

The Forces' favourite paper



Comedy king Cleeve on the success of his *Fawlty Towers* stage version

● See R'n'R pages 4-5

Win!



Classic drugs movie to win

● See R'n'R page 8

ROYAL AIR FORCE

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RAF News

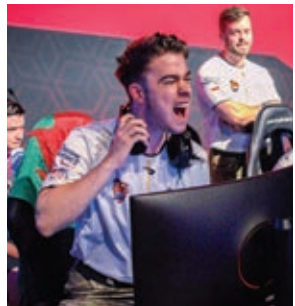


CAS tribute to Irish aces

See pages 14-15



Esport IS glory hunt



● See page 23

Equitation Leading in the Loriners



● See p24

Rugby A Defence Cup third



● See page p27

Salute to The Few

UK marks 85th anniversary of epic battle for British skies



Simon Mander

THE CHIEF of the Air Staff, ACM Harv Smyth, led tributes to the heroes of the Battle of Britain as the nation marked the 85th anniversary of the fight to halt the Nazi invasion in the skies over the English Channel. He said: "The Battle of Britain was an incredible national and international effort. Success in 1940 was enabled by collaboration across the Services, across government, across our society, and with our Allies."

● See reports p3, p9 and pp14-15

BiteSize



“It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity,”

New F-35 Force chief Gp Capt Jim Calvert
See page 7



“One of my first roles was in a RAF recruitment advert,”

Actor Jason Durr stars in new play *Murder at Midnight*
See R’n’R page 3



“If one girl gets into rugby having seen the tournament, then it’s job done,”

RAF star AS1 Daisy Fahey after shining in International Defence Cup
See page 27



ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

RAF News
Room 68
Lancaster Building
HQ Air Command
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Editor: Simon Williams
Email: editor@rafnews.co.uk

Features Editor: Tracey Allen
Email: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

News Editor: Simon Mander

Sport: sports@rafnews.co.uk

All advertising:
Edwin Rodrigues
Tel: 07482 571535
Email: edwin.rodrigues@rafnews.co.uk

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c/o Intermedia,
Unit 6 The Enterprise Centre,
Kelvin Lane, Crawley
RH10 9PE
Tel: 01293 312191
Email: rafnewssubs@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

Single living pledge

NEW SINGLE Living Accommodation will provide 1,800 bedspaces, the MOD has announced.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation has allocated the first sites to construction partners to develop on using a common design for the MOD’s new buildings.

The projects include deals with contractor Reds 10 to create 50 bedspaces at Cosford, while Laing O’Rourke will provide 228 at Waddington and 80 at Honington.

The six-year contract aims to see 16,000 new bedspaces built by 2034 as part of a wider MOD plan to build or refurbish 40,000.

These initial sites have been identified as the first priorities to replace ageing and poor-quality existing buildings.

DIO programme director Warren Webster said: “We have plans for many more new SLA blocks at sites across the country, benefiting thousands of our Service personnel for years to come.”



TIME FOR BEDS:
Defence housing chiefs are to boost RAF Single Living Accommodation

This Week In History



1997
Speed king

TORNADO F3 pilot Sqn Ldr Andy Green sets a new land speed world record driving the Phantom engine-powered Thrust SSC, hitting 714mph in Nevada.



1942
Mossie mission

105 SQN Mosquitoes launch the first daylight bombing raid of Berlin. Six aircraft take off from RAF Horsham. Heavy cloud and bad weather hamper the mission, resulting in only one crew hitting their target.



2004
Harrier flies in

HARRIER GR7As deploy to Kandahar in Afghanistan to deliver close air support and reconnaissance capability to coalition forces on the ISAF anti-terror mission.

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

Home town tribute

Dowding bust and war icon honour chief and The Few

Malcolm Triggs

A REPLICA SPITFIRE and bronze statue dedicated to the man who masterminded the RAF's victory in the Battle of Britain have been unveiled yards from his Scottish birthplace.

A bust of Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding was unveiled in front of Dowding House, now a home for RAF veterans run by the Royal Air Forces Association, built as St Ninian's Preparatory School by his father.

Now, also on the lawn in front of the property, is a recently restored replica Spitfire given to the people of Moffat by Dr Hamish MacLeod.

The replica of PT462, a Mk IX built in 1943, had been in the front garden of the local GP's nearby home since 2009 and was moved to its new location, with the support of RAFA, after extensive refurbishment.

As Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RAF Fighter Command, in 1940 Lord Dowding was dubbed "the architect of deliverance" by wartime prime minister Winston Churchill.

A plaque on the plinth holding the bust has a dedication from his 'Dear Fighter Boys', the airmen



FITTING TRIBUTES: ACM Lord Dowding's bust and replica Spitfire at Dowding House in Moffat
PHOTOS: BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL TRUST

dubbed 'the Few'. It was unveiled by Piers Dowding, 3rd Baron Dowding, his grandson, and Honorary President of the Moffat Spitfire Project Group.

Dr MacLeod, who, as a medical student, took up the temporary position of science teacher at St Ninian's School in 1959, began training as a Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve pilot.

While undergoing night flying and Instrument rating refresher courses in Florida in 1996, he heard a Merlin engine and traced

it to PT462 and he commissioned a replica of the fighter as it had been in 1943.

Now it will be floodlit after dusk each evening, while an interpretation board at the site explains the links between the location, the replica, Dr MacLeod, and the bust of Dowding, thought to be the only one of its kind north of the border.

Dr MacLeod said: "I am absolutely delighted that the replica, which has given so much pleasure to so many people since it was put together in my front garden in 2009, has taken on a new role as a tribute to the man who arguably saved the free world by leading the RAF to victory in the Battle of Britain."



'FOUND': Fg Off Philip Cox

Missing pilot is identified

AIR FORCE historians have revealed how they helped identify a pilot killed during the Battle of Britain and mistakenly buried as an 'unknown soldier'.

The body of Fg Off Philip Anthony Neville Cox was washed up on the Dutch coast at Westenschouwen on August 23, 1940 under the name of COXBAD with a partial Service number.

Attempts to identify him were thwarted after information confirming his service in the RAF was removed by accident from Commonwealth War Grave Commission records.

But further investigation by the Air Historical Branch, showed Fg Off Cox was shot down over Dover Harbour on July 27, 1940, which confirmed that at some point his body had washed ashore, although the location was not recorded.

His identity disks had also been returned to the UK during the war.

Now the headstone at Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery has been changed to reflect the fact his identity has finally been established.

His name will also be removed from the RAF's memorial to the missing at Runnymede in Surrey.

Charity spends £15 million helping the RAF Family

THE RAF Benevolent Fund spent £15.1 million to support members of the RAF Family last year, the charity has revealed in its 2024 Impact Report.

The recently-released report showed that more than 32,500 serving personnel and their families benefitted from the Fund's community activities and events: such as its youth programme Airplay, Station Families Days and station grants.

And more than 19,000 serving personnel and their families received direct support from the Fund, ranging from financial grants and benefits advice to mental health services.

A Fund spokesperson said: "Enhanced wellbeing for the RAF Family remained a key priority for the Fund in 2024. More than 2,000 individuals accessed support through the Listening and Counselling Service."

They included RAF doctor Sam May, who said: "After struggling following a sports injury, the counselling from the Fund was really helpful. It was important

to me to have a non-judgemental place to talk and share the load with someone who could help me figure out coping strategies."

The Fund also helped around 400 households access nearly £2 million in unclaimed benefits through its advocacy and benefits advice services, the spokesperson added.

Support to maintain independence was another key area, with funding provided for home adaptations and bespoke mobility aids.

The RAFBF's Housing Trust gave accommodation-related support to 357 people across 196 adapted homes in 2024.

The charity also supported 3,964 veterans, their families and the bereaved through initiatives like veteran meet-ups, group friendship breaks, and dementia reminiscence groups.

In 2024, the Fund provided direct assistance to 9,300 members of the RAF veteran community, offering support through its advocacy service, mobility



SUPPORT: RAFBF is there for RAF families

equipment, and help with day-to-day living costs.

AVM Chris Elliot, the Fund's Chief Executive, said: "In another year of high

demand, we were able to provide vital support to those navigating financial hardship, illness, bereavement, and mental health challenges."



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CAS debut at Cranwell

NEW CHIEF of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth inspected an RAF Regiment Guard of Honour at Cranwell for the first time since taking the top job.

The Harrier veteran of hundreds of operational missions over Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Iraq and Afghanistan succeeded Sir Richard Knighton.

ACM Smyth joined the RAF in 1991 and then spent 15 years as a frontline Harrier pilot and weapons instructor, before heading the UK's F-35 programme and bringing the fifth-generation stealth fighter into service.



SURVIVOR: WO Joel Lawrence

St Mawgan tribute for Burma WO

Susie Wood
St Mawgan

THE WARTIME exploits of an RAF crewman shot down over the Burmese jungle in 1945 have been recognised at St Mawgan.

WO Joel Lawrence survived the crash and evaded capture by Japanese forces using jungle tactics still taught in the UK Armed Forces.

Now his sons have unveiled a handcrafted wooden box of his memorabilia at St Mawgan to inspire future generations of military personnel.

The Cornish base is home to the Defence Survive, Evade, Resist, Extract Training Organisation where thousands of Service members are taught how to endure and escape hostile environments.

The commemorative cabinet, built by RAF carpenter John Presswell, shows WO Lawrence's harrowing journey and heroic escape.

WO Lawrence moved to Cornwall in 1966 and remained a proud member of the community until his death in 2023 aged 101.

Darcie beats the deployment blues

Tracey Allen

BENSON-BASED four-year-old Darcie Sparey netted a kids' charity award for battling the deployment blues while her crewman dad serves with the Oxfordshire station's frontline helicopter force.

Born during the UK's third lockdown during the Covid pandemic, she forged a special bond with her father and has struggled to cope with the demands of his absence during overseas deployments.

Described by Air Force mum Briony as 'Daddy's Girl', she has been presented with a Little Trooper award for coping with the family pressures of frontline duty after three deployments in three years.

Briony said: "Darcie's resilience has been nothing short of inspiring. She has poured her energy into settling at a new posting, finishing preschool and making new friends.

"I am endlessly proud of her. The past few years have not been easy, but she is blossoming into the most kind, caring and beautiful little trooper.

"We are counting down the days until her dad returns, so we can celebrate a truly special family Christmas together this year."

Louise Fetigan, founder of the Little Troopers charity, added: "Growing up with a parent in the Armed Forces can be really challenging, especially when periods of parental separation are prolonged and happen regularly.

"On top of this, moving home repeatedly can be tough for children, having to uproot their world and say goodbye to friends they have just made."



Charity to target younger vets

Tracey Allen

THE ROYAL British Legion has announced a new 10-year strategy to support the changing needs of Britain's Armed Forces community as the number of younger veterans increases.

The charity says its vision for the next 10 years 'reflects the changing face of today's Armed Forces community in a changing world.'

An RBL spokesperson said: "Decreasing numbers of World War II and National Service veterans alongside societal changes mean that today's Armed Forces community is smaller, more diverse, and with

a younger average age.

"Over the next 10 years, the RBL expects to support more veterans of a working age."

Mark Atkinson, the charity's Director General, added: "Our community is becoming more diverse and current trends suggest that more people will need our help earlier in life."

Two-thirds of the approximately two million veterans in the Armed Forces community are under 80, with an increasing proportion now of working age, with 45 per cent aged 65 or under. Veterans aged 18-29 are the only age group likely to increase in the coming decade, the RBL said.



MUTUAL BENEFIT: RAF personnel fundraise for the Royal British Legion



NAME CHECK: Sqn Ldr Jamil

Correction

IN AN article in the July 25 edition (1613) of RAF News on the final flight of a Saudi-based Tornado by Flt Lt Nick Cogley, we wrongly identified RAF officer Sqn Ldr Mohammad Tahir Jamil as a Royal Saudi Air Force officer. We are happy to correct this error.



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Lightning conductor

Afghan Harrier veteran lands F-35 command

Simon Mander

A HARRIER veteran is the latest boss of Britain's newest fighter force.

Gp Capt Jim Calvert, who completed tours in Afghanistan and detachments on HMS Illustrious and Ark Royal before the iconic jump jet retired in 2010, becomes Marham's Commander Lightning.

He recently completed his first flight in an F-35B under the watchful eye of outgoing boss Gp Capt John Butcher.

Gp Capt Calvert said: "Stepping into the role of Lightning Force Commander is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I couldn't be more thrilled."

"Flying the F-35 for the first time was an unforgettable experience – it's an incredible aircraft, and you really feel the cutting-edge technology at work."

Gp Capt Butcher said: "Having been part of the F-35 programme from its early stages, I've witnessed first-hand the dedication, professionalism, and innovation that has shaped our Lightning Force into the



HANDOVER: Gp Capt John Butcher (left) welcomes Gp Capt Jim Calvert to Marham, where he will command UK F-35 squadrons

exceptional capability it now is. "Every single person involved, from our pilots and engineers to our support staff, has contributed

to making this capability what it is today, and I couldn't be prouder of what we've achieved together." He will remain at RAF

Marham until the end of the year working with 207 Sqn before taking up his next assignment in the New Year.



Sky Sabre £118m lift

BRITAIN'S AIR defences are to be beefed up with systems accurate enough to hit a tennis ball travelling twice the speed of sound.

The UK is to buy Land Ceptor missile launchers which recently demonstrated the capability in live firings, to bolster national security.

The £118 million purchase forms part of Sky Sabre, which can intercept cruise missiles, aircraft and drones and can control the flight of 24 projectiles, guiding them each to separate targets at once.

Britain is doubling the number of deployable Sky Sabre systems operated by the Armed Forces in a drive to reinforce air defences.

Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard said: "Doubling our deployable Sky Sabre capability will strengthen the UK's air defences and deter our adversaries."

The three-year contract will deliver six missile launching systems for use at home and anywhere in the world.

Sky Sabre was successfully tested in the Outer Hebrides as part of Nato's Exercise Formidable Shield in the first live firing of the system in the UK.

In Brief



Space Cadets

AIR CADETS got a week-long look at the world of space and airpower during their annual summer camp to RAF Syerston.

More than 300 cadets and 150 adult volunteers took part in activities from gliding and drone piloting to engineering challenges.

Grads begin Poseidon adventure

Simon Mander

MARITIME PATROL rookies joined ex-Nimrod aircrew at Lossiemouth as they graduated from the latest Poseidon conversion course.

