

The Forces' favourite paper

Flying boat DFC
● See page 19



Festival ticket up for grabs
● See R'n'R p3



ROYAL AIR FORCE
Friday, June 14, 2024
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RAF News



Wg Cdr hands over the reins of global charity mission

See pages 14-15



Football Brize & shine



● See page 23

MTB Wolf haul



● See page 27

Motorsport Rainbow's pot of gold



● See page 28

Thanks of a nation



Staff Reporter

KING CHARLES delivered an emotional address in Ver-Sur-Mer as the last survivors of the Normandy Landings gathered to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

Heads of state from across the Commonwealth and Allied nations joined hundreds of serving personnel at the British Normandy Memorial for the event.

But it was the dwindling band of World War II veterans who stormed the beaches on the French coast in 1944 and who made the pilgrimage to Northern France to remember their fallen comrades who were the guests of honour.

● Continued on page 3



BiteSize

“This is the greatest honour for a member of the RAF Police,”



Gp Capt Samantha Bunn is appointed Provost Marshal See p10

“There was a huge boom in interest in the supernatural after both world wars,”



Ghost hunter Danny Robins See R'n'R pp4-5

“My advice? Seize any adventure training opportunities you get,”



Glider pilot AS1 Connor MacNeil See p23



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Tribute to Omaha beach radar aces

RAF PERSONNEL came together to pay tribute at the only Royal Air Force memorial on the assault sectors of the Normandy beaches.

Members of Air C2 Force from Boulmer attended the ceremony at Vierville-sur-Mer to lay wreaths to commemorate RAF radar specialists with 21 Base Defence Sector who supported the US landings on Omaha Beach.

Forty-seven of the 120-strong contingent of airmen were killed or injured, six are buried at the nearby Bayeux cemetery.

The event was attended by the town's Mayor, local residents, the French Escadron de Détection et de Contrôle Mobiles 90.550 'Augny', Army personnel and US soldiers.

The unit came ashore under heavy shellfire – of 27 vehicles unloaded by four landing craft tanks (LCTs) only



REMEMBERING: RAF personnel attended a private ceremony at the RAF Memorial, joined by Gp Capt (Ret'd) Tim Willbond, President of the Association of RAF Fighter Control Officers.

eight made it to the beach.

Air Cdre Jamie Thompson said: “These units came ashore and fought in a bloody and relentless battle.

“The unit was awarded four Military Crosses, two Military Medals and a Croix de Guerre; the highest number of gallantry awards won by the RAF in a single operation outside the Dambusters Raid.”

UK and French military personnel also took part in a wreath-laying ceremony and service at the cemetery at Bayeux.

This Week In History



1912
Training lifts off

THE CENTRAL Flying School opens at Upavon, training military pilots for the Navy and military wings of the Royal Flying Corps. The first course starts on August 12.

1982
Hercules record

A 70 Sqn Hercules sets an endurance record of 28 hrs, 4 mins flying from Ascension Islands to drop a Rapier battery close to Port Stanley.



1990
Reds head East

THE RED Arrows leave for a six-day tour of Russia and Hungary – the team's first visit to the countries of the former Warsaw Pact.

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



PARAS EMBARK: 16 Air Assault Brigade board RAF A400M at Brize Norton to cross to France for D-Day commemorations. *Below*, King Charles talks to veteran at Ver-sur-Mer

CEREMONY: Veterans and the King and Queen attended the moving events in Normandy, *below*



King: 'They did not flinch when the moment came'

Continued from front page

HM The King said: "On the beaches of Normandy, in the seas beyond, and in the skies overhead, our Armed Forces carried out their duty with a humbling sense of resolve and determination. But many of them never came home. They lost their lives on D-Day landing grounds or in the many battles that followed."

"It is with the most profound sense of gratitude that we remember them and all those that served at that critical time. How fortunate we were, and the entire free world, that a generation of men and women in the United Kingdom and other Allied nations did not flinch when the moment came to face that test."

The King's speech was followed by a performance of *The Last Post* as the memorial flags were lowered and the King's Colour Sqn joined a Tri-Service Guard of Honour. The Red Arrows

performed a flypast to close the event.

The memorial records the names of over 22,000 British troops who were killed during the Normandy Landings and pays tribute to the French civilians who lost their lives.

Surrounding the site were 1,475 silhouettes, created by the Standing with Giants project, to represent the British command fatalities.

As the crowds gathered along the coast, three RAF Atlas A400Ms flew low overhead, dropping paratroopers to remember the hundreds of Dakota aircraft that took off from UK airfields to deliver thousands of troops behind enemy lines.

The main ceremony followed a number of events in the UK, including the televised National Commemoration, also attended by the King and Queen. The event included the personal stories of courage and sacrifice by those who

lived through the largest seaborne invasion in history.

102-year old Flt Lt John Trotman, DFC and Bar, was a Mosquito pilot with 692 Sqn during the Battle for Normandy. He said: "My job was to fly at very high altitude, then drop bombs at strategic points in Europe. The chance of living beyond 30 missions was touch and go. I don't know what the odds were to be alive today."

LAC Albert Westgate, aged 99, explained how he never expected to be a part of the invasion force. He said: "I'd done my wireless operator's course and was waiting to go to Yatesbury for my gunner's course, but for some reason instead of being allocated to an airfield, I got sent to Omaha Beach."

Cpl Joe Randall, 100, was a member of the Airfield Construction Sqn and landed in Normandy three days after D-Day. He said: "We put the very first RAF B-19 runway down just outside Caen. It even made the papers back home. I joined up when I was 17. My mum said 'you're not going', but I did. I've never ever said 'I'm sorry I went'."





DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE INVESTED £40 MILLION TO SUPPORT RAF CHILDREN?

We are proud to share that we have invested over £40 million in supporting children and young people in the RAF Family since 2003.

And we continue in our commitment to children and young people of the RAF today. Our Ben Play and Airplay programme delivers over 7000 hours of youth support every year with a devoted team of Youth Support Workers providing a safe, fun place for youngsters, aged five to 18, to spend time with their peers, develop skills and enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities.

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40 play parks and multi-use games areas



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**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

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Strafe & sound

Typhoon live fire drill tests Nato troops



COMBAT DRILL: UK Typhoons joined ground troops from across NATO for Exercise Dacian Strike in Romania

Staff Reporter

Smarden, Romania

TYPHOONS GUARDING the skies in Romania launched live firing sorties to test Nato ground forces during combat drills with air and ground forces from across the Alliance.

The UK fighters conducted strafing sorties against 'enemy' targets marked by French Army howitzers ahead of a simulated assault by Romanian Army artillery, air force Hawks and rotary attack helicopters.

Crews from Italy, France, the US and Poland joined the latest Nato combat drills

in Smarden, Romania, designed to test air and land integration.

The final wave of the exercise included Romanian artillery strikes allowing Polish Army ground assault units to move towards the target area.

Gp Capt Pete Thorbjornsen, the UK Joint Force Air Component Director, said: "One of the key elements is to make sure that there's deconfliction between the air and land environment. It involves JTACs, who will be in coordination with the air elements, other ground elements and the overall commander to call in for the strikes when required."

"Land integration is key in any future war fight. If we don't understand each other's environment, then we cannot hope to be part of a coalition in a multi-terrain war fight. It's critical that we get the conditions set in place through training so we can execute properly in a war-fighting operation environment."

Exercise Dacian Strike is one of many Nato exercises involving Typhoons from 140 Expeditionary Air Wing currently deployed on Operation Biloxi, Nato's enhanced air policing mission in the Black Sea region.

In Brief



GET IN THE MIX: Combat Stress is calling on volunteers to take part in fundraising tea and cake event

Bake that and party

CHARITY CHIEFS have launched a Forces-wide brew and bake-off to raise funds to support serving personnel and veterans battling mental health problems.

Combat Stress fundraisers are calling on volunteers to sign up and hold their own cake sales, on June 27.

A spokesman said: "We all know it's good to talk. And by holding a Brew and Bake coffee morning or bake sale you can make a life-changing difference to a veteran whilst having a brew, some banter and a slice of cake."

● For details go to: fundraising@combatstress.org.uk



Wycombe wanderers return

AIR FORCE pals Jenny Paker and Pat Toohie made an emotional return to Air Command at High Wycombe – 59 years after they worked there together as caterers.

RAF High Wycombe veteran and former mess manager Dave Brown was on hand to ladle out the banter and share memories with the duo.

"We used to work 48 hours with no sleep," recalled Jenny. "No matter who passed you, you had to stand to attention. It was a very strict time."

Pat added: "There were so many laughs, the camaraderie was amazing. We always looked after each other's backs, and you had to mature very fast back then."

Help make veteran Dick's 100th a day to remember

Tracey Allen

THE ROYAL Air Forces Association is asking the public to help WWII veteran Dick Skepper mark his landmark 100th birthday on June 30 – by sending him a card.

Dick and his two brothers, Alec and Geoffrey, all served in Bomber Command. Dick was a flight engineer, operating out of RAF Oakington. After it converted to Lancasters, he stayed with 7 Sqn for the duration of the war.

He now lives in a nursing home in Warwickshire and taking pride of place in his room is a picture of a Lancaster with portrait photographs of brothers Alec, Geoffrey and their father, who served in the cavalry in WWI.

RAFA caseworker Michael Gilroy, who visits Dick, said: "7 Sqn was the first to fly the Stirling which



Dick was proud to tell me was Britain's first four-engine bomber. He has a large model of the Stirling standing on the table in his room.

"Kineton Manor Nursing Home is having a party to celebrate Dick's landmark

birthday. They would like as many people as possible to send him a birthday card."

● Cards can be sent to: Dick Skepper at Kineton Manor Nursing Home, Manor Lane, Kineton, Warwickshire, CV35 0JT.



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Royal Hall, Harrogate

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In Brief



SYMBOLIC: Cadets are handed the CWGC Torch during Runnymede ceremony

D-Day duty for Cadets

CADETS JOINED descendants of Britain's D-Day heroes at the Runnymede Memorial to honour the Allied fighters who took part in the Normandy Landings.

Among them were RAF pilot Francis Brooker's granddaughter Frances Dodson and Peter Clare, whose father Seymour died in World War II.

They handed over the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Torch of Commemoration to Cadets from 398 (Staines & Egham) Sqn during a ceremony.

Ms Dodson said: "It was wonderful to pass the torch and the legacy on and hope that, if the time came again, the younger generation would be willing to do exactly what my grandfather did."

RAFKidz net funds

FORCES CHARITY chiefs have netted funding from the MOD and Armed Forces Covenant to expand childcare services at stations across the UK.

The undisclosed grant will be used to improve outdoor play areas at RAFKidz nurseries at Boulmer, Brize Norton, High Wycombe, Leeming, Walter's Ash and Worthy Down, and to fund outdoor activities.

RAFKidz organiser Nicky Hall said: "These generous grants will help us improve the outdoor spaces at our nurseries and allow our children to learn, grow and play."

Island inferno

Puma crews battle Cyprus wildfires as heat hits 45°C



84 SQN PUMA II

FIRE THREAT: 84 Sqn Puma II moves in on forest fire caused by soaring summer temperatures. Below, flying through inferno PHOTOS: AS1 JAKE GREEN

Staff Reporter Akrotiri

A PAIR of RAF Pumas launched a nine-hour fire-fighting mission from Akrotiri as a forest blaze threatened to engulf a residential area on the island of Cyprus.

Local authorities called in the 84 Sqn crews and a Jordanian UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter when fires swept across the island as temperatures hit 42°C.

Teams from the Cypriot emergency services and forestry department fighting to contain the blaze on the ground scrambled air support when flames ripped through areas of woodland towards housing



near the south coast.

