Foreword

Welcome to the 2012 Edition of our Association magazine in which we try to reflect some of the events that have once again made another extremely busy year. I do hope you find the articles both informative and entertaining, I think they also illustrate the bond we all share through our Service.

There have been so many highlights through the year but 2 in particular stand out for me. Seeing PMs take on such highly visible roles in the Olympic and Paralympics’ ceremonies by carrying the Olympic and the Union Flags was such a proud moment. I also had the honour to host Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra when she graciously attended a Royal Honorary Air Commodores Lunch at the RAF Club. Her patronage and association with our Service brings so much in sustaining our core identity at such times of change.

Whatever memories you have of 2012 I hope you enjoy our magazine and continue to support our Association in whatever way you can.

P B Cushen
Group Captain RRC QHN BSc PMRAFNS
Director Nursing Services (RAF)
The Chairman’s Welcome

This edition of the magazine is made possible thanks to the generous bequest from the estate of the late Flight Lieutenant Agnes Elaine Coxen (formerly Austin) PMRAFNS 1985-1989 and is dedicated to her memory.

Welcome to this edition; the committee and I felt a magazine was the one Association activity able to be enjoyed by the whole membership and an appropriate use of the bequest. It is daunting to produce a foreword to the publication that at the time of writing is a work in progress. I take comfort in the knowledge that the editorial team will deliver an interesting and informative read. The content will as always be a mixture of the past and present with a focus on our history and I thank all those members who have taken time to share their memories. The history of our branch is without doubt the foundation upon which the serving members build and it is to be celebrated. Our expectation was that this edition would be released at the AGM and reunion in May; events unfortunately made that unrealistic.

2012 is of course a special year in which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth celebrates her Diamond Jubilee and London hosted The Olympic Games. I know you will all join me in sending our warmest greetings to Her Majesty. We as a nation have much to be proud of and should not be ashamed to stand up and say so; regrettably it seems negativity and bad news sells more newspapers. As an association of nurses we are impacted on by reports of poor care and lack of compassion particularly in the field of care of the elderly. Whilst undoubtedly many areas need to be addressed I have this message. Within my family, no less than four very close members work in different areas of the NHS and I believe that it is far from all bad; indeed it is largely excellent. Many of our members continue to work tirelessly within diverse areas of nursing, influencing practice and setting high standards. For those of you now retired it is part of your legacy that young people still enter the profession with the same energy and ideals as yourselves. It is a real privilege in my capacity as your Chairman to meet and work with serving members of PMRAFNS. From that experience I can say without fear of contradiction that we can all be very proud indeed of the work that they do upholding the values past members established.

Enjoy this magazine and please continue to support the committee with your contributions to our activities and through your membership. If you have any contact with PMs, serving or retired who are not members please try and recruit them. Carrot or stick it is your choice. A strong and dynamic Association is one way of ensuring our history is recorded and welcomes the people of today and tomorrow.

Geoff Holliday

PMRAFNS Association Committee

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Editor’s Comments

This issue is biased towards the Princess Mary's Hospital Halton following the unveiling in November last year of the tribute to the hospital, by Barratt homes on the old hospital site, however, I hope there is something for everyone in this edition. As always this publication relies on the membership for their news and anecdotes and I would like to thank all for their contributions, some of which I have taken the liberty of adding in archive photographs. These may not always exactly match the actual dates that the individual was there but hopefully provides a pictorial overview of the hospital through the decades as well as the personal reminiscences.

Next year will see the closure of the Princess Mary’s Hospital Akrotiri and it is planned that in part the next edition will reflect the hospital’s history from it’s early days in the 1950’s in the married quarters area to the new build in 1963 through to it’s final closure in 2013. I would like to encourage all of the membership for anecdotes of their experiences whilst working at TPMH and any old photographs would be appreciated, as always all photographs will be returned.

George Cuthbert
Mr (WO Retd)
Editorial Team

Honours and Awards

The Corner Memorial Cup and Prize
The Hugh Corner Memorial Cup and Prize is presented by the Matron-in-Chief PMRAFNS and Director of Nursing Services (RAF) to perpetuate the memory of Hugh Corner. The prize is awarded annually to the PMRAFNS nurse up to and including the rank of Sergeant who demonstrates the best personal qualities, professional ability and leadership.
2011 – Sgt Sarah Perkins

The Martin Cook Memorial Prize
The Martin Cook Memorial Prize is presented by the Matron-in-Chief PMRAFNS and Director of Nursing Services (RAF), to perpetuate the memory of Martin Cook. The Prize is awarded annually to the best PMRAFNS student nurse who demonstrates the best personal qualities and professional ability during their nurse training.
2012 – SAC Louise Gould

The Peter Pullen Memorial Prize
The Peter Pullen Memorial Prize is awarded by the Matron-in-Chief PMRAFNS and Director of Nursing Services (RAF) to perpetuate the memory of Peter Pullen. The prize is awarded for outstanding contribution to the ‘All Ranks’ Symposium
2012 – WO Tony Kyle

Promotions 2012

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Memories of Halton and the PMRAFNS 1926-1928

In 1914 “the huts” as they were called were hurriedly erected at Halton on land lent to the nation to be used for youngsters training for Kitchener’s Army. The land and Halton house were later given to the Royal Flying Corps when it was formed, which later became the Royal Air Force in 1918.

The wooden huts set out on the hillside formed the hospital as I knew it, they were joined together by a long wide wooden corridor and the wards were on either side, opposite each other. The Officers ward had two rooms at the entrance, with two beds on each side for sisters and there was a separate ward for families and a maternity ward. Perhaps the busiest area was the boy’s ward, as at that time there were 1,000 boys in training at Halton. There was a nursing sister in charge of each ward and many of the orderlies working under them had served in the 1914-1918 war.

In early 1927 the Commanding Officer Wing Commander Shorten told us that we would be moving to a new building all in one day! The offices, X-Ray, dispensary and other departments had already been established and the kitchens were functioning. I was in charge of the ENT ward and on call for Maternity and as many patients as possible had been discharged or sent on sick leave. Then early one morning the call came, the great move began with the surgical and medical wards the first to go, and the huts began to feel strangely empty. None of us had seen the new hospital or the wards so it was an exciting occasion.

My ward was last to go at around 8pm, all my patients were mobile fortunately, for on arrival to our horror we found bedsteads and mattresses awaiting making up and in the middle of the ward a pile of bricks and rubble left by the builders. I gathered the staff together with the patients and we all got together to remove the debris and find buckets for a team to scrub the place out, eventually going off duty and to bed about midnight.

Some months later Princess Mary came to open the hospital arriving after lunching at Halton House Officers Mess, she went round every ward and then had tea in the Sisters Mess served by the senior sisters, with us all in the background. We were all footsore after a long day of preparation and inspection. During tea the Princess slipped her feet slightly up from her shoes—we all loved her for this gesture.

