



The Stinger



Quarterly (ish) Newsletter of the 223rd Entry Craft Apprentices – RAF Halton 1971 - 1973

Volume 6

<http://223halton.hosting.idnet.net>

June 2013

What's in the rag?

- Nothing of interest again
- 40 years on
- Where's Don gone?
- Mug shots 1973 & 2013
- Why is Ian wearing curtains?
- Drink, drink and more drink.
- Swansea & Cardiff in the Premier League.

40th Anniversary Special

Well, it's been over a year since the 'Stinger' (and not 'Singer', as Bob Rodham recently emailed) was published and who do I blame for this?

Inflation has a lot to do with it, so does the ineffectual government we have, the rise in incontinence pads have a little to do with it but the biggest part of the fault lies with you — yes you reading this drivel.

Without your input, this magazine (OK, grand illusions) will never get printed, so get off your back side and send the Field Marshal Editor in Chief, Exalted Prince of the West your thoughts, photographs and money. Or Else!

Reunion

It's that time when we meet again to commemorate the passing of 40 years since we left our apprenticeships at RAF Halton and the last time that some of you bought a round, which we celebrated both during a week-end of innocent fun (?) at the De Vere Village Hotel, Walsall on 25th –26th May 2013. As al-

ways, all the hard work has been done for us, so that all we had to do was turn up, drink, eat and laugh at the same jokes you heard in 1973. Most of the jokes had been recirculated from the 76th Entry (1954-56), who in turn had recycled them from 54th Entry (1946-48).

Bob Rodham goes out of his way to make these reunions successful and this one was certainly no different and our gratitude for his effort was mentioned by all who attended.

I am delighted to announce that the Editor won the first prize drawn for the raffle prizes, which was an outstanding glass painting of a chipmunk by Steve Forster. Now on EBay (joking).

There were a large number of prizes up for grabs in an attempt to raise money for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, which is a supremely useful charity for old codgers like us, especially when bits fall off.

Don Tanner auctioned two helicopter rotor blades that helped to boost the total to over £231 (90p over).



Why is Don Smiling?
Answer on top of page 10.



Why is Jock Kerr doing the Peter Crouch robot?
Answer half way down page 11.

There are many more questions but who cares?

Ian Hovey Starts us off

223rd Entry 40 Year Anniversary

Two score years ago, a bunch of honed, smart, upright Apprentices prepared for the Final Frontier...to boldly go where no Brat has gone before –except for the thousands who passed through before us

Forty-six - mostly upright, gleaming, smiling pseudo adults were at the end of a 24-month trial-by-patience, through thick and thin – namely:

Haircuts,
Initial Square Bashing
Inoculations followed by Square Bashing
Hikes over to Dunstable (in a Square Bashing manor!)
Summer Camp in Wales with a bit of Sheep Square Bashing
Bullnights, Bog Cleaning, Centre Deck polishing, Block Surrounds and a bit of Square Bashing
Saturday Morning lectures – followed by more Square Bashing
Stately Funerals – slow Square Bashing
Route Lining – with more Square Bashing
and finally a Passing Out Parade – with final Square Bashing

I wonder how our feet got through all those miles of trampling up and down, being marched about, thrown out into a mountainous countryside, wading through rivers, map reading, molesting sheep, running up the hills to Pimple Point, legging it down to Wendover to the Rising Sun, Shoulder of Mutton and all the other liquid refreshment establishments or to visit a sweetheart in the town.

We covered more miles than Marco Polo (of 216 Entry) and got through more Officers and NCOs than the Dam Busters...Porky Plump-

ton, Flt Lt Chew, Barnet Mehan, Jock Young, Cpl Hogan, Sgt Thomas - to name but a few. The second year was blessed with the inclusion of our cars, all sorts of vintage models – Ford Anglias, Morris Minors, Ford Prefects, Minis and the like. ..today would be called ‘Classic Cars’ but in those days – ‘Heaps of Crap’. With petrol at 46p a Gallon, we could afford to get home for our 48 hour passes and back in time for ‘Last Orders’ in the NAAFI – ‘Double Diamond – 17p a pint’ Fags – ‘Players No. 6 were 25p for 10’Happy Days

Here we are, 40 years later – older and wider (well some of us) long gone are those days of Workshops, Schools, Airfield Training and Square Bashing. We’ve all grown into the fine specimens that we today – upright citizens – proud to call ourselves Veterans of the Cold War, not ashamed to mention to current serving men and women ‘When I was your age!’ or ‘When I was at 40,000ft with ‘f**k all’ on the clock but the makers name’ and smile quietly recalling the past traumas of an RAF Apprentice.