The 42 (Torpedo Bomber) Sqn personnel celebrated with the traditional 'badge-ripping' ceremony, removing their newcomer patches, and replacing them with the emblem of the Squadron they will be joining.

P8 Acoustic Weapons Systems Operator Sgt Tom Harbor said: "The most satisfying aspect has been seeing our development as a crew from the early stages of the course up to now."

"Initially we were all unfamiliar with aircraft and mission systems and starting to get to grips with the theory. Now,

we can confidently plan and fly sorties and employ the aircraft effectively using all the tools and procedures we've practised throughout the course."

The course began in January and included overseas training flights in Jacksonville, Florida, as part of Exercise Fledgling.

The graduates will now be posted to either 120 or 201 Sqn, where they will complete their combat-ready work-ups on the front line.

The exception is graduate Lt Col Eric Rasmussen, who will be departing Lossiemouth to return to Norway where he will become the Commanding Officer of his squadron.

Remaining in Moray with their new units, Course 14 graduates will soon be flying on Search and Rescue and Anti-Submarine Warfare missions.



Instructors at 42 (TB) Sqn will now begin 'Course 15' with a new batch of RAF students who

will undergo their three-phase conversion course to fly both the P8 and Wedgetail.

This advertorial contains references to suicide attempts which some people may find upsetting.

FROM SOLDIER TO CIVVY STREET. FINDING PEACE AFTER MEDICAL DISCHARGE.

For nearly two decades, Caroline served in the British Army. Her military life was filled with purpose and pride. But when her service abruptly ended, she faced invisible wounds, physical injury, and a deep sense of loss.

"The Army was all I wanted to do. Through it, I met my husband and served in amazing places, meeting people across the world."

But behind those adventures were accumulating scars – the kind you can't always see.

Long before her medical discharge, Caroline's mental health was deteriorating.

"There were too many bad memories of previous tours. I didn't tell anyone and kept it hidden."

While deployed in Iraq, the weight became unbearable. She attempted to take her own life.

Back in the UK, Caroline faced bullying from colleagues who didn't understand why she'd come home early. Six months later, she ruptured her Achilles tendon. The injury wasn't taken seriously, and a delayed operation led to permanent nerve damage and drop foot – a life-changing disability.

But that wasn't the only trigger. She was sent to Afghanistan, then posted to Cyprus – away from her husband, isolated, and barely coping. Over one weekend, she made other attempts to end her life.

"It didn't work. On Monday, my alarm went off for PT. I was more scared of being charged for missing parade than what I'd done to my body. I made it to the parade ground and collapsed."

She was airlifted to a UK mental health facility.

Caroline was later medically discharged. She found the process chaotic and negligent. Her care didn't transfer. Her discharge paperwork was delayed. No guidance. No plan.

"I fell through every gap and felt like a failure.

"You lose everything. Your role. Your identity. Your future. You keep shaving bits off yourself to fit – but you just don't."

For years, Caroline struggled, but then she found hope in an unexpected way: an invitation to a Help for Heroes Christmas party.

That night, she met others who understood her and learnt how the Charity could support both her and her husband. From sporting and social activities to physical and mental healthcare, Caroline discovered that Help for Heroes offer services for anyone who served.

"I've now been with the Charity for ten years. Every year, there's a bit of growth, a bit more healing. It's not fast. It takes time."

Today, Caroline has retrained through night school to become a gym instructor and personal trainer. She also tried new sports, adapted for her new reality.

"I kept clinging to the athlete I was before injury. At some point, I had to



accept that version had gone. So I tried something new."

She earned qualifications in indoor rowing and powerlifting, joining the Help for Heroes Coaching Academy. In 2023, she became a powerlifting coach. Now, she coaches other veterans.

"One guy told me, 'I never thought I'd get to do anything like this because I'm blind.' So we adapted it. When he reached the right squat depth. The smile on his face was everything."

Helping others heal through sport has become part of her own journey.

"I still struggle sometimes. But now, I can be the person I needed back then."

Her message to other veterans still fighting for peace?

"You've already got determination built into you. You just need to channel it into something that lights you up. Whatever makes you feel strong again.

"When you do – you'll feel it. That moment of pride. That freedom. That growth. And that's everything."

**HELP for
HEROES**

Help for Heroes is there for anyone who's worn the uniform, for as long as it takes. Find out more at helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help.

Royal Gunners flying the flag

KCS raise the Ensign for Changing of the Guard

Simon Mander

AIR FORCE ensigns flew alongside Union Flags to commemorate the Battle of Britain as Gunners marched down the Mall to mark the Changing of the Guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

The King's Colour Squadron, supported by RAF Music Services, paraded before taking up their posts at the Royal Household – taking over from the Welsh Guards.

Last raised for the RAF's 100th anniversary in 2018, the 25 six-yard diameter RAF Ensigns are sewn in Yorkshire.

Historian Nick Farley, from The Flag Consultancy, said: "People have fought for our flag and it's a privilege to raise our Union Flag alongside the RAF Ensign. I'm proud to help keep the memory of the Battle of Britain alive today."

A total of 544 RAF personnel were killed in the Battle of Britain, marked every year.

Chief of the Air Staff ACM Harv Smyth said: "Innovation and integration were evident in 1940 and working across the Services, across government, across our society, as well as with our allies and industry, remains critical to our ability to fly and fight, today tomorrow, together."

TRIBUTE TO THE FEW:
The RAF Ensign flies alongside the Union Flag on the Mall to mark 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain
PHOTOS: CPL IAIN CURLETT



Known as the Air Force's drill and ceremonial specialists, The King's Colour Squadron also serve as 63 Sqn in their primary Force Protection role.

Based at Northolt, their proximity to the capital sees them supporting high-profile national events throughout the year such as Remembrance and the State

opening of Parliament.

Their Public Duties responsibility also sees them share and rotate with their counterparts from the Army in protecting Royal palaces.

Chaplain's charity role

Tracey Allen

THE RAF'S Chaplain-in-Chief is to take on the spiritual welfare of Forces veterans with the Royal British Legion as its new National Chaplain.

The Venerable Dr Giles Legood will represent the charity at flagship Remembrance events, alongside his pastoral duties with the Royal Air Force. He has served in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Falklands and across Europe with the Air Force Chaplaincy and was appointed as Chaplain to HM The King in 2022.

RBL Director Mark Atkinson said: "With many years of experience as a chaplain in the Royal Air Force, Giles' appointment is warmly welcomed by all at the RBL, especially as we near the poignant Remembrance period."

"He will play a significant role in the Festival of Remembrance when the nation reflects on the sacrifices made by the military and their families, and we look forward to working with him during the time he'll be in post."

In Brief



Ghost hunt

HOT WEATHER testing of Britain's latest unmanned aerial system has taken place in Cyprus.

The Ghost Drone uses artificial intelligence to work out how noisy it sounds and what it looks like – from the target's point of view – and can operate in temperatures as low as -40°C at altitudes of 12,000 ft.



BRITAIN'S NEWEST fighter took centre stage as the UK Carrier Strike Group arrived in Tokyo as part of Operation Highmast.

Crews lined a flightdeck bristling with Marham-based F-35B Lightning aircraft as the Royal Navy's Flagship HMS Prince of Wales visited Japan for the first time in the halfway point in her eight-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific region.

News



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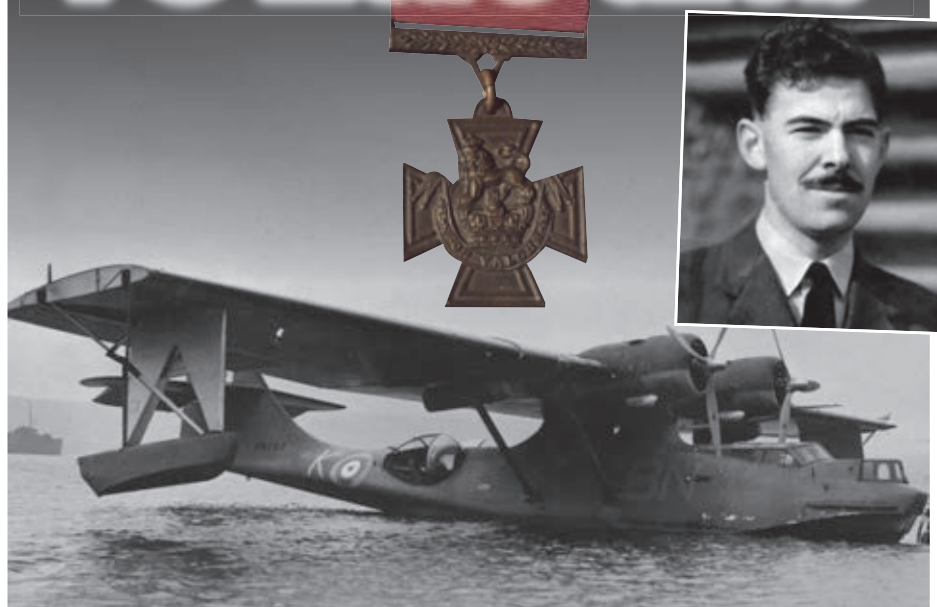
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Last Air Force VC hero dies



Tributes to WWII U-Boat raid pilot Flt Lt John Cruikshank

Tracey Allen

THE LAST airman to be awarded the Victoria Cross for a daring attack on a Nazi U-boat in the North Atlantic in 1944 has died at the age of 105.

Catalina pilot Flt Lt John Cruikshank suffered more than 70 injuries as he flew at 50ft facing down heavy machine gun fire to sink the vessel after depth charges dropped on his first approach failed to detonate.

Despite his wounds

he released six more depth charges on his second run crippling the U-boat, which later sank.

His co-pilot took control during the five-hour flight back to Sallom Voe but Cruikshank refused morphine and insisted on landing the stricken aircraft himself, finally beaching the Catalina which had suffered severe flak damage and a huge rip along the waterline.

He was given a blood transfusion at the landing site before being taken to hospital and treated for his injuries.

● See full obituary p17



Atlas eyes boat drop kit

Simon Mander

A400M TRANSPORTERS will be able to launch rigid-hulled inflatable boats after a Welsh company won a £25m deal to enhance the aircraft's capability.

Under the contract IrvinGQ, based in Bridgend, will deliver its PRIBAD solution, manufacturing up to 25 systems and providing in-service support for the Atlas for up to 10 years.

It can deploy boats ranging from six to 14 metres and weighing up to 12 tonnes, on all specified payloads.

It was selected following evaluation by DE&S' Airborne Equipment Delivery Team and has achieved more than 500 successful drops.

DE&S Delivery Team leader Peter Searle said: "This contract award realises the aerial delivery of large boats as a significant step increase in the A400M capability."

Flight trials are planned for later this year and early 2026, organised by the Air



Test and Evaluation Centre led by QinetiQ and supported by the Air and Space Warfare Centre.

The PRIBAD systems will be manufactured and delivered by 2029 with training for Air Force and Army crews.

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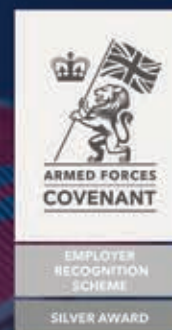
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Drone busters

NEW WAYS to jam and destroy incoming enemy drones from the ground are being sought by defence experts.

Boffins are seeking novel means of cheaply making engines for our own unmanned aerial systems and means of propelling them towards their targets.

The government has launched phase two of its competition looking for innovative proposals that are cost competitive and designed for manufacture.

The MOD-run Defence and Security Accelerator programme seeks solutions to changes in threat systems which could be deployed in operational areas in 12 months.



NEW CHIEF of the Defence Staff ACM Sir Richard Knighton arrived outside the Ministry of Defence Main Building in Whitehall to be greeted by Defence Secretary John Healey and outgoing Chief Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, who retired after four years in the post.



UK software fund powers frontline

Simon Mander

INNOVATORS HAVE been awarded more than £4 million to develop software systems for future RAF aircraft.

Drone swarms, helicopter radars and simulators will all be run by rapidly adaptable avionics designed by the winners after a competition run by the Air Force's Rapid Capabilities Office.

A total of 11 UK and international companies have won a share of the cash to develop systems for fixed wing, rotary wing, small uncrewed systems, and weapons.

RAF RCO Technology Office chief Mike Lane said: "The outreach team have done a terrific job in soliciting interest from such a wide range of organisations, and the number of high-quality

proposals received was a strong indication of their success."

Successful organisations include Leonardo, which will focus on developing its Osprey helicopter radar and related mission systems for new and existing rotary-wing aircraft.

Frazer-Nash Consultancy will demonstrate Swarming Uncrewed Air Systems using the technology, while SimCentric Technologies will adapt training software already used by the UK, Sweden, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, the USMC and other global militaries.

Other projects to be funded under the scheme are lightweight, modular, UAV-based sensors designed by the Thurn Group and Archangel Autonomy's Xnaut AI Co-Pilot software for drones.

Armourers honoured at Arboretum

Simon Mander

ARMOURERS WHO died in the line of duty are to be remembered at the National Memorial Arboretum.

The monument is the brainchild of former Sqn Ldr Mick Haygarth, who retired in 2015 after 38 years' service in more than 30 countries and leading RAF Bomb Disposal teams in Kosovo in 1999.

After setting up a Just Giving page in August 2024, he said friends and family had dug deep to raise £29,000 in nine months.

Sqn Ldr Haygarth, author of *From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, said: "It is common folklore and understanding in the RAF Armament community that the founder of the RAF, Air Chief Marshal Lord Trenchard, held the weapons trade in high regard.

"Although his exact words cannot be traced, he is famously quoted as having said, 'Without Armament, there is no need for an Air Force.'

"There have been numerous accidents and incidents during



SQN LDR HAYGARTH

which Armourers were killed or injured in the line of duty. Some of the most notable were at RAF Snaith, RAF Spilsby, RAF East Kirkby, RAF Fauld and West Freugh."

Armourers have their own

virtual branch of the Royal Air Force Association who march at the Cenotaph every year and hold social events and reunions annually.

The trade has been around since the foundation of the RAF in 1918.

Feature

85th Anniversary of BoB



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: Last of The Few Battle of Britain veteran Gp Capt Paddy Hemingway, who died in March aged 105



MAD MAC: Pilot Ken MacKenzie survived deliberately crashing his Hurricane into a Messerschmitt 109 when his aircraft ran out of bullets



BAPTISM OF FIRE: New pilot Frederick Hughes claimed two kills in his very first contact of the Battle

Honouring the heroes of the Battle of Britain

CAS Harv Smyth pays tribute to The Few at Stormont

BRITAIN'S TOP aviator chose Stormont to pay tribute to Ireland's World War II heroes.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth, returned to his roots to deliver one of his first speeches and mark the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Visiting the Northern Irish parliament, the Lurgan-born Harrierveteran (*inset below*) joked that he was the first Ulsterman to hold the appointment.

