

THE CHINTHE



**656 Squadron Association
Journal
Summer 2007**

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EDITORIAL

Having said in the last Journal that an editorial would not be a regular feature, here I go again.

Your committee have decided that this year we would publish three Journals. We normally publish the Summer Journal after the reunion but, as the reunion this year will be in September, we thought that it would be appropriate to publish one now, albeit a slightly condensed one, and a 'Special' after the reunion and AGM, to cover the reunion weekend celebrations. Once again, the OC's report will be missing, because we didn't ask for it in time for him to meet our self imposed publishing deadline. Hopefully we will have the OC's report for our next edition.

We are still in desperate need of your memories, anecdotes and reminiscences for the Journal. I'm quite sure you are all by now quite fed up of my 'Sprog' articles and I feel that it would be self indulgent to carry them on. It would be very useful to have some tales from Burma, Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan or anywhere else that the Squadron has been operating.

In this edition, you will find updates on the September reunion, the 2008 Borneo Tour and the status of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal presentation. *See Notices*

The AGM is to take place at the September reunion. Please let John Bennett or myself know if you wish to add anything to the agenda for discussion. John has asked to be relieved of the secretaryship as he is now resident in France and finds it impractical to properly fulfil his duties from a distance. John will continue as Secretary until the AGM. Any volunteers to take on the job would be warmly welcomed, if no volunteers are forthcoming, I have put my name forward for nomination. (If I end up as Secretary, we all know that Sylvia will do the work and I will just take the kudos.) John will remain on the committee as Membership Secretary and Webmaster, subject to approval by the AGM.

The 'New Look' Association shop will be set up at the reunion dinner, in addition to the items you've seen in the past, we will have two different Association Calendars, Association mugs and some new key rings for sale.

If any of you should need an up-to-date membership list, just call or e-mail myself or Sylvia (*details on page 24*) and we'll send you one out.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the reunion dinner on Friday 14th September and also at the 25th AAC Celebrations on Saturday 15th September at Middle Wallop.

John Heyes

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2007 is a most significant year for both 656 Squadron and the Army Air Corps, and given that the Corps 50th celebrations are in mid September, Sylvia and John Heyes have sensibly decided to issue the Journal early.

I am writing this item in an Internet Cafe in Berlin as I travel through Europe after 8 months in Bosnia. The wonder of modern communications!

My time in Bosnia was unusual as we are closing down our military operation in the country after a successful 14 year campaign. In many ways there are parallels with our operation in Malaya and Borneo, in that we left at a time of our choosing after a successful military intervention. I often told visitors and our soldiers that there was a similarity, and they readily agreed that it has been over 30 years since we have conducted such a withdrawal.

I was delighted to watch the coverage of the Falkland 25th commemorations, and see so many Light Blue Berets and past members of the Squadron on parade. As I sense there could be much interest in the Remembrance Sunday Parade at the Cenotaph, London I have included a reply slip. If you are interested please forward to me by the end of September.

It is also gratifying to know that 656 Squadron AAC is now safely back home after their second Afghanistan operation. We are all immensely proud of their achievements. They move to Wattisham, Suffolk sometime in the next two years and we will keep you informed of progress.

I look forward to see many of you at Middle Wallop in mid September. Here's wishing for fine weather.

Andrew Simkins

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Associations business has been a little quiet of late, but as the reunion draws nearer then things start to get hectic. Maurice Haynes is doing a superb job in arranging the reunion, whilst John Heyes is trying, in conjunction with the Malaysian High Commission, to have the Pinjat Jasa Malaysia Medal presented to all qualified members at the reunion or AAC Anniversary.

The revised website continues to attract new members, and, since the site went live, we have attracted 30 new members. To those new members who joined since the last Journal I welcome you to our unique Association. The President and committee look forward to meeting you all at a future get together.

The next AGM will be during the reunion week-end and if you have any proposals for the good and benefit of the Association please send them to me (via John Heyes). Please try to have a nominated seconder for your proposal, it is not essential as no doubt another member will offer!

