

# ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

 **ROYAL  
AIR FORCE  
SHAWBURY**

Edition 3  
2022



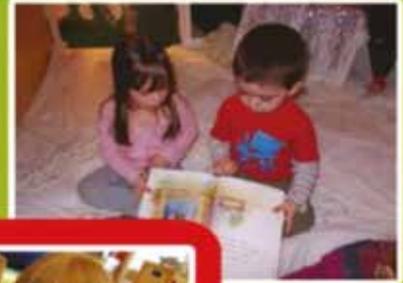
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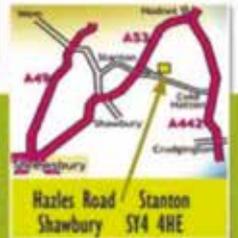
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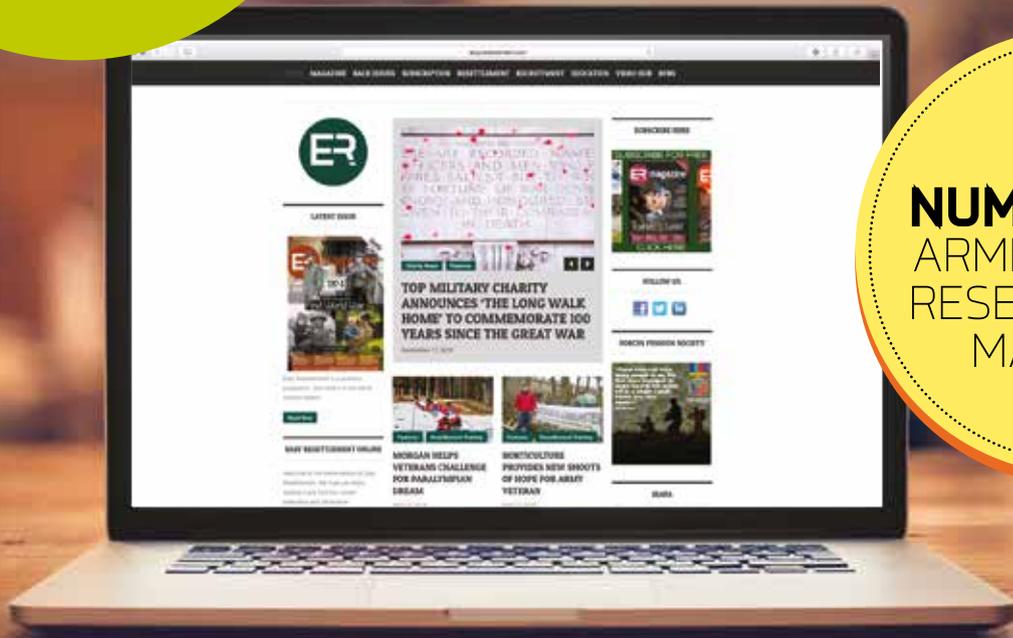
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## ARIES TEAM

**Editor:** Sqn Ldr Kim Leach  
**Deputy Editor:** Flt Lt Ade Vine  
**Editor's Assistant:** Vacant

### Aries Squadron Representatives:

**CFS (H):** Flt Lt Burgess  
**660 Sqn AAC:** Capt Wilkinson  
**670 Sqn AAC:** Maj Marsden  
**60 Sqn:** Flt Lt Edwards  
**705 Sqn:** Maj Gittoes  
**DCASO:** WO Murphy-Brown  
**ATC:** SAC Coulthard

### Distribution:

Mr Frank Young, Central Registry  
Mr Colin Woolley, Central Registry  
Mrs Cheryl Foster, HIVE  
RAF Shawbury Road Reps

### Front Cover Design:

Mr Chris Roberts, Graphics Officer

### Photography:

Mr Ian Forshaw  
Mr Dave Granger

### Enquiries:

**Email:** SHY-AriesMagazine@mod.gov.uk  
**Tel:** (mil) 95531 7572 or 7177  
**Tel:** (civ) 01939 250351 x7572 or 7177

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Lance Media Group Ltd  
1st Floor, Tailby House, Bath Rd,  
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**Tel:** 01536 334 222

**Designed by:** Jo Glen

**Advertising:** Darren Greenhead  
**Email:** darren@lancemedia.co.uk  
**Tel:** (01536) 680 414

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### COVER PICTURE:

*Flight Sergeant Lingham carries the Queen's Jubilee baton relay as it arrives in Shropshire.*



*RAF Shawbury personnel joined the Proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III at Telford*

## Editor's Welcome

*By Flight Lieutenant Ade Vine*

**H**ello and welcome to the third edition of 2022. Thank you to Sqn Ldr Leach for introducing me in Edition 2, I am privileged to be back at RAF Shawbury and to be the Deputy Editor of the Aries Magazine.



We are all living through history; indeed, the Aries Magazine records much of the social history and significant events at RAF Shawbury. It was while hosting civic dignitaries and members of our local community at our Annual Reception on Thursday 8th September that we heard the sad news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had passed peacefully away that afternoon at Balmoral. A date that will now be indelibly etched in the history of this great nation. There is a strong tie between the Armed Forces and the Royal Family, the young Princess Elizabeth first inspected the Guards at Windsor Castle whilst 16 years old and on that day became part of the fabric of the Armed Forces that would later pledge allegiance to her as Queen Elizabeth II, our Commander-in-Chief.

RAF Shawbury has been fortunate to maintain a close relationship with the Royal Family, Her Majesty passed through the Station in the 1980s and 1990s whilst on visits to the region. His Majesty King Charles III, the then Prince of Wales, presented the Firmin Sword of Peace to the Station Commander during a visit in 2010 and, of course, Prince William and Prince Harry have both trained here. As you will see in this edition, we were proud to fly the Queen's Baton as it commenced its passage through Shropshire on route to the Commonwealth Games. Our condolences are extended to His Majesty The King and Royal Family. God save The King.

At the Annual Reception the theme was very much 'community' and we are continually proud to be part of the local community. Accordingly, it has been gratifying to engage and participate in the community and, as ever, as the thread of history winds through our lives we record activities as diverse as the Severn Dragon Boat Race and Shawbury Cubs visiting the Gliding Club.

I hope you enjoy this slice of our history.

# FOREWORD

Commander Mike Brown, Commanding Officer of 2 Maritime Air Wing

**A**s we start to see the Summer of 2022 in the rear-view mirror, I would like to extend a very sincere welcome to the Autumn edition of the Aries Magazine.

As the new (ish) senior Matelot/WAFU on the station and Commanding Officer of 2 Maritime Air Wing (2 MAW) I have met many of you already and I have been very grateful for warm hospitality of the Station and its personnel. A 'Junglie' Sea King Mk4 and then Commando Merlin pilot by trade, I have arrived at No 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS) after a stint at the Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood, while my last flying role was at 846 NAS based at Yeovilton - I feel very privileged to now return to RAF Shawbury as CO 2 MAW. I completed my helicopter training here early in 2006 and then returned for a short period of instructional training in 2011. Returning to the fold 11 years later, it is amazing how much, but also how little, has changed. Shiny new aircraft, a state-of-the-art training facility in partnership with Ascent and a fantastic new gymnasium and sports pitch. But the same old faces everywhere, from aircrew and ATC instructors, catering staff in the Messes and even domestic staff in the Squadrons; it has been fantastic to catch up with acquaintances from the past and it just goes to show what a revered place RAF Shawbury is to work, that the staff are still here over 16 years after my first visit!

The Summer of 2022 has seen the first International Defence Training (IDT) of helicopter aircrew on 1 FTS, with the arrival of 15 personnel from the Bundeswehr and Luftwaffe in Germany. They have been warmly welcomed by the Station and have integrated very well with our trainees and staff. We expect to see more colleagues from Germany, trainees from the Irish Air Corps, while DCASO are currently training a civilian national from Qatar.