Puma crews doused the flames with more than 60 tonnes of sea water from underslung buckets in the operation

which was coordinated from the air by a Cyprus Police Aries aircraft.

It is the seventh time 84 Sqn has been scrambled this year and authorities issued an island-wide red alert as temperatures

continued to rise.

84 Sqn CO Sqn Ldr Dusko Frost said: "Two 84 Sqn Puma aircraft launched as part of an island-wide aviation response which saw the squadron work with a Jordanian Blackhawk

"This is the seventh time so far this season that we have been called to assist, and thankfully with the sterling coordinated ground and air efforts by civilian and military emergency services, the fire was successfully contained and finally put out."

Weapon Systems Operator FS Al Dixon said "Firefighting with the Puma is a skill we constantly train for to ensure we are able to respond safely and protect land and houses on Cyprus.

"Between the squadron and the other assets, we safely and effectively extinguished the fire."

FS AL DIXON

WOs catch 35lb monster carp in coarse comp

See back page





VACANCIES IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

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- 10 years' minimum experience in helicopters
 - Type rating in H145 D2/D3
- 5 years' minimum experience in the H145 D2/D3

TO APPLY

Interested applicants should submit their application and CV to
recruitment@rca.gov.om or aamrawahi1@rca.gov.om
by no later than 30th June 2024.

Tributes to the pilot who 'inspired a generation'

TRIBUTES FROM across the Royal Air Force and the aviation community have been paid to Sqn Ldr Mark Long who died when the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Spitfire he was flying crashed near Coningsby.

The Prince and Princess of Wales were among the first to express their sorrow on social media following the announcement that the 43-year-old had died during a training sortie ahead of his fourth season with the BBMF.

Sqn Ldr Long was described as an 'exemplary aviator and leader' and was due to take over command of the BBMF this year, alongside his duties as one of the Service's most experienced combat flying instructors.

Current BBMF chief Sqn Ldr Mark Sugden said: "Mark touched the hearts of everyone that he met, always prioritising the needs of others."

"The epitome of a military fighter pilot, he personified the very best of the Royal Air Force and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight."

"Always a vision of calm, Mark faced life's obstacles with a wry smile, a knowing nod and a pint of tea. Above all, he was a devoted husband and a proud father. He will remain forever the best boss that BBMF never had."

Mark joined the University of Birmingham Air Sqn while studying economics at Warwick and earned his Wings in 2004 and was selected to remain on 208 Sqn as an instructor.

He later joined the RAF elite when he converted to the Harrier GR9 with 1(F)Sqn at Cottesmore and became the last pilot qualified to operate the aircraft from carriers.

He joined the Typhoon Force in 2012, serving with XI and 29 Sqs and carried out Quick Reaction Alert duties in the UK, the Falklands Islands, and with Nato's Baltic air policing operations in Lithuania.

He served with the BBMF for four

years and also spent a season as the RAF's Typhoon display pilot.

29 Sqn's Wg Cdr Andy Shaw said: "Mark was a humble, kind, generous family man as well as an outstanding fighter pilot, instructor and display pilot."

"He inspired every single Typhoon pilot in the RAF, and taught many of them, bringing an infectious enthusiasm to every task."

"He mentored and cared for all those around him. Personally, he was a great support and friend to me as squadron commander but, more tellingly, he mentored many of our more junior members, some of whom have been selected to be trained as pilots themselves."

"As a member of 29 Sqn for the last decade, Sqn Ldr Mark Long will be deeply missed, and our thoughts at this time are with his family and those who loved him."

Sqn Ldr Long's skills as a pilot and instructor and qualities as a military officer have influenced a generation of fighter pilots, colleagues said.

Typhoon Air Wing Cdr Gp Capt Billy Cooper added: "Mark was a hugely respected fighter pilot, instructor and friend, and one of the most talented aviators I have flown with."

"His service over many years has contributed such a huge amount to not only the operational effectiveness of the Typhoon Air Wing, but also had such a positive impact on the lives of so many."

"Mark was the quintessential RAF Officer; respectful, humble, upbeat, and driven by an innate sense of service and professionalism and doing the right thing by others."

"His time as an instructor and leader has touched everybody on the Typhoon Air Wing and people's lives are better because of him."

Sqn Ldr Long was married with two children and lived in Lincolnshire.

"As an instructor and leader he touched everybody on the Typhoon Air Wing and their lives are better because of him"

Gp Capt Billy Cooper, Typhoon Force



EXEMPLARY: Sqn Ldr Long was highly regarded as a skilled combat pilot and fast jet instructor

Reds and Typhoon air show salute

Staff Reporter

THE RED Arrows and the Typhoon display team took to the skies at the Midlands Air Show in a salute to Sqn Ldr Mark Long.

This year's Typhoon display pilot, 29 Sqn's Flt Lt Dave 'Turbo' Turnbull, was joined by his predecessor, Flt Lt Lawson, in a second Typhoon to perform the iconic 'Missing Man' formation in honour of their

lost fast jet comrade.

The Typhoon duo, who were trained by Sqn Ldr Long, performed a number of formation passes before pulling the manoeuvre in front of thousands of aviation fans at the show.

The Red Arrows launched their own emotional tribute, dedicating their famous Spitfire formation to Sqn Ldr Long.



Speaking before the display, Red 1, Sqn Ldr Jon Bond, said: "Our absolute heartfelt condolences go to Mark's family, all at the BBMF and RAF Coningsby."

"It's hit us very hard. Most of us were either instructed by Mark or saw him on the display circuit over the years."



AIR SHOW HONOUR: The Red Arrows and Typhoon display team dedicated displays to fallen aviator Sqn Ldr Long

News

Tech that

Staff Reporter
AIR FORCE communications specialists with 90SU have launched combat drills in the US using experimental kit designed by UK defence boffins.

The Leeming unit joined USAF teams at Robins Air Force base, equipped with cutting-edge satellite and high-frequency equipment developed by Defence Science and Technology Laboratories, to disable and disrupt enemy frontline systems.

The exercise is the biggest test of the year for 90SU and US 5th Combat Communications Group, who operate in combat conditions from remote and austere locations in Georgia.

90SU commander Gp Capt Paul Jennings said: "XCOMM Roundup is a key annual event to strengthen our ability to work with the USAF and deliver on the RAF's Agile Combat Employment vision.

"Having an enhanced ability to interoperate with the USAF, and experimenting with cutting-edge tactics and technology, allows us to counter modern threats and is critical for preparing 90 Signals Unit for the challenges it will face



INFO WARS: 90SU personnel at Robins Air Base are equipped with experimental satellite and high-frequency technology to counter 'enemy' data systems

in the coming decade."

Frontline teams are training to fight through simulated hostile electronic jamming which disrupts and denies communication links to share the information required to sustain air operations.

USAF commander Col David Abel added: "Interoperability is a force

multiplier. When systems, procedures and units can communicate and function cohesively, a coalition of many becomes one powerful, unified front.

"Every repetition of the exercise is driving improvements to interoperability and a competitive advantage for the USAF and RAF"



Top cop on Air Force beat

GP CAPT Samantha Bunn has been appointed Provost Marshal, commanding the Air Security Force.

The high-profile role covers law enforcement, aviation security and counter intelligence and follows her previous position commanding 2 RAF Police and Security Wing.

She said: "My appointment is the greatest honour for a member

of the RAF Police fraternity. To lead the exceptional personnel of the RAF Police, MPGS, Civil Servants and Reservists within the Air Security Force is something I am incredibly proud of.

"I look forward to the next two years, where we will continue to enable Air and Space commands in the delivery of operations at home and across the globe."

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Squadron Leader Louise Langton

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Raise funds by asking for donations in return for a
delicious brew and some baked goodies.

**COMBAT
STRESS**
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

Survival team calls in cave rescue hero



RACE AGAINST TIME: Rescuers enter the Tham Luang cave complex as they battle floods to reach stranded youngsters, in 2018 PHOTO: THAI NAVY

Staff Reporter Cranwell

WHEN IT comes to battling the odds in the fight for survival few can match cave diving expert John Volanthen.

People everywhere held their breath as the 53-year-old led the world's cave diving elite on the desperate last-gasp mission to save 12 Thai youngsters and their coach trapped more than two miles underground by flood water.

The 2018 rescue from Thailand's Tham Luang caves was one of the most dramatic and complex of modern times and has been turned into a Netflix movie *13 Lives*, and documented by TV crews worldwide.

Now RAF survival experts have brought in the heroic British diver to brief the latest generation of RAF, Navy and Army air crew as part of their combat training and to sign the Wall of Gallantry.

SERE training officer Mark Fairhead said: "The group of boys had their hearts set on signing their names on a stone deep underground in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave system.

"It went badly wrong when water from days of heavy rain quickly flooded and trapped them underground, forcing them deeper into the cave system to find refuge from the rising water.

"John spoke about the two critical elements of logistical planning and rehearsals and the need to be able to adapt quickly to any situation whilst managing emotional response."

Thai authorities put out an



AWARD: John is presented with the George Medal by HM The Queen in 2019

international SOS after efforts to reach the group of 11 to 16-year-olds from a local football team and their adult coach failed.

With water levels rising and breathable air running out, veteran British cave diver Vernon Unsworth, who was planning his own cave dive in the area, called in three colleagues from the UK Cave Rescue Council: Rick Stanton, John Volanthen and Robert Harper.

They were able to locate the group, 4kms underground and over an exhausting and highly technical rescue operation which involved sedating the youngsters and fitting them with improvised harnesses and oxygen masks, dragged all 13 to the surface alongside rescue teams.



SIGNING ON: Cave diving expert John Volanthen joins SERE training chief Mark Fairhead at the Cranwell Wall of Gallantry PHOTO: GORDY ELIAS

The mission tragically claimed the lives of two Thai Navy SEALs – Saman Kunan and Beirut Pakbara.

Mr Fairhead added: "The children were located by John and Rick 10 days after they had become marooned, when these brave men had elected to push beyond their safety limit.

"Based on John's sixth sense that the children were alive, they continued to drag themselves hand over hand against the strong currents, in zero visibility, 4km each way, whilst laying a safety line for others to follow.

"He commented on the importance of remaining determined and focused without

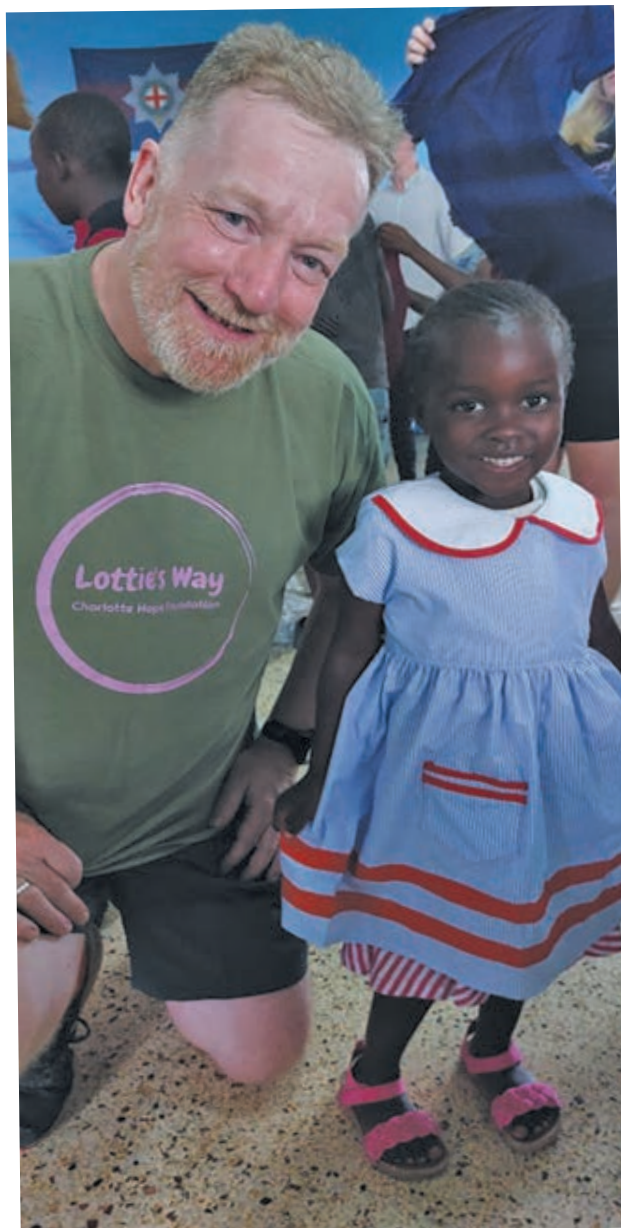
distractions.

