantic was a different challenge entirely. You are clambering over jagged rocks and undulating coastlines and up and down steps. There is no flow as to how you run. You use more energy and you do not get an adequate rhythm. More fuel is used, and you move more slowly thereby taking longer."

Psychologically cleansing yourself of the strains and stresses of the day by a hot shower is Ken's secret weapon for rejuvenation.

Seasoned marathon runners have various aids in their backpacks to help see them through the long haul. Focussing on the next checkpoint, good training and adequate food are but a few examples. Another lifeline are sports gels. If like me you thought a gel was a thick liquid that you spread on aching limbs, think again. Amongst the running fraternity sports gels are a staple for any long distance running. Essentially an energy gel replaces your store of carbohydrates that has become depleted whilst running and as the blood absorbs the sugar, the body is given a short-lived energy boost. Simple as that! They also come in various forms including Isotonic, Electrolyte & Caffeine.

"Gels are great because there is a danger that if you just have water, you flush out all the nutrients in the system. Gels are a reliable source of quick energy," said Ken.

Though gruelling, the champion marathon runner who has over eighty-one ultra-marathons under his belt would definitely do it again. Ken's times were respectable



coming in at 6hrs 15 mins, 6 hrs 30 mins and 8 hrs 40 mins on each of the three days, and consistently running mid-pack – eightieth out of the two hundred running.

Is there any advice for anyone wanting to tackle a challenge of this nature?

"This is not the best event if you have never done a marathon! Work up to it first. Ensure you have the proper kit and be prepared by doing adequate training. People often get confused by how far a marathon is. Make sure that each training session is at least sixteen-seventeen miles and the most crucial point – think about what you are trying to achieve."



PUTIN'S WARS: FROM CHECHNYA TO UKRAINE

WRITTEN BY MARK GALEOTTI

NOTES FROM THE LEARNING CENTRE

The Learning Centre used summer 2023 to re-stock its library, adding the books nominated on the latest CAS reading list to its already extensive collection. Wycombe World invited its intrepid readership to review these books and share their thoughts!

Opening with the annual Victory Day Parade, Mark Galeotti starts his book by describing a Russian society built around its military, with special attention paid to the militarised merchandise you can buy (camouflage handbags, camouflage T-shirts with Putin's face on them) and the tank races. That's right, the *Tank Races*. It's from these descriptions you quickly realise just how *Starship Troopers*-esque the Russians have become.

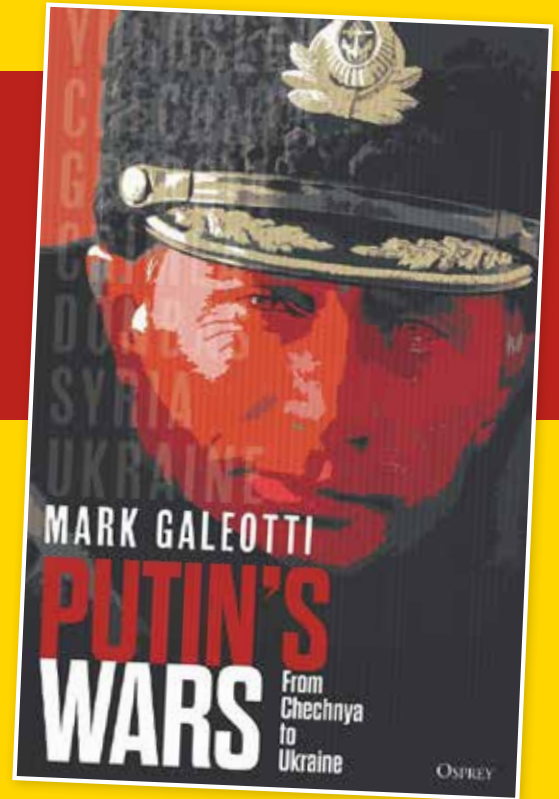
Mark then pulls the classic switcheroo on you, diving back twenty-years to work out where it all started. He canters through decades worth of wars, with Russia essentially fighting a series of insurgencies growing in size and demand. He outlines how the Russian military initially did pretty badly in these 'near wars' by being very unwieldy and corrupt. It was using a fighting style meant for all-out-war, prioritising forcing most of its male population to do two years of military service rather than having vastly smaller number of career (professional) soldiers. Weaponry and tactics therefore aimed towards scale, with mass artillery strikes using S27s kept in cold storage since the 1970s being prioritised over, say, body armour for front line troops. To emphasise this point, Mark points out that the Russian foot soldier didn't get socks until the 2010s.

Fighting smaller, fiddly wars with the world's press watching takes an entirely different soldier to the one who would have blindly charged an American tank on the German plains. As such, Putin's bezzet mate Sergei Shoigu (Russian Defence Minister...at the time of writing) has put a lot of time and effort into modernising the Russian military. He and his generals learnt the lessons from Chechnya and Georgia to create what was supposed to be a fairly competent military force. So complete were these lessons that Russia was able to then occupy the Crimea without a shot being fired.

So why then has the invasion of Ukraine been so painful? Why has a military campaign so weighted in Russia's favour stalled? According to Mark, it's because of Putin. The lesson of the Russian wars in the 1990s and 2000s was that you should trust your field commanders and use professional soldiers. The Ukrainian war failed (and he does call the war a failure) because it was run from Putin's office using conscripts.

Mark concludes his book by saying things will only likely get harder for the Russian military. Whilst we (in Costa Coffee on Site Three) presume Russia only needs to outlast Western goodwill to win the war in Ukraine, the truth is that Russia is on standby for a series of wars along its borders. Chechnya is kept in check by a warlord who's coming up to seventeen

years in office. If he walks out the door (or falls out of an apartment window) you have to wonder who will replace him. Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan are continuing to simmer away and Russia could easily be dragged into a war between them. Likewise, for all the talk about Russia-China relations, it is not impossible the two countries may come to blows over a border dispute in the far East. It's entirely feasible Russia will have to fight a war on three of its four fronts before the end of the decade. The war in Ukraine needs to end, and end quickly, for Russia to build itself back up and ready itself for the next inevitable 'near war'.