In the 1FTS section of the magazine this month you will see a short article on the promotion ceremony recently



conducted during a visit by the Head of German Delegation to the UK. The breadth of diversity here on the station is fantastic with everybody working together to deliver Gains to Trained Strength for Air Operations, Trade Group 7 personnel and helicopter crews to Defence.

Finally, as this is very much a Community and Family oriented magazine, it was great to experience my first Families Day here in August. I had the privilege of flying some of our

guests in the morning, before enjoying an afternoon in the sunshine watching the displays and marvelling at what a well organised event it was. The RAF are renowned for putting on occasions like these and this did not disappoint – well done to Sqdn Ldr Andy Mortimer and his supporting team for all their hard work!

It just leaves me to wish you all the very best for the Autumn term, look after your families and each other, and stay safe!

# RAF Shawbury says thank you to Shropshire landowners and welcomes local horse riders

On 29 September 2022, RAF Shawbury hosted its annual Landowner and Horse Rider Awareness Day. The event gives the Station Commander the opportunity to thank the valued landowners who graciously permit access to their land to allow our aircrew to conduct essential training exercises.

The Station Commander also welcomed local horse riders and representatives from The British Horse Society to the event to learn more about RAF Shawbury's 'Be Seen, Be Safer' horse rider awareness campaign. Launched in April 2015, the aim of this campaign is to promote the wearing of high-visibility clothing by riders in order that they are more visible and can be seen earlier by helicopter aircrew. Whilst high-visibility clothing may not prevent all over-flights, as there may be other safety considerations, it does provide a considerable, cost-effective improvement to rider safety.

The Station Commander, Group Captain Phil Wadlow, welcomed the guests in the Station Briefing Facility and thanked them for their continued support. Wing Commander Turner, Officer Commanding Operations Wing, then explained the training delivered by No.1 Flying Training School and the

Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron. Wing Commander Turner also explained how Low Flying Area 9, covering Shropshire and the borders of adjacent counties, is used and the importance of good relations between landowners, horse riders and RAF Shawbury.

The guests were then sub-divided into groups for tours of the flying training facilities provided by Ascent as part of the UK Military Flight Training System. Tours also took place at the Aircraft Maintenance and Storage Unit, as well as the Defence College of Air and Space Operations.

The horse riders also received a presentation on the Be Seen, Be Safer



*Gp Capt Wadlow congratulates the RAF Falcons after a great display.*

Campaign, provided by Squadron Leader Leach, Corporate Engagement and Relations Officer at RAF Shawbury, and Capt Jones, a Qualified Helicopter Instructor on Sixty Squadron. Horse riders were also able to share their experiences when out riding as well as ask questions to aircrew about the





training activities that take place in Low Flying Area 9.

The guests also experienced a flight in a Juno helicopter, with the riders flying to Nesscliff Training Area for a demonstration of how difficult it is to spot a rider on the ground without high-visibility clothing, which certainly tested their eyesight!

After having a busy morning, the guests were treated to a luncheon in the Officers' Mess before gathering on the Sports Field in front of the Officers' Mess to witness the fantastic display by the Falcons Parachute Display team. The team performed their new carousel manoeuvre which was well received by the guests. The display ended off with the Station Commander acknowledging

their salute, as is the tradition.

Group Captain Wadlow said: *"This has been an excellent opportunity to confirm our good relations with both landowners and the local riding community. I am very grateful for the continued support of the landowners and their contribution in support of Defence. I am also very supportive of the 'Be Seen, Be Safer' campaign which makes a real difference to the riding community in Low Flying Area 9. I hope that riders will appreciate the benefits of wearing high-visibility kit and work with us to ensure that Low Flying Area 9 is as safe as possible for both riders and our aircrew. I would like to thank everybody who attended this event, as well as all the Station personnel who helped to make the event so enjoyable for the guests"*.



Our guests enjoy a tour of the Juno cockpit

# Bob's last landing!

No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS) has bid farewell to one of the stalwart Qualified Helicopter Instructors (QHI) at RAF Shawbury.

After 7500+ hours in the air, Bob Blair made his last landing greeted by his wife Janice, Ascent General Manager Mr Si Vorley, and staff. Becoming an instructor in 1996, Bob has filled many QHI positions including 660 Sqn 2iC, Army Aviation Standards, Regimental QHI and Defence Helicopter School (DHFS) Standards, before leaving the Army in 2008.

Since then, Bob has been a QHI on 660 Sqn AAC as a civilian with DHFS and now 1FTS. During that time, Bob has been instrumental in teaching both Basic and Rotary wing Syllabi to the new generation of military pilots. Some of that generation, are now back in the school in some very senior positions!

Bob now looks forward to many good walks, enjoying the golf course and spending more time with his grandchildren.

We wish Bob all the very best as he enters retirement, and he will be sorely missed both on 660 Sqn and at RAF Shawbury.

**By Owen Camplisson**



Bob with his wife Janice and Mrs Males, after his last flight.

# RAF Shawbury says goodbye to Wing Commander Phil Spencer MBE MA BSc (Hons) CEng MIET RAF

Recently we said goodbye to Wing Commander Phil Spencer, Officer Commanding Engineering and Logistics Wing, at RAF Shawbury as he was driven off the base in a vintage Land Rover.

Wg Cdr Spencer has retired from the Royal Air Force after 38 years, proud to have served and delighted that his last tour was at RAF Shawbury.

Wg Cdr Spencer joined the RAF as an Air Communications and Air Radar apprentice at RAF Cosford in 1984. Commissioned in 1990, he has served in a range of practical engineering appointments as Junior Engineer 3(F) Sqn RAF Laarbruch, Senior Engineer Officer 617 Sqn at RAF Lossiemouth and returned to RAF Cosford as Officer Commanding Aerosystems Training Wing in 2008.

During his long career, he deployed on 4 operational tours to the Middle East and Balkans, as well as completing numerous staff tours. These included serving in the Harrier Role Office at High Wycombe, the Typhoon Project Team at Abbey Wood and Tornado Project Team at Wyton, where he was

responsible for the mid-life update programme for Tornado GR4. Away from aircraft support, he completed 2 tours in Capability Command Control and Information Infrastructure. More recently he has been the SO1 Assurance in the DE&S Airworthiness Team and immediately prior to being assigned to RAF Shawbury, he was the Head of the Engineering Oversight Branch in the Military Aviation Authority (MAA), for which he was awarded a Director General Defence Safety Authority Commendation in May 2018.

He attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course in 2007/08 and was awarded a MBE in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours List in 2006.

Wing Commander Spencer said: "I have enjoyed my Service career and I would do it all over again, if I could. I hope that each one of you will be able to look back at your careers with the same



*Wg Cdr Spencer with the Wessex Gate Guardian*

job satisfaction that I have. I was really surprised and grateful for the send-off and I appreciate the recognition. It was a wonderful way to draw my RAF career to a close."

Everyone at RAF Shawbury wishes Wg Cdr Spencer good luck for the future and in his new role with Airbus Helicopters at RAF Shawbury.



*Wg Cdr Spencer driven off base in a vintage Land Rover*

# A Tribute to Warrant Officer Frederick Joseph Keith Martin

Servicemen and women from RAF Shawbury provided a guard of honour for the funeral service of Warrant Officer Frederick Joseph Keith Martin from Wem at Shrewsbury Crematorium on Friday 19th August.

The Service was attended by family and friends, who gathered to pay their respects and to celebrate the life of Warrant Officer Martin, a World War 2 veteran who flew as a Wireless Operator on missions over France in support of D-Day.

Keith Martin was working for an agricultural machinery merchant in Shrewsbury when the war started. This was classed as a reserved occupation, but in 1942, at the age of 19, he volunteered for the RAF. After training as a wireless operator, he was posted to Wellington bombers at RAF Seighford, from where his crew flew their first operational mission, a leaflet raid to Blois in Belgium.