Marjorie Ellis (Excerpt taken from the 1979 edition of the PMRAFNS Association Magazine)
My Birth Place

I was born at RAF Halton, not in the hospital maternity ward but in a wooden-hutted single storey dwelling, which had been a world war one prefab. Then during my short service Commission in the 1950’s as a PM and stationed at Halton my room was on the top floor of the “New Mess” overlooking the Vale of Aylesbury and the very spot where I had been born.

My father Richard Cornwall-Jones had come to Halton as a civilian with the Air Ministry. He was in the “Works Directorate” and was involved with the building and construction of the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Hospital.

My father used to tell the tale that when the hospital was opened and the first patients were wheeled in on stretcher trolley’s, they couldn’t get into the lifts! Only the length of the stretchers had been calculated and not the overall length of the stretchers plus the longer stretcher poles. In the usual manner of the English the problem was soon overcome, carpenters were sent for and round holes were cut into the wooden walls of the lifts, to accommodate the ends of the stretcher poles, these holes were still visible in the late 1950’s.

In 1950 there were psychiatric, tuberculosis and plastic and burns unit within the hospital. I do not remember if the renal unit was there or if it was still to come. The Nursing Service had yet to start nurse training or to recognise men in its ranks. The nursing orderlies were National Service men.

They were outstanding lads who gave excellent nursing care. Patients drew a kit from the Ward Master on admission. A blue hospital suit, Pyjamas and towel, Mug plate and iron [cutlery]. The most senior patient on the ward allocated ward duties to the up patients. Cleaning, washing up serving meals and ward runner. My civilian training had only had patients who were in bed. Early mobilisation was still in the future. Newly arrived Sisters were taken out of sight behind The Institute of Pathology and Tropical Medicine to learn to salute and march.

I have happy memories of working in the plastic surgery centre (PSC) with the late, and then Group Captain Morley, (later AVM Morley) and the late Sqn Ldr John Winter and Sqn Ldr Ronnie Brown as they were then. It was a very happy unit and patients included many civilians and children. Much experience was gained as surgical techniques were continually developing. Patients were flown on ‘casevac’ from all parts of the world for specialised treatments at this centre.

Her Majesty the Queen’s coronation occurred while I was serving at Halton and to mark the occasion, bonfires were lit that night all over the land. The bonfire burning on Coombe Hill was most dramatic against the night sky.

Mrs Lesley Howat (nee Cornwall-Jones) excerpt taken from PMRAFNS Association magazine 1989

A Tribute to Commemorate PMRAF Hospital Halton

On 16 November 1950, as a newly commissioned Flying Officer, I walked through the portals of the Sisters Mess Halton to start my Service career. Sixty one years later, standing as a guest of Barratt homes, I stood in the middle of what was now a housing estate, to see our Honorary Air Commandant, HRH Princess Alexandra, unveil the lintel from that very portal, as a tribute to the now demolished hospital.

It was a great occasion. So many staff and their families, past and present, to meet. Of course many of us had aged and perhaps there was a slight hesitancy in recognition. We had shared much together in the past but recollections were soon shared and passed on to the younger generation. They of course had much to share with us.

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It was most interesting to talk with the present serving PM’s. In the 1950s aero medical evacuation from Korea to UK took at least a week with 8 hours flying a day. What wonderful advances have been made in medicine and aviation.

We were cut short in these reminiscences by the eagerly awaited arrival of HRH Princess Alexandra. She was as ever her lovely and most charming self and had a word with every one of us. An outstanding day.

The unveiled sisters mess door lintel

The tribute can be viewed in its beautifully landscaped area, standing under a thriving tree planted by our first Honorary Commandant Princess Mary, in a housing estate where once stood the hospital.

Joy Harris, Air Commodore (Retd)

Thoughts of Halton

I arrived at the Sister’s Mess on November 1st 1948 as the Princess Royal left. From our rooms in the new mess you could hear the Apprentice’s pipe band marching the trainees to work in the mornings on main camp.

There was no induction course in those days, fellow sisters showed you how to make up your cap and you just went on duty next morning having seen the Matron. Meals were at a long table and you sat in order of seniority. My 1st night duty the Ward master came round each ward to tell us Princess Elizabeth had a son and heir.

Every other Sunday you had a 1/2 morning or afternoon, afternoons were wonderful Doctors and sisters walked the Chilterns and ended up for tea with that rarity a fresh egg as well.

Talking to Dame Joanna Cruickshank at the annual tennis party held up at the Sisters mess tennis court in those days.

The first streptomycin injection to be given in the Infectious diseases sanatorium to a young airman who seemed near the end and finding him sitting up having breakfast the next morning, set a new hope for us all working there.

A later posting back in the early 1950’s: wearing black armbands following the King’s death, all the front doors round the hospital being painted for the Queens visit and then standing on the lawn at Halton House and seeing her on the terrace there.

Wining a ticket for the Coronation on the RAF stand opposite the Cenotaph, having a wonderful day and while waiting for action hearing the ENT specialist reading Peter Rabbit to his child. The wedding in Tonbridge of Lois Spankey (a sister) to the Ghurka officer she had met marching on one of the parade practices.

Anne Burchell
(Nee Moens)
Memories of PMRAF Hospital Halton

My first posting to Halton was on the 8th Jan 1942 in the PMRAFNS. As I was fever trained I was attached to the infectious diseases unit (IDH), which was separated from the main hospital. A senior sister, four sisters plus medical orderlies staffed it and the ward was divided into cubicles of one, two or four beds. Most of the patients were aircraft apprentices from RAF Halton with measles, mumps or chicken pox and skin diseases.

We had our own Mess including sleeping quarters, lounge and dining room, which was very comfortable and friendly. For recreation we played tennis, visited the many towns including Wendover, Aylesbury and London. After seven months at Halton I was posted.

1957 the first Renal dialysis in Britain at PMRAF Hospital Halton’s new Renal Unit

My next sojourn to Halton was from January 1956-58. Firstly in charge of the medical ward then moved onto the Officers ward. One of the highlights of my career was the day that Group Captain Jackson (medical specialist and later AVM) opened the new Renal Unit at Halton in 1957. The Kolff twin coil Dialysis machine arrived (the first in Britain) and was set up in a side ward. During dialysis two doctors and two sisters, including myself, were in attendance. The first patient was an Army Officer flown in from Germany with renal failure. After a long day’s ordeal on the machine he seemed to improve but after another three dialysis sessions he unfortunately succumbed. How different things are today.

Mrs K McNair, Wing Officer (Retd)

Memories of Princess Mary’s Hospital Halton

Being greedy I share 3 dates, which have particular significance for me.

