



The 'Never Again' News

An occasional newsletter for members of 225 Entry, RAF Halton, Nov 1971 – Oct 1973

No 18 – January 2020

SAD NEWS

Since I last put my podgy fingers to the keyboard and produced an edition of *The 'Never Again' News* (August 2018) I am afraid that I have learnt of the death of three more members of the entry.

Andy Galt, one of our armourers, died on 23 September 2018. It appears that his first posting was to Wattisham, but I know nothing further of his RAF career, or subsequent life, but I believe he had lived in Ireland for a number of years before he died.

In September 2019 I had an email from Ian Oram's widow, Rebecca, who had found our website. She told me that she'd met Ian while we were at Halton and they had married in 1975. Ian bought himself out in 1976, and then worked as a postman before joining the Metropolitan Police. He had been serving with the police for 12 years, and had received several commendations, but died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage in 2001, at only 46 years of age.

Rebecca remembers several of the entry from the happy times spent in the King and Queen at Wendover. I can pass on her email address should anyone remember her or Ian and like to make contact.

This photograph kindly supplied by Rebecca shows of the two of them at her parent's house in Amersham following our passing out parade on 25 October 1973.



Then in late November 2019 I was contacted by Iain Montgomerie's daughter saying that having fought off cancer twice, it had got him at the third attempt and he died on 3 May 2019. Monty will no doubt be best remembered for his car-fettling skills, and he was always happy to share his knowledge to help others keep their old bangers on the road. His first posting was to Oakington, along with several others of the entry, and there he apparently continued to spend much of his time in the Motor Club helping everyone. I think I can safely say that he was one of the most popular members of the entry and that was certainly backed up by the many warm comments and anecdotes on our entry Facebook page.

Otherwise I do not know anything of Monty's subsequent career, or later life in civvy street, but he had moved back to his home area, south-west Scotland, a good number of years ago.

RIP Andy, Ian and Monty. We Will Remember Them.

BACK TO HALTON - 48 YEARS ON



On a far happier note I was pleased to hear from Tony Borrett at the beginning of November 2019.

Tony was visiting Halton for his son's end of basic training passing out parade. With impeccable timing the parade was on 5 November, 48 years to the day since Tony and the rest of us were there signing on the dotted line.

Richard is now undergoing his trade training with the RAF Regiment. Tony is taking Richard's choice of trade well and says that, having himself spent so much time on helicopters working alongside the Rocks, he thinks he can just about cope with it!

Pictured left: Richard and Tony by the Tornado that someone saw fit to plonk on 'God's acre' some years ago.

THE LECKIES ANNUAL REUNION

Thanks go to Chris Birch for a few words and a photo of the Leckies annual reunion in September: -

Eight Leckies plus spouses gathered in Telford and based ourselves in the Central Premier Inn which was an easy walk from the town centre and rail station. As the weather was good on the Saturday we visited Ironbridge and had a long walk around the local attractions before being treated to a dance display by the local Morris Dancers. Some of their moves were not too dissimilar to our own attempts to impress the opposite sex on the NAAFI dance floor many moons ago!

Sunday's weather was not as kind so we went to the RAF Museum at Cosford which most of us hadn't visited before. Not too much in the way of Ground Support Equipment but there was a good Bloodhound Missile display which a few of the guys had worked on. Surprisingly some guys, who had served in RAFG, got a bit excited with the rubber respirators on display!

Editor's note: Strange people some of the Leckies - personally I found many more things to excite me in RAFG than respirators! Of course I did have the great advantage of spending my time in Germany on 431 MU doing Cat 3 Repairs, and respirator wearing was avoided whenever possible. When working at other stations we were 'exercise exempt' and, if at Brügger when the hooter went, we'd report to work and likely be told to disappear to Wildenrath for the day! Happy days indeed, and obviously I didn't spend enough time wearing a respirator to develop the fetish.



The Leckies enjoy the sunshine on their visit to Ironbridge in September. L to R: Bob Newton, Dave Moore, Chris Birch, Colin Murray, Ned Kelly, Jim McWilliams and John Minshall. Martyn Daynes also attended the reunion but is absent from the photo.

THE 'ROOM 2 OXFORD FLIGHT' RIGGERS' BI-ANNUAL REUNION

As many of you will have noted over the years some of the Riggers have a couple of get-togethers each year – very much coincidentally at the time of the Derby and Swindon Beer Festivals. Owl Hurst has kindly sent a few words and a couple of pictures: -

Here is a hazy recollection of our virtually annual trip to the Swindon Beer Festival. Once again we were kindly invited to stay with Tony Killick and his wife Elaine at their newly extended abode.

