

ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCE
SHAWBURY**

Edition 3
2023



SCAN ME



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Air Ambulance
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The Bike Insurer ➔

Bike4Life 2023 Event Raises Record Funds for Lifesaving Missions

Thousands of bikers have helped raise more than £116,000, funding more than 72 future lifesaving missions for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.

The 2023 Bike4Life Ride Out saw a total of 3,500 motorbikes ride in convoy for 23 miles between Meole Brace, Shrewsbury to one of the charity's three operational airbases at RAF Cosford. Thousands of bikers and pillioners took part and attended the Bike4Life Festival.

The event, which took place late April, was the most successful yet, helping to raise the six-figure sum for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity. This means that 36 air ambulance and an additional 36 critical care cars missions have been made possible.



The event, which was officially sponsored by The Bike Insurer, was supported by several famed VIPs including:

- **Carl Fogarty MBE** – one of the most successful world superbike racers who holds second highest number of race wins at 59.
- **Steve Parrish** – British former professional motorcycle and truck racer, and television commentator who was a teammate to Barry Sheene in the 1977 500cc world championship.
- **Allen Millyard** – An engineer and custom motorcycle builder having created specials like one of the world's largest, his Flying Millyard. Well known for appearing on television alongside Henry Cole.
- **Ollie Ollerton** – A former UK Special Forces Soldier and directing staff (DS) from Channel 4's SAS: Who Dares Wins.
- **RubyRides** – A motorbiking social media influencer with a big following on Instagram and YouTube.
- **TV's Emergency Bikers' Mark Hayes and Steve Harris**
Emma Gray, chief operating officer for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, said: "Since its humble beginnings in 2010 as a small ride out, Bike4Life has grown in popularity and support, and we have now reached a record number of riders, festival goers and lifesaving missions funded by the event."

crew attended in 2021, and sadly a great number of these involve motorcyclists in time critical need of rapid, advanced clinical intervention. We are truly grateful for the support shown by the biker community at Bike4Life and are truly amazed by their kindness and generosity, which has helped fund future missions for our rapid response, pre-hospital service"

To follow updates on the next Bike4Life event visit [bike4lifefest.com](https://www.bike4lifefest.com) and search 'Bike4LifeFest' on Facebook and Twitter.

To find out more about Midlands Air Ambulance Charity visit [midlandsairambulance.com](https://www.midlandsairambulance.com) and follow the organisation on social media.

To find out more about this year's Bike4Life sponsor, The Bike Insurer, visit www.thebikeinsurer.co.uk.



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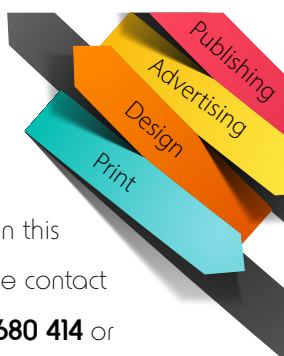
EST. 2022

I began my professional career after graduating from Central Saint Martins. Three years of learning from the best designers in contemporary jewellery, my love of design even stronger. I made the move to Birmingham to work as a bespoke jewellery designer in the renowned Jewellery Quarter. Designing the most elaborate, technically challenging, and beautiful pieces, my knowledge of gemstones, diamonds and fine jewellery grew. However, the drive to have my own business never left me; evenings and weekends were spent in my jewellery quarter studio. 2022 brought my move to Shropshire to establish 'Jemma Bowers Ltd', and I'm more excited than ever.



I offer a bespoke jewellery service tailored to each customer. Specialising in engagement rings, wedding jewellery and special gifts, my work holds emotion. I like to speak with my clients, show them stones, my jewellery collection, and sketch to ensure the piece is perfect for them. Before I begin making, 3D images and to scale wax models are created by computer aided design or traditional hand drawings if the customer would prefer a handmade piece. Consultations are welcome over the phone/video call or in person. Pieces tend to take 5/6 weeks to manufacture. Let's create something beautiful.

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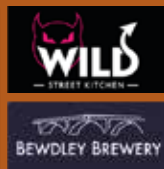
We will be having our mini Oktoberfest at the Greenfields Bowling club, with live music from Vorsprung Durch Oompah who have played at many local events including the main stage at the Shrewsbury Oktoberfest. The Wild Street Kitchen will be providing hot food and fresh pilsner will be from the Bewdley brewery (with other favourites and guest ales available at the bar) **Tickets are £10**

The Oktoberfest is being held to raise money for GCG who won their case at the Supreme Court 2023 to save their recreation ground against Shropshire Council. The recreation ground that was sold to developers and given planning permission for houses without following due process or consulting the community. The Supreme Court 2023 ruled the land was always recreation land, held in trust and it consequently was to remain with public access and that Shrewsbury Town Council selling it did not change that in any way.