A lucky escape followed when, during conversion to the Halifax heavy bomber, they suffered a 4-engine failure on take-off. Fortunately, all the crew survived. He was then posted to No. 626 Sqn, flying Lancasters from RAF Wickenby on missions to bomb the marshalling yards at Orleans, Aachen, and Terginer before D-Day.

On the 5th June 1944, WO Martin's crew flew 2 missions in one day, attacking heavy gun emplacements on the French coast. Unbeknown to them, this was the start of Operation Overlord and D-Day.

After a further 3 missions bombing targets in France, his crew were posted to RAF Faldingworth to reinforce No. 300 (Polish) Sqn. As the Allies pushed towards Germany, his crew bombed plane construction works, marshalling yards and troop concentrations. It was whilst on an operation to attack the marshalling yards at Revigny, that they had a narrow escape. The aircraft had descended to identify the target and whilst on their bombing run at 4000 ft, another aircraft with all 4 engines ablaze, broke cloud in front of them and crashed. It exploded on impact and blew their Lancaster onto its back. Fortunately, the pilot managed to right the aircraft and bring it back safely. Towards the end of their tour, it was rumoured that replacement Polish crews were soon to arrive at RAF Faldingworth to join No 300 (Polish) Sqn; this would mean another posting. So, they volunteered for every



*Keith Martin during WW2*

operation possible and completed their last 4 missions in one week.

Moving away from operational flying, Warrant Officer Martin joined No 3 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit at RAF South Cerney where he flew as the wireless operator/pilot's assistant in Airspeed Oxfords. Acting as an assistant to trainee pilots was possibly some of the most dangerous flying he did during the war! He continued to fly after the war for a short while at the Empire Test Pilot's School, Cranfield, where he flew with the legendary Neville Duke.

In recognition of his war time service, in November 2015, Warrant Officer Martin was presented with the prestigious Legion of Honour Medal by Colonel Jules Facer (Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School).

Warrant Officer Martin was a long-standing member of the Shropshire Aircrew Association and often visited the RAF Shawbury Officers' Mess for dinner events and veterans' tea parties. He enjoyed talking to the younger generation about his war time experiences and it was a privilege to have been able to welcome him to RAF Shawbury.

*Keith Martin presented with the Legion of Honour in November 2015*



# RAF Shawbury flies the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Baton into Shropshire

On Monday 18 July, No.1 Flying Training School at RAF Shawbury had the special honour of collecting the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Baton by helicopter and transporting it to Shrewsbury. The baton was on its way to the Commonwealth Games, which started in Birmingham on 28 July.

Despite the sweltering heat, crowds turned out to see the Juno helicopter from No. 1 Flying Training School (flown by Sqn Ldr Rich Allison and Lt Cdr Andy Holley) land at the Shrewsbury Sports Village. The crewman, FS Matt Lingham had the honour of carrying the baton and jumped out to hand over the baton to start the Shropshire leg of the baton relay to the Flaxmill Maltings. The baton's route included a ride on the Sabrina boat on the River Severn, a visit to the Pengwern Boat Club before ending with a lap of The Dingle and an on-stage reception and entertainment in the Quarry Park.

Flight Sergeant Lingham said: "It was a great honour to be selected to carry the Queen's Baton and to be able to take part in this historic event. Flying the baton in by helicopter was a great way to start the baton relay in Shropshire and the whole crew enjoyed being part of the event."



Above: The Queen's Baton flown over The Quarry, Shrewsbury.



FS Lingham and the Queen's Baton

# Giggleswick School CCF Visit RAF Shawbury

After a long sojourn due to the pandemic, the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) camps are back with the cadets as keen as ever to get out and experience activities on a busy base or station. RAF Shawbury welcomed 50 cadets and staff from Giggleswick School CCF at the end of June for a visit to partake in several activities and get a feel of what it is like to be on a busy training unit.

So why would a CCF based in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales travel a significant distance to visit RAF Shawbury?

The school has a strong contingent of RAF, Army and Royal Marine cadets commanded by Lt Col Darren Richmond. The headmaster is a retired Army Air Corps pilot who completed Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) in 2001 with fond memories of his time at RAF Shawbury; unsurprisingly, the school has many notable alumni with a military heritage. The previous CO 9 Regt AAC, Lt Col Dufton – whose father was an Old Giggleswickian, had the pleasure of conducting the Annual CCF Inspection in Jan 2020 and was Guest of Honour for the evening.

On a glorious Shropshire day, the cadets took part in a Mobile Team Challenge delivered by a team from DCASO, visits to the ATC tower and the Aircraft Maintenance Storage Unit and flying activity in a Juno and the 1FTS simulators.

Cdt Cpl Dylan Sampson remarked: "We thoroughly enjoyed our experience at RAF Shawbury. We got the chance to see inside the control tower and hangars, expanding our knowledge of air traffic control and aeroplanes,



Giggleswick CCF cadet pose with a retired Red Arrow Hawk T1



learning about the various aircraft. We also had the opportunity to experience a flight simulator, testing out our flying skills and dexterity; this inspired some people to have a look into a career as a helicopter pilot. Another inspiring experience was when some cadets got the chance to fly in a Juno flown by Flt Lt Howard. We are aware of how lucky we are to have had this experience, and we are incredibly grateful!"

Cdt Cpl Will Scholey wrote for the CCF RAF Shawbury Report: "Even though it may have been an early rise, the glow on everyone's face shone throughout the day. We arrived at the base to a warm welcome then made our way to the briefing room where we received our briefing for the afternoon, which consisted of activities such as: STEM, a tour of the maintenance and storage hangar, a tour of the ATC tower, practice on the helicopter simulators and, for RAF cadets and one or two selected others, an Air Experience Flight in a Juno helicopter. Everyone excluding the RAF section performed in STEM team building tasks which helped to build confidence among the cadets and would be something we would look to include in Friday afternoon cadet training. This helped cadets to express leadership characteristics many did not know they had. Cadets then moved to the maintenance and storage hangar;



Lt Cdr Oakes explains the cockpit to Giggleswick cadets

here, cadets were able to investigate the engineering behind the aircraft stored there. In the ATC tower, cadets gained an insight into the job of controlling the movements of many aircraft. Finally, cadets experienced the opportunity to fly a helicopter in a simulator, whilst being guided and taught. This sparked the interest of many cadets who would like to experience this again. We would like to thank everyone at RAF Shawbury for allowing us onto the base and the opportunity to have these experiences."

A memorable visit for all and a big thankyou to those that helped with the organisation and hosting. CCF summer camps are planned at RAF Shawbury throughout August, so please continue to give your time to engage with the cadets and assist the Station ACLO, WO Kev Morley.

Lt Cdr Oakes CFS(H)



# Families Day 2022





*The Red Arrows put on a spectacular display*



*An expensive line-up!*



*The RAF Falcons Display Team*

Families' Days have always been an important and highly anticipated event in the military calendar. They provide the opportunity for serving personnel, civil servants, Defence partners and their families to let their hair down, as well as provide an insight into what their respective family members do. Not only that, it also gives the opportunity to thank all those people for their constant support they selflessly give.

During the event, the main dispersal was transformed into a bustling hive of activity. There was lots for families to see and do, including a series of modern and vintage static aircraft, an extensive collection of exotic super cars to admire, plus countless activities and stalls for the whole family to enjoy. There was children's face painting, a bouncy castle, axe throwing and a falconry display just to name of few. Once again Danny Jones, an Ascent employee, wowed the crowds with his fantastic singing.

A highlight of the day, thanks to the support from Airbus and Ascent Flying Training, was the opportunity to take families flying or any families with younger children the offer of the simulator experience.

Both options were extremely well attended, just under 300 family members experienced physical flying and a further 140 family members and cadets enjoyed themselves in the synthetic environment.