Paddy Hemingway

And as the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's Lancaster prepared to thunder overhead, he told of the Emerald Isle's contribution to Germany's first defeat, showcasing air power's utility to the world.

He said: "This year, the Battle of Britain commemorations are particularly poignant following the death of Gp Capt Paddy Hemingway in March, at the



incredible age of 105, in his beloved home city of Dublin.

"Paddy was the Last of the Few – the last of those that gave us that human connection to the battle, and the end of the lived experience. He will be very sadly missed, but certainly not forgotten."

ACM Smyth cited some of the great Irish fighters, leaders and commanders who joined the RAF to fight the Nazis, like Paddy Finucane and Victor Beamish.

And not to be outdone, Northern Ireland's contribution to the Battle of Britain was equally impressive. Men like Ken 'Mad Mac' MacKenzie, who deliberately crashed his Hurricane into a Messerschmitt 109 when he ran out of bullets, and eventually ended up a PoW in Stalag Luft III, of Great Escape fame, who died in 2009 as Northern Ireland's last Battle of Britain fighter pilot.

But it was the exploits of Donaghadee-born 264 Sqn Defiant pilot



BRAVE: Pilots of 85 Sqn, led by Sqn Ldr Peter Townsend (*centre, with walking stick*) pose with one of their Hurricanes at Church Fenton, North Yorkshire, in September 1940. They are, L-R: unknown, Fg Off John Allman Hemingway, Fg Off James Eglington Marshall, Plt Off Emile Francois Marie Leonce Fayolle (French), Sqn Ldr Townsend, unknown (rear), Plt Off Geoffrey Allard, Plt Off Nigel Leslie Digby Kemp, unknown, Plt Off William Henry Hodgson (New Zealander) PHOTO: AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH (RAF)

Frederick Desmond Hughes – whose baptism of fire came on August 26, 1940 during his very first contact with the enemy – that dominated his thoughts.

Flying as one of seven aircraft, launched from RAF Hornchurch, his squadron was ordered to patrol Dover when they attacked nine Dornier 17s at 11,000 feet.

Firing three bursts of three seconds, the gunner saw the starboard engine burst into flames and the bomber going down in fire.

He then attacked the second section and fired five bursts of two seconds at 100 yards, and saw the front cupola break away; the nose went down, pieces fall away and one of the crew was seen to bail out.

Me-109s

"Hughes would claim two of seven kills that day. However, in the process his squadron was attacked by 50 Messerschmitt Me-109s that downed or

damaged four of the Defiants for the loss of two air gunners," said ACM Smyth.

Hughes found his niche, and it was the move to night operations that enabled him to demonstrate his skills as a night fighter pilot and the source of his moniker – Hawkeye.

By April 1941, he was an ace with six kills to his name and was decorated with his first Distinguished Flying Cross; two further bars to his DFC would follow.



FLYPAST: CAS (right) watches BBMF Lancaster soar over Stormont. Edwin Poots, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly (centre)



ONE OF THE LAST: 100-year-old Polish former airman Marian Słomka at the ceremony in West London PHOTO: CPL IAIN CURLETT (RAF)

Remembering huge Polish contribution

POLISH VETERANS reached out to today's RAF personnel as they remembered the bravery and sacrifice of their countrymen during WWII.

Their 145 pilots formed the largest non-British contingent during the Battle of Britain and the impressive kill rates of units such as 302 and 303 Sqns were key to victory against the Luftwaffe.

Chief of the Air Staff ACM Harv Smyth attended the annual Polish Air Force

Memorial remembrance service in Ruislip, West London, which drew a large crowd.

The final wreath was laid by 100-year-old Marian Słomka, who is believed to be the last surviving member of the Polish Air Force in the UK.

During the ceremony RAF Music Services played national anthems and *The Last Post*, serving as a poignant reminder of the shared history and lasting friendship between the United Kingdom and Poland.



RECOGNITION: Fg Off John 'Paddy' Hemingway, who was awarded the DFC when serving with 85 Sqn at Stapleford (May 1941)

As the war ended, Hughes would add a Distinguished Service Order to his tally, having personally destroyed 18 aircraft.

Most of all, he remained in the RAF. He would add an Air Force Cross, a DSO, a BE, and a CB to his impressive list of post nominals.

Hughes ultimately rose to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal and would be promoted from Personal Staff Officer to Chief of Air Staff Dermot Boyle – the first man to hold the post.

ACM Smyth said: "The Battle of

Britain was an incredible national, and international effort. Success in 1940 was enabled by collaboration across the Services, across government, across our society and with our allies, and the extremely important but often overlooked role of industry.

Shoulders of giants

"Warfare remains a team sport – this is as true today as it was 85 years ago. As I begin my four-year tenure as CAS, I am reminded that I stand

on the shoulders of these giants – and I will give my all to ensure that today's RAF is ready to fight tonight, whilst preparing for whatever may come tomorrow: just as we did in the summer of 1940; agile, integrated and ready."

As *RAF News* went to print the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne in Kent prepared to pay tribute to one of the men who masterminded the RAF's Battle of Britain victory, as the nation marked the 85th anniversary.

In April 1940 Keith Park was placed in charge of Fighter Command's 11 Group, which was responsible for defending London and the South East of England and bore the brunt of the Luftwaffe's attacks on this country.

Sir Keith Park

Park and Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, who was in overall charge of Fighter Command, played a huge part

in the RAF's subsequent victory and are remembered at Capel-le-Ferne, where there are busts of both men.

In August 2023 Sir Keith's name was added to the list of The Few. Following research in Auckland, New Zealand and the UK, the evidence put forward by author Dilip Sarkar, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and of the Royal Aeronautical Society, was accepted by the Ministry of Defence's Air Historical Branch.

Alarm over rumours of cuts to tax free lump sum allowance

RUMOURS in the media of consideration being given by the Chancellor to cutting the pension tax-free Lump Sum Allowance (LSA) in the next budget, is causing alarm amongst Members of the Forces Pension Society and the wider military community.

If such a tax is imposed, it will impact everyone serving in the Armed Forces. This comment is typical of those we are receiving:

"My plan, to ensure my family's financial security, relies on the lump sum payment, as it has been promised for the over 25 years I've already served."

Political decision-makers must understand the purpose of the Armed Forces Pension

Scheme. It is to sustain operationally effective Armed Forces by incentivising service and providing a financial platform for a second career



SCAN ME



Neil Marshall, CEO of the Forces Pension Society as a demonstration of the nation's commitment to those who have served their country – as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Reneging on this promise would be corrosive and undermine confidence in those who serve, that the Government will honour its obligations – and all that implies for Armed Forces retention.

On 28 June, the Government announced it would enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in

law. **The Prime Minister stated: "I made a promise to serve those who have served us. Through the new Armed Forces Covenant, we are delivering on that promise... our Armed Forces Covenant will put our Armed Forces community at the very heart of government decision-making."**

This was accompanied by a pledge for a "wider commitment to renew the contract with those who have served the country, ensuring they are treated with respect and long-term security."

Neil Marshall, CEO of the Forces Pension Society said: "We trust these media rumours are just that – rumours. If not, the Prime Minister will risk reneging on the promise he made to the Armed Forces just a few weeks ago."

**The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides pension guidance to those serving and retired, across all three services, and represents the pension interests of the whole military community.*

Last year, the Society's expert Forces Pensions Consultants dealt with almost 30,000 pension enquiries. Membership of the Society is growing and numbers more than 66,000. For more information, visit forcespensionsociety.org



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Last WWII VC holder 'puts out the light'

Scot Flt Lt John Cruickshank was modest hero of Coastal Command



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT John Cruickshank VC, a modest soft-spoken Scot, who has died aged 105, was the last surviving holder of the Victoria Cross from World War II and the last surviving airman to have received the supreme award for gallantry.

He was born and educated in Aberdeen and when war broke out he was mobilised into the Royal Artillery. In January 1941 he transferred to the RAF to train as a pilot. Following courses in Canada and the USA he was commissioned in the RAFVR and in March 1943 he joined No 210 Squadron to fly the Catalina flying boat.

U-boat

In July he sighted and attacked a U-boat without result and in September spotted a boatload of 11 survivors in the Bay of Biscay and directed two warships to their rescue.

On the afternoon of July 17, 1944, Cruickshank headed into the North Atlantic from the remote base of Sullom Voe in the extreme north of the Shetland Isles. It was his 48th patrol and, in common with many of his fellow "boat skippers," he had spent many long and tedious hours seeking out U-boats.

He and his 10-man crew had been on patrol for eight hours and were 100 miles inside the Arctic Circle and on the brink of

turning for home when the radar operator picked up a contact on his screen. Cruickshank homed towards the target and identified a submarine travelling at 14 knots on the surface. Believing it to be friendly he ordered a recognition signal flare to be fired and the code letter of the day to be flashed. The response was not what he expected as his Catalina was surrounded by exploding anti-aircraft shells.

Cruickshank evaded and circled the submarine and prepared to attack. Flying at 50 feet he approached as his gunners raked the submarine's conning tower and gun crew. He swept over the submarine but, to his dismay, his depth charges failed to release. He climbed away and decided to re-attack. As he ran in, the Catalina came under intense fire and was repeatedly hit. The navigator was killed, and Cruickshank was severely wounded, but gave no indication to his crew that he had been hit.

Injuries

Ignoring the grievous injuries to his chest and legs, he pressed on with the attack and personally released six depth charges. The mechanism functioned, resulting in a perfect straddle. Cruickshank sought refuge in a nearby fog bank to assess the situation. He saw no more of the submarine but later learnt that he had sunk U-347 on its second

war patrol and commanded by Oberleutnant sur See Johann de Bugron.

The Catalina had been riddled with flak damage, including a long gash along the water line. The radar was out of commission and fuel was leaking from damaged pipes. This was a particular worry since the aircraft was over five hours flying time from base. The holes were stuffed with life jackets and canvas engine covers.

In addition to Cruickshank, two other members of the crew had been badly injured and the second pilot, Flt Sgt Jack Garnett, was forced to take control of the aircraft.

Emergency

Cruickshank lapsed in and out of consciousness as a crew member dragged him to the rest bunk to dress his wounds. He had to be restrained from returning to the cockpit and on the long flight back to base he refused morphia since he knew he must be available to assess any further emergency and the landing.

The aircraft finally reached Sullom Voe but it was dark, and Garnett had not landed a Catalina at night before. Cruickshank, who was in great pain and only able to breathe with difficulty, ordered the crew to take him forward and prop him up in the second pilot's seat. He told Garnett to circle until it

was sufficiently light for him to attempt a landing. Eventually, the combined effort of the two pilots got the badly damaged flying boat on to the sea, but it immediately started to take on water and sink. Cruickshank opened the throttles and ran the flying boat on to the beach.

Hospital

When a doctor reached the beached Catalina, he found Cruickshank had collapsed and he was given an immediate blood transfusion. Strapped to a stretcher, he was immediately transferred to hospital in Lerwick where it was discovered he had received 72 individual wounds, the most serious to his legs and chest.

On September 1, 1944, the London Gazette announced the award of the Victoria Cross. The citation stated: "By pressing home his second attack in his gravely wounded condition and continuing his exertions on the return journey with his failing strength, he seriously jeopardised his chance of survival. Throughout he set an example of determination, fortitude and devotion to duty in keeping with the highest traditions of the Service". Only four men of Coastal Command received the VC, the other three were awarded posthumously. Garnett was awarded the DFM.

After recovering from his

wounds Cruickshank served at Headquarters, Coastal Command. He was released from the RAF and served for two years as ADC to the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He returned to his banking career.

He was much in demand at various reunions and commemorative events and services and, despite long journeys from his home, he endeavoured to meet the great majority.

He was present at Westminster Abbey in March 2004 when The Queen unveiled the first national monument to Coastal Command. He told Her Majesty: "Decorations didn't enter my head."

Modest

A man who remained exceedingly modest, he was an important reminder of the generation who gave so much, and in his case, someone who pressed on so determinedly. He had never expected reward and apparently, the first thing he asked about after regaining consciousness on the aircraft was the fate of his crew.

Cruickshank was very conscious that he was the last surviving airman VC after the death of his friend and fellow Scot Bill Reid in 2001. He said: "When I go, I suppose I had better put out the light".



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Sky shouting pilot who flew the Queen

Sqn Ldr led 126 missions of psychological jungle warfare

SQUADRON LEADER Peter Langley, who has died aged 100, was tasked to form a special airborne Psychological Warfare Unit to fly over the jungles of Malaya during the Emergency of the 1950s to force the communist terrorists to surrender.

He was 17 years old when he started his training as a pilot, which was completed in Canada and the USA in February 1944. Whilst waiting to complete his operational flying training, he was detached to Fairoaks in Surrey to assist the RAF Regiment manning an anti-aircraft gun. He was on duty on the night of June 19 when a V-1 flying bomb passed close by. With the help of an Australian sergeant pilot, he engaged the "doodlebug" flying at 500 feet and shot it down.

With a surplus of pilots at the time he gained his wings, he volunteered to fly gliders and, after training, joined 671 Squadron in India. In December the squadron moved to Lalaghat to the south-west of Imphal. Before he could see action, he was recalled to England to visit his terminally-ill father.

PoWs

Langley remained in England and converted to the Dakota to join 271 Squadron. With the end of the war in Europe, he was involved in repatriation of PoWs and the return of displaced persons to all parts of Europe. The squadron moved to Naples to carry out similar tasks. Before being demobbed in 1946, he flew routes to Karachi taking troops

to the region and returning ex-POWs.