All the money money will be used to return the land to public (it is now overgrown) and to pursue any further action to gain access. So anyone coming and raising a glass will be doing so for a very good cause. It was important to us to use local companies and ensure we are supporting local communities as they are at the heart of everything we do. GCG is proud to be associated with local entrepreneurs and businesses that are at the heart of our communities.

The food is being provided by a local company "Wild Street Kitchen" who pride themselves on high quality food using locally sourced ingredients using trusted environmentally-conscious organic suppliers and minimising the impact on the planet. They will be freshly making food on site at the event.

Bewdley Brewery
will be providing
a pilsner
"Laxford Lager"
for the event:




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To find out more visit our website -

www.wemtownfc.com



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ARIES TEAM

Editor: Flt Lt Ade Vine

Editor's Assistant: Mrs Lesley Bromwich

Aries Squadron Representatives:

CFS (H): Flt Lt Duckworth

705 NAS: Capt Brownjohn

660 Sqn AAC: Capt Law

670 Sqn AAC: Maj Marsden

60 Sqn: Flt Lt Brady

DCASO: WO Tudor-Smith

ATC: AS1 Roberts

Distribution:

Mr Frank Young, Central Registry

Mrs Cheryl Foster, HIVE

CERO Team

Front Cover Design:

Mr Chris Roberts, Graphics Officer

Photography:

Mr Ian Forshaw

Mr Dave Granger

Enquiries:

Email: SHY-AriesMagazine@mod.gov.uk

Tel: (mil) 95531 7572 or 7583

Tel: (civ) 01939 250351 x7572 or 7583

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*An RAF Falcon Parachute Display
Team member flying the Union Jack*



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Lance Media Group Ltd

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Kettering, NN16 8NL

Tel: 01536 334 222

Designed by:

Jo Glen

Advertising:

Email: darren@lancemediagroup.co.uk

Tel: (01536) 680 414

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Editor's Welcome

By Flight Lieutenant Ade Vine

Like the British summer weather as Editor of the Aries Magazine you are never quite sure what you are going to get! Fortunately, as an indifferent summer slips into autumn I have been blessed to receive a bumper crop of content for this the third edition of 2023. The range of content is, of course, merely a reflection on the amazing personnel of the Whole Force (military, civilian and Defence Partners) at RAF Shawbury and the sheer range of activities that they undertake both on and off duty.



We are all too aware at RAF Shawbury that the personnel who are trained at No. 1 Flying Training School and the Defence College of Air and Space Operations will be off to front line units ensuring that the rotary squadrons and Air Operations units across UK Defence can maintain the serious business of defence of the UK and our interests. While they may encounter tense times ahead the world-class training they have received in Shropshire, but also importantly the awareness of the work-life

balance and looking after each other that is inculcated here, will serve them and our nation well.

In this edition you will see how RAF Shawbury's influence has spread beyond the borders of Shropshire. Who would have thought that Junos from Shawbury would have led two Royal Flypasts this year, watched

by thousands in London and millions more on television. For the first time we have attended air shows out of the UK, in Germany and Ireland. A team from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations travelled the furthest though, read how viewing Air Operations training in Australia and Singapore can inform the future of our Air Operations training for a global environment. While looking forward it is a wise person who knows that we can draw lessons and contrast from history and the Normandy Staff Ride provided just that opportunity.

So as we approach Autumn, please enjoy a bumper harvest of articles in this third edition of 2023 as varied as the summer that was.

FOREWORD

By Wing Commander James Sills BSc (Hons) CEng MIMechE RAF, Officer Commanding Engineering and Logistics Wing

A very warm welcome to Edition 3 of the Aries magazine for 2023.

