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ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday, March 22, 2024
Edition No. 1580 £1.20

RAF News



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Nuke role secrets of V-Force

● Win ground-breaking new V-Bomber book about the RAF's Cold War icons

Ice Hockey
McCracken on a High



● See page 23

Football
Under-23s fall short



● See page 25

Skeleton
We're No. 1



● See page 28

Arctic role

Lightning set to strike on NATO'S northern flank



NORTHERN FLIGHTS: 617 Sqn F-35 on board HMS Prince of Wales bathed in light from the Aurora Borealis, close to the Arctic Circle. PHOTO: AS1 AMBER MAYALL

UK LIGHTNING stealth fighters launched combat training missions across Nato's high north alongside more than 100 fighters from across the Alliance during Exercise Nordic Response.

The large-scale manoeuvres, supported by a maritime force of 50 vessels, are part of the biggest drills since the Cold War.

● Continued on p2

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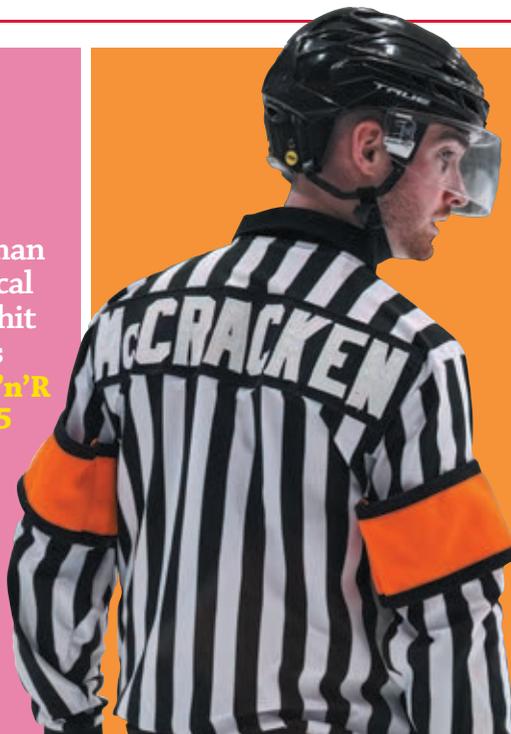
“It was a wonderful way to mark this milestone,”

Flt Lt Jamie Jackson racks up 3,000 hours with an Atlas flight through Mach Loop in West Wales
See p9

“You’ve got to pinch yourself sometimes,”



Pete Waterman on musical of his hit songs
See R'n'R pp4-5



“I aim to be at National League level one day,”

High Performance Athlete ice hockey official
Cpl Lewis McCracken
See page 23



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NATO heads north

Staff Reporter

NATO CHIEFS have mobilised more than 90,000 military personnel for Exercise Steadfast Defender, including 20,000 from the UK Armed Forces.

Operating across Eastern and Northern Europe, land, sea and air operations are designed to showcase the Alliance’s military fire power and face down the threat from Russia, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said.

Swedish Gripen fighters joined US F-35s during dog-fighting combat air drills over the Arctic as the nation marked its ascension to the Nato alliance.

A RAF Voyager tanker operating from RAF Lossiemouth refuelled the Swedish jets, during Exercise Nordic Response.



ALLIANCE AIR POWER: F-35s come into land on the deck of HMS Prince of Wales. Inset left, Swedish Gripen prepare to refuel from RAF Voyager. PHOTOS: AS1 AMBER MAYALL

This Week In History



1984
Vulcan retired

THE DELTA wing Vulcan bomber is withdrawn from service as 50 Sqn is officially disbanded at RAF Waddington.

1944
Stalag break-out

RAF PRISONERS held at Stalag Luft III stage a mass break-out. 50 of those recaptured are shot under Hitler’s personal orders. Only three make it to safety.



1991
Harrier Balkan raids

HARRIER GR7s take part in Nato bombing raids on Serbian arms stores following the collapse of diplomatic talks to resolve the Kosovo crisis.

Extracts from *The Royal Air Force Day By Day* by Air Cdre Graham Pitchfork (The History Press)

Chinook gets a lift

£2bn deal signed with Boeing for 14 upgraded aircraft



PLEDGE: Defence Secretary Grant Shapps meets Chinook crews

THE UK'S heavy-lift helicopter capability will be bolstered by 14 extended-range Chinooks under a £2 billion deal with US defence giant Boeing.

The new CH-47(ER) helicopters will lift the UK's strategic mobility with a top speed of 200mph, double the range of a standard Chinook, air-to-air refuelling capability and capacity to carry up to 55 personnel or 10,000kg of cargo.

The aircraft also boast advanced digital cockpits and a modernised airframe to increase stability and survivability in extreme conditions.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps announced the commitment to proceed with the Foreign Military Sale contract after meeting crew members from the RAF's existing Chinook fleet.

MOD procurement chiefs reduced costs for elements of the programme by more than £300 million, a spokesman for DE&S said.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps added: "Procuring these Chinook helicopters will mark a significant milestone in our efforts to modernise and enhance



POWERHOUSE: And the RAF's Chinook fleet is now set to raise its game even more with new airframes

the agility of the UK Armed Forces, cementing our ability to respond at pace to situations and threats across the globe.

"The Chinook is one of our most iconic aircraft, having been operated in every major conflict since the Falklands War. Delivering on this deal not only enhances our capability, but will boost UK industry and skills."

As part of the deal, UK companies will also produce components critical for manufacturing and maintaining the helicopters, providing jobs in areas such as aircraft avionics and electric power, supporting skills development and wider UK industry.

Introduced in the UK in 1980, the Chinook made its combat

debut in the Falklands conflict in 1982 and has been involved in every major conflict since and carried out humanitarian missions worldwide.

The double rotor helicopter has seen action in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan inserting troops and kit and conducting medical evacuation

missions, collecting injured personnel from the battlefield.

Keith Bethell, DE&S Director Helicopters, said: "Our Chinook Delivery Team has worked closely with our US allies on this crucial procurement.

"We now look forward to pushing ahead and delivering this outstanding heavy-lift capability for UK Armed Forces."



DOING THEIR DUTY: Members of Brize Norton's GD Flight prepare the aluminium figures

Brize help for D-Day Giants

PERSONNEL FROM Brize Norton have volunteered their time to support the Standing with Giants project marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

The charity will install 1,475 silhouettes across the meadow fields of the British Normandy Memorial in April.

The figures are made of recycled aluminium, cut to shape and painted in the Standing with Giants workshop by volunteers from across Oxfordshire.

Groups from Brize attended the project on different days, including members of the Air Wing, General Duties Flight and Command Support Team.

Station Commander Gp Capt Claire O'Grady said: "We have a range of people from across our Whole Force

volunteering their time with this. I have a personal family connection through my grandfather who was there on D-Day with The Royal Yeomanry Regiment, so for me contributing to this project means a lot."

Sections including the Air Mobility Force, 1 Tactical Police & Security Squadron, 4624 Squadron and the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit also helped out.

Dan Barton, Standing with Giants founder, said: "Thank you to all RAF Brize Norton personnel who have come to help. It means a lot to us and it's lovely to see the enthusiasm and passion from military people coming to help with our project. We are grateful to everyone who has supported us."

**// Our
welfare break
gave us the
quality time
we needed as
a family."**

- Al Dyer



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**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**



The RAF Benevolent Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SC038109).

In Brief



FUNDRAISER: Army wife Amy Briggs

Cyprus tribute

BIG-HEARTED AMY Briggs hit the road in Cyprus to raise more than £2,000 in memory of Air Force pal Cpl Richard McLellan, who took his own life in 2023.

The 37-year-old Army wife completed the annual Gym 2 Gym half-marathon to support the RAF Benevolent Fund and mental health charity Andy's Man Club.

She said: "Richard and I met over 20 years ago now, through our partners at the time. We became friends instantly.

"I am truly gutted to have lost him like we did, and I wanted to push myself to complete something special for him."



FUNDING: Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer

Injured vets win funding

INJURED AND disabled veterans could receive grants following the launch of a Forces mobility fund.

Forces charities Help for Heroes and Blesma won funding to finance the scheme from the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) and the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund, last year.

Military welfare chiefs say there are more than 1.85 million veterans in the UK, many of whom could be entitled to grants from the VMF, which will remain open for five years.

Veterans' Affairs Minister Johnny Mercer said: "We have made great strides in supporting veteran healthcare and recovery, and the opening of the OVA-backed Veterans' Mobility Fund is an important step in improving the lives of veterans across the UK."

● Go to: helpforheroes.org.uk/veteransmobilityfund

Take Gnat

Vintage display jet joins Reds'

Diamond anniversary party



60s SHOWSTOPPER: Distinctive yellow Folland Gnat takes to the skies with Arrows at Waddington
PHOTOS: CPL PHIL DYE

Staff Reporter

A **VINTAGE** Gnat like those flown by the Red Arrows in their first season in 1965 took to the skies over Waddington alongside the present-day team's Hawks as the Air Force aerobatic aces prepare for their 60th anniversary season.

The 60s display aircraft is painted in distinctive yellow livery in a salute to the Reds' RAF predecessors, the Yellowjacks display team.

Sqn Ldr Jon Bond, who will lead the team as Red 1 for the first time this year, said: "To bring together the past, present and potential future of the Red Arrows is the perfect way to launch our 60th season display calendar."

The team is set to perform a new, nine-aircraft display at air shows, sports events and military anniversaries, including D-Day this summer, along with four airshows in Canada to celebrate the Royal Canadian Air Force's centennial.

Sqn Ldr Bond added: "I know, from my own childhood experience at airshows, just how many people – of all ages and backgrounds – these events bring together and how important they are to communities.

"Generations of families, up and down the country have enjoyed watching the Red Arrows display ever since the first public show in 1965 and this 60th season will remain faithful to our aims – to



entertain, inform and inspire."

Leader and Red 1 for four consecutive seasons between 1966 and 1969 – still a record to this day – as well as being a wingman in the team's founding year was Sqn Ldr Ray Hanna.

His daughter Sarah joined the Arrows for the event at Waddington. She said: "For me, it has always been a point of great pride that my father led the team

through those formative, critical years and established the foundations for its longevity."

The Folland Gnat – two of which came to Waddington for the 60th launch event – was primarily used by the RAF as a training aircraft.

It was flown by the Red Arrows from the team's first season in 1965 until being replaced by the bigger Hawk T1 in 1980.

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Computer generated image shows a typical street scene at Newton Meadows. Elevational treatments and handing may vary. *Incentive available on selected plots, terms and conditions apply.



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1. Head to the website and browse the events available
2. Pick your race and register
3. Start your training and fundraising!



**ROYAL
AIR FORCE
museum**

The Royal Air Force Museum is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000922) and is a charity registered in England and Wales (1197541)

Stateside Kingpins eye threat

Pete Singlehurst

UK BATTLESPACE specialists based in the US are supporting Coalition operations by monitoring airspace across the Middle East from North Carolina.

Weapons controllers, air traffic controllers, system operators and air and space specialists are working alongside US Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force units to provide tactical command and control of 1.1 million square miles of airspace covering Iraq, Syria and the Arabian Gulf.

Set up three years ago, the multinational task force, dubbed Kingpin, reports to the Coalition's Combined Air Operations Centre in the Middle East.

The UK contingent commands RAF Typhoons, Atlas transporters and Voyager tankers deployed across the region.

Detachment Commander Sqd Ldr Wright said: "Kingpin is the only Coalition tactical command and control unit actively involved in 24-hour combat missions.

"The team seamlessly operate alongside Coalition members, continually strengthening relations with our partners in an environment within which the UK will most likely function in



future operations."

The Kingpin detachment relocated from Al Dhafra in the United Arab Emirates in 2021 and will move from its present home with 727 Expeditionary Air Control Squadron to 728th Battle Management Squadron, at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, next year.

Civilian Air Traffic Control Liaison, Flt Lt Johnston, said: "Kingpin has shown that it can provide an identical output from a safer operating area, and demonstrates that in the face of evolving security challenges and geopolitical dynamics, it can rapidly and effectively respond from anywhere in the world."

Stations' showdown

Tracey Allen

AIR FORCE stations are set to go head to head as welfare chiefs announce the shortlist for this year's RAF Benevolent Fund awards, hosted by actor Alistair Petrie.

Brize Norton, Henlow and Waddington are up for Station of the Year, with Brize Norton, St Mawgan and Wittering nominated for Airplay Project of the Year.