Things to say to CAS to make him think you've read the book:

"So...Putin [maintain unwavering silent eye-contact for five seconds]. Mental, hey?"

"Sir, I loved your recommendation of Putin's Wars! I thought the section about the Victory Day parades particularly fascinating. What are your thoughts on starting some kind of yearly Tank Race using the minibuses in the MT section?"

N

Netflix needs to buy the rights to the Tank Races! Can you imagine a tank version of Drive to Survive with a Russian Daniel Riccardo crashing into a barrier at seventeen miles an hour? Absolute scenes.

STATION CHARITIES COMMITTEE



The Station Charities Committee is a 16 strong committee that coordinates charity events and fund raising on behalf of the Stn Cdr and execs Ctee.

2023 was another positive year with the Scotty's Little Soldiers, Papyrus and High Wycombe Royal Star and Garter all receiving support, exposure and donations.

Each year, the Ctee supports 3 charities. One local, One military and One national. These are nominated from across the Station and voted for at the EGM in the presence of the Stn Cdr.

The charities for 2024 are:
High Wycombe Royal Star and Garter - Local
Combat Stress - Military
Scotty's Little Soldiers - National

Throughout 2024, the Ctee will take the lead on events such as Bake Sales, Physical Challenges, sweepstakes and quizzes. In addition, don't be surprised to see the Ctee on the gates with collection buckets during Military Child Month (April) Mental Illness Awareness Week (7-11 Oct) and maybe a Christmas Jumper day in December!

The Team have signed up to

complete **100 miles EACH** during the month of May to support Combat Stress. These miles will all be done on foot but at varying paces!

If you would like to show your support, please log on to **Combat Stress - High Wycombe Charities Committee**. These donations will go direct to Combat Stress on behalf of RAF High Wycombe.

The Committee is ever evolving and there is always scope to additional general members as we start the year with all executive positions filled.

In addition to the Ctee's hard work and efforts, we believe that all personnel across the station should receive recognition for their charity work throughout 2024. If you have any events lined up for 2024, please let us know what you are doing and when. More importantly, please drop us a narrative when you have completed it, along with the amount raised and any imagery you are willing to share.



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COMBAT STRESS

44 MILE ULTRA MARATHON CHALLENGE

They say no good story starts with a salad, in this case this is certainly true.



I am going to miss Suman Garewal. The Flt Lt moved away from my office at SHQ in November to begin another tour.

She always had something thought provoking to say or had a story about a fascinating person she had met. But before she left, she told me about Sergeant Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Driver.

People receive awards for all sorts of reasons. It could be for courage, teamwork, projects, being a champion for the underdog or highlighting the plight of the overlooked in society. Rarely does it cover all of these things. In Lizzie's case, it does. The Women in Defence Award for 'Unsung Heroines' aims to recognise the exceptional work of people in defence and to emulate campaigner Emmeline Pankhurst's principle of 'Deeds not Words'. I was keen to see what Lizzie had achieved to attract national interest.

On first meeting you realise there are many sides to her character – the no-nonsense and efficient side, the fun loving, the committed mentor and the spiritual. All play their part to make her the rounded person she is today.

Her latest tour, in Service Discipline has come to an end and it was the compassion and empathy that she showed in the role that encouraged her manager, Sqn Ldr Dutton to nominate her. *"I see people on their worst day... but we are giving people a platform to tell them what has happened... they have a chance to be heard,"* said Lizzie. *"Their case may not have gone the way they would have liked it to, but I am here to tell them why."*

The desire to help others is inbred, being very much a people person. *"I always attempt to keep the peace and am very much a pleaser,"* said the Sergeant.



Over the summer of 2023 I was left to my own devices bored and scrolling through Facebook, as you do, I came across an advert from Combat Stress looking for people to participate in their Ultra Marathon. A total of 44 miles spanning the length of the D-Day beaches and finishing down at the infamous Pegasus Bridge all in conjunction with the 80th D-Day Anniversary.

It didn't take me long to convince myself to sign up, as I stated I should never be left to my own devices, thinking this would be an amazing challenge and something to really be proud of to participate in. Having never run further than 5km...ever... the next morning I knew I had to get my training started. I contacted a good friend of mine (after they stopped laughing on the phone for about 5 minutes) who has done several Ultra Marathons, they soon put me on a good training programme to ensure I had the best possible chance of achieving my goal.



To date I have completed two 10km races and one 36Km challenge, all yielding very positive results and proving my training is coming to fruition. I have a Half Marathon to round off this year's training at Brecon followed by a few more in the New Year and looking to complete an Ultra Marathon in April before the big race day.

This will be a fantastic event to complete and raise money for Combat Stress, a charity who does so much for all our Military personnel. If you would like to donate please do so here <https://events.combatstress.org.uk/fundraisers/victoriatrafford/dday44challenge> and if you see me running around Naphill please do give me some encouragement, especially this time of year.

Flt Lt Tori Trafford



A Driver for CHANGE

Despite the relentless negativity in the job that can be jading, working in a close-knit team, sharing experiences and being interested in her team's personal lives gives her the perfect coping mechanism. Faith also plays an integral part, which she initially found during a tour in Afghanistan in 2012. The day before her birthday she tragically lost six work colleagues which gave her pause for thought. Her belief in God has strengthened and as part of the Defence Christian Network, represented the RAF at the launch of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative created by the Archbishop of Canterbury. For each of the nine days leading up to Pentecost, Christian's pray on the same topics. Being a faith trustee for the Armed Forces Christian Union has also been pivotal in her own spiritual and mental growth.