Myself, Pete Knowles, Ivor Linington and Pat “Paddy” Minister arrived on the Saturday morning and shortly afterwards were whisked away in a taxi to Swindon Steam Museum. We were met there by Doug Goulding and proceeded to gently sip a few morsels of the fine ales on offer whilst chewing the cud. Subjects included: Retirement, what to do whilst retired, golfing holidays for the retired (Keynote Speaker, Tony Killick); Looking after Grandchildren (Pat Minister); How to sell the same house three times and not sell it (Pete Knowles); How to combat hair loss (Spray it with WD40) Owl Hurst (Honest my hair has never looked so bouffant since).

The highlight of the afternoon was a beer-related pub quiz, questions being read out at 80 decibels over the loud speakers by a lady who evidently used to be a railway station announcer for some backwater station in Kazakhstan for what you could understand. Fifty torturous questions later she then started to give the answers, by first repeating each bloody question again. We managed to restrain Pete Knowles from taking her out with a fully loaded firkin of Old Tadger, and left for the Glue Pot Pub in the Railway Village, a fine real ale pub with plenty on offer, including ciders. A few beers later, it was time for a curry - Paddy Minister’s favourite part of the evening. Whilst the rest of us devoured various Indian dishes, Paddy got stuck into plain chicken and chips.

We all recollected various stories, with the usual different recollections of the same event. Ivor swore he couldn’t remember going to Pat Minister’s wedding, he still can’t remember even though we now have photographic evidence: -



Room 2 Riggers at Pat Minister’s wedding many years ago. From left, the men in the picture are Paul Henry, Ivor (I wasn’t there) Linington in a snazzy suit. Pete Knowles and Owl Hurst are just about visible, the latter, very trendily equipped (for about 3 decades ago!) with dark glasses and a moustache, is peering out from behind the lady in a pale blue coat – however, unsurprisingly, he isn’t actually the tallest one there, he says he was standing on a step-ladder!

Hopefully we will all meet up again for the Derby Winter Ale Festival to be held at the Roundhouse opposite the Railway Station 19-22 February, the 22nd (Saturday) being our normal day of attendance. Would be great to see anyone else from the entry, if they could make it.



Room 2 Riggers at the Swindon Beer Festival in October 2019: L to R: Owl Hurst, Pete Knowles, Tony Killick, Ivor Linington, Doug Goulding (making a special guest appearance as he lives in Swindon), and Pat Minister.

THE LAST HALTON APPRENTICES' ASSOCIATION REUNION

Following the news that Halton had been given a stay of execution until 2025, it has been decided that they will be able to host one last apprentices' reunion. Therefore the previous plan to hold a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum has been shelved and an event similar to the previous triennial reunions will now be held at Halton on Saturday 15 August 2020.

This will also mark the end of the Halton Apprentices' Association (HAA) as numbers and income is dropping as each year goes by. As part of the effort to find ways to resolve this and try to extend the life of the HAA a survey of current members only got a disappointing 11% response rate. In amongst the results from this small sample were figures for those indicating that they wanted the HAA to continue - 82% of them were between 75 and 97 years old!

If you would like to go to this final reunion and are not already a member, you will need to join the HAA, however, with the association winding up, you'll only need to pay for a year's membership (£10) plus the fee to cover the cost of the reunion - £15 if I remember correctly.

I know that a number of you who are HAA members are probably not going to attend this final reunion, but the Leckies are looking to hold their annual get-together that weekend in Hemel Hempstead, so hopefully some of them will come along to keep me company for one final march down the hill and across Main Point.

LAYING UP OF THE HAA STANDARD

On the following day, Sunday 16 August, a service will be held in St. Clement Danes Church in London, for the laying up of the HAA Standard. Again membership of the HAA will be necessary to get a place, but otherwise this is a free event with a buffet laid on afterwards.

THE FUTURE

In order to ensure that the legacy of Halton apprentices lives on the HAA set up the RAF Halton Apprentices' Trust (RAFHAT) in 2017. This has so far provided eight scholarships for engineering students, with a further three due to have started in September 2019. A bequest from a former apprentice of £100,000 has put this scheme onto a very firm footing and as I understand it any remaining money held by the HAA after disbandment will be transferred to the RAFHAT to help fund further scholarships etc.