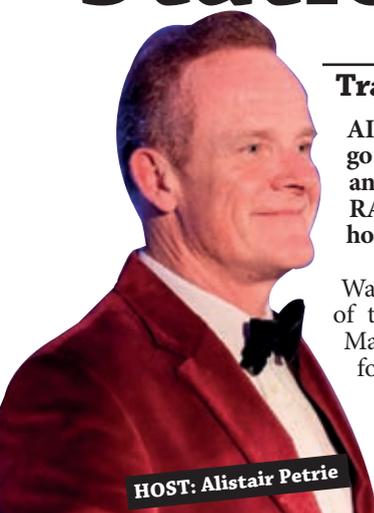
The International Bomber Command Centre, South Ayrshire Council and The Beaujolais Run are shortlisted for Outstanding Support from

an Organisation or Group while Padre Mike Hall and ASI Neil Robinson are in contention for Outstanding Support from an Individual.

The RAF Formation or Squadron of the Year could go to East of Scotland Universities Air Squadron, The King's Colour Squadron or RAF Music Services.

RAFBF chief executive AVM Chris Elliot said: "We would be unable to carry out our life-changing work without the significant support from these dedicated individuals, groups, organisations and RAF stations.

"I'd like to extend my thanks and congratulations to every one of this year's nominees."



Farewell to St Paw-gan

MILITARY POLICE dog handler Cpl Tim Cayless and his hero hound Donna have signed off together at St Mawgan.

The duo have been working together for the last few years at the Cornish station, teaching aircrew evasion tactics.

As Tim neared the end of his 37-year career with the RAF he decided to take his faithful canine colleague with him, and adopted her.

He said: "Working with dogs, there never seems to be tough days. I have always put my dogs first and have never not wanted to go to work.

"You are always needed by them, without you they have no one. That, and the joy of making them and you better, drives me on.

"The process of rehoming Donna with me was easy. I know everything about her. I just can't wait to get her home and get fighting her for the settee."

Donna is the second dog Tim has adopted, while his dad provided a home for a third who retired as Tim was posted to Cyprus earlier in his career.

He added: "I have had many highlights during my career and looked after so many wonderful animals.

"Being on the New Year's Honours List in 2016 after being awarded an AOC's commendation was very special."





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Jamie's big Mach-attack



IN THE LOOP: Flt Lt Jackson completes his 3,000th-hour flight with low-level pass through the Machynlleth Loop PHOTOS: SGT LEE MATTHEWS

Staff Reporter

ATLAS PILOT Flt Lt Jamie Jackson celebrated 3,000 hours on the RAF's heavyweight transporter with a spectacular flight through the famous Mach Loop in West Wales.

The low-level manoeuvre followed

a UK training sortie taking in Glenco and the Western Isles in Scotland.

When he's not supporting operations and exercises worldwide with 30 Sqn, Jamie's performing for airshow crowds across the UK piloting the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's iconic WWII Lancaster bomber.

He said: "The weather was simply glorious, perfect for this training sortie, and it was a wonderful way to mark this personal milestone."

In Brief



STARTERS' ORDERS: Nat and Russ at RAF Cranwell

Wife Nat's in the running

AIR FORCE wife Nat Haynes is on track to achieve her London Marathon hopes - after a 13-year wait.

She finally won a place to compete in the annual event and will be running to raise funds for Forces charity SSAFA and its mentoring scheme for Service leavers.

Husband Russ will be hitting civvie street later this year after serving for 14 years and the couple have been supported by SSAFA's welfare team.

Nat said: "The London Marathon has been in my sights for years, but it is particularly poignant that I am running it this year for SSAFA as my husband is leaving the RAF and I want to give something back after so many years of being a Service family."

F-35 scrambled for NATO bomber drill

F-35 LIGHTNINGS have been scrambled from the UK's flagship carrier in the High North to intercept US B-1 Bombers simulating an enemy threat in the latest Nato war games.

617 Sqn Dambuster crews launched from HMS Prince of Wales to defend the skies on Nato's northern flank, alongside aircraft from seven nations in the Joint Expeditionary Force.

UK stealth fighters and 3 Sqn Typhoons supported by a Voyager tanker tracked a pair of US B-1 Lancers off the coast of Norway during Exercise Global Guardian, which forms part of Nato's large-scale Steadfast Defender drill involving more than 90,000 personnel.

The UK fast jets took over from Dutch F-16s, escorting the US aircraft as they headed from the UK to their home base in the US.

One Typhoon pilot said: "3(F) Sqn were pleased to have the opportunity to exercise with JEF partners from the Netherlands and strengthen NATO relations by intercepting the US B-1Bs.

"It was a privilege to fly in a mixed formation, taking over from Dutch F-16s as they approached UK airspace.

"Working with ground control



BOMBER ALERT: Typhoon and F-35 close in on B-1 Lancers in High North. Inset right, refuelling from Voyager

operators, and with air-to-air refuelling from an RAF Voyager, we were able to intercept and escort the B-1Bs before handing over to UK F-35Bs from HMS Prince of Wales, as the US Bomber Task Force continued their flight away from the UK."

F-16 Eagles, F/A-18C Hornets, Saab Gripens and F-35 Lightnings from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands and Sweden were deployed in response to the simulated adversary long-range aircraft provided by US Bomber Task Force.

JEF director Gp Capt Kev Latchman added: "JEF nations' participation in air defence highlights the collective efforts of the JEF in deterring any would-be adversaries while contributing to NATO's enhanced Vigilance Activity in the region."

Drone-buster laser set for frontline by 2030

Staff Reporter

THE UK'S drone-busting laser weapon which can destroy enemy targets with pinpoint accuracy could be ready for the frontline by 2030, Defence boffins claim.

The high-energy DragonFire system is designed to hit a target the size of a pound coin from more than 1km away, costs just £10 a shot to operate and could transform UK defence, developers say.

The laser weapon is the result of a £100 million joint investment by the MOD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and industry partners MBDA, Leonardo and QinetiQ.

Firing it for 10 seconds is the cost equivalent of using a domestic heater for just an hour, giving it the potential to become a low-cost alternative to conventional weapons.

DragonFire showcased its

capability during trials in the Hebrides last month, tracking and successfully destroying a target at a range of 1km.

The high-energy light beam is powerful enough to cut through metal, disabling electrical systems and destroying weapons carried by enemy drones.

Fired at an incoming missile, it could obliterate the warhead at a safe distance, developers say.

As well as providing effective defence against attacks on land and maritime targets, DragonFire could slash the MOD's weapons bill and reduce the risk of collateral damage and casualties.

A DSTL spokesman said: "The DragonFire Laser Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW) system has proven itself in testing and has the very real potential to transform the UK's defence capability.

"It can provide a credible sovereign UK capability to meet the UK defence needs.



DRAGON'S DEN: High-energy laser can cut through metal, destroying systems and weapons on enemy drones and missiles. *Inset right, DragonFire hits target during recent trials in the Hebrides* PHOTOS: DSTL

"LDEW offers a number of significant benefits, including reduced logistic, cost burden and collateral damage in operations.

"DragonFire could offer UK Defence significant operational advantage by delivering enhanced air defence capabilities

to the frontline, while reducing expendable ammunition costs and reducing risks of collateral damage."

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Royal Air Force In Concert

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the RAF Music Charitable Trust

Lincoln Cathedral

7.30pm Saturday 11 May 2024

Compere: Melvyn Prior



Royal Hall, Harrogate

7.30pm Friday 28 June 2024

Compere: Howard Leader



Watersmeet, Rickmansworth

Royal Air Force Squadronaires

7.30pm Friday 15 March 2024

CAST, Doncaster

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Thursday 19 September 2024

Palace Theatre, Newark

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Friday 20 September 2024

Playhouse, Weston Super Mare

Central Band of the Royal Air Force

7.30pm Friday 27 September 2024

Assembly Hall, Worthing

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

3.00pm Sunday 29 September 2024

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

7.30pm Friday 4 October 2024

The Bands play by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council



 **ROYAL Music**
AIR FORCE Charitable Trust
www.rafmusic.org.uk/concerts



Museum's starring role

Staff Reporter

THE RAF Museum Midlands has teamed up with local astronomers to hold a series of star-gazing events over the Easter break.

Visitors will explore the skies over



the venue under the expert eye of the Shropshire Astronomical Society. The event is part of the Museum's Space Race and Fly exhibition which also features rocket building, planetarium shows and training on the flight simulator.

● Go to rafmuseum.org/midlands for details.



REACH FOR THE SKIES: View from the Museum planetarium

In Brief



WINNERS: Air Marshal Paul Lloyd (right) presents the Clyde Trophy at Cranwell

Teen SOS scramble



Rescue aces winch young climber to safety after 16hr ordeal



CRITICAL: RAF and Cumbrian Mountain Rescue experts launched operation to save injured teenage climber suffering extreme hypothermia

Staff Reporter

Cumbria

AIR FORCE mountain rescue teams winched an 18-year-old hiker to safety in a 16-hour mission after efforts to haul him from a freezing stream by a Coastguard helicopter failed.

Experts from Leeming and Valley were called in by Cumbrian Police after the young climber went missing as blizzards hit Scafell Pike, the highest peak in the Lake District.

Service volunteers and Cumbrian

mountain rescue personnel battled extreme conditions for four hours before locating the injured climber, who had suffered a broken leg, trapped in waist-deep freezing water at the bottom of the Piers Gill ravine.

Rescue chiefs called in a Coastguard helicopter but efforts to pull the teenager, suffering from hypothermia and lapsing in and out of consciousness, from the bottom of the 45-metre ravine failed.

As the climber's condition became critical, the rescue team set up a winch to pull him to safety before putting him on the waiting helicopter and flying him to hospital,

where he was treated for a suspected broken femur and severe hypothermia.

A spokesman said: "Working together, RAF and Cumbrian rescue teams carried out an initial assessment of the casualty.

"They quickly realised the casualty was in need of immediate evacuation, he had a suspected broken femur and was severely hypothermic.

"Once loaded onto a stretcher, we carried out a technical and difficult stretcher raise. Now able to safely winch the casualty, the Coastguard helicopter returned and transferred him to hospital."

Ox-ing clever

GLOBE-TROTTING Oxford Reservists scooped the Clyde Trophy for Public Relations.

In the last 12 months 4624 Sqn personnel have deployed to Norway, Holland, the US, the Falklands, Qatar and Gibraltar.

The Brize Norton-based unit was presented with the annual trophy by Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, AM Paul Lloyd during the Warrant Officers' conference at Cranwell.

UK Lines up at Minhad



ROYAL EVENT: Princess chats to UAE military personnel at Minhad

HRH PRINCESS Anne has opened a permanent UK military facility at Minhad airbase in the United Arab Emirates.

The Princess Royal was given a tour of the new Donnelly Lines building ahead of the official ceremony attended by UK and UAE military personnel and British consulate staff.

The facility is named after RAF Billy Donnelly who died after his Vickers Wellington Bomber crash landed in Fujairah in 1943.

Speaking at the event, AVM Pratley said: "Our continued investment here is a further example of the UK's commitment to the security of the region and is a tangible commitment to the work for peace, security and stability, working hand in hand with our allies in the UAE."

Feature

Secrets of V-Force nuke role revealed



BLUE DANUBE: Britain's first atomic bomb. The fins extended after release allowing it to be accommodated in V-bomber bomb bays



A LOT has been written about the Valiant, the Victor and the Vulcan, but not much about their strategic nuclear strike role.

Military historian and

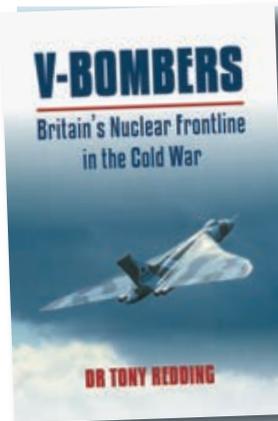
author Dr Tony Redding has aimed to correct that with his new book *V-Bombers, Britain's Nuclear Frontline in the Cold War* (grubstreet.co.uk). The product of seven years' research on the British airborne nuclear

deterrent – which led to a PhD from King's College, London – it is the first detailed account of the operational capability and credibility of the airborne nuclear deterrent during the peak years of confrontation with the Soviet Union. The book includes much fresh material on V-Force weapons, war mission, targeting, vulnerabilities and tactics for attacking targets within Soviet Russia.