As the afternoon approached and everyone had gorged themselves on all the fantastic food that was available, the flying displays started. The crowds

were treated to a whole host of aircraft including the Red Arrows, a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Spitfire, a glider, a Rolls-Royce Heritage Flight Spitfire, the RAF Chinook Display Team and an impressive jump from the Falcons Parachute Display Team. There was also a variety of static aircraft including a Wildcat, Avenger and various aircraft from Vulture Sqn based at Sleaf, a Navy Wasp and a Harvard based out of Yeovilton.

Once the flying had been completed and everyone had waved goodbye to the Red Arrows, the Sporting Bears Motor Club got to work providing high speed runway experiences in their collection of high-performance cars in exchange for donations to their chosen charity. The event organisers would like to thank everyone for coming and to everybody that helped make the event so spectacular.

This event would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Families Day Committee, lead by Sqn Ldr Mortimer. Vital contributions from ESS, ATC, Stn Ops, MT and Supply made the day a great success. Also a huge thank you

to charities The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and SSAFA – a massive thank you to absolutely everyone involved.

Bring on Families' Day 2023!

By FS Hannibal – RAF Shawbury Families Day Committee



*A variety of stalls at Families Day*

# RAF Shawbury Annual Reception

RAF Shawbury was delighted to host this year's Annual Reception on the 8th September 2022. The theme for the event was 'engaging with the community' demonstrating how Station personnel have both re-engaged on the base and in the local community after the COVID-19 pandemic. The reception provided a perfect opportunity for the Station Commander to host members of our valued community, welcoming them back with a slightly more relaxed approach than with the previous year's understandable precautions.

Our guests were hosted by Station Executives and they enjoyed a variety of canapes and refreshments in the Officers' Mess. Displays showed pictorial examples of recent engagement and ongoing engagement such as the Be Seen Be Safer campaign. Members of the Central Band of the Royal Air Force provided superb atmospheric music during the event. As well as promoting RAF Shawbury's place in the community, the Annual Reception also provides the opportunity for the Station to thank industry, military and community partners for all they do in supporting our output to Defence.

This year saw several high-profile guests in attendance including the High Sheriff of Shropshire, Selina Graham, Councillor Elisabeth Roberts, Mayor of Shrewsbury, and Councillor Mark Whittle, Mayor of Market Drayton, alongside a large number of distinguished guests. The attendance of such guests underlined the importance of the event for the Station and reinforced the close links that RAF Shawbury has with the wider local community.

During the reception the Station Commander took the opportunity to inform and update the guests on



*Sqn Ldr Summers, OC Sixty Sqn; Mr Simon Vorley, Ascent General Manager; Mrs Selina Graham, High Sheriff of Shropshire; Wg Cdr Vamplew, OC DCASO; Mr Graham.*

the variety of engagement activities that the Station had resumed and conducted since the reduction of restrictions.

Following last year's Reception, Dinner Nights recommenced with the Battle of Britain commemorative dinner and our personnel were pleased to remember the fallen at the Battle of Britain Service at the Memorial in the Quarry last

September. Earlier this year the base held its annual 10km Race on the airfield raising over £3000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

RAF Shawbury's Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) programme has been an outstanding success, with ten school visits completed during the summer, by our STEM Ambassadors who landed in local schools in a Juno helicopter to deliver engaging STEM activities.

Staff and trainees from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations have been busy supporting the community with gardening and maintenance projects including the Barnabas Community Church, Shrewsbury, St Andrew's Church at Stanton on Hine Heath, and All Saint's Church Grinshill.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration provided a great opportunity for community engagement with our valued veterans. Our annual Veterans' Tea Party was held on 27th May 2022, which was attended by local veterans and hosted by our personnel. Trainees thoroughly enjoyed



*Gp Capt Wadlow addressing the Annual Reception guests.*



*Mr McCarthy, Shropshire Council; Mrs Kerr, Shropshire Council; Mrs Moore, Community Development Officer; Sqd Ldr Parker, OC SSS; Mrs Downing, Veterans UK; Mr West, Aquila; WO Owens, Station Warrant Officer.*

the experience of talking to local veterans and hearing their stories about their military service.

On Monday 18th July 2022, No.1 Flying Training School had the honour of collecting the Queen's Baton from Stoke-on-Trent in a Juno helicopter and transporting it to Shrewsbury. Despite the sweltering heat, crowds turned out to see the helicopter land and the official Baton Bearer, Flight Sergeant Lingham hand over the Baton to start the Shropshire leg of the relay to eventually finish at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

During 2022, the base also supported

its 3 chosen charities with fund raising activities, Young Minds (fighting for young peoples' mental health), BLESMA (supporting limbless veterans) and The Shrewsbury Ark (supporting the homeless and vulnerable).

Guest, Major General (Retd) Crackett said, "I have been aware of at least 20 years of authentic support to a high standard with RAF Shawbury's community engagement and the importance they place in introducing their trainees to that community involvement".

Mr McCarthy, Shropshire Council Community Enablement Team and

Armed Forces Community Covenant Lead commented, "Your involvement with the community is always spot on".

The event was due to conclude with an Ensign Lowering Ceremony and flypast. However, as the Station received the sad news of the death of Her Majesty The Queen, the Station Commander respectfully closed the event.

RAF Shawbury are grateful to everybody that supported, enabled and attended the event, and we look forward to continuing mutual interaction as part of the local community.

**Flt Lt Martin**



*Mrs Wadlow; Mr Newman, Master Shrewsbury Drapers; Gp Capt Wadlow, Station Commander; Mr Lee, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals Trust.*



*Councillor Waite, Mayor of Ludlow; Mr Waite; Councillor Whittle, Mayor of Market Drayton, Mrs Whittle, CFO Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, Shropshire Fire and Rescue.*

# DCASO Dits

Despite the hectic work schedule, DCASO personnel have still found time to relax and unwind over the Summer with Sports Days, FD events and of course the Annual Shawbury 5's where the DCASO Ladies reigned supreme!

It was an honour to welcome Mrs Lesley Ashwood to RAF Shawbury for the inaugural presentation of the Ashwood Trophy in memory of her late husband, WO Tony Ashwood, a much missed and well-loved former member of the ATC Trg Sqn. The first trainee to be awarded this trophy, Sgt Greg Collier, was a very worthy recipient and the unit is lucky to be keeping his talents in the Tower.

As we head into the Autumn, we prepare to bid farewell to Wg Cdr Sarah Vamplew who is posted to Brunssum on promotion to Gp Capt. Wg Cdr Mark Paxman will join us as the new OC DCASO in October and he will certainly have very large (yet tiny!) shoes to fill. We wish them both congratulations and the very best of luck in their new roles.

## AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING SQN (ATCTS)

It has been a busy quarter for ATCTS with events including a squadron sports day, Shawbury 5's and the first ever presentation of the Ashwood Trophy. The sports day was organised to thank the trainers and trainees for all their hard work and offered an opportunity for DCASO to blow off some steam with a little friendly competition. Sports included volleyball, tug of war and dodgeball. DCASO hosted the annual Air Operations 5-a-Side football tournament; this was well attended



*The first presentation of the Ashwood Trophy to Sgt Collier by Mrs Ashwood*

with over 20 teams from all services competing from around the world including multiple ladies' teams. The opening ceremony was a great success with over 200 personnel attending and entertainment was provided by the band Crazy66. The fancy dress was suitably disgusting, and drinks packages were on offer thanks to ESS. It was 49 Bty who proved they had the best 5-a-Side team within the Air Ops branch yet again. The Shawbury Ladies made the station proud by winning the ladies' competition, hopefully this success continues into next year with an even bigger and better event. To celebrate the life of the late WO Tony Ashwood, the Ashwood trophy was commissioned and awarded for the first time at the JATCC 451 graduation. This trophy is awarded to the JATCC trainee who has demonstrated outstanding

motivation and determination throughout their course, along with fully embracing and personifying the core values and ethos of the RAF, whilst inspiring others to do the same. The first winner of the award was Sgt Gregory Collier, an exceptional trainee and SNCO, an outstanding team player and an incredible talent with a huge future ahead of him. Congratulations from all at DCASO for this achievement. Sadly, DCASO and the RAF said goodbye to WO Marie Kennedy after 31 years of distinguished service. Everyone at DCASO is grateful for the passion and dedication she showed towards teaching the next generation of controllers and wish her all the best for life in civvy street.

## AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SQN (ABMTS)

Recent months for ABMTS have been particularly busy, nonetheless the squadron has still managed to embrace many Force Development and Adventure Training opportunities. ABMTS recently held a Continuous Professional Development event where a number of briefs were given throughout the day to demonstrate different presentation skillsets for theory, on topics ranging from Cruise Missile tactics through to portrait drawing, as well as providing many squadron personnel a good opportunity to learn new knowledge.

## SPORTS FUN AT DCASO





*The Whole Force at DCASO*

Both STF and CTF have recently hosted a visit for Air Cadets as part of the Cadet summer camp. The cadets were introduced to innovative new projects such as VR headsets and were given the opportunity to operate the TAC sim alongside Weapons Controllers and Identification Officers allowing them to learn a little about what a weapons controller's job may look like.

STF has presented an opportunity for trainers across DCASO to try their hand at being an "IDO for a day". Instructors were hosted by STF and were given introduction briefs in the role of the IDO, the wider ASACS equipment and operations. A short introduction into communication formats and how to ID the picture were then briefed before allowing the 'Trainees' to operate on the equipment. This event will be opened up again to other trainers and staff across DCASO to raise awareness of the role and promote inter-agency awareness.

### AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS TRAINING SQN (ASOTS)

#### ASOTS in numbers:

- 8** – The number of Sqn personnel arriving & departing: McBrinn SHADER, Quiney MPA, Lee & Rowe Ex CHAMELEON, Jones posted to Brize Norton, Evans swanning it up in Madrid & welcome back to Hodson & Metcalfe.
- 7** – The number of graduates on FOTC(O) 11.
- 6** – The number of people offered

promotion (Adams, Avery, Hope & Sullivan to Sgt, Jones & Loughran to FS).

**5** – The number of trainers who conducted a famil visit to RAF Boulmer.

**4** – The number of courses in-house concurrently (FOSC 21, ASOSC 1, FORC 14 & FOTC(O) 11).

**3** – The number of marriages / engagements: Walsh to Tregoning, Metcalfe to Fitchew and McBrinn pending.

**2** - The number of 'Matthew Sullivan' following Jnr's arrival, congratulation Matthew & Janica.

**1** – The number of babies my wife is expecting (it has been a long journey, with many ups and downs (no inuendo intended)).

Much fun was had when the Sqn conducted FD to Shrewsbury with the trainers taking on the orienteering tasks set by FD Sqn, and CPD to the Maritime Museum in Liverpool. Finally, congratulations to Crosthwaite and Rowe following their individual boxing matches, raising money for Cancer Research UK.

### ASSURANCE SQN

Assurance Sqn joined in this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations with a Sqn bake-off. This came about as a tester for the Shawbury 'Picnic in the Park' Jubilee celebration between WO Coyles and Sgt Beagley however, by the end of the day this had evolved and included numerous members of the Sqn. A wide variety of entries

appeared on the day, from Fg Off Mills' cheesecake muffins to some very questionable, very savoury cookies by WO Cookson and everything in between. An enjoyable tasting session came to an end with Sgt Beagley being voted as the winner with his showstopper, a 3-tier raspberry and white chocolate sponge. A delightful, delicious morning in the Assurance building, so much so that the next bake-off is already booked in the calendar.

46 cadets from Giggleswick School Tri-Service Combined Cadet Force attended Shawbury for a Mobile Team Challenge. These activities can't go ahead without support from Shawbury personnel and Assurance Sqn were well represented by WO Morley, FS Watkins, Sgt Beagley and Fg Off Mills. The cadets were able to gain knowledge to enhance their leadership, teamwork and communication skills, along with many more that are essential for the Armed Forces of today.

As ever, Assurance Sqn were keen to volunteer their support to the Royal International Air Tattoo admissions team, led by WO Coyles, Sgt Beagley and Fg Off Buckley, ensuring the safe and smooth transition of aviation enthusiasts to one of the UK's biggest and grandest air shows. Highlights included the South Korean Black Eagles and the BBMF.

*The DCASO Diarists*

The Youth Activities Centre



# Summer at the NEW Youth Activities Centre

After 5 years of planning and building, RAF Shawbury's new Youth Activities Centre finally opened in November 21.

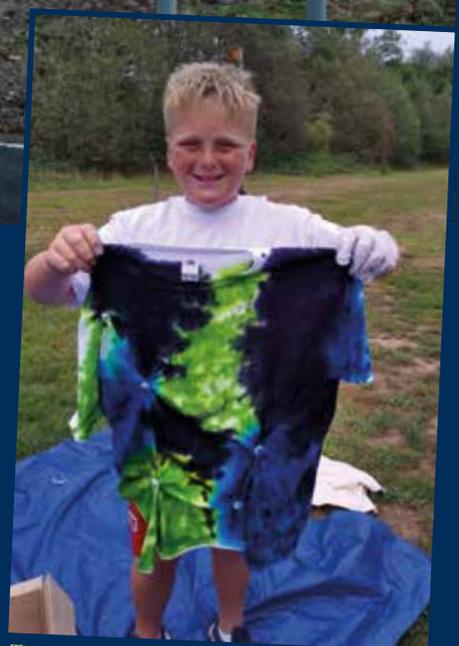
This fantastic building now enables the Community Support team to deliver a mixture of social, education and learning activities to young people, as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) initiatives. The building not only supports young people, but also delivers outreach activities to local veterans.

The building has been designed to be environmentally friendly. It incorporates technology such as Structural Insulated Panels, an Air Source Heat Pump supplying underfloor heating and photovoltaic panels providing electricity. The building also

incorporates an eco-friendly surface water drainage system.

The Youth Activities Centre has also been chosen as one of the focal points for RAF Shawbury's contribution to HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy project. Trees have already been planted to enhance the fully accessible recreational area. The next stage is the planting of a wildflower meadow, to encourage wildlife and insects such as bees and to provide a focal point for the young people to observe and learn about nature.

The Youth Activities Centre is being utilised as a beacon to demonstrate the support being provided to the tri-Service family at RAF Shawbury. The activities and support being delivered aim to support young people and their social development as they emerge from the restrictions and social isolation experienced during the COVID pandemic. It also allows them to



Tie Dye fun

integrate into the local community, as a number of local children from Shawbury village also attend the youth activities.

This Summer, the Airplay project has enabled RAF Shawbury's young people to get involved in a host of trips and activities ranging from a residential stay in Staffordshire, day trips, Ten Pin bowling, Tie Dye, arts and crafts, Pizza making, games afternoons, and an evening of celebrations for the opening of the Commonwealth Games.

Mrs Gail Moore, the Community Development Officer said: "The new Youth Centre has made a huge difference to the youth provision at RAF Shawbury. It is a fantastic hub for young people and helps them to develop stronger relationships and reach their full potential."



Pizza making in the Youth Activities Centre

# Shawbury Helicopter Visits Oak Farm, Ditton Priors

Oak Farm is situated on a 30-acre site in the village of Ditton Priors in Shropshire. They provide a working environment for adults with learning disabilities. Their aim is to engage workers with the outdoors by participating in meaningful activities and learning opportunities based around animal husbandry and horticulture. Animals found on the farm include a donkey, alpacas, goats, chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs.

Workers at Oak Farm experience a range of learning opportunities and activities throughout the day, week and year. People see the farm as work, not social care, therefore increasing confidence, self-worth and esteem. Work at the farm tends to be done in groups so people are encouraged to take responsibility for not only themselves but others too. The staff are committed to providing a valuable experience for everyone who comes to Oak Farm.