I have requested the President and committee allow me to move sideways, after the AGM, to being the Membership Secretary and Webmaster. This will mean we need a new General Secretary and we are looking for a volunteer to join us. The work is not as arduous as it was when there were no other committee members, but you will need a computer with Office programs and Email access to consult other committee members. If you would like to volunteer then contact me or John Heyes so that we can discuss any necessary handover. We are still looking for a Deputy Treasurer and the same computer / email criteria apply. The position is only a back-up to the Treasurer, keeping a duplicate of the accounts, and does not require accountancy knowledge, although it is a bonus if you have it!! You can contact me by email or speak to me on 0161-408-1628 (Skype land line) or on Skype at Bellapais.

I look forward to meeting many of you on September 14th, may the food be excellent and the comradeship even more so!

John Bennett

FALKLANDS MEMORIAL PARADE

by Richard Peacocke



June 17th 2007 saw me on parade once again, some 20 years since I had quit the Army. Not only that but I was on parade among the khaki and sky blue of the Army Air Corps, not the red and blue of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps with whom I had served. Why was this?

June 14th was the 25th anniversary of the surrender of Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands, which they had renamed the Malvinas. Sunday 17th was the first real chance for veterans to celebrate with a parade, drum head service, a march past royalty and Maggie, and a fly past of fixed wing and rotary aircraft.



Me, heading South on the Europic Ferry, 1982

There has been a kerfuffle over sovereignty of the islands since the mid-1500's, when they were first discovered. Until the early 19th century, the Falklands remained the Spanish colony of Islas Malvinas. In 1816, Argentina won its independence from Spain and said they should preside over the Falklands through right of inheritance, insisting they formed part of Tierra del Fuego. In early 1982, Argentina once again asserted her claims, successfully

mounting *OP AZUL*, an almost blood-free invasion of the Falkland Islands. They subsequently expelled the small garrison of Royal Marines back to the UK and disarmed the 40 or so Falkland Island Defence Force soldiers back to their homes.

A large taskforce was mounted in two waves to approach, threaten and, if necessary, land and retake the islands. They called this *OP CORPORATE*. Scout Flight 656 Squadron AAC was loaded onto the Europic Ferry at Southampton and literally bobbed their way South via Portland, Dorset. Captain John Greenhalgh was in command. He needed the AAC Ammunition Technician to support them, so along I went. Fortunately, we had met before on the Army Pilot's course at Middle Wallop in the 1970's, so had a working relationship already established. This made my assimilation into a tight-knit team very much easier than it might have been.

History now shows how we flew and fought our way across the islands on the other side of the world, and how the Squadron came home

again 25 years ago to a tumultuous welcome. Personally, I was transferred to 421 EOD Unit to help clear up the awful bloody mess the Argentines left behind – you wouldn't believe where they left grenades as booby traps – so missed the home-coming, arriving back some weeks later after 24 hours on a SF C-130 into RAF Lyneham. This small fact was to be reflected on 25 years later.

I was told of the parade in a round-about way and arrived on site in my suit and medals looking for a sea of blue berets. I wandered around the non-secure area for a while until I found myself on the wrong side of a security fence looking at our boys formed up ready to march. A tall, handsome, and seemingly very young pilot Captain was standing looking at me, so I asked, "How does an old veteran get in amongst the boys, Captain?" He smiled, reached down, tore open the fence, and waved me through. "The Air Corps hasn't changed then?" I asked. He just smiled again and refitted the fence before the Police Officer arrived. No, I thought, the spirit is just the same.

I am terrible at remembering names



*Me, Sgt Richard Peacocke MSc
on my way to the parade*



*Me, Lt Col Sam Drennan OBE DFC AFC
and Maj Bill Twist*

a few hours old, so had no chance over 25 years – that was, until I saw the craggy features of Sam Drennan! Who could miss him? He saw me, and we clashed hands very warmly. Then we posed with the 2 i/c (now a teacher, poor soul) for a treasured photograph.

Being greeted by a tall and very white-haired REME veteran, who called me their "Crazy ato", another REME man spun round and asked me where the hell I'd been, explaining that he had turned his back in Fitzroy Settlement and I had disappeared for 25 years!

And now here I was again! And what was I playing at? It was as if all that time collapsed into a sliver and the two periods smashed together in front of us.

We skipped up Horse Guards Road to a variety of steps called out by a variety of sergeant majors to form up around a Falkland Islands-shaped stand in the centre of Horse Guards Parade. The ceremony had already begun and we entered to high applause from the visitors and podium. There stood Maggie in bright red alongside Prince Andrew, Prince Charles, the Prime Minister and their families among others.

