

ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

 **ROYAL
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SHAWBURY**

Edition 1
2019





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CONTENTS



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IN THIS ISSUE...

- 5** Foreword
- 6** 2018 Photographic Review
- 8** Honours & Awards
- 10** Force Development
- 12** Sports News
- 13** Charity News
- 16** Total Safety
- 17** Flying Milestones
- 17** SAOC News
- 18** ATC News
- 20** Station News
- 28** DHFS News
- 32** Community News



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Editor's Welcome

By WO Nick Williams

Happy New Year readers and welcome to the first edition of the Aries magazine in 2019.

On our last working day in 2018 we welcomed a new Station Commander, Group Captain Chris Mullen who introduces himself in his foreword. Everyone at RAF Shawbury was also delighted that some of our personnel have been named in the New Year's Honours List for 2019; details of the recipients are in our Honours and Awards section. As you are aware RAF Shawbury nominates charities every year to benefit from our fundraising events. Our Charity Committee has selected three charities for 2019; these are the RAF Benevolent Fund, the Shrewsbury Ark and SANDS - the stillbirth and neonatal death charity. There is a fantastic article on our new helicopters, the Juno and Jupiter. This has also appeared in the RAF Review and gives a fascinating insight to the helicopters and how it is transforming rotary training for all 3 Services.

Finally, we wish a happy retirement to WO Dave Lynn and Mr Richard Williams who have worked with the RAF for a total of 92 years. Happy reading!



COVER PICTURE:

Juno (front) and Jupiter (rear) flying over Shropshire.

Date of Next Edition:

Submissions for Edition 2 2019 to be received by 11th March 2019



**FORCES & CORPORATE
PUBLISHING LTD**

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Padre's Peace

by the Rev (Wg Cdr) Alastair Bissell

2018 was a momentous year for the Royal Air Force as we celebrated our centenary with several events and church services helping to mark an important milestone. It was also a significant year for the RAF Chaplain's Branch who commemorated 100 years of service.

It has been truly remarkable hearing stories of others who served in past generations. Accounts of both individuals, squadrons and the many who supported at key moments in history have been particularly heart-warming, especially those stories of courage and heroism. As we reflect upon their legacy, we all have a great deal to live up to. Such sentiments I am sure are true of all our Armed Services and those who work alongside.

We all have stories to tell and experiences to share which also make our contribution unique. Our loyalty to each task, our presence and influence in our community can also make its mark in a profound way.

Winston Churchill once said: 'History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it'

As others have done in the past, we can also help to make history.

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FOREWORD

by Group Captain Chris Mullen ADC MA RAF, Station Commander

Happy New Year to you all and what a great privilege it is to be appointed as the Station Commander for RAF Shawbury for the next 2 years and to be able to write my first foreword for the Aries magazine as we bring in the New Year in 2019. Whilst I have had the opportunity to meet many of the personnel on the Station during the last 3 months of last year, when the DHFS team were trying their best to remind me how to fly again, I am really looking forward to getting out around the Station and meeting the rest of team Shawbury in the next few weeks.

I must also take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work and support that Gp Capt Chuck and Jo Norris delivered to RAF Shawbury over the past 2½ years. I have had the pleasure of taking over a job from Gp Capt Chuck on 2 occasions and he has left the Station in rude health! I am sure that you will join me in wishing him, Jo

and the girls all the very best for their future posting.

So, what about the future; what will 2019 bring for RAF Shawbury? First, it will bring more personnel to the base with the move of the School of Air Battlespace Management (SABM) from Boulmer, which will be complete in August this year. The building work has already commenced to adapt the old DHFS building to accommodate the new simulators but there is plenty of work to be completed before they arrive; however, I know that I can rely on you all to give the new additions to our team a really warm welcome. In addition, we will see a further increase in the numbers of personnel as the DHFS training system continues to accelerate to full-speed.

Whilst this means that there will be more change after a very busy and somewhat tumultuous year in 2018, I believe that it will provide greater diversity of thoughts and ideas that



should result in an even more vibrant and active station. I truly believe that this is an exciting time of expansion for Shawbury that will present great opportunities for all the community.



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2018 PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW



Jubilant finishers of the RAF 100 10Km Run around a very windy airfield



We regularly practice with the emergency services for all eventualities in this crash scenario.



Our first student sortie in the Juno: Flt Lt Jamie Johnson with instructor Chris Suckling



The Pockett family enjoying the 2018 RAF 100 Families Day



A behind the scenes look at the heating complex in the OSB as a Babcock engineer checks the system



An unusual angle to capture an Apache



One of the Babcock Team replacing brushes on the Airfield Sweeper at MTMS



All out of the saddle for a hill climb in the RAF Cycling Championships held in Shropshire



One of the more unusual visitors to RAF Shawbury an American CV-22 Osprey



A visiting Wildcat on approach to RAF Shawbury.

2018 was a fantastic year for RAF Shawbury with some brilliant photographic opportunities for our station photographers. Ian Forshaw has selected 14 of his favourite images to sum up the year, many from the RAF 100 events.



A visiting Polish MiG 29 Fulcrum for the Cosford Airshow



Tony Grogan carrying out crewman checks whilst airborne

The visiting Typhoon Display Team on arrival at RAF Shawbury



RAF Shawbury Personnel Receive Honours and Awards



At a ceremony held in the Officers' Mess on 14th December, a number of RAF Shawbury personnel were presented with honours and awards by Air Vice Marshal Gerry Mayhew, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff. The ceremony was also attended by family, friends and colleagues.

The following honours and awards were presented:

A Long Service and Good Conduct Medal Clasp was presented to Major Lee Woodhouse MBE and Flight Sergeant Colin Horan.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medals were presented to Major Peter Deegan, Squadron Leader Karen Swanston, Flight Sergeant Daniel Jackson and Sergeant Matthew Fearon.

The Volunteer Reserve Service Medal was presented to Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE.

The Royal Commission was presented to Captain Stephen Robinson.

The Royal Warrant was presented to Warrant Officer Lou Simpson and Warrant Officer 2 Ian Seaton.

Congratulations!

RAF Shawbury Personnel Named in the New Year's Honours List 2019

Military and civilian personnel from RAF Shawbury have been honoured in the Military commendations list, announced in conjunction with the New Years Honours List 2019. The Station Commander and personnel at RAF Shawbury were delighted to see a total of five awards which have all been announced within the main honours list:

Air Officer Commanding 22 Group Commendations were awarded

to the following personnel at RAF Shawbury:

Major L P Woodhouse MBE
Flight Lieutenant R J Haigh
Corporal M S Huda
Mr D Tully-Fewtrell

An Air Officer Commanding 22 Group Team Commendation was awarded to:

School of Air Operations Control
Training Design Team

Group Captain Chris Mullen, the Station

Commander at RAF Shawbury said: "I am delighted to see that personnel at RAF Shawbury have been recognised in this way. All recipients have dedicated their time and energy to directly influence the cutting-edge training provided at RAF Shawbury and I am immensely proud of all recipients. I look forward to congratulating them and their families during special ceremonies throughout 2019 when they will be presented with their awards."

RAF Shawbury Selects the winner of the Best Airman Award

Cpl Fiona Stanley has made an outstanding contribution to both the ATC Squadron and the wider station. A vibrant and engaging character, her enthusiastic manner allows her to communicate highly effectively across the whole rank and civilian structure. For the majority of the period she was the only substantive Cpl in ATC and easily handled the increased workload, which included preparation work for the section's Formal Operations Assurance Visit in February 2019

As Deputy Principle Flight Operations Manager (PFOM) she works closely with the Flight Sergeant to maintain awareness of the various demands on the Station's Flight Operation Assistant workforce and has covered his post for 2 separate fortnightly periods. That she carried out the functions



of the PFOM shows an individual with the capacity to excel beyond the scope of her current rank. The Deputy SATCO highlighted that she carried out the reformatting of the ATC Order Book during a night shift without being requested to or being part of her duties

thus saving the ATC Executive Team several working hours, enabling them to focus on other duties.