Acting as a trailblazer for women in winter sports forms part of her award nomination. Lizzie's sport of choice is Luge – which involves competitors lying on their backs on a small sled (think tea tray) with their legs outstretched in front. Speeds of up to 140km/h can be reached as competitors race down an icy track without any brakes. Apart from being the only female competing in Team GB and the first female to qualify for the World Championships in Austria in January 2022, she also secured GB's first bronze medal. Not bad for someone who, when they first took up the sport was considered by the GB coach to be the worst person they had ever seen compete!

Success was bittersweet. Despite the glory of winning, fate dealt a blow when during a practice session on the slopes she turned too early and hit a wall,



sideways, at 50mph. Miraculously she got up and walked the 100m down the mountain, taking only one dose of ibuprofen for the minor pain. In truth she had broken three vertebrae in her spine. The Medical Air Evacuation Team from Brize Norton brought her home to a centre in Birmingham after four days in an Austrian hospital. "I cannot praise the Brize team enough," said the lucky-to-be-alive athlete. The road to recovery was surprisingly short and was very much down to self-rehabilitation. It is here that Lizzie's strength of character and will to succeed came into play. A lesser person may have become engulfed in depression and the 'why me?' syndrome. But this isn't in Lizzie's DNA.

"How did it affect me mentally? I got on with it. There was no other option. I couldn't drive or go anywhere. I was trapped indoors for six weeks. There was no pain, so no need for pain killers. I had to sit very still, and it healed itself. There was only one occasion when I had pins and needles in my leg and thought I would not walk again. Breaking the top and bottom of my spine meant that I could not open the fridge or stand for longer than ninety seconds at a time."

Despite the setback and the painful memories, Luge still focusses heavily in the Sergeant's life, becoming the first female coach in the sport. She has been instrumental in helping to change the rules as she figured out that women were trained to slide like men when it is different for females, who are more flexible and lean more in turns.

I was not surprised to hear that within five months she was back on the pitch playing her beloved

football. She currently coaches the under elevens girls' team as well as playing for and coaching the women's team. "Lots of girls up to the age of twelve and thirteen play then they stop, considering it to be no longer cool. By seventeen many are wanting to come back. I want women to know that it is ok to stay in the sport. You don't have to stop just because you have hit fourteen and have discovered boys."

Being a role model for the younger girls is crucial for the pioneering Sergeant. "It is important that they have one... that they have different options and to know that it is okay to be you!" Being a Brownie leader for ten years and a girl guide leader as part of the Trefoil Guild allows the committed Sergeant to champion the needs and rights of women. "I like seeing girls discover new things. Last week we made fajitas. Some had never even seen a cheese grater, thinking cheese came ready prepared in a bag!"

"I fully embrace feminism and equality, but I don't think we should go as far as to forget that we are different."

The passion Lizzie has for women's issues is palpable. For her it is all about visibility and breaking through barriers so that women's needs are taken seriously. This has led to her involvement in Salute Her – a veteran's charity for and run by women set up to tackle the problem of female veterans not seeing themselves as veterans; "We do not feature on mainstream veteran charity websites. We are not the Tommy... we still see WWII, red coats and Chelsea Pensioners. It is often assumed that women are the spouses who do not see conflict. We offer someone to talk to – often many are victims of military sexual violence."

The work of Lizzie and others is making headway. An impassioned speech given by the Sergeant in the House of Commons on the issue of military sexual violence has raised the issue to the highest levels of government.

The plucky NCO is keen to promulgate the fair treatment of women globally and became involved in the Uganda based charity Amigos. Their ethos, 'Hand up, not hand out' gives young females in Uganda the chance to learn new skills like tailoring



and hairdressing, sustainable farming, digging wells, teaching and to start their own businesses. Two visits to the desperately poor country has given Lizzie a new perspective on life and the importance of educating young women to achieve their best.

If, like me you are wondering if this amazing woman has time to breathe or relax, she does! Me time includes reading in coffee shops and letter writing to an army of friends in the Armed Forces Christmas Union. A bible journal also helps with mindfulness.

Lizzie is not one to blow her own trumpet. The Women in Defence Awards may have shone a spotlight into her busy world, but she is grounded and remains a little bemused by the attention. Although pipped at the post for the 'Unsung Heroine Award', Lizzie is a winner already based on the selfless work she does – summed up in her one wish - that people be happy and content with what they have.

Her philosophy on life is something that we can all learn from:

"Someone said to me, do you know what Lizzie, you are just not that important. All of my problems in the grand scheme of things – how big are they?"

Good luck, Sergeant Driver – campaigner, mentor, friend.

Laurence Parker, MCO





THE RAF HIGH WYCOMBE MOTORBIKE CLUB

People ride motorcycles for many different reasons. For some it is just a handy, and nimble mode of transportation that gets them to their destination a little quicker. But for others it is the sense of freedom, the adrenalin, or being on the open road. More importantly though is that riding a motorcycle can provide people headspace and escape from the stressors of life. Whether riding alone or in a group of likeminded people, commuting or riding out for fun, motorcycling is many things to many people.

The RAF High Wycombe Motorcycle Club is somewhere all people connected with the Station can come together and share their interest in Motorcycles. This summer there has been a fair amount of activity. Whether it be for ad hoc solo small group rides, or larger organised day rides. While there are the usual faces that turn up, it is always good when someone new comes along and joins us. It is not about who rides what, its groups like this where a Fat Boy Harley is perfectly happy riding along by some Ducati Crotch Rocket sports Bike. The more the merrier.