"He offered advice on planning and preparation, including techniques to manage emotion and the importance of being fully physically, logistically and psychologically prepared for anything."

John was presented with the George Medal for his bravery by Queen Elizabeth II in 2019.

Feature

Taking Football to Africa



A NEW CHALLENGE: Wg Cdr Hope working with Lottie's Way, a charity that goes beyond football to help those in need around world



OUT OF THIS WORLD: Wg Cdr Hope with astronaut Tim Peake at RAF Shawbury in 2023

WHEN RAF officer and dedicated sports fan Neil Hope founded a charity in 2006 to deliver football kit to impoverished Africans, he had no idea it would become such a runaway success.

Now the RAF Shawbury-based Wg Cdr, who is retiring after 42 years' service, can reflect with pride on 18 years of fundraising that has seen the charity grow into the global phenomenal Taking Football to Africa and Beyond, delivering hundreds of thousands of items of sports equipment to more than 60 countries.

It has more than achieved its aim of bringing aid through football to children and adults living in the poorest areas of the world and its volunteers make regular visits abroad to meet the recipients. Neil has made 18 delivery trips to Kenya to date, with the most recent at Easter, and estimates more than 120 people have taken part in the visits with him over the years. Each participant has funded their own place.

Neil, who received the MBE in 2012, said: "The way it has developed and continued to grow is incredible to be honest – more than 381,000 items to around 63 countries, with regular donations from top clubs including Queens Park Rangers, Manchester United, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Aston Villa. We've also had lots of support from county clubs. And the Football Association have been very, very generous and have given us about 600 footballs that retail at over £100 each."

He explained: "The charity started from a conversation in a bar. My boss at the time, Wg Cdr Christine Taylor, was a season ticket holder at Bolton and said 'let's collect all the football shirts we have lying around in drawers and send them out to Africa.' That was the seed.

"We don't really ask for kit anymore, it's all word of mouth now. And as long as we can get the stuff out there we'll continue to do it."

The charity became a family affair, with Neil's wife Helen, daughter Charlotte and son Chris all involved. Tragically, 19-year-old Charlotte was killed in a car crash on the A53 near Shawbury by a dangerous driver in 2022, in which Helen was severely injured.

The charity Lottie's Way, the Charlotte Hope Foundation, was set up in 2023 in her memory and Taking Football to Africa and Beyond has now become part of it.

She was heavily involved in volunteering with Neil and planned to work in Kenya as a primary school teacher. The foundation is now run by Neil's son Chris.

Charlotte also volunteered at the Restart Africa Centre in Gilgil, Kenya, which rescues local street children. The foundation has raised more than £50,000 to fund university tuition for students from slum areas.

Neil said: "The Restart Centre is a special place. It takes care of children many of who are victims of sexual abuse and teaches them, treats them well and turns them into really well-

Wg Cdr bows out of RAF -

A night the puk to a glo mission help ot



FAMILY AFFAIR: Neil had support from wife Helen and daughter Charlotte, as well as son Chris

rounded human beings.

"When Charlotte was killed we said no flowers at the funeral but please donate to a crowd-funding page for Restart. It has now raised

around £53,500 – enough to fund five students through university for seven years, that will be life-changing for them. The five have just finished their first year, including one studying to

- but charity he launched to help the world's poorest lives on

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BELOVED DAUGHTER: Wg Cdr Hope's daughter Charlotte was killed by a dangerous driver near Shawbury in 2022 and her mother, Helen, was badly injured

be a doctor.”
He added: “The intent is to use money from Lottie’s Way to help where we weren’t able to before. For example, we’ve been able to buy baby formula for an orphanage and help a school in Gilgil where all the children are HIV positive. We can now help in places where, traditionally, we’ve only been able to help out with football kit.”
An impressive £14,000 has already been raised for Lottie’s Way and lots of fundraising events are planned, including a walk by more than 30 volunteers up and down Snowdon on June 15.
“It’s great, the community spirit here in Shawbury is absolutely amazing, with the number of things people are doing,” he added.
Neil sums up the success of Taking Football to Africa And Beyond with one word – football.
He said: “The vast majority of countries are football crazy, especially African countries. When you go to places like the

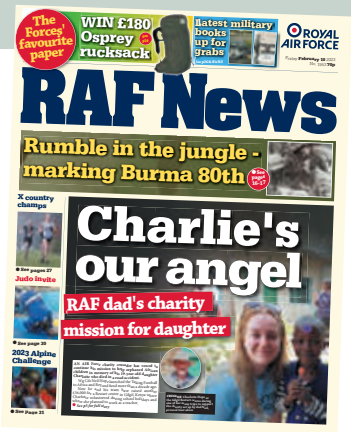
slums in Nairobi and see the terrible conditions people live in it’s incredible, they have so little. When you give them football kit it means the world to them.”
Neil joined the RAF in 1982, aged 17-and-a-half, after doing badly in his O-levels, and the resits, and not sure what to do next.
His father, who served as an RAF dog handler for seven years, took him to the local RAF careers office and two months later young Neil was at RAF Swinderby.
“I only signed on for six years so I’m not really sure what happened,” he laughed.
He trained as an Air Traffic Controller and, before being commissioned, his roles included ‘hanging off the Rock of Gibraltar’ while serving in a bird control unit.
He left the Air Force for a while, later returning as a Full-Term Reservist, and

his posts since have included Community Relations Officer at Shawbury and Senior Air Traffic Control Officer at the Shropshire Station.
His final post has been Danger Area Airspace Manager and Head of Battle Management Assurance.



HONOUR:Wg Cdr Hope receives Aries Award at Shawbury from AVM Bunny James, AOC 22 Gp

While he was Shawbury CRO, Neil worked with Sqn Ldr Mark Smales, who will become the lead for Taking Football to Africa and Beyond.
Neil explained: “Through the years Mark has become a really big part of the charity – he will take on the lead and I will become a worker.”
For Neil, retirement doesn’t mean slowing down though; he has a trip to Nepal planned for February 2025 with a group of volunteers – his fourth so far, working with the Gurkha Welfare Trust.
He and Helen, an ultra-runner before the devastating car accident, both have places for the Great North Run in September and he’s planning to play more golf.
And, after being involved in RAF



RAF NEWS: Coverage of charity’s work

football for 35 years, mainly in senior administrative roles, the Newcastle United fan will also continue to cheer on his local team, Shrewsbury Town.
He’s very much a man in demand, and has been offered around a dozen jobs in aerospace and football. He said: “I’ve turned them all down – for now, I just need a break.”
He’s certainly earned it.
● Go to: lottiesway.com for more information.



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SCAN ME WITH
YOUR CAMERA

Best of British sports cars

ASTON MARTIN, Jaguar, Lotus, McLaren – just some of the legendary names behind a host of iconic British sports cars.

Richard Gunn charts the rich history of the UK's most magnificent high-performance machines, from their primitive, pioneering days to today's technologically advanced modern sports cars, in his new book, *British Sports Cars* (keypublishing.com).

Highly illustrated, featuring more than 180 photographs, this fascinating title, Volume 5 in Key Publishing's Classic Vehicle Series, aims to show how, over almost 140 years, these exciting, and sometimes extraordinary, vehicles developed. Gunn explains how speeds have risen, handling has been enhanced, styles have evolved and sophistication has increased.

The oldest car pictured in the book is the Sporting Napier (1901-1924), which, explained Gunn, achieved prominence in early racing by being the first British car firm to build cars especially for motorsport.

The most up to date motor featured is the Noble M600 (2010-present), which has an impressive nought to 60mph time of three seconds.



ASTON MARTIN DB6: PHOTO Richard Gunn

The author added: "...the M600 can reach 200mph in under half a minute and still have something in reserve."

The book's 10 chapters cover the pioneering days of British sports cars and each decade of the twentieth century, with a concluding chapter on New Directions for a New Century.

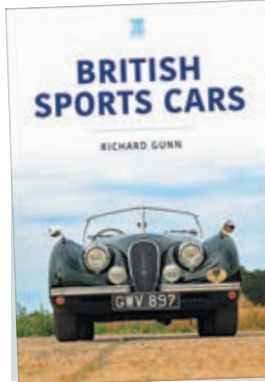
Gunn said: "In 1930, the number of cars on British roads exceeded one million for the first time. With a national population of nearly 46 million, that

might not seem many – today's figure is 38.6 million vehicles shared between over 68 million people – but it was nevertheless a significant landmark. Car ownership was spreading rapidly, with a growing trend of motoring for pleasure – which included, for many, having something a little sportier than just a common-or-garden family runaround."

He added: "British sports cars reached their peak during the 1960s. It was the decade that gave us the Jaguar, E-type, the Aston



LOTUS ELISE



WE HAVE copies of *British Sports Cars* up for grabs. For your chance to win one, tell us:

Win!
What was the name of the first British car firm to build cars especially for motorsport?

Email your answer, marked **British Sports Cars book competition**, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Rm 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by June 28.

Martin DB5, the MGB...and much more besides.

"The British motor industry was second only to the USA's in the 1960s. In 1963, over two million

vehicles left British factories, bound for showrooms across the globe. Motoring by now was for everyone; personified by cars like the Mini and Ford Cortina."

Green light for 99 Sqn



CREWS OPERATING the UK's heavyweight C-17 Globemasters took to the skies over Brize Norton during training sorties using the latest night-vision technology.

Junior pilots supervised by instructors followed the Oxfordshire station's flying circuit to hone their tactical assault landings on a pitch-black 500ft landing zone marked with infra-red lighting only visible through the night vision goggles.

The training sortie also included touch-and-go landings, taxi-ing and challenging reversal manoeuvres using the aircraft engines under the direction of a loadmaster.

The C-17 is the RAF's largest aircraft with a 50m wingspan and is powered by four Pratt and Whitney turbofan engines.

The transporter can carry more than 70 tonnes of cargo and can reach an altitude of 45,000 ft. Laden with 45 tonnes, it has a range of 4,500 nautical miles.

PHOTOS: SGT LEE MATTHEWS

Understanding your pension value



THE LATEST Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Study shows well under half (38%) of all those who responded (more than 9,000) expressed satisfaction with their pension.

Compared with the 2023 results, there has been a decrease in satisfaction across the board, with over a third of respondents now claiming to be dissatisfied.

This shows there remains a lack of understanding of the real value of Armed Forces pensions.

The reality is that at today's values, a pension income of £20,000 would require a pension pot in the private sector, of at least £400,000. Plus an Armed Forces pension is inflation-proofed and unaffected by stock market fluctuations. We can also fairly claim our pensions are among the best in the public sector.

The Forces Pension Society has long been advocating a better understanding of what Armed Forces Pensions offer, in order that those serving may make informed decisions about how to get the most from them, including choosing the best time to leave.