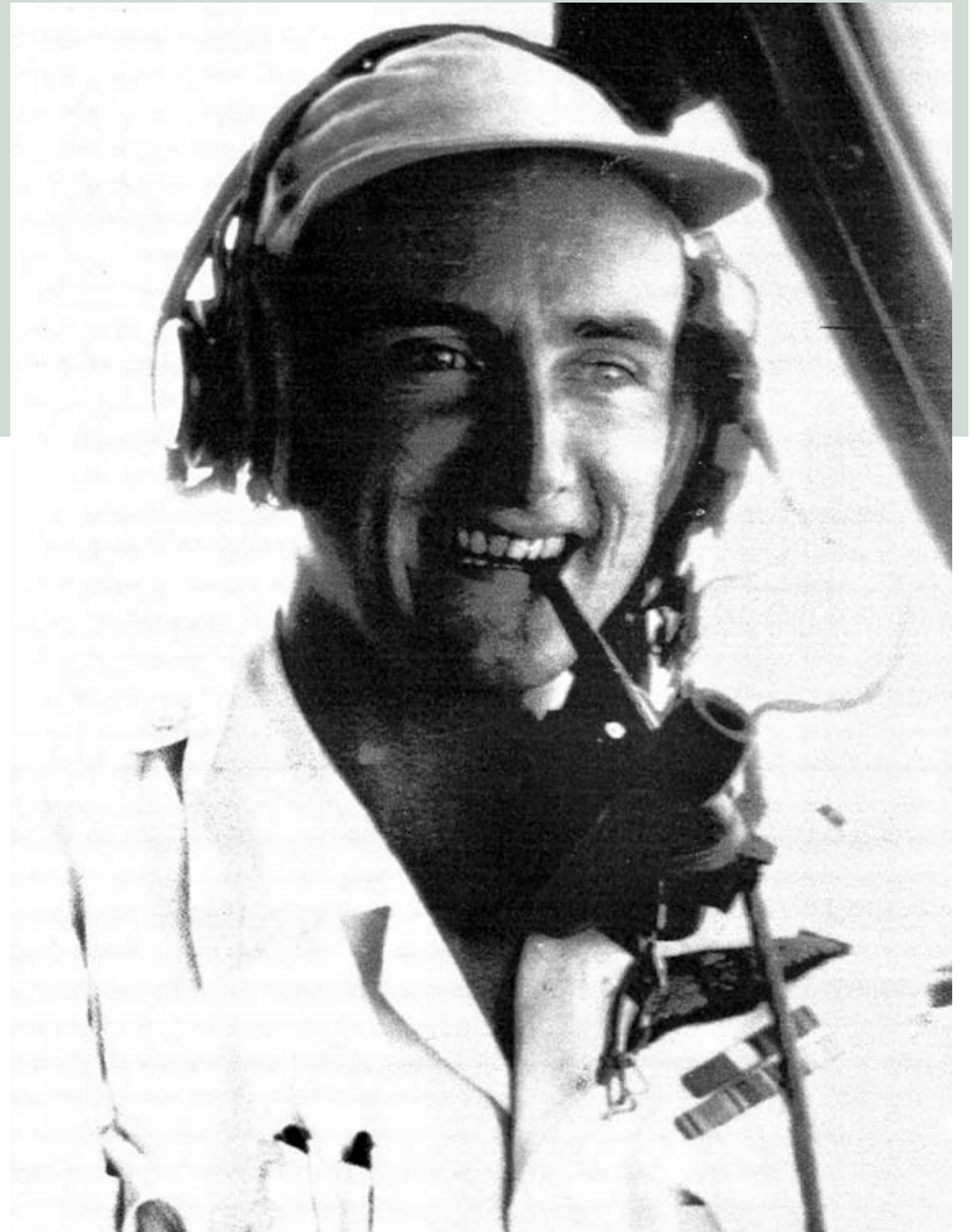
As the Korean War opened, he was offered a commission and rejoined the RAF with 47 Squadron, flying Hastings between the UK and Japan. He then converted to the Valetta transport aircraft and left for Changi in Singapore. Soon after arriving, Langley moved to 267 Squadron to form and train the "Voice Flight".

Leaflets

The main aims of the "war of words" that was inaugurated during the campaign were to induce surrender amongst the terrorists, by breaking their morale and causing disaffection within their ranks, and to win the battle of their minds. The RAF provided one of the main agencies for the delivery of both tactical and strategic messages. The dropping of leaflets and broadcast of messages in the deepest jungle could be carried out only by aircraft.

At the time broadcasting recorded messages from aircraft, often called "sky shouting", was introduced, Langley was serving on 267 Squadron flying the Valetta transport aircraft dropping supplies to patrols in the jungle. The engine noise of the aircraft proved too intrusive for broadcasting, so they were replaced by three Dakotas. Two Auster light aircraft were added to the Flight for shorter range sorties.

In good conditions, and flying at 2,500ft over the target area, a broadcast message could be heard



up to 2,500 yards below and to the port side of the aircraft. Sky shouting was closely coordinated with leaflet dropping, both being essential parts of the psychological campaign, which reached its peak during Langley's time in charge in 1954 and 1955.

During this period, he flew 126 operational missions and was awarded the DFC, "in recognition of gallant and distinguished service in Malaya."

After returning to the UK, he commanded the VIP Flight of 30 Squadron, where he remained for over two years. During this

period he was detached to Cyprus for the Suez crisis in November 1956. He flew a Valetta carrying the Brigade Commander of 16 Parachute Brigade and dropped him into Gamil airfield north of Cairo.

Malta

In 1958 Langley moved to Malta to command the VIP flight of 1312 Malta Communications and Target Towing Squadron. He assumed command of the squadron in 1960. During this period, in 1961, he was detached to The Queen's Flight at RAF

Benson and flew the Queen and Prince Philip on their tour of India and Nepal that year.

He finished his RAF career flying the Argosy in the tactical airborne support role and route flying round the world with 214 Squadron.

He retired from the RAF in February 1966 and moved into civil aviation. He spent a further 18 years as a pilot with several airlines based in the USA and the Far East. When he retired from flying on his 60th birthday in 1984, he had amassed more than 20,000 flying hours.

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Sqn Ldr Norman Browne DFC

Obituary

Laser-guided bomb pioneer Browne dies at age of 77

Buccaneer Gulf vet DFC really made his mark

SQUADRON LEADER Norman Browne, who has died aged 77, was a **Buccaneer navigator awarded the DFC during the First Gulf War for operations dropping laser-guided bombs on strategic targets in Iraq.**

Belfast-born Browne joined the RAF after leaving school and trained as a navigator. He volunteered for an exchange appointment with the Fleet Air Arm, and trained on the Sea Vixen all-weather fighter. He embarked in HMS Hermes with 893 Squadron and sailed for the Far East. He later flew from HMS Eagle.

Phantom

On return to the RAF, he converted to the Phantom and joined 43 Squadron in 1969, which had recently been equipped with the aircraft at Leuchars. The squadron was responsible for protecting UK airspace in the northern region and two aircraft maintained a 15-minute quick reaction alert posture to scramble and intercept Soviet aircraft approaching the area.

Browne spent six years at Leuchars and for five of them he was the navigator of the RAF's Phantom display aircraft, which participated at numerous airshows. He then left for Germany to join 19 Squadron at RAF Wildenrath.

Navigator

After nine years on the Phantom, he transferred to the Buccaneer force in 1979. He was part way through his conversion course when the RAF decided to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first crossing of the Atlantic in 1919 by John Alcock and Arthur Brown. A Phantom was chosen for the flight, and an aircraft was painted in a special commemorative scheme. The pilot selected was Sqn Ldr Tony Alcock (a nephew of John Alcock). Having recently flown the Phantom, Norman Browne was selected to be the

navigator, and his Buccaneer training was put in suspension.

The aircraft took off from Goose Bay in Labrador on June 21, 1979, was refuelled in mid-air by RAF Victor tankers and landed at Greenham Common airfield after a record-breaking flight of 5 hours 40 minutes. Sharing the cockpit was Twinkletoes, Arthur Brown's toy cat mascot which had accompanied him on the 1919 crossing. After the flight, Norman returned to complete his conversion to the Buccaneer.

Browne was posted to 16 Squadron based at Laarbruch on the Dutch-German border. It was during this tour of duty that the RAF procured from the USA the Paveway/Pavespike precision laser-guided bomb system. Pavespike was an electro-optical laser designator targeting pod mounted on the port wing of the Buccaneer. It was controlled by the navigator who "marked" the target before firing the laser as the Paveway bombs had been released. The bombs then homed to the target with great accuracy.

Lossiemouth

A series of trials were established in the UK and in Canada and Browne was the lead navigator. Following the success of the trials, the system was adopted by the Buccaneer maritime wing at Lossiemouth for attacks against shipping.

When operations in the First Gulf War began in January 1991, the RAF's Tornado bombing force ceased its low-level operations in favour of operating at higher levels. To improve accuracy, a force of Buccaneers was deployed to the region on January 29. Their task was to laser mark the target for the Tornados carrying bombs equipped with a laser seeker attached to the nose of their bombs.

Having been at the forefront in the development of trials and tactics for the new, and highly accurate, bombing capability, Browne oversaw the training of navigators who were responsible for tracking and marking targets

for the bombers.

Browne and his pilot were in the first pair of Buccaneers to fly non-stop from their base at Lossiemouth to Bahrain. He immediately established a training programme with the Tornado force to perfect the tactics and critical co-ordination between the two aircraft. He led the first combined Buccaneer/Tornado attacks against heavily defended enemy positions deep in Iraqi territory then marked the targets for the first two laser bombs to be dropped in the war.

Iraq

Initially the targets were major bridges crossing the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Once they were destroyed, the combined force switched to the Iraqi airfields and the hardened shelters that housed the Iraqi Air Force's most capable aircraft. The success of the operation led to the failure of the Iraqi Air Force to operate and eventually led to the Allied air forces gaining air supremacy over Iraq.

On February 21, 1991, Browne's aircraft and another Buccaneer were attacking Shaykh Mazhar Airbase when two Iraqi Air Force transport aircraft were spotted on the ground, one taxiing. By this stage of the war, the Buccaneers were now carrying their own laser-guided bombs and, as the two navigators marked the aircraft with their lasers, their pilots released the bombs, scoring direct hits on both aircraft.

DFC

Browne was the lead marker on many missions. The citation for his DFC commented, "he is the most outstanding navigator of the Buccaneer detachment." It concluded, "the exceptional results he achieved in confronting the enemy in the heart of his territory has shown him to be a magnificent leader under fire."

When the Buccaneer was retired from service in 1994, Browne left for an appointment at Ramstein in Germany, as a



member of the NATO Tactical Evaluation team. At the end of his tour, he returned to Lossiemouth where he was to spend the rest of his career, first as a regular officer and then as a reservist, supporting the training of Tornado crews. He finally retired after 42 years, three months service. During his long career he had twice been awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

He remained in the Lossiemouth area, where he

immersed himself in local activities. He served with branches of the RAF Association and the Royal British Legion. A keen golfer, he was on the committee of the local golf club and was actively involved with the RAF Lossiemouth rugby club.

Browne was the consummate professional; unflappable, approachable and modest, he was greatly admired by his air force colleagues and by the local population.



Yee-haw, Mustang is one helluva ride

THIS WEEK I'm driving a motoring icon. In a world that is full of characterless EV crossovers, the Mustang is the automotive patron saint of petrolheads. Just look at it, it's straight off the silver screen, with a soundtrack that continues to dominate Hollywood. You film a car chase with Mini, it's going to be quietly dubbed with the sound of a V8 to add drama, this V8!

Exterior

Narrower headlights, more menacing bonnet vents and a refreshingly uncluttered tail end help to make the 2025 Mustang an enduring thing of beauty. It's faithful to the 1960's legend, with simple rear lights and an iconic profile. Why am I telling you this? It's a Mustang, it looks like a Mustang, one of the most famous cars on the planet... enough said.

Interior

The cabin quality has improved dramatically over previous models and you now get a dual-screen combo that pairs a 12.4 inch digital instrument binnacle with a 13.2 inch infotainment panel. It incorporates the latest tech, but looks traditionally simple. The clocks, for example can be set to mirror the chrome dials from the 60s classic and the handbrake looks like a conventional lever. Instead, it's a modern electronic set-up that, when the car is set to drift mode, locks the back wheels to allow for those movie style stunts. Brilliant!

Driving position is bang on and there's plenty of space up-



front. Rear seats are cramped, with tight leg and head room, due to the classic coupe design. Again, you know what to expect. It is an American working person's supercar and the materials used reflect that. European journalists often get this wrong and make

comparisons with rivals like Mercedes, but think of it this way... Style is relevant... If you're going to the boardroom, you'll want a crisp suit but, if you're a cowboy superstar, denim is just fine. This is a fine fitting pair of Levi's (other jeans are available).

On the road

Weighing the best part of two tonnes, the Mustang is no svelte gazelle. It's proper, old school American Muscle. That means it's a rocket ship on take-off and a bit of a porker through the bends. Quite honestly though, it doesn't matter at all. It may lack the precision of a sports car, but the body control is pretty good. It's a package that allows you to sense the car's limitations and you soon adapt to drive like an American... slow in, fast out... You'll live longer, that way.

You don't buy a Mustang to set lap times, you buy one to bring the kind of smile to your face that can only be surgically removed. It does that. 0-62mph in 5.3 seconds, for the manual, 4.9 in the automatic, drift mode for shredding tyres and a V8 engineered to turn worlds, it's all about the experience.

There are a few things that you'll never use. Quiet mode, designed to muffle the beautiful exhaust roar, is unlikely ever to



be engaged and you'll spend a lot of time shutting down the suite of driver assistance systems to get rid of all the annoying beeps and bongs. Once you learn how to do this, life becomes fun again. Failing that, just drown them out with the roar of the V8!

Real world economy, if that sort of thing interests you, is around 22 mpg.

Ford Mustang

Pros

- V8 straight-line power
- Slick manual gearbox
- Cheaper than rivals

Cons

- Expensive to run in the UK
- Hefty through the bends
- Eco unfriendly

Verdict

The Ford Mustang offers a huge amount of drama for the money. It sounds like a Hollywood car chase and you can drive like a stunt performer with that slick manual gearbox. Its simplicity is refreshing and it has real old-school, cowboy charm. If you worry about running costs, it might not be your dream car, but it is loud, politically incorrect and downright outrageous. I absolutely love it.



Sport

ESPORT

RAF esports comes out from the Shadows

Three aviator teams in with a shout of Inter-Services glory



Daniel Abrahams

THE SERVICE'S esports stars are homing in on Inter-Service success to close out the year after a bumper 12 months of national and international glory.

The association has three teams in the running for the Inter-Services crown: RAF Stormshadows, who top the leaderboard, with the British Army Falcons a close second; while RAF Shadows secured third spot to earn their right to represent at the Inter-Services Championship LAN (Local Area Network) at RAF Wittering in December; while RAF Vulcans sealed the final qualification spot.

RAF esports spokesman Flt Lt Connor Stewart said: "Throughout the year, teams from the Royal Navy, British Army and RAF have been competing in seasonal qualifiers to earn points in order to qualify for the finals, hosted by BFBS."