The author interviewed more than 70 V-Force air and ground crew and reviewed more than 300 operational research reports and other official documents. He shows how the V-bombers retained a unilateral capacity to destroy a small number of the very largest cities in the Soviet Union in the period until the handover of the strategic nuclear deterrent of Polaris submarines in 1969.



AT THE SHARP END: 1960s Victor crew



WE HAVE copies of *V-Bombers* by Dr Tony Redding (rrp £25) to win. For your chance to own one tell us:



In which year was the handover of the strategic nuclear deterrent of Polaris submarines?

Email your answer, marked **V-Bombers book competition**, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: **RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE**, to arrive by April 5. Please include your full postal address.

Centred on the destruction of Moscow and Leningrad, this core retaliatory threat was judged severe enough to undermine Russia's position in relation to the United States. In other words, a few British V-bombers had the destructive capacity to destabilise the

balance between the superpowers. The book concludes that, within the first few hours, a small force of surviving V-bombers could have unleashed the explosive power of all Allied bombs dropped on Germany during six years of war. Dr Redding said: "I have long puzzled over why the extensive

By Tracey Allen

V-Force revealed

VICTORY Vs: (From top) Victor, Valiant and Vulcan, 1958



V FAMOUS: RAF Vulcan, left, and refuelling during Falklands War bombing raid, above



Unique Victor's on display at Duxford

ONE OF the few remaining Cold War bomber of its kind is on display at IWM Duxford following a five-year restoration project supported by a fundraising campaign that raised more than £25,000.

The Handley Page Victor XH648, a historic jet-powered strategic bomber, made its first flight in November 1959, and was then flown with 15 Sqn based at RAF Cottesmore, as part of the Far East Air Force during the confrontation with Indonesia in 1962-63.

On return from Indonesia it was converted by Handley Page in 1965 into a two-point tanker and spent 10 years with 55 Sqn at Marham before being retired to Duxford just over 10 years later. The aircraft has been repainted with its marking from its service with 55 Sqn.

Retired Sqn Ldr Garden 'Gary' West, who flew

more than 1,800 hours on the Victor, including on XH648, and was part of the Victor force involved in the Indonesian confrontation, said: "It's an honour to see one of the Victor Mk 1s I served in restored to its finest fettle. Its unique and unmistakable presence immediately brings back vivid memories of operations in bygone days, and I hope lots of people will visit and learn about its place in aviation history."

Carl Warner from IWM Duxford added: "As the only surviving Victor B1A in the world, this is an iconic aircraft with a design that was seen as incredibly futuristic when it was first developed in the 1950s. It was even intended to have a fully detachable cockpit for use as an escape pod. Today it stands as a symbol of innovation and tells an important part of the story of the Cold War conflict."



COLD WAR ICON: Veterans get up close to restored Victor

literature concerning the Valiants, Victors and Vulcans, the Cold War, the British bomb, the Anglo-American nuclear relationship, etc, contains no detailed account of V-Force capability and credibility and no assessment of its operational capacity, had the Cold War turned hot.

"This is a significant gap in the literature, given that the V-Force was the cutting edge of UK military posture and international political presence in the very dangerous world of the 1960s and beyond. I hope this book goes some way towards placing on record the immense efforts made to keep us safe during the Cold War years."

Former Vulcan nav/radar, wing targeting officer, RAF Waddington, Roy Brocklebank, said Dr Redding has drawn aside the veil of secrecy surrounding the ethos of the V-Force.

He explained: "As the United

Kingdom's independent national deterrent, it was necessary to demonstrate a capability whilst maintaining the mystery of how this would be achieved.

"Orders for the three bombers, the Valiant, Victor and Vulcan, were public and many overseas flights demonstrating a global reach were undertaken. As a deterrent, the type of targets in the Soviet Union were publicised but the precise targets, the force routing and the weapons' effects were closely-guarded secrets."

He added: "Others have published works that give some insight into this secret world, but Tony Redding's work on the nuclear deterrent is unique as he has skilfully combined meticulous

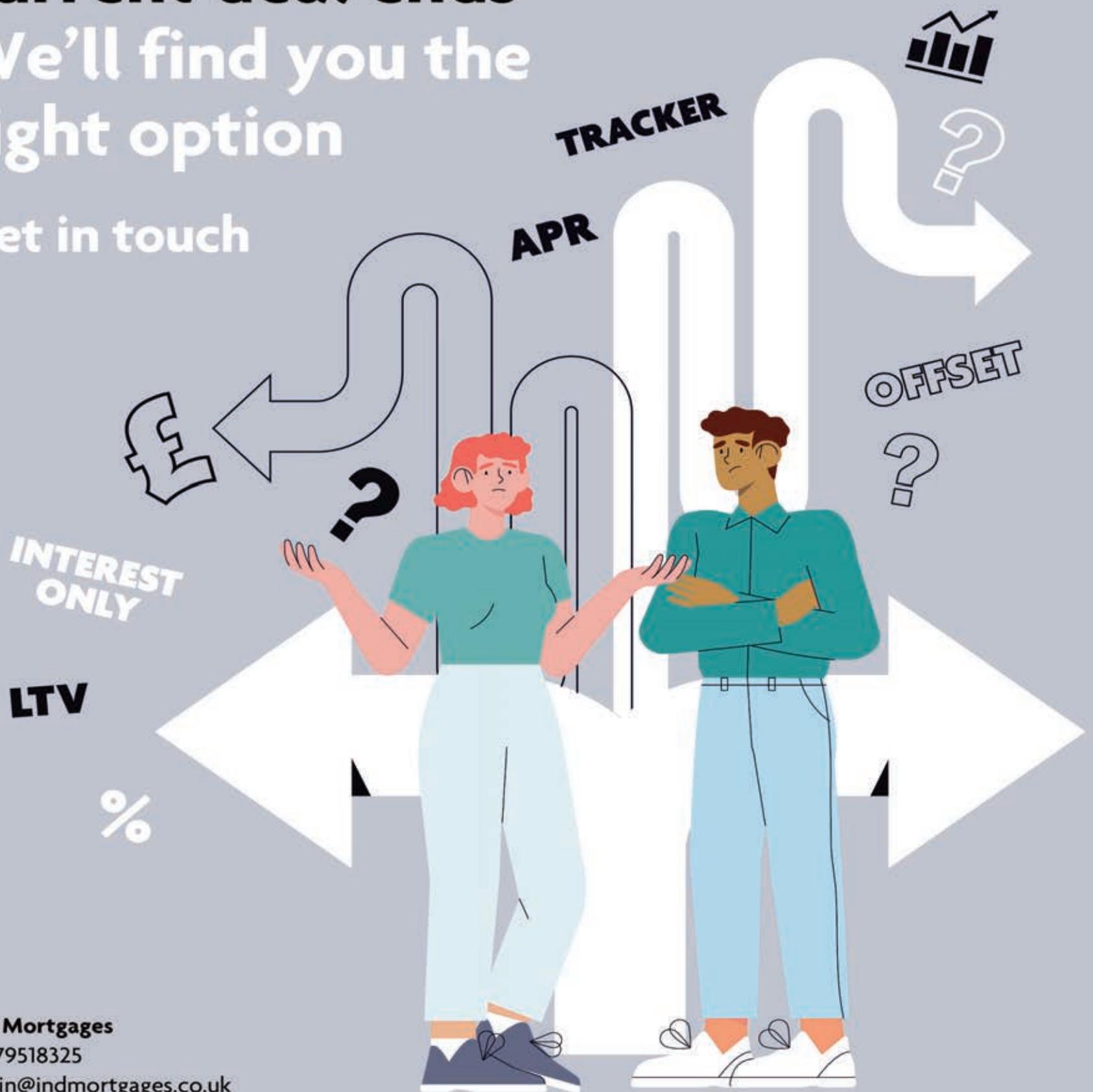
research on higher command policy and studies by the Bomber Command Operational Research Branch with first-hand accounts from many aircrew and supporting ground crew who flew or worked on the aircraft."

Dr Redding added: "This book is also about the dedicated aircrew and ground personnel, the aircraft, equipment and weapons and, of course, the V-bombers' long period of supplementary nuclear services alongside the submarines, a period ending, perhaps ironically, in the Black Buck raids of the Falklands War in 1982."

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Op Jericho Mossie heroes of Amiens raid are honoured

Families gather for 80th anniversary of low-level mission



NAVIGATOR: Flt Lt Alan Broadley

Tracey Allen

RAF HEROES who lost their lives in one of the most daring raids of World War II have been remembered by their families in a special commemoration ceremony.

The relatives paid tribute at the 80th anniversary of Operation Jericho – the low-level raid on Amiens Prison in northern France – joined by VIPs, dignitaries, Amiens townspeople and schoolchildren.

On February 18, 1944, in appalling weather conditions, the raid – a precision attack on the prison to allow resistance fighters taken prisoner to escape – was carried out by three squadrons of Mosquito VI bombers from 140th Wing.

The pilot and navigator of the Mosquito that led the raid, Gp Capt Percy Charles 'Pick' Pickard and Flt Lt Alan Broadley, were killed when their aircraft was shot down in the first minutes.

The attack consisted of three successive waves, each targeting one side of the prison.

The human toll was very heavy – of the 832 prisoners, 102 were killed by the bombings, 74



RESPECT: Veterans and families at the ceremony in northern France

were injured and 258 escaped, including 79 resistance fighters and political prisoners.

Two thirds of the escapees were recaptured.

Memorial Association Le Souvenir Français (Amiens section and Somme section) organised an international ceremony to commemorate the raid and its fallen, which included Flt Lt Richard Sampson of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the pilot of another Mosquito shot down by the Germans. His navigator, Sqn Ldr A.I. McRitchie RNZAF, was captured.

Clair Pepper, Flt Lt Broadley's niece, said: "My husband Trevor and I were invited to attend the ceremony by M Gérard Lobry, one of the organisers of the commemoration weekend, and we were very honoured to do so.

"At the crash site we were still

able to find fragments of the Mosquito including the Perspex canopy. One gentleman with a metal detector found three live 20mm cannon rounds – quite remarkable after 80 years in the ground."

The next day the relatives travelled to Amiens prison after being presented with raid memorabilia and a commemoration plaque by the mayor of Amiens' representative.

Clair added: "The wreath-laying ceremony was attended by numerous Amiens dignitaries, Air Force personnel from the UK, Canada and New Zealand and veterans. The people of Amiens turned up in large numbers."

Wreaths were laid on Alan and Charles's grave by Clair and Trevor, Gp Capt Pickard's granddaughter Nicole and representatives from the Somme



REMEMBERED: Pilot Gp Capt Percy Pickard's grave in Amiens



TRIBUTES: Wreaths at the graveside of Flt Lt Broadley

Aviation Group and local historical society Association Jericho 44.

Clair said: "We found the whole weekend of events very

emotional and overwhelming. It made me feel extremely proud and thankful to know that Alan is remembered and looked after by the people of Amiens."

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Tim Morris

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Range Rover Sport

Pros

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- Phenomenal off-road
- Impressive EV range

Cons

- Still expensive
- Rivals have better reliability records
- No 7-seat option

Verdict

The Range Rover Sport is a supremely comfortable SUV that really shifts. Luxury is the key here and it's amazing how fast you can navigate this ocean liner through the bends. Off-road ability is even more impressive so it's the very definition of a fast 4x4. It's the original and still, arguably, the best. It's cheaper than a big-boy Range Rover too. Just keep an eye on your options list.

THIS, LADIES and gentlemen, is the third generation of a performance SUV pioneer. When I first drove the Range Rover Sport back in 2005, I said it was superbly responsive in comparison to the full-fat Rangy.

Then, in 2014, I drove the Sport again for Motors TV and put it around Silverstone. That version was lighter, faster and more agile. I marvelled at the paradox that Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) had created by making it that quick without sacrificing its off-road capabilities.

Now here I am, back in the turbocharged, go-anywhere armchair, with a huge grin still on my face. The Sport is 35 per cent stiffer than the latest Range Rover and sits 20mm lower. It comes with four-wheel drive as standard, powered by an array of petrol, diesel and hybrid powertrains.

Our car was the 3.0 litre 6-cylinder 440HP Twin Turbocharged Ingenium Petrol PHEV (Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle). As tested, our car weighed in at a hefty £93,660 but it's still cheaper than a standard Range Rover, by a fair few pounds. To put it in context, the range starts from £80,000 for a 300 bhp 3 litre, six-cylinder car in base SE trim.