6th September 1966

The day I arrived at No 1 School of Technical Training RAF Halton as a 16 year old to commence training as an Administrative Apprentice (AA) in 307th Entry. The one-year apprenticeship involved both service and trade training and a return to school. Graduation as a Nursing Attendant providing one got the requisite scores was in the rank of Senior Aircraftsman (SAC). PM Hospital in those days was a somewhat distant vision on the horizon of my aspirations. The nearest we got to the hospital was the demonstration wards and classrooms of The Medical Training Establishment (MTE). We marched there each day from 3 Wing through the spinney to the hospital site.

Mrs A McNair, Wing Officer (Retd)

It is interesting to reflect that there were no PM’s involved in teaching our nursing skills. We learned by rote and repetition; practical’s included laying up dressing trolleys, packing drums for sterilisation and even making kaolin poultices cutting out lint squares and smearing them with a smelly grey glump.

One of the hardest tests in finals was reciting word perfect the 15 rules of roller...
bandaging (or was it 17?) To my everlasting embarrassment when I passed out from Halton I was posted to RAF Hospital Wroughton; not at that time with a royal prefix to the name, embarrassed in that I was posted still as an AA being too young to put on my precious hard earned SAC rank propellers. One of my fellow apprentices in 307 entry was also posted to Wroughton he was my friend Martin Cook in whose memory an annual award is still made within the branch.

23rd February 1971

I made my first return visit to Halton on the day of my 21st birthday to attend interview for SRN training at PMH, memorable in many ways.

I had completed a tour at Wroughton before being posted to RAF Hospital Muharraq Bahrain for a year. On return from overseas I was posted to a medical centre at RAF Digby in Lincolnshire. Having been exposed to student nurses at Wroughton who were classed as PMRAFNS NCE (non commissioned element) I was rather taken with the idea of joining their ranks. They seemed an exotic species having no RAF rank only being identified with blue bands on their ward dress as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd year student nurse, on qualifying they were simply addressed as Staff Nurse and served in most cases for less than a year after registration. The female student nurses of that time were a very cosseted group enjoying the best accommodation blocks with single rooms when all other single ranks below corporal shared rooms of at least 4 people. The PMRAFNS at that time was exclusively female and remained so until the creation of The Unified Nursing Service in 1980.

Returning to Halton I clearly remember the dread I felt presenting myself at the guardroom to be allocated transit accommodation; the fear was well founded as unluckily for me the Station Warrant Officer (SWO) spotted me and ordered me to the barbers for a haircut, before I was allowed to sign in. Halton then was still very much a tough discipline station; I would not have minded but I had only days before had my hair cut for the interview; not that it counted.

The interview for SRN training would be better described as a trial, I recall that Wing Officer Grace Haydock Senior Matron was the lead interviewer with a male nurse tutor also present. Wg Off. Haydock opened the interview with the statement that she had no idea what I was doing there wasting her time (that’s another story). Never the less I was successful and started Nurse training at RAF Hospital Ely on 25 SRN Course in June 1971; the only male with 25 girls, my salvation being that I had only just been married 2 months before and was accompanied (eventually) by my beautiful young bride Lynette (and still am to this day). I must make a special mention- Sqn Off. Elizabeth Harris was our clinical teacher.

Nurse Training at Halton 1965

25th July 1976

I was posted to Halton as a Junior Technician Staff Nurse on qualifying in 1974 and worked both on male surgical and The Cade Unit. My second son Luke was born in the maternity unit at PM Halton in 1976, he is now a proud dad and works as an Intensive Care Nurse in Lancaster. Daniel my first son was born in RAF Hospital Ely in 1973; he is an Emergency Care Practitioner in Bucks as is Vicky his wife. Clearly we Holliday’s make a substantial contribution to health care.

There is more

Lyn and I were again posted to PM Hospital Halton on return from a Wegberg tour in 1985 and both our boys enjoyed early school years up to senior level in Wendover as I managed to stay put for almost 10 years. Not all in one post; initially I was nursing officer in charge of ward 5 Orthopaedics, succeeding the legendary Pat Surridge.

It was special to work along side the likes of Air Commodore Harry Vieyra and Wing Commander Chris Hanley orthopaedic surgeons. I then undertook external training in infection control and became Senior Infection Control Nursing Officer following in the footsteps of Alma Orr the first to hold the post. In that job I was based initially in the former MTE renamed The Institute of Health and Community Training (IHMT) and then The Institute of Pathology and Tropical Medicine (IPTM). Maybe not unique but I was privileged to serve in all but one of the Halton Medical units; that being The Institute of Dental Health and Training (IDHT).

While we were at Halton Lynette who at that time worked as a secretary felt the call...
and undertook nurse training at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Lyn completed midwifery training after we left the RAF and now works as a Health Visitor. Not exaggerating that we Holliday’s prep up the NHS thanks in no small part to life and lessons learned at Halton.

Sqnl Dr (Rtd) Geoff Holliday 1966-1995

A Return to Halton

It was a strange feeling returning to PMRAFH Halton 29 years after first joining the PMRAFNS – this time with a different hat on. During the first Gulf War of 1990-91 and Operation Granby, I was one of several Herefordshire Red Cross volunteers on standby for nursing and welfare duties in the post Acute Care Centre there.

With few casualties, supplementary nursing was not needed, but I worked one day a week as a Red Cross Welfare Officer for about 3 months. We manned the Red Cross and St John Centre with its library and occupational therapy items, and were open house for coffee and a chat with the up-patients. In addition, we prepared beds and facilities in the Red Cross block as accommodation for relatives who may have needed to stay on hand. I thoroughly enjoyed my library round, especially in the Maternity wards with the happy mum’s and babies. In the Cade unit, I thought back to my time there when it was a temporary Officers ward and remembered some of the patients I had nursed there whilst also remembering the 21 night duty stint we all did when we first joined the service.

It was good to call into Matron’s Office to meet Group Captain Bernie Forward again. What a contrast with our nervous first introduction to Wing Officer Jessie Higgins as brand new PM’s and now we had male matrons!

A surprise awaited me in the men’s surgical ward. Arriving during a Consultant’s round, I was about to creep out when my name was called and I found myself in the middle of the ward being hugged by a handsome Naval Medical officer – my godson, who was on a course there. I don’t know who was more surprised, the consultant (a good humoured Australian) the patients or me!

With thankfully so few patients, I enjoyed my days there until we were stood down. Those of us who served way back were sad when the hospital finally closed in 1995 however it is heartening to see that the chapel oil painting of the nativity, the font, some of the silver and the hassocks embroidered with badges of medical units are now in St George’s Church Halton to remind us of those happy days.