By way of introduction, I am Wing Commander Jim Sills, the 1 FTS Chief Air Engineer and the Military Continuing Airworthiness Manager. A somewhat grand title, I can see why people still don't really understand what I do. It basically means I work with my Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisation team, Ascent and Airbus to ensure that the airworthiness of the aircraft is maintained, and Air Safety is not compromised, and I advise the Station Commander on any engineering contribution to risks to life. Wider than this though, I am also Officer Commanding Engineering and Logistics Wing, a more traditionally understood role which of course is all about enabling the output of RAF Shawbury. It encompasses all the engineering and logistics bay activity provided by our Babcock team under contract HADES, as well as Health and Safety, Risk Management, and currently Cyber. Usually on a station this would be a large wing of military staff, but at Shawbury it is mainly civilian and contractor provided, and in fact the number of 'blue suit' staff is just 15, including myself, making the station truly reliant on the whole force.

Arriving from a 6-month COVID restricted deployment in Al Udeid I was eager to get back into station life. It is

fair to say that my career to date has been mainly fast jet orientated, living on noisy bases in the middle of nowhere with a just a short stint in Joint Helicopter Command HQ supporting rotary. But having been at RAF Shawbury for a little over a year now (although it still feels like only a few months) I can confidently say that this is my favourite station so far. My predecessor called it the best kept secret in the RAF, and having never previously been here in my 18 year career, I have to agree! Small enough to walk everywhere, it still has the traditional RAF station feel to it; friendly, motivated and professional. It's a quietly busy hub of activity, not just because of the formal training outputs from 1 FTS and DCASO, but also the plethora of other activities; overseas Staff Rides and visits, charity events, clubs, air shows and flypasts, formal parades, quiz nights, and social Mess functions. It even has an incredible gym. It may take a global pandemic or even a tour in Defence Equipment & Support to



make someone realise how lucky we are to have all of this on the doorstep, but having been through both I intend to make the most of being here and experience all of it. I just need to make sure the RAF leaves me here as long as possible so I can!



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Families Day

For the second year in a row Families Day was blessed with glorious weather. Families Day is held annually for Whole Force personnel and their families to say thank you for all their efforts and support.

This year the Committee, led by Lt Cdr Forrest, did a fantastic job in organising the day and, new this year, an evening of entertainment. In the morning, families were able to fly in No. 1 Flying Training School helicopters, visit the Flying Training Devices (simulators) and try their hand at Air Traffic and Weapons Controlling in the Defence College of Air Space Operations simulators.

Moving into the afternoon there was an amazing mix of stalls and attractions to visit, including: Face Painting, Falconry, RN STEM, Gliding Simulator and even Axe Throwing! West Mercia Police showed off their vehicles and equipment and put on a brilliant Police Dogs display. Service-related charities had stalls to inform about their activities and some also sold some very nice cakes. Local RAF Air Cadets supported

the day helping with litter patrols and also got to enjoy the event.

For those who like four wheels, there were several sports car clubs with some very shiny and probably quite expensive cars. The Sporting Bears charity also gave rides at the end of the day for a donation to theirs and Station charities. All this and an Air Display as well, opened by the ever-popular RAF Falcons Parachute Display Team. The awe-inspiring Typhoon display was the highlight for many, but the classic lines of the Rolls Royce immaculate Spitfire were equally inspiring. The glider from our own Gliding Club also drew gasps of amazement with its graceful display. In the evening, the entertainment moved to a Hangar Party with live music and great food from ESS. All in all, a fantastic day and the bar set high for next year's committee.

Trying a West Mercia Police motorbike for size.



Rocking the Hangar Party



Typhoon showing this year's patriotic paint



STATION NEWS



Families get close-up to a Juno helicopter



The Falcons painting patterns in the sky



The Spitfire's classic lines

Inspiring the next generation of aviators in the Gliding Simulator



Cosford Air Show Support

As you can imagine the planning for the Cosford Air Show 2023 (AS23), started way back in 2022 and after a break due to COVID, the organisers were hopeful of a full flying display programme and a great family day out for all, with between 50,000-60,000 expected visitors.

As the Royal Air Force's only Air Show in the UK, AS23 attracted display teams from all over the world. But how did RAF Shawbury assist?

Shawbury's involvement began in January 23, with nomination of an Air Traffic Control Project Officer, Flight Sergeant Ritson, linking in with Station Operations for the ground support element. Meetings started in earnest at the start of February 23, both at Cosford and Shawbury. This was the first opportunity to meet the Flying Display Committee and the big reveal of the participants, which at that stage was close hold. Nevertheless, Shawbury's support would need to begin immediately without disclosing too much.