Displaying further resolve, she undertook a 400Km charity cycle ride across India in November raising £4200 to support 3 Cancer charities. A cause close to her heart, she trained in her own time undertaking arduous training rides at weekends to prepare for the event showcasing her supreme commitment and determination.

Cpl Stanley consistently demonstrates the best of the Service both through her commitment to Service ethos, and through her desire to strive continually for excellence in all that she does. And for these reasons she has been selected to receive the Best Airman award.

By WO Nick Williams



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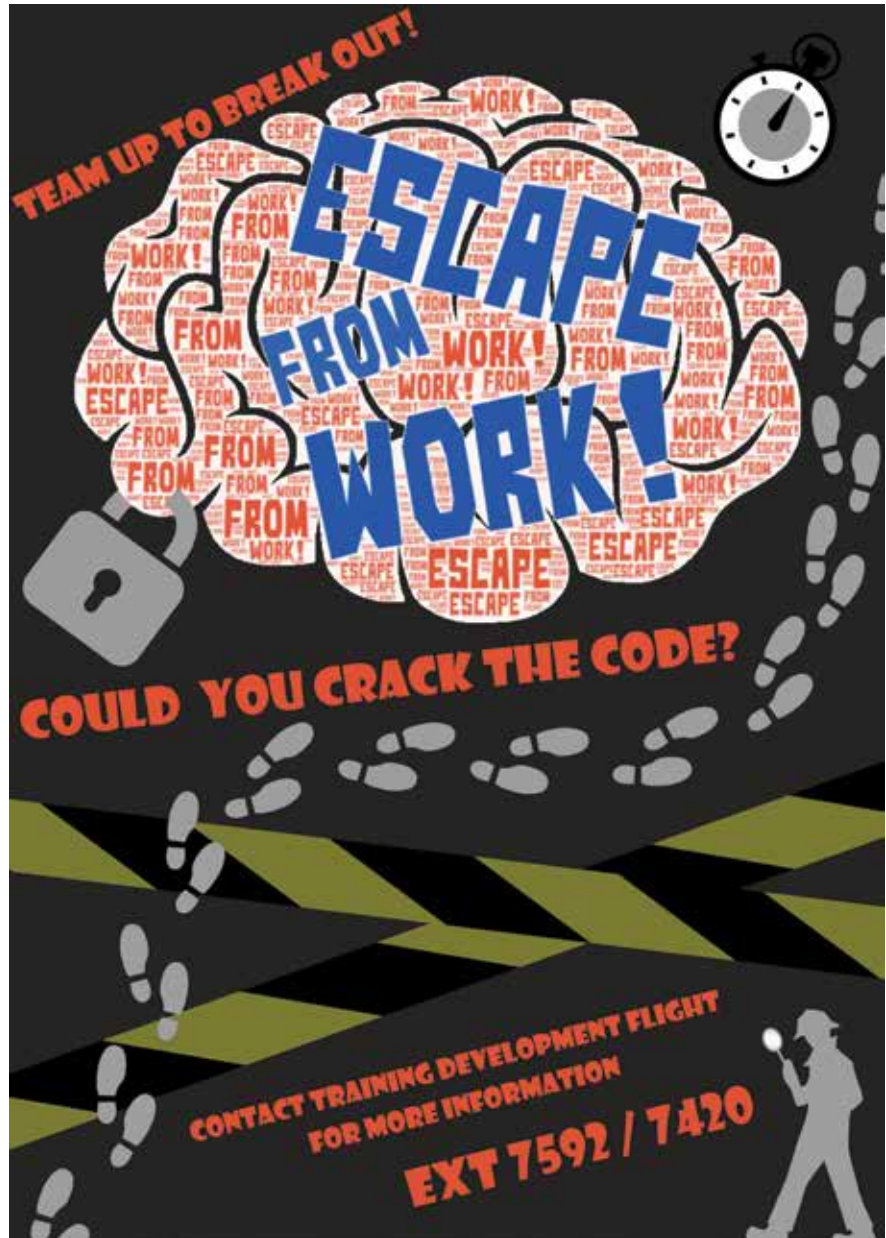
... sounds good doesn't it?!

Well don't just take my word for it, the feedback from all the participants who have taken part in the activity has been positive, one team saying that 'It is great to spend time away from the office, with the team, for an enjoyable couple of hours.'

In December 2018, 4 teams escaped from work and attempted to 'break out'; the Force Development (FD) activity, which is set up in the library and lasts for approximately 1½ hours, was facilitated by Sgt Paula Spencer, SNCO Training & Development Flight (TDF) and Mrs Amanda Davies, TDF administrator.

Thinking back to the 4 teams who took part in December, the higher ranks don't really stand out (sorry!) except for the military precision which was shown by the team from PEd Flt. The Engagement/Graphics team were, at times, overwhelmed by some 'red herrings' and one individual was 'caught' showing initiative. SAOC Assurance proved that it is possible to achieve results even when there are 2 leaders with completely different skill sets. The team from SHEP/Project Plans were keen to keep searching for clues even though all they needed was under their nose.

This FD activity is perfect for a team of up to 8 personnel and covers leadership, communication, problem solving and team cohesion – the main point is that it is fun. Please get in touch with TDF on ext 7592/7248 if you and the team want to take up the challenge.



TDF will always assist personnel with the planning of potential FD events and events are regularly arranged for station personnel. All the relevant information can be found on the RAF Shawbury Training and Development SharePoint page under BSW. There is

also a mobile notice board which is predominantly located at the top of the stairs in Aries. Whilst you are there you could always pop in to the Learning Centre and speak to Fg Off Dave Harper (Station Training Officer) and Sgt Paula Spencer to discuss all things FD.

By Sgt Paula Spencer

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Stn Cdr Gp Capt Chuck Norris presents the winners' certificate to Maj Woody Woodhouse.



The 670 Sqn Team encouraging maximum effort.



The support for all was fantastic.



The bag lift is harder than it looks.



The 670 Sqn tyre flip technique was perfect.

670 Sqn AAC prove to be the Super Team

Signing up to the event for the first time since 670 Sqn AAC reformed at RAF Shawbury in April 2018, the team of 7 QHI volunteers fully expected nothing more strenuous from Super Teams than a bit of Unihoc. On arrival at the gym and seeing the list of events the cold clammy hand of realisation took hold swiftly, looking at the other teams in the room it was apparent that not only were we mistaken about what events we'd be doing but also that the combined age of our team was considerably more than anyone else in the hall by a country mile. With 6 people only allowed to compete in each discipline it at least meant there was a chance one or two of us might survive the day.

Led by the OC Maj 'Tac Handle' Woodhouse MBE and snappily dressed in matching sqn t shirts the team of 40 somethings took their place ready to start the event, first up was the tyre flip. Andy 'The Truth' MacDonald was straight in with the plan, keep flipping alternatively with one person each side until the pace started to slow down then swap for two fresh replacements. Smashing this challenge out of the gymnasium from start to finish we set off as we meant to go on.

Next up came the power bag sprints and work smart not hard was the plan. Having watched other teams change runners after two sprints of the hall we changed this to one each cutting out the time taken to turn around at the far end of the hall, it worked a treat even with WO2 'I don't do cardio' Poole in the side. A huge effort from everyone saw the team set another high score for this event.

The sled push next was a killer with the very real possibility of one or even all of us collapsing from a heart attack, at a combined age somewhere near the Sqn number 670 this one was tough from start to finish, even more so with one of the PTIs pushing the sled off track and towards the gym wall! Capt 'Does anyone know I'm a World Record Holder' Robinson led from the front and by some miracle the team not only won but made it through without a single casualty – looking at the sweat pouring from 'The Truth' it was more from luck than judgement.

The bag lift over the bar and burpee box jumps were the teams penultimate events and had mixed results. Setting a ridiculously high score to beat on the bags the exertion caught up with us on the box jumps, Maj 'Swampy feet' Garner and Maj 'TIA' Steinberg kept things going and we just about kept breathing long enough to strap into the rower for the final round. A massive effort from the boss in his new personalised t shirt got the team going with everyone involved giving their best and falling off the seat jelly legged at the end of their turn. Urged on by WO2 (SSM) Thomas taking his turn to miss one of the events the team cemented their place as event winners, not too bad on their first appearance.