Mrs Marion Donaldson

The Renal Unit

Of the many specialist units at PMRAF Hospital Halton the renal unit had a unique ability, that of portability. This concept of treating the patient Wherever they were was the main thrust of the original Renal unit founder, Gp Capt (later AVM) Jackson in 1957, he took the Kolff Twin coil Dialysis machine and had it adapted. This enabled a renal team to be mobilized, wherever they were required. For in many cases patients were too sick to be moved to Halton. This approach had been maintained over the years as new equipment and technology became available and whilst still bulky was far more portable than those early days. The renal teams travelled far and wide where required, treating patients in locations such as Hong Kong, Belize, Cyprus or the Falklands and also within many NHS hospitals.

Following two years in Primary Health care at the Station Medical Centre at RAF Akrotiri, I was posted to PMRAF Hospital Halton onto the Renal Unit in Sep 91. This was primarily to gain experience prior to undertaking an ENB intensive care course (ENB 100) at Guys and Lewisham hospital trust, an excellent 6 months of hard work and play in London. I had originally completed an ITU course as an SEN 10 years earlier, which consisted of two weeks theory at RAF Hospital Ely and then 3 weeks practical at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle.

Completing my course in June 92 it was back to PMRAF Hospital Halton and the Renal unit with some trepidation, primarily because the Renal Unit had a reputation for keeping its staff very busy. The nursing officer in charge was Squadron Leader Massey (now Wg Cdr Retd) with Wing Commander Rainford (later Air Cdre) as the Consultant in charge. The unit seemed to have a higher level of Officers than the majority of the other wards within the hospital, many from that period are now senior officers of the Branch, Wg Cdr’s Mackie, Spragg and Griffiths to name but a few.

The unit was on two floors of the hospital the chronic dialysis unit was situated on the top floor with the renal investigations ward below which was separated into two areas by the ward.
This was my first tour at Halton although I had previously attended the main camp no 1 School of Technical Training in 1976 on a 3 month Gen Mech (E) course and at the Medical Training Establishment (MTE) on a 3 week first aid course prior to commencing nurse training at RAF Hospital Wroughton. I can honestly say that despite being a trainee I had a great time at Halton so to be posted back to obtain specialist qualifications was great and allowed me to revisit my old haunts and renew old acquaintances.

Not long after joining the unit I was off on tour to Op Grapple as the Aeromedical Evacuation Liaison Officer (ALEO) to 22 field Army hospital at Vitez in Bosnia for 4 months, but that’s another story, however, an example of the Renal Unit nursing travel scheme! Which more normally involved a request for renal dialysis (or ‘Mobile’) The mobile renal team consisted of one doctor and one renal technician, if required, for example if the patient was located overseas then this would be augmented with another nurse and a technician from the medical and dental serving section (MDSS). There is one story of an urgent request for a mobile in the early 1980’s in which the doctor was rudely awakened in his tent whilst on a camping holiday by the police and then rushed to a waiting helicopter to take him to join a team going out to Hong Kong

I have many fond memories of my posting there, Halton was a great posting its location was excellent and it had a small but enthusiastic sub aqua club, although it did take some getting used to the local water temperature, having just returned from Cyprus.

The team on the unit were great fun to work with, it provided a great sense of teamwork looking after a diverse group of patients working in some cases 12 hour shifts, which unless you worked nights was not a normal shift pattern (some wards still worked split shifts) The nursing Officer in charge of the actual ICU was Flt Lt Helen Ryan. All too soon though the intensity of the ICU workload started tailing off as the renal unit made moves towards closure along with the rest of the hospital and moving it’s chronic renal patients to a new unit

My tour was busy and went quickly and I was fortunate to be posted before the final closure of the hospital, however, I was posted to RAF Hospital Wegberg, Germany, which was also due to be closed but again that’s another story.

George Cuthbert
The Dame Joanna Cruickshank Trophy

Dame Joanna Cruickshank was the first Matron-in-Chief of the new Royal Air Force Nursing Service (RAFNS) leading its formative years through Royal consent in 1923 to the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Nursing Service (PMRAFNS). She served from 1918 to 1930.

In her final year she donated a trophy in the hope that her nursing sisters would participate annually in a tennis tournament and compete for the trophy. The first winner was a Sister Cargill of RAF Hospital Uxbridge in 1930 and the competition has over the years gone from strength to strength it has been held in many locations, however, it is with the PMRAF Hospital Halton and laterally the RAF Tennis Club at Halton that this trophy has become associated with.

With the exception of 11 years, primarily the WWII years the competition has been run continuously since 1930, and the records show that there have been many repeat winners. The individual with the claim to most wins is Wg Cdr Stewart who first won the trophy in 1992, subsequently winning it 11 times in total. The most successful other rank was FS Evans-Randall who won the trophy on 5 occasions.

Over the later years further additional competitions and trophies have been donated by subsequent matron in chiefs and senior members of the Branch including, the Williams trophy – Men’s Singles, the Wendy Williams Plate - the Men’s Doubles, The Reid Plate – Women’s Doubles and the Forward Trophy – Mixed Doubles more of which will be covered in future editions.
A Remarkable Career

Wing Officer Jean Mary Emerson (formerly Payne) ARRC PMRAFNS served 1944-1970

It is a great pleasure to be writing an account, albeit brief, of a career spanning over a quarter century that is not an obituary. The circumstances that lead to this are happenstance. In my role of chairman I became aware that we had a member who had celebrated her 90th birthday in May 2011 and felt some regret that we had missed the opportunity to acknowledge that occasion through The Association. Recognising that such an individual would have a treasure trove of memories I undertook to contact her. Initial contact led to a visit by me with Wing Commander Steve Beaumont in early February this year to meet the lady at her home in Ferndown. Steve and I were welcomed warmly and treated to two hours of delightful conversation with this charming and spritely septuagenarian. This account will share some recollections of ‘a remarkable career’.

Prior to the outbreak of war a young woman found herself relocated to London from her home on the South coast. Her mother, a lone parent was forced to move seeking work; employment had disappeared where they lived with the fear of invasion by Hitler’s army. In 1938 Jean Payne undertook two years training as a nurse at The Hospital for Women, Soho Square. On reaching the age of 19 years she was able to commence 3 years training to State Registration at The Westminster Hospital. These years of nurse training throughout the blitz were described as both the best and worst of times and it is difficult for anyone without that experience to imagine. Operating theatre became the favoured area of work for Jean and she was determined to pursue this. On qualifying in 1943 she worked as a staff nurse in theatres but was faced with the dilemma of what to do next. Options then were limited with most nurses going on to undertake midwifery training and it was at that Jean set her sights on joining one of the uniformed nursing services. Choice of The Royal Air Force was partially made on a preference for the uniform as she did not much fancy khaki and the Navy required ‘connections’.