We were treated among other things to films and documentary clips, massed bands, a lovely song, and HRH The Duke of York – a rebel to the end (well, he is a pilot) – changing the order from one poem to another. He was meant to read ‘The Song of the English’ but chose instead the last verse of Kipling’s moving ‘The Song of the Dead’:

*We must feed our sea for a thousand years,
For that is our doom and pride,
As it was when they sailed with the ~Golden Hind~,
Or the wreck that struck last tide --
Or the wreck that lies on the spouting reef
Where the ghastly blue-lights flare.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we ha' bought it fair!*

I was finding it difficult to see by now – ehem, the draft must have gotten into my eyes – but we were still not finished. The pipers played ‘The Craggs of Tumbledown Mountain’ and the massed choirs of London sang. The draft in my eyes became much worse and a lump was blocking my throat, so that I had real trouble seeing the Drumhead Service taking place both on Horse Guards and in San Carlos. The service was followed by wreath laying in both Horse Guards and San Carlos, and a blessing.

‘Sailing’ was sung by all, and my Stephanie tells me that she and all around her in the crowded stalls, men and women, civilians and soldiers, were crying unashamedly by this time. It was extremely moving and beautifully done. Then Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely told us all to ‘Shun!’ and we ambled off through the streets in a huge gaggle, advancing “to the front in twelve’s”. I commented that the last time the Army had advanced in twelve’s was at Trafalgar, but Sam strongly denied having been there.

We managed to fall in outside Buckingham Palace and watched a spectacular fly past, which included some weird futuristic sort of helicopter gunship of the modern 656 Squadron – we cheered it on.

It became evident pretty quickly that I was not as young as I had been. Three hours of travel followed by over four hours on parade caused my arthritis to bite and my feet to go numb. But it was worth it!

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Singapore (Where the heck is that?)

by D.W. Davies

After three weeks embarkation leave, at seventeen and a half years old, I was ready for the Great Adventure!

Boxing day 1953, I reported to RAF Cliffe Pyford for posting to the Far East. I had left Wolverhampton Low Level Station with my father's



words ringing in my ears "Keep your hands in your pockets". I arrived at Birmingham before realising what he meant.

I was late arriving (with full kit bag) at our destination, so there was only time to grab a meal and off to bed. Next morning, after breakfast, it was down to Lyneham for boarding Hastings Aircraft (which later in life, meant working on them at SASF Negombo).

We flew to Idris, Libya taking five or six hours for our first taste of sun and Arabs. Then a short trip to the local village. I had never seen so much sand before.

The next morning, an early take-off across North Africa to RAF Habbanyia where we were billeted in tents. We enquired about going to the Casbah in Baghdad, but it was too far to travel.

29th December 1953. We flew to RAF Muripoir, Karachi. I remember the log sheet being passed back referring to PONR which I found meant 'Point of no Return' - enough fuel to get there but not enough to get back.

30th December 1953. We flew South along the West Coast of India to the island of Ceylon, RAF Negombo, (later to be my posting for the last twelve months of my service.) The billets were sited in a coconut plantation and everyone rode bicycles.

31st December 1953. New Years Eve. We flew across the Indian Ocean to RAF Changi, Singapore, where we went up to the NAAFI for welcome drinks (moon men, big berets, white legs). We were surprised at how everyone looked suntanned and fit. I met up with an old pal who had arrived earlier on the 'Empire Fowey'

New Years Day 1954. We were treated to a nice meal at the reception centre down by a lovely lagoon. We were told it was OK to swim as there was a shark net across the entrance (it was not 100% as there were lots of holes in it).

The next day we all assembled outside the transit office for our postings. The two WOs came out with a clipboard calling out twenty five or so names, they were then told to board the waiting lorries to RAF Seletar, wonderful flying boats. Retiring to the office, the next list was for RAF Tengah Fighter Squadron, they were duly dispatched. This was followed by ten or so who were told they would be staying at Changi. Now, realising my name had not been called, I was wandering about enquiring if there was anyone else. After a short delay, four of us were left to face the WO who told us to go to the armoury and get a rifle and twenty five rounds, plus a parachute. We were told we would be dropped into Kuala Lumpur that night. He then returned to the office. Well, you should have seen the faces! Returning with a huge grin, he revealed we were about to be sent to 656 Squadron at Noble Field, Kuala Lumpur. The parachute would not be necessary but the rifle and ammo would be needed though as we were to be the rear guard on the Midnight Troop Train to KL.