"We have been involved in an incredible year. In June we took part in the Armed Forces Esports Invitational at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, where I led RAF Stormshadows."

"Over the course of three intense days, our teams battled it out against some strong opponents."



Stormshadows were seeded fourth after the two-day round robin phase, with RAF Shadows, seeded sixth, eventually finishing fifth.

Stewart added: "Stormshadows lost in the Grand Final to the USAF, but beat US Space Force and French Air Force, before our most impressive victory against the number two seeded US Coast Guard, a 4-2 lower final win."

A month later the association took part in Formula 1 Sim

Racing at Silverstone F1 in July, where it continued to develop its partnership with the RAF Motorsports team (inset left), speaking to more than 1,000 members of the public.

Stewart added: "This summer also saw the RAF Esports Call of Duty team host a three-day trial and selection event for the opportunity to represent the service at the sixth annual Call of Duty Endowment (C.O.D.E) Bowl."

"After some incredibly competitive matches, it's clear

that the RAF boasts some incredibly talented players, and the four selected to travel to Las Vegas for the event on September 30 are Cpl Ethan Grange (Captain), Cpl Harry Hemeter, Cpl Matty Ingham and AS1(T) Blaine Langford.

"The event will be live on the official Call of Duty YouTube channel, we hope personnel can join in supporting the team."

He added: "We feel that this year has proved that Esports is marketable to all walks of life, showcasing its value to defence."

FOOTBALL

Witt win

RAF CATERING cooked up a footballing storm with its annual five-a-side cup tournament going the way of RAF Wittering A.

The day's action, which attracted more than 100 personnel, started with the teams in two groups, playing a round-robin event – with final placings deciding if they went into the Cup or the Plate competition.

Once those two separate contests were underway the tournament became a knockout, with teams slowly eliminated from the events.

The day ended with the final for the Cup seeing RAF Wittering A, captained by AS1 Pete Chongwe, face the very skilful Out of Trade team in what would be a 2-2 thriller, decided on penalties.

Out of Trade stormed into a two-goal lead, with Wittering levelling the scores to take the game into a penalty shootout, which they won 4-2.

The Plate final was between RAF Benson and Voyager, with Benson, captained by AS1 Duncan Dunlop, taking the silverware.

Wittering A stopper Cpl Jason Parry was awarded keeper of the tournament.

To see your sport featured in *RAF News*, send a short report (max. 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached hi-res jpegs) to: Sports@rafnews.co.uk

EQUITATION

Riders mount charge

They lead Loriners Inters

Daniel Abrahams

THE SECOND leg of the Loriners Inter-Services competition saw the RAF take first place to be sitting pretty for the remaining championship rounds.

In an incredibly close finish at the Royal Navy Equitation Championships, the RAF team of Wg Cdr Sarah Boon, Sqn Ldr Sam Martin, Flt Lt Izzy Draper and AS2 Sophie Richards took the win by just one second over the Army.

The RAF team currently lead the IS rankings after winning the first leg (dressage) at the RAFEA Champs in April with WO Keeley Martin winning the individual

and Flt Lt Mandy Markle coming third.

The event's scheduled second leg, usually held at the Army Championships event, was lost with the cancellation of that competition.

Speaking after the win Sqn Ldr Sam Martin said: "I'm very grateful to have been given the opportunity to represent the RAF as a member of the Show Jumping Team at the Royal Navy Champs at the David Broome Centre in Wales, and even more proud that the RAF won the Inter-Services team class.

"As always, the Army put up a stiff fight, but it was particularly nice to see the newer members of the RAF team do so well, which

bodes well for the future of RAF Equitation.

"The Royal Navy were excellent hosts and the whole event epitomised what our Inter-Service sport is all about: friendly rivalry between the Services, excellent teamwork amongst the competitors and team managers, and a shared passion for horses which ultimately binds us all together."

Individually, Draper stormed to second place, with Boon taking fourth.

● Follow RAF Equitation on Instagram @raf_equitation.

INDIVIDUAL SECOND:
Flt Lt Izzy Draper



WINNING
TEAM: Wg Cdr
Sarah Boon



MOTORSPORT

RAF pair are a class act

SNETTERTON WAS the venue as the RAF sidecar duo recorded their first class victory as the SSD entered its penultimate round.

The amazing result came after the pairing of Cpl Rob Atkinson and Sgt Mark Middleton finished second in the first race, first in race 2 and third in race three, at the Norfolk track – a significant landmark in the team's rookie season in the SSD British Sidecar Championship.

Delivering their strongest performance of the season, the aviators raced at the track for the third time this year. Confidence was high following free practice, where they topped the class and qualified in provisional pole position before being narrowly displaced in the closing laps.

Race one saw a competitive start, with Kirby/Salmon making an early charge through the field. A rare engine failure forced Bell/Hyde to retire, leaving the RAF crew to battle intensely for the lead.

Despite matching pace across the lap, the superior straight-line speed of the Cable/Wilkes bike denied them victory, though a



GOOD RESULT: Atkinson and Middleton, centre

lc-photography.co.uk

strong second equalled their best result of the season.

In race two, overnight adjustments paid dividends. After eight laps bottled up behind Cable/Wilkes, a collision involving Kirby/Salmon opened the door and the RAF crew seized the opportunity to take the lead. Holding off late pressure, they crossed the line just 0.1 seconds clear to secure a maiden class win – a landmark moment in their campaign.

Race three provided another intense contest, with Bell/Hyde engaging in a thrilling exchange of positions as Kirby extended a gap at the front. A late attempt to close second place saw the RAF machine run wide through the infield, but they recovered strongly to take a well-earned third place to conclude the weekend with a full set of podium finishes.

● See Instagram @raf_sidecarteam to follow the pair.

SKATEBOARDING

Refusing to wilt in Wilts

IT WAS every skater for themselves at this year's Castle Combe six-hour endurance event, with RAF personnel producing top 10 finishes at the Wiltshire race circuit.

Having entered as reigning team champions, this year's event would see Chf Tech Ian Savage, Sqn Ldr Barney Polden and Cpls Tom Spurling and Dom Brown fight it out for individual titles.

With six hours of racing ahead, the aviators aimed to complete as many laps of the 1.85-mile Chippenham circuit as possible.

Polden and Spurling finished fifth and sixth respectively after completing 33 laps (61 miles).

Brown was 13th with 27 laps (49.95 miles) and Savage 14th with 25 laps (46 miles). All four averaged more than 10mph for the whole six hours.

Savage said: "There was a strong headwind throughout the day but it stayed dry, thankfully. The course was fairly flat, but again as the hours progressed, the slight gradients



STAMINA: Cpl Dom Brown

seemed to get strangely steeper and steeper.

"We managed to raise more than £900 for the RAF Benevolent Fund, so all the riders can be proud of their performance."

● Follow the association on Instagram @royalairforceskateboarding.

HOCKEY



BENSON: Cup winners

Benson do the double

THERE WAS UKAF Tri-Service Cup Winners Cup glory for RAF Benson in the outdoor hockey at HMS Temeraire.

The victory makes for a superb silverware double as the air base also took the recent Inter-Stations title.

Despite having to overcome the unit champions of both the Royal Navy and the Army in a day of high-stakes military hockey, the aviators came out firing in the opening fixture against Navy champions HMS Heron.

The sides were evenly matched in the early exchanges until AS1 Alex Naughalty broke the deadlock, rifling home a strike from a penalty corner to establish a slender lead. HMS Heron deservedly levelled before half-time.

After the break, Flt Lt Andy Seimann surged through midfield before unleashing a ferocious strike for 2-1, which the aviators held on to.

In the second fixture, HMS Heron, visibly fatigued, were swept aside 7-2 by Army Cup holders 35 Eng Regt, setting up a mouthwatering final.

What followed was a contest worthy of its billing, with the Army taking an early 1-0 lead. Seimann, now deployed in a deeper role, once again imposed himself, deflecting home an equaliser after Benson's forward line of Cpl Chloe Nickel and AS1 Harvey Taylor had pressured 35 Eng Regt into conceding a penalty corner.

AS1 Will Hall and AS1 Naughalty dictated, but despite being on top and seeing another Seimann strike, the Army levelled 2-2 at the break.

The match's decisive moment arrived when AS1 Harvey Taylor won a penalty stroke and captain AS1 Sam Pedrick converted with composure, restoring Benson's lead at 3-2.

The closing stages saw both sides exchanging blows, but it was Benson who stood firm until the whistle.

ANGLING

Daniel Abrahams

SERVICE SEA-FISHING has ruled the IS waves for 18 years following another successful Inters win, this time at Holyhead, North Wales.

Hosted at RAF Valley, the three Services' nine-man teams took part in arguably the most competitive event of the year.

Sgt Scott Rennie said: "The RN and Army squads produced a mixture of outstanding sportsmanship and camaraderie to make an excellent tournament, with the RN pushing us this year and providing extra motivation in anticipation of them hosting IS 26 in Plymouth."

Drifting and anchoring the many craggy bays around the beautiful North Welsh coast produced a total of 2002 fish of 25 different species over the two days of action.

Dogfish, pollock and wrasse made up the bulk of the scoring fish but rarer species such as launce, ling, and plaice made appearances.

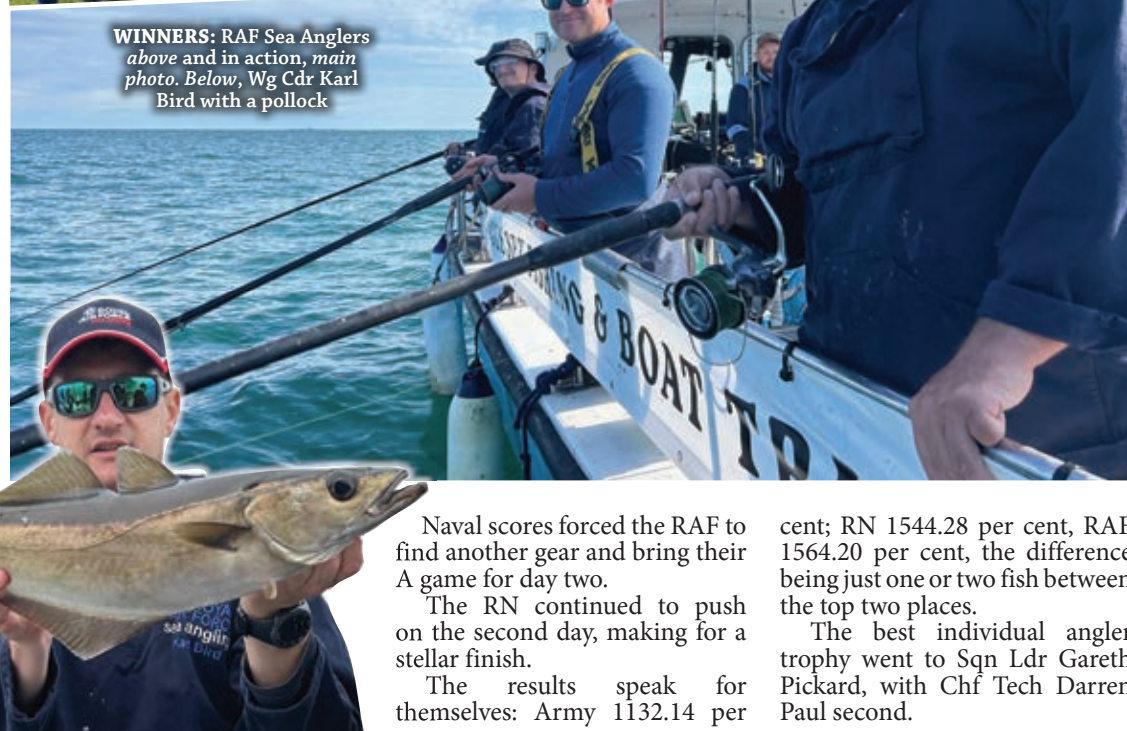
With the conditions being kind on the practice days, match day one saw winds picking up and following the close of play on the first day, the aviators were under no illusions that the Royal Navy had come to win.

Some very impressive

18 IS titles in a row for fishermen



WINNERS: RAF Sea Anglers above and in action, main photo. Below, Wg Cdr Karl Bird with a pollock



Naval scores forced the RAF to find another gear and bring their A game for day two.

The RN continued to push on the second day, making for a stellar finish.

The results speak for themselves: Army 1132.14 per

cent; RN 1544.28 per cent, RAF 1564.20 per cent, the difference being just one or two fish between the top two places.

The best individual angler trophy went to Sqn Ldr Gareth Pickard, with Chf Tech Darren Paul second.

RUGBY UNION

Aviators help UKAF to Defence Cup third

● Continued from page 27

Grundy said: "The opening rounds of the IDRC were a fantastic experience and a great showcase of Forces rugby."

"After the disappointing French game, we finished the tournament strongly at Kingsholm."

France went on to retain the trophy, with the aviators providing another try fest in the third and fourth place play-off game against Ireland in Gloucester.

UKAF set about dismantling Ireland 76-5 when Aspinall touched down after five minutes for 5-0, running in her second after eight minutes. Fahey – who produced an imperious 80 minutes with three tries and four conversions – converted to make it 12-0.

She then jinked in after 16 minutes for her first try for 24-0, before a superb battling try from Procter saw the aviators take

control of the scoreboard.

The Fahey roadshow continued, touching down and converting for 43-0.

In her final game, Sqn Ldr Lou Langton touched down her first-ever IDRC try for 55-0 before Grundy made it 60-0. Fahey converted that before completing her hat-trick on 69 minutes for 69-0, which she converted, kicking two more points after a Swain try for 76-5.

On the tournament and future, Procter said: "This competition has been an exciting milestone for women's military rugby and people's careers. It's brought together talented athletes from around the world, giving them a chance to shine on an international stage."

"As one of the youngest in the team, it's cool to finally get to experience this environment. It's opening more doors and creating new opportunities for all of us. There's so much to look forward to."

RUGBY LEAGUE

League leaders

SERVICE RUGBY league is back and RAF head coach Sgt James Hutchinson is aiming to see his championship-winning side defend their title over the autumn Inter-Services series.

Having taken the 2024 tournament in style and won the summer Tri-Nations competition last month, the aviators were looking to their opening game on September 18.

Hutchinson said: "Our aim for the IS competition this year is to defend our title and to do so in the same fashion as last year, by winning both games."

"We're defending champions so we'll be coming in with plenty of confidence, but certainly not complacency."

"We're more than aware of the challenge in front of us and will be preparing for two very tough games. IS victories certainly don't come easy and our lads are up for that challenge."

