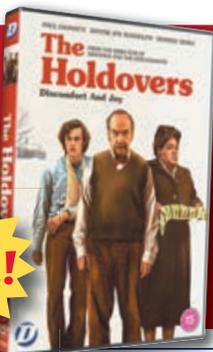


The Forces' favourite paper

See Oscar winning actress

● R'n'R page 5

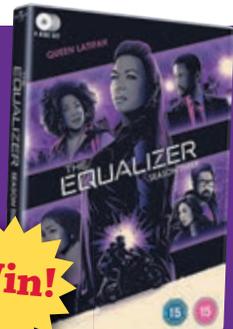
Win!



Queen Latifah reigns again

● See R'n'R p8

Win!



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday, April 19, 2024
Edition No. 1582 £1.20

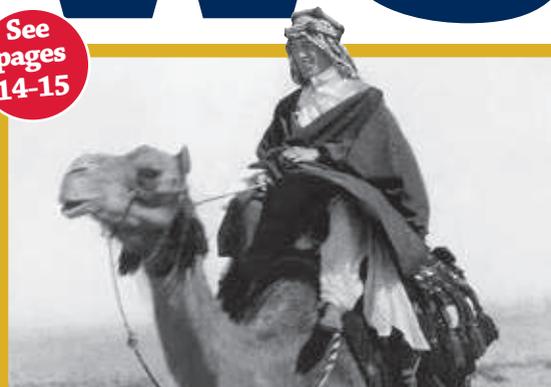
RAF NEWS



Arabian flight: How Lawrence took refuge in the RAF

● Win new book which includes story of British legend's surprising RAF career

See pages 14-15



Boxing UKAF treble



● See page 26

Hockey 7th IS title on the trot



● See page 27

Football IS champs once more



● See page 28

Holding the NATO line



UK FIGHTER jets have launched a mission to safeguard Nato's eastern air space over the Black Sea in Romania.

Six Typhoons supported by more than 200 RAF personnel will operate alongside the Romanian Air Force from the Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base to face down the Russian threat along the Alliance's eastern flank.

● Continued on p2

BiteSize

“You need stamina... and a good pair of trainers,”



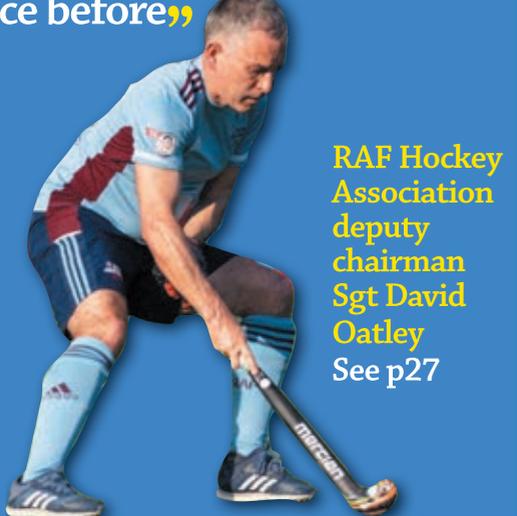
Officer runs 10km a day for 100 days for RAF charity
See page 5

“It’s lovely that stuff I wrote half a century ago is still hitting home,”



Renowned lyricist Sir Tim Rice
See R’n’R pages 4-5

“The men won the IS title for the seventh time in a row, which has never been done by any Service before,”



RAF Hockey Association deputy chairman Sgt David Oatley
See p27



ROYAL AIR FORCE RAF News

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UK’s eastern promise

● *Continued from front page*
NATO’s enhanced air policing mission was launched in 2014 following Putin’s illegal invasion of Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula.

UK Typhoons will be scrambled to intercept any unauthorised aircraft closing in on Nato-controlled air space.

Last year RAF fighters leading the enhanced air policing mission from Estonia tracked 50 Russian military aircraft over the Baltic, and will be scrambled to track unauthorised aircraft skirting Nato skies.

Air Cdre Martin Cunningham said: “Our presence here is an example of the UK’s steadfast commitment to Nato and a further demonstration of our air power projection capability.”

“There has been an enormous amount of preparation to get us to this point, from the huge road moves, delivery of equipment, training of our expeditionary air wing personnel and, of course, to the Typhoon squadron from RAF Lossiemouth arriving.”



SECURITY PLEDGE: Air Cdre Martin Cunningham at the official handover of NATO duties at Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base

This Week In History



1982 Vulcan strikes

VULCAN PILOT Flt Lt Martin Withers leads the Operation Black Buck raid on Stanley airstrip during the Falklands conflict.



1988 Lightning retires

THE LAST English Electric Lightnings operated by 5 Sqn and 11 Sqn retire from RAF service after almost 30 years.

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

1945 Jet age begins

616 SQN Meteors attack Nordholz airfield in Germany in the RAF’s first jet-engined operation of WWII.



Sqn Ldr Tam's a Good Samaritan

She raises charity funds after own mental health struggle

Tracey Allen

FIGURES RELEASED by the MOD show that suicide rates in the Armed Forces are falling, and that regular members of the RAF are 75 per cent LESS likely to end their own lives than members of the civilian population.

Army regulars remain at highest risk, with an average rate of 10 per 100,000, twice the rate of the RAF's five per 100,000 and higher than the Navy's figure of eight, according to figures for the last 20 years.

However, mental health experts warn that the pressures of the job can take their toll.

Sqn Ldr Tamsin 'Tam' Wakeham (pictured), based at Air Command, High Wycombe, struggled with her sexuality and thought of ending her own life.

She now volunteers for the Samaritans charity which helps those struggling to cope and are at risk of suicide, and will be running the London Marathon on April 21 to support the group.

Tam struggled with her mental health as a young woman in the military; she joined the RAF in 1989 aged 19 and later had a relationship with another woman when the ban on homosexuality in the UK Armed Forces, axed in 2000, was rigorously enforced.

She said: "I felt persecuted. I was told being gay was wrong, it was evil and gays were freaks of nature."

"I didn't want to talk to people. I wouldn't ask people about themselves as I didn't want them to ask me about myself."

She left the Service in 1994 and moved to America where she



worked in surveillance in a casino and volunteered as a firefighter and as an emergency medical technician and 911 despatcher.

But she always had a hankering to return to the Air Force and rejoined after the hard-line ruling on gay relationships was scrapped.

The former loadmaster on the C-130 and Weapons Systems Officer, who now works in air planning, said: "Although I was hiding myself when I was first in the RAF, I stayed in touch with a good bunch of people I had served with. I felt there was a sense of unfinished business. I still had a fondness for the military."

She rejoined the RAF in 2000 after the LGBTQ+ ban was lifted.

Tam has run the Loch Ness Marathon twice and the Yorkshire Marathon once but it will be her first London Marathon and she's looking forward to it.

She said: "I can't wait, everyone who's done it says there's a great atmosphere. I'd like to finish the event in under four hours."

"My wife Liz will be there cheering me on. She's a better runner than me and has run the London Marathon before; she's been giving me very good training advice."

Tam will be wearing her Samaritans vest for the run and will be joined by fellow volunteers including Dave Lock, who runs in a green Samaritans telephone costume.



MARATHON VETERAN: But it will be her first London

She aims to raise £2,000 and has promised herself a glass of champagne when she's completed the marathon.

She said: "I have been a volunteer for Samaritans for a few years. The organisation itself is amazing, the training and support volunteers get is just brilliant and you're hanging out with lovely people who just want to help others. I'm in a good place physically and mentally so it seems a good time to give back."

70 miles just Pleasant run for Nutty Cpl

AN RAF Physical Training Instructor based in the Falkland Islands is taking on the challenge of running 70 miles from Mount Pleasant Complex to the island's capital Stanley and back to raise money for two charities.

Cpl Sam 'Nutty' Nutt (below) said: "I am based in the Falklands for the next six months and on May 4 will make the run, over hills and tackling the Falklands weather. Weather in the Falklands is unpredictable so I'll more than likely be running through wind, rain and possibly the odd bit of hail or snow. I plan to complete the run within a day."

"I'm aiming to raise £750 for the RAF Benevolent Fund and for MIND UK, as both charities mean something to me."

"About 10 years ago I lost one of my closest mates to mental health issues and ever since then I have understood the importance of trying to keep a healthy mind as well as a healthy body."

Sam, who is also an exercise rehab instructor, added: "I run at least once a day and have done so for more than two years, I also play hockey and football."

"Previously a fellow PTI and I tackled the Red Bull 400 for the RAFBF, which is a 400-metre run up a ski slope."

Go to: givestar.io/gs/stanley-and-back-to-donate and follow Sam on Instagram at: [snutt23](https://www.instagram.com/snutt23).



Help to mark Syd's 100th

AN APPEAL has gone out for well-wishers to send an RAF veteran cards and flowers for his 100th birthday on April 23, St George's Day.

Syd Geater was a member of a Lancaster bomber crew who served with 106 Sqn.

John Shipton, from Sleaford and District Legionnaires Aviation Society, said: "Syd served with the squadron at RAF Syerston, near Newark, and afterwards when it was sent to RAF Metheringham, near Lincoln."

"His Commanding Officer at Syerston was no other than Wg Cdr Guy Gibson, chosen by Bomber Harris to form 617 Sqn,



COMRADES: Syd, second left, with pals at a 106 Sqn reunion in 2006

the legendary Dambusters. Syd and his fellow crew members from 106 Sqn were the last to see Gibson before his fatal mission."

John added: "It would be very nice if folk can remember



AIRMAN: A young Syd in uniform

Syd's birthday by sending him a birthday card or flowers."

You can send them to Syd care of the International Bomber Command Centre, Canwick Avenue, Lincoln LN4 2HQ.

French guard at the palace

MEMBERS OF the French Armed Forces made history as they became the first non-Commonwealth troops to guard Buckingham Palace, marking 120 years of the Entente Cordiale.

The anniversary was also celebrated in Paris, where British military personnel took part in a similar ceremony at the Elysée Palace, the first-ever example of a foreign state guarding the French presidential residence.

Thirty-two members of the Gendarmerie's Garde Républicaine and 40 guardsmen from F Company Scots Guards took part, accompanied by the Band of the Grenadier Guards,



INSPECTION: Duchess of Edinburgh

who played the national anthems. They were inspected by Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, Chief of the General Staff General Sir Patrick Sanders, French Chief of the Army Staff General Pierre Schill and French ambassador to the UK Hélène Duchêne.



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

As April marks the Month of the Military Child, 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.

Our Listening and Counselling service has helped to improve the mental wellbeing of over 450 young people since its inception, covering a wide range of mental health support for conditions including anxiety, depression, behavioural problems and family change.

We are here for every member of the RAF Family in need – listening, understanding and providing life-changing practical, emotional and financial support.

To find out more about our support for children in the RAF Family, visit: rafbf.org/family

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Atlas delivers aid lifeline for Gaza civilians

Staff Reporter

THE RAF launched the UK's latest aid drop into war-torn Gaza as part of a large scale mercy mission conducted by nine nations to ease the plight of Palestinian civilians.

An Atlas A400M transporter flew from Amman in Jordan to carry out the airdrop into a UK-designated drop site on the northern coast of Gaza.

More than 10 tonnes of life-saving supplies including ready-to-eat meals, water, baby formula and rice was delivered into the area to coincide with Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan.

A fleet of 14 transport aircraft from the US, Germany, France, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands and Egypt also took part in the mission coordinated by the Jordanian Armed Forces.

The Atlas and crew are based at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire with both RAF and British Army personnel supporting the operation in Jordan. It is the sixth aid mission launched by the RAF, delivering a total of 53 tonnes of vital supplies.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said: "The prospect of famine in Gaza is real and today's international airdrop will provide life-saving food supplies for civilians."

"This is the sixth RAF airdrop in recent weeks, delivering over 53 tonnes of aid, including water, flour and baby formula."

"After six months of war in Gaza, the toll on civilians continues to grow."

"We continue to stand by Israel's right to defeat the threat from Hamas terrorists, who have failed the people of Gaza and hide behind civilians."

"This terrible conflict must end. The hostages must be released and the aid must flood in."

The international airdrop is part of UK efforts to provide vital humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and follows the announcement of a package of military and civilian support to set up a maritime aid corridor.



INTERNATIONAL AID MISSION: RAF and Army crew launch 10 tonnes of aid from the Atlas over northern Gaza. Below, children trapped in the area at an aid station



This includes the deployment of a Royal Navy ship to the Eastern Mediterranean as well as up to £9.7 million of aid.

The maritime corridor initiative will see tens of thousands of tonnes of aid pre-

screened in Cyprus and delivered directly to Gaza, via a new US temporary pier being constructed off the coast or via Ashdod Port, which Israel has now agreed to open.

The UK is also focused on

ensuring more aid can enter Gaza by land, and deliveries will be scaled up with the opening of the Erez crossing.

In partnership with the World Food Programme, the UK's largest delivery of aid – more than 2,000 tonnes of food – crossed the border last month.

Foreign Secretary David Cameron added: "Led by our Jordanian partners, we have joined nations around the world to mark the end of Ramadan by getting life-saving aid into Gaza. Thousands of people in desperate need will benefit from this united effort."