WO2 (SSM) Martin Thomas



The sled push.

Bad Weather Doesn't Dampen Santa's Fun Run



Despite the horrendous weather on the morning of 18th December over 50 brave personnel from RAF Shawbury took part in this year's Annual Santa Fun Run.

The run is held annually with participants paying an entry fee which is all donated to the Station Charities Fund who, in turn, distribute it to the 3 nominated station charities.

This year they raised over £60 with prizes for the first male, Flt Lt McArdle and female, AC Parker; adding to the fun theme the prize for the best dressed runner was shared between Cdr Scott and Flt Lt Pockett.

Well done to all who took part and the Station gymnasium team for organising the run.

By Cpl Sherry Flanagan

CHARITY NEWS

Supply Staff end the year on a fundraising high

As many of you will be aware throughout the year the team in Supply organise regular fundraising events. 2018 was no different and as usual they held their annual Christmas fundraiser which consisted of a tombola and hamper raffle and this was preceded by their collection in October for the Remembrance Day Poppy Appeal.

Both proved to be highly popular with staff across the station taking part; the Supply team were extremely pleased with the results. These events raised a total of £776.30 of which £607 was donated to Stroke Awareness following the Christmas fundraising and £169.30 to the Poppy Appeal.

A special mention must go to Diane Rees, Sue Day, Phil Smith, Ben Meade and Steve Christie who as usual contributed in many ways to make



these appeals such a success. The team would like to thank everyone who took part and congratulations to Flight

Sergeant Kenny Peate who was lucky enough to win the hamper.

By Mr Jim Greer

Taking Football To Africa and beyond appeal

RAF Shawbury Charitable Appeal completes its most successful year

The RAF Shawbury based charitable appeal that delivers 'Aid through Football' has completed its most successful year to date.



Celebrating RAF100 at Juja Farm Kenya.



The Team at Ruiru Prison Academy Kenya.

Children wearing Leicester City kit in Nigeria.



The RAF Shawbury based Taking Football to Africa and beyond Charitable Appeal ended 2018 having delivered football kit to 18 countries worldwide over 34 deliveries. The Appeal, run by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, has been operating from the North Shropshire airbase since 2006 and collects donated football kit before re-distributing them to children and adults across the globe. Since its inception the appeal has delivered over 218,000 items of football kit and other items to people in 56 countries and in 2018 the appeal completed its most successful year to date by delivering over 31,500 items.

Neil said; 'it has been a hugely successful and busy year. 2017 ended with a delivery visit to Nepal and we quickly began deliveries in earnest in 2018. We have delivered items across



Leicester City Kit - Masai Dance - Zanzibar - Tanzania.



Lou Simpson at Moni Ideal School in Juwawa Nairobi.



RAF FA donated kit at Brain Academy in Mathare Nairobi Kenya.

the globe including to the refugee camps in Turkey and Syria, to islands in Indonesia and to many countries across Africa and the Americas. We also assisted with items for children in Belarus, affected by the Chernobyl disaster and made many deliveries into Kenya. At Easter we took 11 people to Kenya to deliver thousands of items of kit including in the large slum areas of Kibera, Kibagare and Mathare, whilst celebrating the 100th birthday of the RAF. We also continued to help numerous other charities with items of kit. We have been shocked by the fantastic assistance given to us, through donations, from many outlets and especially member clubs of Sheffield & Hallamshire County FA, Hampshire FA, Leicester City and Manchester United. As always, we have also had extensive assistance from Shrewsbury Town FC, through our fabulous links between the club, RAF Shawbury and RAF Football. In February we will again travel to Kenya

to make deliveries with a team of 11 people delivering 'Aid through Football'.

We could not do this without a huge amount of support; the appeal team as a whole but especially Tony Kinchley and Warrant Officer Louise Simpson MBE and to my best support team, Helen and Charlotte Hope. I would also like to pass on a big thank you to those who assist the appeal at RAF Shawbury, RAF Brize Norton and in Kenya and across the globe.

The appeal continues to collect and re-distribute kit. More information can be received through Neil at:

neil.hope684@mod.gov.uk

By Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE



Kibera Slum - Nairobi-Kenya.



Nigeria - Shrewsbury Kit.

WINTER DRIVING ADVICE

How to Stay Safe and Avoid a Breakdown this Winter

Breakdowns are more common in the winter and road conditions can be really challenging, especially when snow and ice strike. Here's how to stay safe.....

Batteries and electrics

Car batteries rarely last longer than five years, and there are extra demands on them in the winter, thanks to lights, heating and wipers.

Tips

- Turn off electrical loads like lights, heated rear window and wipers before trying to start the engine.
- Use the starter in short five-second bursts.
- If the engine doesn't start quickly, wait 30 seconds between attempts.
- If you don't use your car often, give it a regular overnight trickle charge.

Antifreeze

Antifreeze only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair. You need a 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water for the winter – this protects your engine down to -34C. Most modern cars use long-life antifreeze. Make sure you use the right type. Some types of antifreeze need changing after only two years. Check your service schedule.

Troubleshooting

A continuous squealing noise when you start up probably means the water pump's frozen - it's the fan belt slipping on the pulley. Stop the engine straight away and let it thaw out. This could take days unless you can move it into a heated garage.

If your car overheats a few miles from home, it's likely that the radiator has frozen. Stop straight away so you don't cause more serious damage.

Vision

- Clean your windscreen inside and out.
- Keep the windscreen and other windows clear of dirt, snow and stickers, to avoid a fine.

- Clear snow from the roof – it can fall onto the windscreen and block your view.
- Air-con demists the screen faster and reduces condensation.
- Replace worn or damaged wiper blades.
- Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the blades freeze to the screen, you could damage the blades or wiper motor when you turn the ignition on.
- Use a suitable additive in your screen wash to reduce the chance of it freezing.

Visibility

- Make sure all lights are working and lenses clean.
- If the roads are really mucky you might have to clean your lights after every trip.
- Keep number plates clean, to avoid fines.
- If you have to clear snow, don't forget the lights – front and back.
- You must use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced. If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.

Tyres

- The AA recommend at least 3mm of tread for the winter.
- Don't let air out of your tyres to get more grip – it doesn't work, and it's unsafe.
- Only use snow chains if there's enough snow to prevent damage to the road.
- Think about getting winter tyres or all-season tyres – these are made from a special rubber that gives better grip in cold, wet conditions.

It's also advisable to pack an emergency kit as well as year round essentials. The AA recommend the

following:

Year-round essentials

- A fully charged mobile phone (with the AA app installed).
- An in-car phone charger or power pack.
- Sunglasses.
- Personal medication.
- First aid kit.
- A road atlas – in case of diversions.
- Sat-nav or a printed route for an unfamiliar journey.