Nearly every section was involved in ensuring the smooth running of the Air Show, whether they knew it or not. Every meeting at Cosford started with how many days to the Air Show to go, and the smaller that number got, the busier Shawbury got.

The first piece of the puzzle for RAF Shawbury was the arrival of 2 x C130s from the Royal Jordanian Air Force on



Patrouille Suisse F-5 Display Team taxi in

Sunday 4th June. After the 9½ hour flight direct from Amman, the crews arrived in bright sunshine, followed by a warm welcome to the UK from Operations, Aircraft Maintenance & Storage Unit (AMSU) and Flight Sergeant Ritson.

The Loadmasters quickly sprang into action and set about unloading the Royal Jordanian Falcon's display aircraft, 4 v Extra 330LX. After just over an hour

they were safely in the Hangar ready for the build, test flight and practice that week.

6th June – Two C130s depart for Amman. I'm not sure the crews realised that we are not an International Airport, with full catering facilities. I'm afraid the request for frozen meals and ice is not part of our usual remit!

The Jordanian engineers re-built the aircraft and completed a very impressive test flight on Thursday 8th to 'test the aircraft with G', witnessed by many as, 'jaw dropping and eye opening', especially from the Brown House!

7th June - Two support trucks arrived at the gate for the Patrouille Suisse F-5 Display Team, followed by, at the airfield, a Citation jet and eventually the F-5 Tigers.

It has to be said that the F-5s set up attracted much praise from all, especially their evening meal set up (you clearly needed to see it!). The only issue we had from them all weekend was they put the Union Flag upside down – they were quickly re-briefed!

9th June - Validation day at Cosford. A busy day for Air Traffic Control and, linking in with the display teams, was a



Royal Jordanian Falcon Extra 330LX being assembled

company called Ironbird Photography. Operating from a C208 Caravan, they conducted air-to-air photoshoots with the Jordanian Falcons, Typhoon, RNLAH NH90 Helicopter, RAF Chinook and Patrouille Suisse - all to be conducted in-between the display validations and a busy arrivals programme at RAF Cosford.

10th June – more practice for both display teams and the arrival of the Red Arrows later that afternoon. I think the highlight of that day though, had to be the arrival of the Norwegian Air Force Historic Vampire display aircraft, flown by Col Martin 'Tintin' Tesli, in the de Havilland Vampire FB.52 single seat aircraft (LNDHY), which first flew in September 1943. However, earlier in the day, with no estimated time of arrival or details, both Operations and Air Traffic Control were slightly worried, especially with a weather forecast of showers/lightning! A quick phone call to the number on their website (thank you Google) and we were informed that the aircraft had just taken off. At 26,000ft and 252kts, closely tracked, the Vampire eventually arrived and what a fantastic site it was.

11th June – The Royal Jordanian Falcons departed for Cosford to refuel, ready for their display later that day, followed by the Patrouille Suisse and the Red Arrows. Unfortunately for us and AS23 the Vampire was unserviceable so missed the show, eventually departing on the 21st June. The whole Air Display went really well, and all the aircraft we supported



*Thanks for
looking after us*



Royal Jordanian Air Force C130

returned safely to RAF Shawbury.

12th June – The Patrouille Suisse departed for Switzerland.

13th June – The Royal Jordanian Falcons departed for Poland. What most people saw during the week were the aircraft departing/ arriving, 'the face of Aviation'; however, from our perspective we saw the long days by all and fantastic support and flexibility from around Station to make sure we provided the best professional service we could – and I believe we did. A massive thank you to Flight Sergeant Kerry Ritson and Air Traffic Control, Dave and his team (AMSU), Mechanical Transport, ESS (Catering), Officers' Mess Staff, Flight Sergeant Dewan and the guards from Cosford, Met Office, Aquila, Airfield Wildlife Control Unit, Airfield Electricians, Airfield Fire Section, Medical Staff and finally, my own Operations Team.

Until the next time!

**MAcr Rob Croisdale,
OC Operations Flight**



Royal Jordanian Falcons

Learning and Development Fair

The RAF takes the development of its people very seriously. That starts in basic training, through Service and later in resettlement. On 18 May 2023, the Learning Centre held its first Learning and Development Fair since Covid-19 in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Universities, colleges and resettlement providers from across the country were on hand to provide advice and literature in support of lifelong learning.

The Station Commander was first on hand to welcome and thank the providers for taking valuable time out of their busy schedules to support RAF Shawbury and to provide first class advice and guidance to our whole force personnel.