"The UK remains ready to play its part in getting supplies in by land, air and sea, but the people of Gaza need more."

"We continue to push Israel as hard as we can to get more aid across the border and delivered throughout the region. Words must turn into action – this is essential to avoid an even more severe humanitarian crisis."

In Brief



TRAINING: RAF handlers joined civilian canine experts at Honington

Going to the dogs

DOG HANDLERS tested out their skills at Honington's new training capability unit alongside civilian canine experts.

Expert dog trainers Jerry Bradshaw and Taylor Jones joined the Air Force air security specialists for a seminar designed to enhance the use of military working dogs on the frontline.



Museum makes a day of it

THE RAF Museum will be marking its annual Royal Air Force Day giving Service veterans and serving personnel the chance to meet up.

The venue will be holding a series of events in Hangar 6, where the Age of Uncertainty exhibition is housed. The event takes place on May 6 at the Hendon site.

Alfie's haul

WYCOMBE MARATHON man Wg Cdr Alfie Hall clocked up 100 10k runs in 100 days to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The crusading officer, who emblazoned the name of a different RAF veteran from the Service role of honour on his running vest for each event, covered more than 1,030kms.

He said: "It is relentless and you need stamina to do this day after day. A good pair of trainers also helps."





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In Brief



UPGRADE: Peterhead House is the final block to be built under a £60 million contract

Lossie revamp

THE FINAL single living accommodation block to be built as part of a major housing revamp at Lossiemouth has been completed.

The handover of Peterhead House brings the total of new fully-equipped, en suite single rooms to more than 400 under a £60 million deal to build seven blocks with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and contractor Robertsons Northern.

The complex also includes 24-hour social areas, laundry and kitchen facilities, landscaping and new car park.

The housing upgrade is the latest part of the Moray station's £400 million construction programme, which includes resurfacing the runway, a new fire station, new technical buildings including a Typhoon engineering facility and squadron operations building, and upgrades to utilities and drainage across the site.

Lossiemouth Station Commander Gp Capt Jim Lee said: "The handover of the final block is a huge moment and signals the end of a long, collaborative journey."

"I am deeply grateful to everyone who has helped deliver transformational changes to our station that will endure for decades to come."

Game's on for Forces families

Fortnite and Roblox help kids cope with parents' deployment



BRIDGING THE GAP: Forces parents deployed abroad are using chat functions on games consoles to stay in touch with children back home

Tracey Allen

RAF FAMILIES are using internet-based communication such as online gaming and video calls to help them stay connected while serving away from home – according to new research.

A report by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) discusses the benefits and pitfalls of internet-based communication such as the ability to play online games together, and speak in real time through internet video calls,

Researchers interviewed

RAF parents and their children who were asked to relate their experiences with communication with family members during periods of separation.

Youngsters reported using the chat and call functions on games like Fortnite and Roblox to communicate with their parents while playing online.

Air Cdre Kevin Pellatt, Armed Forces Commissioner for Norfolk, said: "Long periods of separation are difficult to navigate and this report makes helpful recommendations on ways to improve contact."

Families described how internet-based methods made it easier to communicate due to their immediacy and allowed parents to be more flexible with timings and communicate on the go.

Abigail Wood, from the Institute for Military Social Research, said: "This report adds insights into how to best support RAF families to maintain quality communication."

"Online methods of communication were practically useful, enabling the serving partner to still be part of day-to-day decision-making despite

being far away. The online gaming element allowed youngsters to share a hobby with their serving parent while spending time communicating with them."

She added: "The nature of video calls did sometimes remind people of the distances between them, and could be upsetting as a result."

The research was funded by the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Trust Wellbeing Fund and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The study also urged the government to provide more information to families about online safety.

D-Day convoy hits the road

Staff Reporter

HUNDREDS OF Harley Davidson riders at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire led a convoy of four lorries carrying giant silhouettes from the For Your Tomorrow installation to France to honour those under British command who died during the D-Day landings.

More than 1,400 Standing with Giants silhouettes will be placed at the British Normandy Memorial, overlooking Gold Beach, for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, in June.



On a charge

RAF LOSSIEMOUTH'S Moray Flying Club has become the first to operate a carbon emission-free electric aircraft.

The new Pipistrel Velis Electro aircraft – callsign 'Moray 01 Electric' – took to the skies last month and will offer students the chance to take their first solo flights in a zero carbon aircraft.



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Geez-ey does it

Staff Reporter

MARATHON SENSATION Russ Cook, dubbed the Hardest Geezer, teamed up with RAF endurance star Sgt David Adam as he completed the final leg of his epic bid to run across Africa.

The two met up as the internet star crossed the finish line at the Tunisian Masters marathon

event – the 360th and final event in his record-breaking challenge which clocked up more than 11 million followers on the X social media platform.

Russ, 27, ran through 16 countries, overcoming health scares, a robbery and visa problems crossing African borders and raising £700,000.

He crossed the finish line in

Ras Angela, Tunisia to chants of ‘Geezer’ from spectators.

Adam, who competed in the Masters event and shadowed Russ, said: “He completed an absolutely amazing feat of endurance, and no doubt testing times since he started his quest more than a year ago.

“He is and always will be an absolute legend and inspiration.”



HARD ACT TO FOLLOW: Sgt Adam (left) with Russ Cook after Tunisian event

In Brief



PTSD therapy wins funding

FORCES WELFARE chiefs are funding a pilot study on a new treatment to help ease the plight of PTSD sufferers.

An initial trail of the new non-traumafocused talking therapy showed that nearly half of participants no longer had a PTSD diagnosis at 20 weeks of treatment, compared to just 16 per cent of those receiving traditional TF-CBT.

The Forces in Mind Trust has awarded King’s College mental health researchers £329,000 to carry out further trials ahead of a possible rollout nationwide.

The new treatment focuses on neurolinguistic programming (NLP) which seeks to understand and change verbal and non-verbal language patterns to enable sufferers to think differently about something that has distressed them.

A feasibility trial was conducted with 35 ex-Service personnel asked to recall the memory of their experience, without requiring them to directly visit the traumatic event.

Forces in Mind chief executive Michelle Alston said: “The non-trauma focused nature of the intervention, its quick timescale and lack of adverse effects are impressive and offer a potential promising alternative for those ex-Service personnel living with PTSD.

“FiMT are very pleased that funding has been awarded by the NIHR to further explore NLP-based trauma intervention treatment, and that we are able to co-fund the next step in bringing a new treatment for ex-Service personnel experiencing PTSD.”



Tracey Allen

A FORMER RAF and Army medic turned publican is taking his unusual military-themed bar out on the road – in a converted ex-Army Leyland DAF truck.

Stuart Sloan, managing director of the company that runs the Saltoun Arms in Aberdeen, is driving the bar, named Shots Fired, around Scotland visiting parks hosting community events and festivals and will be helping military fans toast Armed Forces Day this summer.

The ex-SAC, who spent six years in the RAF and four as a reservist, said: “I was looking for a vehicle I could use to take to festivals, weddings and so on, and found Millie aka the Shots Fired Bar, that started her life in the Armed Forces in 1990 and served the duration of her career in Kenya



supporting Army operations.”

The DAF was originally painted yellow due to local regulations and was shipped back to the UK in the early 2000s.

The vehicle lay dormant before being bought by a private buyer after being decommissioned by the Army when the older fleet was being replaced by new MAN trucks.

SLOAN RANGER: Military veteran Stuart Sloan is taking his Forces-themed bar on the road this summer. Below, in Afghanistan during his time with the RAF

The vehicle was returned to its original Nato matte green colour scheme and retains all the original military features, including the roof hatch and machine gun mounts above the cab.

Stuart, whose military career took him all over the world, including service in Afghanistan, added: “She was converted in the rear to incorporate freezers, fridges and draught beer lines and named Hope and Glory Bar, trading in the south of England. The Saltoun Arms bought her in early 2023.

“I wanted to tie in my military experience with my love of the hospitality industry.

“We want to use the bar to help raise money for charities and at a recent event raised funds for the Cash for Kids charity. We operate just in Scotland as the truck itself is very thirsty and only does about 13 miles to the gallon.”

News



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Made in Orléans

French test for UK heavyweight



Alex Gill

UK ATLAS crews joined Nato allies to test their ability to operate on the frontline from remote locations during combat drills in France.

The Brize Norton-based aircraft flew into Bricy air base near Orléans to conduct war drills alongside transport crews from France, Spain, Canada, Greece and Italy, who also operate the A400M.

The exercise is the latest test for the Nato-wide Agile Combat Employment strategy to operate from austere and makeshift sites to avoid detection from enemy forces.

Detachment Commander Sqn Ldr Beard said: "The aim of the exercise is to

train together as a coalition in a complex air environment, facing a high-level threat from a peer adversary.

"The French Air and Space Force have been superb and gracious hosts and the fact we both fly the A400M Atlas makes interoperability so much easier, we have both learnt a great deal from each other."

RAF Project Officer Flt Lt Meredith added: "Each participating country is using this exercise to hone vital readiness skills and enhance interoperability between air forces.

"The detachment, made up of both regular and reserve forces, has stepped up to the mark and delivered; proving again the agility of our air force and our ability to deploy and work from any location."

Diamond display debuts at Cosford

Staff Reporter

THE RED Arrows will showcase their new 60th anniversary routine in front of an estimated 50,000-strong crowd at the Cosford Air Show.

The aerobatic aces are promising a show-stopping nine-aircraft display featuring their trademark Diamond Nine formation for their landmark 2024 season, along with vintage manoeuvres not performed for a generation.

Air Show spokesman Sqn Ldr Chris Wilson said: "It's exciting that the display team will be back as a nine-ship display this year, performing the Red Arrows' trademark Diamond Nine formation in their diamond year, bringing back an iconic shape not seen since 2021.



"We can't wait for audiences to experience this very special display and we're looking forward to welcoming the Red Arrows to Cosford again this year."

Go to CosfordAirShow.co.uk/Tickets for details.



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Royal Air Force 'In Concert'

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Music Charitable Trust



Lincoln Cathedral

7.30pm Saturday 11 May 2024

Compere: Melvyn Prior



Royal Hall, Harrogate

7.30pm Friday 28 June 2024

Compere: Howard Leader



 **ROYAL Music**
AIR FORCE Charitable Trust

www.rafmusic.org.uk/concerts



In Brief



RAFA's back in the saddle

FUNDRAISERS ARE set to hit the road at Cottesmore for this year's Royal Air Force Association charity ride.

More than 1,000 cyclists are expected to take up the challenge on the track or in the virtual world to cover distances from 25 to 100 miles to support the group's welfare programmes.

Launched in 2018, the annual fundraiser has netted more than £450,000 for the Forces family, with riders taking part across the world.

Organiser Rachel Huxford said: "Last year more than 1,000 cyclists took part in our event in Rutland and around the globe, raising over £110,000.

"We're looking forward to welcoming more riders than ever in 2024 as we continue to grow the event, providing even more ways for people to be part of this incredible global community."

The event is on June 15. Go to rafa.org.uk for details.

CAS drive for frontline AI



FUTURE WAR: UK is stepping up the development of AI for a new generation of uncrewed platforms

Staff Reporter

AIR CHIEFS have unveiled plans to work with the Army, Navy and defence industry to develop a new generation of low-cost drones and uncrewed AI-driven platforms.

The new Autonomous Collaborative Platforms (ACP) strategy lays out how the RAF hopes to exploit advances in Artificial Intelligence technology to boost frontline capability and keep the UK at the forefront of autonomous battlefield kit.

The war in Ukraine highlights the rapid evolution of weapon systems and tactics and defence chiefs say harnessing

emerging technology will reduce the risks facing frontline fighters and increase UK firepower.

Launching the ACP strategy this month, Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Rich Knighton, said: "As we look to the future, it is clear that Autonomous Collaborative Platforms will play an important part in enhancing the mass, lethality and survivability of our combat air forces."

"Building on the Defence Drone Strategy and in close collaboration with the Royal Navy and Army, the

RAF will focus on low-cost Autonomous Collaborative Platforms to augment the operations of our existing crewed combat air platforms. We expect to field an operational capability within the next year."

UK Defence giant BAE Systems unveiled its first ACP demonstrator prototype earlier this year which can be configured to take on surveillance, reconnaissance and attack roles and is designed to operate alongside existing combat fighters like Typhoon.



STRATEGY: ACM Knighton

Medics scramble for civvie drill

Alex Gill

Brize Norton

BRIZE MEDICS have teamed up with civilian air evacuation specialists to hone their frontline life-saving skills.

Members of the Tactical Medical Wing's critical care team, which flies seriously injured military personnel back to the UK, joined aeromedical specialists from Capital Air Ambulance at the Oxfordshire station.

The collaboration allows Air Force medics to train volunteers during realistic emergency drills before taking to the air on board Capital's fixed-wing air ambulances on real-life call-outs.

Wg Cdr Adam Smith said: "It's important for us to maintain the skills of our medical specialists while we hold them at readiness."