I hope that this small band of guys continue to meet every three years – our numbers are decreasing with the burden of families, jobs, location and other barriers that are put in our way.

We have all come through some of the most difficult, but enjoyable, times over the past 42 years and hopefully our memories will continue through our written words and passing on our experiences to our successors.

Finally, I wish to thank, again, Bob and Yvonne for their considerable effort, and time, in making these reunions possible... Ladies and Gents. The 223rd Entry Craft

A p p r e n t i c e s
– RAF Halton 1971 to 1973..

Saturday Night



Don Tanner helping two more helicopters become worthless by pinching their tail rotors.



The Pink Panther demonstrates how he set up his own bank in Luxemburg from his 50p shoe cleaning empire at RAF Halton.



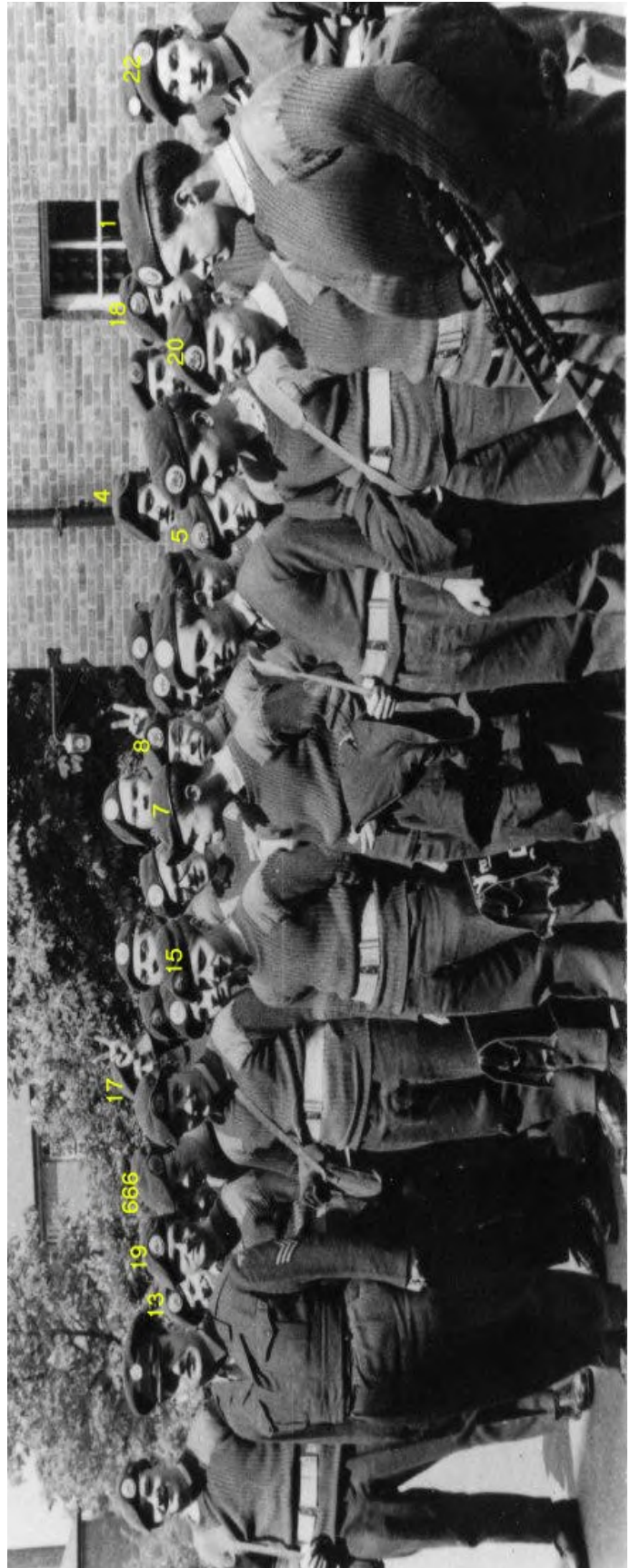
Our bosses show us guys how to look cool standing against a wall, despite the fact that the guys have had plenty of practice doing this on ID parades with the local police.

The girls helped brighten up the night, compared to the grey old men they are married to. A chorus line of beauties and a rabble of dirty old men complaining about the youth of this country.