Our travels this year have seen us visit Jeremy Clarkson's Diddy Squat Farm, motoring enthusiast café Caffeine & Machine, Breweries, more cafés, and even people's homes that are on route for a good cup of tea. When going out for a ride one option is to set off and get lost, turning whichever way you feel like at the time. A great way to eat up the miles and find new places. However, not the best when there is more than a few of you, as the banter can get unbearable when the lead person takes you down a

dead-end path, or worse a horse track that the chrome on my bike would not thank them for. So, the next option is planning a route before setting off.

Planning a route can be its own enjoyment. Finding places and roads you have not been to before, that will be fun to ride with plenty of bends and turns. Beautiful countryside and views are a must. Then a few pre planned stops along to way to break up the ride, have a drink and chat about the motorcycles. This is how we ended up at the places above.

And of course, you can even get other people to do the planning for you through Motorcycle Rides and Events. This year as the RAF High Wycombe Motorcycle Club we took part in Ride to the Wall. A huge charity ride (like 5,000 motorcycles huge). Groups start at various points around the country and head towards the National Arboretum to raise money and pay respect to those that have come before. A great day and great experience to go out together in our group.

Whether it is a solo ride, or an organised group ride, it does not matter. Getting out and riding a motorcycle can be so much to people, and that is great. The RAF High Wycombe Motorcycle Club is here to encourage people of all abilities, with or without a licence, to come together to share in the benefits that riding gives so many people. The Club is always welcome to new people, even if someone want advice on how to get started or is interested in riding out with like minded people. So next time you strap on your helmet and pull on your gloves, give us a shout, we would love to share the road with you.



FIRST

I would like to introduce the RAF High Wycombe Motorbike Club, its members, what we have been up to and our plans for the future.

I took over the club from Flt Lt Kris Stewart last year and then almost immediately deployed for 6 months, arriving back in the UK in May this year (2023). The focus of my efforts since getting back to Blighty have been to build the membership, try to secure a building to be used as a clubhouse, organise rideouts and, to look at options to improve the club experience and offers available to the members.... I'd say that I'm currently achieving a slightly better than 50% success rate on those efforts, but momentum is growing.

I don't know what the exact club membership was when Kris departed, but I can say that it is now just shy of 30 members (via our WhatsApp group) and still growing, which is great news. There have been some great ideas offered up by the members and a number of events already brought to fruition due to their efforts. I've listed them below, with a few words on each from the members who helped

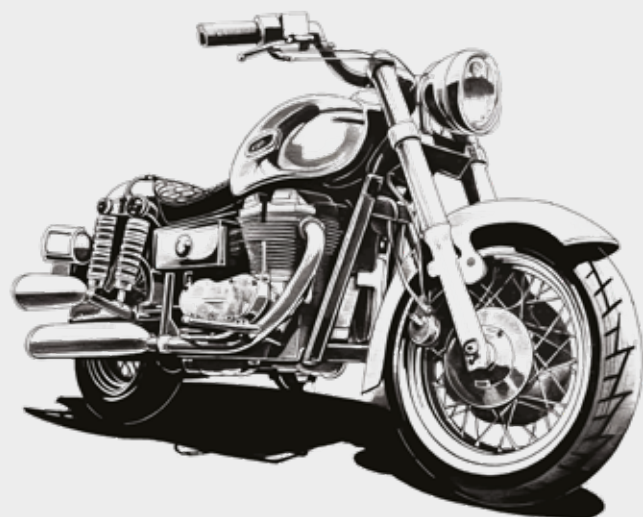
make them happen.

In addition to these we have also had rideouts to The Sanctuary, Caffeine & Machine, The Bike Shed and a few others. And we have plans for 2024 already – we plan to get down to S-Bomb Vintage Workshop, support the Station Health & Wellbeing Day (where we are hoping to get Mental Health Motorbikes to come down and support). We also have riders hoping to pass their advanced riding courses and to support Blood Bikes in their spare time, as well as looking to support a few charity events too.

If anyone is interested in the club or any of the events, please get in touch. You can use my work email (Ctrl+K my name – there's only one!), join one or both of the WhatsApp groups (we have an "Events and Rideouts" group and an "MCC chat" group), or just come along to a social at Smithy's one Wednesday (first of each month) around 1900hrs.

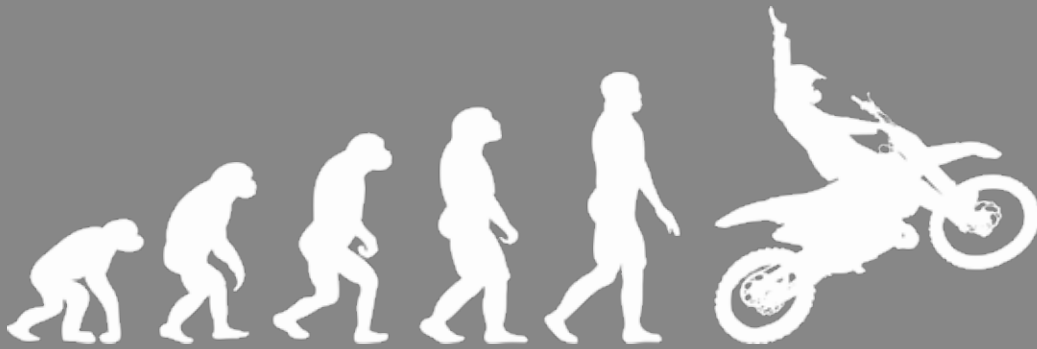
There is a Sharepoint site too, <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/teams/24534>

Sqn Ldr Dom Monaghan-Welsh





IMPRESSIONS



BIKER DOWN

Delivered by Mr Keith Wheeler, a retired Firefighter, this afternoon course was held in the Oakeshott Centre on Site 3 and consisted of three modules: (1) Dealing with a collision that you witness or come across, (2) Basic life support and, (3) Motorbike and rider safety.