"The opportunity with Capital Air Ambulance for our people to work with them on their day-to-day operations, learn from one another



and ensure that when the time comes for the next RAF mission our Critical Care Air Support Team are ready to deploy is fantastic."

Capital operates Europe-wide repatriation flights to the UK for patients with critical medical problems.



Falklands back in the loop

Helen Pickering

A £8.9 million project to resurface Mount Pleasant's Alpha Loop in the Falkland Islands has been completed.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation and contractor Mitie flew in an entire concrete-batching plant and heavy plant equipment over 8,000 miles from the UK to carry out the work, moving and replacing 3,500 tons of concrete in less than a month, a spokesman said.

The facility at the British Forces base is vital to maintain the airbridge between the UK and the Falklands.

Project manager Maj Dan Ellis said: "Working closely with DIO and Mount Pleasant Complex staff, as well as with Mitie Defence and their sub-contractors, has been the key to success."

"The speedy delivery of the Alpha Loop project should now serve as a showcase example of what can be achieved."

From ships of the desert to RAF boats: the many faces of Lawrence of Arabia

T.E. LAWRENCE, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, is one of the most well-known personalities from the 20th century who played a prominent role in the Arab Revolt.

Disillusioned by British politicians in their treatment of the Arabs during the aftermath of the First World War and uncomfortable with the fame that his exploits had attracted, Lawrence wanted to lose his persona as Lawrence of Arabia, to evade press intrusion and disappear into a life of obscurity and solitude in the ranks of the Royal Air Force as an aircraftman.

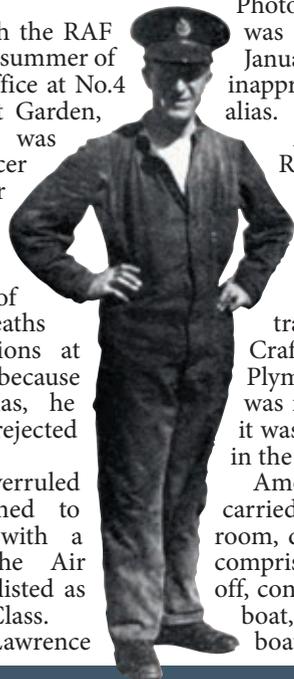
Air Vice-Marshal Oliver Swann recommended that Lawrence use an alias to conceal his enlistment to ensure that he could serve in the RAF without attracting attention. He initially used the alias of John Hume Ross in his first period of service between August 31, 1922 and January 23, 1923 and later as T.E. Shaw for more than a decade.

Lawrence's career with the RAF in the ranks began in the summer of 1922 at the recruiting office at No.4 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, where he was interviewed by Pilot Officer William Earl Johns, later famous as the author of the *Biggles* books.

Johns ordered that a check be carried out of his name for birth, deaths and marriage registrations at Somerset House, but because Lawrence used an alias, he became suspicious and rejected him.

Johns' decision was overruled when Lawrence returned to the recruiting office with a representative from the Air Ministry and he was enlisted as an Aircraftman Second Class.

In September 1922, Lawrence



Haunted by his own celebrity, T.E. Lawrence sought refuge in the RAF under an alias. He was unmasked by *Biggles* author Earl Johns and rejected but returned to bring his pioneering spirit to the Service. Author Paul Kendall delves into the strange relationship between the enigmatic warrior known worldwide as Lawrence of Arabia and the Royal Air Force.

began his basic training at RAF Uxbridge. He did not excel at drill on the parade ground, but he demonstrated his prowess as a marksman on the firing range, which aroused the attention of superior officers.

He concealed his controversial past by informing his superiors that he had done some game shooting. The RAF firing range still stands in Dowding Park.

Discovered by the press while attending a course at the RAF School of Photography, Farnborough, Lawrence was discharged from the Service in January 1923, because it was deemed inappropriate for him to serve under an alias.

After serving two years with the Royal Tank Corps, he returned to the RAF in 1925 and was posted to RAF Cadet Training College Cranwell, where he served as a runner and a clerk.

In 1929 Lawrence was transferred to the RAF Marine Craft Section at RAF Cattewater at Plymouth until April 1933. The station was renamed RAF Mount Batten and it was here where he worked as a clerk in the machine and workshop section.

Among the duties that Lawrence carried out were cleaning the barrack room, daily drill and duty watch; which comprised four hours on, eight hours off, conducting checks in a small rowing boat, during all weathers, of the flying boats and their moorings, ensuring



AIRCRAFTMAN: Lawrence in RAF uniform

that they were not dragging their anchors and that they remained static.

His commanding officer, Wg Cdr Sydney Smith, recognised his abilities and assigned Lawrence to investigating engine problems associated with the rescue motor boats at the base.

He would dismantle an engine to study the nuts and bolts of how it worked. He was involved in the development of faster motor boats. Lawrence demonstrated that he was a competent mechanic and his work to improve fast motor-boat technology would benefit the RAF.

Despite serving in the ranks, Lawrence was influential in the RAF. He considered that the tight high collar of RAF shirts was cumbersome and most aircraftmen would unhook them and look untidy.

He also thought that puttees were a waste of time. He raised these issues with his superiors and in due course the high

collar was replaced with a soft shirt and tie, while puttees were substituted by long trousers.

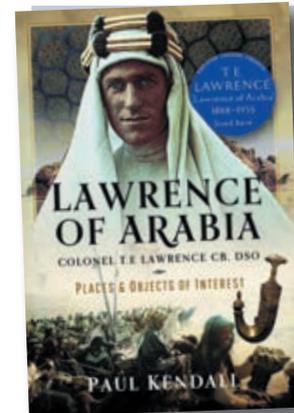
According to Wg Cdr Smith's wife Clare, Lawrence was also responsible for the removal of the swagger stick in the Service, referring to it as 'a silly bodkin thing' which was of no practical use to the airman. RAF officials agreed and it disappeared.

Lawrence was stationed at RAF Calshot from 1929-31, where he was involved in preparations for the Schneider Trophy Race and he also took part in trials of the prototype Seaplane Tender 200 series fast rescue boats for the RAF in Southampton Water.

During the winter of 1934-5 Lawrence oversaw the launching of the RAF fast rescue boats and armoured target boats at Bridlington Harbour in Yorkshire. The slipways where these vessels were launched and the Ozone Hotel where he was billeted still exist today.

This was his last posting with the RAF and three months after he left the Service he died in a motorcycle accident near his home at Clouds Hill, Dorset.

● *Lawrence of Arabia, Colonel T.E. Lawrence CB, DSO, Places and Objects of Interest*, by Paul Kendall, is published by Frontline books (frontline-books.com).

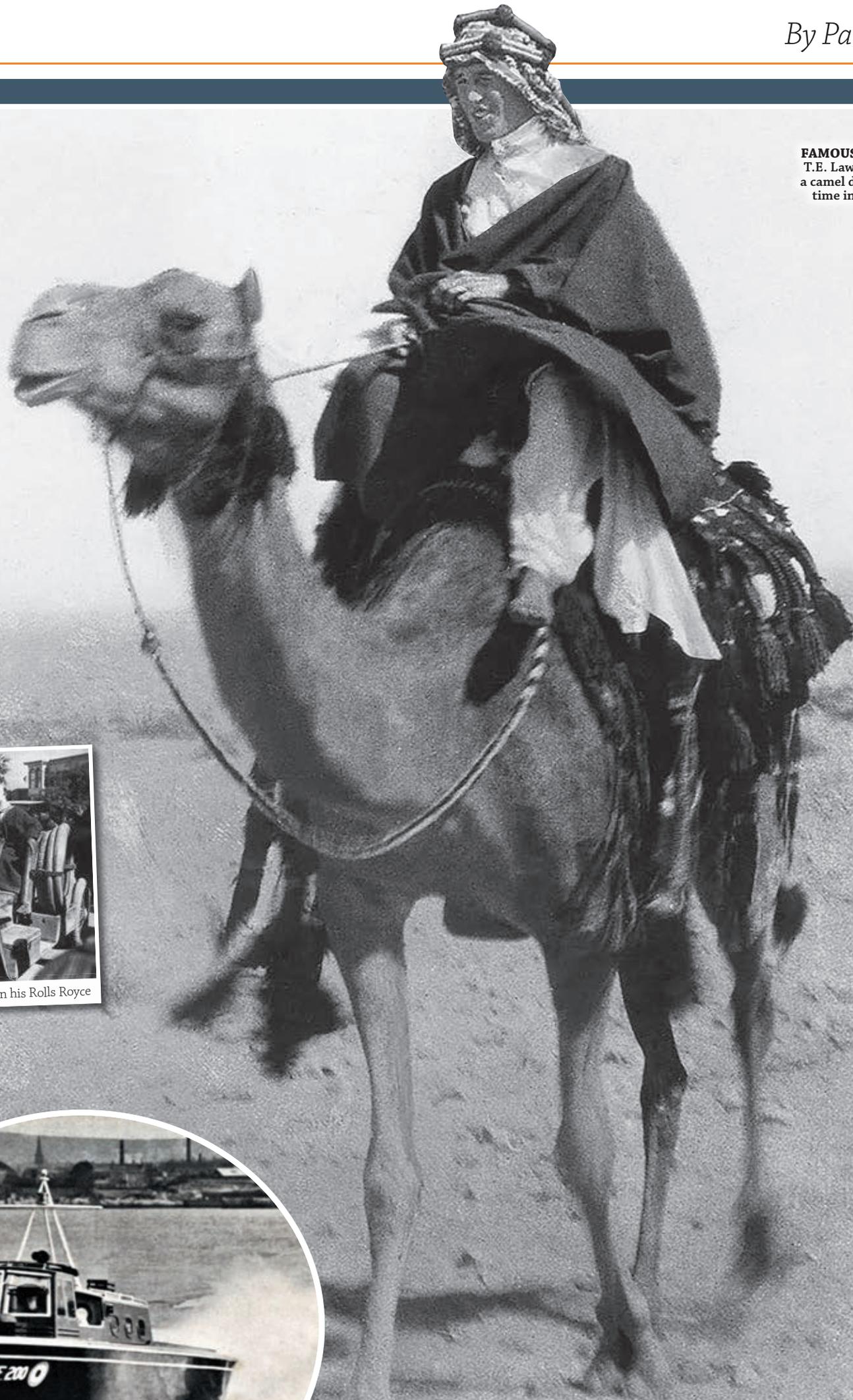


WE HAVE copies of *Lawrence of Arabia* by Paul Kendall (rrp £28) to win. chance to own on

Under which Lawrence first at the RAF in 1922?

Email your answer to allen@rafnews.com, News, Room 68, HQ Air Comm, HP14 4UE, to include your full

By Paul Kendall



FAMOUS IMAGE:
T.E. Lawrence on a camel during his time in Arabia



WESTERN TRANSPORT: Lawrence is driven in his Rolls Royce



RESCUE CRAFT: The first 200 Class power boat with Lawrence at the wheel, and at RAF Mount Batten, *inset left* (both Paul Kendall Collection)

of Lawrence
Paul Kendall
For your
please tell us:
*alias did
attempt to join*

Win!

Answer, marked Lawrence
competition, to: tracey.
o.uk or post it to: RAF
, Lancaster Building,
and, High Wycombe,
arrive by May 3. Please
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Oldest WWII Goldfish Club member Reg dies aged 103

Gunnery leader was awarded DFC after 20 top-level missions

FLT LT Reginald 'Jimmy' Woolgar, who has died two weeks before his 104th birthday, was an RAF air gunner who survived a ditching in the English Channel and went on to complete 42 bombing operations over Germany.

He joined the RAF shortly after the war began in 1939 and trained as a wireless operator/air gunner before joining 49 Squadron at Scampton, near Lincoln, in September 1940. The squadron operated the twin-engine Hampden bomber.

His first target was Berlin, which was attacked by 129 bombers on September 23/24, and was described as a "unique raid for this period of the war". He later attacked targets in Hamburg, Kiel and the industrial Ruhr in addition to sorties to lay aerial mines in the estuaries and approaches to enemy ports. Whilst over Oslo fjord, his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire, one bullet hitting his gunsight. On landing, he discovered holes in his sheepskin flying jacket.

On the night of February 14, 1941, Woolgar and his three companions took off in their Hampden bomber of 49 Squadron to attack Mannheim; it was their 23rd operation. Leaving the target, one of the aircraft's two engines failed. The aircraft steadily lost height on the return flight.