In October 1944, Jean began her service in PMRAFNS, which was to span 26 years and saw postings to Wroughton, RAF Melksham, Halton, Cosford, Ely, Uxbridge and overseas tours in Egypt, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Wegberg, Cyprus and Singapore (plus some the author might have forgotten). Service life seems to have suited and she quickly progressed from a short service to a permanent commission and finally attained the rank of Wing Officer as senior matron at Uxbridge. Jean served previously at Uxbridge in 1963 working with Sir Stanford Cade, a celebrated surgeon of his time, developing chemotherapy in the treatment of cancers. It was for this that she gained her the award of The ARRC. Jean recollected that she still found it amazing that some of the drugs trialed then are still used today.

Memories- some snapshots.

No initial officer training in those days, her first posting was direct to Wroughton and officers ward on night duty. At that time Wroughton was dealing with wartime casualties. Then followed spell at Melksham. This was a hospital on an RAF station dealing with acute surgical and medical patients; Jean then was a Flying Officer in theatres and enjoyed both work and an active social life.

Her first overseas posting was to Cairo, the posting notice read ‘middle east for disposal’. The hospital was unique having been built as a children’s hospital everything was scaled down to child size. Travel on posting was by troopship. Cairo presented travel opportunities and Jean with colleagues took a budget trip to Luxor. Unfortunately she contracted hepatitis and amoebic dysentery from an ice cream purchased from ‘a posh establishment’. This illness meant a missed posting to Singapore and she was flown to Palestine for treatment then enjoyed her sick leave on Cyprus. After recovering, Jean was posted to Fayid, a family’s hospital in Egypt; there the nurses had to live in an old disused NAAFI. She remembers Group Officer Reece as the principle matron for the region.

RAF Hospital Fayid the Families wing at Abyad 1952 Matron Squadron Officer Ashworth
A posting to followed to Singapore with friend and colleague Beryl Johns (who she stills visits today in the Exeter nursing home where Beryl is resident).

They sailed on The Devonshire a troop ship out of Liverpool. Unfortunately no one thought to mention the ship was sailing with one engine not working; a cause for some concern, and excitement during a storm in 1951 the ship was forced to send a “Mayday” call when her engines failed during a gale in the Bay of Biscay, but the crew managed to restore power and the “Mayday” was cancelled.

No time for stand down after travel, Jean and Beryl were immediately set to work in Changi by the matron. During this posting, having been found to be aero med qualified, our now Flight Officer found herself doing weekly flights to Iwakuni a Royal Australian Air Force Hospital in Japan.

These missions were to evacuate multinational casualties from the war in Korea and would consist of up to 36 patients each trip; the aircraft used was the Hastings. Of particular poignancy in this The Diamond Jubilee Year was that during one such mission on February 6th 1952 that the news of The Kings death reached Jean. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2nd began her reign.

In May 1969 Wing Officer Payne married her late husband John Emerson a retired army officer. She had first met John through amateur dramatics at Cosford some 18 years previously. It would have been unusual even unique for an officer of PMRAFNS in her rank to have been married then and continue serving. In order to establish a permanent home base with her husband she made the decision to retire in October 1970.

Geoff Holliday
Flight Lieutenant Tony Nicol ARRC PMRAFNS

2012 is an exceptionally auspicious year for all of us in the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Nursing Service and indeed the Royal Air Force Medical Services as a whole. Throughout this year we have celebrated several prestigious events, the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics to name a few. But finally and with an air of disbelief the day many of us hoped would never come arrived, the Branch came together to bid farewell and good luck to the longest serving member of both the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Nursing Service and Defence Nursing Services as a whole.

It was a beautiful sunny day at Royal Air Force Lyneham on Friday the 23 Mar 2012 and a fitting location for Flight Lieutenant Tony Nicol’s Top Table as he finally hangs up his hat and departs the fold in search of pastures new. Many friends and colleagues of the Royal Air Force past and present came together to celebrate and dine him out in style after forty-two years of dedicated and distinguished Service.

Tony Nicol’s successful and varied career has seen him rise through the ranks from Aircraftman to Flight Lieutenant. He has worked in both primary health care and secondary health care and has been involved in some capacity with every conflict and campaign since 1975.

Highly decorated, he has accrued an impressive selection of medals on his chest.

The Associate Royal Red cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with Bar, Gulf War 1, Telic and more recently the Herrick and Diamond Jubilee Medal to name but a few. It’s true he has had a head start on all of us, but he really has worked all around the world. The list of countries he has travelled to reads more like an ‘A to Z’ of the world and his passport stamps would rival Alan Wickers. I’ve checked it and he has been to nearly every letter of the alphabet from Ascension, Belize, Canada, Djibouti, Egypt, Falkland Islands… to former Yugoslavia and Zanzibar. Some letters more than once Bahrain, Brazil and Barbados! If civilian Aeromed doesn’t work out for him he might want to consider a consultancy position within the travel industry.

What isn’t so widely known about Tony is that he actually joined the RAF on the 5 Sep 1969 into the Electronic Fitter Air Radar Trade Group. Eventually seeing the light he remustered, qualifying as a nurse in 1972.

With such an illustrious career it is to be expected that he has worked at most, if not all Royal Air Force Medical Units over the years. Some of which may have long since closed but most of you I am sure will have worked at over the years, and I am convinced will have a story or two of your own to tell. I had the honour of assisting him with his Top Table and was privy to many memories that were shared on that prestigious day. He was likened to a ‘Legend, the Grandfather of Aeromed, and our very own ‘Victor Meldrew’. What was absolutely certain that sunny afternoon on the 23 March 2012 is that we were all united in our thoughts; Tony taught many of us the meaning of ‘esprit de corps’ and will forever remain in our fondest memories. We are unfortunately losing a true stalwart from our Branch whose support; knowledge and experience will be greatly missed.
As a token of our appreciation and on behalf members of the Defence Medical Services, Group Captain Cushen presented several gifts to Tony. Most notably a personally engraved crystal wine decanter and glasses. On behalf of all PMRAFNS members past and present we would all like to wish Tony and his beautiful wife every success in retirement.

Jane Marriott (nee Bartolini)
FS

MDHU Peterborough’s Big Brew Event – Raising funds and Awareness for SSAFA October 5th 2012

Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Families Association (SSAFA) are a national charity providing support for those who serve in the Armed Forces, or those who used to serve, and their families. Each year, highly trained staff and a network of 7500 volunteers provide practical support and assistance to more than 50,000 people, from D-Day veterans to young soldiers wounded in Afghanistan.

This year, military staff from wards B5 and A4 organised the well-known ‘Big Brew’ event in order to raises funds and awareness for this invaluable cause. Cpl Anna Taylor and Cpl Sinead Jones were put in charge of the organisation of the cake selling and the logistics of the hot drinks, overseen by Lead Military Nurse Flt Lt Marsdunn.

Early on the 5th Oct, military staff from both ward areas assisted with the initial set up, ready for the selling to begin, and off course it was led with Military precision.

All that took part enjoyed the day. Some individuals were tasked with selling hot drinks and cakes in the hospital foyer where a stand had been set up with kind permission from Peterborough City Hospital. Other members of staff visited the clinical areas to sell the cakes, a much needed boost for the nurses on a Friday afternoon.