The format was relaxed and interactive. Using photos and imagery to initiate conversation, Keith asked us "What would you do?" whilst showing us a picture of a road traffic collision. We were pretty proud of ourselves – between the small gathering in attendance we managed to get all the salient points, but what Keith was able to do was put it into an easy and sensible order with which to process such a scenario. None of it came as a surprise due to the training we all conduct as part of our Mods 1-3 in our annual training, but it was useful to see it put into effect in a motorbike setting and to see how the details differed.

The next thing Keith covered was the approach of each Emergency Service when arriving at the scene of an incident, and they are not the same! As with the points from the module on dealing with collisions, I am having to hold myself back from spilling the beans on what was covered here. I'm not being coy or having to keep trade secrets, it's more that Keith is the experienced expert and if you are interested in learning about this sort of thing then I would highly recommend coming along to the next one. There's no set date yet, but it will likely

Hi all, whilst I arrived at RAF High Wycombe in October 2022 and it is now over a year later, this is my first article for the Wycombe World and I wanted to share my experiences so far and perhaps encourage others to consider coming along for a look at the club and its members.

I had only recently passed my full bike test when I arrived, but wanted to get out and enjoy myself, learn some new routes in the local area, upskill and learn from others, and meet up with likeminded people. These were my goals and the reasons for joining the Bike Club.

I didn't really know anyone here when I arrived and, to be honest, it is always pretty daunting moving to a new base with no prior knowledge or network of people. My usual riding buddy and partner was still based at RAF Marham and only came home at weekends, which meant that during the working week I was left to my own devices.

I soon scouted (hunted down!) a few core members who were part of the RAF High Wycombe Motor Cycle Club and managed to get some points of contact to reach out.

The downside to entering autumn / wintertime is that

the weather is not very motorbike-friendly. This means that the options for finding riding buddies can be few and far between. But when I first arrived and with the right warm weather kit on this did not deter me, or my partner, and we managed to get out for a few rides. This is the great thing about being part of a club: there is often someone around who wants to go out for a ride somewhere and we very often come across a bikers café or a place of interest.

Since then, and during the improved weather over the summer this year, one of the Club members has organised a few bike rides. There was one memorable rideout that saw us out for the whole day. We stopped throughout the day, with the freedom and option for anyone to join and/or depart at any of the meeting points. Our first meeting point was early-ish in the morning where we stopped at a biker café to grab breakfast or just a brew to keep warm in the early morning freshness. Later stops were for a sandwich or snack, and we even ended up at Clarkson's Farm, Diddly Squat, which was great to visit relax in the sun for a bit and perhaps grab a momento or two from the little shop (shame the prices weren't also little!). Since joining the Club we

have had a few rideouts with some just a jaunt around the local area and others taking us a little farther away or for a more specific purpose, but they are always useful for learning or practicing skills and are such a laugh too. There is even a very special nickname for our illustrious OIC, courtesy of the club of course, but you'll have to come along for a ride to find that out!

Being a part of the club has given me some great friends and contacts here, ones I would ride out with on a regular occurrence. I have grown in confidence, laughed uncontrollably at some moments on the way but above all have had lots of fun.

If you're not sure but still curious, why not come along to one of our socials? They are held on the first Wednesday of each month at Smithy's All Ranks Bar on Site 3. Normally starting around 1830-ish. Nothing formal, no requirements to come or stay – just a chance to chat about bikes and meet some of the people. We have members who ride, some who don't have a bike yet and some who don't have a licence yet, but they are all interested in riding.

Flt Lt V Trafford

Continued >>>>



be in March or April 2024 and we will look to raise awareness in the Wycombe World. Alternatively, you are welcome to attend any of the social events at Smithy's (each month on the first Wed) and/or you can join the WhatsApp groups.

Module 2 was more familiar information based on the First Aid training provided to us through the military. There was some additional information that I don't think is generally covered in the military annual training, which covered such things as allergies and conducting a second survey of the patient. This highlighted a few things of which I hadn't thought but will remember for next time.

What was different though, was the application of it to a motorbike rider – particularly when considering the helmet: to remove it or not to remove it, that is the question! And *if* you must remove it, then how should it be done to minimise the risk to the rider...? Again, I won't try to explain it here because a picture paints a thousand words...but having a go is even better!

Finally, Module 3: motorbike and rider safety. This was good and covered areas that many of the newer riders in the group weren't aware, only two of which were selective attention and the different types of "blindness" when out on the road – both for riders and car drivers. What was also very useful was that Keith mentioned YouTube videos that also presented some of these things with detailed explanations and demonstrations. I've checked online and they are very good and extremely useful, again this is especially true for the newer riders.

This wasn't my first Biker Down course and it won't be my last. Not only does one pick up on more details and achieve a deeper understanding of the points presented each time, returning for

repeat courses also ensures that you are as up-to-date as possible with any changes and developments regarding road safety.

And even if you don't have a bike and don't intend to become a biker, there are points to be learned by all road users (car drivers, passengers and pedestrians alike). So look out for the next course and come along.

Wg Cdr R Fitton

BIKE SAFE

The Bike Club arrange all sorts of events – both fun days out, as well as events to help riders improve their skills. Recently a Bike Safe course was delivered by the (relatively) local Metropolitan and Thames Valley Police Service, which I attended along with a few others from the club.

I'll admit, I was unsure what to make of volunteering to go on a ride with the police! But I was very pleasantly surprised. Not only were they incredibly nice people to chat with before, during (you stop off on the way around your ride out) and after the riding element of the course, but they are very, very experienced riders and make their huge steeds (BMW R1200RT) seem like much smaller and more nimble bikes than they really are (they even let me have a sit on one...with the engine off and the key firmly still in their grasp!).