There is something about mastering a new skill that feels so good. And not just a practical one; any kind of learning can boost your wellbeing, and there is a growing pile of research to prove it. Studies have found that learning throughout our lives can improve self-esteem and increase life-satisfaction, optimism and



Station Whole Force personnel benefited greatly from all that was on offer

belief in our own abilities. And so, it was great to see such a cross-section of personnel attend this valuable event and for those inspired individuals, a new learning adventure has now begun.



Officer Commanding Base Support Wing enjoying the stands



The Station Commander welcomed all providers and visitors to the event

Firefighters 25 Years

On 24th August four of our Firefighters, who all trained at the Fire Service Central Training Establishment at RAF Manston in 1998, were all on duty on the exact day when they each marked 25 years of firefighting service.

Pictured: From left to right Crew Manager Kevin Waterhouse, Watch Manager Stuart White, Watch Manager Dave Hale and Firefighter Dave Price



King's Birthday Flypast

No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS) were honoured to lead the second Royal Flypast this year when 70 aircraft took to the skies in a spectacular display for the King's Birthday Parade on the 17th June.

As reported in our 2nd edition, 1 FTS led the Coronation Flypast earlier this year, but the poor weather precluded many of the fixed-wing aircraft from joining the flypast on the day. This time, however, the weather was much improved and

all the planned aircraft were able to fly over The Mall and Buckingham Palace, watched by Their Majesties, The King and Queen, and other members of the Royal Family. Three Junos, led by Flt Tom Knapp from Sixty Squadron led the spectacular flypast which came



Junos with Chinooks and Pumas positioning behind

The Royal Flypast crews



together from 15 locations across the UK and forming up over south-east England. Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton said, "We are very proud to be able to showcase our capabilities to our Commander-in-Chief, on this historic occasion for His Majesty The King. We provided a fitting and appropriate tribute for our Monarch, which was a true spectacle for the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth."

Overhead Central London



Bückeburg Air Show

Military and Civilian personnel from No.1 Flying Training School (1 FTS) and the wider RAF Shawbury family had the honour and privilege of attending the Bückeburg Air Show 2023, as part of the 'Tag der Bundeswehr' (German Armed Forces' Day).

The Air Show was one of multiple events being held all across Germany on the 17th June 2023, with this event alone attracting in advance of 100,000 spectators. During the day, the German Armed Forces were able to proudly show off a vast array of military vehicles, air systems and tactical demonstrations to the public.

To support the event, aircrew from 705 Naval Air Squadron, 660 Squadron Army Air Corps, 60 Squadron and 202 Squadron flew two H135 Junos from RAF Shawbury to the Bückeburg Air Base. The crews had to make fuel stops at Rochester Airport in Kent and Eindhoven Airport in the Netherlands, before flying the final leg to Germany. With the weather on their side, they were able to thoroughly enjoy the European transit, which offered an excellent training platform for recently qualified aircrew to practise and consolidate a plethora of skills in the air. At both stops, the crews were greeted with fantastic hospitality, which laid the foundations for a brilliant five days overseas. Additionally, personnel from RAF Shawbury, Ascent, Airbus and German trainees currently on course at 1FTS were able to fly out via civilian airlines. These personnel performed vital roles in logistics, liaison and engineering to ensure the detachment ran smoothly.

Whilst at the Air Show, one Juno crew had the honour to take part in a large opening formation fly past. The formation was led by Bell 206Bs, with the Juno flying alongside other EC135s. Following in the formation were NH90, CH-53 and Tiger attack helicopters. It was an epic display of rotary assets from both training and operational

British and German crews



backgrounds in the German military. The flypast was heavily rehearsed in the days prior to the 17th June, with every detail being scrutinised and perfected to ensure the spectacle was professional, inspiring and most importantly safe.

The second Juno was utilised in static role on the crowd line where the crew could liaise with our German counterparts, the wider aviation community, and the public to foster a better understanding of 1 FTS and the UK Military Flying Training System as a whole. The static aircraft drew in significant interest as it was the first time British aircraft and personnel had been present at the event and was the only British military aircraft to attend a German Air Show this year. Of particular note was a visit from the German Defence Minister who took

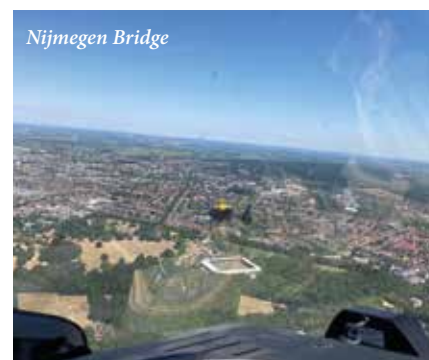
great interest in the training currently being offered to German aircrew at RAF Shawbury.