The generosity from military and civilian members of staff and visitors to the hospital was overwhelming and the cakes sold out in record time!

A special thank you goes to John Lewis who kindly donated pretty cake stands for the event, and small cake businesses in the Wittering area who baked several batches of cupcakes at a reduced rate for the event.

As the last cake left the table, the money was counted and an amazing £656.72 was raised for this fantastic cause. Not bad for a few hours work!
Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade London
November 13th 2011

19 association members enjoyed a glorious sunny morning in London marching in remembrance and celebration of all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. It was such a contrast weather wise to last year when we got a soaking. We were a long way back in what was a huge number on parade. A mild flutter of anxiety was experienced by us all when WO Alex Levers our ‘drill guardian’ briefed us as we assembled that we would be turning left out of horse guards to form up before executing an about turn to march down Whitehall to The Cenotaph. For most of us a long forgotten drill movement; never the less completed in our own inimitable style that does not feature in any drill manual.

Whilst waiting for the formal ceremony to begin we were able to enjoy the almost spring like morning and reflect on what being there meant for us as individuals. The consensus was that it is about remembering yesterday; supporting those serving their country today and looking forward to a more peaceful future. This year had a particular poignancy with the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and the events in Libya foremost in our minds. None could have avoided a lump in the throat and yes even a tear when the names and ages of all those killed in action this year rolled up on the big screen. We were all struck by the young ages of so many of them; some things do not change. It is amazing how many people line the route as spectators and quite humbling at the continuous applause as rank upon rank representing every conceivable organisation march past.

Dorothy MacFadzean carried our poppy wreath to be laid along with all the others on The Cenotaph. The salute as we returned to horse guard’s parade was taken by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. He was observed as we filed past turning to:

Veterans march past the Cenotaph (defence images)

Nursing With Altitude 2012

The President of The Royal British Legion and asking ‘who are those ladies?’ a result, a mention at the highest level and a shot of us on the BBC as well. After the event we enjoyed lunch in The RAF Club and catching up with both old acquaintances and new friends. Next year will be rather special being diamond jubilee year; the committee would be delighted if more of you could join us and swell the ranks. Do not be put off by getting the marching right it is so much more about sharing a common experience and remembering how privileged we were to have served. All those attending offer their thanks to Flt Lt’s Lisa Goodwin and Claire Goodall for organising everything so well. Finally without doubt baby Mollie stole the show and everyone’s heart.

Geoff Holliday

The Olympics 2012

Many of us will have watched the splendid summer of sport with the London 2012 Olympics and taken pride in that many serving and retired service personnel were taking part in all areas of both the Olympic and Paralympic events.

Of Many PMRAFNS personnel drafted in to assist two Serving members of the PMRAFNS were chosen to participate in the high profile events of the opening and closure ceremonies. Sgt Lauren Odell was one of the flag party at the closure of the Olympic games, which then turned into a spectacular closing musical extravaganza.

Sgt Odell of MDHU Peterborough marching with the Olympic flag at the closing ceremony

FIt Lt Amy Marsdunn marched alongside and saluted the Union Jack in the opening ceremony of the Paralympic games. Well done to all those involved in both competitions and wore their distinctive PMRAFNS headdress.

Paralympics Opening ceremony
RAF Medical Services Football

Well it was that time of year again where the best and most football crazy of the RAF Medical Services gather together and have a kick about and usually get rather a good tan too. This was to be the final year that the might of Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) would have a proper home field advantage and RAF Lyneham is saying goodbye to its most loyal of sections and what a way to say goodbye.

MDHU Peterborough’s Finest

WO Meikle had once again scouted the best of MDHU Peterborough’s talent on the football field. The final team was Sgt Horribin, Cpl Beynon Cpl Grey, Cpl Lowe, Cpl Sully and SAC (T) Seed. This year saw 12 teams compete on the 5 a side football field, once again challenging and testing each other’s skills. It was perfect weather with not a cloud in the sky for the entire tournament. After running around such a small pitch all day you get rather tired, however all to soon the finals were upon us with, MDHU Peterborough rising to the challenge. and being declared the best MDHU

The final match was between TMW vs RAF Leeming it could have not been closer, with only minutes to go TMW were 1-0 up before out of seemingly nowhere Leeming scored, taking the final match to sudden death penalties. TMW scored first with a great kick into the bottom right, everyone was on the edge of their seat unfortunately for Leeming even with a great kick there was a dive and the goal was saved. TMW deservedly and fittingly were the champions of the 2012 RAF Medical Services Football Tournament.

Here’s to next year and at the moment no one knows where it will be held, but wherever it is, we shall be there to enjoy the day and have a kick around.

Cpl Beynon

Life in Andalucia.

We moved here in April 2010. We spoke very little Spanish and knew even less about the way of life, but, having spent 3 years researching where we wanted to live, we thought it would be ok.

Well I have to say it is much better than ok.

The village is supplied by numerous visiting vans. There are at least 3 bread deliveries during the morning, a vegetable van twice a week, a fresh fish van on Thursday and a general goods van on Friday. In between the regular deliveries several others pass through the village selling their wares. Oh, and the doctor and nurse have a clinic every Thursday. That’s a real meeting place even if you don’t need to see the doctor you just go along for a chat, and, everyone knows what you are there for because they ask!

It’s a very simple way of life here with the main work environment being around olives. Our house looks onto the olive groves and is at the end of a road leading into the ‘campo’ (olive groves). The olive picking season is between December and April depending on the weather. First they pick the olives, all done by hand, and then they cut or fell the trees depending on their age and condition. It is really hard work and they keep the groves immaculate.

If the weather is good work starts at about 7am and they finish at 5 or 6pm. Lunch is still provided by the women in some areas otherwise it is a stick of bread and a chunk of chorizo.

Those who do not ‘go to work’ have to do a certain amount of work for the local government in order to get benefits. They clean up the village, paint walls and railings and tidy the really elderly people’s gardens. It’s strange to see groups of women dressed in overalls sweeping streets, but here it is the norm.
We have both been accepted as villagers and are now expected to take part in everything. Our neighbours won’t speak English to us, even if they could, and so we have to converse with them in Spanish, which is quite funny at times. We still get things wrong, and will do for some time I guess but they understand and our neighbour especially just says “oh, Suzanna” and laughs.

Kevin is the resident photographer, they love their photos. We now put together an album after each event, and trust me there are a lot of them, and give it to the ‘Village Residents Association’ President to pass round the village. She told me the other day that she will use the photos to show to the Council at the end of the year to get some funding for the village, more Fiestas!