Workers at the farm will develop skills they can apply to their everyday lives. As well as animal husbandry and horticulture activities, workers are also given the opportunity to participate in cooking, film and photography projects, craft work, running the farm shop, one-off workshops such as drumming or tie-dye, flower arranging, wreath making, life skills development, and much more!

A big part of being at Oak farm is building friendships and developing life skills. They learn about socialising, working as a team and confidence building. These experiences act as a steppingstone to attending events outside of the farm and encourage independence.



The farm host 'Oakfest' every couple of years which is a village show held in Ditton Priors to fundraise and bring the community together whilst celebrating the skills of those they support. On Wednesday 7th September 2022, a crew of three (two pilots and one crewman) from RAF Shawbury flew a Juno helicopter to visit Oak Farm in Ditton Priors. We landed in the field adjoining their farm and were able to show them all around the helicopter discussing our roles as aircrew and how we fit into the wider military role. The workers were able to get up close to the inside and outside of an aircraft – an opportunity most had never experienced- and they were able to learn about how helicopters fly, how Pilots and Rearcrew are trained and what the purpose of our training is. In addition to showing them our flying uniform and safety equipment (helmets, gloves and Body Armour Load Carrying System), we also took aerial charts to show them how we plan routes to fly – we were able to show the workers where they lived in relation to RAF Shawbury!



After we had shown everybody around the helicopter, the staff and workers kindly showed us around the farm where they grow flowers, vegetables and herbs, we saw many of the farm animals – Doris the Donkey was particularly sociable- and they showed us their workshops and team room. Everyone at the farm was incredibly grateful for our visit and the staff and workers at the farm were absolutely fantastic to meet. The encouraging spirit and positive ethos of the farm was so apparent, it was a pleasure to visit them.

*Thank you Oak Farm.*

**Flt Lt Burgess, CFS(H) Sqn.**

Photos courtesy of Oak Farm



If you would like to find out more about Oak Farm you can visit: [www.Facebook.com/OakFarmDittonPriors](https://www.facebook.com/OakFarmDittonPriors) or <https://bethphage.co.uk/what-we-do/oak-farm/>



The toast

# Splice the Mainbrace!

At 16:30 on the 27 July 2022, Royal Navy personnel from RAF Shawbury ‘Spliced the Mainbrace’ at the direction of Her Majesty The Queen, to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

This very Naval tradition of ‘Splicing the Mainbrace’ is a rare honour, bestowed from only the Monarchy or Admiralty, to either signal their satisfaction with the Royal Navy, or as an invitation to join them in celebration of a significant event; the last such occasion was the birth of Prince Louis in 2018.

Splicing the Mainbrace has a long tradition in the Royal Navy, originating in the Age of Sail. The “Mainbrace” would be the largest line (think rope) of rigging that held the “main-sail” in position. During combat, this rigging would often be shot away by enemy cannon fire, and it fell to the hardest sailors to repair this line whilst the

battle still raged. For this feat, those sailors were awarded an extra ‘tot’ of rum in addition to their daily alcohol allowance (fun fact – RN sailors were given a daily rum/grog ration right up until 31 July 1970).

Our event at RAF Shawbury consisted of gathering all our Naval brethren together under the shadow of Naval Ensigns and signal flags, whilst sea shanty tunes played, and Navy Rum was dished out (or non-alcoholic alternatives for drivers!). This was followed by a ‘dit’ (navy slang for story) on the origin of the event from our most nautical Senior Rate, POACMN ‘Knocker’ White, and finally the raising of a toast to Her Majesty The Queen, from the Senior Naval Officer at RAF Shawbury, Cdr Mike Brown.



Ready to Splice the Mainbrace.

by Lt Jack Cook RN,  
705 NAS

# Meet the Trainees at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) 2022

Between the 15-17 July, 6 rotary wing trainees attended the Royal International Air Tattoo 2022 as representatives of No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS). Deploying with the trainees was a line-up of the aircraft supporting the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) which included two Juno helicopters and one Jupiter.

The operational theme for this year's air show was 'Training'. The 1 FTS trainees had the opportunity to represent this theme and discuss their training with the public. Interest in the UKMFTS was evidently high from the numbers who attended the static display. Many young people from a wide variety of backgrounds approached the trainees to learn more about the aircraft and the training system in general. Many wished to know what the path to become military aircrew looked like. A highlight for the trainees was being able to show those young people around the aircraft, with many being allowed into the cockpits under the supervision of the aircrew and shown how the aircraft functions. This opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge given to you by the UKMFTS instructors was greatly

rewarding for the trainees involved.

The trainees also had a chance to socialise with foreign military aircrew and officers. The opportunity to see which aircraft other nations are in service, and the chance to learn how they are operated was not something most would normally experience. The trainees had the opportunity to tour many other nations' aircraft, including a V22 Osprey, a German A400M and a German Sea Stallion. At all of these aircraft, the foreign aircrew were extremely welcoming and clearly interested in showing the capabilities of their aircraft. Many of these aircrew were also shown the UKMFTS aircraft, with the trainees explaining the capabilities of their aircraft. All the trainees greatly enjoyed the chance to represent their services and



1 FTS and look forward to attending another Royal International Air Tattoo!

**By Flt Lt Abell  
1 FTS Trainee**

## Members of International Helicopter Training Centre (IHTC) train with 1 FTS



RAF Shawbury has recently welcomed some international colleagues from the International Helicopter Training Centre (IHTC) Bueckeburg and Helicopter Wing 64 Holzdorf, Germany, as they start pilot training with No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS).

On 20th June 2022, during the ground school phase, one of the officers received the good news of promotion, made official at a ceremony with their German Commanding Officer. Congratulations from 1 FTS.

*Pictured left: Members of the International Helicopter Training Centre*

# TOP GOAT

## The When - Sunday 24th July

18 brave, sea-faring aviators from RAF Shawbury set sail on the high seas (River Severn) under the pseudo name of "Top Goat" to participate in the annual Dragon Boat Race, held in support of an amazing local charity "Severn Hospice".

## The Who

OC Sixty, Sqn Ldr Summers, had the vision to partake in a well overdue charity event. He promptly 'voluntold' one of his Flt Cdrs to organise... who subsequently and promptly 'voluntold' junior CSE 445-14. The team was established, led by the Flt Cdrs: Flt Lt Gary Carr and Flt Lt Zoe Chalton-Wilson. Within hours of publicising, word spread that RAF Shawbury were competing in a physically arduous dragon boat race against 12 other 20-person teams around Shropshire and instantly "Top Goat" was established.

## The How and the Why

In order to enter this worthwhile event, the team needed to raise £350 for the entry fee and agreed to raise a further £1000 for the cause. With only 1 month to raise £1350, it was time to get to work! Massive thanks to the RAF Shawbury Charity Committee, who started our campaign off with a jump start of £200; the rest was down to "Top Goat".



Ready to race



The Top Goat team

The team baked harder than Mary Berry; cooked sausage baps better than Gordon Ramsey; begged on the gate with sweets in hand like Oliver Twist and designed "Top goat" tees that Vivienne Westwood could envy.

By the week of the race, and after much, much support from around the station, "Top Goat" managed to raise a credible £1500 and sixty pence, 10 Australian dollars and a trouser button.

## The Big Day in Sparta / Shrewsbury

Sunday 24th July saw hundreds descend on the River Severn in biblical, Ark-like conditions for the big event, but the atrocious weather did not deter. The money was raised and the focus (as you can well imagine) was now set on victory; especially as the neighbouring team turned out to be the Shrewsbury Cross-fit fraternity, eagerly donning their sweat bands and Lycra (never let the truth get in the way of a good story).