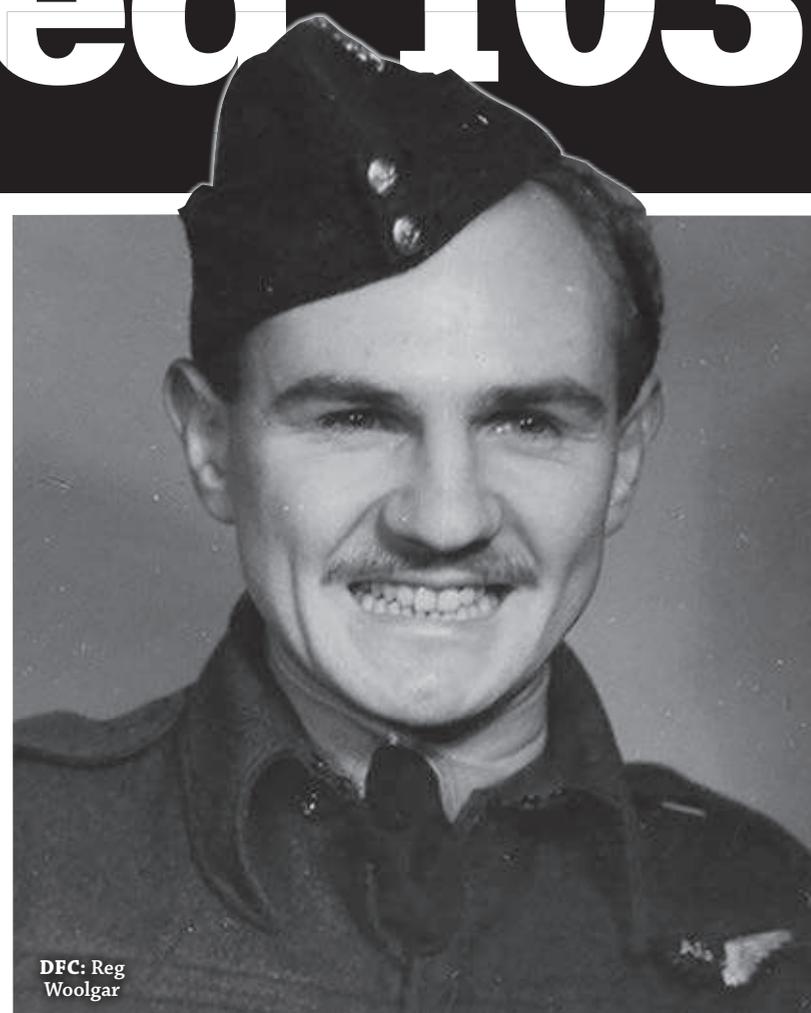
After five hours, the remaining engine ran out of fuel and the pilot ditched the bomber in the English Channel.

The crew managed to release the dinghy and spent a very cold night before a searching aircraft found them in the afternoon when they were near the Isle of Wight. A Royal Navy motor launch was despatched to pick them up and take them to Gosport. His 'ditching' qualified him to be a member of the Goldfish Club, of which he was the oldest surviving member.

As an experienced air gunner, Woolgar attended a course at the Central Gunnery School before becoming an instructor at a bomber training unit. He was commissioned and became the unit's gunnery leader.

In the spring of 1944, he joined 192 Squadron, a special duties squadron in 100 Group. Equipped with the four-engine Halifax, it was the squadron's task to fly with the main bomber force and locate and identify the enemy's radar and signals units. This allowed intelligence officers to survey and plot the German radar chain, allowing specialist electronic equipment to be developed to jam the enemy radar system.

He flew numerous sorties along the French coast seeking data on the emerging



DFC: Reg Woolgar

threat of Hitler's terror weapons, the V-1 flying bomb and the V-2 rocket. Prime Minister Winston Churchill placed a high priority on these missions. After flying 20 operations as gunnery leader, Woolgar was awarded the DFC.

At the end of the war, he left for Palestine and joined 38 Squadron at Ein Shemer. Equipped with the Lancaster, the squadron was employed in maritime surveillance during the Palestine disturbances. On July 22, 1946, Woolgar was

approaching the King David Hotel to attend a meeting when a bomb exploded killing 91 people, including some attending the same meeting.

Woolgar left the RAF in 1947 and became a chartered surveyor. He and his wife Doris were married for 81 years, thought to be the second-longest current marriage in Britain, and they enjoyed cruising and bought an apartment in Majorca. He was a strong supporter of the Sussex Branch of the Aircrew Association until it disbanded.



READY FOR ACTION: Graduates of the British Flying Training School



HERITAGE HERO: Museum executive director Patrick Hotard (left) with photographs of the flying school's different intakes

Texans keep memory of Brit trainee aircrew alive

Dylan Eklund

TERRELL, SOME 30 miles east of Dallas, is a small, fairly peaceful, American city. Noted for being the birthplace of Hollywood A-lister Jamie Foxx, 80 years ago things were very different when the skies resounded to the unmistakable sound of the radial engines of aircraft flown by RAF student pilots training at the local airfield.

But those days are not forgotten. Today, a dedicated group of Texans keep the memories of a little-known chapter of World War II history alive with a museum which details the history of No.1 British Flying Training School (BFTS) and the close ties with the local population.

As Britain struggled to train sufficient aircrew to meet the demands of all-out war, Prime Minister Winston Churchill made an urgent plea to US President Franklin D Roosevelt for material and pilot training. The passing of the Lend-Lease Act by Congress in May 1941 allowed the US to provide war supplies to any nation deemed vital to the defence of the United States.

This paved the way for the construction of seven British Flying Training Schools and in



LONG JOURNEY: Early trainees had to access America after sea voyage to Canada

June the first and largest of them was established in Terrell. By the end of the war more than 2,200 Royal Air Force and United States Army Air Corps cadets earned their wings there.

The training commenced before the US had entered the war, which required RAF trainees to first travel to Canada by sea – where they were promptly discharged from the RAF and issued with six-month visitor visas by the US government. The thick wool suits they were

issued became increasingly uncomfortable on the long railroad journey south to Texas.

The southern US offered wide-open, friendly skies over sparsely-populated farmland – perfect flying conditions for trainee aircrews. The contrast between wartime Britain and Texas was stark, but the warm welcome provided by the rural community undoubtedly made things a great deal easier.

Terrell's citizens welcomed the student pilots into their homes

and their community, forging many life-long bonds. One, Henry C Madgwick, married a woman he met in the city and returned post war and became mayor.

Museum executive director Patrick Hotard explained that the strong links endure to this day. He said: "People who remember the school talk so fondly about the relationship that the locals had with the Brit cadets and how fond they were of them."

In letters home cadets also often remarked about the bountiful food available in comparison to the wartime rations back home.

With the entry of the US into the war following the attack on Pearl Harbour, the cadets proudly donned their RAF uniforms. One, Flt Sgt Arthur Louis Aaron, was subsequently posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for nursing a stricken Stirling bomber safely home despite severe injury. Another student was actor Robert Hardy.

At the school the 21 cadets who died in accidents are still remembered today. As Museum chairman Bill Huthmacher explained: "They are all still buried here in Terrell, there's a plot where they're all together in the local cemetery. We gather at the plot for Remembrance Day every year."



SOCIALISING: Brit trainees at US bar

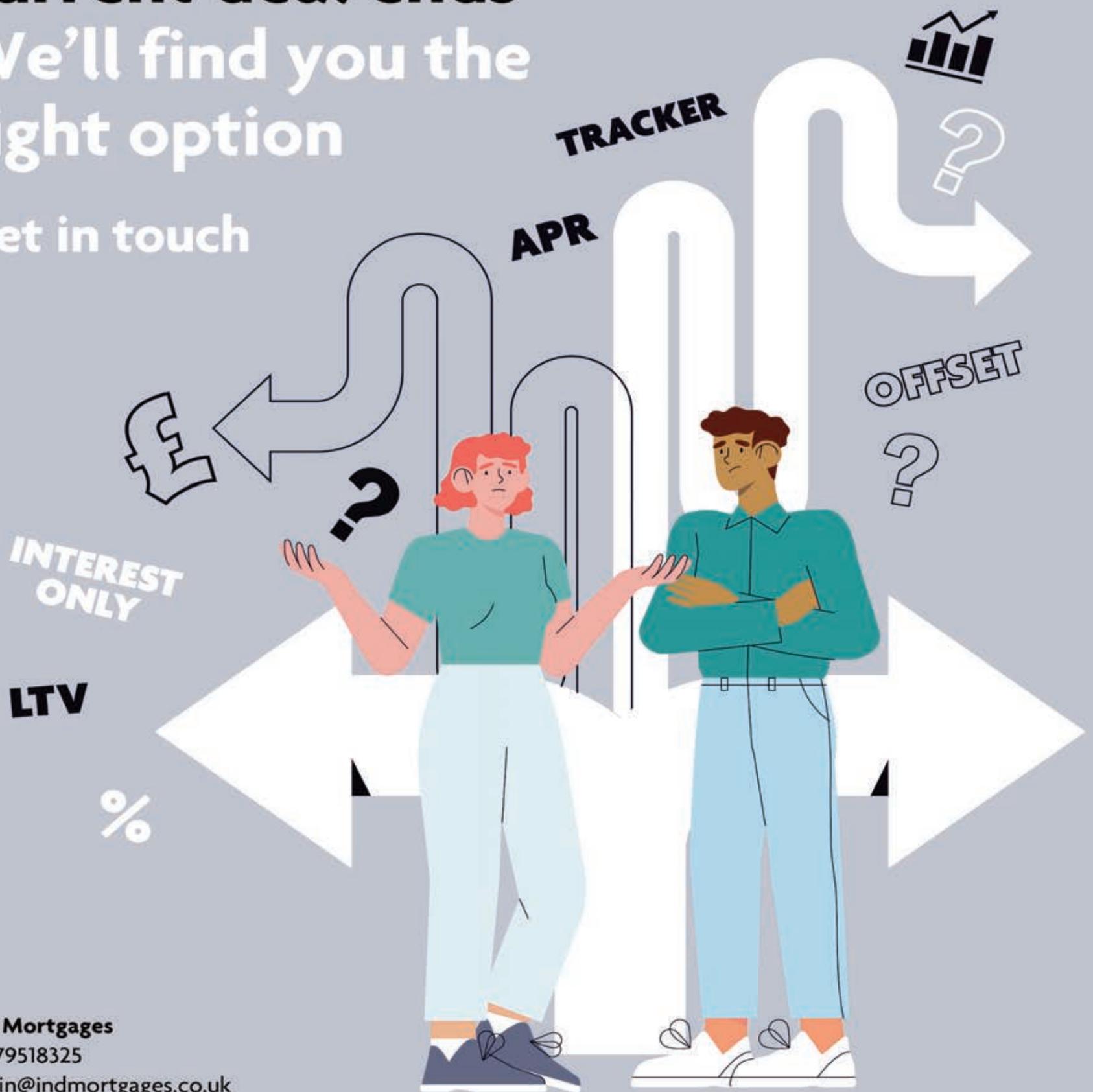
The 1 BFTS Museum was started by cadets to celebrate their friendships and to remember those who died in training. It includes a collection of hundreds of historical items: log books, training materials, WWII memorabilia, uniforms, and aircraft. It also explores many fascinating personal stories behind the artefacts providing an insight into the cadets' backgrounds, their training and the lives they led after leaving Terrell.

But RAF flying training in Texas skies is not consigned to history – at Sheppard Air Force base RAF students still train today. The Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training initiative sees students train alongside fellow aviators from across the Alliance which includes, appropriately, training on Texan II aircraft.

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Tim Morris

Kia Ceed Sportswagon 1.5 TGD*i* (from around £23,850)

Motoring

Ceed keeps it real



Simplicity's the key to success for this family workhorse

WE'RE CONSTANTLY told that electric vehicles (EVs) are good for us, but the same could be said of cod liver oil and cabbage soup.

EVs undoubtedly have their place but sometimes you just want simplicity. The Ceed Sportswagon is just that, a good, honest family motor that does what it says on the tin.

It comes with a slick 6-speed manual gearbox, actual instruments, heater controls on the dash, a real handbrake and a physical key that you put into the ignition.

Exterior

Estate cars are not usually known for their sleek lines and sporty prowess but Kia has made a pretty good effort with the Ceed Sportswagon. A lower contour slopes gradually upward from the front wheel arch as it heads toward the rear, finally swooping over the back arch. This gives the visual effect of making the rear arches look bigger and more defined. The angular air vents on the front and rear bumpers also help to make it stand out, while the 17-inch alloy wheels continue the angular detailing.

Interior

The driving position is spot on for taller drivers and the controls are all well-aligned. The driver's seat could do with a little more adjustment for the shortest of people but most will get along fine.

There's plenty of room inside for passengers to spread out and the Sportswagon has a good amount of real estate in the load area. It's a practical small estate. Kia has used some nice materials



too. Unlike Kias of old, the new Ceed feels relatively plush and up there with the class leaders. Everything feels well bolted together too.

It's the details that make you smile. I've already mentioned the physical clocks and controls, but switches feel nicely-damped. The squishy plastics used on the dash are also nice to the touch. Details matter.

Our test car was the level '3' trim (Kia's trim levels are simply numbered, 2 upwards). The infotainment system featured the usual offering of DAB radio, Bluetooth and Apple CarPlay/Android Auto smartphone mirroring (so you can use your phone's apps on the screen), plus built-in sat nav via a 10.25 inch touchscreen. This is mounted nice and high, the graphics are clear and the menus are simple.

As systems go, it's pretty quick to respond

too. A row of shortcut buttons below allows you to quickly switch between different menus, which is really useful.

On The Road

I do like the Ceed. Handling is pretty sharp for an estate, in part thanks to the fully independent rear suspension. The quick steering and nice weighting give the Sportswagon an assured feel and you can really thread it through the bends on a winding road.