Remembrance Day is not really recognised in this part of Andalucia. In previous years I have marched at the Cenotaph but last year because we weren’t in the UK we remembered in our own way. Kevin made a small wooden cross and I made some poppies and attached them to the cross. At 11am on 11/11/11, on a very warm day and in beautiful sunshine, we walked to the Village Cross, outside the Church, wearing our Medals. We were seen walking to the Church and we felt extremely proud to be able to explain to some of the villagers what we were doing. Once there we stood in reflection and laid the cross with a translation in Spanish on the base of the Church cross next to our fathers and grandfathers medals.

Remembrance day in the village

We retrieved our medals but left the cross there; it is still there today.

Christmas and New Year remind me of Service life in my younger days, party after party. Christmas Eve started at 6.30pm with a Church Service, then its back home to eat, then up to the bar at 1130pm ‘ish to eat, drink and party with the locals. Bed about 7am! Christmas Day is a family day, usually spent around the fire watching TV. New Year follows a similar routine, except this year we were asked to collect our neighbours to go to the bar. We did at 1130pm only to be asked to join them to eat, we left there at 2am to go to the bar and yes we were there till 7 again.

Here they really celebrate the ‘Day of the Kings’ on the 6 January. There are many processions, floats and lots and lots of boiled sweeties. All the floats are manned with people in costume and they throw boiled sweets at people lining the streets. Women stand at the side of the road with upturned umbrellas to catch them and children run behind the procession picking them up.

Day of Kings

Carnival is the next Fiesta and this year it took place in February. Those of us who take part put on fancy dress and yet again party with the rest of the villagers, old and young. Food and drink is free and the night always ends with dancing. Spanish of course and usually the women whilst the men sit and watch. I take part but never get the steps right, it doesn’t matter.

Andalucia Day came next on 1st March. The village plans their fiestas but does not advertise them until the very last minute, it’s just a Spanish thing, apparently. As we are just about to sit down to dinner a neighbour shouts for me from the street. Another...
Spanish thing, it’s always the women, not the men, women talk to women and men talk to men, just like women. We are both invited to eat, drink and enjoy Andalucia Day at the social centre, when, well now! We hastily get changed and walk up the road. When we get there Kevin is the only man, not a mistake, we were both invited and he is the first to be given a beer by the President of the Residents Association. Kevin is then asked to take a photo of the table before we eat.

This is the first time I have ever had bread, olive oil, fish and chocolate!

Well we are nearly up to date now. Just to mention that the other day was ‘the day of the woman’ and yes you guessed correctly, I was invited to celebrate with the other ladies of the village. This time though one neighbour came to tell me about it at 6.30pm, yes it was happening at 6.30pm and no I wasn’t ready, probably because I didn’t know I was going!! Anyway I hurriedly got changed and by 6.45pm was just out of the door when another neighbour came to make sure I had understood what was happening. I spent the next two hours eating bread, olive oil and chocolate, singing, dancing and playing games. We had a brilliant time.

There is a serious side to life out here though.

I sweep the terrace most days, usually in the morning, in my dressing gown, because that’s what you do, I water the plants daily because it’s so dry and it’s the norm. I cook, clean and shop as usual, do the washing and ironing usually in one day because it dries so quickly. I will soon start to have a siesta, too, as you do.

But, you know what I wouldn’t give up one day of this, I’m so lucky to be here.

Sue Hewitt (nee Clarkson) Sqn Ldr (Retd)

Exploring the sacred Gateways to Xibalba

Adventurous training covers many activities including Sub Aqua Diving and I have had the great fortune over the years to lead some remote and excellent diving expeditions worldwide. When planning any form of expedition the level of risk is the biggest concern and in some sports there are areas, where the risk is deemed too high. In diving one such area, is cave diving. I first contemplated cave diving when on tour in Belize in 1986 and was able to visit Mexico, where there are some of the best and longest fresh water cave diving systems in the world. The Yucatan peninsula in Mexico is basically a giant limestone slab that was once coral reef. For millions of years, rainwater has carved the porous stone, creating these beautiful caves. At the end of the ice age the water level rose around the world and these caves were flooded with water. Recently I returned to Mexico on holiday and was finally able to explore a small part of the flooded caves or cenotes (from the Mayan word dzonot), of Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula.

The high risk within this area is self apparent, as well as being underwater you are unable to return direct to the surface if anything untoward happens. You first have to travel back along the cave before being able to then get to the surface, also there is potentially great hazards with the visibility for when entering the system if you kick up the sediment or if there are sudden rains storms you can quickly be without any visibility within the cave to see your way out, and caves generally have many passages with potential to get lost in low visibility. Sound training in this area and a sense of self-preservation are paramount as cave diving it is not for the faint hearted. Many divers have lost their lives in undertaking this type of diving who were not appropriately trained having ventured into caves, that said there have also been many well trained divers who have lost their lives despite their high level of training and equipment, hence the service view that at the moment it is a risk to far.
A cenote (pronounced ‘say-no-tay”) is a natural sinkhole created where a cave ceiling has collapsed, these sinkholes provide access to the cave systems, a famous example of this is the Blue hole offshore Belize which is some 1,000ft in diameter and 426ft deep and can apparently be seen from space.

The cenotes were considered sacred gateways to the underworld (Xibalba) populated by the gods, the word comes from the Mayan for ‘sacred well’ these were very important in ceremonial life of the Maya, they deposited some of their dead into the sinkhole including those sacrificed by priests. Some of these cenotes are remote within the jungle and very difficult to access but some are located close to local towns and villages.

There is now a booming dive industry in cave and cavern diving with Mexico fortunately there are relatively easy sites which allow for training courses to be run prior to anyone opting to go down the more demanding exploration route. There are miles of flooded caves some of these systems run for 110 miles (so far) and there are ever more elaborate expeditions pushing the limits to see where all these fresh water systems lead or connect to other systems, the depths can be down to 140m – however, this is at the extreme end of cave diving. It is thought that approximately 85% is still to be explored. I on the other hand settled for some less elaborate cave diving as being on holiday I wanted to be back for dinner!

I dived 4 different cenote sites starting with an easy system to demonstrate my skills to the instructor before then going on to more difficult and amazing diving. Some of these sites are dived frequently so guidelines are already permanently in place to allow safe entry and exit, of course you need to remember to clip onto the line and continually orientate yourself to where the line is in relation to the walls, special directional tags are on this line, so that should visibility be lost you can feel your way out by returning to the line and feeling for these tags, without these individuals may start travelling into rather than out of the cave in poor visibility. Air and equipment is an issue depending on the length of cave penetration you are planning, some of the easier sites require only two cylinders or twinset, to in more extreme lengthy dives, having to place cylinders along the route prior to the main dive so that should the worst happen there is a supply on the way out, which you can change to or obtain differing oxygen rich cylinders with which to decompress with. You also need to plan for anything, so taking secondary kit is essential such as a spare masks or extra torches, just in case any of your main equipment fails during the dive.