2013

v

1971



- 1 Roy Davidge
- 2 Pete Lewis
- 3 Phil Scott
- 4 Steve Blemings
- 5 Keith Godden
- 6 Dave Gingell (Broken)
- 7 Don Tanner
- 8 Keith Bass
- 9 Paul Bedward
- 10 Chris Lowe
- 11 Davey Jones
- 12 John Kerr
- 13 Ian Hovey
- 14 Paul Pickwell
- 15 Mick Carter
- 16 Dave Squires
- 17 Stuart Thompson
- 666 Ken Ryan**
- 18 Bob Wilson
- 19 Dick Bothamley
- 20 Bob Rodham
- 21 George Strachan
- 22 Steve Farmery



The Don holds court, with his jester to his left.



The ladies relax, while the guys talk of drunken exploits 40 years earlier.



The evening starts with a laugh and then Ian stands up to talk and spoils it all.

Halton Photo: 23 Colin Fishburn, 24 Steve Smyth, 25 Tony Newman, 26 Terry Hayward, 27 Rod Wallace, 28 Dave Crerar, 29 Rae Stevens & 30 Nick Rogers



The head of the family plots the next cunning plan.



Explaining to Ian that it was not a fancy dress party and since he had come as a pair of curtains, he should pull himself together. Sorry for that.



Ken about to say goodnight to Taff.



Don, minus his bearskin, stands on guard over the raffle prizes and due to the RAF's cut-backs, he has to use a rotor blade instead of a SA80.



The Pontefract 3rd XV front row relax after an especially tiresome scrimmage against Keithly Blind School.



Two old mates look eye to eye.



Some wives are so fed up waiting for a drink that they carry their husbands forcibly to the bar to buy a round. Times have not changed.



Chris starts the girls off on the 'gangnam' style dance. He has still got it, despite the cream and the pills.



Dave gave a talk on the ~~Arberetum~~, ~~Arberetum~~, ~~Abbaeten~~, ~~Abereaten~~, the place where the memorials are.



We know who ate the pies!





Revenge is a dish served cold but the question is, which of the 19 other members of 223 hit him or maybe, which one of the 19 did not hit him?



The local Mensa group plotting to rule the world.



The good, the bad and the ugly!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Some people drove to RAF Cosford!!!!



Jock Kerr checks his wallet to see if his 10 shilling note is still OK



Eyes down for a full house.

Ian receives his mess bill and he is not very happy. He later burst into tears and cried all night.



223 Entry 40th Anniversary Graduation Reunion by Dave Gingell

The bank holiday week-end of the 25 -27th May brought glorious weather to the UK, when members and their wives and partners of 223 Entry RAF Halton held their 40th Anniversary of passing out. We were a small entry, with 46 in total surviving the two years of training. The chosen venue was the De Village Hotel in Walsall. Arriving on the Friday Evening or Saturday morning we made our way to the hotel bar for refreshments. The usual banter and similar stories were exchanged, even after 40 years nothing had changed! A good turn out with members arriving from Germany and Luxembourg.

Saturday evening we sat down for an evening meal. Bob Rodham welcomed everyone and Ian Hovey opened with a tribute of memories appertaining to our entry. Reading aloud as only Ian can do, they would have read true of any apprentice. Dave Squires then followed with an update on the work being undertaken at the National Arboretum. Dave has certainly put a lot of effort into this project. After the meal we undertook a raffle, where all prizes had been do-

nated by members of the entry. As usual someone seemed to win all the prizes! Don Tanner then auctioned memorable aviation items as only Don can! All profits made were donated to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Sunday we were able to visit the National Arboretum and/or RAF Cosford Museum. The weather stayed warm and everyone seemed to have a good day out. Some got lost but there again they did rely on the sat nav. (Nothing wrong with old fashioned road maps). Sunday evening we once again enjoyed an evening meal together. Yvonne Rodham had prepared a pub quiz which as usual had everyone saying "I told you so" or "I knew that". I never knew what Gynophobia meant and I still do not understand the metric units of measure. Pints and inches were everyone's answers!

Monday morning after breakfast we gathered to say our good-byes and face the bank-holiday traffic home. We all found the week-end very enjoyable and relaxing. On behalf of myself and all the members of 223 entry we would like to thank Bob and Yvonne Rodham for all their hard work in not only organizing this week-end but all the work they have put in over the years.