The only downside is that you can forget you're throwing a boxy estate around, until you push it too hard. At that point the back end will remind you to know your place and a suite of stability aids will kick in.

It rides well, especially around town, and it's a massive improvement over Kias of yesteryear, soaking up speed bumps and

Kia Ceed Sportswagon

Pros

- Handles well for an estate
- Plenty of space for load and passengers
- Well-priced
- Great warranty (7 years)

Cons

- Could do with more seat adjustment for short drivers
- Feels underpowered at times

Verdict

The Kia Ceed Sportswagon keeps things simple. If you want a brilliant family car that's stupendously easy to live with in everyday life, this is as honest as it gets.

potholes with relative ease.

Our test car was the 1.5 TGD*i*, producing 158bhp. The stats were 0-62mph in 8.6, a top end of 130mph and combined fuel economy figure of 48.7mpg. The turbocharger does a brilliant job of compensating for the small power output, but you do have to drive to the car. In short, get your revs up in advance and keep them up if you need the car to move with any enthusiasm. Otherwise, you can get a worrying flat-spot when you start to move into traffic.

As you can imagine, you're not going to win any drag races here but it's no slouch, rather a good long-range tourer that won't break the bank.



Out of this world

It's worth the Trek to NASA's Space Center

SPACE, THE final frontier.... Wait, that's the opening line from *Star Trek*. To boldly go... No, still *Star Trek*... One small step for man... There we go, real-life space adventure, greater than anything that Hollywood could ever imagine. The best part is that you can actually experience it yourself, without ever leaving planet Earth.

NASA's Kennedy Space Center (KSC) is situated on the east coast, between Cocoa Beach and Titusville. Often referred to as Cape Canaveral, it's been home to America's space programme since 1949. It was world-famous long before theme parks arrived in Orlando and, in my book, remains one of the world's most exciting attractions.

It's home to America's manned space programme and now also hosts several private space travel companies. The Apollo missions blasted off from this very spot and the space shuttle programme also launched here.

The Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex (KSVC) is both a living piece of history and a rare opportunity to get inside the world's most active, cutting-edge, space port. The site covers a whopping area of 190 square miles (500 sq km) and hosts some incredible attractions. Where else could you see a real space shuttle, touch a moon rock, tour a NASA space flight facility and get an up-close view of the Saturn V moon rocket?

For many, the most incredible part of the experience will however be getting the chance to meet a veteran NASA astronaut. We had the immense pleasure of talking to Bob Cenker (pronounced Senker), who flew on Space Shuttle Columbia mission STS-61C, January 1986. This was the last shuttle mission before the Challenger disaster, which occurred only a few days later.

Bob has an immense career in aerospace engineering and is everything you'd expect a NASA astronaut to be; knowledgeable, charismatic and humble. During our chat he revealed how, in the run up to his Columbia mission, several launches had been aborted. He therefore was so relaxed by the actual launch date that he dozed off before lift-off.

Events like the Challenger disaster and the eventual explosion of Columbia itself, during re-entry in February 2003, demonstrate the true heroism of astronauts like Bob. It was therefore my privilege to have spoken with him. I've been a journalist for a long time and met a lot of celebrities over the years but, in my book, the 'meet an astronaut' experience is worth every penny and shouldn't be missed.

It would take four articles to review all the amazing attractions here, so I'm just going to touch lightly on a few.

The 'Rocket Garden' puts the sheer size of veteran spacecraft into context, while the bus tour that takes you over to the Apollo/Saturn V Center shouldn't be missed. Here you stand



astounded, under the gigantic Saturn V, the largest rocket ever flown.

Then there are all the interactive exhibits and rides. Gateway, in The Deep Space Launch Complex, allows you to experience the interstellar travel of tomorrow, with brilliant effects. Blue Origin's New Shepard Flight to Space VR Simulator is another great experience, while Spaceport KSC takes you on four simulated journeys to Uncharted Worlds, light years away.

'Heroes & Legends' was one of my favourites, featuring a multisensory 4D experience that takes you on an journey with four space age heroes: Alan Shepard, Neil Armstrong, John Glenn and James Lovell. You relive the excitement and dangers of the first crewed space programme missions, brought to life through well-choreographed lighting, special effects, epic surround sound and 3D imagery. The 1960s scenes feel particularly real and it's almost as if you've travelled back beyond your years to witness that momentous event first-hand.

My other pick of the day would be the Atlantis exhibit, which features the \$60 million 'Launch Experience' ride.

Here you experience the sights, sounds and excitement of a vertical Space Shuttle launch in a simulator, a bit like the Star Tours simulator at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

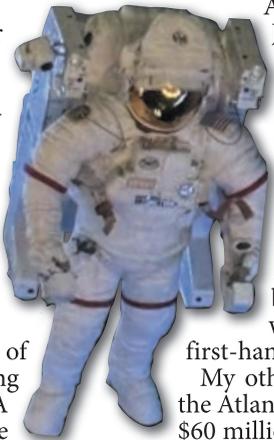
You then move on to another interactive display, that smartly reveals the nose of the Space Shuttle Atlantis. When the screen lifts you discover that this is, in fact, the actual shuttle, beautifully lit in the next room. It is a really moving experience.

Admission to KSVC is not cheap, but most attractions are included so, if you make a full day of it and plan your visit, it's well worth it. Don't forget that you'll need to book time slots on many rides in advance. Ask for details if you're unsure.

Finally, to get the best out of your visit, you'll need to allow a whole day. Even then it's a push to get around everything, especially if you want to take the bus tours. Start early people, with bags of energy.

● kennedyspacecenter.com
● kennedyspacecenter.com/explore-attractions/heroes-and-legends/astonaut-encounter

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER: See a real space shuttle, tour a NASA flight facility, touch a genuine moon rock... and maybe even talk to a real astronaut



MOTORSPORT



All revved up to go

THE RAF sidecar team of Corporals Mark Middleton and Rob Atkinson kicked off a thrill-packed 2024 season after unveiling their new-look Adolf RS Yamaha at Brize Norton.

Posing in front of a Globemaster, the pair – with sponsors behind – also revealed their coming season on the British Sidecar 2024 race calendar, which promises top action from Brands Hatch to Snetterton over six race outings.

Middleton said: “We are delighted to announce we will be competing in the British F1 Sidecar Championship this year on our Adolf RS Yamaha.

“The team is also grateful to announce a new partnership

with Mecsia Group and RAF Engineering, who come on board for the 2024 season as sponsors. We also welcome back Atlantic Aviation Group Defence Services for the third year running.

“A massive thank you to all the support we’ve received over the winter break to make 2024 happen.”

The duo will race at Pembrey on April 13-14 (after RAF News goes to press), Donington Park May 17-19, Knockhill June 14-16, Snetterton July 5-7 Cadwell Revival August 2-5 before closing out the season at Brands Hatch October 11-13.

● Follow the duo on Facebook @RAF Sidecar Team.

BMX

Thrills and spills

Haywood's helmet proves up to the job after crash in final

Daniel Abrahams

A THREE-PRONGED assault on the opening rounds of the British Cycling BMX National Series in Manchester produced good results including a second place for Sgt Matt Haywood.

Team captain Haywood said: “Overall it was a good start to the national series and things are looking positive heading into Cyclopark in Gravesend for rounds three and four.”

The team of Haywood, Cpl Chris Taylor and Off Cdt Pete Watson, took to the Manchester indoor venue for the two rounds of action, with Haywood only riding on the Sunday of the two-day event.

The team lost Taylor early after he had to withdraw due to injury, which left Watson as the only RAF rider to do battle for round one on the opening Saturday.

He was on both his 20in BMX in the 19-29 men’s open and the 24in Cruiser in the 19-29 men’s class.

On the 20in in the motos he posted fourth, fifth and fourth to progress to the quarter-final,

where he came fifth, so didn’t progress further.

In the 24in Cruiser class he posted two seconds before also finishing second in the quarter-finals. Coming fourth in his semi-final, he progressed into the A final. Keeping up with the pack, he managed to cross the line in sixth.

On Sunday both Haywood and Watson were in action and again Watson was racing on both bikes and looking to improve on the day before.

On his 20in he posted third, fourth and third to move into the quarter-final, where another third saw him progress into the semis.

After running into the racing pack and being squeezed, he crossed the line in eighth, which set him up for a B final.

Again, getting squeezed on the first straight, Watson crossed the line in eighth.

On the 24in Cruiser he posted second, second and fourth to progress into the quarters again, where he crossed the line in second.

A fourth in the semi put him



LEADING MAN: Sgt Matt Haywood hits the front in Moto 2

PHOTOS: BILLY WRIGHT

again in the A final. He battled hard and gave his all, crossing the line in seventh.

Haywood kicked off his motos with a third, then leading most of the way in the second race he was pipped at the line into second place.

A fifth in the third moto enabled him to progress into the A final, where a good start set him up for a respectable fifth place after some manoeuvring down the second straight and it was all set to finish that way until he crashed, taking another rider with him.

“Thankfully there were only



BATTLING DISPLAY: Off Cdt Pete Watson, right, on his 24in Cruiser, on which he made the A final, coming seventh

some minor scrapes and my helmet did what it’s designed to do and protected me from any

head injury, although it will now be consigned to the bin,” said Haywood.

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



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JUDO

Throw yourself into judo

A NEW dawn broke for Service judo as it relaunched at the RAF championships at Cosford.

Association spokesperson Fg Off Elena Howell told *RAF News*: “We want to ignite new interest in the sport while also bringing back personnel who have already had involvement.”

“It is safe to say it was a success, with a range of experience and engagement from all who attended.”

She added: “The champs took place during the relaunch and saw everybody getting involved and having a go at competing.”

“A great display of judo was demonstrated from all levels.”

There were awards given for Fighter of the Day, which went to ASI Molly Game, and Inspirational Novice – Cpl Stuart

Murdoch. Later, the team took part in a celebratory meal and there was the presentation of RAF Sports Colours to those who competed in last year’s Inter-Services.

Howell added: “RAF Judo is one big team and all levels are invited to join, no previous experience required.”

“We have fantastic coaches dedicated to the development of our whole team and increasing the performance of our players.”

Thank you to RAF Cosford for accommodating us and to RAF Cosford Photographers for providing some fantastic photos.”

● Anyone interested in getting involved in future judo events should contact: Elena. Howell101@mod.gov.uk



PHOTOS: CPL NATHAN EDWARDS



SIX OF THE BEST: The RAF contingent of the UKAF Netball squad who had a cleansweep of victories against Isle of Man

RAF super six help UKAF take revenge

A SUPER six of RAF netball stars shone in a four-game sweep over the Isle of Man national team at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth.

Flt Lt Kelsey Dawes said: “Athletes travelled from far and wide to assemble in Portsmouth to commence the first training session as part of the UKAF squad for 2024.”

“This training consisted of three hours of fitness, tactics and cohesion, ensuring new members knew how we all played together.”

Of the match action, she added: “The team provided a fantastic performance although unproven, taking away a clean sweep of all four games.”

“This shows the natural ability and

drive and passion that this new squad has.

“What a fantastic start to the season. It was amazing to be involved.”

Flt Lts Dawes, Nat Daly and Francesca Kennard-Kettle, Fg Off Maisey Osborne and Cpls Steph Baker and Emily Fitzpatrick took to the court for the back-to-back wins, which saw UKAF beat the national side that will be competing in the upcoming Netball Europe competition 44-28, 45-44, 58-44 and 56-40.

The results were revenge for the team, who lost by 21 goals and 40 goals to the Manx the year before.

● Follow RAF Netball on Instagram @ rafnetball.

Sport

ANGLING

Three not-so-little fishies

THE SERVICE'S sea anglers traded the white heat of competition for the learning curve of the first overseas expedition in 15 years, to Vingsand in Norway.

The association chose the location on a quest for big fjord cod and haddock on Exercise Valhalla 24 and we were not disappointed as in Vingsand harbour, in mid-west Norway, anglers could participate in both shore and boat fishing over the week.

Cpl Emma Gillie said: "Conditions on the first couple of days were generally cold and overcast with fresh south easterly winds, but by the Sunday evening the weather cleared and we were spoiled with two consecutive nights of Northern Lights and stunning sunny days.

"Fishing under a blanket of stars with almost zero light

pollution was an experience but there was plenty of cod and haddock from both boat and shore to test and delight the anglers.

"Three halibut were caught and safely returned as they are out of season, while big pollock, ling and coalfish, along with smaller species like dab and grey gurnards, kept everyone twitching."

Memorable fish included a 27lb halibut for Sgt Lee Brackenbury, a 20lb cod for Chf Tech Darren Paul and an 8lb haddock for Sgt James Anastasi.