It all sounds like to much planning and effort to dive into what essentially is a hole in the ground but its outward looks are deceiving, as you enter the water leaving the natural light and noise behind there is a sense of peace and wonder as you slowly fin along the passageways, the rock formations and the remoteness provides a sense of awe at every turn in the passageways.

Looking back towards the entry point of the Cenote

Some of these passageways are wide with plenty of room to swim through, however, some are very restrictive, at these points you may need to take your cylinder off to wriggle through the space, where it then may open up into the most beautiful underground sinkhole or amphitheatre structure with huge stalagmites’ and stalactites. Also in some sites there are animal bones and human remains to be seen from ancient times, although not at the sites I dived and nor did I require to take my cylinders of to squeeze through, although at some stages in some passageways I did think I may have to, it’s a times like that you wish you were more sylph like.

There is little fish life away from the entrance points the main attraction of diving in caves is one of insatiable curiosity and wonder at the great structures found within them which drives individuals to see where these cave systems ultimately go and what if any creatures live within them. Some of the stalagmites and stalactites have met and formed into columns in some areas some of these are huge, in other areas
where they have not joined the cave looks like a huge mouth full of pointed teeth. It may also be able to find areas where you can get out of the water or surface in caves. I was able to surface in one such cave which, had no natural light that I could detect, however, must have had an opening somewhere as it was a roost for a large colony of bats.

After the heat of the day diving in these fresh water cave systems was very refreshing in one cave we were well into the cave system when it opened up into a small amphitheatre style shape and to my surprise within it was a statue of the Madonna resting against one wall. My initial though was that something dreadful had occurred here previously, however, it turned out that the owner of the land had asked one of the divers to place this in the cave for good luck.

It was an excellent introduction to the cenotes each dive was different and led to me wanting to explore further into the systems and on my next visit I aim to do just that.

George Cuthbert

Obituaries – PMRAFNS Book of Remembrance

Mrs Marion Bathe (Lambton)
Flight Officer PMRAFNS 1951-1957.
Died 05 Mar 2012.

Mr Richard (Dick) Jacques
Warrant Officer PMRAFNS 1971 – 2003
Died 05 Oct 2012

A personal note from The Deputy Chairman. George Cuthbert

I had the great pleasure of working with Dick Jacques many occasions, Our first encounter was as State Enrolled Nurses in Cyprus in 1982 where he was a Sergeant. It was my first overseas tour and he and I were the only RAF ICU trained staff at the time, it was a busy tour and as a young SAC I learned a great deal during that tour as he had an instructor’s patience and a ready wit. He worked in most of the RAF hospitals during his career and if asked would say that Cyprus was his favourite. In later tours there he would spend his off duty time exploring the island in his 4-wheel drive jeep particularly at Akamas and Troodos occasionally sleeping in his car under the stars, as he described it, however, later admitting he had managed to get lost in the dark. I last worked and flew with him on his final tour as Warrant Officer on the Aeromed Squadron (AE) at Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) RAF Lyneham in early 2000. Another busy tour as TMW was still developing, as was the AE Sqn and his work at the time did much to develop the operational nursing role within aeromed. My last recollection is of him at Tony Nicol’s top table lunch at RAF Lyneham earlier this year, which was a bit of a special day for all concerned, as many retired members attended. For me it’s how I’ll remember him entertaining us all with tales of his time in the service with Tony and others too many to mention, all of whom will have their own fond memories of this gentlemen of our Branch, who will be sadly missed.
PMRAFNS MEMORABILIA

**Nurses with Altitude Mug**
Description: Chunky Style Mug with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS inscription on the front. Nurses with Altitude inscription on the back.
Cost: £5.00
Inc P&P: £7.20

**Coaster**
Description: Round plastic coaster containing the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo.
Cost: £1.35 Inc P&P: £2.04

**Papermate Pen**
Description: Black pen with PMRAFNS logo on the side. Black gel ink.
Cost: £1.10 Inc P&P: £1.79

**Parker Pen**
Description: Blue rollerball pen with the PMRAFNS logo on the side. Blue ink.
Cost: £3.50 Inc P&P: £4.19

**Personal Organiser**
Description: Black leather A5 personal organiser, containing diary pages.
Cost: £6.50 Inc P&P: £8.70

**Paperweight**
Description: Round glass paperweight engraved with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo.
Cost: £7.50 Inc P&P: £9.70

**Luggage Tag**
Description: Metal luggage tag with the PMRAFNS logo printed in black on the top.
Cost: £2.40 Inc P&P: £3.09

**Travel Alarm Clock**
Description: Travel Alarm Clock with blue outer cover printed with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo. Inside also contains a calculator.
Cost: £4.70 Inc P&P: £6.90

**Male Cummerbund**
Description: Silk RAF colours cummerbund with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo at regular intervals. Velcro and clasp adjustable from 66cm to 104cm.
Cost: £25 Inc P&P: £27.20

**Female Cummerbund**
Description: Silk RAF colours cummerbund with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo at regular intervals. Velcro and clasp adjustable from 66cm to 108cm.
Cost: £25 Inc P&P: £27.20

**Polyester Tie**
Description: Polyester RAF colours tie with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo at regular intervals.
Cost: £24.00 Inc P&P: £26.20

**Silk Tie**
Description: Silk RAF colours tie with a single Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo on the left at the end of the tie.
Cost: £7.50 Inc P&P: £9.70

**Polo Shirt**
Description: Blue polo shirt with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo embroidered in gold coloured lettering.
Cost: £7.50 Inc P&P: £9.70

**Sweatshirt**
Description: Navy blue round neck sweatshirt printed with the Caduceus and PMRAFNS logo in gold coloured lettering.
Cost: £4.75 Inc P&P: £6.95

**Embroidered Picture**
Description: Embroidered Caduceus set in the RAF colours mount and gold coloured frame.
Cost: £30 Inc P&P: £32.20

TPMH Commemorative Booklet

The TPMH Commemorative Booklet (containing a condensed history of TPMH) and separate DVD (which contains the full 50th anniversary history of TPMH in pdf format, together with an I-book version for I-Pad and I-phone users, and the digital photo archives of TPMH) are being distributed to raise funds for Station Charities RAF Akrotiri.

The costs of production have very kindly been met by generous donors, acknowledged within the booklet and DVD. This allows the booklet and DVD to be distributed freely, but anyone wishing to have a copy is asked to consider giving a donation, the amount being at their discretion.

All donations relating to the TPMH Commemorative booklet or DVD should be sent to:

Mrs Fryne Alexandraki
Accounts Flight
RAF Akrotiri
BFPO 57
Tel: 2527-6160.
Dii: BFC-AKI COSU BSW Accts Svs Funds

Please make cheques payable to: Service Funds, RAF Akrotiri
All proceeds will be go towards Station Charities RAF Akrotiri.