That's still better equipped than most mansions of course, so 'base' is a relative term here.

Exterior

Like the big-boy Rangy, the Sport looks impressively BIG. The huge air scoops on the front bumper, the sharp sports alloys, the twin shark-fin aerials, the rear boot spoiler and the chunky chrome exhausts all contribute to the overall impression that this is a sincerely fast 4x4. It looks like a proper Range Rover, only more aggressive.

Interior

The old Sport could be ordered as a seven-seater, just like the larger Range Rover, but the 2024 version boasts no such option, which I think is a bit of

a step backwards. Beyond that subtle disappointment, the cabin is a perfectly wonderful place to be. Legroom is in epic supply and you're never going to feel claustrophobic.

The seats soak up the miles effortlessly and you can always engage the optional massage functions if you get bored. Active noise cancellation technology has been fitted into the headrests, reducing unwanted road and tyre sounds.

You can order your armchairs in a range of materials. Leather is, of course, on the list but you can also choose from alternatives, such as the more environmentally friendly 'Ultrafabric'.

It features the big Range Rover's digital instrument display and the 13.1 inch touchscreen infotainment system. The layout is extremely well-thought-out and, apart from the usual modern problem of having to battle through digital menus to find functions on the move, it's pretty intuitive. If all else fails, you can switch to Apple CarPlay or Android Auto.

On The Road

Let's start with the important stuff. Our 3.0 litre 6-cylinder 440HP Twin Turbocharged Ingenium Petrol PHEV test car had some impressive stats: 0 - 60mph

in 5.5, with a top end 140mph. Official figures state 70 miles of electric-only range (closer to 50 with my driving) and a WLTP fuel consumption figure of 'up to 334.4 mpg'.

Performance is effortless and refined in the Sport and it cruises around town silently in EV mode. It's a great combo that, at least on paper, will take you further than a BMW X5 xDrive50e before you have to fire up the engine.

The air suspension is firmer than the set-up on the Range Rover, and there's noticeably less body roll on winding roads. It feels stable and agile, for a hefty 4x4, and goes like stink. It's seriously impressive and still has the edge over most rivals, with the possible exception of the Porsche Cayenne, which offers a fair bit more grip.

It's impressive on tarmac, more impressive off-tarmac and enough of an eco-warrior to make it school-run friendly. That will really upset the green brigade at the school gates. Perfect!





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Tim Morris

A MAN walks into a bar... and says to a journalist, "America is totally fake".

The journalist asks a few questions and it becomes clear that the guy's only experience of the US has been a single trip to Orlando. What's worse, he didn't ventured outside the Disney Springs area.

This explains a lot, thinks the journalist. I mean, call me old fashioned, but I'm pretty sure that the 6ft-tall mouse I spotted when I was at Disneyland wasn't an example of the common American house mouse.

So the journo tells the guy he's wrong, hops on an aircraft and writes a small series of travel features to prove his point. True story.

This week we're heading for authentic America, a hidden gem on Florida's Space Coast. New Smyrna Beach is a wonderful mix of old and new, a place that truly captures the small-town vibe, despite its size. It occupies a notable chapter in the history books as the second oldest city in Florida and the site of the largest single attempt at British colonization in the new world.

These days it has something for everyone. Young adults come to experience the 'Flagler Crawl' in the many amazing bars along Flagler Avenue, while others come to relax on the 17 miles of crisp, sandy beaches that stretch from Ponce de Leon Inlet to Canaveral National Seashore.

New Smyrna has a laid-back beach feel and you feel welcome from the moment you arrive. It's home to a vibrant community of families, artists, surfers and sun-lovers. If you love any, or all, of the above you'll fit right in.

The city's barrier island is recognized worldwide for its surf, with *Surfer* magazine touting it one of the "Best Surf Towns in America" and *National Geographic* magazine including it in its "World's Top 20 Surf Towns".

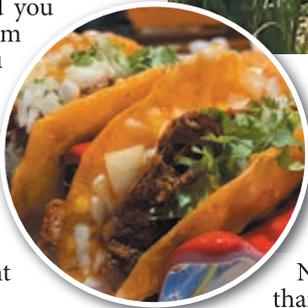
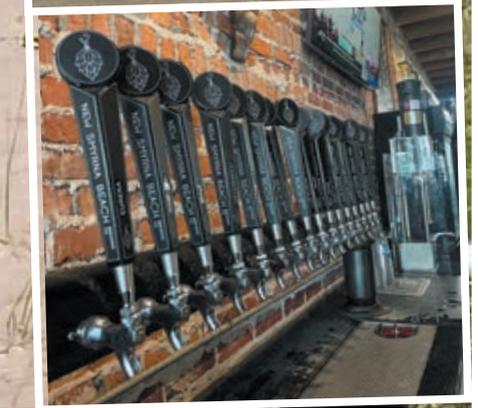
On the edge of town you'll find North America's most diverse estuary, the Indian River Lagoon. This plays a special role in the Marine Discovery Centre's exploration, conservation, and education work. You can experience a variety of wildlife encounters throughout the year and there's something new every time you visit.

There are two distinct downtowns in New Smyrna. One centres on Flagler Avenue, the other around Canal Street. The two are connected via the 'Waterfront Loop' and you can't help but feel relaxed as you stroll around them. The palm tree-lined streets host intriguing stores, authentic restaurants, artisanal coffee shops, art galleries and quaint B&Bs.

Space Coast is taking off



ATTRACTIONS:
Space Coast beach and, right from top, bohemian Canal Street, ebikes on the sand and the New Smyrna Brewery. Inset below left, tacos from La Terraza



It's 28°C in March, so you can't go wrong.

Stay

You can't get a better spot in New Smyrna Beach than SpringHill Suites Hotel. Located on sand-dusted Flagler Avenue, it's right on the beach, with a pool that overlooks the sea. It's in the very heart of the action, allowing easy access to the many lively bars and restaurants. If you love live music and a good night out, you're in the right place.

The hotel opened in 2018 and offers stylish suites with modern facilities. Our room was a suite with twin queen beds. It was spacious, with a comfy lounge area and a handy business desk, ideal for laptop work.

The large en suite bathroom was modern, with clean edges and chrome fittings. There were plenty of soft, fluffy towels provided, along with shampoo, conditioner and shower gel.

Downstairs, the lounge offered a commanding ocean view, with comfortable seating and a bar. Breakfast was a nice experience, with a selection of hot and cold options. What I really liked was the waffle-making machines. A nice touch from Marriott Bonvoy there.

The only negatives were that the air conditioning was really loud, but maybe that was just the one in our room. And at \$578 per night in March, suites are not cheap either.

Here's the real selling point though, you can actually watch space launches at Kennedy from the beach outside the hotel. This is the Space Coast at its best.

Relax

Head down to Canal Street and explore the charming town. Art lovers will find The Hub a delight as it provides space for local artists to display and sell original works. It also supports the community by offering a range of art classes, scholarship programmes and music workshops.

Only a few yards away you'll find Jane's, a gallery that showcases and sells ceramics. It also runs a variety of classes, so why not try your hand on the potter's wheel if you're feeling creative.

The local museum on Canal Street is also well worth a visit as it contains artefacts that date back to the first settlers and the Seminole wars.

Head back to Flagler Avenue and stop off at Zeno's Boardwalk Sweet Shop. With more than 60 years' experience of 'pulling taffy' the soft sweets you buy here are

so light and smooth they almost melt in your mouth. I made more than one visit.

For that late afternoon unwind, stroll down to the 'Grille at Riverview' and enjoy a refreshing cold drink overlooking the Indian River Lagoon.

Adventure

Join OM Sunshine on a Manatee & Dolphin watching Paddleboard Tour, it's even suitable for those with no experience. Our guide, Michele, was incredibly knowledgeable and knew the waters well enough to point out dolphins within minutes of us arriving. She also runs yoga classes on the beach. Even I had a go and, apart from face-planting into the sand whilst attempting to become a tree, it was one of the most relaxing experiences I've ever encountered.

Explore the beaches in comfort by booking an ebike with Pedego Electric Bicycles. They have a brilliant range and can travel at 20mph on battery, where conditions permit, so there's no long haul back to the shop when you're tired. Just watch the stunning coastal view sail serenely past with no effort or dial down the electrics for a great workout. It's a win-win.

Finally, take a beer tasting session at New Smyrna Brewing

Co. on Canal Street. They are immensely proud of their craft beers in New Smyrna and if you love a pint, or two, this is the 'motherlode', as they say. Every beer is crafted right here and each is totally unique.

Eat

We could cover a whole feature on the many amazing places to eat in New Smyrna but, for simplicity, here are a few highlights:

- Flagler Tavern (flaglertavern.com) – a top-notch restaurant and bar in the heart of the community.

- Yellow Dog Eats (yellowdogeats.com) – set over on Canal Street, this is lunch with serious flair.

- River Deck Tiki Bar and Restaurant (riverdecknsb.com) – awesome food, the best view of the river, a boat dock right outside and Happy Hour from 3-6pm.

- Café Heavenly (cafeheavenly.com) – the most authentic American dining experience we encountered and a personal favourite.

- La Terraza Mexican (laterrazansb.com) – a lively restaurant and bar, serving authentic Mexican cuisine that you will love. Head downstairs to 'Casey's' bar after your meal for a fun night of live music.



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ATHLETICS



SGT ADAM: True master of his sport

Tunisian triumph

A CLASS win in the Tunisian Masters saw Sgt David Adam continue his African running opus.

Speaking after the Cross-Country Championship, he said: "This was, without doubt, my best performance in Tunisia and indeed of any race I have completed in several years. I certainly run better in warmer climes than I did in the recent RAF Cross-Country Championships, where I was absolutely freezing at the start and ran poorly.

"The twisty turning course has metal poles holding the course tape, which I hit during the race, but it was a privilege to watch the Kenyan and Ethiopian runners in full stride and finishing so well."

The race was incorporated into the African Cross-Country Championships, with the Masters course two laps of 2km each.

The warm but gusty day proved tough going, especially as runners trekked uphill into a strong headwind.

Adam added: "I was told before the start that all the top Tunisian Master runners were in the starting line-up.

"At the gun I sped off at a five minute per mile pace and tried to maintain that for the entire 4km.

"I was hoping if I started to fade, I was too far into the race to be caught.

"Passing a few good runners, I maintained 10th place overall to secure first in the Over-55s and become the Tunisian Masters Cross-Country Champion.

"I was two seconds behind the third-place finisher in the Over-45s, to give some perspective on my race time, which was really pleasing."

ICE HOCKEY

Official recognition for ice hockey linesman Lewis Cpl is Cracken on with things

Daniel Abrahams

"IF I can hopefully improve RAF Ice Hockey in whatever way, that is my aim," said Cpl Lewis McCracken after he won High Performance Athlete status in the service.

Speaking to *RAF News* on the eve of officiating as a linesman in the NHL Britton League Cup final between Streatham RedHawks and Slough Jets, he added: "The RAF Sports Board endorsement is great. To have RAF Ice Hockey Association President Air Cdre Mark Hunt emailing to congratulate me and calling the news 'truly inspirational stuff', is the sort of thing that inspires me to try harder and push further."

McCracken – currently a Level 5 IHUK linesman in the League One South – said: "To be officiating this League Cup Final match is another show of respect and trust in me.

“National League is where I want to be and I am 100 per cent certain I will make that grade”

"National League is where I want to be and I am 100 per cent certain I will be making that grade. I have some amazing mentors; Liam Evans being one, a legend in the game who has accelerated my learning. Even though I have only been doing this for two years, I have learned so much more than many at this stage.

"I'm fortunate enough to get sent all over the UK to officiate; I've been to Slough, Basingstoke, Cardiff, Gosport, Guildford, Chelmsford, Streatham and had some overnight stays in Sheffield for the Junior Play-offs.

"Ice Hockey UK have also recently opened an exchange program where the best officials can be sent overseas to Hungary, so



IN THE THICK OF IT: Cpl McCracken (centre) wades in to separate brawling ice hockey players during a game

fingers crossed I can progress even further to reach that level and promote the RAF on a global stage."

It is here that McCracken really wants to achieve, with dreams of a Winter Olympics and Junior World Games event coming closer every day. He is also seeing the

benefits in his day to day Service and sporting life.

"I decided I wanted more from and to give back to a sport that I am extremely passionate about," he said.