Side note: Our fancy dress (as you can see by the pictures) was subtle... flying suits and a Tee reading "Top Goat". We weren't insinuating we were the top, greatest of all time, as many thought. This was merely a nod to our Sqn history (Markhor Goat - due to time spent in Afghanistan and the Far East). Inevitably, we were quickly established as 'the team to beat'. This was not helped by an anonymous request for "Danger Zone", which belted out as we released from the jetty, coupled with our first heat 1:05 time (weekend record) skipped by the Stn Cdr, Gp Capt Wadlow. Our finest cheerleader, OC Ops, shouting, "come on Top Goats," from his elevated position of the Sabrina also added a very real sense of credibility to our winning potential.

By heat 3, it was obvious we would make the final 3 boat head-to-head!



Top Goat charity bake-off

With amazing support from family and friends, we set off for our final race. To our right was Ashcock Dragons (great team with great banter) and further right was our arch nemesis rival, aka Lycra wearing X fit crew... Suffice to say, all previous rhythm, cadence and ability departed the boat immediately after the start. Absolute brute strength, chaos, and not wanting to relinquish our lead culminated in us passing the finish line in 1:04. Sixty won, with a lead of less than one second (Ashcock Dragons won last year with a 1:12).

It was an absolutely awesome race, with mutual respect expressed for all involved. At the prize giving, we were informed these were the quickest times ever recorded, in 18 years of the event running.

Bravado aside, RAF Shawbury represented well; their lipstick approach of not taking it too seriously (other than the racing) went down well with the local community, who showed great support at the prize giving, albeit calls for post-race CDT!

This was a great event with an even greater cause. It would be fantastic to have some in house rivalry next year from around camp... If you're up for it and think you can topple "Top Goat", get in touch with Sixty Sqn.

Flt Lt Gary Carr



# 1st Shawbury Cubs visit RAF Shawbury Gliding Club

RAF Shawbury Gliding Club were delighted to welcome an excited group from 1st Shawbury Cubs on 19 May 22, a most enthusiastic and fun group of visitors who kept us firmly on our toes for the duration of the visit.

Through a number of interactive stands, the aim was to give our young visitors an insight into how a glider stays in the air, the instruments and controls that aid unpowered flight and the mechanics of how a glider is towed into the air, and all accompanied by a related quiz. There was plenty of opportunity to get hands on the controls and it was clear that our visitors' soaring imagination knew no heights! Club members had their work cut out, particularly in answering the numerous questions from this group of young and very inquisitive individuals. "Be Prepared" is the Cub Scout motto and we thought



Pre-flight checks.  
Photo: Geoff Catling



Future RAF pilot.  
Photo by Geoff Catling

we were, but amongst the questions that came thick and fast were some crackers that we hadn't quite prepared for ranging from, "Why was there a sheep painted on the wall of the hangar?"; "Are you really older than the glider?"; to "Where is the rev counter?".

The visit finished on a high with refreshments and a Q&A session with the Club Officer In-command, Sqn Ldr Alan Swan, and Chief Flying Instructor, Ian Gallacher. We couldn't find a glider related Activity Badge for these intrepid youngsters, so we made them one in recognition of their contribution to a fantastic visit. Undoubtedly we will see some on the airfield in the future and, who knows, amongst these young folk may well be RAF pilots of the future.

**Geoff Catling**



Left: Pull back on the stick to raise the nose.  
Photo: Will Dean



Below: Wings level and we are away! Photo: Geoff Catling



Where's the rev counter?  
Photo: Geoff Catling

# Station Force Development Activity at Alderford Lake

20 Jul 22

On Wednesday 20 July 22, personnel from across the unit participated in a stand-up paddle boarding and water-based obstacle course Force Development (FD) event at Alderford Lake, Whitchurch. Alderford Lake is situated approximately 15 miles from RAF Shawbury, it is a great resource for local FD, has a huge inflatable obstacle course and a lake suitable for paddle boarding, windsurfing, canoeing and wild-water swimming.

The purpose of the event was to improve operational effectiveness through individual and collective education and training activities, based on the Generic Performance Statement (GPS) and the Civil Service Competency Framework (CSCF) through FD. All personnel both active participants and observers met the FD aims including those of communication, collaborating and partnering. Personnel from across the Station broke down communication barriers during the day to enable more effective working practices to be established moving forward.

A very successful day for RAF Shawbury achieving the largest amount of personnel, both Military and Civilian, in a single FD/AT event for over three years. It was a great opportunity to meet people on unit, put a name to a face and build on teamwork with other unit personnel. Physically demanding, this event took people out of their



Paddle boarding tuition



On the water

comfort zones offering opportunity to develop personal growth and group participation. A great turn out, lots of fun and we achieved our goals. A huge well done to Fg Off Darko for organising such an awesome event.

The responses below encapsulate observations and comments from a cross section of participants, thus providing 'Whole Force' feedback.

*"It was a great opportunity to meet Military personnel from the wider unit. Normally I do not have the opportunity to visit other areas within the Station and therefore, it was nice to put faces to names"*

Jane Powis,  
Deputy Business Manager.

*"First time paddle boarding, thoroughly enjoyed it despite the 4 times I stood up and fell off each time"*

FS Andy Flanders, FS Infra.

*"The main takeaway from Alderford was seeing a new version of the same colleagues; it's rare you get to tackle them off inflatable ledges in the office environment. As well as being an absolute physical challenge, it was great to see everyone put their office personas away and simply just bond for a bit."*

Fg Off Lambert

*"A fabulous location and great that we can still reward our people like this, in a fast-moving complicated world, this day was superb for my team – smiles all round"*

WO Griffin



In the water!

# Base Support Wing's Force Development 'Away Day'

After more than a year of the pressures and constant change to both our working and home lives due to Covid-19, we were all ready for a much-needed team building and comradery session. It was time to get back into the driving seat, have a good old catch up with our friends and colleagues and start looking forward. Having decided on a low-level walk with a military and historical slant, 9 civil servants and 11 military personnel embarked on a visit to the old RAF Hednesford site at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.

The site itself is now a place of great natural beauty but back in 1939 at the start of WW2, No 6 School of Technical Training was opened, known as RAF Hednesford. During the war thousands of personnel undertook their basic training on the maintenance of RAF airframes and engines there, before being dispatched across the country to work on aircraft fighting in the war. Between 1950 and 1956 it was used for basic training with 81,500 men passing through. When RAF Hednesford closed it was reopened as a resettlement camp for Hungarian refugees fleeing from the Russian Invasion of Budapest. The camp was eventually demolished between 1960 and 1970 with only the roadways between the wooden huts now visible. During our time at Cannock Chase the group visited the war memorials and cemeteries which were very poignant and thought-provoking. These sites gave further opportunity for participants to share their pre-learned knowledge of the area to the wider group.

The day gave those involved a great opportunity to improve personal skills such as communication, leadership, and navigation. As well as giving an opportunity to reflect on the past and, look ahead both on a professional and personal level to the future.



Memorial to RAF Hednesford

This proved to be an informative and fun day out. The group left learning a great deal more about the history of RAF Hednesford and Cannock Chase; with the added advantage of meeting up in open, pleasant surroundings. The time away from the office built greater team cohesiveness for those who had been used to spending the majority of their time working in isolation, both in the office and at home.

We all left with the knowledge that we are there to 'support' and 'be supported' by other members of our team.

Written in collaboration by Sgt Leigh McGuire, SNCO Community Support and Marie Jackson, Business Manager  
Pictures courtesy of Tracey Archer, Graphics Department



The German Cemetery at Cannock Chase

# The Drapers Company Award

On 30 June 2022, Flight Sergeant Carl Kneale from C4i and Sergeant Darren Booth from DCASO-ABMTS were invited to Central London at the request of the Drapers Company for an awards ceremony in recognition of their hard work and dedication to the output of RAF Shawbury.

The nominees were escorted by the Station Commanders representative – Officer Commanding Engineering and Logistics Wing (OC ELW), who was responsible for presenting citations to the Drapers Master and Wardens reporting the achievements of FS Kneale and Sgt Booth.