A good pension is, after all, the springboard for a second career in the private sector and the basis for a dignified retirement thereafter. Either way, it has critical importance in providing a secure foundation for the future.

Armed Forces Pensions are complex and that's why one of the key aims of the Society is to provide clear pension guidance to our Members, explaining the benefits of their



● Neil Marshall, CEO, Forces Pension Society

Armed Forces Pension.

To this end, in addition to having access to our expert Forces Pensions Consultants, Members receive webinars, e-newsletters and our magazine, Pennant.

Membership of the Forces Pension Society is now more than 66,000, and last year, our Forces Pensions Consultants dealt with more than 20,000 pension enquiries from Members.

Maj Gen Neil Marshall, CEO of the Forces Pension Society said: "One of our core aims at the Society is to help facilitate a greater understanding of the real value of Armed Forces pensions."

"This latest AFCAS survey shows we still have work to do, in conjunction with the

Services themselves, to communicate the value of Forces pensions and, in the process, encourage greater retention.

"Many in the Armed Forces underestimate their true worth and don't realise that AFPS15 is one of the best public sector schemes there is. By joining the Society, our Members gain a greater understanding of the real value of their pension and how to make better choices as their careers progress. This is especially vital when considering the best time to leave."

● The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that serves as a watchdog for the whole military community. If you would like to know more about our work and how we can help you make the most of your personal pension worth, visit forcespensionsociety.org



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By Tracey Allen

Feature



RAF CAIRNS: Vic, second left, after debriefing following bombing run against Japanese positions at Buka, 1942



FAMILY AFFAIR: Sqn Ldr Sam Hodgkinson, Vic's grandson, a 28 Sqn Chinook pilot at RAF Benson

The RAAF flying boat DFC

LIKE MANY World War II heroes, Wg Cdr 'Vic' Hodgkinson was reticent for a long time about his distinguished war service.

The DFC winner, who was Mentioned in Despatches, was one of the founding members of 10 Squadron RAAF. He went on to take part in the early stages of the Battle of the Atlantic, was involved in many air-sea rescues – including picking up 21 survivors of a U-boat attack – and served with an RAF flying boat squadron based in Alexandria. He flew through heavy enemy fire to make contact with Allied troops fighting for their lives in Crete.

His son Richard said: "My father always wanted to fly. Growing up in Lymington in the UK, I knew he was a pilot for BOAC and that he had flown flying boats for the Royal Australian Air Force in the Second World War. In the attic there were a few dusty mementoes of his RAAF service, including fleece-lined flying boots, a Japanese sword and special flying sunglasses."

He added: "My father rarely spoke of his wartime experiences, and it was not until his retirement from BOAC in 1971, when he had accumulated more than 19,300 flying hours, that he began to type a record of his remarkable career."

That record formed the basis of Vic's autobiography *My Flying Boat War, Survival and Success Over The Atlantic, Mediterranean and Pacific in WW2* (pen-and-sword.co.uk), in which he tells his amazing story.

Vic revealed that he became 'hooked' on aviation while in High School in the 1930s.

He said: "Our family house, at Concord, Sydney, was on the route between Mascot (the original Sydney airport) and the RAAF station at Richmond."

"On leaving High School, as the aviation industry was almost non-existent there was no demand for my inexperience. The RAAF also ignored my applications."

After doing an aircraft construction course at night school and working as an aircraft store keeper, Vic was eventually accepted for the Service.

He said: "Application for Cadet Pilot Training was a social priority and normally only sons of doctors, solicitors and the like were considered. I was accepted and reported for enlistment in January 1937 at RAAF Richmond."

In January 1939, he was on his way to the RAAF's Flying Training School, as a trainee sergeant pilot. He started training on the Westland Wapiti, was presented with his 'Wings' in October that year and then began a seaplane conversion course.

In early 1940, 10 Sqn was loaned to the RAF by the Australian Government, equipped with Short Sunderland flying boats. Flying from Mount Batten, Pembroke Dock and Oban, with



LAKE BISCARROSSE: Vic, right, and colleagues on the top of the Sunderland, June 1940, awaiting the return of Lord Lloyd who was negotiating with the French government in Bordeaux to continue fighting the Germans. Inset, the rescue of SS Stangrant survivors



WE HAVE copies of *My Flying Boat War* to win – for your chance to own one, tell us:

When was Vic Hodgkinson demobbed from the RAAF?

Email your answer, marked *My Flying Boat War* 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 June 28.**

Win!

the rest of the squadron, Vic played a vital part in the Battle of the Atlantic as part of the RAF's Coastal Command.

In October that year, while on a moonlight patrol 500 miles west of Oban, his Sunderland crew's rear gunner spotted a red light flashing in the sea below.

Vic said: "We circled this light until dawn, which revealed a ship's lifeboat that appeared to contain a number of people – we eventually ascertained the

occupants were 21 seamen."

The Sunderland's skipper was reluctant to attempt a landing on the open sea, but Vic and his colleague 'Thursty' Thurston persuaded him to try.

"Although there was a little wind, a moderate swell was running. It was a rough 'arrival' on the swell, but we came to a stop after a few bounces and taxied over to the lifeboat. The state of the sea was such that it was difficult to approach it

without damaging the fragile hull of the Sunderland. However, we managed to nose up to it and hold it off while we were pitching about," Vic remembered.

"Eventually the boat approached the heaving bow, and the seamen managed to climb aboard through the bow gunner's hatch."

The men had been in the open boat for two days and some had frostbite. Their ship, the SS Stangrant, had been torpedoed.

In 1942, Vic was sent back to Australia and served with both 20 Sqn RAAF and 40 Sqn RAAF. During this time, he flew the Consolidated Catalina, Martin Mariner and Dornier Do24s that came into RAAF service after the fall of the Dutch East Indies. His missions included dropping supplies to remote areas, minelaying, reporting on Japanese ship movements and engaging in the bombing of enemy positions.

Aged 26, in 1943 he was awarded the DFC 'for gallant service in

operations against the Japanese."

He was demobbed in May, 1946. He said: "I had accumulated 4,347 hours flying in the RAAF. Of the 50 cadets who I joined at Point Cook in January 1939, only around nine of us survived."

After the war he moved back to the UK, became a pilot for BOAC and amassed 25 years' service with the airline.

Richard said: "In his retirement Vic spent hundreds of happy hours refurbishing the Short Sandringham flying boat *Beachcomber* in Southampton's Solent Sky Museum, contributing to maritime aviation books, expanding his collection of flying boat photographs and books and corresponding with museums, aviation societies and ex-colleagues all over the world."

Vic died in 2010. His love of flying was passed on to his grandsons – David, a British Airways Captain, and Sam, a Sqn Ldr with 28 Sqn at RAF Benson, who flies the Chinook.



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Tim Morris

Nissan X Trail (from £45,900 otr)

Motoring



Nissan's Trail-blazer

NOW IN its fourth generation, Nissan's flagship SUV, the X Trail, is a larger, more refined big brother to the Qashqai crossover.

It comes with seven seats, a classy cabin and a new chunky, rugged look. It's economical too, thanks to Nissan's petrol-hybrid powertrain. In any guise, you can expect to enjoy fuel economy of around 40mpg. That's pretty impressive when you consider its size.

Interior

There's plenty of space in the cabin, front and back. The additional seats in the boot are, as usual, really only suitable for children, or short hops, but everywhere else you can spread out in comfort.

Everything feels solidly put together and the cockpit features nicely textured, soft-touch plastics. Switches are well damped and the steering wheel has a nice, chunky feel.

The dashboard is clear and logically laid out, with controls placed within easy reach. The buttons and switches are easy to identify at a glance and have precise movements.

Physical buttons and knobs are a rarity these days but they're far more user-friendly on the move and I love the X Trail's simplicity.

The infotainment is controlled through a touchscreen, which varies in size, depending on the trim level. In our test car, the 12.3 inch screen responded quickly and had a simple menu system. The Bose sound system was also suitably loud, with crystal clear audio.

On The Road

The latest X Trail is a big beast, a full-sized Sports Utility Vehicle with a high bonnet, an aggressive front end and solid flanks.

As you'd expect, there's lean through corners and you do have to respect the weight. The steering doesn't provide epic amounts of feedback but it's sharp enough and the car is surprisingly easy to place.

Its party piece, though, is the way that it gets its backside off the line. The wheels are powered directly by the electric motors, so it has the rapid shove that you get with an electric vehicle (EV). It makes the X Trail feel particularly punchy for an SUV.

That's about as far as the thrills go unfortunately, because it doesn't take long to realise that the set-up of the hybrid system is firmly geared towards economy.

Beyond the initial shove, booting it tends to produce more noise than acceleration and you'll notice only a gradual uptick in speed under the din.

Chug along, like a 4x4 should, and you'll be treated to quiet, smooth electric progress. It's a joy to drive overland and around town on battery power. Cheap to run too.

Nissan X Trail

Stats

- 0-62 mph: 7 seconds
- Top Speed: 111mph
- Economy: 43.5 mpg (Combined)

Pros

- Nissan reliability
- Stylish and well-built
- Plenty of standard equipment

Cons

- Petrol engine a little noisy
- Extra seats eat into boot space
- Less agile than previous X Trails

Verdict

7-SEATERS usually cost a bomb to run, but the X Trail does SUV practicality for a lot, lot less. It's a spacious, comfortable, refined cruiser that's easy to live with day to day.



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FOOTBALL

Brize take prize and Wyton clean the plate with 9 goals

BRIZE NORTON and Wyton are the RAF FA Cup and Plate champions after two dominant performances saw them take home the silverware 3-0 and 9-0 respectively.

The finals action started with Wyton against Valley in the Plate at the F.Ball Stadium, home of Leek Town FC, and it was the Valley defence who sprung a leak first as Flt Lt Fred Akwe tucked the ball away for Wyton.

The early strike was followed five minutes later by Captain AS1 Rory

RAF Brize Norton	3
RAF Leeming	0

RAF Wyton	9
RAF Valley	0

Stewart, with AS1 Ryan Somers adding a third on the stroke of half-time.

With a huge fightback needed from Valley, the task became even harder when, on the hour mark, substitute Sgt Will Riding netted his side's fourth.

A further brace came 10 minutes later from Man of the Match Stewart, before three goals in three minutes saw Riding net two more and Stewart claim his fourth.

In the Keith Christie Trophy final Brize took on Leeming and it was the North Yorkshire station that went closest early on, with a 13th-minute effort hitting both posts before spinning away.

From that effort Brize stormed up the other end and won a penalty, which skipper FS Dave Wanless slotted home.

The goal gave Brize a real boost and they continued to create chances, netting a second 10 minutes later as Man of the Match Cpl Allando Davis danced in from the left wing to fire a low cross into the box which was met by AS1 Rory Simmons.

Chasing a two-goal deficit after the restart Leeming came out firing, forcing a series of good saves from the Brize keeper, but just as they looked to be making inroads Sgt Mike Goddard headed in the third for Brize and the game was done.

GLIDING

Flight of the Connor-dor!

AS1 Goes Solo in the Alps

Daniel Abrahams

HAVING LAUNCHED its 'Go Solo' gliding scheme in 2022, RAFGSA saw the first inductees take to the skies above the French Alps for Parours Combattants.

The RAF Gliding and Soaring Association's expedition – one of two major events on the RAFGSA calendar – sees gliders based in Sisteron for two weeks face numerous challenges including training for high-altitude flying, hypoxia awareness and using oxygen-fitted gliders for the first time.

The expedition saw personnel multitask as they followed new airfield procedures, calculated necessary heights for glide slopes and selected potential land-out airfields to land in or take off from. Completely different flying conditions and combating navigation charts also add to the steep learning curve as they soar over local landmarks such as Crête des Selles, Montagne de Chabre, Sommet de la Platte, Tête Grosse and Malaup.