Winter emergency kit

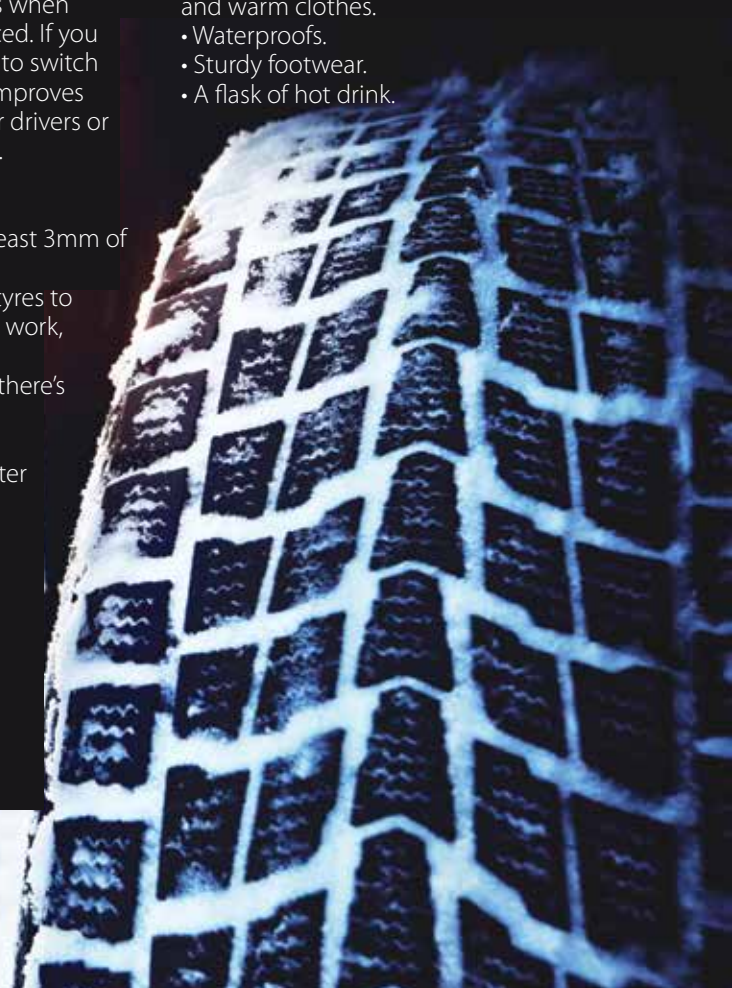
Keep in your car throughout the winter:

- A blanket, rug or sleeping bag.
- Shovel.
- Ice scraper and de-icer.
- Torch and batteries.
- Snacks – chocolate or cereal bars.
- Extra screen wash.

Severe weather extras

When bad weather's forecast and you have to travel, pack these essentials, too:

- A warm winter coat, scarf, hat, gloves and warm clothes.
- Waterproofs.
- Sturdy footwear.
- A flask of hot drink.



A year in the life of a pilot – literally!

660 Sqn AAC has recently celebrated significant flying milestones for two of its instructors. WO2 "Bonnie" Langford achieved his 2000th hour flying the Juno aircraft. Bonnie has recently trained as an instructor having previously flown the Lynx Mk7/9/9a and Dauphin, deploying globally. 2000 hours represents a significant level of experience which Bonnie will no doubt put to great use in his role as an instructor.

I'm sure many people wonder what a pilot does in a year, a question Mr Scott



Booker is better placed than most to answer. Scott recently achieved 8760 flying hours which equates to a whole year in the air! During that year Scott has flown the Sea King Mk5/6/50A, Gazelle, Squirrel and Juno, flown all over the world including an exchange with the Royal Australian Navy, being a display pilot with The Sharks and had a memorable experience whilst embarked on HMS Argus when he had

an engine failure during a pilot's first embarked load lifting sortie. Although at different ends of the instructional spectrum, both are looking forward to the challenge of learning a new aircraft in the Juno and passing on their wealth of experience to the first MFTS ab-initio students in 2019.

By Lt Chris Gayson



SAOC NEWS

Hanging your hat up after 55 Years of working with the RAF

After a career spanning over five decades, Richard Williams worked his final shift at RAF Shawbury.

Richard started his career in 1963, serving in the RAF as a Ground Radio Technician. Serving in the RAF for nearly 13 years, his final posting before leaving in 1976 was at RAF Tern Hill.

Richard stayed in Shropshire and later that year started employment with Marshalls of Cambridge, working in Ground Radio at RAF Shawbury. In 1977 he moved over to The School of Air Operations Control (SAOC) or as it was known then, The Central Air Traffic Control School (CATCS) working in the

Simulator Maintenance section. Promoted to Leading Technician in 1978, Richard has continued to maintain the simulations for over 40 years. During this time, he has overseen many major upgrades and has worked for several different employers who took on the contract after Marshalls. He ends his employment working for the current contractor, Aquilla ATM Services who took on the contract in 2016.

We wish Richard a happy retirement, he will be greatly missed across the Station by his friends and colleagues.

By Mr Garry Wall



RAF Shawbury said goodbye to Warrant Officer Dave Lynn

A stalwart of Air Traffic Control, Warrant Officer (WO) Dave Lynn worked his last shift at RAF Shawbury's Air Traffic Control (ATC) Tower just before Christmas after 37 years' service!

He joined the RAF on 2 Nov 1982 as an Assistant Air Traffic Controller, serving at RAF Leeming, Watton, West Drayton and Linton-on-Ouse. Promoted to the rank of A/Sgt in Jun 1992, he subsequently passed the Joint Air Traffic Control Training, attaining the trophies for best student and best exam results. After only one tour at RAF Finningley, he was selected to attend the Area Radar Training Course again leaving with the trophy



Wg Cdr Mike Jordan congratulates WO Dave Lynn on his retirement

for best student on course. After a tour at ScATCC (Mil), then based at RAF Prestwick, and a further tour at Linton he then returned to RAF Shawbury as an Instructor to impart his wealth of

knowledge and experience through his calm, collected and affable nature. He was subsequently the first WO to take up the role of ATC Examiner in 2008 and finally settled in to Shawbury ATC

as a controller in Apr 2012. Throughout his service he has also served on operations overseas and completed 3 tours at Mount Pleasant Airfield, Falkland Islands as well as achieving the sought after exchange tour on Ex Long-Look in Australia.

Although the RAF is saying goodbye to an absolute legend in Air Traffic Control terms, his future plans mean that his knowledge and experience will not be lost to RAF Shawbury when he takes up his new role within Ascent. Warrant Officer Lynn, thank you for your service and RAF Shawbury wishes you good luck for the future.

By FS Lorna Donaldson



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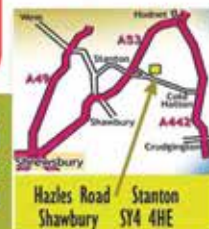
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There's a BUZZ around RAF Shawbury

RAF Shawbury has now for the last 4 years been happy to support the Praise Bee project. Lead by local horticulturist and geneticist Mr Viv Marsh, a close relationship has now blossomed between RAF Shawbury and Viv since 2014.

Bees were first introduced onto the station in 2014 as part of the Station Environmental Policy. The Bees are a species called the Red Mason Bee, it is a non-stinging, non-honey making variety of bee. The reason for specifically introducing Red Mason Bees is because they are a ferocious pollinator, they are 200 times more efficient than the Honey Bee. As well as being able to pollinate a lot more, they are also much less susceptible to Varroa Mite, a major cause of honey bee colony collapses across Europe and North America.

RAF Shawbury was approached by Viv for several reasons. As a large area of open grassland that is untouched by normal agricultural processes the base functions as a micro nature reserve. RAF Shawbury also sits on top of an aquifer used by the local area, due to this the station must be careful on the



Inside one of the nesting boxes.

use of chemicals around the site. Both factors combined meant that it was the perfect place to form a new colony.

Since the start of the project, over 200 pupae have now been collected from nests based at RAF Shawbury. The pupae collected have been used to start other colonies across Shropshire

and further! Interest is now growing in the project since the BBC show, Countryfile, chose to highlight the Praise Bee campaign and filmed at RAF Shawbury.

A major boost for Viv and the project was working with Women's Institutes who installed 69 empty nests in grounds of churches across Shropshire, Pupae harvested at RAF Shawbury was then rehomed at these nests to start colonies. Pupae from the station has also been used further afield to start up colonies at other military units across the country. This includes colonies now at RAF Halton, RAF Brize Norton, BRNC Dartmouth and RMA Sandhurst, similar schemes are now also in place at NHS sites and Police Stations.

Viv returned to RAF Shawbury in November to check on the two nest that are located on the stations grounds. Finding the nests is a little tricky, unlike traditional large white bee hives, the Red Mason Bee's only use a small green box to nest. Inside this contains around 15 cardboard tubes. The first nest managed to produce good results with around 80 pupae expected to be harvested from the hive. This hive's location has been used since the start of the project and has been successful every year managing to produce a good quantity of pupae. The 2nd nest is an experimental nest; the aim of this nest is to find out more about the behaviours of the Red Mason Bee. Viv wants to understand how far the Red Mason Bee will travel from one nest to setup another colony. Near to the location of the 2nd nesting box there is an existing colony across the road, Viv wanted to see if Bees from the existing colony would establish in a new nest by themselves without human intervention to lay pupae.