The RAFHAT has also taken on the responsibility for all matters relating to the 'Halton Grove', the apprentices' memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Work is still ongoing with regard to the future of other aspects of our heritage such as the Trenchard Museum and the records currently held there, plus the entry stained glass windows in St George's Church. The HAA (the RAFHAT will take over responsibility after the HAA's disbandment) management are involved in discussions with the appropriate agencies such as the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Buckinghamshire County Council. Hopefully in the not too distant future a clearer picture of what will happen to these assets after Halton's closure will emerge.

OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION – NOVEMBER 2021

I am still looking to organise a 50th Anniversary reunion and hope that as many as possible of the entry will attend. In 2011 for the 40th Anniversary there were 26 of us but, as I have contact details for another twenty or so, I hope that we can do even better in November 2021. It makes sense to hold it somewhere centrally, and Burton-on-Trent has been suggested by Chris Birch as the Leckies met there a few years ago - the fact that it's the home of the National Brewery Centre may, however, have swayed his thinking! There are a number of places we could visit over the weekend – the aforementioned National Brewery Centre being one, but there's also the RAF Museum at Cosford not too far away and the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) is only a few miles from Burton. Owl Hurst, who lives in that area, has offered to assist with arrangements and this is most welcome as it's not always straightforward when I try to organise things from the north of Scotland.

My initial ideas are to meet up on Friday 5 November 2021. On the Saturday we could visit Cosford (hiring a coach will be looked at) and have a meal together in the evening. On the Sunday we could go to the NMA where we can remember all those from the entry who have died - Dave Chitty and Steve Fryer are of course named on the Armed Forces Memorial at the NMA as they died on duty. There might even be scope to include a visit to the National Brewery Centre on one of the afternoons as well.

Should anyone have any comments to make, be they in favour or against, or indeed if there are any other suggestions for the weekend, please let me know.

I know that several of you live abroad, but I do hope that by having plenty of notice you will be able to make arrangements to join us – hopefully the UK Border Force will let you back into the country!

Even at this very early stage it would be extremely helpful if you could let me know whether you are a) definitely looking to come to the reunion; b) are seriously considering it; c) not at all interested. It will also be useful to know whether you will be looking to be accompanied by your other halves. None of your decisions will be binding at this stage of course, but it does make it much easier when it comes to arranging a hotel etc. if we at least have a rough idea of numbers to start with.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO FIND THE ‘MISSING’ ONES

On my list of those who were with us at some stage I have a total of 86 names. I have contact details for 47, and am aware of 11 who have died; therefore there are still 28 ‘missing’. While I understand that some may not want to get involved, it would be good to at least make as many as possible aware of our plans for 2021 so they can be given the opportunity to join us. I have listed their names below and if any of you know of their whereabouts please either try to make contact with them yourself (and let me know the results) or pass the information on to me and I’ll try to contact them.

Airframes: -

Robert ‘Paddy’ Coburn

G. Davey – Joined us from 223rd Entry in Jun 73.

P. Deakin – Joined us from 223rd Entry in Nov 72 – transferred to adult training Mar 73.

Anthony ‘Russ’ Fenn

Phil Green

Jonathon ‘Bob’ Hope

Andrew McCormack

Dave McNeir

Trev Millard – Discharged Oct 72.

Dave Millington

Nigel Morse – Has previously left a message on our website, but didn’t give contact details.

Dave Paterson

Robert Scales

Ken Scott – Discharged Nov 72.

Richard Tribe – Discharged Jun 73.

Graham Willis – Discharged Dec 71.

G. ‘Mid’ Myers – Joined us from 223rd Entry in Mar 72.

Armourers: -

Steven Barnard – Discharged Jan 72.

John Duncan

Paul Edwards

Andrew Gayfer

William Kane – Discharged Jan 72.

Brian Odell

Alan Parker

Steve Pritchard

Roger Taylor – Discharged March 73.

Nigel Winn

Ground Electricians: -

Gareth ‘Stan’ Kyte

AND FINALLY

I am always pleased to receive contributions to this august publication, so don't be shy in forwarding stories, or reports and pictures of your exploits, be they from your RAF days or later.

The plans for our 50th Anniversary reunion will be developed over the next year or so and I'll keep you up to date with progress through our Facebook page, emails or (if I get my act together) another edition of *The 'Never Again' News*.

Please don't forget to let me know your intentions for November 2021.

Best wishes to you all for 2020.

Dickie Bird