AS1 Connor MacNeil said: "I undertook my first flight just 18 months ago at RAF Shawbury Gliding Club while on training at RAF Cosford then, thanks to the



SOARAWAY SUCCESS: AS1 Connor MacNeil shares the ridge with glider R22 below

Go Solo scheme, I completed my first solo flight in May 2023.

"I could not have imagined that some 12 months later I would be flying in a glider in the French Alps."

Now based at Marham, MacNeil added: "The experience has been a mix of excitement, amazement and challenges, each moment shaping my journey as a junior pilot. This adventurous training offered a chance to push my limits and explore new heights."

Completing a total of seven flights, MacNeil navigated mountain ridge flying and thermalling, adding: "I also



TWO MILES HIGH: Connor takes first flight on supplemental oxygen

the challenges, the scenery and views of the Alps were unforgettable.

"This was my first adventurous training opportunity and it exceeded all my expectations. My advice to young RAF personnel is to seize any adventurous training opportunity."

● Follow RAFGSA on Instagram @rafgliding.

GRADUATION:
AS1 Connor MacNeil at RAF Cosford with partner Rachel



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EQUESTRIAN

Silver's a Boon for Wg Cdr

It's jump-off joy at Royal Windsor for Spitfire Sarah

WG CDR Sarah Boon held her nerve to bring home silver for the RAF at the prestigious Royal Windsor Horse Show.

Boon, riding for the RAF Spitfire team, was selected for the jump-off on Tango Cache Du Pot in front of a packed house and the Royal Box and delivered an excellent performance to secure second place in the non-mounted regiments section.

The RAF lost out marginally to the Army on a day where a field of 25 teams including the Army, police and international Armed Forces competed.



The top 12 teams with the lowest number of faults in the first round had to pick a single rider for the jump-off, this time against the clock.

Against the backdrop of Windsor Castle, the famous course comprised 8-9 show jumps, around 95cm-1m in height.

RAF Team Spitfire – Boon, Windsor debutant Wg Cdr Caitlin Wroe and Sqn Ldr Sam Martin – were the first to jump and returned clear rounds from Boon and Martin, with an unlucky four faults from Wroe.

With many of the teams recording several faults, this put the team in a good position to go through to phase two of the competition.

RAF Team Hurricane – Windsor debutants Sqn Ldr Elizabeth Nelmes and Fg Off Claudia Durran, together with AS2



SILVER LINING: Wg Cdr Sarah Boon in action, above, and teammate Sqn Ldr Sam Martin, inset left PHOTO: 1ST CLASS IMAGES

Rowan Duke – were one of the last teams to jump and the stakes were high.

Duke went first, recording 12 faults. Then a fast but accurate round by Nelmes resulted in just one pole downed, before Durran

also took one pole, leaving the team on 20 faults.

Durran said: “It was such a privilege to compete on my young horse, Millie, having only owned her a year. At such an early point in her career, I was so

chuffed with how she coped with the busy atmosphere.

“I had such an enjoyable day and I look forward to many years to come.”

The rides left the three Hurricane riders out of the top 12.

GRIDIRON

US Visitors dominate in second NFL taster

Daniel Abrahams

SERVICE AMERICAN football took another leap forward with the second NFL Flag match day, which gained international TV recognition as UKAF lost to a USVF team at Lakenheath.

Despite the result, 60-12 going the way of the hosts this time, the day was a jam-packed NFL experience for the RAF players on hand.

Before kick-off RAF Mustangs players – current IS champions – carried out interviews for a BBC camera crew and *Good Morning Football*, a US-based American football show.

Then it was down to action for the game, which was supported by the New York Jets NFL team, who provided jerseys and merchandise and equipment for the day.

Former NFL stars Tony Richardson (Dallas Cowboys) and NY Jets’ Erik Coleman were also on hand to impart knowledge.

RAF coach Chf Tech Paul Wakeford said: “After a couple



of soggy training days where the selected players from the three Services came together to learn the playbooks for the second UKAF vs USVF game, the weather cleared up for the day of the match.

“The format this year changed from three shorter games to one longer one, and it was apparent from the start that the USVF were taking this more seriously

than the previous year having held full try-outs.

“Although the home team ran away clear winners, the UKAF team represented themselves well and definitely surprised the USVF team by scoring twice and holding them on several occasions to no score.”

● Follow RAF American football on Instagram @rafamericanfootball.



FLAG-CARRIERS: UKAF team, in white, help trailblaze the cause of gridiron in the military. Inset left, former NY Jets star Erik Coleman was on hand to sign autographs and give out some expert tips at Lakenheath PHOTOS: SGT LEE MATTHEWS

Sport

Ultra-successful race

THE SERVICE’S first ever ultra-marathon proved a successful, if gruelling, affair with the 24-hour race going the way of the Army in Little Rissington, Gloucester. The 4.2-mile lapped event saw Cpl Gareth Jones (Army) win, running 21 laps (88.2 miles/141.9km) in the allotted time. In a down to the wire race, Flt Lt Harry Brierley pipped Sqn Ldr Michael Farrington to second place. The race also included a pairs event which saw Wycombe Walkers (Cpl Alan Temple and LCpl Samuel Haynes) beat Scrambled Legs (Cpl Tobias Smith and Cpl Jon Williamson) by two laps. Organiser Cpl Ian Aherne

said: “This was a very inclusive run as athletes did not have to run the full 24 hours. Out of all the entrants, only two had run an Ultra Marathon (50km or more) before, and by the end all of our runners had beaten that distance, giving them personal bests. This could evolve into a yearly event.” Fellow race organiser Flt Lt Clare Garside added: “Hopefully next year we will see an increase in people wanting to come and be involved with a closed course event that has a relaxed feel and will give you the chance to push yourself the furthest you’ve ever been in a safe environment. And when you’ve had enough, you can cheer on everyone else and enjoy the show.”

Rugby Dan’s the man

SERVICE RUGBY Union rewarded its own as former Corporal Dan Phillips was presented with a RAFRU’s President’s Award for his service to the RAF game at the recent IS clash. Phillips has worked as part of the RAFRU Community Development team for the past six years, helping to get 48 new personnel trained as fully qualified level two coaches. Another two coaching courses are planned for this year, in July and November. He said: “Our aim is to put on Pitch side First Aid, Continued Coach Development events and level two RFU affiliated coaching courses for both Service personnel and civil servants. We will also try to help stations across the RAF to host any bespoke courses if they wish.”



AWARD: Dan Phillips

Phillips also works with the RAF’s Engagement team, coordinating big games and hosting sponsors. During his time in service, he has played rugby and worked with the management teams of RAF Benson, Northolt and High Wycombe, where he is OIC of the station’s team. He received the prestigious award at Gloucester Rugby Club before the recent RAF v Army Inter-Services clash.



DEGREE OF SUCCESS: The teams on the University of Gloucester court

UKAF in France double

THERE WERE back-to-back wins for the UKAF as they beat Netball France at University of Gloucester after just four days of preparation. A 65-37 victory followed by a 49-24 result came after intense training at Imjin Barracks. Providing seven players and two coaches, the RAF were front and centre as the team took to the court for a hotly-contested first quarter, with UKAF holding the lead by a few goals. As the game continued

the team hit its stride and increased the gap throughout the subsequent quarters for the comfortable win. The second game saw the visitors come out of the blocks with new determination and tactics but the Service team remained calm and adapted its own tactics to secure another win. Flt Lt Kelsey Dawes said: “It was a very successful weekend for both teams, who have learnt a lot.”



Scotty, king of Scotland

Daniel Abrahams

SCOTLAND WAS the destination for the RAF’s men’s golf team as they prepared for the coming Inter-Services championships and season ahead. Announcing its competition fixtures for the year, the team, led by Flt Lt Tom Howells, attended a spring training camp at the ‘Home of Golf’ – St Andrews. Howells said: “We took 16 personnel, comprising players from both our elite and development squads, to play five rounds of golf over a week with the purpose of team building and enhancing technical skills and course management on links-style courses. “We were privileged to play three of the prestigious St Andrews Courses – The New, The Jubilee and The Castle – as well as The Torrance Course, at the Fairmont Hotel, and an Open Qualifying Venue in Scotsraig Golf Club.” Throughout the week a cumulative ‘Order of Merit’ was captured with Inter-Service debutant (2023) Cpl Scotty Richardson emerging as the eventual winner. Howells added: “During the camp personnel were honoured to be hosted on a visit to The



TOUR OF DUTY: Players on the Swilken Bridge as they prepare for Inter-Services

Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews; the iconic building recognised by golfers worldwide. We were able to witness the first-class facilities and invaluable golfing memorabilia dating back to the inception of golf as a sport.” The Development Team now switches focus to Inter-Services glory, at Thonock Park Golf Club, while the Elite Team will face the British Police and Civil Service on August 24, prior to September’s Inter-Services championships.

Upcoming events

- Strokeplay Champs – June 12-14, Luffenham Heath GC
- B Champs – July 8-10, Seacroft GC
- Matchplay Champs – July 15-17, Gainsborough GC
- Inter-Services Championships – Sept 9-12, Formby GC
- Inter-Station champs – Oct 1-3, Lincoln GC

Riders wild about new Wolf Tracks



HIGH-FLYER: Cpl Tom Abel

MOUNTAIN BIKING

A SOLID sixth-place finish was the reward for the RAF riders in the British National Enduro Series first round in Scotland's Laggan Wolf Tracks for Sgt Andy Lochhead.

The new course proved a tough and challenging addition to the mountain bike calendar, with Lochhead riding in the veterans class as the RAF took a team of 17 to the event.

Team rider Cpl David Thompson said: "With a mix of off-piste and trail centre trails, the weather was always going to play a part in the race. Seeing all four seasons in one day made things interesting."

"With 27kms, nearly 900ms of climbing and five stages, it was a great test of the legs and lungs. Stage 1 provided some steep climbs, while stage two had an uphill sprint at the start. Stage 3 was the last off-piste stage and was a lot longer than anyone wanted it to be. Stages 4 and 5 were across the valley in the trail centre, with stage 5 giving the riders some fantastic airtime."

"There was some great shredding by all team members and with Sgt Lochhead getting a sixth, all I can say is 'bring on round two in Wales.'"

Cpl Sweeting blasts back with sixth place and a PB



CHALLENGING: Pearce Regional Race Series

ROUNDS ONE and two of the Pearce Regional Race Series saw the RAF Downhill Mountain biking team in fine form, producing top 10 finishes.

In Bala, Wales, for Round 1, were: Sqn Ldr Andrew MacMillian, Flt Lt Barry Fenton, Sgt Matthew Redman, Cpl Katie Sweeting and AS1(T)s Guy James, Liam Johns and Alex Metcalfe.

The Pearce Regionals incorporate a Combined Service Race Series, meaning there was the need to perform well against the strong Army and Navy teams also present.

First up were Fenton and Redman. Both riders scored strong times of 3:32 and 3:47 respectively, with Fenton

improving on his second run by 5 seconds – with the pair producing 31st and 39th place finishes in the veterans 39-49 class.

Sweeting, back racing after a hiatus and having not been to the venue for five years, was the next RAF rider down the hill, scoring a time of 4:56 on her first run, a PB for her at Bala, for a sixth-place finish in the female 19+ class.

The Senior category was next, with Johns, James and Metcalfe throwing caution to the wind as predicted downpours made a second run unlikely. Unfortunately, all three crashed, with James suffering a heavy fall in the lower woods. All got up to finish, with 29th, 35th

and 36th places respectively, before the bad weather did indeed see the second runs scrapped.