"I always thought I could do the job of an on-ice official to a good standard and help to increase the popularity and reach of ice hockey in Britain.

"The RAFIHA also benefit greatly by

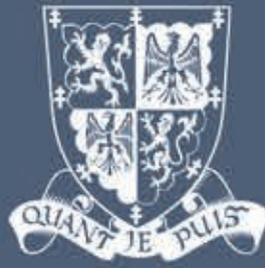
having me as an official when it comes to RAF Championships and the wider UKAF when it comes to the Inter-Services Championships.

"Also, they have me for free, so don't have to pay for a match referee, for example. Then that money can be used elsewhere to benefit the sport."

McCracken, who still finds time to play his beloved sport for the RAF Senior team, added: "I can help explain officials' decisions during IS matches or any game I play in, but the bad news for my teammates is I know the refs get it right most of the time. As much as players may dislike it, nine times out of 10 they are correct, they call it right and by the book."

● Follow RAF Ice Hockey on Instagram @raficehockey.

Would you like to see your sport featured in RAF News? Send a short report (max 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached jpegs) to: Sports@rafnews.co.uk



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FERNTASTIC: WO Hoyle on his way to 3rd-placed Grand Veteran

CYCLING

Splatt's the way to do it

Toms starts the season with a win on muddy Norfolk course

Daniel Abrahams

A **FIRST** place was the perfect start to the cycling season for Cpl Sarah Toms as she took the senior class women's crown in the Kings Lynn MTB club race.

Her category win in the 1.5-hour race saw her finish 18th overall in a field of 150 riders.

She was joined by WO Adey Hoyle; third-placed Grand Veteran, 13th Veteran and 16th overall.

Toms said: "The previous night's rain meant the course was very cut up, leaving little traction and deep ruts. The clean-up process was a long one with mud in every nook and cranny, but it was all worth it, especially with the event raising £6,000 for the local air ambulance service."

The race in Shouldham, Norfolk featured three six-mile laps through a single-track forest course.

With both RAF riders coming through the second circuit in the 1hr 20min mark, it meant a battle royale was set up for the third lap, and so it proved with Hoyle battling local riders to complete the race, while Toms blasted home to seal the win in the women's race.

Hot off the heels of announcing its six teams for the 2024 season (RAF News 1579, March 8), the RAF Cycling Association has released dates for its first road competition fixtures.



PEDAL POWER: WO Adey Hoyle and Cpl Sarah Toms

The RAF Time Trial Championships will be held on April 7, with team members competing in the MK Bowl RBL Criterium Series starting on April 10, with a second race on April 24.

There will be further races on May 8 and 22, before the final Criterium on June 5.

The RAF Road Championships will be held on July 3. For venue details and further information message @rafcycling on Instagram.

FOOTBALL

Player shortage hits U23s as Navy take championship

SGT DANNY Bartley described his U23 team's 1-0 defeat as "a disappointing result and a hard one to take," as the Navy won this year's Inter-Services championship.

Bartley - whose charges had gone into the championship decider in Portsmouth in good spirits following a 2-0 opening win over the Army - had the bulk of the chances in a well-fought decider at a damp and windy HMS Victory stadium.

He said: "We felt in good shape just before the Inter-Services but losing players to exercises, deployments, injuries and a call-up to the SRT left us very short facing the Navy."

"The squad were fantastic and had chances to win the game

Royal Navy U23s	1
RAF U23s	0

and I felt we were the better team, especially in the first half. The Navy fielded two ex-professionals and we must take that as a compliment to how well we've performed this season.

"We will come back stronger next time, eager to win the IS, but for now I send huge congratulations to the Royal Navy for retaining the title."

An even first half finished goalless despite both teams creating good opportunities, with the RAF regularly exploiting space down their right-hand side and the Navy's in-swinging corners being a constant threat.

Keepers on both teams were called into action and proved more than capable, but with a touch more composure in the final third either team could have found themselves up at the break.

Shortly into the second half it was another Navy corner which led to the decisive goal; the RAF failed to clear despite a couple of chances to do so and the ball was headed home from close range.

Despite a barrage of pressure from the RAF as they searched for an equalizer, it just wouldn't happen for them. After a nervy seven minutes of additional time the whistle went, meaning the Navy retained the title and became the inaugural winners of the new Richard Wilkinson Trophy.



HEARTBREAKER: RAF U23s can only watch as a Navy corner is headed in by Navy player

Sport

BMX

BMX gears up to attract new riders

“WE ARE building,” says OIC Sgt Matt Haywood talking about the BMX team’s coming season, as they look to grow and attract new riders.

The four-man race and one-man freestyle 2024 team – without former University Air Squadron rider Taylor-Lei Mohan for the season – kicked off their year with a session at the National Cycling Centre in Manchester.

Sgt Haywood said: “We had a great year last year, we are building – it is an exciting time for anyone to come onboard, it’s a family and we have an amazing bond between us all. We were proud to show off what we are about at the recent Manchester event, where we had a gazebo.

“Our aim is to continue building the team, to bring new riders in from all over; including from regular reserve, plus UAS, where Taylor-Lei came from.

“For us the UAS is a great place to find riders, who will have been riding since they were single figures – we will be at every British Nation Cycling event and British Championships, plus our individual regionals, which will mean I will ride 24in Cruiser Southern region, with Flt Lt Chris Leary 20in Grand Veterans and Cruiser 30-39 years in the Midlands and Cpl Christian Taylor, Southwest region in Grand Veterans 20in class.

In his second season, Off Cdt



AIRBORNE:
RAF rider

Pete Watson will ride 20in and Cruiser racing.

The team will also see its freestyle side working hard to not only win podiums but to attract new riders to the discipline.

Haywood added: “In the freestyle side AS(1) John Anderton – British Cycling Backyard Jam series – is breaking new ground. We don’t see a difference in the two disciplines, he is looking for new riders, always across the board, that side of the house is John’s to oversee, and he is doing a fantastic job.”

● Visit: [facebook.com/RoyalAirForceBMXRacing](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalAirForceBMXRacing) to find out more about RAF BMX.



COMRADES:
Military riders

ICE SPORTS

ST MORITZ

Ice warriors come home with



BOB’S THE JOB: AS1 Emily Cantley and Cpl Jess Stewart both enjoyed success

● Continued from back page

The double team joy in the men’s bobsleigh saw Cpl Shanwayne Stephens with brakeman AS1(T) Levi Wiffen coming individual runners-up with Cpl Anthony Harvey and AS1(T) Ethan Green third, while AS1 Emily Cantley was first and Cpl Jess Stewart second and fastest brake woman – meaning the RAF women finished runners-up overall in the team event.

Thornbury said: “Another amazing year for our men’s team, and although there were some ups and downs for us overall, we look forward to next season and hope the women’s team can join the men in victory.

“We are one team and happy with the results and development we made over the last few weeks.

“As always, we look forward to hosting RAF trials in the summer at Bath University. Where we look to seek out new talent in both men’s and women’s teams to make this very successful squad even stronger, with a development ice camp to come in November and December.”

Sgt Kibble said: “This was a remarkable year and the IS really showed our dominance this season. A great team effort throughout from the staff and coaches to the athletes who gave their all, day in day out.

“Moving forward we will continue with new recruitment and look to work closely with the Army and Royal Navy counterparts towards a possible Tri-Service Novice Camp next season, to be held in Austria at the new Junior track which looks ideal for our novices to be introduced to the sport.”

Bobsleigh team captain Flt Lt Jonny Anderson said: “I am extremely proud of the team, we

NATURAL LUGE

RAF Champ Sgt Dex Unwin is naturally gifted

TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS may have halted the last day of the RAF Natural Luge Championships in Jaufental, northern Italy, but it didn’t curtail the previous week’s action.

The penultimate day of the training camp saw novice and championship racing, with the beginner category seeing Cpl Thomas Johnson come first, with AS1 Nicholas Tate second and AS1 Bradley Whitmore third.

The second and final race category was for overall RAF Champion, with Sgt Dex Unwin taking first followed by Cpl Chelsea Medlock as runner-up, with Cpl Johnson stepping up to complete the



COACHING: RAF Champ Unwin, front, with sliders

podium finishes in third.

Novice slider AS1 Peter Birch said: “Despite the sport being unlike anything

the beginners had done before, by day four everyone was sliding nearly full runs of the track.

“This is a testament to both the instructors, and the effort levels shown by the students. Natural Luge is an intimidating sport, which many soon realised as they tried to comprehend the steepness of the track and not think about crashing into the barriers. However, they were in expert hands.”

The first day of training saw the team learning the safety elements of the sport and practising the core skills, such as turning and braking, gradually building up both speed and confidence in sliders.

Birch added: “The instructors then did their first runs of the week, which was invaluable for the novices as it gave the opportunity to watch and learn from their techniques.

“The timed runs, a pivotal moment of the trip, introduced the competitive sport element. As the end of the trip drew near, the team was full of confidence, ready to improve their times from day four, before the rain set in and the track was deemed unsafe.”

Fourteen RAF personnel, including six novices, attended the camp, which book-ended a season that kicked off with a street event last September.

BLITZ

three team golds



LAIID-BACK:
Luge slider
Cpl Kain Birch

RUGBY UNION



FORWARD
POWER:
RAF's
AS1 Tyler
Richardson
(2nd from left)

Oatley shines but the French prevail

RAF	22
French Air Force	30

Dan Abrahams

A 30-22 80th anniversary match win for the French Air Force ended a run of four away losses but provided the perfect Inter-Services warm-up for the RAF.

Thanking the visiting Armée de l'Air et de l'Espace team after the match at the StoneX Stadium, Home of Saracens, RAF team captain Fg Off Alex Stanley said: "The French gave us a sporting and tough match, it was the perfect test for the upcoming Army IS game, so I'd like to thank them for that."

While head coach FS Justin Coleman (*inset below*) said: "Individually there were some stand-out performances, Oatley was one, and TJ [Richardson] did well for the forwards, but as a team, in terms of mentality when fatigued, we have got work to do, but we have time to fix it."

The clash saw the French take an early 3-0 lead through a penalty following a missed penalty from the boot of Cpl Jordan Oatley, who went on to have a stellar night.

The RAF then settled in and led through a Cpl Toby Evans try, kickstarted by a superb break from Cpl Ryan Crowley. With Oatley converting it meant the RAF led 7-3.

The loss of AS1(T) Sam Shepherd through injury was followed by the French taking a 10-7 lead.



YOU BOOTY:
Cpl Jordan
Oatley starred
for the RAF

That lead was short-lived and a sinbanning for the French star La Roche saw Oatley level 10-10 with the boot.

The French then ran in a try to lead 17-10 at the break.

A series of penalties were sent between the posts for both sides,

seeing the scores sit at 22-20 for the RAF, before a drop goal saw the French retake the lead.

There was a possible knock-on and dive over the dead ball line to touch down the winning try for the French, but the score stood, and the conversion sealed the match win for the visitors.

● Follow RAF Rugby Union on Instagram @RAFRugbyunion.



WINNING NOVICE:
Cpl Thomas Johnson

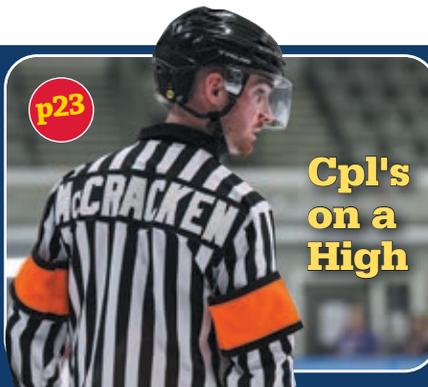


arrived without some of our big guns, but we pulled it out of the bag. "We set ourselves a target of gold and we achieved it, we then wanted podiums which again was done,

we have some real stars to watch in the future, and some strong talent, we will go back and regroup in the summer and head towards the novices."

5

pages of the best of **RAF** Sports action



p23

Cpl's on a High



p25

Winning start

Medal blitz in St Moritz



SKELETON STARS:
(l-r, above) Flt Lt Nicole Burger, Flt Lt Abbey Johnston, AS1 Mollie Baker and Cpl Shawnie Etchells



WE'RE NO. 1 AGAIN:
Men's skeleton captain Flt Lt Rhys Thornbury

Dan Abrahams

IT WAS a high-speed trophy blitz in St Moritz as the RAF's ice sports stars celebrated another bumper Inter-Services taking home three team wins out of five.