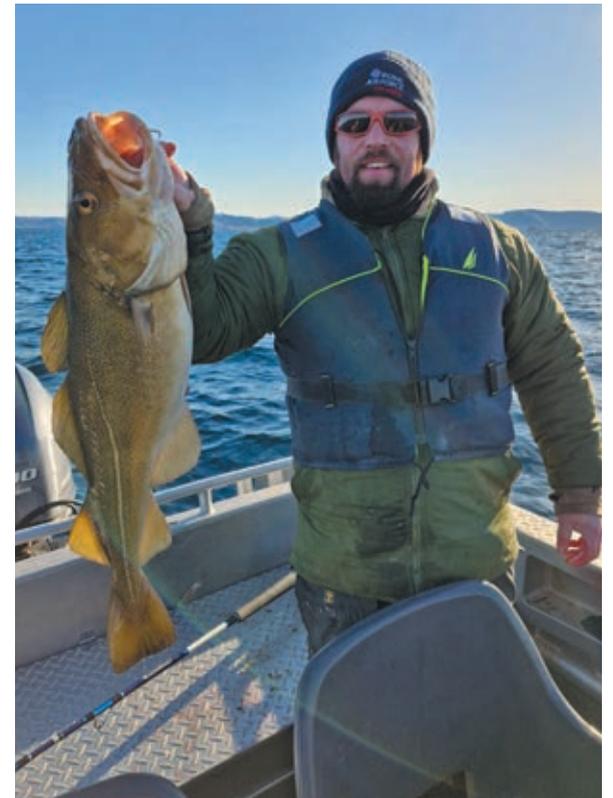
● To find out more about sea angling visit Station/Units or gymnasiums to locate Sea Angling representatives.



CODEFATHER:
FS Scott Rennie



SGT BRACKENBURY: Monster halibut



PUT THE CHIPS ON: Chf Tech Darren Paul's bringing the - 20lb - cod

BOXING

UKAF hat-trick for RAF Boxing



SPLIT-DECISION WIN: AS1(T) Luke Selby-Grace



UKAF CHAMPS:
AS1(T) Blaine Lambert on his way to victory and AS1(T) Lewis Cameron, inset right
PHOTOS: SBS

Daniel Abrahams

IT WAS a UKAF selection hat-trick for RAF fighters at the Elite Boxing Championships in Aldershot.

AS1(T) Blaine Lambert, Sgt Cameron Lewis and AS1(T) Luke Selby-Grace won their bouts to gain selection to represent UKAF after a gala night under the lights at the Army-hosted event featuring the cream of military boxing.

Team spokesperson Sgt Ben Baily said: "Overall it was a successful night for the team, drawing with the two other Services [three wins each in championship scoring bouts]. That's the closest the RAF has come to lifting the team trophy in a significant number of years.

"Five team members are now through to the England Boxing National Amateur Championships, with the three winners

joining AS1s Frankie Lyall and Carys Mainwaring in the pre-quarters taking place in Wolverhampton."

First up was AR Jayden Johnson - taking on Fus Matty Calderwood at 57kg - who lost out on a split decision after a classy display.

Next, AS1 Archie Pallister faced two times UKAF Elite Champion Pte

Lewis Harvey at 60kg weight, losing to a unanimous decision.

At 71kg class AS1(T) Lambert faced Spr Marley Devitt for the 71kg title and motored to a split-decision victory.

At 75kg, Sgt Lewis was up against Fus Connor Moore, a finalist from the 2023 UKAF Elites, and the Airman took the opportunity to showcase his skillset, with a

boxing masterclass to win on a unanimous decision.

Closing out the night, the heavyweight class saw AS1(T) Selby-Grace face Pte Kieron Cooper in the 92kg bout and the RAF boxer found a way to a split decision victory and UKAF title number three.

● Follow RAF Boxing on Instagram @raf_boxing

HOCKEY

7th heaven for men

Women and masters are champs too

Daniel Abrahams

IT WAS treble joy for the Service's hockey stars as they dominated both the men's and women's and women's masters at an historic IS outdoor championships in Aldershot.

The men's team made it seven wins in a row as they thumped the hosts 4-1, having narrowly beaten the Royal Navy 5-4, while the women beat the hosts 2-1 thanks to a late winner from Flt Lt Ellen Hood, having thrashed RN 7-1. Having beaten RN 1-0, the masters beat the hosts 3-1 with goals from Wg Cdr Sharon Eveleigh-Hall, Sgt Laura Hughes and Sarah Lye (civilian).

RAFHA deputy chairman Sgt David Oatley said: "I am delighted to say that the men, women and women's masters teams were all victorious.

"The men won the title for a record seventh time in a row, this has never been achieved by any Service before and I am pretty sure it cements them as the most successful RAF Sports team of current times.

"Our women, having retained the indoor crown in November, and being the current RAF Sports Team of the year [after winning the indoor and outdoor IS double last season], won both their matches to retain their outdoor title from last year too.

"The late goal for the women's team set up a proper grandstand finish.

"For our women's masters, having lost both matches in last year's tournament it was a real turnaround for them to win both matches this year and become champions too."

The men's team closed in on the IS title in style, with goals from Flt Lt Nick Brocklehurst, a brace from team captain Cpl Scott Perry and Cpl Tom Grimshaw, leaving a delighted Perry to say: "We will be going out tonight and it's going to be a special night.

"Seven in a row has never been done



CHAMPIONS: Cpl Thom Fowler (front) and Sgt Kyle Barnes (right)



BATTLING PERFORMANCE: Fg Off Jeorgia Carr (right) and Sqn Ldr Rachel Park (left) against the Army

before, I am really happy with that. We are just the dominant force in the sport right now and will be for many years to come – we have some excellent youngsters coming through."

Speaking after her team's title-winning game, which saw Fg Off Jeorgia Carr net the opening goal against the hosts, RAF skipper AS1

Alex Naughalty said: "I hope this win will spark us to a run of more to come. As captain, I am extremely proud, and we are going through quite a transition as a squad. We don't know where our expectations will be, but it's really building to something special."

● Follow RAF hockey on Instagram @rafhockey.

RUGBY



CAM & HAVE A GO: Victory over Cambridge PHOTOS: SBS

Titans humbled

RAF RUGBY union head coach FS Justin Coleman is determined not to let the British weather bog down his side's IS title challenge after back-to-back wins.

Speaking to *RAF News* from the side's training camp at RAF Cosford the bullish coach, who has seen his side's pre-IS warm-up schedule decimated by downpours and match postponements and cancellations, said: "It's not where I would want to be, but we take the positives from how we have adapted and reacted on and off the pitch.

"We had a great result against the Rams. To see things we planned and put into practice come off means we go into the IS with that under our belts."

The team's resounding 43-21 win over Reading-based Rams Titans closed out the IS warm-up schedule. It followed a 54-17 win over Cambridge Rugby's 1923 side at their Grantchester Road home. There was a hat-trick by AS1(T) Rhyan Scott-Young, a brace from AS1 Keiron Prescott and tries from James Roberts, Ryan Crowley, Flt Lt Sam Moorby and Flt Lt Dave Manning.

The Rams game saw the RAF lead 21-14 at the break with tries from Prescott, Crowley and Cpl Jordan Oatley, all converted by Oatley, with second half tries from Cpl Zack Taylor and another three for Prescott.

"We postponed the Rams clash after the Cambridge game due to a waterlogged pitch. It has not been ideal at all," said Coleman.

"Our fixture list has ended being nothing like we had planned in January – which has been a bit of pain. We lost our chances of facing Premiership Academy sides.

"We have been training at Cosford and going to Cranwell for team-building exercises.

"The team have been working on tactics and selections to play on weather-affected pitches, with the venue at Brickfields Stadium in Plymouth for the Navy match likely to be a mud bath.

"The Army game will be on a 3g [artificial] pitch so totally different."

● Follow RAF Rugby Union on Facebook @ RAFRugbyUnion.

RUGBY



ON THE HUNT: Vultures train hard in Gibraltar with sights set on their Navy prey

Masters Rock the Barbarians

RAF RUGBY stars geared up for this month's Inter-Services with an intensive week-long training camp in Gibraltar.

In preparation for the championships in Plymouth against the Royal Navy Masters, 32 RAF 'Vultures' participated in daily training sessions ahead of a game against local side Gibraltar Barbarians.

The players took to Europa Park where they battled it out, ending the game with a 32-12 victory for the RAF Vultures.

RAF Vultures manager Sgt Gaz Charnock said: "Being part of the RAF Vultures victory over the Gibraltar Barbarians fills me with immense pride.

"This win wasn't just about

the scoreboard; it was a testament to the unwavering determination of our players, the tireless efforts of our coaching team, Player Support Group, and the synergy that binds us together as a unit.

"In the face of adversity, our team displayed resilience, adaptability and a hunger for success that will propel us forward as we approach our first Inter-Service fixture against the Royal Navy.

"This victory isn't just a step forward; it's a testament to the countless hours of hard work and preparation put in by every member of our squad. Together, we stand ready to conquer any challenge that comes our way."



5

pages of the best of RAF Sports action



FOOTBALL

Boss bows out on a high

Hamilton steps aside as women lift Inters trophy

Daniel Abrahams

“IT’S BEST to change on a high, that’s the way to go,” said WRT head coach Sgt Chris Hamilton after the 1-0 Inters win over the Royal Navy.

Cpl Philippa Wilson’s second-half, 25-yard thunderstrike sealed the win at Park Hall stadium, home of The New Saints FC, in a game that the RAF women dominated but struggled to find the net.

The strike was a worthy winner on a night where the women’s team said farewell to Hamilton, who had guided the side for the last two years following stints as an assistant coach during the previous two years, with the team winning its fourth IS title since 2019, with 2020/21 not played due to Covid.

Hamilton said: “It was emotional, but everybody has been behind this success, the whole group. It’s hard to walk away from such a good place and set-up.

“We wanted to see a performance like that, one for the whole game, we have played well for 70 or 75 minutes in matches, but that was for 90 minutes and we were so in control if it had been 5-0 nobody would have questioned it.

“I’ve been with the group for four years and I feel it is time for a set of fresh eyes and voice, maybe someone will try a new formation or have new ideas on the game, and it might help push things on. “The side has depth, there are young players in the squad now, this could be a strong side for years to come and the older players are not showing any signs of giving up or flagging at all. It should be a nice place to



ON THEIR WAY: Beating the Army 2-0 PHOTOS: GRAEME MAIN

walk into for a new coach. “I think that the time is right, sometimes you can outstay your welcome. I’d rather leave the role with people saying, ‘do not leave’ rather than ‘thank god he has gone.’ “A pathway must be kept open for people coming through in RAF Football, whether that is new coaches or players, and my move will ensure that. I have loved it, I am so proud of what we have achieved, there is a lot of hard work that goes on in the background. My assistant manager, Cpl Jack Housley-Stott, spent hours cutting clips from matches and putting together

presentations for the players, that is just one example of the work that goes on behind the scenes. “I would never say never to another role within RAF Football because I have loved it, but for now I will continue to work in civilian football.” The 1-0 win followed the 2-0 win over the Army at Aldershot, with the team managing to get Cpl Rachael Howes (pictured inset above) on from the substitutes bench just weeks after she was diagnosed with cancer, with a follow-up substitute

selection being made for the RN game before she started her treatment for the illness. Hamilton said: “We were delighted to get Rachael on against the Army and her desire to play for her team symbolises what it is all about. She drove home from the Navy game to start her treatment – the girls were desperate to have her there and if the scoreline had not been so tight we would have got her on for a few minutes again, although she did lift the IS trophy with our captain Sgt Cat Beaver.”



Navy break men's hearts with 84th-minute strike

IT WAS late heartbreak for RAF football fans in a 2-1 defeat to the Royal Navy which saw the SRT give up the IS championship at Shrewsbury Town. The loss also marked the end of head coach WO Andy Kuchta’s three years in charge of the team, which only needed a draw to retain the title following a 3-2 win over the Army in the opening game at Aldershot. Having led through AS1 Joe Spalding after a perfectly timed

through ball from Sgt Mike Goddard, the game saw the visitors push for an equaliser, which came after 65 minutes, before they finally breached the Airman’s defences again in the 84th minute. Kuchta said: “Six minutes away from the title, but that’s football. I will not hide behind excuses, we did not play properly on the day and the Navy were stronger than us and deservedly won it. The lads are disappointed.

“Credit to the Navy, they made it difficult for us. The whole IS championship is now a great battle for all three Services, the bar has been raised. All three Services have cycles, three years ago we started ours and now I’ll be moving on – we have had three really good years, we lost one game this year, we beat the Army from a two-goal deficit. “My biggest take away from my time here is that the brand of football we played is loved



1-0: AS1 Joe Spalding scores against Navy PHOTO: CPL NATHAN EDWARDS

across the RAF and has made people proud.” Follow RAF Football on Instagram @raffootballassociation.

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R'n'R

Announcements

- p6-7
Puzzles
- p8



Win Oscar-winning comedy on DVD ● p5

From EastEnders to the Somme – Max Bowden



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

GREAT GIFT!

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

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

Look what you can find out!

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- Spelling variations
- Early movements
- Lands owned
- First migrants to the New World
- Notable bearers of the name
- Passengers on the Titanic
- Convicts to Australia

Beautiful border graphics complement the coat of arms and relate to the name's country of origin. Each surname history scroll comes with an individual certificate number and a gold seal. In addition, a bibliography of sources is printed on the reverse. These beautiful scrolls are a real talking point, and the perfect gift or keepsake to celebrate a family name. Plus, the scrolls are available unframed or in your choice of two stunning quality frames, hand finished in our UK workshop.