Round two of the series saw 16 RAF riders head to Machynlleth, Wales. Five stages lay ahead of the team, each with its own uniqueness, from steep to rocky and fast.

Despite the challenges the Gravity team recorded two top 10 finishes, with Cpl Gareth Hernaman-Wood eighth and Sgt Andy Lochhead ninth. There were also a further four top 20 RAF finishes.

● **Contact Discipline Sec Stuart. McCarthy105@mod.gov.uk to get involved with downhill and enduro mountain biking in the RAF.**

FOOTBALL

Young Lions the pride of Cyprus

THE JOINT Service Signal Unit (Cyprus) became a home from home for England's U17 footballers as they were hosted by Ayios Nikolaos Youth FC, run by RAF coach Cpl Matthew Mahoney.

The Tri-Service unit hosted the England stars and coaching staff who were in Cyprus for the UEFA Under 17s European Championship.

Ay Nik Youth FC was established in 2015 and reformed two years ago by volunteers of the UK Armed Forces, transforming the team into a grassroots club.

During the day the Young Lions squad took part in a small football session with the youngsters before presenting them with their player of the session trophies.

Mahoney said: "The visit has left a lasting impression on our young players and has ignited their passion and motivation. My little boy has not stopped talking about it and has spent all Sunday in the back garden practising to be the next Jack Fletcher, as he's a big Man United fan."

"We wish the England U17s the very best in the upcoming Euro Championships in the beautiful country of Cyprus."

U17s captain Chris Rigg said: "It was brilliant to visit the Ay Nik Youth FC and meet the families of the British military based here in Cyprus."

"We really enjoyed the experience and it was great to have a kickaround with the kids and present them with their trophies."



AMBASSADORS: England U17 stars hand out toy lion mascots to Service youngsters

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

MOTORSPORT



GOOD TACTICS:
FS Ben Rainbow
PHOTOS:
CAMPIX

Bikers retake pole position

IT WAS a day to remember for the RAF team as they reclaimed the lead in the Inter-Services with a series of outstanding rides at Cadwell Park.

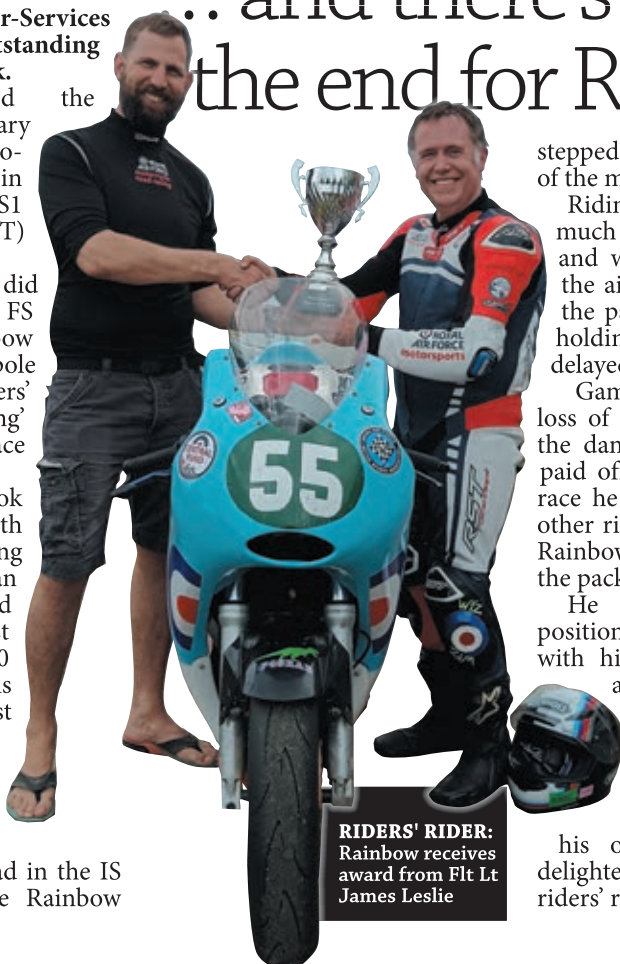
They dominated the GBRacing military event, securing back-to-back podium finishes in the 600cc class for AS1 Brad Burns and AS1(T) Kenny MacLeod.

The success did not end there with FS Benjamin Rainbow gaining a first-time pole and winning the 'Riders' rider of the meeting' for a silky piece of race craft.

The service took 14 riders to the Louth circuit, including debutant Cpl Jordan Harkins who managed an impressive 21st place on his CB500 having gained his ACU race licence just four days before.

Burns and MacLeod then secured the points needed to see the Service regain the lead in the IS championship, before Rainbow

... and there's gold at the end for Rainbow



RIDERS' RIDER:
Rainbow receives award from Flt Lt James Leslie

stepped up for another highlight of the meet.

Riding his Suzuki against much more powerful bikes and with changeable weather, the airman decided to wait in the paddock instead of a bike holding area after the race was delayed due to a crash.

Gambling that despite a loss of track time he would hit the damp track on warm tyres paid off as 30 seconds into the race he entered the fray and as other riders were losing traction Rainbow was blasting through the pack.

He amazingly took pole position but could not hang on with his underpowered Suzuki and another change in the weather.

There was to be no podium finish, but his endeavours were recognised by his opponents and he was delighted to be nominated the riders' rider.



Wg Cdr takes a silver at Windsor

See page 25

ANGLING

Spiller and Keightley win by 120lb margin



HEAVYWEIGHTS: Late surge saw Cpl Spiller and Sgt Keightley storm to victory

Daniel Abrahams

IT WAS the Sgt Michael Keightley and Cpl Adam Spiller show as they stormed to success in the second RAFCAA match of 2024 at Thorney Weir, Colne Valley.

The 48-hour event saw 28 anglers compete in pairs, with the biggest combined weight of catch taking the win.

FS Matthew Whittaker's rod alarm screamed off first within two hours of the action starting, with a 22lb 8oz mirror carp his prize.

That was quickly followed up by WO Richard Cooke catching what proved to be the biggest carp of the match and a contender for biggest fish of year – a 35lb 10z mirror. It made Cooke somewhat of a specimen hunter, with the biggest fish in the last two matches.

As the scores were totted up on the first evening it was Whittaker and FS Ian Coleman in the lead, with a combined weight of 79lb 10oz. They were closely followed by Sgt James Mitchell and Sgt Lee Hasbury, managing to put a run of fish together in Peg 4, with a weight of 64lb 6oz.

Cooke and WO Jason Verney rounded off the top three, with the 35lb 10z mirror landed in the early stages.

The next 24 hours proved less fruitful for most pairs, with the exception of Spiller and Keightley, who managed to haul in 172lb 14oz, putting them in the lead going into the last 15 hours of action. The pair would eventually finish on 239lb 10z – winning by a huge margin of more than 120lb.

Verney and Cooke landed another three carp, including another 30lb+ specimen, to come second with a catch total of 115lb 6oz.

Coleman and Whittaker slipped another carp into the net, putting them in third with 105lb 14oz.

● Follow RAF Carp angling on Instagram @rafcarp_fishing.



BIGGEST FISH: WOs Cooke & Verney

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Announcements

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R'n'R



Win star-studded
drama ● p 4



All for Art – hit comedy on tour



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Win family ticket for folk festival



Great day at Hatfield, worth £153

MUSIC FESTIVAL Folk by the Oak returns to its parkland setting in Hatfield, Hertfordshire on Sunday, July 21, headlined by iconic band Levellers, and with lots of free family activities.

Thanks to having two stages in one tree-lined arena, music lovers can catch every set in one day of music.

Joining Levellers on the Main Stage line-up are Boston-based Darlingside, indie-folk band The Staves, kora master Seckou Keita with his new collaboration Homeland Band, master storytellers The Young'uns with their spine-tingling harmonies and The Furrow Collective, a collaboration between four talented individuals drawn together by a shared love of traditional song and balladry: Lucy Farrell, Rachel Newton, Emily Portman and Alasdair Roberts.

Over on the Acorn Stage, headlined by Essex legend and festival favourite Beans on Toast, the event welcomes HEISK – a six-piece folk band, Cahalen Morrison – an accomplished roots multi-instrumentalist



GRACE SMITH TRIO: Boundary-pushing approach to folk music

and captivating singer, Lucy Farrell – a leading contemporary English folk artist renowned for her beguiling vocals, plus Malin Lewis Trio and the Grace Smith Trio, both offering an innovative and boundary-pushing approach to folk music.

Folk by the Oak also has a fun-packed family area in sight and sound of the Main Stage, an inspiring array of arts and crafts plus real ale bar and street food. Most of the family and craft activities are free and, though rarely permitted in the festival world, you are welcome to bring

your own picnics and drinks into the arena, making the event excellent value for money.

Car parking is also free of charge, but the organisers encourage everyone to consider car-sharing or coming by train. The festival entrance is just a 10-minute walk from Hatfield station, which is served by regular Great Northern trains from King's Cross and Moorgate in central London.

Book direct (where there's no hidden booking fees) and view the full line-up at: folkbytheoak.com, or enter our competition



LEVELLERS: Headlining on the Main Stage in the beautiful parkland setting

for a family pass (rrp £153) to this fabulous festival.

To be in with a chance of winning, answer this question correctly:

Which iconic band is

headlining Folk by the Oak this year?

Email your answer to: info@folkbytheoak.com, subject: RAF NEWS FBTO COMPETITION by June 28, 2024*.

*PLEASE NOTE entries must be sent by email so that your family pass can be sent out electronically. By entering the competition, you agree to subscribe to Folk by the Oak e-marketing database. JSL Productions will never share your personal data with third-parties who intend to use it for their own purposes without your consent. You can unsubscribe at any time using the unsubscribe option on JSL Productions marketing emails. Winners will be selected at random on June 28 and notified by email. Tickets are transferable but cannot be exchanged for any other goods. Winners agree to abide by concert and estate rules. Please email: info@folkbytheoak.com for full competition T&Cs.



Film Review

Wilding (PG)
In cinemas now

BASED ON the appropriately-named Isabella Tree's bestselling book of the same name, *Wilding* is a beautifully-shot, fascinating film that tells how Tree and her husband Charlie Burrell made the bold decision to turn the farmland Burrell inherited over to nature.

Tree narrates the story of how the



SAPLING: Rhiannon Neads as a young Tree

Returning farm to nature

couple stopped using conventional intensive farming methods, despite the hostility of local farmers, and rewilded the ecosystem at Knepp – a breathtakingly lovely 35,000-acre estate in West Sussex, with a castle.

The film is just an hour and 14 minutes long, with Rhiannon Neads heading the small cast as a younger Tree. Almost every shot, directed by David Allen, is mesmerising – at times almost soporific in its beauty – as it shows traditional animals including longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies, red deer and Tamworth pigs thriving on the land – and incredible footage of pigs diving for mussels.

Tree, a travel writer, and Burrell, a baronet, started their rewilding project more than 20 years ago and their patience has been spectacularly rewarded –

Tamworth pigs 'rooting' in the soil has resulted in Knepp becoming the most popular site in the UK for purple emperor butterflies and the area is now a major breeding spot for the critically endangered turtle dove.

The introduction of beavers onto the estate, despite a seven-year battle to get them there, and of white storks, is also a success.

Of course, it's not all a bucolic paradise, and the documentary shows some disasters – with wild ponies invading a fundraising polo match and the Tamworths gatecrashing the catering tent to devour ice-cream mix.

Wilding is a charming, lyrical film that also presents strong food for thought about how we treat our precious land.