The journey was a bit frightening for four 'moon men's' first experience of the jungle. The train was just like a cowboy train with a platform on the back and lights above our heads. Traveling in front was an armoured engine in case of bombs on the track. The train kept stopping every so often for some reason, which made our position on the rear of the train, in the jungle, with the light above our heads, very vulnerable.

We were elated to see the sunrise and the end of the journey at Kuala Lumpur railway station, seven hours later.

We were now down to four lads, two called Richardson (not related) from Manchester, Nobby Clark from St Helens and myself. We were then taken to 656 Squadron, Noble Field. The two Manchester lads went to Benta and Taiping, Nobby stayed at Noble Field and I went to RAF Kuala Lumpur to the Mobile Serving Flight.



Mobile Service Flight Ground Crew

A sprog gets his Permanent Pass

by John Heyes

Many years ago, when National Service was coming to an end, I volunteered to join the Army. I would have missed the 'Call up' for National Service but, as I had no academic qualifications and the RAF had turned me down flat due to failing their colour blindness test, I decided that REME would benefit from my active participation. After basic training, at Blandford, I was posted to 8 Training Battalion, Taunton, where I was to be taught the rudiments of soft skinned vehicle maintenance.



Appropriately 'tied'

After six months of undetected crime, trainees were permitted to apply for a 'Permanent Pass' which entitled the holder to wear civilian clothes when leaving the camp at week-ends and in the evenings. The civilian clothes had to be inspected by the company commander. If they were not deemed to be suitably sober and respectable, then the applicant had to either, obtain different clothes for approval, usually achieved by borrowing clothes that had already met with grudging tolerance, or spend his free time out of camp wearing uniform. Permanent Passes were checked at the gate by the Regimental Police, a group of people who were world renowned for their lack of sense of humour and their strict adherence to the myriad of regulations governing soldiers. They also

checked the acceptability of the clothes to meet the dress code as published in Part 2 orders. Many soldiers missed buses to Taunton as a result of having to return to the barrack room to find acceptable ties or shoes or whatever item to which the Regimental Police had taken exception.

I duly presented myself to the Company Commander and obtained the precious Permanent Pass. The rules for civilian dress were strict. A tie must be worn at all times. Jeans were not permitted. All clothes must be clean and pressed. Suede shoes were only worn by deviants and were definitely out. Part 2 Orders published the seasonably acceptable variations in dress for leaving camp.

It was summer and, unusually, I seemed to be in funds, so had decided to go to town on Saturday afternoon. Part 2 Orders stated that it was acceptable to leave camp without a jacket but a tie must be worn. I

duly dressed to go out and reported to the Guard Room for inspection. Outside the Guard Room was a full length mirror for self inspection. I examined myself and found nothing amiss then reported to the duty Regimental Police corporal for permission to leave camp. He looked me up and down and said,

'You can't leave camp dressed like that!!'.

'What's wrong Corporal?' I asked.

'You have to wear a tie,' he said, 'It says so in Part 2 orders.'

'I am wearing a tie,' said I, 'It's a cravat and it's just the same as a tie.'

'Orders doesn't say nothing about cravats, if you want to wear one of them things then you'll have to wear a tie with it!' Was his final word on the matter.

Exit to barrack room to don a tie.

A group of Sergeants and a group of Officers take a train to a conference. Each Officer holds a ticket, but the entire group of Sergeants has bought only one ticket for a single passenger. The Officers are just shaking their heads and are secretly pleased that the arrogant Sergeants will finally get what they deserve.

Suddenly one of the Sergeants calls out "The conductor is coming!" At once, all the Sergeants jump up and squeeze into one of the toilets. The conductor checks the tickets of the Officers. When he notices that the toilet is occupied he knocks on the door and says "Ticket, please!" One of the Sergeants slides the single ticket under the door and the conductor continues merrily on his round.

For the return trip the Officers decide to use the same trick. They buy only one ticket for the entire group but they are baffled as they realize that the Sergeants didn't buy any tickets at all. After a while one of the Sergeants announces again "The conductor is coming!" Immediately all the Officers race to a toilet and lock themselves in.

All the Sergeants leisurely walk to the other toilet. Before the last Sergeant enters the toilet, he knocks on the toilet occupied by the Officers and says "Ticket, please!"