I found this course to be invaluable as a new rider. It allowed me to learn from the expertise and guidance of the Roads Policing teams..., and you have a full day with them. The morning consists of a theory session in which you start setting up your new skills, learning about better riding techniques and being given tips to try out for the afternoon ride. At first it is unnerving to have a huge marked Police motorbike behind you as

you suddenly go back into learner mode and flashbacks to test day... Thoughts of, "Did I mirror signal correctly?" and "Oh gosh, I'm 1mph over the limit!" constantly pop into your head.

But the whole experience was actually very relaxed. Contrary to my initial belief they are not there to catch you out... in fact, they're not even there to criticize you. What they are there for is to see if you can learn and apply the skills you have been taught.

Like I said, it was invaluable and it has transformed me into a more confident rider; looking ahead, reading the roads, anticipating traffic, noting road signs and recognising the signs in myself as a rider so that I can continue to self-improve. I can't wait for the next one – some of the other guys on the course said they had done them before and always returned for more because your knowledge and riding ability is constantly changing, so there is always something new to learn.

Flt Lt V Trafford

IAM / BARD

On Thursday 23rd of November the Institute of Advanced Motoring supported a morning "taster session" of their course to improve road use through the Buckinghamshire Advanced Riders and Drivers organisation. The session was led by Mike Coughtrey from BARD and he had brought eight coaches with him; this was going to be a good day. Before starting, Mike also mentioned that in addition to the advanced driving/riding courses there was also a "Winter Driving Mature Driver" course for experienced road users to benefit from when it comes to travelling in the more challenging conditions of winter weather.

The morning started with an interactive PowerPoint where

we were asked to fill in the blanks: "What are the five common ways to spoil a day's riding?" After this we were taught the system of bike control taught under the IAM training programme. It all seemed pretty obvious when sat in the warm, comfortable environment of the Oakeshott Centre with a coffee in one hand and a biscuit or two in the other...the time would come when I didn't feel quite so comfortable with the 'easy' and 'obvious' elements of their safe system of bike control. And this happened once I was out on the road under the scrutiny of one of their riders. Whilst Guy was a very nice chap, he had the eyes of a hawk and didn't miss a thing. His initial debrief seemed very complementary and my chest was beginning to puff out, but once he started putting marks on the paperwork to assess my riding I realised that I still had plenty to learn. And I'm sold; I'm going to do the advanced riding course. For a relatively small amount of money I can get one-to-one tuition out on the road where it really matters and learn from experience at the same time as being told the principles. Not only will it make me safer out on my bike, but it will reduce my insurance premium. In today's cost of living I'll take any saving I can find!

The ride itself lasted between 45min and an hour for each of us. And everyone came back in beaming. Yes we were told where we had room for improvement, and yes we had our little bad habits pointed out to us. But it wasn't done from a position of imperiousness, but because they genuinely cared about making you a better rider. And, of course, they had all been through it themselves.

Should anyone be interested themselves, either for motorbike or car, you can email them direct at: **bards.enquiries@gmail.com**

Sqn Ldr Dom Monaghan-Welsh



RIDE TO THE WALL

The event itself took place 7th October, a Saturday. It was an early start with five of us meeting at 7:30 in the morning. We would meet with a couple of others at the event itself. Heading off from the Parkwood site junction near the Site 1 entrance we headed for the M40 and the Cherwell Valley Services ready for the 8:35 departure time, leaving early to give us time for a fuel top up if we wanted and definitely a hot coffee to keep us going for the journey to the National Memorial Arboretum.

The journey itself was incredible. There were marshalls in hi-vis riding up and down the snake of bikes riding in convoy up the motorway – there were hundreds of us! People in cars would gawk out of their windows, people were waiting at flyovers and pedestrian bridges over the motorway with banners to show their support. It was actually very moving and humbling to be a part of such a huge demonstration of support to The Fallen from all services and conflicts. But this almost paled in comparison to the

thousands of bikes actually at the event location. Field upon field was filled with bikes of very kind – old and new, sports bikes and classics, with pillions arriving on the back of bikes and even in sidecars. Wow.

Once inside there was a hubbub of activity everywhere you went, but it wasn't raucous. There was a subdued, respectful air but everyone was enjoying themselves and the event. There were live military bands playing, coffee and food stalls with percentages of profits supporting charities and people from every walk of life.

We took a little time to rest, stretch and get some sustenance – it had been a loooooong ride.

It was nice to chat to the riders that hadn't been out on previous rideouts and get to know them. We then decided on a vague plan to explore the NMA, taking in a few specific areas or memorials that had a personal significance to each of us. With all of us being serving members, but having had different experiences up to this point in the military, it was great spending the

day sharing our stories and learning about different areas, squadrons, histories of the units as we meandered through the expansive site. Thankfully there are a number of benches dotted around so we could rest and cool down in what had turned out to be a beautiful hot and sunny day (although Dom, the OiC of the Club wasn't quite as keen on the sunshine having not brought sunscreen for his head!).

With a long ride home, we didn't leave it too late to head back to our bikes. But this is where our inexperience showed – the queue to get out was hideously long. Not wanting to cook under the sun *and* on our bikes we decided to relax a little longer in the field where our bikes were sat until the temperature dropped just a little lower and the queue started moving a just a little quicker. It was late by the time we got home and, with friendly but short goodbyes, we got back home.

Tori had put her GoPro to great use and shared an awesome video of clips she'd collected throughout the day, which will hopefully find its way onto the RAF HWY MCC Sharepoint site so take a peek if you want to see how the day looked.

We have plenty of other rides that aren't as long, as far or as poignant, but it was good to be a part of this ride on this occasion and with the friends I've made in the club so far.

Lest We Forget; We Will Remember Them.

Flt Lt B Ter Haar

so we could make the most of the day was definitely a good idea and as the doors opened, we were some of the first in the arena.