Four out of five rounds
Review by Tracey Allen



REGAL: Wayward pony Duncan at Knepp Castle

R'n'R



Theatre
Art
UK tour



'CRITICS':
Art stars (l-r)
Seann Walsh,
Chris Harper
and Aden
Gillett

AWARD-WINNING comedian Seann Walsh, Chris Harper (*Call the Midwife*, *Coronation Street*) and Aden Gillett (*The Crown*, *The House of Elliot*) star in a new production of Yasmina Reza's multi-award-winning play *Art*, on tour this autumn.

Described as a razor-sharp exploration of art, love and friendship (and winner of Best Comedy at the Olivier Awards, Tony Awards and Moliere Awards), the production is directed by Iqbal Khan (*East is East*, *National Theatre* and *Othello*, RSC).

A seemingly simple purchase of contemporary art – an all-white painting – ignites a hilarious debate amongst three close friends. What begins as a light-hearted discussion about art quickly descends into a riotous exploration of the blurred lines between art and reality.

It'll be all-white on the night for mates

The tour, presented by Joshua Beaumont and Original Theatre, will visit Lighthouse Poole (August 29-31), Theatre Royal Bath (September 3-7), Norwich Theatre Royal (September 10-14), Mercury Theatre Colchester (September 17-21), Malvern Theatres (September 24-28), Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne (September 30-October 5), Nottingham Theatre Royal (Oct 7-12), Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (Oct 15-19) and Sheffield Lyceum Theatre (Oct 22-26), with additional dates to be announced.

● Go to: artthecomedy.com for more details.



DVDs
May December (15)
On DVD and Blu-ray now (Dazzler Media)

Win!



The age-gap marriage scandal

OSCAR WINNERS Natalie Portman (*Black Swan*) and Julianne Moore (*Still Alice*), star in a powerful, thought-provoking film that follows married couple Gracie (Moore) and Joe Atherton-Yoo (Charles Melson), whose 23-year age gap sparked a notorious tabloid romance that gripped the nation two decades ago.

Cut to modern day, and their marriage comes under renewed strain when Hollywood actress Elizabeth Berry (Portman) comes to spend time with the family to better understand Gracie, who she will be playing in a film about the scandal.

Directed by Oscar-nominated Todd Haynes (*Far From Heaven*), *May December* has been described as a bold, original and morally complex film.

We have copies of *May December* to win on DVD. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply answer this question correctly:

For which film did Julianne Moore win an Oscar?



ROLE PLAY: Berry (Portman, left) takes notes on Gracie (Moore)

Email your answer, marked May December DVD 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 June 28.



Theatre
Uncanny: I Know What I Saw
UK tour

Danny R the para Indiana

DANNY ROBINS admits that he is 'obsessed' with ghosts and the afterlife. The writer and broadcaster is the creator of the hugely successful BBC Radio 4 podcasts and global hits, *Uncanny*, *The Battersea Poltergeist* and *The Witch Farm*, the BBC TV series *Uncanny* and the award-winning West End play *2:22 - A Ghost Story*.

Now he's touring the country with the stage show of *Uncanny: I Know What I Saw*, that goes to venues including Wycombe Swan (June 23), Peterborough's New Theatre (July 4) and the Oxford Playhouse (July 15).

Dubbed 'The Terrifying Live Tour', the show features chilling real-life stories of the supernatural experienced by ordinary people from ordinary places, brought to life on stage through theatrical invention in a mix of projection, sound and storytelling.

Robins (*inset, right*) said: "It's [ghosts and the afterlife] something that has obsessed me since I was a kid. I used to hang out in the school library, poring over books like the *Usborne World of the Unknown*, staring at alleged photos of ghosts. I think part of it was because I was brought up an atheist, so I had an entirely belief-free childhood. I became fascinated by the idea that there might be something more out there.

He added: "As I've got older, the idea of an afterlife captivates me more and more. The paradox at the heart of ghost stories is that they are simultaneously scary and comforting; even the most frightening ghosts bring

with them that amazing hopeful prospect that death is not the end; that those we have loved and lost might still be out there or that we may be able to communicate when we pass on. What an idea that is.

"Now I'm in this amazing position where, thanks to *Uncanny*'s success, thousands of people send me stories of their potentially paranormal experiences. I feel very privileged – it's my childhood dream come true."

Robins, whose writing credits include BBC Radio 4 comedies *Rudy's Rare Records* starring Lenny Henry, and *The Cold Swedish Winter*, revealed he's never actually seen a ghost himself.

"I have spent most of my life desperately wanting too, but now I regularly interview people who believe they have, I often think, be careful what you wish for," he explained.



Robins - Paranormal Jones



GHOST TOUR: Danny in live show

"To have one of these experiences is life-changing, both in terms of the level of fear it can create, but also in terms of the way it changes your whole concept of reality. I'm not quite sure I could cope with it!"

He described the stage show as "a truly theatrical experience... that feels like a proper thrilling evening of spooky theatrically exciting storytelling."

He added: "I bring two cases to life that have never been featured on the *Uncanny* podcast or TV series, scaring you with them using all the magic of the theatre, including an epic light and sound design, video projection, illusions and an amazing set. The director, Sam Hodges, and I wanted to create something that feels like a truly magical night out."

"We'll have two of our experts with us each night - one from Team Believer and one from Team Sceptic - exploring the cases and answering people's questions, and we'll also be hearing ghost stories from the audience."

There seems to be a real appetite for the world of the paranormal and unexplained and Robins' work seems to be reaching an ever-widening audience, known as the Uncanny Community - why does he think these

stories are resonating with people now?

He explained: "I think there is an enduring fascination with the paranormal. It's not surprising really, it is the biggest question of all, isn't it? What happens to us when we die? It's what every religion ever founded has attempted to answer. But I agree that there is a particularly intense interest right now and the paranormal does seem to be being talked about in mainstream culture in a way it hasn't for decades. I think there are definite reasons for that - the fact that we have been exposed to such factors as Covid, climate change and wars creeping ever closer to us in recent years has made us face the fact of our mortality in a way we probably haven't since World War II."

"In the wake of both world wars, there was a huge boom of interest in the supernatural and I see that now too. When the world feels chaotic, uncertain, broken, scary, we go looking for another world outside of it."

After all his investigations into the strange and unfamiliar, would Robins say he is now Team Believer or Team Sceptic?

"I'm a sceptic who wants to believe," he said. "I feel like I am on a journey. If you listen to the first series I made about the paranormal, *Haunted*, you'll hear a more sceptical me. Having been exposed to so many strange, unsettling, inexplicable stories now I find it harder and harder to dismiss the idea that there is something strange going on here."

"I still haven't had any experience myself, but I find myself unable to come up with rational answers for what the witnesses I meet are telling me. That is the closest I will come to saying I believe. I'm a paranormal Indiana Jones, hunting the holy grail that is proof that all this is real."

● Go to: uncannylive.com for full tour details.



Galleries

Now You See Us

Tate Britain, until Oct 13

Celebrating female trailblazers of art

MORE THAN 100 artists are featured in Tate Britain's impressive new exhibition *Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520-1920*.

The work of well-known names such as Artemisia Gentileschi, Angelica Kauffman, Gwen John and photographer Julia Margaret Cameron are on show alongside many others who are only now being rediscovered.

A Tate Britain spokesperson said: "Their careers were as varied as the works they produced: some prevailed over genres deemed suitable for women like watercolour landscapes and domestic scenes. Others dared to take on subjects dominated by men like battle scenes and the nude, or campaigned for equal access to training and membership of professional institutions."

The exhibition, that runs until October 13, showcases oil paintings, watercolours,

pastel, sculpture, photography and 'needlepainting' to tell the story of these trailblazing artists. It looks at the enormous challenges women artists had to overcome to establish themselves professionally and gives the chance to view some very rarely-seen works including Tudor miniatures and



Susanna and The Elders by Gentileschi - the first time the painting, which is lent by the Royal Collection, is on public display.

Curator Tabitha Barber said: "All these women were well-known in their day. This exhibition shows the success of these determined women, that they could be artists against the odds. Women artists had lack of access to training."

The show looks at Kauffman and Mary Moser, the only women

included among the Founder Members of the Royal Academy of Arts; it took 160 years for membership to be granted to another woman - Dame Laura Knight in 1936.

The spokesperson added: "Women of this era are often dismissed as amateurs pursuing 'feminine' occupations like watercolour and flower painting, but many worked in these genres professionally."

The exhibition concludes in the early twentieth century with women's suffrage and World War I and includes paintings by Anna Airy, who worked as a war artist, and Knight, an official war artist in WWII.

Barber added: "The perception we've inherited today that we still have is the idea of women artists as genteel amateurs but we wanted to demonstrate that women have always been professional artists and how they battled against the odds to pursue their professional careers."

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



ABOVE: Anna Airy, *Shop for Machining 15-inch Shells*: Singer Manufacturing Company, Clydebank, Glasgow, 1918 © Imperial War Museum
INSET, TOP: Levina Teerlinc, *Portrait of a Lady holding a Monkey*, 1560s. Victor Reynolds and Richard Chadwick



Your Announcements

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

Deaths

DUNGATE John, MBE, AFM Sqn Ldr (Ret'd), passed away on May 24. Much loved husband to Ann, and father to daughters Yvonne and Julie. A celebration of John's life was held at Lincoln Crematorium on June 10 at 10am. Signing off 10:10.



Sqn Ldr John Dungate

EDWARDS Alf (Chief Technician), passed away peacefully at Royal Stoke Hospital, Monday, May 13, aged 87. Previous postings included Patrington, Holbrook, Seleta, Henlow, Madalena, Saxa Vord, RSRE Malvern, HQ Strike and Mount Alice, Falklands. Loving husband and father to dearly departed Gwendoline. Survived by their children Jackie and James. Any further info on Dad, I (James) can be contacted by text only please on sms or WhatsApp: 07724 875372.

ROBERTS John Noel, Gp Capt RNZAF, died on March 17 in Auckland, New Zealand, aged 88. Formerly Sqn Ldr JN Roberts, RAF, he transferred to the RNZAF in 1974 from the Provost Branch. He joined the RAF as an Apprentice in 1951. He served in many parts of the world including Hong Kong, Aden, Cyprus (with

the UN Peacekeepers), Malta, Northern Ireland, Singapore and Bangkok.

SMITH Michael (Mick), sadly passed away on May 22, aged 62. A former RAF avionics technician, Mick served for 22 ½ years, working on Phantom and Jaguar aircraft, flight simulators and ended his career working as a Sgt in the Career Information Office in Edinburgh. Mick never married but he will be sadly missed by his sisters Patricia and Alison, his nieces Cathy and Jenny and all his family and friends. His funeral was held at Park Road Crematorium (West Yorkshire) on June 4.

WALLIS Richard David; aka David, Dave, Wings, and Horse. David died on 4 March, aged 88. Retired Chief Technician, after 26 years of proud service to the RAF; he joined as a boy entrant, aged 15 at RAF Cosford. He was a Nuclear Veteran, and a Blind Veteran. Adored husband and much loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather. David's cremation was held in April, in Dorset, without ceremony, at his request.



Chf Tech Richard Wallis

Seeking

I am currently searching for Ivan Spring, a South African Airman who was based at RAF Marham

in the 1950s for my mum, maiden name Susan Clarke (now Susan Bennett) who has dementia. She recalls Ivan fondly and has photos of when she went to visit his family in South Africa but doesn't appear to have any photos of him. She lived in Cambridge when she knew Ivan and her mother worked as a housemistress at Queens' College. It would be lovely to find out what happened to him and complete the story. If anyone can help, please email: beckygoff542@gmail.com or telephone: 07985 424308.

Reunions

45TH Entry C Flt 3 Sqn Suppliers. 64th anniversary reunion at Barn Hotel, Cocksparrow Lane, Cannock on Friday/Saturday June 28-29. If interested please contact Dave Bell on: 01482 377625.