The results were hailed as 'amazing' and 'remarkable' by team captains Flt Lt Rhys Thornbury (skeleton) and Sgt John-Paul Kibble (luge), with bobsleigh skipper Flt Lt Jonny Anderson saying he was 'extremely proud'.

An 18th consecutive skeleton men's

title win was backed up with a stunning first for Flt Lt Rhys Thornbury with fastest push start and fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh individual-placed finishers.

The women's team came runner-up, with Flt Lt Nicole Burger placing third overall with fastest push start.

In the luge the Service's male sliders took the top five spots and eight out of the top 10. AS1(T) Ailsa Dermidy was the best RAF female slider, in third – meaning the Royal Air Force took the combined men's/women's team gold.

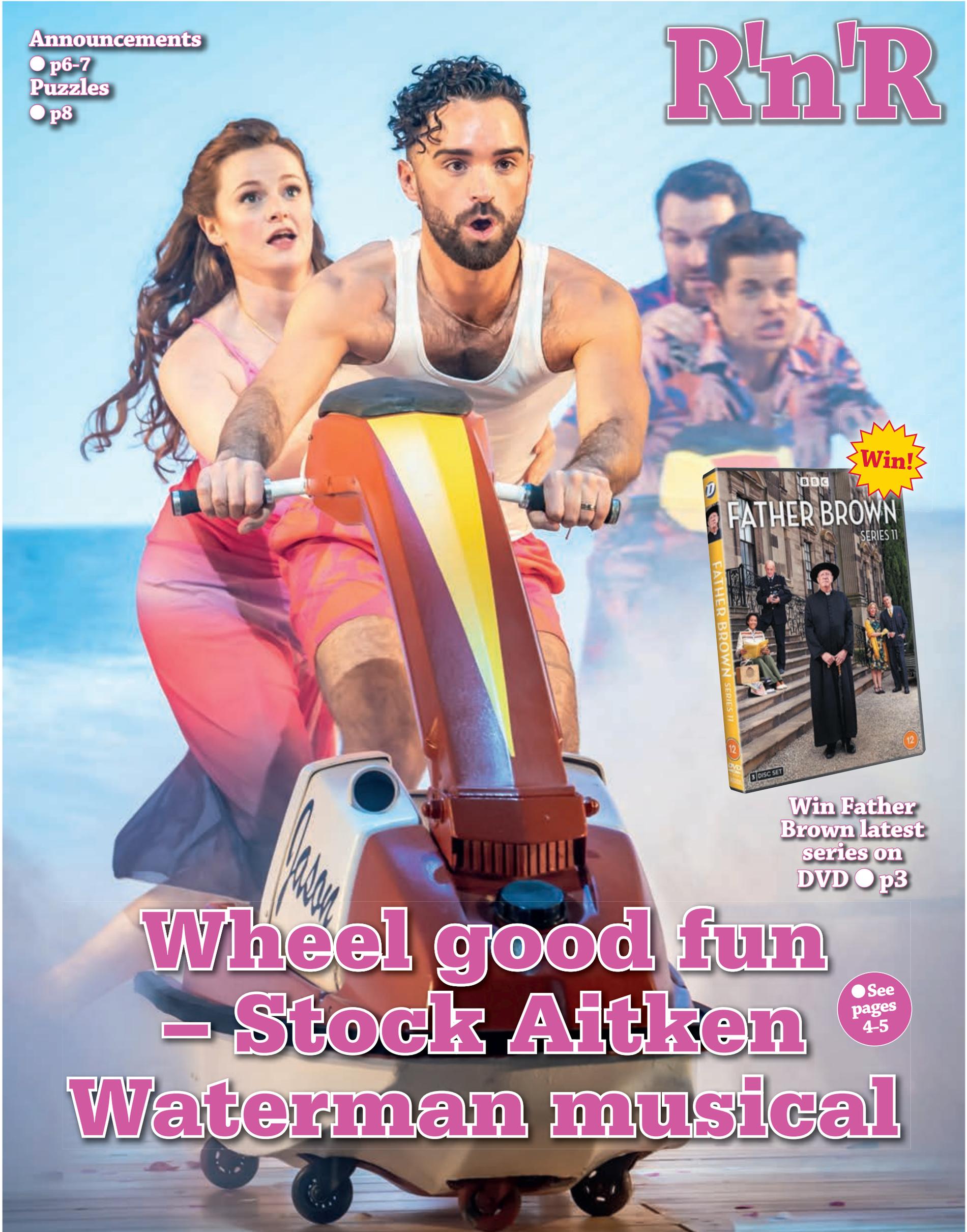
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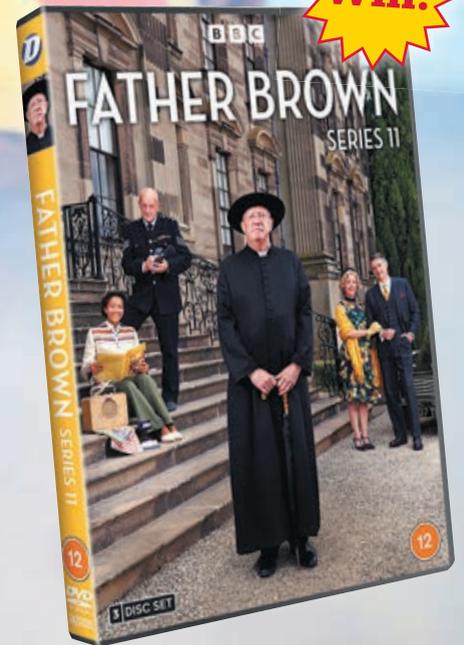
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R'n'R



Win!



Win Father Brown latest series on DVD ● p3

Wheel good fun – Stock Aitken Waterman musical

● See pages 4-5

A Coat of Arms and Surname History Scroll for *YOUR* family name.

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Discover the fascinating origins of your surname plus the earliest-known coat of arms for a bearer of the name, with this beautiful printed scroll.

Ever wondered about the story of your own name? *Hall of Names* has the history of more than a million surnames and you can see your own surname's history faithfully reproduced on high-quality A3 parchment paper. A full colour rendition of the name's earliest-known coat of arms also features at the top of each scroll to create a real talking point. If there is a motto, this is usually in Latin with a translation at the end of the scroll. With attention to detail, the surname history is extensively researched and includes fascinating facts and intriguing details about your chosen surname.

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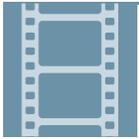
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Film Review
Shoshana (15)
 In cinemas now

Extremism tale of 30s still sadly relevant

A DEFIANT relationship between a Jewish woman and a member of the British Palestine Police Force is at the heart of Michael Winterbottom's political thriller set in late 1930s Tel Aviv. Based on real people and events, the backdrop to the romance between Assistant Superintendent Thomas Wilkin

(Douglas Booth) and journalist Shoshana Borochov (Irina Starshenbaum) is the violent foundation of the Israeli state during the British Mandate of Palestine. At a time when Jewish immigrants are seeking refuge from Nazi-occupied countries, and the division between Arab and Jewish populations is



CONFLICTED: Jewish journalist Shoshana Borochov (Irina Starshenbaum)

becoming more pronounced, British forces are tasked with containing radical extremists. With acts of terrorism growing in size and severity, the film presents ideas and imagery that resonate with the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. Shoshana is the daughter of a revolutionary Marxist Zionist, and a member of Haganah: an underground territorial defence force that advocates for the creation of an independent Jewish state. Wilkin is shown to have embedded himself into the community, earning a mutual

trust that is abandoned by the new Superintendent Geoffrey Morton (Harry Melling) who intends to snuff out the Jewish independence movement, despite their wish for peace. Forcing Tom and Shoshana into opposition, their relationship looks to become just another casualty in this enveloping war of ideals. The shooting style and editing pace do well to suspend you in uncertainty, as the ticking time-bomb of political unease is probed in the hunt for Avraham Stern (Aury Alby), leader of the Zionist

paramilitary organisation Irgun. Intended to show how political extremism forges enemies, even of lovers, the tensions of the relationship are symbolised in the warring factions of the region, however the combat makes the quarrelled love affair feel trivial by comparison. Despite shifting focus, the final act of *Shoshana* is thrilling, and though it has been a passion project 15 years in the making, it is unfortunately more relevant than ever. **Review by Sam Cooney**
3 out of 5 rounds 🟡🟢🟣



DVDs
Father Brown, Series 11 (12)
 On Blu-ray, DVD and download now



HOLY ALLIANCE: Fr Brown and Sister Boniface



Canny priest fights crime in Cotswolds

CHARISMATIC, CRIME-FIGHTING priest Father Brown (Mark Williams), returns in this smash-hit television series to solve more mysteries in the beautiful English countryside. Based on the character created by GK Chesterton and set in the picturesque Cotswolds, it's now 1955 and Chief Inspector Sullivan (Tom Chambers) and Mrs Devine (Claudie Blakley) have grown closer since we saw them last, something that hasn't

escaped the notice of Father Brown and Brenda (Ruby-May Martinwood). With a food fayre to die for, a real-life crime at a crime-writing festival and a village rivalry that turns deadly, there's plenty for the gang to be busy with. And when his old friend Sister Boniface (Lorna Watson) is implicated in a murder at an arts and craft fair, Father Brown must prove her innocence – before it's too late...

You could win a copy of this entertaining series on DVD – for your chance to own one, simply tell us: **Who created the character of Father Brown?** Email your answer, marked Father Brown Series 11 DVD competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to our usual address (see *30 Rock* competition, right) to arrive by April 5. Please include your postal address on all competition entries.



DVDs
30 Rock Complete Collection (15)
 On DVD & Blu-ray now. Fabulous Films/Spirit Entertainment

Bag super, 19-disc set complete collection of TV comedy classic

ALL SEVEN seasons of the critically acclaimed, hilarious *30 Rock* are now out on DVD and Blu-ray. Created by Tina Fey (who wrote the screenplay for *Mean Girls*) and executive produced by Lorne Michaels (*Saturday Night Live*), the box set has nearly seven hours of bonus features. *30 Rock* stars Tina Fey as TV writer Liz Lemon, and Alec Baldwin as corporate executive Jack Donaghy. Broadcast between 2006 and 2013, the show won 16 Emmy Awards and six Golden Globes. Lemon and Doherty manage the everyday mayhem at an NBC late-night variety show. Pretending to help them are mercurial stars Tracy Jordan and Jenna Maroney (Tracy Morgan and Jane Krakowski) as well as wide-eyed NBC page Kenneth Parcell (Jack McBrayer). An impressive list of guest stars appeared in the series including Jim Carrey, Peter Dinklage, James Franco, Jennifer Aniston, Jon Hamm, Will Arnett, David Schwimmer, Steve



Buscemi, Salma Hayek, Carrie Fisher, Oprah Winfrey, Steve Martin and Matt Damon. We have copies of the box set up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, answer this question correctly: **Who created 30 Rock?** Email your answer, marked 30 Rock competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 5.

R'n'R



WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK: Podcast favourites James Holland and Al Murray

Chance for history buffs to Chalke up a new experience

THIS YEAR'S Chalke History Festival promises to be the biggest and best one yet, with a diverse range of activities and experiences set to appeal to both history buffs and casual visitors.

A spokesperson for the festival said: "The aim is to bring together the most passionate minds in academic historical investigation and debate."

Two of the UK's most successful programmes will be recorded in front of a live audience at the event, which takes place on a 70-acre farm at Church Bottom, Broad Chalke, near Salisbury, from June 24-30.

Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook will be bringing *The Rest is History* – the most downloaded history podcast in the world, and the top history podcast in the UK and the US – to Church Bottom. And World War II aficionados James Holland and Al Murray will be hosting an episode of their popular *We Have Ways of Making You Talk* podcast.

The Grand Tour co-presenter James May is to make his debut at the festival this summer, talking about his favourite subject – cars. Also appearing for the first time is writer, actor, comedian and TV presenter Michael Palin, who will discuss his biography of his great-uncle Harry who was killed in World War I.

Award-winning historian and broadcaster Bettany Hughes will be returning to talk about the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and journalist, broadcaster and President of the School of Oriental and African Studies Zeinab Badawi will be talking about her new book on the history of Africa.

Historic Equitation – a team of historical interpreters and equestrians led by renowned horseman Dominic Sewell – will be demonstrating the social, economic and military importance of horses throughout history, from the rise of the mounted knight to the spectacular horsemanship of the 17th century. They will be at the festival all week and will deliver a show-stopping display in the arena on the Saturday and Sunday.