I was not disappointed, there were so many different types of bikes to sit on and see how they felt, it was such an opportunity for me, as I have my licence and am looking for a bike. I'm not sure what kind of bike I want, so this was great. I had a sit on just about every kind of bike they had! Sometimes to try it out and sometimes just because...why not?!

It was also a great opportunity to meet some of the club members who all were so welcoming, what a fantastic community of bikers we have!

It also had a lot of great kit for sale at good prices. Whilst I didn't buy anything on the day, I was able to try some kit on and check what sizes and I've since ordered some things online. I know that at previous events people have picked up comms systems, helmets, boots, custom made moulded earpieces, bike locks – you name it, they probably have it there. Dom certainly got his money's worth with a new pair of boots and helmet for his Ducati.

They also have a small arena where you could try riding some of the latest models, including an off-roading course to really test your skills. You had to have your licence with you to prove you could ride, and you had to book early in the day because the places fill up quickly. Maybe next time.

It was a truly great day out and I know that I'll be going to the next one. Who knows, maybe a few of us from the club will make the journey together to do it and I'll head up on my new bike. (Now then,...just need to choose a bike first...).

Sqn Ldr G Mackay ■



MOTORBIKE LIVE SHOW AT THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM

This was my first proper outing with the club and my first visit to Motorbike Live. Catching the early train



LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Sport

Where else can you drive a classic Porsche, crash it, not get hurt and have no issues with insurance? Virtually of course!



Many thanks to the Thunderbolts Esports Club for the set up and to Cpl Rutherford for helping to organise the charity stream of RAF HWY's first UK Le Mans 24hr event to raise awareness of, and money for, Diabetes UK. The charity is particularly close to Cpl Rutherford's heart as he explained, "My own father has diabetes. It is a great cause that can help so many people with this disease."

home. If I had to sum it up in one word, it is challenging! It doesn't cost any money and it won't hurt if you crash.

The chance of driving a classic Porsche in a Le Mans rally is virtually nil...but sim racing gives you that opportunity."

The well attended event raised £620 for Diabetes UK.

Many congratulations to the winners (who beat the competition by just over four miles or half a lap) – AS1 Long, AS1 Wilkinson, AS1 Craig & Cpl King who received medals.

Over a full day four teams competed in the motorsport challenge where driving skills were tested to the limit. Despite some technical challenges the event was well attended with supporters popping in to cheer on the bleary-eyed racers. For Cpl Rutherford, "The biggest challenge was the last hour, having been up for the duration of the event to make sure it ran as smoothly as possible. With everyone around, the noise and the anticipation it seemed to take forever!"

Winner Cpl King commented, "It rounds off a pretty successful year for racing stuff I've been involved in this year after the last month or so with Motorsports."

And if you have never tried sim-racing before?

"I would definitely say ease yourself in", said Cpl Rutherford, "And don't get disheartened, because it feels very different and can be difficult. There are loads of good, low-cost options to get into it, and of course locally people can join the Thunderbolts Esports club and have a go!"

Competitor Cpl King has been a simulator (or 'sim') racer for ten years and said, "This is a lot more accessible than many of the expensive high-end packages out there. This allows you to use on your Xbox or computer in your own

Laurence Parker, MCO



THE ESPORTS CLUB

// Hello there!
We are the RAF High Wycombe Thunderbolts, an inclusive group that get together to play, compete, socialise, discuss, and share everything in and around eSports and gaming. The club came about during COVID as part of a pan-RAF project to establish The RAF Gamers Network (RGN). The RGN is a charity that's quickly enabled eSports to become the second largest sporting group in the Airforce.

Most recently the Thunderbolts took part in a 24 Hours of Le Mans Charity Sim race, organised and managed by one of our very own committee members Cpl James Rutherford. The event saw four teams go head-to-head non-stop for... you guessed it, 24 Hours! With the DCPT Team, captained by Cpl James King, shooting ahead for the win and the event raising £650.00 for Diabetes UK. A tremendous success and something we were very proud to be able to support and be part of. More events are planned in 2024.

The Thunderbolts are currently in the middle of a 4V4 Call Of Duty Tournament, being led by our team captain AS1(T) Mathew Whatley, against other RAF stations and blended teams from across the RAF. We are always looking for new members so get involved, what have you got to lose? Contact Cpl Matthew Alford or Cpl Adam Evans for more details."

Adam Evans

RAF HIGH WYCOMBE SADDLE CLUB GALLOPS INTO FINALS OF THE EQUITATION INTER-STATION LEAGUE

The skilled equestrian team is set to compete in the finals in November held at RAF Cranwell.



RAF High Wycombe and RAF Brize Norton Saddle Clubs after their match, July 23

The talented riders of the RAF High Wycombe Saddle Club have secured their place in the finals this November having competed in two crucial matches over the summer.

The Saddle Club, which was only reformed after COVID in 2022, comprises of military and civilian personnel from RAF High Wycombe, and offers a range of equestrian activities at Light Honourable Artillery Company, Flemish Farm, Windsor which includes dressage, show jumping, and hacking around Great Windsor Park.

This summer, the club participated in two key competitions in August this year to earn their place in the final taking place on 7 November 23. This consisted of 3 riders, competing against RAF Brize Norton at home, and RAF Odiham away at Sparsholt college, showcasing their exceptional skills in both the disciplines

of dressage and show jumping. For those that aren't familiar with dressage, it is often referred to as dancing with a horse, where a rider and horse competition are marked based on the performance on a set routine in both walk, trot and canter. Show jumping is based on your speed to complete a round of show jumps, whilst limiting the number of poles you knock down!