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Paul's off his swede

RAGING AGAINST THE MACHINE: Paul (Richard Lumsden) draws trouble to him and smells a rat when prized marrow plants grown by pal Caroline (Jo Hartley, inset right above) are stolen

Lumsden's a fanatical conspiracy theorist in new comedy

YOU MAY not be familiar with his name but you're likely to recognise his face – and voice.

Richard Lumsden, currently appearing in the West End in Jez Butterworth's latest play, *The Hills of California*, directed by Sam Mendes, is well-known for playing Ray in the long-running hit Radio 4 comedy *Clare In The Community*. Now he's starring in a new film, the mockumentary *Swede Caroline*.

Just released, the hilarious comedy – it has some real laugh-out-loud moments – focuses on up-and-coming prospect Caroline (Jo Hartley, *Afterlife*, *This Is England*). As she readies herself for the big championship, the competitive giant vegetable growing world is rocked by scandal when her prized marrow plants are stolen.

With her life turned upside down and desperate for answers, she turns to two private detectives (Aisling Bea, *This Way Up* and Ray Fearon, *Beauty and the Beast*) who are then dramatically kidnapped. Are the events linked? Caroline thinks they are and the hunt for her missing marrows takes her way beyond the allotments, plunging her into a national corruption scandal that goes all the way to the top.

The film also stars Celyn Jones (*The Almond and the Seahorse*, *Submergence*), as Caroline's friend Willy and features cameos from *Cold Feet*'s Fay Ripley and Alice Lowe (*Sightseers*, *Prevenge*). Lumsden plays Caroline and Willy's mate Paul,



MARROW HARROW: A villager shows off her gourds. Top left, Fay Ripley has a cameo and, top right, Aisling Bea, who plays a private detective

who he describes as 'a fanatical conspiracy theorist'.

It's the debut feature film for directing duo Brook Driver (who also wrote the script) and Finn Bruce, who described it as a 'feel-good film'.

Bruce said: "It's a film with such heart and a wonderful working-class female lead, instead of more superheroes and explosions."

He added: "We want to celebrate this dynamic, eccentric and quintessentially British world [of giant veg competitions and country shows], bringing a big story [of corporate corruption, insider training and even kidnapping] to the local village environment."

Hartley said: "It's the

memorable characters [in movies] that remain within our hearts long after we've forgotten the story. That's how I feel about Caroline. She appeals to the everyman. She's brave, unconventional, messy, down to earth and has a huge heart, she's real.

"Caroline's journey is universal. It's one we can all relate to. She fights for her friends, never gives up on her mission and is searching for the truth. There's nothing better than seeing the underdog hero win out."

Lumsden explained: "Brook and Finn are a dream team, I feel they have a really good future, they are quite a force."

He added: "Paul was a delight to play, he loves trouble and draws it to him. There's no vanity in that

character – he's in a tight vest, not in peak physical condition. I liked Paul a lot – I still do.

"The teamwork with Jo and Celyn was a lot of fun, we had a really good time making the film. You're working with like-minded people who are happy to put everything into it.

"Giant vegetables are always funny. I've never been a vegetable grower myself but I've witnessed those worlds first-hand and seen the seriousness with which they're taken."

He added: "People do recognise me in the street but they're never quite sure where from and I give them this embarrassing list of all the shows I have done."

His many credits include the

film *Sense and Sensibility*, TV series *Sugar Rush*, *The Singapore Grip* and *Is It Legal* and, for radio, *Sneakiepeeks* and *The Barchester Chronicles*.

He's also a musician, composer and writer – his first novel, *The Six Loves of Billy Binns*, came out a few years ago, and he's now working on another. And, with Chris Niel, he co-wrote the TV drama *Wonderful You*, which starred Greg Wise (Mr Emma Thompson and Lumsden's former brother-in-law).

Lumsden plays various instruments including the guitar, banjo and clarinet and his present theatre role involves some piano-playing.

He said: "It means I have to practise scales every day, which I had totally forgotten how to do. I usually do half an hour's scales every morning and I pity anybody who has to hear that, I've invented keys that don't exist!"

He is a supporter of the brain injury charity The Friends of Attend ABI (FAABI) – he has some friends who have had brain injuries – and holds music and writing workshops.

He said: "Once the play has finished its run in June, I will go to the FAABI workshops every week and spend a few hours with some lovely, inspiring people. It's about getting confidence back to go out into the world again and I think by learning a skill that you always thought you'd never have, that really helps. I really enjoy being part of that."

● *Swede Caroline* (15), is in cinemas now.

By Tracey Allen

R'n'R



Theatre
Birdsong
UK tour



LEAD ROLE:
Max Bowden as
Jack Firebrace

Bowden digs deep as *Birdsong's* Firebrace

AWARD-WINNING actor Max Bowden, best known for the roles of Ben Mitchell in *EastEnders* and Justin Fitzgerald in *Waterloo Road*, will star as Jack Firebrace in *Birdsong*, Sebastian Faulks's epic story of love and loss, when it returns to the stage in a new production for 2024, marking the 30th anniversary of the international best-selling novel.

The critically acclaimed Original Theatre show, adapted by Rachel Wagstaff and directed by Alastair Whatley, tells the story of one man's journey through an all-consuming love affair and into the horror of World War I.

Bowden said: "I'm so excited to be collaborating with Original Theatre again on a project close to my heart. *Birdsong* highlights the tragedy of war, yet the beauty of humanity simultaneously through strong relationships under extreme circumstances, and I can't wait to bring Jack Firebrace to life under their guidance."

Whatley, the artistic director of Original Theatre, said: "Max joined us to play the character of Tipper, a young soldier, in the 2016 tour of *Birdsong* and now the best part of a decade later returns to play the wonderful role of Jack Firebrace. I cannot wait to get back in the rehearsal

room with Max to explore one of Sebastian's most unforgettable characters."

In pre-war France, a young Englishman, Stephen Wraysford, embarks on a passionate and dangerous affair with the beautiful Isabelle Azaire that turns their world upside down. As the war breaks out over the idyll of his former life, Stephen must lead his men through the carnage of the Battle of the Somme and through the sprawling tunnels that lie deep underground. Faced with the unprecedented horror of the war, Stephen clings to the memory of Isabelle as his world explodes around him.

The tour starts at Salisbury Playhouse (September 6-14), and goes to venues including Leeds Playhouse, Cambridge Arts Theatre, Richmond Theatre, Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, Everyman Theatre Cheltenham, Chichester Festival Theatre, Norwich Theatre Royal and finishes at the Theatre Royal Bath on November 30.

The producers of *Birdsong* are working in partnership with the Royal British Legion, with associated fundraising details to be announced, said a spokesperson.

● **Go to:** birdsongplay.com for further details.



Theatre
Tim Rice: My Life in Musicals
UK tour

Sir Tim: Chance to know him so well...

An evening with top lyricist

LEGENDARY LYRICIST Sir Tim Rice, whose collaborations with composer Andrew Lloyd Webber include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, has just started a nationwide tour with his new show *My Life in Musicals - I Know Him So Well*.

The tour runs until May 14 (Rose Theatre, Kingston Upon Thames) and visits venues including Guildford, Poole, High Wycombe, Reading, Liverpool, King's Lynn, Truro, Canterbury and Coventry.

Sir Tim, who also wrote *Chess* with Björn and Benny from ABBA, said: "I've done quite a few shows like this, mainly

for charities. And then I was offered a fairly regular gig on a cruise liner, and I really enjoyed doing that. The show would be me chatting, introducing the songs, most of which I'm very happy to say are quite well-known, and telling what are, I hope, amusing entertaining stories about how each song happened. I had a live band and two female singers and two male singers who between them would bash out the vocals. It was tremendous fun.

"We did a trial run of four dates in England in February last year and they went pretty well. So the producers recklessly said: 'We'd like to put together a longer tour'.

"It's meant to be a sort of fireside chat with songs that most people will know. If you're straightforward and not trying to be too clever, and you've got great singers and a great band, [The Duncan Waugh Band and West End Singers] which I have, then it works."

The superstar songwriter also sings himself during the touring shows.

He explained: "I sing when I talk about *I Don't Know How to Love Him*, which is a romantic song from *Jesus*



SIR TIM RICE: He writes the songs that make the whole world sing

Christ Superstar. Its *Morning*. The tune show. Andrew and hit record with it. M the song, and they s various artists,' but the reason it never g is that the words w were a bit stupid. Bu quite encouraging - show."

“The nervous had a new hi

Now 79, he added nervous was last Feb about falling over be hip put in. The do anything for six we shows just under fou Some of the theatres a rake, so I had to be quite smart stick - at times. I even did As I wielded my stic

Edited by Tracey Allen



Theatre
Killer Books
UK tour

The books that helped to motivate murderers

THE RENOWNED UK criminologist, author, broadcaster and former prison governor Professor David Wilson is joining forces with novelist and broadcaster Marcel Theroux for a 33-date UK tour this autumn – *Killer Books*. The pair will discuss books that have motivated murder and how fiction can sometimes become fact.

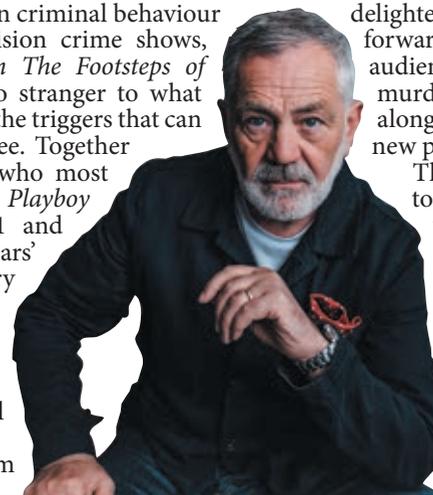
The tour, which begins on September 1 in Lerwick and then travels to multiple venues across the country before culminating in Exeter at the end of October, draws on the pair's unique insights and unparalleled knowledge of both murder and fiction.

With a 40-year career in criminal behaviour and host of many television crime shows, including Channel 4's *In The Footsteps of Killers*, Prof Wilson is no stranger to what motivates murderers and the triggers that can set them on a killing spree. Together with Marcel Theroux – who most recently presented *The Playboy Bunny Murder* on ITV1 and has more than 20 years' experience in the literary field – he will delve into the realm of murder in fiction, characters, plots and locations that arouse lethal violence in the real world.

Prof Wilson said: "I am



MURDER IN MIND: Theroux (above) and Prof Wilson (below)



delighted to be touring again and am looking forward to once again engaging with the audiences, about true crime, violence and murder. And this time I will have a friend along for the ride, who will bring a whole new perspective on the topic."

Theroux added: "This will be my first tour and I am so lucky to get to do it with an accomplice like David Wilson. I am truly thrilled to be a part of this – it's such a fascinating topic – and to dive deep into the world of murder and fiction in front of a live audience every night will be a great experience and one I am greatly looking forward to."

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

original title was *Kansas* existed way before the I wrote it hoping to get a music publishers quite liked said: 'We'll send this out to it never got recorded. And got recorded, I now realise, were not really good. They at the tune was fantastic. It's and I talk about this in the

"Right, lads, let's go with this one."

The son of a World War II Army Major and a WAAF who served as a photographic interpreter, Sir Tim started his professional life as a trainee solicitor, but was always a pop music fanatic. He then worked as a trainee at EMI Records' A&R department, and by now was writing with Lloyd Webber after publisher Desmond Elliot put them in touch with each other.

Tim and Andrew accepted an invitation to write a musical entertainment for Colet Court School, London's end of term concert – *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was the first public performance of a Rice/Lloyd Webber work, on March 1, 1968.

Sir Tim revealed that he enjoys interacting with fans at his shows. He said: "It's really nice to meet people. I wouldn't say I'm like the Rolling Stones would be after a show! But you always get a very nice group of people coming round backstage. They always seem to dig up photographs and record sleeves either that I've never seen, or that are from the early 1970s. Some of it is really interesting. At the shows we did in February, we got everyone standing at the end and singing along to *Any Dream Will Do*. It's lovely that stuff I wrote half a century ago is still hitting home."

● **Go to: sirtimricelive.com for tour details.**

Interview by James Rampton

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DVDs

The Holdovers (15)

On 4K Ultra HD, Blu-ray and DVD from April 22 (Dazzler Media)



Da'Vine's divine in quirky comedy

THE *HOLDOVERS'* Da'Vine Joy Randolph (below) scooped the best supporting actress title at the recent Oscars for her performance as school head cook Mary Lamb.

Dubbed one of the best films of the year, this comedy drama from Oscar-winning director Alexander Payne (*The Descendants*, *Sideways*) has been described as a beautiful and bittersweet modern masterpiece.

It follows a cranky teacher (Paul Giamatti, *Sideways*) at a New England prep school who is forced to remain on campus during the holiday break to babysit the handful of students with nowhere to go.

Eventually, he forms an unlikely bond with one of them, a damaged, brainy troublemaker (Dominic Sessa), along with Mary, who has just lost a son in Vietnam.