And the moral of the story?

Officers like to use the methods of the Sergeants, but they don't really understand them.

Anon



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OBITUARY



22999285 Ex WO1 (ASM)
Gordon Donald Powley
6.12.1938 - 27.1.2007



Gordon Donald Powley was born in Hamilton, Scotland on the 6th December 1938. At 6 weeks old he set sail on the SS Devonshire with his mother to India, to join his father who was serving there with the Cameronian Highlanders, Don's grandfather's regiment. He remained there until 1945 moving around various bases. Between 1938 and 1943 at Darjeeling, Trimulgarry and Secunderbad, then in 1943 Khailana, where at one time he was in hospital in Chakater. During most of this time his father was away seeing action in the Burma Campaign, so Don saw little of him until he was five years old, but he appears to have gained many Aunts and Uncles from the battalion some of whom still remain today.

The rest of his childhood and school days were spent between Gibraltar, Bordon, Chepstow and Bovingdon where his father was teaching, as he had transferred to the Educational Corps after the war. During this period he was also a keen Sea Cadet.

With his background it was not surprising that Don enlisted, and on the 18 February 1954, found himself at the Army Apprentice School Chepstow, to undertake training as a Vehicle Mechanic and serve in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

It was here that I first met him. We were in the same company together, although he was a year ahead of me. During this period the characteristics which we all later associated with him came to the fore, joviality, humor, tenacity, toughness, the practical joker. Always in some scrape or other! In fact his Aunt Moira recalls in her recent letter to Val, her memory of Don, 'As a loveable scamp, always getting into scrapes, which

he always seemed to get away with'. How true those words reflect the Don we all knew!

Don went to Germany on his first adult posting in January 1957. By October he had volunteered for Aircraft Mechanic training and was at Middle Wallop, departing there in January 1958 for a tour with 653 Squadron AAC in Cyprus. It was here I always remember him telling me they lived in a tented camp just north of Nicosia and the offices and workshop accommodation were all fabricated from the Auster boxes in which their aircraft had arrived! However he enjoyed a memorable time there sporting a large black handlebar moustache to fit in with the local gentry whom he had befriended on his forays to the town suburbs. It was here that he experienced the street rioting which was on the up at this time in Cyprus. These early days stood him good stead for his future aviation career.

He returned to Middle Wallop, with the Army Air Corps Centre Workshops and Beaver Flight in August 1960, prior to being posted to 656 Squadron AAC, Malaya in late 1961, serving on 7 Recce Flight initially at Taiping and then Terendak, until centralisation of the squadron at Kluang. During this period he seemed to be constantly up to no good with a chap called Bobby Lennon, or so he used to tell me! He also used to wonder what happened to worn out flip flops? This shows the way Don's mind worked. He was promoted to Sergeant and went to Borneo with 14 Flt AAC in 1963 when the Indonesian Confrontation started up, being located at Labuan and Tawau in the long houses there. This he told me was the best time he had in the service and often recalled many of the events and humorous tales over a pint of ale in later years.

He returned to Germany in 1964 at 18 Flt AAC, Detmold, after a year he joined the 15/19 Hussars, Air Troop. He then departed the Army for the first time.

Don returned to his family home in Nottingham in 1966, and took up employment with the local Power Company at one of their Power Stations. It was here, in the Nottingham Conservative Club, that he first met Val. A beautiful young lady who won his heart completely and they were married in September 1967. But Don remained unsettled and missed the service life. One day while sitting outside his work place he saw an Army Low Loader going by with a helicopter on the back, he sighed, it was too much, that was it, he was down the recruiting office and re-enlisted. On return he attended an Artificer Selection Board, passed, and joined the next Aircraft Artificer Course. He completed training in November 1968 and was promoted Staff Sergeant.

He was then posted to 131 Independent Flight, RCT, at Wildenwrath in Germany and was later detached to Sharjha, in the Gulf

States, to 74 AC Wksp REME, for 6 months. It was here he found out what happens to worn out flip flops, when visiting a Suk. He came across a crate of dead flip flops and found the locals punched out rubber discs or doughnuts as they were called from the soles and utilized them in sealing the piping and joints on Hubbly Bubbly Pipes! This amused Don and he got the local chico or boot boy to find the bits for a bubble pipe, also charcoal and water. Combined these with his newly found rings, and sat there in front of all puffing away on his hubbly bubbly pipe. There was also a keen cyclist in Sharjha who was out training daily after work and Don decided, with another, to remove this chap's bunk door, unscrew the door knobs and remove the square connector piece between the handles and then re-hang the door. Well you can imagine this chap on his return trying to open his door! They let him get on with it, then helped him climb through his window while both then tried to open the door from each side, obviously to no effect. After 10 minutes or so they were so overcome with amusement that they had to come clean. He was so irate. But that's Don sense of humour.