"The Army and Navy playing each other first gives us a chance to watch their game and maybe look at a couple of things, but



CONFIDENT: Sgt James Hutchinson

we generally like to concentrate on ourselves, we believe if we perform to the best of our ability, then we don't need to look too much into what the other sides are doing."

Sport

TRIATHLON

Athletes go distance

THERE'LL BE no rest for the Service's triathletes as they close out the season with a series of testing events beginning in Nottingham and ending at Hever Castle in Kent.

Association spokesperson Fg Off Katie Edge said: "As the season gradually draws to a close, we're looking ahead with great anticipation to this year's Middle Distance Inter-Services and RAF Championships. Building on the strong presence and outstanding performances of last year, we are hopeful for another successful showing."

"We're also excited to be competing in the National Relays in Nottingham, where we have six teams entered. This event, often described as 'organised chaos', promises to be a thrilling experience for all involved."

The association has 20 athletes registered for the IS Middle distance championships in Rutland.

The Vitruvian course (classic triathlon race) will provide a potentially choppy two-lap swim, before competitors take on a rolling but fast three-lap bike course perfectly suited to a TT bike. The race will close out with a two-lap, flat, out-and-back run course which takes competitors across the Rutland Dam, which Edge



Sgt Patrick Cutmore



Cpl Rebecca Ryder

says: "Gives athletes the perfect opportunity to gauge their position amongst the other competitors and hunt them down."

The association also has eight personnel currently registered to compete at Ironman Wales in Tenby, Pembrokeshire on September 22.

Despite being held in the picturesque seaside town, the event is named Face The Dragon and will see competitors swim two 2.4-mile laps of Carmarthen Bay, cycle two circuits of the 112-

mile course, and run four circuits of the 26.2-mile course to end the challenge.

Edge added: "In addition to our team events, our outstanding athletes are also competing in individual competitions this year."

"Now in his second consecutive year of success following qualification at Outlaw and placing 8th in his age group last year, Wg Cdr Sean Williams will represent GBR at the European Long-Distance Championships in the Netherlands this month."

"Meanwhile, Flt Lt Harriet Haywood, Sgt Patrick Cutmore and Cpl Rebecca Ryder are taking on The ROC Face Up To The Mountain endurance triathlon series."

"Having already completed The ROC Wales in May 2025, they are now preparing for The ROC England, which takes place at Windermere/ Scafell Pike this month."

● Follow the association on Instagram @raftriathlon.

TENNIS

Tennis is 4 All

ANY PERSONNEL who fancy making a racquet can take advantage of the Tennis Association's T4All project, held monthly.

Event OIC Cpl Ellen Bunting is currently organising the winter schedule.

She said: "Our October event is being finalised for dates at the moment. It will be a chance for anyone to come along and try tennis, as it is tailored for all abilities."

"We start the day with three hours of coaching from Halton Tennis Club's coaches. The afternoon is taken by members of our squad's teams who have coaching qualifications - this gives them a chance to practise their coaching, as well as keeping a relaxed feel to the day."

"There are also fun games and some match play."

She added: "Anyone is welcome, we support all abilities and encourage people to get involved in the Novice Champs, as well as the Summer and Winter Champs as we have a Novice section to those events too."

Contact Cpl Bunting via: ellen.bunting101@mod.gov.uk for more information.

ICE HOCKEY

Charity match tribute to tragic BBMF Spitfire pilot Mark



THERE WAS a goal-tastic 12-6 charity match between RAF Ice Hockey and Tri-Base Lightning for the Mark Long Trust.

The association's fifth annual fundraiser at Cambridge Ice Arena raised more than £1,725 for the Mark Long Trust, set up in honour of the late Sqn Ldr who passed away in May 2024 when the BBMF Spitfire he was flying crashed near RAF Coningsby.

Lightning were the victors. RAF team coach Flt Lt Leigham Martin said: "As OIC Vulcans I was massively proud of the team. The charity is very close

to our hearts, the jersey design was amazing, and from there it was a huge honour to play in front of Mark's wife Sqn Ldr Beth Long and their daughter, Sophie."

"The game was a hard fought and exciting match and the players left everything on the ice to make sure that we did the Trust proud and that the game would remain in the memory."

Mrs Long and Sophie were presented with a jersey emblazoned with the word 'LONG' on the chest and signed by both teams.

● Follow RAF ice hockey on Instagram @raficehockey.



GOAL FEST: Keepers were kept busy. Top left, Sqn Ldr Beth Long and Sophie with jersey

TRISH THOMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY

5 RAF Sport

pages of



RAF horse riders mount big charge in Loriners

See page 24

RUGBY UNION

Bronze bombers

It's third place for UKAF in International Defence Cup



TALENT: AR Daisy Aspinall

Daniel Abrahams

THERE WAS semi-final heartache, tries, tries, more tries and a third-place finish as UKAF's women hosted an unforgettable International Defence Rugby Cup tournament with RAF personnel front and centre.

Speaking after UK Armed Forces secured third place following a 76-5 thrashing of Ireland at Kingsholm in Gloucester, Flt Lt Lucy Nye, UKAF vice-captain, said: "We're gutted not to make the final, but delighted to go out on a high. The RAF involvement this tournament has been terrific; we have players in key positions – our squad numbers are growing."

"The tournament was amazing. We had cultural days, opening and closing ceremonies, World Cup watch parties. Off the field and on it was a fabulous experience. We are so lucky to be part of something like this."

AS1 Daisy Fahey, who closed the tournament with a hat-trick try display against Ireland, said: "We ended things well and showed what we are about. I'm proud of our performances."

"If one girl gets into rugby having seen the tournament, then it is job done."

It was aviators to the fore in the tournament's opening game at Esher as the RAF players



HAT-TRICK: AS1 Daisy Fahey ran in three tries and kicked four conversions against Ireland in third-place match
PHOTOS: IDRC2025

recorded an incredible nine tries in the 105-0 win over Tonga. AR Daisy Aspinall ran in five tries, with Fahey kicking 20 points and touching down.

Nye, AS1 Kim Grundy and Cpl Tyler Lewis were the other RAF try scorers.

Cpl Orla Procter opened the scoring at Basingstoke against Ireland in round 2.

Her third-minute running try was converted by Fahey, while

AS1 Rebecca Defilippo provided passes for the game's last two tries in the 65-0 win.

The final group game, in intense heat at Aldershot, saw the aviators provide the killer blows needed to quell a Zambian fightback, as match captain Nye and Grundy went over to make the game 32-10, with the match ending 32-22.

UKAF were brought down to earth with a bump after a

bruising defeat against reigning champions France at Richmond RFC.

The French scored twice in the opening 20 minutes for 12-0. Three minutes later UKAF ran in, with Fahey converting.

Another French score on half-time made it 19-7 at the break. Scoring twice more after the break for 26-7 and 31-7.

Speaking after the final game
● Continued on p25

RUGBY UNION

Officers meet in World Cup



OPENER: Cokayne scores try against USA
@catgorynphotography

RAF WOMEN'S rugby will make history at the World Cup quarterfinals when Flt Lts Amy Cokayne and Sarah Bonar face off in Bristol.

The clash will see Cokayne and Bonar take to the field for England and Scotland respectively, the first time RAF personnel have met at this level.

Cokayne said: "Playing Sarah had crossed my mind, but now that it's confirmed, it's fantastic. I made sure to say a big congratulations on her 50th cap, that's a huge milestone and I'm absolutely chuffed for her. We both knew this moment might come, and now it's about focusing on our teams."

On the build-up to the game Bonar said: "We will catch up for a coffee and talk everything but rugby. Then game day we will look forward to getting stuck into each other."

Cokayne added: "We text each other a lot. That won't change, as long as she's not asking for our lineout call. I'll always be there for her, and I know she'd do the same for me."

Bonar said: "Amy is world class. I'd say she is world number one in her position and I'm grateful to have played alongside her over the years."

AVM Mark Jackson, vice-chairman RAF Rugby, said: "I cannot wait for it, after a massively successful IDRC where personnel produced some fabulous displays and right at the centre of the World Cup two RAF officers will face each other head-to-head in front of more than 30,000. I hope they have an amazing match."

The game, due to be held on Sunday, September 14 at Bristol's Ashton Gate, after RAF News goes to press, was confirmed after Scotland came runners up in Pool B and England won Group A.

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SCAN ME

R'n'R

From cop to killer – Jason Durr

● See
page 3



Win!

Win classic film
on DVD ● p8



Film review page 3 + Announcements: pages 6-7 + Puzzles: page 8



IT'S TIME TO BREW AND BAKE FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH.

We all know it's good to talk. Host a Brew and Bake coffee morning or bake sale on station, at home, or in your community and make a life-changing difference to a veteran whilst having a brew, some banter and a slice of cake.



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**COMBAT
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FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH



Theatre

Murder at Midnight

UK tour

One eye on success

“HE IS unlike any other character I have played,” said Jason Durr about Jonny ‘The Cyclops’ in the touring production of Torben Betts’ new comedy thriller *Murder at Midnight*.

Best known for *Heartbeat* and *Casualty*, Durr stars in the world premiere of the show with another TV favourite, Susie Blake (*Victoria Wood: As Seen on TV*, *Coronation Street*).

Directed by Philip Franks (*The Darling Buds of May*) the cast also includes Max Bowden (Ben Mitchell in *EastEnders*) and Katie McGlynn (*Coronation Street*, *Hollyoaks*).

Durr said: “Jonny is a one-eyed drug dealer, pig farmer and notorious gangland killer – lovely man. We meet him on New Year’s Eve, in his not so quiet corner of Kent, with his glamorous wife and his somewhat trigger-happy sidekick, his mum played by the wonderful Susie who starts seeing things, her very jittery carer, plus a vicar who’s hiding something and a nervous burglar dressed as a clown.

“It’s a great story – Torben Betts is a fabulous writer. If Tarantino was going to do a comedy thriller this would be it. It’s edgy, funny, gripping,



MUM: Rehearsing with Susie Blake

full of twists and turns. It really isn’t a run of the mill murder-mystery – that’s one of the reasons that really attracted me to it.

He added: “Jonny has an enormous amount of wit which is wonderful to play. He’s a one-off, he’s really something else. That really drew me to the play, and the fact that the brilliant Philip Franks is directing it, who I’ve known for nearly 30 years. We’re dear friends and we worked together on *Heartbeat*, Philip was Sgt Craddock to my Mike Bradley. It’s just a joy to be back working with him.”

Jason is on tour until November and said he’s looking forward to having Christmas and New Year off to spend time with his family.

“I’ve been very blessed in my

career to play an enormous range of parts, from being in the Royal Shakespeare Company, to Lynda La Plante’s *Above Suspicion*,” he said.

When just out of drama school, one of his first roles was in a recruitment commercial for the RAF.

He remembered: “It was filmed in the north of England and I got to sit in a Tornado, which was incredible. I was told ‘Whatever you do, don’t touch anything yellow and black’ – which I think was for the ejector seat.”

He added: “When I’m asked what’s the role I’ve most enjoyed I say it’s the one I’m about to play – it’s always exciting to do a deep dive into a character. What I do is fun, I’ve been having fun since I was a kid with the dress-up box. It’s really no different, it’s just adults doing it, hopefully a little more subtly.”

Produced by the award-winning Original Theatre, the tour runs until April 4, 2026.

● Visit YouTube: youtu.be/acPx1VuJ1ws to watch the *Murder at Midnight* trailer and go to: murderplay.com for full tour details.

Interview: Tracey Allen

DRUG DEALER:
Jason
as The
Cyclops



Cinema

Thunderbirds (U)

60th anniversary

Thunderbirds are go

TWO EPISODES of *Thunderbirds*, the groundbreaking Supermarionation series from Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, will be in cinemas in expertly restored 4K UHD from September 20, to mark the much-loved TV show’s 60th anniversary.

The cinematic double-bill brings together the episodes *Trapped In The Sky* and *Terror In New York*.

“Even back in 1965, Dad and his amazing teams made each episode of *Thunderbirds* feel like a mini movie – huge stories, stunning models, and that unmistakable sense of adventure,” said

Jamie Anderson, CEO of Anderson Entertainment. “To see them newly-restored in 4K and back on the big screen, marking classic *Thunderbirds*’ return to cinemas for the first time since 1968, is something really special. I’m very proud to be able to share them with audiences across the UK.”

Trapped In The Sky is *Thunderbirds*’ first episode. Master criminal the Hood plants a bomb on board the new atomic-powered airliner Fireflash before it departs on its maiden flight. Unable to land for fear of setting off the bomb, the crew and passengers’ only hope of survival lies with International Rescue.

Terror In New York City is largely regarded as the most exciting *Thunderbirds* episode ever made. After Thunderbird 2 is heavily damaged in a mistaken attack, it leaves the team seemingly without a swift means to transport any rescue gear to New York City to save a news crew trapped underneath the collapsed Empire State Building.



RESCUE: Thunderbird 2 in action



Cinema

Paul and Paulette Take a Bath (15)

In cinemas now

The odd couple with a taste for the macabre

PAUL AND Paulette Take A Bath is about a whirlwind romance – at least, it is for one of them.

Paul (Jérémie Galiana), an American in Paris, is taking photographs when he notices Paulette (Marie Benati) quietly repeating a gesture in the street of the former Place de la Révolution. He snaps her as she ritualistically runs through the movements again and again. Evidently, she is re-enacting the execution of Marie Antoinette.

Both parties, as we will quickly learn, share a morbid fascination with history: he cooks the favourite meals of political despots, she visits murder houses, and even carries around a picture of a young and ‘gorgeous’ Stalin. Their chance meeting – the Frenchest meet-cute imaginable – ends with Paul cutting Paulette’s hair, just as would have been done before a beheading.

Each of them is seeking distraction: Paul from his creativity-sapping office job, and Paulette from the loss of a lover, Marilyn Monroe impersonator Margarita (Margot Joseph). Although she says romance is not on the table, their chemistry and overlapping peculiarities suggest otherwise.

It’s as though the film follows the kooky love interest of whacky romantic-comedies back to whence she came – but still viewing her through



HITLER FETISH: Paul (Galiana) and Paulette (Benati)

the lens of an infatuated American. The tone is aggressively whimsical, especially when it mines darker historical themes with casual flippancy – such as the scene in which the pair role-play Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun at his (supposed) former apartment.

This film hinges on how charming or grating you find its central duo, which ultimately might be generational. There are moments when it seems to reach for something deeper than tongue-in-cheek provocation, but it ultimately ends in a strange place – something like the opposite of a punchline.