Volunteers play a vital role in the success of the festival and the organisers are always on the lookout for enthusiastic individuals to join the team. The application process is now open via the website: chalkefestival.com.

● See the website for more details about the Festival and go to @ChalkeFestival on X, on Instagram at @chalkehistoryfestival and on Facebook.



FUN FOR ALL: The festival also includes children's rides and historical re-enactments



Theatre

I Should Be So Lucky: The Stock Aitken Waterman Musical

UK & Ireland tour

I Should Be So Lucky

New musical features the songs of Hit Factory trio Stock Aitken & Waterman

THE UNFORGETTABLE songs of phenomenal hit-makers Stock Aitken and Waterman (SAW) have been adapted for a stage show, written and directed by Debbie Isitt (the *Nativity!* franchise). *I Should Be So Lucky: The Stock Aitken Waterman Musical*, is now on a UK and Ireland tour.

Along with a host of the West End's finest talent, including Lucie-Mae Sumner (*Mary Poppins, Guys and Dolls*) as Ella and Billy Roberts (*Rock of Ages, Titanic The Musical*) as Nathan, Kylie Minogue will digitally appear throughout the show.

Kylie said: "It is the music that inspired a generation (plus my first five albums!) so to have all the SAW hits in this original story will make for a compelling, funny and heartfelt show. Let's enjoy the magic all over again!"

Ella and Nathan, a young couple, hopelessly in love are about to take the biggest step of their lives – marriage. Until it doesn't go quite to plan. Will they be together forever, or will he make her cry and say goodbye?

The musical features no less than 10 Number 1 singles and



SHOW: Love songs

more than 25 songs from the Hit Factory, whose music defined an era. They include Kylie's *I Should Be So Lucky*, *Never Gonna Give You Up* by Rick Astley, Jason Donovan's *Too Many Broken Hearts* and Bananarama's *Love In The First Degree*.

Waterman said: "I'd previously worked with a couple of people on it [a musical] but I think we'd never seen a story that was of any interest to us. Nobody came up with a story that we thought was emotional enough – they are very emotional songs and I think

people didn't get that.

"Working with the cast in the theatre took Mike [Stock] and I back to when we wrote the songs. When you hear someone do a song slightly differently, the lyrics get to you. I guess nobody before had understood why the lyrics were so poignant. Yes, they were hits, but they were more than hits to the people that bought them, they were statements, particularly for young people. We've always guarded that, we never wanted to spoil that memory."

He added: "This is a very

Edited by Tracey Allen



CREATIVE WHIZZES:
Writer and director Debbie Isitt and hit-maker extraordinaire Pete Waterman, of SAW fame

different genre for us – musical theatre – it’s hard work, it’s one of the hardest things I’ve done in my life. My admiration for the cast is unbelievable. The hours they work and the detail they put in.”

Waterman revealed that he considers *Never Gonna Give You Up* SAW’s most successful song to date. “It has taken on a life of its own. It’s easy to say that now that it has become almost legendary– it’s 35 years on. It’s a song that got written on the way to work with Rick, and we didn’t take it that seriously at the time,” he explained:

“You’ve got to pinch yourself sometimes. It’s when you see Kylie closing the Olympics or Rick doing Glastonbury and then doing this musical, you sit there thinking, ‘I didn’t think I’d be doing this 40 years ago. I thought we’d do great just getting a couple of years out of it.’”

He added: “I hope audiences have fun with this show. This musical couldn’t have been timed better. We’re currently in a world that’s all over the place, I mean, we just need a bit of uplift as we’ve got enough grief.”

Isitt said: “Stock Aitken Waterman songs were the soundtrack to my youth and being

asked to create a musical featuring all the hits was a very exciting proposition. The songs are about love and that was my starting point for the story and the show. The songs spoke to me – the lyrics and the melodies – I wanted to create a show about love in all its forms – romantic love, thwarted love, love of family, love of self – to create an experience that is emotional and fun and feel good, just like their music makes me feel.”

She added: “As soon as they start up you can’t help but feel engaged with the brilliant hooks and catchy choruses. But they also take some of us back to times when we were young and having fun – and the songs are stories too – stories that we can all relate to – about unrequited love, yearning, and heartfelt human emotions. Lots of people know and love the songs but younger audiences are discovering some of them for the first time and it is so fantastic to watch that – everyone – young or old – are up and dancing at the end.”

The tour continues to Bromley, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Sunderland, Aberdeen and Dublin.

● **Go to: musicalsontour.co.uk for more information.**



Film

Lee (15)

In cinemas from September 13

The story of female WWII photographer Lee Miller

KATE WINSLET stars as pioneering war correspondent and photographer Lee Miller in the much-anticipated film *Lee* due to premiere in UK and Irish cinemas from September 13.

Determined to document the truth of the Nazi regime, and in spite of the odds stacked against female correspondents, Miller captured some of the most important images of World War II, for which she paid an enormous personal price.

Joining Winslet in the stellar cast is Andy Samberg playing *Life Magazine* photographer David E. Scherman, Alexander Skarsgård as English Surrealist painter, photographer, poet and biographer Roland Penrose, Marion Cotillard plays Solange D’Ayen, the fashion director of – *Vogue* and close friend of Miller’s, Josh O’Connor is Tony, a young journalist, and Andrea Riseborough is *British Vogue* editor Audrey Withers.

Born in 1907 in Poughkeepsie, New York, Miller



PIONEER:
Miller, as played by Winslet

was one of the most remarkable female icons of the 20th century. She became a model for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* before moving to Paris to study photography with the surrealist Man Ray.

Lee set up her own photographic studios in Paris and New York before marrying Aziz Eloufi Bey and relocating to Cairo. A chance meeting with the artist Roland Penrose led her to move to London at the outbreak of WWII. Her Surrealist images along with her pack shots, portraits and extraordinary wartime photographs have earned her a key place in the history of art.

Farleys, her post-war Sussex home, is the centre of the Lee Miller Archives which cares for her photographs, papers and ephemera. Farleys House and Gallery are open to the public from April to October.

● **Go to: farleyshouseandgallery.co.uk for more details.**



DVD

The BFG (U)/Roobarb ...and Custard!

Out now on DVD and Blu-ray. Fabulous Films Ltd/Spirit Entertainment



Giants of children's animation

DAVID JASON (*Only Fools and Horses*) stars as the voice of the Big Friendly Giant in this enchanting tale of young orphan Sophie and the BFG, based on Roald Dahl’s famous story.

The cast also features Angela Thorne (*To the Manor Born*), Frank Thornton (*Are You Being Served?*), Mollie Sugden (*Are You Being Served?*) and Ballard Berkeley (*Fawlty Towers*).

The BFG was brought to life by Cosgrove Hall Films who also created *Count Duckula*, *Chorlton and the Wheelies* and the world’s greatest secret agent *Dangermouse* (also voiced by Jason).

It tells the story of lonely Sophie as she meets her 25-foot-high prince and is whisked off into the wonders of Dreamland. Tasked with harvesting dreams and blowing them into the minds of children with his magical trumpet, the Big Friendly Giant pulls Sophie into his magical Giant Country, full of snozzcumbers and whizzpoppers, to help him defeat the evil gargantuan grumps who are filling the heads of England’s children with fear and dread.



Together, and with the help of Her Majesty The Queen, Sophie and the BFG deliver the most spectacular dreams imaginable.

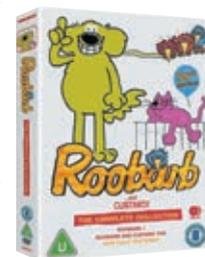
We have copies of the film up for grabs. For your chance to own one, simply tell us:

Who is the voice of the Big Friendly Giant in the BFG?

Email your answer, marked BFG competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 5.

RICHARD BRIERS did the voice-over for Bob Godfrey’s classic wobbly animation series *Roobarb ...and Custard!* that first hit our TV screens in 1974. Fifty years on *Roobarb* still captivates generations in each four-and-a-half-minute episode of pulsating anarchic cartoon madness.

Roobarb is a mangy green mongrel with an overactive imagination who takes centre stage with his hair-brained schemes. Custard is *Roobarb*’s



next door neighbour, a lazy and mischievous bright pink cat, who’s always ready to poke fun at *Roobarb*’s mishaps. Each fun-packed episode finds *Roobarb* going about some lunatic mission or other, closely watched by Custard from his spot on the garden fence. There’s always an audience to laugh at him when things go wrong...as they invariably do!

This 50th Anniversary Edition set of *Roobarb ...and Custard: The Complete Collection* includes all 30 episodes of *Roobarb* from Series 1, fully restored from the original film negatives. It also features all 39 episodes of the second series from 2005, which saw the return of *Roobarb* in *Roobarb and Custard Too* and retained all the charm of the original cult show.

For your chance to win a copy of *The Complete Collection*, answer this question correctly:

What colour are Roobarb and Custard?

Email your answer, marked *Roobarb and Custard* competition, to the address above, or to our postal address, above, to arrive by April 5. Please include your full postal address.



Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

Death

SMITH Peter, Sqn Ldr, passed away on February 16 aged 80. Served in the RAF 1960-1980: Sqn 14 Canberras, Oxford UAS flight instructor, ETPS test pilot, RAE Farnborough. Post RAF at BAE.

Reunions

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Have you ever served at RAF Bawdsey? If so, why not join our Association and come along to our next annual reunion to be held at Bawdsey Manor on Saturday, June 1. For full details please email Doreen Calver on: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or telephone: 0751 3301 723.

18 Sqn reunion (Operation Corporate) Falklands War reunion at Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett, Norfolk on Saturday, May 4. If you are interested please get in contact with David Hudson via email: d_hudson79@yahoo.co.uk

124 Entry Apprentices – RAF Cosford, 1974-77. 50th anniversary reunion. Members will be meeting at The Limes Country Lodge Hotel, Earlswood, Solihull on Saturday, October 12 with an informal buffet luncheon to follow on in the evening of Sunday, October 13. For further information please email: nigelcooper1@live.co.uk or call/WhatsApp on: 07986 200137. We have currently managed to locate and contact more than 30 of our 49 original members so a great time is assured.

Associations

RAF Armourers past and present: RAF Association's Armourers Branch aims to provide welfare support and comradeship for all who have served or currently serve as an RAF Armourer.

Please see the website: rafaarmourers.co.uk or you can contact the committee via email at: plumbersrest@outlook.com.

THE Association of RAF Women Officers (ARAFWO) is a lively, friendly, world-wide networking group. Visit our website: arafwo.co.uk and discover the benefits of membership, plus see what activities and events we offer all over the world.

SUAS – have you been a member of Southampton University Air Squadron as a student or staff member? If so, please join our Facebook page, 'Southampton UAS Association' or email: 6FTS-SUASAdmin@mod.gov.uk to join our association community so that we can welcome you back

RAF Catering Warrant Officers' and Seniors' Association: all serving or retired TG19 WO or FS and all former Catering Branch Officers are invited to join the RAF CWO&SA. We meet twice yearly with a vibrant gathering of retired and serving members. So why not come along and join us? For more information send an email to: janedjones6@btinternet.com. The first year of membership is free.

IF you trained as an RAF Administrative Apprentice (or are related to one) we would be delighted to welcome you to the RAFAA Association. Please see: rafadappasn.org; or contact the Membership Secretary on: 07866 085834 or the Chairman on: 01933 443673.

RAF Physical Training Instructors Association holds an Annual Dinner and AGM over a weekend plus locally organised events. Please contact RAFPTIA Honorary Secretary Denise Street-Brown on: ptisec@outlook.com for membership enquiries. The Association was formed in 1996 to bring together serving and retired PTIs. It currently has 600 PTI members. To become a member of the

Association you will have had to have successfully passed the RAF Physical Training Instructors Basic Training Course.

RAFA vacancy

DUE to the recent retirement of our Branch Secretary, the result of a road accident, the Beccles and Southwold Area Branch of the RAF Association (RAFA), has an important vacancy to be filled at the earliest opportunity.

The post would suit a retired or mature ex-member of the RAF familiar with admin procedures at a basic level.

The applicant must also be computer literate and have their own transport.

The post is without remuneration, however, reasonable expenses will be paid and training given.