Sharp, funny and poignant, *The Holdovers* is a masterclass in the



OSCAR-WINNER: Da'Vine with co-stars in *The Holdovers*

power of cinema and we have copies to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

Who directed *The Holdovers*?

Email your answer 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 May 3.





Your Announcements

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

Deaths

BARKER, Ian. Boy apprentice to Corporal Armourer, served in the RAF 1972 - 1995. Passed away suddenly, but peacefully in his sleep on March 7 aged 68. Husband to Anne, father to Susan, Helen and David. Grandfather of nine and great-grandfather to one with a new one on the way. Brother to Lyn and Jill.

In Memoriam

IN abiding memory of my friends and colleagues who formed the rear crew of Vulcan XH535 and who died when it crashed during a test flight on May 11, 1964. They remain sorely missed, Tony Phillips.

Reunions

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

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

124 Entry Apprentices – RAF Cosford, 1974-77. 50th anniversary reunion. Members will be meeting at The Limes Country Lodge Hotel, Earlswood, Solihull on Saturday, October 12 with an informal buffet luncheon to follow on in the evening of Sunday, October 13. For further information please email: nigelcooper1@live.co.uk or call/WhatsApp on: 07986 200137.

We have currently managed to locate and contact more than 30 of our 49 original members so a great time is assured.

Associations

RAF Armourers past and present: RAF Association's Armourers Branch aims to provide welfare support and comradeship for all who have served or currently serve as an RAF Armourer. Please see the website: rafaarmourers.co.uk or you can contact the committee via email at: plumbersrest@outlook.com.

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

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

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

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

RAFA vacancy

DUE to the recent retirement of our Branch Secretary, the result of a road accident, the Beccles and Southwold Area Branch of the RAF Association (RAFA), has an important vacancy to be filled at the earliest opportunity. The post would suit a retired or mature ex-member of the RAF familiar with admin procedures at a basic level. The applicant must also be computer literate and have their own transport. The post is without remuneration, however, reasonable expenses will be paid and training given. A warm welcome awaits for a friendly volunteer who will give a few hours of their time monthly to assist our Committee to provide welfare support and comradeship to our 60 members (14 of whom are still serving), veterans and their families and enjoy the company of those who have had similar experiences. For further information please email branch President Brian Vousden on: lancaster457@btinternet.com, and see website: rafabecclesandsouthwold.wordpress.com/

RAFA Cranwell concert

THE ANNUAL RAFA Cranwell Branch Bomber County Charity Concert will be held on May 12 from 7pm to 10pm at the Masonic Rooms, Watergate, Sleaford, with music by the Miller Magic Big Band. Tickets, £10 each, are available from Moore & Scrupps Jewellers and Sleaford Jewellers, both of Southgate, Sleaford, in the foyer of Sleaford's Tesco Superstore from 10am until 4pm on May 9, and on the door of the Masonic Rooms, from 6.30pm on the evening of the concert. The concert is dedicated to the airmen of Bomber Command who took part in the Nuremberg Raid on March 30-31, 1944. This year the concert also celebrates the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings on June 6, 1944.

Obituary

Op Manna pilot John dies at the age of 102



SPECIAL DAY: John, seated, celebrated his 100th birthday with family.

A FORMER Lancaster pilot who took part in Operation Manna, the humanitarian food drop to Dutch civilians, has died aged 102.

Sqn Ldr John McGroary MBE passed away on March 8 having served 32 years in the RAF from 1943 to 1976.

His son Tony said: "He started learning to fly on Tiger Moths and ended his career at RAF Wittering on the Harrier OCU, having flown many aircraft types including the Oxford, Anson, Wellington, Lancaster, Dakota, Harvard, Piston Provost, Chipmunk, Meteor, Vampire and Harrier."

In 1942 John was called up for the RAF. After basic training and flying aptitude tests he was selected in the summer of 1943 for flying training in Canada, where he was awarded his wings and promoted to Sgt.

Tony added: "He then undertook pilot training on heavy bombers and was posted in 1945 to 625 Squadron at RAF Scampton, flying Lancasters on operations in the closing weeks of the war and Operation Manna – dropping food to the starving Dutch. At this time he was promoted rapidly to Flt Lt.

"At the end of the war he volunteered for Transport Command and joined 46 Sqn, flying the DC3 to Europe and the Middle East.

"He was demobbed in 1947 and returned to civilian life at



HONOUR: John with wife Joan in July 1966 at Buckingham Palace for his MBE presentation. *Inset below*, the young airman in 1943.

his old engineering company, although he continued to serve in the RAFVR.

"Following the outbreak of the Korean War, John was recalled to the RAF in 1952 and trained as a flying instructor, initially with the Harvard and Provost, followed by Meteor and Vampire courses.

"From 1955 to 58 he was with 8 FTS at RAF Swinderby as a Qualified Flying Instructor and Flight Commander on the De Havilland Vampire."

The funeral and cremation was held in Bristol on April 4.



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.

Important Notice

The publishers of *RAF News* cannot accept responsibility for the quality, safe delivery or operation of any products advertised or mentioned in this publication. Reasonable precautions are taken before advertisements are accepted but such acceptance does not imply any form of approval or recommendation. Advertisements (or other inserted material) are accepted subject to the approval of the publishers and their current terms and conditions. The publishers will accept an advertisement or other inserted material only on the condition that the advertiser warrants that such advertisement does not in any way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act. All copy is subject to the approval of the publishers, who reserve the right to refuse, amend, withdraw or otherwise deal with advertisements submitted to them at their absolute discretion and without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Mail order advertisers are required to state in advertisements their true surname or full company name, together with an address from which the business is managed.

R'n'R



Prize Crossword No. 359

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

Across

- 7. He tried to leave Crete in one vehicle from America (6)
- 8. Size of book involving war quote we ignore (6)
- 10. Score playing great golf (7)
- 11. Heartless Sam will annoy and simper (5)
- 12. He went 20,000 Leagues under the sea, returning warning (4)
- 13. **And 6 Down.** Frogs drank haphazardly at US base (5,5)
- 17. Maureen has tea and coffee (5)
- 18. **And 5 Down.** Without peach, I whip fruitcake using alternative (4,5)
- 22. First generation refugees initially experience fresh anguish (5)
- 23. Before start of summer, clouts angry grasshoppers (7)
- 24. Types of ship Kohl uses? (6)
- 25. Wine Rod has before two ducks have left (6)

Down

- 1. **And 9 Down.** Secretary of State for War and the Royal Air Force treats chronic Hull twins (7,9)
- 2. Did William's brother fly this aircraft? (7)
- 3. Little Angus Townsend shows great enthusiasm (5)
- 4. Copper is into Eastern cooking (7)
- 5. See 18 Across
- 6. See 13 Across
- 9. See 1 Down
- 14. Company's car at station (7)
- 15. Young girl I take on RAF assignment (7)
- 16. **14 Down** has one upsetting Rio Shaw (7)
- 19. Graceful silver the Italian finally chose (5)
- 20. These animals have pride in 50 atoms (5)
- 21. Go away with Scottish sheep! (5)

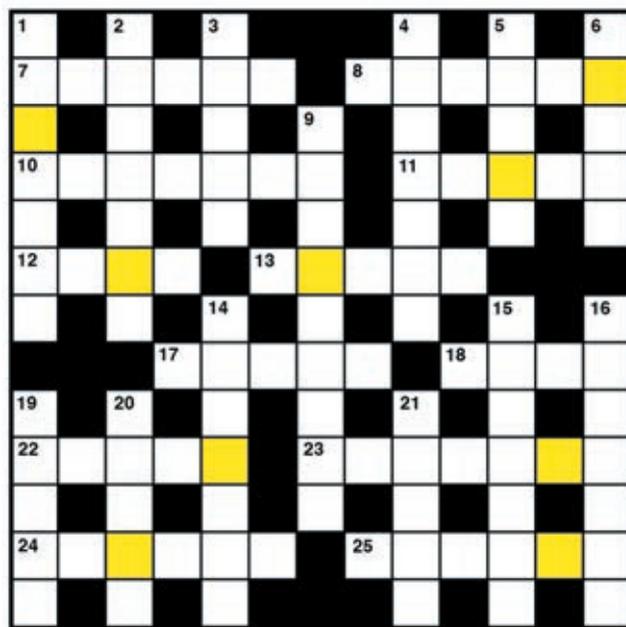
Name:

Address:

.....

RAF term:.....Crossword No. 359

Please send your entries for our Prize Crossword and Prize Su Doku puzzles to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel, to arrive by May 3. Prize Crossword No. 357 winner is: David Mogg, London SW17.



Solution to Crossword No. 358

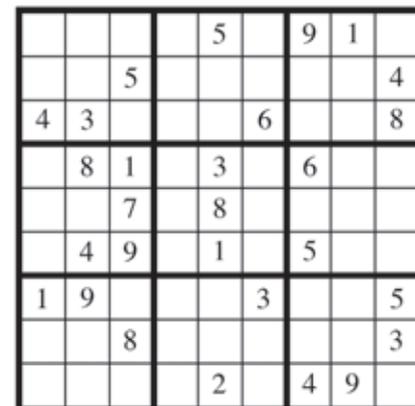
Across – 1. Roti 8. Repeatedly 9. Mosquito 10. Coax 12. Statue 14. Relate 15. Runway 17. Desert 18. Ohms 19. Labrador 21. Helicopter 22. Apse
Down – 2. Out Of Touch 3. Iraq 4. Sprite 5. Favour 6. Hercules 7. Lynx 11. Afternoons 13. Township 16. Yellow 17. Debate 18. Oche 20. Aura
RAF operation – *Desert Fox*



Prize Su Doku No. 369

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 May 3. The winner of Su Doku No. 367 is: Mr MJW Halford, Exeter.



Solution to Su Doku No. 368

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



Music
Blancmange
 New album and UK tour



Life's still sweet for Blancmange's Neil

BLANCMANGE – who had a massive hit in the 80s with *Living On The Ceiling* – will release their career-spanning album, *Everything is Connected*, featuring 38 tracks, on May 11.

And the band start an 11-date UK headline tour on May 16 in Newcastle, finishing in Southampton on June 3.

Vocalist and songwriter Neil Arthur said: "I'm really lucky to be able to make the music completely on my own terms. Within myself there are no limits, there's a massive palette inside and I will try anything."

Neil met multi-instrumentalist Stephen Luscombe at the Harrow School of Art in 1979 and, as synths weren't readily available, they toyed with experimental homemade instruments which sounded vaguely like synths. They signed with London Records in February 1982 and the band became a regular fixture

Arthur's brought own support band for tour

in the charts and on *Top of The Pops*.

The duo stayed in contact, often joking that they should do more stuff together one day, and re-emerged 25 years later with 2011's acclaimed album *Blanc Burn*. Sadly, Stephen left shortly after due to ill health, but reconnecting with the spirit of

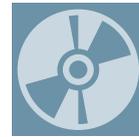
BUSY MAN:
 Neil Arthur rains supreme



Blancmange unlocked a prolific side to Neil, resulting in seven more Blancmange albums in the space of a decade.

In 2022 and some 40 years after the release of their debut *Happy Families*, Blancmange re-signed to London Records for their most recent album, *Private View* (2022).

Support on the tour comes from Neil himself in one of his collaborative projects, *The Remainder*, with Finlay Shakespeare and Liam Hutton. **Go to: blancmange.co.uk for details.**



DVDs
The Equalizer Season 3 (15)
 On DVD now (Fabulous Films/Spirit Entertainment)



Queen Latifah stars as female vigilante McCall

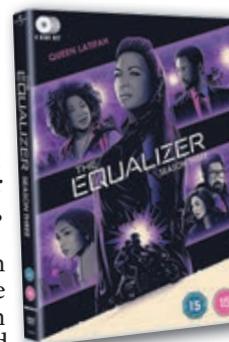
THE EQUALIZER is a reimagining of the classic series starring Academy Award nominee Queen Latifah (*Chicago, Bessie*) as Robyn McCall, an enigmatic woman with a mysterious background who uses her extensive skills as a former CIA operative to help those with nowhere else to turn. She looks like your average single mum who is quietly raising her teenage daughter but to a trusted few, she is *The Equalizer*.

In the aftermath of her abduction, the walls between Robyn McCall's family and vigilante life continue to crumble as those closest to her must come together for the first time to save her in season three of this fast-moving action series.

Latifah also executive-produced *The Equalizer*, which follows a gender-flipped version of agent Robert McCall, originally played by Edward

Woodward in 1985 and later by Denzel Washington in the film franchise.

Destiny's Child's Kelly Rowland plays a superstar singer in the episode *Paradise Lost*. When Misty (Rowland) decides to retire from the spotlight she receives a terrifying letter from a fan, so her security team contacts Robyn McCall to help track down the culprit.



We have copies of *The Equalizer Season Three* (4 disc set) on DVD up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply send us the correct answer to this question:

Who played agent Robert McCall in the film franchise of *The Equalizer*?

Email your answer, marked *The Equalizer* competition, to: traceyallen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by May 3.