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

WHAT do you know about the 2 Halifax RAF Sqn 346 and 347 which flew from RAF Elvington near York in World War II? Why not join the Sud-Ouest France Branch of RAFA to find out more? You will be welcomed with open arms or un Accueil Chaleureux! For further details contact Terry Dennett at Admin@Rafsudouest.fr or call: 0033546953889.

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 this address: 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: rafadappassn.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. To become a member of the Association you will have had to have successfully passed the RAF Physical Training Instructors Basic Training Course. The Association was formed in 1996 to bring together serving and retired PTIs. It currently has 600 PTI members.

RAF Wainfleet

LOOKING for photos/memorabilia/stories from RAF Wainfleet. The current owner of the tower would love you to get in touch. Please contact: willroughton@hotmail.com.

Volunteers wanted for 'best-kept secret'

AN AVIATION MUSEUM is looking for volunteers to help out at what's been described as "one of the world's best-kept secrets."

"You don't need to be a previous Rolls-Royce employee ... you just need enthusiasm and we can provide the training," said Dave Wheeler from the Hucknall Flight Test Museum in Nottinghamshire.

He added: "Hucknall airfield (near Junction 26 on the M1) was sold by Rolls-Royce for housing but a small group of dedicated Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust members have saved the former Rolls-Royce Flight Test Establishment's Wing Test Hangars – now the Hucknall Flight Test Museum – a registered charity which has been awarded Grade II listing status and as 'Home of the Merlin' one of the best kept secrets in this country and worldwide since 1935."

Dave explained: "The opportunities for volunteers are endless – either in the workshop as one of our restoration team



SAVED: The Grade II Listed hangars form the main museum

members, fundraising, archiving, shop and cafe management, museum maintenance with our housekeeping and gardening team or joining our front of house team which looks after our visitors' experience, or becoming one of our tour guides.

"Even our STEM and Outreach team require help, along with our modellers."

If interested you can phone or text Dave on: 07834 278460 or email: davidwheeler.flt.lt@gmail.com.

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

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.

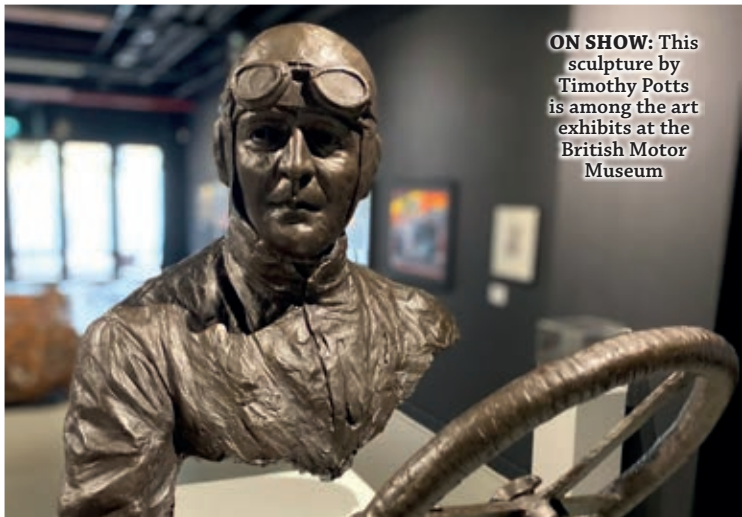
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Your Announcements

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



ON SHOW: This sculpture by Timothy Potts is among the art exhibits at the British Motor Museum

Calling young artists

THE BRITISH Motor Museum has launched a young artists competition to celebrate the opening of its new exhibition, 'The Gallery 2024'.

The contest gives young artists with a passion for automotive art the chance to showcase their work at the museum over the summer. There are three age categories for entry: under 11s, 11-16, and 17-25. The deadline for entries is July 8.

Entries in all mediums of artwork, including drawings, paintings, sculptures and digital art, are welcomed, said a museum spokesperson.

The winning artworks will be displayed in the museum from July 26. The winner of each age category will also receive £50 worth of art vouchers, thanks to a donation from LifeWithArt.

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

Fund keeps vet warm

THE RAF Benevolent Fund has come to the aid of a veteran who was struggling with the coldness of her home while recovering from cancer treatment.

Former sergeant Elizabeth Boyall, from Lossiemouth, was a medical administrator for the Service, leaving the Air Force after 22 years. Her career took her to Germany, Cyprus, Kosovo, the Falkland Islands, Hong Kong and UK-wide, and she also served in the Gulf conflict.

In 2022 Elizabeth had surgery following a breast cancer diagnosis and was unable to work. She approached the Fund for financial support to help towards living expenses during her recovery.

The RAFBF replaced windows in her home that were 35 years old, as well as her draughty, single-glazed front door.

She said: "It was always very cold in my house and when I was going through my cancer treatment it was miserable."

"I was off work for three months once the treatment had



GRATEFUL: Liz today and, below, during her RAF service

finished and I was depressed. I felt stuck because I couldn't move anywhere else, but I felt like I would never be able to get these things done to the house."

"Always worrying about the work that needed doing contributed to my low mood and how I felt about life generally."

Elizabeth also had a security light fitted by the RAFBF so she felt safer at home, where she lives alone with her four pets.

She said: "I'm now much warmer and having the safety of the security light helps a lot when I go out at night with the dogs."

She now works part-time for a charity providing mental health support for people with complex care needs.

"I've felt really supported by the Fund. I felt like someone cared – I didn't feel so hopeless. I'm so grateful for the help," she added.



RAF News

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Prize Crossword
No. 363

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 8 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF word.

Across

- 1. Beginner leaves projection to gain supremacy (4)
- 8. Without Ally, fancily elicits research-based solution (10)
- 9. It's pureed for consumer convenience... (4,4)
- 10. ...while these are worn for protection (4)
- 12. RAF plane encountered eastern alternative (6)
- 14. First English flower festival (6)
- 15. See 21 Across
- 17. Live about Manchester City, say (6)
- 18. Be familiar with negative on radio (4)
- 19. Daughter is irritable in RAF emergency (8)
- 21. And 15 Across. Famously sandy member of RAF? (8,2,6)
- 22. Goat I take David Beckham to hear (4)

Down

- 2. Hero danced around solid figure (10)
- 3. See second letter of Berlin double agent (4)
- 4. Pep's Spanish city joins ancient city (6)
- 5. For example, Delaware Bond doctor came back nervous (2,4)
- 6. As Serbia crumbles, stations are the answer (3,5)
- 7. Pilots in Wichita Cessna (4)
- 11. Crumbs, it's sharp! (5,5)
- 13. Were mobs building shelters? (8)
- 16. Originally amorous, Romeo declined, ending not terribly passionate (6)
- 17. Hill falls over a number not fit for human consumption (6)
- 18. After Kelvin, I shall finish off (4)
- 20. Speakers, for example, say hello to Fiona (2-2)

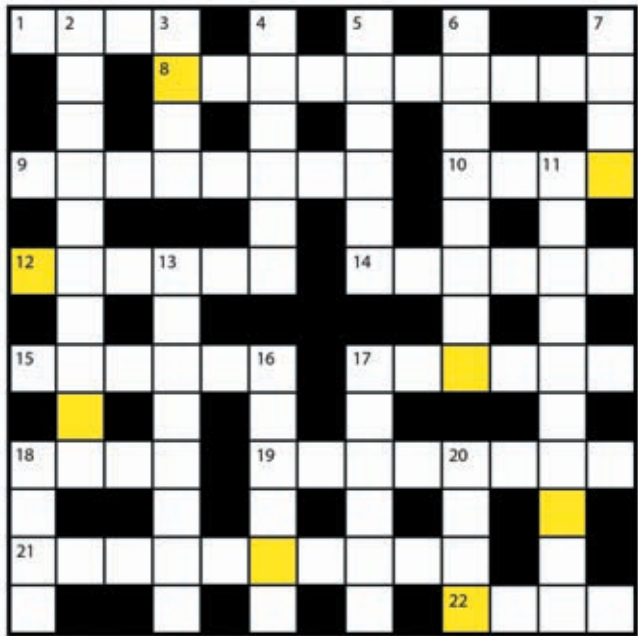
Name:

Address:

.....

RAF word: Crossword No. 363

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 June 28.
Prize Crossword No. 361 winner is: Brian Reynolds, Royston.



Solution to Crossword No. 362

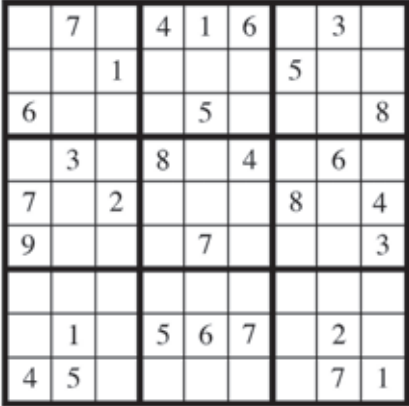
Across - 1. Adze 8. Tap-dancing 9. Thanks To 10. Made 12. Shakes 14. Autumn 15. Arnica 17. Hang-up 18. Dash 19. Airlifts 21. Absolution 22. So-so
Down - 2. Diphtheria 3. Eton 4. Spasms 5. Dakota 6. Scampton 7. Ogle 11. Dambusters 13. Knighton 16. Abacus 17. Harris 18. D-Day 20. Ions
RAF plane - Hurricane



Prize Su Doku
No. 373

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 June 28.
The winner of Su Doku No. 371 is: Tony Smith, Biggleswade.



Solution to Su Doku No. 372

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

Balcony date for Bluebird Belles

VINTAGE CLOSE harmony trio The Bluebird Belles (pictured) will be appearing at the Guildford Fringe Festival on July 6 – on the historic Guildhall balcony on the High Street.

There's no need to book, said the organisers, just bring a blanket or chair and settle in to be entertained.

The festival, that features theatre, comedy, spoken word, music, cabaret and family-friendly shows, is now in its eleventh year, and runs from June 29 to July 20. June 30 sees a free evening of Opera on the Balcony with arias and duets from well-loved composers such as Puccini, Verdi, Mozart, Lehár and more.

Charlotte Wyschna, the festival's managing director, said: "We have been proud to offer open access to performers and shows, and have kept ticket prices as low as possible, with an average ticket costing £10."

Go to: GuildfordFringeFestival.com for more details and call the Box Office on: 01483 361101.



DVDs

The Goldfinger (15)

On Blu-ray, DVD & digital (Trinity CineAsia)

Win!

Greed rules in Hong Kong

INSPIRED BY true events and set in Hong Kong during the 1980s, *The Goldfinger* follows the rise and fall of a multi-billion-dollar company and its chairman Henry Ching (Tony Leung, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, *The Grandmaster*), who undergoes a major investigation led by an elite anti-corruption investigator, Lau Kai-Yuen (Andy Lau, *The Wandering Earth II*, *House of Flying Daggers*). The result is a relentless and intriguing 15-year investigation in pursuit of the truth.

Reuniting Leung and Lau with their *Infernal Affairs* co-writer Felix Chong (*The Silent War*, *Overheard*), now directing, this bold new film has been hailed as a sweeping, stunning tale of greed and excess. Their classic original *Infernal Affairs* was first released more than 20 years ago, and in turn spawned Martin Scorsese's Oscar-winning film *The Departed*.

The Goldfinger has just

taken six prizes at the 2024 Hong Kong Film Awards, the most wins for any single film this year, including Best Actor for Leung, his sixth accolade at the annual ceremony.

We have copies of *The Goldfinger* on DVD up for grabs. For your chance to own one, tell us:

Where is *The Goldfinger* set?

Email your answer, marked Goldfinger DVD 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 June 28.



HIGH-ROLLER: Company boss Ching (Leung)