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



Books
Cheltenham Literature Festival
October 10-19, 2025

Glitterati join the literati at festival



TOUR DE FORCE: Ian McEwan

DAME JOANNA LUMLEY, Miriam Margoyles, Ian McEwan, Kate Mosse and Ken Follett are just some of the big names lined up for this year's Cheltenham Literature Festival. Running from October 10-19, the programme features more than 400 events staged across the Gloucestershire spa town.

McEwan discusses his latest fictional tour de force *What We Can Know*, reclaiming the present from our looming sense of catastrophe and imagining a future where all is not quite lost. And two master storytellers come together to discuss their historical epics: Kate Mosse on the 20th anniversary of *Labyrinth*; and Ken Follett on his latest novel *Circle of Days*, telling the human story behind the building of Stonehenge. The irrepressible Margoyles is in conversation with Gaby Huddart sharing candid stories from her extraordinary life.

In a year of WWI remembrance, and with Cheltenham Festivals having been born just weeks after the end of the war, several events pay respect to this history. Historian and broadcaster Tessa Dunlop explores Britain's wartime past through the people and events remembered across our memorial-studded landscape. She is joined by Ruth Bourne, one of the last surviving Bletchley Girls, and Bomber Command veteran Colin Bell.

Anne Sebba and Laurence Rees delve into the psychology of the Nazi camps; Max Hastings brings to life the courage, strategy and sacrifice behind D-Day; Roger Moorhouse and Bletchley Park



LUMLEY: Sharing insights from *My Book of Treasures* All photos: Still Moving Media

historian David Kenyon reveals the reality of the U-boat war; and Al Murray and James Holland discuss the surrenders that heralded the Allied victory.

At Cheltenham's rooftop restaurant, The Nook on Five, Festival-goers can enjoy a special series of events and exclusive dining experiences. There will be a rare event with influential food writer Nigel Slater, who shares *A Thousand Feasts* – his memoir of small joys, quiet rituals and the sensory pleasures that shape a life. And *Saturday Kitchen* host and new *MasterChef: The Professionals* judge Matt Tebbutt is joined by co-star and wine expert Olly Smith for a chat over a dinner of modern British pub classics with matched wines.

Director and long-time collaborator Richard Curtis interviews Ben Elton about Ben's new autobiography, with behind-the-scenes tales from *The Young Ones*, *We Will Rock You*, *Upstart Crow* and *Blackadder*. The *Blackadder* star, presenter and history enthusiast Tony Robinson shares his adult fiction debut, bringing to life an epic tale of

Anglo-Saxon intrigue, rebellion and the making of England. Joanna Lumley is interviewed by Emma Freud to share insights from *My Book of Treasures*, with anecdotes from her life and career.

Penny Lancaster joins Jane Garvey and Fi Glover for a live recording of their Times Radio show to discuss her new memoir, *Someone Like Me*. She opens up about navigating fame, family, life with husband Rod Stewart and the challenges she's faced along the way.

Guest Curator Tracy Borman, Chief Historian at Historic Royal Palaces, presents her new book *The Stolen Crown* and reveals how the myth of a smooth Tudor-Stuart succession was a carefully crafted fiction – one that sparked chaos and unrest in the Stuart era.

The Festival programme is also packed with events for children and families. And for aspiring writers, there are workshops to offer inspiration and guidance, such as writing historical fiction, crafting a pitch, and how to self-edit.

● **Go to: cheltenhamfestivals.org for the full programme.**



Theatre
Fawlty Towers
UK tour

Cleese a jolly good fellow

John's *Fawlty Towers*

JOHN CLEESE is talking about the runaway success of the stage version of *Fawlty Towers* – after becoming a smash hit in the West End, it's about to embark on a 10-month UK tour.

"To be honest, I was more confident about it than almost anything I've ever done. But life has taught me to be self-deprecating, particularly in the UK; otherwise, you're accused of being a bit cocky and you get slapped down," he said.

"I remember reading the finished script and thinking it was really funny. And the English do love farce. Think Ben Travers. Think Brian Rix and Ray Cooney. Look at the success of *Noises Off* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Farce is universal."

For all his quiet confidence that this evening in the theatre would be enthusiastically received, he couldn't have predicted its rapturous reception.

The Daily Mail said it was "a fine reproduction of a vintage antique". *The Express* deemed it "the funniest show in town" and *The Times* called it "hugely entertaining".

I sat next to two women, both in their 30s, and not only were they enjoying it: they knew every single word of every sketch written surely before either of them was born.

Cleese doesn't try to hide his pride in this much-loved classic co-created with first wife Connie Booth. But he shakes his head in mild wonder at the



NEW BASIL: Danny Bayne in the show

way in which it seems to have rooted itself in the public consciousness.

"I was told not so long ago of a family who have a game where one of them tries to introduce a quote from *Fawlty Towers* into the conversation without the other three realising. How great a compliment is that? For instance, if anyone says: 'Don't mention the war', everyone knows its origin."

The show opened at London's Apollo Theatre in May 2024 and he won't easily forget the reaction of the first night audience. "They were literally rocking with laughter." But then who could resist the self-delusional Basil, once described so brilliantly by Cleese himself as: "Rude but inefficient"?

This 'new' production includes some cast changes. Danny Bayne will now play the crane-legged Basil with

Edited by Tracey Allen

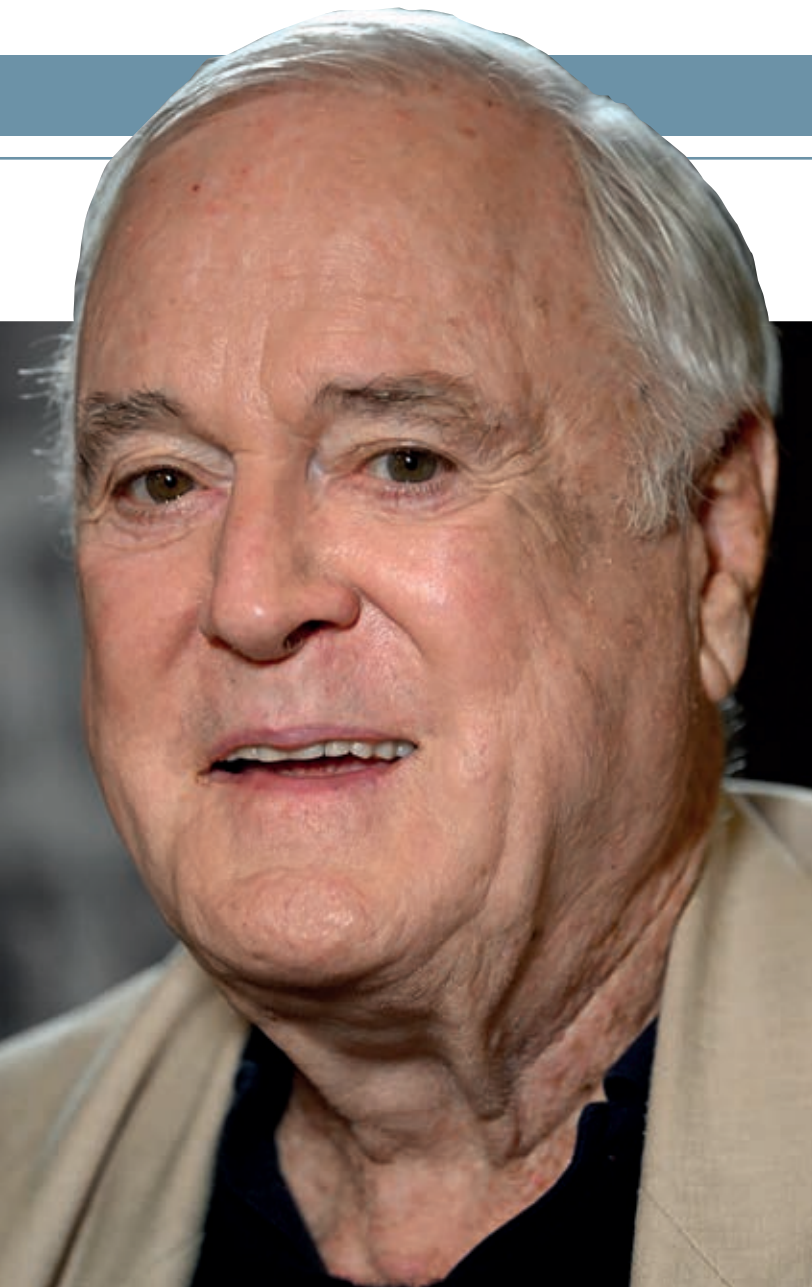


Photo by Dave J Hogan

still a hit 50 years on

Mia Austen as his acerbic wife, Sybil. Joanne Clifton, winner alongside Ore Oduba in 2016 of the famed *Strictly Come Dancing* glitterball, takes on the role of Polly, the woman who pretty much single-handedly prevents *Fawlty Towers* from collapsing like a pack of cards. Happily, the peerless Paul Nicholas remains as The Major.

It features three of the most cherished sketches, cleverly stitched together (by Cleese himself) with a new finale wrapping up proceedings. Prepare to enjoy yourself all over again.

Miscommunication is the name of the game with a threatened visit by a brace of hotel inspectors followed by a party of German tourists. Then there's Basil's ongoing – futile, as it turns out – attempt to keep from Sybil his flutter on the horses with little or no help from Spanish waiter Manuel, played by the excellent Hemi Yeroham.

For two months until recently, an inexhaustible John, 85, has been writing a book called *Fawlty Towers: Fawltys And All – My Favourite Moments* (to be published by Headline on October 9) to celebrate 50 years of the comedy milestone.

He and younger daughter Camilla have also been working on developing a reboot of a possible third TV series of *Fawlty*, set in a Caribbean motel where she will play opposite him as Basil's illegitimate daughter. And she's been collaborating with him on a

stage musical version of the hit film *A Fish Called Wanda*.

Nor does it end there. A new film script called *Lookalikes* is currently in development. "Originally, it was going to be about those people who stand on Sunset Boulevard in LA pretending to be famous stars," Cleese explained.

"That changed when someone came up with the brilliant idea of getting real superstars to play the lookalikes," explained Cleese. The script is currently with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

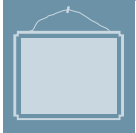
Fawlty, Cleese argues, is funny and timeless. "And we were lucky with Monty Python. We made two good movies, one of them medieval, one of them set in the time of Christ. Neither is going to date."

Now there is talk of bringing *Life of Brian* to the London stage.

"It's enough for me to know – because people often tell me – that I've helped them through difficult times by making them laugh. They come home, turn on an episode of *Fawlty Towers* and the world doesn't seem quite so bleak. That's my reward.

"I think we need much more laughter in the world. I'm not advocating mean teasing. Just good old-fashioned laughter," said jolly John Cleese. "There's nothing to beat it."

Interview by Richard Barber
● Go to: fawltytowerstour.co.uk for a full list of tour dates.



Galleries

William Morris Gallery

Women in Print: 150 Years of Liberty Textiles



TOP DESIGNER: Althea McNish, c.1961 ©Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives



MARY QUANT: Cotton suit in Liberty fabric for Ginger Group c.1965 © Liberty/William Morris Gallery

Liberty belles

THIS AUTUMN, William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, East London, will present *Women in Print: 150 Years of Liberty Textiles*.

Conceived in partnership with Liberty to mark the design house's 150th anniversary, the exhibition will highlight the pivotal role and contributions of women textile designers.

Tracing the rich history of Liberty fabrics, the show will survey the evolving influence and status of women in textiles over the past century and a half.

Women in Print will bring together iconic patterns by designers such as Althea McNish, Susan Collier, Sarah Campbell and Lucienne Day, alongside previously overlooked names, celebrating how women have been – and continue to be – at the heart of Liberty's creative innovations and ongoing relevance today. It will feature more than 100 works, spanning garments, fabric, original designs, film and historic photographs.

Founded in 1875, Liberty began as an importer

of textiles and objects from the Middle East and Asia before designing its own fabrics.

A spokesperson for the exhibition said: "Growing political, educational and employment opportunities around the time of the First World War opened doors for women to enter professional textile design, and by the 1930s, nearly half of Britain's textile designers were women.

"The main gallery will conclude with a display of garments featuring Liberty fabrics, illustrating how the firm's textiles have been incorporated into fashion from the 1930s to today. Highlights will include a Mary Quant 'Ginger Group' floral suit and a 'Dolly Rockers' mini dress in psychedelic fabric designed by Pat Albeck."

Women in Print is part of William Morris Gallery's 75th anniversary programme.

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



Theatre

An Evening With The Fast Show

Extra dates

Palladium tickets are selling *Fast*

DUE TO demand, two extra London Palladium dates – January 19 and 20, 2026 – have been added to the forthcoming live UK tour of *An Evening With The Fast Show*.

Now playing eight shows at the iconic venue, the 29-date tour opens at Cambridge Corn Exchange on November 3.

It will see co-creators Charlie Higson and Paul Whitehouse (pictured) reunite with Simon Day, John Thomson, Arabella Weir and Mark Williams.

Following the huge success of The Fast Show's 30th anniversary shows

in 2024, "the defining comedy sketch show of the Nineties" (*The Independent*) is going back on the road.

This celebratory UK tour has been hailed as a huge treat for fans of the multi-award-winning quick-fire TV sketch show and provides a behind-the-scenes insight into some of their favourite characters and catchphrases as they come alive on stage once again.

The cast will chat together about how it all began, how they made the TV show and created the characters,

and the fun they had doing it. This will be interspersed with performances of some of their best-loved sketches, monologues and songs, with on-screen inserts and a moment to remember their former collaborator, the late, great Caroline Aherne.

Fans will see the return of many of their favourite characters, including: Ted & Ralph, Jesse, Swiss Toni, Does My Bum Look Big In This?, Dave Angel, Jazz Club, The Suits You Tailors, Ron Manager, The Mad Painter, Rowley Birkin, Bob Fleming, Competitive Dad, Professor Denzil Dexter, and The Girl Who Boys Can't Hear.

● Go to: thefastshow.live for more information.





Your Announcements

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Seeking

SEEKING Flt Lt Bev Webb who was the station MO (Medical Officer) at RAF Wyton in the 70s, 1972-74. Any information will be gladly received. I was on Tactical Supply and we spent many weekends flying at Panshangar in the two Auster aircraft they had. Please call Maurine Boakes on: 0116 2849332 or contact me on Facebook.

SEEKING memorabilia relating to the Victor Bomber, in particular hanging china/porcelain wall plates. If you can help please contact Dick Squire on: dick.squire4@gmail.com.