### The Drapers Company – Background

The Drapers Company celebrates its 650th anniversary this year, reflecting on a historic journey which started in the 14th Century with a small group of traders in woollen cloth, banding together to protect their business interests. It is now a 21st Century livery company and has had a long tradition of commercial and philanthropic activities in support of the Armed Forces.

The Drapers company has been affiliated with various military units dating back to 1945 with a City of London Anti-Aircraft Battery. This was followed by links with the 71st City of London Yeomanry Signal Regiment and in 1994 they established a link with HMS Monmouth, a Type 23 Frigate. In 2007 The Drapers Company is affiliated with the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and RAF Shawbury.

The Company not only provides grants for these units' retrospective welfare funds but also raises awareness of their work and service to the country. Drapers have a similar link with the British Transport Police (BTP).

In addition to this support, the Drapers Company presents an annual award to each unit for personnel who have been nominated by these Units for their contribution over the year. FS



Kneale and Sgt Booth were nominated along with other personnel from RAF Shawbury and these two were chosen by the Station to have their citations submitted to the Drapers. The council then chose a winner of the Drapers Medal and certificate of recognition from the citations submitted to them.

### Award presentation

The awards day itself involved travel by train to Central London for OC ELW, acting as the Stn Cdrs representative, and the two nominees. A quick coffee and change into Service Dress was followed by a reception for all the award nominees from the Yeomanry, Welsh Guards, BTP and RAF Shawbury in the rather splendid Drawing Room of the Drapers building. The nominees were then called forward to the Court Room by the council to have their

citations read out to the Master and Wardens. The Clerk of the Drapers then announced the winner and runner up for each unit and each was presented with the Drapers Medal or Certificate of Recognition.

For RAF Shawbury, Sgt Booth was awarded the Drapers Medal for his work to enable development and delivery the Surveillance Foundation Course on behalf of the Defence College of

Air and Space Operations. His work included a significant redevelopment of the Simulator scenarios for trainees to include the entirety of UK airspace and a complete rework of the Defence Learning Environment training package to streamline the path from Phase 2/3 training to the front line.

For recognition of his hard work and dedication in enabling C4i to transition the station to the new IT SuperUser framework, FS Kneale was awarded a certificate of recognition.

After the awards ceremony, the award winners, runners-up and guests were invited to lunch where the Master and Clerks explained more about the role of the Drapers and their pride in supporting the Armed Forces.

The Company of Drapers takes great pride in its affiliations with the UK Military and Civil Servants. It is clear that they value our contribution and are grateful to host the annual awards and recognise the efforts of people across Defence and the British Transport Police. As the recipient of the Drapers Medal, I was humbled to even be nominated for this award and to actually win it is something I'm very grateful for. RAF Shawbury should be honoured to be affiliated with this historic Company and I would encourage all Line Managers to consider nominating their personnel for the award, should the opportunity arise.

**Sgt Darren Booth**



*The Drapers Medal Room*

## Awards Presentation by Director of Flying Training

During a visit to RAF Shawbury on 31st August Air Commodore Ian Sharrocks OBE MA RAF, Director of Flying Training, was pleased to present various honours and awards to individuals and teams across the military and civilian personnel at the Station.

Operational Service Medals were presented to Group Captain Jordan and Air Specialist (Class 1) Coulthard, while a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was presented to Captain Law. Flight Lieutenant Ellis was presented with an Air Officer Commanding No 22 Group Commendation and the Air Commodore was especially pleased to present his Director of Flying Training Commendations to the Physical Education and Training Development Flight and to the Spring Early Years Nursery Team. Colour Sergeant Lomax was presented with an Air Safety Award. The medals and awards given on that day were truly representative of the range of activities that our personnel are engaged with through operational deployment, training and support of our personnel and dependants, training future helicopter crews safely and recognising service given.



Medals and Award recipients with Director of Flying Training



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# FA Disability Cup Finals Day

The FA Disability Cup Finals Weekend is the pinnacle of the football season for players and coaches from a number of disciplines across the beautiful game. This year's event, held at St George's Park on the 11th – 12th June, was the biggest and most successful to date, attracting large crowds as well as being shown live on BT Sport and highlights on Channel 4.



The event aims to showcase disability football to as wider audience as possible and also highlight player pathways, which are available from grassroots up to elite level for all the impairment groups. RAF Shawbury has a strong link with the FA and specifically Disability Football due to Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE. As a member of the RAF FA, FA Council and FA Disability Committee (amongst other roles) he is always keen to further enhance the links between the FA and RAF Shawbury, as highlighted by the Disability Football event held at RAF Shawbury in December 21. Personnel from Shawbury have successfully supported the Disability Finals Weekend for the last several years, apart from when COVID interceded, and it is always a popular event for those who have the opportunity to 'work' the weekend.

*"All those who took part spoke very positively about the weekend, saying that despite the long hours and hard work it was an amazing experience and they were honoured to be a part of the event"*

Photographs courtesy of FA/Getty



The volunteers from Shawbury were made up of students from FOSC 21 and ASOSC 1, DCASO trainers, MPGS and DAAM. Once over the shock of the extremely unsociable early start they got to experience and look around the fantastic facility that is St George's Park before soon being put to work in their allocated roles to assist the FA and Limelight Sports (a specialist agency who have started to run the event as the popularity increases). Roles fulfilled by RAF Shawbury personnel ranged from VIP and guest liaison, medal and trophy bearers, setting up of presentations through to possibly the smartest dressed ballboys/people had ever seen. As well as the planned roles a great deal of military ingenuity shone through, with suggestions on improvements as the event was running being readily adopted by the organisers. Guests, VIPs, FA staff and Limelight staff were unanimous in their praise for our volunteers and could not speak highly enough of them. Evidently last year just wasn't the same without our contribution and all involved were a credit to their Service and their Unit.

All those who took part spoke very positively about the weekend, saying that despite the long hours and hard work it was an amazing experience and they were honoured to be a part of the event. A particular highlight on the



Sunday involved everyone trying their very best to communicate with the players and supporters involved in the deaf final with a distinct lack of sign-language interpreters. As you would expect they found a way! The disciplines that were represented over the weekend were partially sighted, Cerebral Palsy, blind, amputee, deaf and powerchair. Everyone was overwhelmed and amazed by the skills displayed by all the players involved, they were quite simply on another level and need to be seen to be believed. The highlights are still available on YouTube and are well worth a watch, I won't reveal the winners of the games should anyone wish to have a look.

Huge thanks must go to the FA and Limelight for staging this fantastic



event and for allowing RAF Shawbury the opportunity to play a small part in its success. Also thanks to Wg Cdr Hope for his continued work with the FA and ensuring that the relationship between them and RAF Shawbury continues to go from strength to strength. Plans are already in place for further support to next years Disability Cup Finals weekend which will undoubtedly be even bigger and better than this year.



# Welsh Three-Peak Challenge

Earlier this year a team of young personnel from RAF Shawbury decided to take on the daunting challenge of climbing the three highest peaks in Wales, within a 24-hour period, commonly known as the Welsh Three-Peak challenge.



The eight-person team, including a dedicated Driver, planned to walk up the highest mountain in each part of Wales, North, Mid and South.

This challenge was not for the faint-hearted with a wake-up for 02:30, arrive at and climb the smallest of the 3 mountains Pen-Y-Fan, a mere warm-up at 886m. Next travel for a late morning climb up the second tallest of the three peaks, Cadair Idris, also known as the difficult mountain despite not being the tallest at 892m. Finally, after a long day of travelling a late afternoon, or if you prefer early evening, walk up Snowdon, a very popular and probably the best-known mountain being the tallest in Wales at an impressive 1085m. Reaching the summit was the culmination of a tiring but incredibly inspiring day, having started our day at 02:30 and finished at around 23:00. Including

pre-positioning there was eight hours of driving and fifteen hours of walking during the challenge. The participants were weary but had enjoyed some majestic scenery and bonded as a team.

Any ideas for our next challenge?

SAC Rowe



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