On his return from Sharjha in May 1971, Don served on the Aircraft Engineering Theatre Standards Team based at Middle Wallop. It was here that I caught up with him again in March 1972 when I was posted in as the Team ASM. During the next two years our friendship grew through work and play and we caught up on much common ground having served in the same theatres. The demanding work of annual Whole Fleet Aircraft Inspections, and Annual Unit Technical Reviews, also the numerous projects raised by the Senior Aircraft Engineer's office at Wilton, for the team made sure we were fully traveled and employed. It was here once again Don came into his forté with his dedication to task, his hand skills learnt from his apprenticeship and his technical knowledge and ability honed from the field operations in which he'd been involved. He used them all. Equally his character was displayed to the team. Pranks, stories, jokes, it never ended. You could bet if he came in for a tea break, got out his 'bakky' tin and started rolling a cigarette, you knew you were in for a long tale or joke. Whether they were all true or not I'll never know but he was great story teller who could captivate an audience so well.

He was also a thespian and Fran and I enjoyed many evenings in Pitton Village Hall seeing Don perform on the stage. In fact I feel his life was a performance to him! In 1974 we went our different ways. I, to Commando Forces HQ and Don a year later, to 7 Flight AAC, in Berlin, on promotion to Warrant Officer Class Two. It was here that Fiona was born in January 1975. Also that year Don scaled Mont Blanc with a team from the flight, he being the logistics member. He then moved to Manchester OTC as a PSI, returning to Germany in 1976 to join 660 Squadron AAC and later 663 Squadron at Soest as the AQMS. In April 1967 Robert was

born in Iserlohn Hospital. He then undertook a short Northern Ireland Tour prior to returning to Middle Wallop in October 1978 to join 70 AC Wksp REME. In July 1980, when he was promoted to Warrant Office Class One, Artificer Sergeant Major, he moved to Aircraft Engineering Training Wing, REME, to complete his service as ASM, being deployed for two years to Seme, Bordon to assist with an IT Training project. He departed the service after 28 years and 113 days, having been awarded the GSM and Clasps, Cyprus, Borneo and Northern Ireland.

For resettlement Don did a 'bricks and mortar course' through which, over the next 10 years, he converted his bungalow to a four bed roomed house with a double garage and servicing pit! Fran and I remember our visits back between tours seeing the slow progress of the house completion, poor Val and the children! Don also obtained his Aircraft Engineer's License at Kidlington, Oxfordshire, then joined Bristow Helicopters at First Line, Middle Wallop, in October 1982, remaining there until December 1988. A work colleague of the time recalls:

'At daily aircraft push out Don generally expounded his considerable knowledge in discussing and contesting most subjects under the sun with the lads. In the crew room chats he would emphasis his point with the tip of his pipe stem at the unfortunate person in discussion, sometimes heatedly! On aircraft he was an extremely good engineer, willing and able to pass on his vast technical knowledge and experience. When it was a non-flying day due to bad weather Don would really be in his element with his story sessions, affectionately known as 'Donanory' after the children's 'Jackanory' programme. In extremely inclement weather He would ring up myself and colleague who rode in on motorcycle and insist that he brought us into work.' Such generosity and comradeship.

Don returned to the School of Aeronautical Engineering, as an Instructor on Basic Airframes and Engines, in late 1988. It was here again our paths crossed as I was posted in as Officer Commanding Training Company in December 1990. We had many a chin wag over the old days and the Technician material coming through in those days. Don had lost none of his sparkle for life, or his ability to roll a cigarette and his tale telling over a cup of tea.

He returned to Bristow Helicopters, in July 1993, not wishing to go to Arborfield, with the scheduled School move. The calibre of Don once again came to bear as indicated by a contemporary who joined Bristow's in 1999 who states:

'He immediately took me under his wing bringing me up to speed on the metal work and hand skills I had to acquire. He was a mine of technical information and did all he could to train and encourage others in their tasks. He was highly respected by the military technicians and

supervising staff as well. Everything had to be by the book. He knew rivets and bolts inside out and instilled quality into the proceedings.' Fitting I think.