This nesting box was less successful; however, Viv was happy as there was at least some Pupae. He will now see if the pupae are from the same Bee's that were in the nest across the road, then experiment further with this nest in the



Mr Viv Marsh explaining the distance covered from one nest to another to WO Nick Williams whilst Mr Dan Haycocks takes notes.

All Change at the Top for RAF Shawbury



Mr Viv Marsh and WO Williams talking about the behaviours of the Red Mason Bee.

spring.

Research that is being gathered from this project is being used by Viv and will be incorporated into the Harper Adams University Bee Research Program. This work is also being supported by Shawbury Parish Council who are allowing bespoke areas of wild flowers to be grown. The wild flowers suitable for the Red Mason Bee have been sown in the Glebelands public area alongside St Marys Church. This meadow has benefited from the support and funding provided by RAF Shawbury.

From the humble beginnings and the original colony at RAF Shawbury, a buzz is spreading across Shropshire and further with the eventual aim of encouraging the public to put a bee nesting box in their own garden, alongside some suitable recommended plants. If you too would like to start your own bee colony there's plenty of hints, tips and information at www.praisebee.org.uk.

By Mr Dan Haycocks



Mr Viv Marsh counts the pupae in the nesting box.



Gp Capt Chris Mullen on the left taking over from Gp Capt Chuck Norris

Personnel from Royal Air Force Shawbury welcomed their new Station Commander, Group Captain Chris Mullen ADC MA RAF who officially took command of RAF Shawbury on Friday 21st December 2018.

Group Captain Mullen joined the Royal Air Force in 1992 and was streamed rotary at the end of his Basic Flying Training. Selected to the Puma he conducted tours on 230 Squadron, RAF Aldergrove and 33 Squadron, RAF Benson qualifying as a Helicopter Tactics Instructor and a Qualified Helicopter Instructor; he also completed operational tours in Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq.

A staff tour at Joint Helicopter Command Headquarters as SO2 Flight Safety preceded a tour on the Rotary Wing Operational Evaluation Unit as the Puma/Merlin Flight Commander. Here, he was responsible for all operational trials on the Puma and Merlin aircraft, including support to the delivery of the Merlin onto Op HERRICK. Promoted to Wing Commander and after attendance on Advance Command and Staff College he returned to RAF Benson to take Command of the JHC Operational Evaluation Unit and SH STANEVAL (R&S Wing) in 2011. This exciting period coincided with niche capability development for Op OLYMPIC and the delivery of Puma HC2 and Chinook HC4 to the Front Line.

A subsequent op tour in Command

of 902 Expeditionary Air Wing supporting ISR provision for Op HERRICK was followed by a tour in J5 Plans, PJHQ, where he was responsible for operational planning across the Middle East.

Selected for promotion to Group Captain in August 2016, he was assigned to HQ Allied Rapid Response Corps (ARRC) in the position of Chief Air Operations Coordination Centre (Land) and Aviation during a period where the ARRC were at readiness as the NATO Response Force LCC and developing their warfighting Corps HQ role.

Group Captain Mullen said: "It is a great privilege to be appointed as Station Commander at RAF Shawbury and Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School and Defence College of Air and Space Operations. This year cements the next chapter in RAF Shawbury's long history and relationship with the County of Shropshire as the School of Aerospace Battle Management (SABM) relocates here from Boulmer in the summer to co-locate with the School of Air Operations and Control. This, together with the final elements of the Military Flying Training System contract embedded within the Defence Helicopter Flying School, will ensure RAF Shawbury is a world leader in training provision for both helicopter crews and air operations staff for years to come. I look forward to meeting and working with you over the next 2 years."

By WO Nick Williams

RAF Shawbury serves up a festive feast

On Wednesday 5th December, 75 senior residents from the local area, were invited to RAF Shawbury for a traditional festive lunch, entertainment and a surprise visit from Father Christmas! The lunch takes place annually and has become a tradition in the RAF Shawbury calendar.

The lunch was held in the Officers' Mess at RAF Shawbury with guests being escorted on to the station; having been welcomed to the mess they were served with arrival drinks before hosts took them through to the dining room. The guests were formally welcomed by Wing Commander Alan Jones, Officer Commanding Base Support Wing, before children of the St Mary's School Choir entertained guests singing traditional Christmas carols.

Before the meal was served Padre, Reverend (Wing Commander) Alastair Bissell read a good-humoured grace that was well received by guests.

The three-course traditional Christmas lunch was served by military, civilian and contractor personnel based at RAF Shawbury. Making sure that the guests were well looked after, personnel talked with guests about their memories of the station and the

local area. Master Aircrewman Dave Diable, the Master of Ceremonies entertained guests and provided a festive Christmas playlist and Warrant Officer (Magic) Martin Jones was on hand to wow guests with a variety of magic tricks between courses. Following the meal, there was a surprise visit from Father Christmas himself. In a diversion away from tradition, some lucky guests were given the chance to participate in a game of TV favourite "Play Your Cards Right" hosted by Father Christmas. Prizes were kindly donated by personnel at the station and included a bottle of Gin, Chocolates and gift vouchers. Just like the TV Show though "Everyone's a Winner" and anyone who didn't quite manage to correctly guess higher or lower got a selection of biscuits to take home. The big, final prize was a large hamper filled full of festive treats, won by Mr Max Gittins.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Chuck Norris said: "Once again it was wonderful to welcome residents from the local community onto the Station and provide some festive cheer. Personnel who volunteered loved reminiscing with our guests as they served the food and drink throughout the afternoon. With this year marking the RAF's centenary, it has been lovely to hear stories from those who have served at the Station and how much they enjoyed the celebrations. I would also like to thank residents for their continued support for the training that we provide. The station looks forward to welcoming our guests every year." The event organised by the stations



One of the tables enjoying their starters.



Betty Teece playing her cards right with special guest, Santa!



Brenda Jones and Mary Absollon amazed by Magic Martin (WO Martin Jones).



Patrick and Maureen Knight being served their main course by Jayne from ESS.

Community Support team was a huge success, Gail Moore the Community Development Officer commented: "This afternoon was the product of many weeks work and organisation. I would like to say a big thank you to the ESS and Mess staff for the ongoing support they give to what is a very important event to both the village and the base. Thank you also to St Mary's Primary School who entertained our guests with their wonderful singing.

By Mr Dan Haycocks

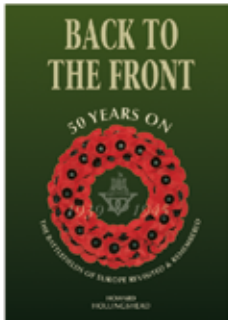


Above: Kathleen Edwards and John Challenor served by Sgt Chris Diamond.



Tom and Judith Embrey served by Sqd Ldr Duncan Parker-Groves.

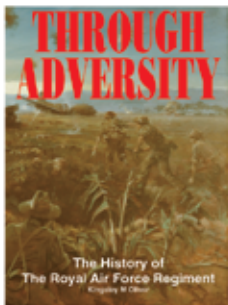
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Forget the "Smiler" ... it's their Smiles that Thrilled Us!!

On 6th Aug 2018 C4i once again hosted 10 children from Belarus, as part of the Chernobyl Children's Charity, for a fun week of activities both on and off Station. As well as the children, we were proud to also welcome the support staff including Anastasia (Interpreter), Natalia (Doctor) and Kevin, Sally and Gabi (UK based Carers).

The children – all aged between 9-11 - have all been affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster which occurred 32 years ago and are either in remission from various cancers/leukaemia's or are still receiving treatment for the illnesses. By bringing them to the UK for a few weeks in the summer, it gets the kids away from the radioactive dust that rises in the summer heat and gets them breathing fresh clean air and eating clean food. This has a massive impact on them and has been proven to extend their lives by an average of 2 years, just from being over here for a couple of weeks in the summer.