This year's team consisted of Wg Cdr Erica Ferguson, Sqn Ldr Cat Poole, Flt Lt Nina Wilkinson and Flt Lt Penny Hawkins. Of note was Wg Cdr Ferguson's overall win away at Sparsholt college against RAF Odiham, on a horse she had never ridden before. And it was also only Sqn Ldr Pool's first year of riding after a long period of not riding, quite an achievement with only two training lessons.

Saddle Club OIC, Flt Lt Jo Parker, has been away for much of the year overseas, and as a result hasn't been

able to witness any of the successes to date, but said: "Huge congratulations to all personnel who took part and a massive thanks to Flt Lt Penny Hawkins for stepping up as co-ord this year. All the very best of luck to our riders in the last leg – what an achievement!"

If you would like to join the RAF High Wycombe, please contact the PEd Flt, or Flt Lt Jo Parker or Fg Off Jen Anderson for more details, or visit the Facebook Page: RAF High Wycombe Saddle Club.



Wg Cdr Erica Ferguson on her 'hireling' from Flemish Fam during the first match

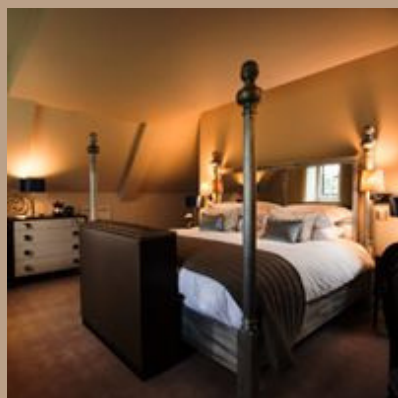
AUTUMN & WINTER AT

DANESFIELDHOUSE
HOTEL AND SPA



As you approach the tree-lined drive that winds beneath the striking Clock Tower, you'll be in awe of this immense setting. The gleaming, whitewashed exterior of Danesfield House sits overlooking the River Thames between Henley and Marlow and the Chiltern Hills beyond, amongst 65 acres of the most impressive landscaped gardens. Purple wisteria climbs the walls of the building while the wonderful scent of lavender wafts among the grounds. Pretty fountains and waterfalls make Danesfield Gardens so quintessentially English while the Italian Garden adds a touch of the Mediterranean.

Brimming with history, Danesfield House was once home to the Intelligence Section of the RAF, formerly RAF Medmenham from 1941 and remained in the hands of the RAF until 1977. It first opened its doors as a hotel in 1991.



Danesfield House arguably enjoys the most spectacular country house setting in the UK, which is why it has become such a popular venue for weddings and corporate events. There are four imposing rooms available for private dining; whether you want to entertain a large party of 100 or host a more intimate affair of 10 guests, there is an ideal space to accommodate your group.

There are 55 stunning rooms and suites to choose from, some with four poster beds or freestanding baths, and some with their own balcony and views across the Thames. There's a welcome mix of both traditional country house style rooms and more contemporary design to choose from. Huge windows capture the mesmerising scenery and luxurious furnishings dress the rooms beautifully.

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For all enquiries:
enquiries@danefieldhouse.co.uk
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If you are planning the kind of wedding that's only seen in fairy tales, you have come to the right place! Danesfield House weddings are magical! There are few settings as enchanting for your big day. From a marquee on the lawn or a traditional ceremony in the Versailles Suite, to an elaborate celebration with exclusive use of the entire hotel, there are several options for civil ceremonies and partnerships.

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Key things to consider when choosing your Lasting Power of Attorney

When it comes to planning ahead for the future, one important decision you need to make is choosing your Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). Under UK law, an LPA is an essential legal document that grants someone the authority to make decisions on your behalf should you become unable to do so.

Wills, Trusts and Probate Partner at Blaser Mills Law, Minesh Thakrar, outlines key things to consider when appointing your LPA.

Before delving into the process, it's crucial to understand the concept of the Lasting Power of Attorney. There are two types: Property and Financial Affairs LPA, which grants someone authority over your finances, and Health and Welfare LPA, which empowers someone to make decisions regarding your healthcare and personal welfare. UK law specifies that the person chosen as your LPA must be at least 18 years old and have the mental capacity to make informed decisions.

Key things to consider

Trustworthiness and reliability: Your chosen LPA should be someone you trust, as they will have access to your financial and personal information. Consider their ability to act in your best interests.

Availability: Select someone who is local to you, as they may need to visit you regularly, attend meetings on your behalf, or manage your affairs in person. Accessibility is crucial for a smooth decision-making process.

Compatibility: Ensure your LPA understands your values, beliefs, and preferences regarding healthcare and financial matters. They should be able to make decisions that align with your wishes when you cannot express them yourself.

Financial responsibility: If appointing an LPA for property and financial affairs, choose someone with good financial responsibility. They should be capable of managing your assets, paying bills, and making informed financial decisions in your best interests.

Communication skills: Effective communication is vital between you, your LPA, and other parties involved. Select an individual who can effectively convey your wishes and instructions to medical professionals, financial institutions, and family members.

Seeking legal advice

We advise to seek advice from a legal professional when creating an LPA. Solicitors specialising in Wills, Trusts and Probate can offer valuable guidance throughout the process. They will help you complete the appropriate forms, clarify legal terms, and ensure the document is properly executed.

How Blaser Mills Law can help

At Blaser Mills Law we understand the importance of putting the right planning in place for the future. Our team of Wills, Trusts and Probate solicitors are experts in the field and work with clients to find the best solutions for them and their families.

About Minesh

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To speak to one of our Wills, Trusts and Probate solicitors about executing a Lasting Power of Attorney, please contact **Minesh Thakrar** on **01494781366** or **mit@blasermills.co.uk**.

For more information, visit:
[blasermills.co.uk](https://www.blasermills.co.uk)





**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**



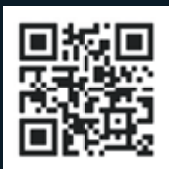
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