So ends the military history of Gordon Donald Powley. His conduct was given as Exemplary on leaving the service. His character honest, dependable with a strong sense of responsibility. Of jovial disposition, certain to brighten any gathering with his personality, wit and humour. He was a Beachley Old Boy Association and 656 Squadron AAC, Association member too. I think that is how I will always remember my good friend Don, for even in his last months he retained these traits and was stoic to the end.

I'm sure we all have our own thoughts of him, but Val, Fiona and Robert on top of our most sincere condolences at this time for your sad loss of a dear husband and loving father, the memory to cherish forever is that he was a true man, soldier and life companion.

Derek Walker

CAN ANYONE HELP?

We have had a request from David Friday for information about an old Auster that he is restoring. If you can help him with information, please email him at the address below.

" I am restoring a Mk. 5 Auster. It was built in '45 and flew with the communication squadron 1315 in Japan from '46 to '48. In 1950 it was shipped to Seletar to join 656. It served there until 1951. Its RAF number was TW 371. If anybody knows anything about its service and also how it would have been painted during its time in Japan I would appreciate the information. I hope somebody in the Association may be able to help me'.

David Friday.
barwite@bigpond.net.au

ASSOCIATION SHOP



656 Squadron Association Calendar 2008

“David Shepherd Paintings”

To place an order for this Calendar, please contact:

John or Sylvia Heyes
Contact details can be found on Page 24

Calendars cost: £ 8.00 each plus postage at cost.



656 Squadron Association Calendar 2008

“Austers”

To place an order for this Calendar, please contact:

John or Sylvia Heyes
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Calendars cost: £ 8.00 each plus postage at cost.

ASSOCIATION SHOP Cont.



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Boxed Paperweights depicting various aviation subjects @ £ 5.00 *
List available upon request

* Postage on all items at cost.

NOTICES

PINJAT JASA MALAYSIA MEDAL

There have been many enquiries to the committee as to the latest state of play for the issue of the Pinjat Jasa Malaysia Medal.

The policy of the Malaysian Government is that the medals should be presented at semi formal parades or at organised functions. We, your committee, have invited the Malaysian High Commission Defence Attaché to our reunion dinner on the Friday 14th September to present medals to those who are attending and are entitled. We have also asked that he bring the medals for those not attending the dinner so that we can post them out to those who have applied. At the time of going to press, we have not had any confirmation that the Defence Attaché will be able to attend. Hopefully we will have his final decision before the paperwork for the reunion is posted out to attendees.

ASSOCIATION BORNEO TOUR 2008

The Borneo Tour is being organised on our behalf by Magic of the Orient. Magic have very successfully organised our last two tours to Malaysia. We have asked them to base the tour on 12 to 14 days in Borneo based in two centres, Kota Kinabalu, Shangri la Hotel Tanjung Aru and Kuching, Hilton Hotel. No formal organised days are planned. We have asked Magic to give us quotes for days out as follows:

From Kota Kinabalu to:-

Sandakan, Orang Utan Sanctuary
Brunei
Labuan Island

From Kuching to :

Sibu
Kapit
Belaga
Nanga Gaat

If any member wishes to visit other locations, please let John Heyes know and we will obtain quotations. Day trips do not need to be booked from UK, they can be arranged when in Borneo.

We have asked Magic to build flexibility into the long haul ticketing in order that any members who wish may extend their trip to visit KL or Singapore after the Borneo section.

If you are interested in the tour and have not registered your interest (With NO commitment) please contact either John Heyes or Maurice Haynes.

To make the trip more economic, we need around 40 passengers on the tour. Those that have registered an interest will be notified of the basic costs, hopefully, by end of July.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call or email John Heyes. *Contact details on page 24.*

REUNION DINNER, OPEN DAY AND AGM

A few notes to outline the weekend on September 14th and 15th. On Friday the 14th we are holding our reunion in the Museum at Middle Wallop. It will be a change of tempo from previous reunion dinners, more relaxing and less formal. 160 members and guests have booked in. We hope to start the evening at 1800 and finish at 2330. Somewhere in between is a carvery dinner, drinks, hopefully presentation of Pinjat Jasa Malaysia medals, drinks, speeches, drinks and meeting of friends. Transport has been arranged as required, 73 people have taken advantage.