The C4i team decided to up the ante slightly this year by raising some money to fund the various trips off base. A quick peruse of the physical fitness levels within the section and we rapidly concluded that a "Lands' End to John O Groats" event was clearly out of the question. Luckily Corporal Greg Hunter had a lightbulb moment – "I know lads, let's just get our legs waxed for cash, how difficult can it be!"; little did we know of the pain awaiting us. Jo Owen, a local beautician, generously agreed to complete the waxing for free as well as donating a beauty hamper for the raffle! I won't delve



They even opened up the cockpits for the group!

too much into the pain, but what I would say is one wax strip is like rubbing a cheese grater along your shin then pouring vinegar on top. It hurts - a lot - then repeat that 30 times on each leg and the process soon becomes old. Massive respect to all the ladies out there that suffer this in the name of beauty!

It's worth mentioning that Flight Lieutenant Rich Haigh decided to wax the bottom half of his arms - why just the bottom we don't know but we do know that he screamed the loudest! If you picture Chewbacca with his sleeves rolled up it may give you an indication of the task. FS Andy Bradley didn't jump or even make a peep; the only logical reasoning behind this is that he must have done it before and was used to it. Never the less it was a great success and we raised over £700, so many thanks to Suzanne Eddy for the beauty gift voucher and Donna Hamer for arranging 2 tickets to the Shrewsbury Flower Show for the raffle!

We wanted to hit the ground

running and thanks to a large discount the first day was Drayton Manor park. You could see instantly on arrival that the children hadn't experienced anything like this before; their eyes lit up and we knew a great day was in store. Unfortunately, Belarusian children are totally unaware of Theme Park etiquette – always go on the log flume last! So, after a good soaking it was off to enjoy all the other rides. Luckily the weather was glorious, and I can honestly say a great time was had by all. The mix of big and small rides was perfect for some of the less adventurous visitors (cough! Nat the doctor).

Day 2 was a long one, the morning trip to the Air Museum at Cosford was fun for the children plus the free rides on the simulator were a most welcome treat. Back on the bus and we were off to Airplay in the HIVE for craft and arts afternoon. This was an excellent opportunity for the children to mix with the local dependents. Not content with two activities the evening excursion was



The spinball whizzer at Alton Towers



Thumbs up for the Blue Planet Aquarium



The Crocky Trail Slides test - this is a scream!



Enjoying the RAF Cosford Museum.



The Crocky Trail Slides test this is a pass..



Everyone arrives at Drayton Manor and dry for the timebeing.



All set for a great day at Alton Towers.

continues overleaf...

STATION NEWS

to Climbing The Walls in Shrewsbury, another fantastic experience for the children. The venue is not your usual climbing wall, there's a special area just for children with all sorts of weird and wonderful objects to climb up. It was great to watch the children overcome their fear of heights and proved to be an excellent confidence building exercise.

Day 3 started off with a visit to Ice cream farm at Tattenhall. I'm not sure if Drayton Manor park had set the children's expectations a little too high as the small slides and swings didn't quite cut the mustard. That said, as soon as we visited the retro computer games room spirits were raised; shooting aliens, pool, and racing games is a universal winner for all children. A quick lunch then it was off for a last-minute visit to Blue Planet aquarium for some fish fuelled adventure - and we weren't finished yet! Post evening meal it was X-Strike. X Strike is a locally based company who generously offered to entertain the children for free! And for those who don't know X- Strike is Nerf gun battles in a blow-up tent. The



The Crocky Trail Slides showing the grown ups how it's done.



Happy Birthday Vlad not sure why FS Bradley is wearing the pinata.



Trying out the Retro Games at Tattenhall.



Focussed on flying.

Day 4, we decided to visit the Crocky Trail in Chester. It's a rustic adventure park made from old scaffolding and whatever the farmer could find by the looks of it. The children absolutely

adored this unusual twist. The haunted house (dark shed with bits of plastic hanging from the ceiling) was too much for Anastasia - she screamed more than the kids and Vlad decided he was too hot and decided to fall off the log into the stream on purpose. But apart from that the trail has just the right level of challenges for the children to play on. The evening line-up got under way with WO Martin Jones brilliant magic show - a welcome change of pace for all, and finally a party in the Aries club for Vlad's birthday. This was probably the most dangerous part of the week; my advice is - if you place any child in front of a Piñata and give them a stick, then stand well back.

a great week and we were fortunate enough to be given free tickets for Alton Towers as part of the Merlin's Wand scheme. Anastasia started the day as she meant go on, constantly asking when we were going on the Smiler. The children, although a bit overwhelmed by some of the larger rides grew in confidence, and it wasn't long before they were asking to go on Wicker Man and Thirteen.

Alton Towers was the perfect way to end what was a tiring but extremely rewarding week and we're already looking forward to next Year and hope to make it bigger and better than ever. None of it would have been possible without the help and generosity of RAF Shawbury staff. Special mentions must go out to Helen in the Junior Ranks' mess and her staff, Jane Bond in accommodation, Ajilon's princely donation, Wg Cdr Hope for the bags and the HIVE staff and AirPlay team for their support.



Just one of the many fun walls at Climbing the Walls.

We wanted the final day to be the cherry on the top of

By Sgt Phil Waterson

*If you go down to the woods today,
you'll be in for a big surprise!*

Trainees from the Defence Helicopter Flying School, Course 320-004 have been busy assisting Shropshire Council to maintain a popular walking spot, Corbett Wood, a Countryside Heritage Site at Grinshill. The 11 trainees were participating in a community engagement project while holding. This developed not only developed their leadership and communication skills, but also enabled them to support their local community.

The group set off from RAF Shawbury for two weeks in December, meeting Mike Smith from Shropshire Council and Ranger Rob Smith who gave them a tour round the site and the tasks that needed completing. The group decided to split in to two groups, so they could manage the tasks in a timely manner. Group one worked on the tasks in the car park with group two starting the work in the woods.

Group one had the major task of removing the old posts surrounding the car park that had rotted and been bashed by cars over the years. First fresh holes were dug ready for the new posts, this was a painstaking process as the group had to dig through rock and tree roots cut to be able to insert the new posts. Despite the arduous effort of pickaxing, cutting and digging, the task allocated the most time was complete in one and a half days! With the 45 posts inserted and set, the team met group two to assist with their task.

Group two started at the top of the main pathway in the woods. The group then worked down the pathways clearing bramble and holly back to the rock face, with the cuttings going onto piles to be burnt later. Corbett Wood is a site of scientific interest (SSSI) for its geological importance, with this very site rumoured to have inspired Charles Darwin to write his Theory of Evolution. The purpose of this clearing was to widen the pathways and to allow the users of the woods to see the historic walls.

The final big task was to clear



Work commences on the car park.



The group clearing the overgrown pathways.



DHFS Trainees who took part in the project.



The bench carved into the rockface.

a long section of pathway making it much easier to use. The path overtime had become overgrown and dangerous, a stone section was rebuilt separating the walkers route from mountain bikers and horse riders and the pathway cleared of holly and bramble making it much easier to pass. One section had become unpassable during the Winter months, this was covered with 20 tonnes of stone and sand and sloped to direct the rainfall. Not only did this look much better, but it meant walkers didn't have to take a slippery diversion. Logs were used to form a neat edging of a path as well as a bench carved into the rockface for walkers to take in the stunning scenery. This carried significant personal value to Ranger Rob, whose brother had sadly passed away a few years ago had helped with the carving of the bench.

With word getting around of 320-004's work, Genevieve Tudor from BBC Radio Shropshire turned up to view the transformation and chat with the team about the undertaken tasks. The interview was aired on the very same evening with Sgt Dacres giving an explanation as to what the group had done. Mike Smith from Shropshire Council also thanked the group saying "What the group have achieved in a short space of time is amazing! They have made a real difference with their energy and enthusiasm despite the poor weather."