A warm welcome awaits for a friendly volunteer who will give a few hours of their time monthly to assist our Committee to provide welfare support and comradeship to our 60 members (14 of whom are still serving), veterans and their families and enjoy the company of those who have had similar experiences. For further information please email the Branch President Brian Vousden on: lancaster457@btinternet.com, and see website: rafabecclandsouthwold.wordpress.com/.

RAFA Cranwell concert

THE ANNUAL RAFA Cranwell Branch Bomber County Charity Concert will be held on Sunday, May 12 from 7pm to 10pm at the Masonic Rooms, Watergate, Sleaford, with music by the Miller Magic Big Band. Tickets, £10 each, available from April 1 from Moore & Scrupps Jewellers and Sleaford Jewellers, both of Southgate, Sleaford, in the foyer of Sleaford's Tesco Superstore from 10am until 4pm on Thursday, May 9, and on the door of the Masonic Rooms, from 6.30pm on the evening of the concert.

How to use our service

There is no charge for conventionally-worded **birth, engagement, marriage, anniversary, death, in memoriam seeking** and **reunion** notices. For commercial small ads contact Edwin Rodrigues on: 07482 571535. We cannot, under any circumstances, take announcements over the telephone. They can be sent by email to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk. Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept notices submitted by post.

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Go out of this world at the RAF Museum



JOURNEY INTO SPACE: The Space, Race and Fly planetarium

AN OUT of this world Easter break is promised at the RAF Museum, Midlands with its Space, Race and Fly event delivering a fortnight of interactive shows and STEM activities for families.

"Visitors can dive into the vastness of the universe in a planetarium experience, take one giant leap into the Apollo 11 Space Academy, be 'wowed' in the spectacular Science Show, and look deep into the night sky during stargazing evenings," said a Museum spokesperson.

Families can also enjoy a range of STEM activities rotated throughout the Easter break.

LEGO Balloon Dragsters will have them designing and building a LEGO dragster powered by a balloon and competing in a race across the hangars. And you can let your imagination take flight and unleash your creativity with the Space Crafts activity as you craft your own UFO, rocket, or aircraft, ready to take flight within the Museum.

Other activities on offer include a flight simulator, scale model solar system and rocket workshops (charges apply for some of the activities).

● Go to: rafmuseum.org/midlands for a detailed schedule.

Work continues on Vulcan

NEWARK AIR Museum volunteers logged more than 18,300 hours of working on projects around the Museum's 16-acre site in 2023.

"This year the trustees hope to harness similar levels of dedication and support to continue with restoration work and repainting projects," said Howard Heeley from the Museum.

"High on the priority list is continued work on Avro Shackleton WR977, to carry on from the work on the aircraft's nose section completed last autumn. He added: "On the sister Avro airframe, Vulcan XM594 (inset), some additional structural repairs and maintenance repairs will continue, with the aim of keeping the airframe in a good overall condition, externally and internally.



"As the better weather arrives work will recommence on the repainting of the MiG-23; whilst structural repairs will continue on the nose section of Chinook, ZA717."

● Go to: newarkairmuseum.org.uk for more information.



Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to:
tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

Tribute to Dame Vera



THE WING at the **Battle of Britain Memorial** is the venue for a unique evening of memories of, and melodies from, the late, great, Dame Vera Lynn next month.

The fundraising evening on Tuesday, April 16, will be presented by two friends of the inimitable Dame Vera – Susan Fleet and Vicki Lee – who will provide an evening of entertainment alongside a buffet supper.

Susan (pictured above), long-

time friend and PA to Dame Vera, will talk about her relationship with the Forces' Sweetheart, while New Zealander Vicki (above, with Dame Vera), an outstanding singer on a visit to the UK, will present highlights from her Vera Lynn Show, performing Dame Vera's songs and telling veterans' anecdotes.

And as well as demonstrating her own vocal talent, Vicki will lead the audience in some well-known songs.

The evening begins at 7.30pm, with a cold buffet provided between Susan's reminiscences and Vicki's performance.

Tickets are £50, and the generosity of the performers means that all proceeds will go to the Trust's 30th anniversary appeal *The Next Sortie*.

Numbers are limited so booking is essential. To book your space please call: 01732 870809 or email: battleofbritain@btinternet.com.



EGG-STRASPECIAL: The BMM's Shaun the Sheep Land Rover

Feel the need for speed

THIS EASTER the British Motor Museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire is inviting families to explore some of Britain's fastest cars.

From March 23 to April 14 visitors to the Museum will be able to take part in activities including Find the Fastest Car Trail, Make Your Own Fast Car and the Racing Driver Tour.

Those visiting over the Easter weekend itself (March 29 to April 1) can enjoy a classic Easter Egg Hunt, searching around the collection for six differently-coloured eggs hidden amongst the cars.

Emma Rawlinson, the Museum's Lifelong Learning Officer, said: "Children will love exploring the collections with the Racing Driver characters and searching for the fastest car in the collection. We're sure you'll all be feeling the need for speed!"

● Go to: britishmotormuseum.co.uk for more information.

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R'n'R



Prize Crossword No. 357

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the nine letters in yellow squares to find an RAF aircraft.

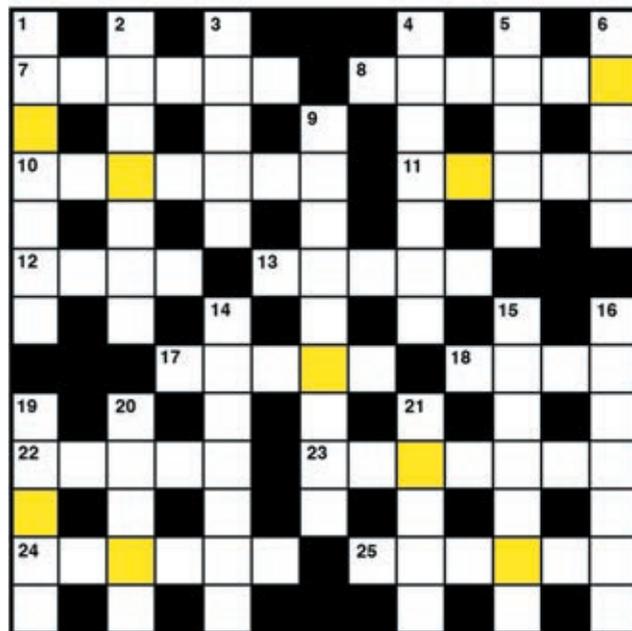
- Across**
 7. Empty hello is hollow, tasteless on hikes (6)
 8. See 11 Across
 10. Good behaviour in December with no alcohol (7)
 11. **And 8 Across.** Train company transports zoo intern to station (5,6)
 12. Copy cross crest (4)
 13. Sum up Dracula (5)
 17. Boils first cabbage you sowed this summer (5)
 18. Father embraces, returning Greek letter in chopper (4)
 22. That bag Penny gives cry of pain (5)
 23. Lip lady frogs sit on, maybe (4,3)
 24. See 3 Down
 25. Turpin's working at station (6)

- Down**
 1. Cheese to gorge? (7)
 2. RAF personnel wire car ineptly (7)
 3. **And 24 Across.** Smooth sword destroyed by missiles (5,6)
 4. Unseemly mobbing during Blitz (7)
 5. Respectable good man offers help (5)
 6. Mountains little Adrian desires to find (5)
 9. 809 NAS Olympians? (9)
 14. May duck python on plane (7)
 15. Fancy model, after drink (7)
 16. Touchdown on jetty (7)
 19. Jerk springs towards Frenchman (5)
 20. No BS from dumbass author (5)
 21. Honours Chelsea (5)

Name:
 Address:

 RAF word: Crossword No. 357

The winners of our Prize Crossword and Prize Su Doku puzzles will receive a recent top aviation title – please send your entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel, to arrive by April 5. Prize Crossword No. 355 winner is: R Marriott, Lincolnshire.



Solution to Crossword No 356:

Across – 1. Venus 4. Dashiki 8. Chinook 9. Inept 10. Open 11. Daughter 13. Rays 14. Gala 16. Cascades 17. Bali 20. Opted 21. Lanolin 22. Sporrán 23. Easel.
Down – 1. Victoria Cross 2. Noise 3. Snow 4. Diktat 5. Sting Ray 6. Inertia 7. International 12. Lysander 13. Risotto 15. Merlin 18. Atlas 19. Once.

RAF aircraft – *Lightning*

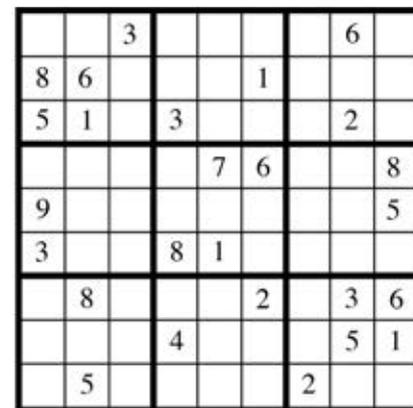


Prize Su Doku No. 367

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, each column and each 3x3 square contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 5.

The winner of Su Doku No: 365 is: Brenda Fallon, Penrith.



Solution to Su Doku No: 366

1	5	2	9	4	8	3	6	7
3	9	6	5	7	2	1	8	4
7	4	8	3	6	1	2	5	9
6	1	9	8	5	4	7	3	2
2	8	3	6	1	7	4	9	5
4	7	5	2	3	9	8	1	6
9	3	7	4	8	6	5	2	1
8	2	1	7	9	5	6	4	3
5	6	4	1	2	3	9	7	8



Film Review

American Star (15)

In cinemas and on digital platforms now

McShane stars as an aged assassin



WILSON IS alone in Fuerteventura, wandering around empty beaches and taking in the sights, but he is there on business: to kill someone for money.

Ian McShane (*Deadwood*) plays octogenarian Wilson (pictured), one of many Brits abroad in the Canaries, but he seems of a different class, wearing a suit at all times despite the heat. A French barmaid tells him that there are three types of people here: locals, tourists and those running from something, and that he doesn't fall into the first two categories.

American Star begins by setting up this hitman on the hunt, but when the target doesn't show right away, it quickly takes its foot off the pedal and drifts down the scenic route. There are a lot of shots of Wilson walking or driving on his lonesome, instilled with some sort of wistful thought perhaps. We get some sense of

his personality when he befriends Gloria (Nora Arnezeder) the barmaid, revealing his suave and considerate charm, or in his avuncular run-ins with a kid who spends a lot of time in their shared hotel corridor, avoiding the fights of his parents.

Other than having the odd cocktail, or visiting a famous local shipwreck (from which the film takes its name) the remainder of the job at hand comes in the form of his nephew Ryan (Adam Nagaitis). In the same line of work, he is becoming concerned that his uncle is losing sight of what brought him here in the first place, and warns that his new friend Gloria is actually an associate of the target.

Bookended by action, *American Star* is more a meandering film, that laments age and purpose in a rather pleasant corner of the world.

Review by Sam Cooney
 Three roundels out of five ○○○



Film Review

Doctor Jekyll (15)

On digital platforms now

No place to Hyde, Izzard

HAMMER HORROR have revamped and gender-flipped the classic story of dual personality with Eddie Izzard playing the roles of Dr Nina Jekyll and her more malicious spirit Rebecca Hyde.

The story is told from the point of view of young ex-con and new dad Rob (Scott Chambers), who is struggling to find employment which he'll need if he wants to see his daughter. Brother Ewan (Morgan Watkins) manages to pull some strings and bag him an interview for an undisclosed job for an unnamed client.

The gothic elements of the story remain healthily intact as Rob is dropped off at the manor, its grand corridors filled with expansive paintings, sunlight dramatically spotlighting areas and creating shadows everywhere else.

Despite his lack of experience and informal manner, Dr Jekyll takes an interest. Perhaps it is his good nature, or his grounded Jack-the-lad energy. Nina

Jekyll appears to be a kind soul, apparently famous for her achievements in pharmacology, she walks with a cane and needs Rob to help around the house and give her medication.

However, once she has a cigarette with its strange green glow, there is a shift in personality, becoming more curt and hostile. Rob has to navigate his way between these two personalities, as well as the mother of his child who has sticky fingers and wants to be let into the manor.

The story does what it says on the tin, not so much adapting the tale but adding a few contemporary details.

There is a moment late in the film where Izzard shines as Rebecca Hyde (left) – and it is at this point that you realise she is the much more interesting character, funny and twisted. It is a shame then, that Izzard spends most time pretending to be the gentler and more boring Nina Jekyll.

Review by Sam Cooney
 Two roundels out of five ○○