Saturday 15th has a different flavour. First The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall are in attendance. The morning will be largely given to the formality of the occasion, followed by lunch with a pageant air show lasting up to 1800 approximately. This will be followed by Beating the Retreat. I understand in the evening there will be a survivor's party. For those attending through 656 Association (193) you will need to be seated by 10.15. There is likely to be a veteran's parade. Tickets will be despatched by 656 Association when we get the block issue from AAC mid July we hope.

The AGM will be held on Sunday morning at 0900, in The Premier Travel Inn, Andover. Due to the lack of space, attendance will be limited to paid up members. If you have any items for the Agenda please advise the Association Secretary. *Contact details on page 24.*

Please note, apart from the AGM all timings are still in the planning stage and may change. Further updates will be given with your tickets.

JOURNAL SUGGESTIONS

Are you seeing what you want to see in your Journal? If you have any suggestions or ideas for improving the content, please do let us have them. We are constantly looking for new material from members old and new, serving or non serving. If you spot something in magazines or newspapers that you think might be of interest to other members, let us know and we will try to obtain permission to re-print them. All suggestions welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. J.A. Tully	REME	Joined Jan. 2007
Mr. J. Venn	RA	Joined Jan. 2007
Mr. W. Robson	RA	Joined Jan. 2007
Mr. P. Hurrell	AAC	Joined Feb. 2007
Mr. D. Smith	RA	Joined Feb. 2007
Mrs. V. Powley	Associate	Joined Feb. 2007
Mr. B. Humphries	REME	Joined Feb. 2007
Mr. D. Learmonth	RAOC	Joined Feb. 2007
Mr. F. Miller	FAA	Joined Mar. 2007
Mr. T.W. Fleming	REME	Joined Mar. 2007
Mr. K. Lamb	AAC	Joined Mar. 2007
Mr. H.B. Heathfield	REME	Joined Mar. 2007
Mr. B. Smith	AAC	Joined Mar. 2007
Capt. S. Lunn	AAC	Joined Mar. 2007
Maj (Ret) R. Welsh	REME	Joined Apr. 2007
Mr. G.C. Richardson	RAF	Joined Apr. 2007
Mr. S.R. Haynes	Associate	Joined Apr. 2007
Mr. A.C. Haynes	Associate	Joined Apr. 2007
Mr. J. Essom	REME	Joined Apr. 2007
Mr. C. Lovell	REME	Joined May 2007
Airtpr. G. Connell	AAC	Joined May 2007
Maj (Ret) R. Twist	RRF/AAC	Joined May 2007
Mr. R.T. Goodwin	RA	Joined May 2007
Mr. R. Wheat	RAF	Joined Jun. 2007
Capt. B. Miller	AAC	Joined Jun. 2007

DEATHS

Sadly , we announce the death of the following members and offer our sincere condolences to their relatives and friends.

Col P.N.M. Jebb	RA	Died November 2006
Mr. G.D. Powley	REME	Died January 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBER'S DETAILS

President:

Lt. Col. Andrew Simkins OBE
Watersmeet, Lower Road, Edington, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 4QW
Tel: 01380 830454 E-mail: simkinswatersmeet@btinternet.com

General Secretary & Webmaster:

John Bennett
'le Chataigneraie', La Mont, 71550 Anost, France
Tel: 00 33 385827049 E-mail: 656assn@talk21.com

Treasurer:

Mark Meaton
94, Brackenbury, Andover, SP10 3PU
Tel: 01264 363004 E-mail: mark.meaton@lineone.net

Events Coordinator:

Maurice Haynes
Thatched Walls, Stoke, Nr. Andover, Hampshire, SP11 0NP
Tel: 01264 738203 E-mail: mauricehaynesuk@yahoo.co.uk

Journal Editor:

John Heyes
Ty Ni, Corwen Road, Pontybodkin, Mold, CH7 4TG
Tel: 01352 770100 E-mail: heyesjohn@googlemail.com

Journal Compiler & Distributor:

Sylvia Heyes
Ty Ni, Corwen Road, Pontybodkin, Mold, CH7 4TG
Tel: 01352 770100
E-mail: sylviaheyes@googlemail.com

Web Site: www.656squadron.org