All in all, a very productive and successful two weeks, transforming Corbett Wood and making it much more user friendly. So, if you go down to the woods today, you'll be in for a big surprise!

More information about Corbett Wood, the walks and wildlife it has to offer can be found at www.shropshiregreatoutdoors.co.uk

By Sgt Charlie Harvey

The Juno (right) and Jupiter (left)



Introducing JUNO and JUPITER

by Flt Lt Chris Pepper

With a little help from his colleagues, Qualified Helicopter Instructor Flight Lieutenant Chris Pepper describes how the new Juno and Jupiter are revolutionising UK military helicopter training, through a revitalised Defence Helicopter Flying School.

After flying the Puma HC1 and 2, I became a Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) in 2015, serving on 60 Sqn with the Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) at RAF Shawbury and flying the Griffin. I converted to the



A Juno on a sortie over Shropshire.

Juno earlier in 2018, but remain with 60 Sqn as a QHI. There are several facets to military helicopter crew training. Some of them will be changing as we introduce our new-generation Juno and Jupiter aircraft, and to better tell the story, I asked a few key personnel for their perspective.

First though, it's important to introduce the UK's latest military training helicopters. The Juno HT1 is the UK military version of the Airbus Helicopters H135, part of the original EC135 family, used in almost 60 countries

The DHFS OSB.



Inside the Jupiter cabin.



The Jupiter being used for winch training.

with around 300 military and civilian operators. It has replaced the Eurocopter Squirrel in UK service. The larger Jupiter HT1 is the UK military version of the Airbus Helicopters H145. Both types entered service in April 2018 as part of the UK Military Flying Training System (UK MFTS), which trains helicopter crews for the RAF, Royal Navy and British Army. The Jupiter has replaced the Bell Griffin.

Both aircraft take their power from a pair of turbine engines, driving four-bladed composite main rotors and a Fenestron, a 'fan' arrangement that replaces the traditional tail rotor. The main rotor blades are connected through an advanced rotor hub that includes an anti-resonance isolation system, placing the H135 and H145 among the quietest helicopters in their class.

Of mixed aluminium alloy and composite construction, both helicopters have two pilot positions, plus a pair of forward-facing seats 'in

the back', with space for two crewmen to operate adjacent to the cabin side doors. Clamshell doors aft provide access to a luggage storage space behind the seats. A winch system is fitted to the starboard side of the Jupiter, while it and the Juno are also underslung load (USL) capable; they're also fully night-vision device (NVD) compatible. In both helicopters the engines sit on top of the cabin, either side of the rotor hub. Full authority digital engine control (FADEC) takes atmospheric parameters and pilot inputs into account to automatically adjust engine settings, fine tuning the fuel and air flows to optimise powerplant efficiency. Meanwhile, safety is assured through multiple redundant systems.

Airbus Helicopters calls the aircraft's fully integrated avionics suite Helionix. It provides LCD multi-function displays (MFDs) with touch-screen technology, helping trainees transition to the cutting-edge technology on

The Flight Training devices.



Taking part in the RAF 100 Flypast.

frontline aircraft. Helionix includes a four-axis autopilot to reduce pilot workload, and a First Limit Indicator (FLI) in which engine instrument data is shown under one indicator. A GPS navigation and communication suite and traffic advisory system complete the equipment, while a mission system, including a digital map and helicopter terrain avoidance system, gives pilots full situational awareness. This integrated equipment is at the forefront of helicopter design and is very much the future for military and civilian rotary-wing operators.

Instructor's View

I previously flew with a glass cockpit, so the transition from Griffin to Juno was not as tricky as it might have been, and I soon settled into the scan [the act of looking across the primary flying instruments] required to fly straight and level with a semblance of accuracy. Once I'd mastered the basics I was awarded my Certificate of Qualification on Type (CQT), then progressed through

the Competent to Instruct (C2I) package that serves to highlight the nuances of instruction on the aircraft.

As a training platform it performs fantastically well. Of particular note is the training mode function, which accurately replicates a single engine failure, including Nr (rotor RPM) droop, representative engine indications and even the associated yaw. Cleverly, all this happens with both engines running and no degradation in engine output. Gone are the days of winding throttles to idle to simulate power loss emergencies!

But the student's view of these next-generation training platforms is perhaps even more important, and I asked Lieutenant Tim Helliwell RN, a trainee pilot, to describe the learning experience.

Trainee Viewpoint

"From a trainee's perspective, flying the Juno is giant leap

continues overleaf...

forward; the twin-engine, glass-cockpit aircraft is a world away from the single-engine and analogue instrumentation of the Squirrel. It's a welcome step towards the aircraft we expect to pilot on the front line and its capabilities have prompted a significant change in the character of flying undertaken at the DHFS.

"The Juno has three MFDs that may be configured to show several different pages of information. The layout and volume of data can initially be daunting, but after a few sorties it becomes intuitive and provides a level of situational awareness far beyond that available in the Squirrel. Furthermore, features including moving maps, GPS navigation aids and the advanced autopilot system significantly free up the pilot's mental capacity, which should prove invaluable during the tactical elements of flying training.

"As with the Squirrel, a typical flying day consists of trainees being given a 'mass brief' covering all the knowledge and techniques required for the upcoming sortie. Trainees then prepare an individual sortie brief that

The instruments inside the Flight Training Device.



may include the production of maps via the mission planning system, as well as consideration of the prevailing weather, pertinent ATC [air traffic control] and local area information, and aircraft information and performance calculations. This brief is then delivered to the trainee's allocated QHI before a more in-depth discussion of the sortie profile and manoeuvres to be performed. Aircraft are often taken on a 'rotors running' basis, before departing the airfield for an area of the Shropshire countryside and, hopefully, a successful, productive flight."

Fresh Approach

Implemented via a contract with Ascent, UK MFTS is the new system overseeing military flying training in the

UK and incorporating the formerly independent Flying Training Schools under one banner. At RAF Shawbury and RAF Valley it provides all the DHFS training and is also responsible for training new aircrew instructors with the Central Flying School (Helicopters) (CFS(H)).

At RAF Shawbury, Ascent sub-contracts Airbus Helicopters to provide 29 Juno and three Jupiter helicopters. In addition, Ascent provides state-of-the-art simulators and other synthetic training aids through Lockheed Martin, its ground-based training equipment provider. Infrastructure support is provided in all cases by Babcock.

The helicopter pilot training

course takes students who have completed elementary flying training on the Grob Prefect and progresses them from ab initio status on helicopters to become qualified military pilots. It awards RAF and Army trainees their Flying Brevets, while RN trainees receive theirs at the end of their frontline Operation Conversion Flight (OCF) course. At Shawbury, students learn the basics of helicopter handling, then progress through navigation, confined areas and instrument flying, before learning how to operate helicopters, including USL, tactical formation and NVD work. The syllabus comprises classroom-based theory lessons and sorties in high-tech flight training devices (FTDs), culminating in flying the Juno and Jupiter. In the classroom, students learn about helicopter physics, gain aircraft-specific engineering knowledge, and study meteorology and airfield and airspace operations.

State-of-the-art FTDs in the new on-base Operational Support Building (OSB) provide the greatest contrast to previous instructional methods. They lend students the opportunity to practise emergency procedures that could not be conducted in the air. They can also be linked for co-ordinated missions in tactical scenarios. Over 40% of the syllabus is completed in the FTDs.

The Jupiter is used at RAF Valley, where instructors teach trainees nearing the end of their course how to operate in mountainous terrain and maritime environments. It will also be used to instruct pilots and crewman how to safely operate the winch specific to these operating areas.

Senior Operator's View

UK MFTS delivers a streamlined, efficient training



A student using one of the Flight Training Devices.

process using modern aircraft more closely aligned with frontline platforms, enabling relevant, forward-looking training for student pilots and crewmen. The aircraft are also more reliable, reducing maintenance costs and improving safety.

