



The 'Never Again' News

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

No 5 – October 2010

TRIENNIAL REUNION

On Saturday 25 September six of us (Tony Killick, Paul Farrall, Owl Hurst, Pat Minister, Pete Knowles and I) met up at Halton for the Triennial Reunion. Thankfully the weather gods smiled upon us and most of the day was bright and reasonably warm.

After we had all met up we adjourned for a beer in the Indoor Drill Facility that's been built alongside our old block – yes, you did read that right - an indoor drill facility! However all is not lost as I met the current OC Recruit Training Squadron, who I knew from his time as an Ops Officer at Lossiemouth a few years ago, and he said it hasn't been used since he took over, except for parking his car in bad weather. Originally a Halton trained engineer (not an apprentice) he was of the opinion that if it was good enough for him to march up and down the square in all weathers then it is certainly good enough for today's recruits. I also heard from another source that he has re-introduced bed packs, so I expect he's really popular!

After a good blether about our time at Halton, and the telling of several tales (some of which are not suitable for repeating in this newsletter!) the six of us wandered off for lunch in a considerably nicer dining room than in our day – gone are all the long tables and bench seats. On the way we stopped briefly outside the old Oxford Flight for a group photo and in a touch of serendipity the blocks have been renamed and lo and behold it is now called Spitfire Flight!

After lunch everyone was summoned to line up for a march past (well more of an amble past really), with the current Station Commander taking the salute. I don't know how many ex-brats were present but we were lined up in ranks of six and stretched for more than the length of the road running along the east side of the parade square. I'm sure the next HAA magazine will enlighten us as to the actual number but someone said they were expecting 1,500 and I have no reason to doubt that. Once on the parade square we formed three sides of a square facing the Ensign for a Sunset Ceremony, an address by Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller (210 Entry) and a flying display by a Spitfire flown by Air Marshal Cliff Spink (104 Entry). Then it was time to march off down the hill and across Main Point to

Workshops - I bet the traffic really enjoyed that as by the time the band had reached the road we junior entries at the back probably hadn't left the parade square.

And then, not really wanting to partake of the service in St George's Church that was on offer (no change there in trying to skive off church parade!), and wondering how even 10% of those present would fit into the church anyway, we said our farewells and drifted away after a very enjoyable day together.

AN APOLOGY – THERE WERE SEVEN

There were actually seven of us at the Triennial but unfortunately the six of us didn't meet up with the seventh member. Bob Wilson was playing in the band and by the time we'd heard that he was there the first sitting of lunch was about to start and everyone had started wandering off in all directions, and afterwards the forming up of the parade got in the way. Once on the move we didn't stand a chance as he was at the front and we were trailing almost at the back! I'm sorry Bob that we didn't get to see you, but we'll be sure to search you out next time.

CONTACTS

Spurred on by the Triennial it's time to really knuckle down and contact as many of our entry as possible if we are to stand a chance of organising a 40th anniversary reunion for next year.

So far I have established firm contact with the following: -

Dave Cottrell	Martin Crown	Taff Desborough	Paul Farrall
Owl Hurst	Tony Killick	Pete Knowles	Pat Minister
Iain Montgomerie	Mick Ogle	Dave Rouget	Pete Schneider
Bob Wilson			

I've also had information from some of you on contact details and possible whereabouts of the following, but for various reasons I have not been able to make firm contact with them - for example two who I did speak to a while ago have moved jobs before giving me their email addresses etc. and have now 'disappeared' when I've tried again. If you know where any of them are (and of course any others that are not mentioned) please either try to contact them and do your best to encourage them to come on board, or pass on the details you have and I'll try: -

Tony Borrett (FR)	Glyn Casey	Doug Goulding	Pete Davies
George Fairbairn	Kev Feeney	Pete Firth	Andy Gault (FR)
Gordon Graham	Phil Green (FR)	Bob Hope	Ivor Linnington
Tom McOuat	Merv Roberts (FR)	Ken Scott (FR)	Ian Whaplington

FR = On Forces Reunited, messages sent and still awaiting replies.

The above (plus me), along with the six known to have died, makes a total of 36 accounted for to some degree out of the 82 names I have on my master list. Please do your best to explore all avenues in finding and contacting as many of the guys as possible – all information will be gratefully received.

ENTRY 40th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

I have contacted the HAA Office to see what advice they can offer regarding what is possible and what is not for a reunion. While it is obvious that a visit in some form to the station itself is desirable we have to bear in mind the burden put upon them when a bunch of 'old codgers' turn up at the gate. Certainly the Trenchard Museum in the old Henderson (boxing) Gym is worth a look, as are the stained glass windows in St George's Church that have been designed and installed by many entries. In the past the HAA has been able to arrange a full day, including lunch, for reunions and I will work with them to see if we could make it on the actual anniversary of 'signing on the dotted line' as the 5th November 2011 is a Saturday.

An idea would be to assemble at a hotel somewhere reasonably close to Halton on the Friday (4 November), travel to Halton on the Saturday for a visit (perhaps hiring a coach so no one has to worry about abstaining from drink the night before) and then finishing off the day back at the hotel for an evening meal together. This format would have the advantage that, with the exception of the long-distance travellers amongst us, it would not intrude into the working week too much.

As always your ideas and input would be much welcomed.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW

I have already mentioned in passing the stained glass windows in St George's Church and if you have visited the HAA website you will have probably seen the pictures of those already commissioned by entries (over 100 so far) to commemorate their time at Halton, and they make quite a feature. It's an idea to see whether we can do the same and if we act soon enough we might be able to have it unveiled / dedicated while at Halton for the 40th anniversary. Although all of the windows in the end wall are now completed there are spaces still available in The Lady Chapel to the left of the altar.

I will do some preliminary investigation into likely costs etc. and again would very much appreciate your thoughts and input - and how about some ideas for the design? If you need some inspiration visit the HAA website (www.oldhaltonians.co.uk and follow the 'tribute' link on the home page) and have a look at the windows and the rationale behind some of the designs.

MYSTERIES SOLVED

In the last edition I mentioned my recollection that at least one of the entry had done a runner the very first night we were at Halton. Tony Killick has confirmed that it did indeed happen as the chap was in the bed next to him at night out but gone in the morning! Not surprisingly Tony doesn't recall his name, and as we hadn't been attested at that stage there's not much the RAF could do to make him return. That may be one reason why in more recent years recruits are attested at their local CIO before actually going off to do their initial training.

Tony also remembers Steve Blemings (the 223 Rigger who I couldn't recall being back-flighted to us) and he was put in Class A2 – probably because they had a spare bed from the first night escapee!

AND FINALLY - WHAT A MOTLEY CREW!



Outside the renamed Oxford Flight, 25 September 2010
L to R: Paul Farrall, Pete Knowles, Tony Killick, Pat Minister, Owl Hurst, Dickie Bird.

All the best
Dickie Bird