As a writer, he would make a good drummer or perhaps not (Editor)

Ken blowing kisses to anyone who would buy him a drink





On parade! I didn't realise how short some of the guys were until I saw this photo (Editor)

Answer to why is Don smiling? - Wind!



223 Semaphore training begins with a request for another pint

Is this River-dance for the elderly?



Some animals will just grab the first woman they see

Some people never change, not even after 40 years.



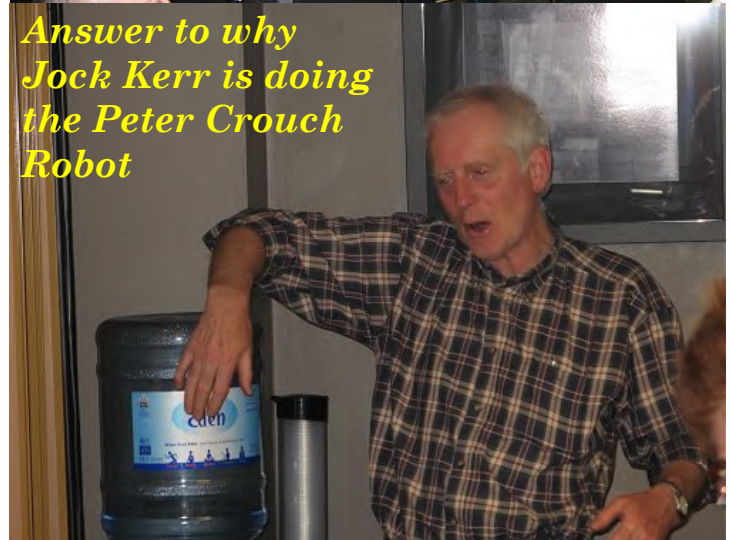
Please tell me if I am boring you!



Don doing what he does best, lean against a bar with a pretty woman at his side, unlike at Halton when he was often found face down in the bar, with a woman kicking him in the ribs.



The paparazzi are desperate to take photos of Taff as he gets them off



Answer to why Jock Kerr is doing the Peter Crouch Robot

No one knows but he looked better at it than Peter Crouch, mind you that does not say a lot! He later threw his hip out (the window).



Guess who farted?

Answers on a postcard to The Editor in chief, el supremo, Ward C for the criminally incontinent, Crynant Working Man's Club.



Taff brought his true love with him, lager.



Sometimes thinking can give you a headache and sometimes it can confuse you.



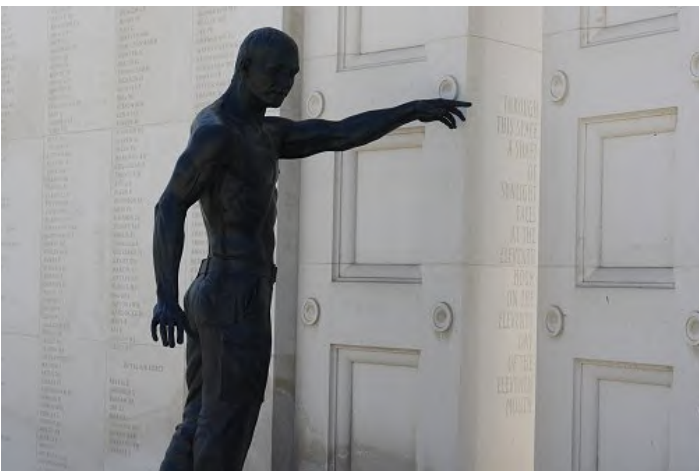
A serious debate is conducted to find out whose round is next



But sir, I have to have the plate! We don't allow customers to lick the plate clean here!



On safari in deepest, darkest Staffordshire.



Bob Rodham went that way!

Those that went to the National Arboretum enjoyed themselves and appreciated the sacrifice of those remembered and the sacrifice of the old codgers keeping the gardens nice — Dave.

Thanks for the memories, both good and bad and thanks to Bob for all his tireless dedication to 223 Entry.

We are a band of brothers, who have shared experiences, shared hardships and even shared the odd girlfriend but our time at RAF Halton made us into what we are today—fat, bald and with a dodgy ticker.

You can reach the Editor Chief of the Imperial Staff and bar, Prince of the East & West, Guardian of King Solomon and all-round great bloke at this email address:

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Keep in touch and send me your thoughts, photos and money (cards accepted).



Roll on the next get together and hopefully, all of us still alive can get there, those who are dead or will be dead before then, are excused but we will still expect a slip.