It's therefore a really good news story, as one of the system's more senior operators, Wing Commander Mike Jordan, Officer Commanding Operations Wing, RAF Shawbury, confirms: "Coming from Merlin and Puma 2, and having instructed on the Squirrel, I can state confidently that the Juno and Jupiter are a step change compared to the Squirrel and Griffin. Both new types offer our trainees a much greater insight into multi-engine, glass-cockpit helicopter operations and avionics systems, preparing them much better to hit frontline operations in similarly equipped aircraft, while increasing safety.

"In addition, and as an ex-Boss of CFS(H) Sqn, I am convinced that using the Juno to train new helicopter instructors will better allow quality instruction on the front line straight from training. After many years working with commercial partners in the old system, the DHFS is now enjoying the flexibility that results from extended relationships with organisations like Ascent and Airbus. I'm truly looking forward to the future, when I believe our trainees will be much better prepared than I was at a similar point of training, while the DHFS will be envied world-wide for its output."

DHFS

The new DHFS construct has created a slightly different organisation compared with the legacy system. It has been split into 2 Maritime Air Wing (MAW), comprising 705 Naval Air Sqn (NAS), 660 Sqn Army Air Corps (AAC)



The Juno being prepared for Underslung Load Training.

and 202 Sqn, and 9 Regt AAC, comprising 670 Sqn AAC and 60 Sqn. No. 670 Sqn has recently moved from Middle Wallop, Hampshire, where it trained Army pilots on the Squirrel.

DHFS retains its tri-service outlook, which helps prepare trainees for joint operations on the front line. All the squadrons have a mix of personnel from the three services, plus a large percentage of Ascent instructors, all of them ex-service and vastly experienced.

Squadron Commander's View

Meanwhile, the various squadron executive officers preserve the ethos and customs of their respective services, as Sqn Ldr Ally McDowell, Officer Commanding 202 Sqn at RAF Valley, explains: "No. 202 Sqn re-equipped with the H145 Jupiter after retiring the Griffin. The aircraft

shares its avionics suite with the Juno, although the Jupiter is a larger, more powerful helicopter. The cockpit similarities smooth the transition between the two, enabling DHFS trainees to 'break out' of Shawbury for a module of advanced training at RAF Valley, where syllabus elements can be fluidly 'muled' onto the more capable H145 with no time required for re-qualifying.

"The training system is designed and executed by Ascent, in partnership with myself and my squadron. Together we work with Airbus, which maintains the Jupiter. The whole picture is completed by Babcock, which provides safety equipment support. The individuals on all four teams have diverse backgrounds, but most are ex-military. Some of 202's longest serving members are found on the teams; all are united by a sense of loyalty to the squadron which, at 104 years

old, is among the most senior RAF units.

"The squadron enjoys a long-standing and well-developed relationship with its parent station, which has always been proud to have resident helicopters. And thanks to the unit's unique geography, the Commanding Officer's Cup (CO's Cup), which unites the whole force, varies in its events from the usual diet of hockey games and cross-country runs – participants can often be found on the beach, playing in volleyball championships or taking paddle-boarding lessons.

"Here at RAF Valley, trainees enjoy a broadening opportunity to operate at a busy fast jet base. As the home of IV(AC), 25(F) and 72 Sqs, Valley's taxiways, circuits and radar patterns are invariably full of Texan T1 and Hawk T2 aircraft. Set against the dramatic mountain backdrop of Snowdonia and pleasantly situated on the very edge of 5km of golden sandy beach, from Valley it's possible for 202's students to be operating across a wide range of niche environmental disciplines within minutes.

"Our remit is to provide RAF and Navy pilots, observers and crewmen with a basic education in the challenges and skills required to operate over the sea, in the littoral environment and with marine craft, which includes how to safely hoist a winchman or, indeed, a survivor. This foundation prepares them for the challenges they'll face on the front line, where expeditionary warfare and interoperability are the key themes that enable us to provide world-class military effect. Having conquered the challenging flying 202 Sqn exposes them to, their education is complete, and they return to Shawbury to prepare for graduation and onward posting to their frontline careers."

RAF Shawbury Airplay Food Hub Project

Young people from RAF Shawbury have been working on a food bank project for the last eight months.

Using the Airplay Youth Offer Funding, members of the junior and senior Youth Club been working especially hard to complete the work. This has involved reinvigorating the way the Station supports the 'St Barnabas Community Projects home of Shrewsbury Food Bank' by making the current Station food bank more appealing, interesting, noticeable and user friendly. By giving the young people ownership of this project, we facilitated the growth, awareness and creativity of our members while encouraging positive contribution and achievement within their local community.

On the 30th May 2018, the young people visited the St Barnabas Food Bank in Shrewsbury with their donations. They got to see and play a part in the full process of what happens to the donations after arrival at St Barnabas. The young people were very respectful and learned a great deal, for example, organisational and life skills by looking at and understanding how a food bank operates. The scenario and role play activities run by the Centre staff were insightful and challenging for the project participants, youth club



Youth club members learning how to put together a food parcel at Shrewsbury Food Bank.



Youth club members learning about Shrewsbury Food Bank's role.



The building of the Food Hub gets underway!



The start of the Food Hub.

members had to work as a team to put food parcels together for families who had no access to a fridge or cooker.

The young people have been collaborating with RAF Shawbury Community Support and RAF Shawbury Airplay and have designed, painted, decorated and embellished a new food bank cupboard for the Station. They have also created a large wooden mountable sign displaying the presence & location of the Food Hub. The young people decided to make it more of a 'food hub' by not only offering a place for donating food and toiletries but also creating a user-friendly space with signposts for help and support in the local community.

The youth club members were also empowered to have a say in organizing the Food Hub launch event held in the Station's Aries Club on Monday 3rd December. The young people had a great time at the event which was successful and well attended. The young people were proud of their achievements and enjoyed speaking to the invited VIP's and event participants about the project and all the work they had carried out throughout the year.

The Food Hub is now officially up



Youth Club Members and staff officially open the Food Hub.

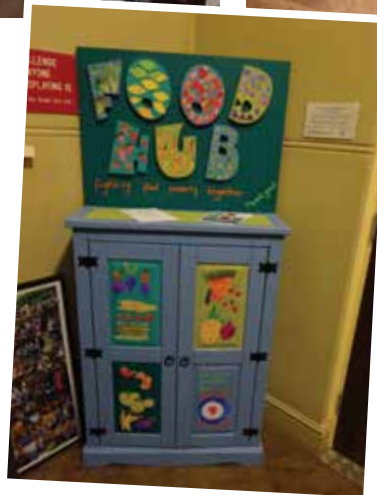
and running and the young people's participation, support and commitment to the project will continue to grow. The young people will be responsible for collecting and emptying the cupboard in Aries on a weekly basis for Airplay staff and members of the Community Support Team to take donated items to the Food Bank in Shrewsbury. They will also take a turn in transporting the food items to the food bank once per half term so that

relationships and project progress can be maintained and further developed.

**By Lauren Baxendale
Station Youth Worker**



Youth Club members officially open the Food Hub for donations.



Left: The Food Hub created by the Station Youth Club members.

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WHAT DO RAF HIVES DO?

The RAF HIVES Service provides an information and welfare referral service to the Armed Services community, including serving Personnel, their families, veterans, Reservists, and civilians on Station.

The HIVES can support you on:

- relocating
- local station and civilian facilities
- schools and further education
- housing
- healthcare facilities
- employment and training opportunities
- places of interest

RAF HIVE Information Officers are not trained in welfare counselling, however, they are able to offer initial support to individuals and can make referrals to appropriate professional services. All HIVE staff are bound to a Code of Confidentiality.



Cheryl Foster is the HiVE Information Officer and has a wealth of information and knowledge about RAF Shawbury and the local area gathered over the years she has worked here. She welcomes visitors to the HiVE and is happy to give you advice and information on the matters that affect all personnel and families on the unit.

Located in the Cookson Community Centre at the top of the main car park, the HIVE Information Centre offers a drop-in service Monday to Friday from 0900 - 1400.

**Contact Ext 7206 or
cheryl.foster588@mod.gov.uk**



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