I am seeking incidents of ghostly or paranormal phenomena at the ex-RAF base at Bircham Newton in Norfolk (now the Construction Industry Training Board), either on site or in the nearby accommodation. Thank you. Paul Lee, email: paul@paullee.com

SEEKING Warrant Officer Morgan Russell Price, MBE, formerly stationed at RAF Leeming, born in Loughborough in 1969. Urgently need to get in touch with him. Email: lyndasmart31@gmail.com

SEEKING anyone who served with or knew WO Henry Hamar during and/or following WWII, any information will be gladly received, contact: andyhilton75@hotmail.com

CALLING ex members of 230 OCU RAF Fittingly who served there during the 1960s. I am seeking 230 OCU's Squadron Crest to make a wall shield. Email: rogerparker1944@icloud.com maybe for a get-together some time in the future.

225 Squadron – I am seeking the current custodian of the 225 Sqn Association archives. Shortly before his death in 2011 my father, Maurice Potts

(pictured below in 1943), loaned his wartime logbook to someone in the Association for research purposes, but it was never returned – perhaps because of his passing. The last contact I can find is 225's former CO, Sqn Ldr Gordon Henderson, but he died in 2009. I am now pursuing my own research into the squadron with a view to publication of my father's extensive wartime diary, and would be very grateful for the safe return of his logbook so that I can ratify various facts. Please email: marcus@cmcgraphics.co.uk



Reunions

309 Entry RAF Hereford C Flt 4 Sqn Cooks, April 1967 to May 1968. If anyone knows anybody from that Entry and wants to get in touch, with a view to meeting for a 60th anniversary celebration in 2027, please call Ian Dell on: 01202 722058

ALL ex Clk Secs who were trained on the Apprentice Wing at RAF Credenhill in the 1960s and 1970s are cordially invited to contact the undersigned with a view to arranging a reunion in 2025. Please email: tibbett@ntlworld.com

217 Craft Apprentices RAF Halton, 55 years Reunion, September 30 and October 1 at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, LN10 6QG. BMMF & IBCC trips planned for during the day with a

formal dinner on the evening of October 1. Please contact Gerry Evans on: 01793 764236 or email: gerry.e.54@btinternet.com

THE RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Veterans Association AGM and Reunion Gala Dinner is to be held on Saturday, October 4 at The Park Royal Hotel, Stretton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 4NS. All members are welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the reunion, please contact Alan Teasdale on: joalteas@btinternet.com. If you would like to join the Association as a member, please visit our website: omanrafveterans.org for further information.

103RD Entry RAF Halton Apprentices Reunion October 17 at the The Park House Hotel in Shifnal, TF11 9BA, 7pm. Contact Mick Woodhouse on: 07811 401040, email: mickjwoodhouse1946@gmail.com or through: 103rd-entry.org.uk

Association

THE Association of RAF Regiment WOs and SNCOs 2025 AGM and Reunion event will take place from Monday, September 29 to Thursday, October 2, at The Parsonage Hotel and Spa, Escrick, York. For further information visit the association website (currently under construction) at: www.rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk or contact: honsecretary@rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk

BoB gala dinner

TO MARK 85 years since the Battle of Britain, the RAF Benevolent Fund is hosting its inaugural fundraising gala dinner at RAF Northolt on October 1. Contact Ellen Brooks on: events@rafbf.org.uk or visit: rafbf.org/the gala for more information including packages and costs, or to secure your place.

LIFE'S A BEACH: Getting up close to a starfish during a beach visit by RAF families



St Mawgan seaside fun

STARRY-EYED youngsters got hands-on experience of some fishy goings-on during a visit to the beach by RAF personnel.

A total of 13 families from St Mawgan took part in Rock Pool Adventures, a day of exploration, connection and community spirit.

Hosted at Big F-T's Shack on Tolcarne Beach, the event was part of a wider initiative led by the Cornish base's families support team to strengthen bonds in the local area.

Guided by an enthusiastic instructor, participants learned to identify sea creatures, pick up crabs and navigate coastal caves.

St Mawgan community development officer Carol Atkinson said: "It was great to see families from across the Station chatting and having fun together."

"The enthusiasm of the instructor encouraged the young adventurers, and their grown-ups, to pick up crabs, identify anemones and climb through caves."

Vets charity has new Chair

THE STOLL Foundation, one of the UK's leading providers of supported housing for military veterans, has appointed Gary Lashko (pictured right), former Chief Executive of The Royal Hospital Chelsea, to succeed Air Vice-Marshal Ray Lock as the chair of the charity's Board of Trustees.

AVM Lock will step down as chair in December after an eight-year tenure.

Mr Lashko has more than 40 years of experience working with charitable housing associations and mental health services to The Stoll Foundation.

He said: "I am delighted to be taking on the role of Chair at The Stoll Foundation, a historic charity with a bright future. The impact of having a safe and affordable home cannot be overstated, and The Stoll Foundation provides a lifeline for those who have served our



country and now find themselves in need of support."

AVM Lock said: "We still have some important strategic decisions to make in the coming months as we begin our handover, and I am looking forward to working again with Gary, who I admire greatly. We are both determined to continue The Stoll Foundation's upward trajectory, thus ensuring we provide the best possible supported housing for our current and future residents."

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 or by post to: **Announcements, RAF News, Room 68, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE.**

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STRIKING:
The Spitfire
replica stands on
top of a building
alongside the A40

SSAFA marks partnership milestone

FORCES CHARITY SSAFA is marking 35 years this year of partnership, compassion and commitment with the Royal Air Force through the RAF Personal Support and Social Work Service (PS&SWS).

For decades SSAFA's teams have provided confidential, Service user-focused support for issues ranging from mental health and bereavement to housing, domestic abuse and family resilience.

A spokesperson for the charity said: "Iraq's invasion of Kuwait took place on August 2, 1990, and just a few months later, the largest coalition since World War II was formed in advance of the battle to liberate Kuwait, a coalition that saw thousands of RAF personnel deployed to the region with countless more in the UK and elsewhere playing their critical roles."

"RAF PS&SWS supported them, and their families. It does still."

SSAFA's CEO, AM (Ret'd) Steve Shell, said: "This anniversary is not just a celebration of years of partnership, but of challenges



USER-FOCUSED:
SSAFA provides
confidential
support

overcome, lives improved and futures made brighter, and demonstrates that we adhere to a key SSAFA principle by ensuring that our RAF colleagues never battle alone."

In 2024, the charity supported 3,735 individuals, with 3,356 enquiries for support of which some 1,200 escalated to referrals for further support, the spokesperson added.

Cathie Johnson, RAF PS&SWS

Head of Service, said: "For an astonishing 35 years, SSAFA has worked in partnership with the Royal Air Force to deliver personal support and social work to serving personnel and their families."

"We're extremely honoured to be given the opportunity to continue our work, which has been essential in ensuring that RAF personnel can fulfil their roles."

Replica honours BoB anniversary

A FULL-SCALE replica of the legendary Supermarine Spitfire has been positioned on top of a building in West London to honour the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Visible to motorists travelling along the A40, the Spitfire can be seen on a branch of Vanguard Self Storage.

A spokesperson for the company said: "The Spitfire has been elevated as a powerful symbol of British engineering

excellence and the courage of the men and women who defended the nation during World War II.

"The aircraft will stand as a striking visual representation of remembrance and appreciation."

The spokesperson added: "The display is part of Vanguard's celebrated collection of classic military vehicles and heritage artefacts, joining an impressive array of those that have featured on the rooftop."



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RAF News

The official voice of the Royal Air Force

R'n'R



Crossword

No. 393

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 9 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF word.

This edition's Crossword and Su Doku puzzles are just for fun for you to do at home, no need to send your entries in.

Across

- 1. The picture within was magnificent (4)
- 8. Reach ruins, destroyed by RAF planes... (10)
- 9. ...while these RAF planes were out for blood (8)
- 10. Heartless snooker legend on a platform (4)
- 12. The endless squabble with Prudence (6)
- 14. And 19 Across. RAF weapons 'Mission Impossible' star will duck on French islands (6,8)
- 15. Instruments of punishment sadistic leader discusses, by the sound of it (6)
- 17. Say no to waste (6)
- 18. Artificial Intelligence takes South Africa back to another place (4)
- 19. See 14 Across
- 21. Massive idiot embraces a horse-rib on his return (10)
- 22. She would shorten outbuilding (4)

Down

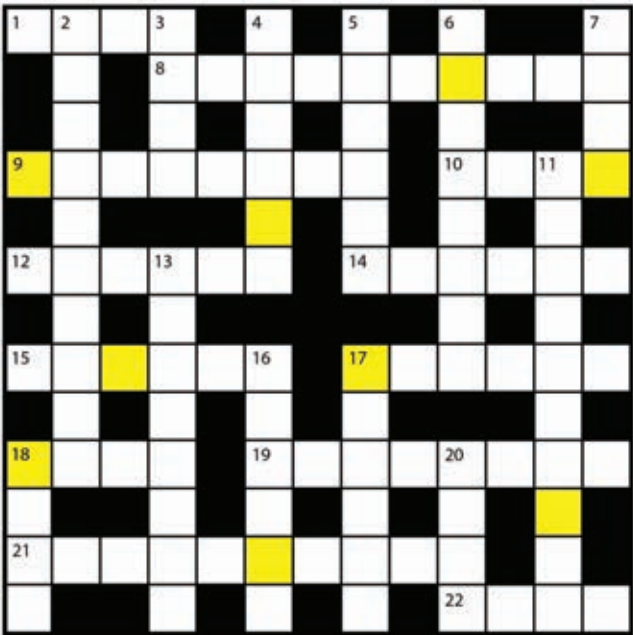
- 2. Coming down without them is life-threatening (10)
- 3. Fragment Colin holds in place, originally (4)
- 4. Damage caused by return of Conservative Regional Director (3,3)
- 5. Caira's upset by what is found in the lungs (3,3)
- 6. South African currency Duff exchanges for hair issue (8)
- 7. River goddess (4)
- 11. Demanding profession? (10)
- 13. Commanding present cleaner outside garage (2,6)
- 16. Am nosy about surprising number involved (2,4)
- 17. Save Royal Engineers' snooker stick (6)
- 18. Endless noble gas on mythological ship (4)
- 20. Pubs in positions of influence, we hear (4)

Name:

Address:

.....

RAF word: Crossword No. 393



Prize Crossword No. 392 winner is:

Solution to Crossword No. 392

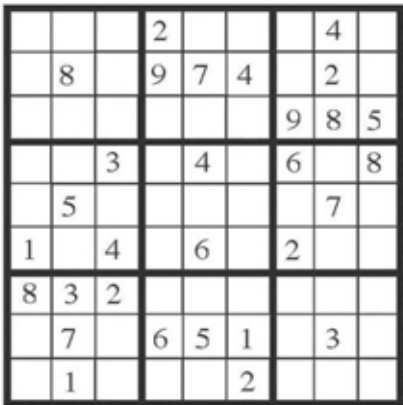
Across – 1. Swan 8. Accelerate 9. Admonish 10. Nest 12. Knight 14. The End 15. Streep 17. Allows 18. Gnat 19. Spitfire 21. Biggin Hill 22. Loop
Down – 2. Waddington 3. NATO 4. Script 5. Old Hat 6. Cranwell 7. Jest 11. Send Word To 13. Great Age 16. Posing 17. Acidic 18. Gobi 20. Full
RAF word: Simulator



Su Doku

No. 403

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.



Solution to Su Doku No. 402



DVDs

Traffic (15)

On Blu-ray and DVD now

Win!



STAR ROLES: Catherine Zeta-Jones and Dennis Quaid

War on drugs goes on

TO MARK its 25th anniversary, Steven Soderbergh's Oscar-winning classic *Traffic* returns to UK Blu-ray and DVD.

Boasting an all-star cast, *Traffic* has been described as the war on drugs, redefined.

The high-stakes, high-risk world of the drug trade is seen through a well-blended mix of interrelated stories: a Mexican policeman (Benicio Del Toro) finds himself and his partner caught in an often deadly web of corruption; a pair of DEA agents (Don Cheadle and Luis Guzmán) work undercover in a sordid and dangerous part of San Diego; a wealthy drug baron living in upscale, suburban America is arrested and learns how quickly

his unknowing and pampered wife (Catherine Zeta-Jones) takes over his business; and the US president's new drug czar (Michael Douglas) must deal with his increasingly drug-addicted teenage daughter.

You could win a copy of this great movie on DVD – for your chance to own it, simply answer this question correctly:

Who directed *Traffic*?

Email your answer, marked Traffic DVD competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by October 3. Please include your full name with your competition entry.



Theatre

The Party Girls

On tour

Such devoted sisters

A NEW play about the Mitford sisters, *The Party Girls* by Amy Rosenthal, is now on tour.

Written by the daughter of actress Maureen Lipman and playwright Jack Rosenthal, it's described as a razor-sharp look at one of Britain's most scandalous sisterhoods, showcasing how the Mitford girls cut a glorious swathe through pre-war high society.

The production goes to the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne from September 22-27, Oxford Playhouse (Sept 30-Oct 4) and Birmingham Rep (Oct 6-Oct 11).

Nancy aspires to be a celebrated novelist, Diana and Unity fall for the dangerous, charismatic leaders of the Far Right in Britain and Germany, and Debo sets her cap at a Duke. Meanwhile, Jessica (Decca) crosses continents in her own passionate pursuit of love – but can she ever escape her sisters and her past?

Ahead of the cast taking to The Playhouse stage next month, they visited the county to explore one of the family's homes, the Jacobean manor house Asthall Manor, near Burford. The



FAMILY HOME: The cast of *The Party Girls* at Asthall Manor where the Mitfords lived.

Mitfords lived there from 1919 to 1926 – both Jessica and Debo were born there.

Rosenthal lenses the play through the eyes of Jessica who reflects on her childhood home in her memoir *Hons and Rebels*, recalling the 'Hons cupboard' where she and Debo would retreat from the adult world. Nearly 100 years after the family moved from the Manor, the 'Hons cupboard' remains intact.

The play's cast includes Elisabeth Dermot Walsh

(*Doctors*) as Diana Mitford.

Director Richard Beecham said: "I'm thrilled to be directing the world premiere of Amy Rosenthal's timely new play. Amy's brilliant portrayal of the notorious Mitford sisters explores the present through the past, uncovers the political in the personal, and finds considerable humour amongst all the horror and heartache. And she does it all with the lightest of touches."

Go to: show tours.co.uk for full tour details.