Alongside the Air Show, the team was able to utilise their time away to explore the German culture in the surrounding region and visit the Bückeburg Helicopter Museum and the astounding Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial that overlooks the landscape.

The participation of 1 FTS at the Bückeburg 2023 Air Show was deemed an incredible success by all those involved. The detachment offered excellent training value and a fantastic experience. The professional manner in which 1 FTS personnel conducted themselves was exemplary and, as a result, was met with compliments and significant gratitude from our German counterparts.



Lined-up prior to the opening flypast



Nijmegen Bridge

Irish Air Corps Show



The 1 FTS Jupiter crew greeted on arrival in Ireland



Some of the 1 FTS team with a Eurocopter EC135 and a Pilatus PC-12 of the Irish Air Corps

A No. 1 Flying Training School Jupiter of 202 Squadron, based at RAF Valley, and personnel from RAF

Shawbury joined other RAF assets, including the Red Arrows and Battle of Britain Memorial Flight in Ireland to celebrate 60 years of helicopter

operations by the Irish Air Corps. The celebration was held at the Irish Air Corps Family Day and Air Show in Bray near Dublin.



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GOLD AWARD 2021

DCASO Dits

The DCASO Diarists

As we head into the Autumn (did anyone notice the Summer?), DCASO continues to deliver at pace with Air Traffic Control, Flight Ops, Weapons Control, Surveillance and Air and Space Ops trainees all receiving world-class instruction in our mighty college.

OC DCASO recently led a team on a liaison visit to Australia and Singapore. Meeting with our Defence counterparts, much was gained in sharing good practices and initiatives; hopefully we will be able to reciprocate their kind hospitality in the future.

A flurry of assignments has resulted in a shake-up of the DCASO HQ; we bid farewell to Sqn Ldr Dan Turner (OC ABMTS), Sqn Ldr Andy Mortimer (OC ATCTS) and Sqn Ldr Michael Brown (DCASO COS) and welcome Sqn Ldr Nick Smith, Sqn Ldr Scott Boland and Sqn Ldr Laura Ridley-Siddall as their respective replacements. Good luck to them all in their new roles, either here at DCASO or in pastures new.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING SQUADRON

In June this year, seven members of Air Traffic Control Training School (ATCTS) and one from ATC, set off for Scotland to embark upon Ex Highland Trail. The goal was to hike the West Highland Way over the course of five days and then finish with a 6th day climb of the UK's highest Mountain, Ben Nevis. The West Highland Way is a 96-mile trail stretching from Milngavie to Fort William and takes in some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery along the way. Under the supervision of Flt Lt Jefferies and FS Lee, the team set off from Milngavie on Day 1 in high spirits.

Day 1 passed without real incident, with the group even finding the energy to make a minor detour from the trail in search of some much-needed Ice Cream. The day finished in true Scottish style, being welcomed to Balmaha by a local Piper.

Due to the humidity, dreaded midges and rugged terrain, the trek along the banks of Loch Lomond on Day 2 was slow going. Several of the group also suffered from blisters, with Flt Lt

Crosthwaite and Flt Lt Taylor appearing to have their own competition as to who could amass the most!

Day 3 saw the group enjoy a BBQ before the forecast thunderstorms and torrential



Ex Highland Trail

downpour set in. Much to their relief, the cooler weather saw the midges leave WO O'Rourke and FS Lee alone for a few hours!

With temperatures again set to soar, the group set off early for Kinlochleven. The early departure meant the group managed to pass through Glencoe mid-morning and arrive at the foot of the steepest climb of the hike, the Devil's Staircase before lunch. Despite the arduous terrain and the heat of the midday sun, the group summited the Devil's Staircase with relative ease. Still being pursued by a swarm of midges, Fort William and Ben Nevis were finally in sight. To save the fairer skinned members of the team, an early departure to scale Ben Nevis was suggested! After posing for a few photographs at the top the group headed back to Fort William to conclude their trip with a couple of well-earned beverages!



Ben Nevis



Devil's Staircase



West Highland Way

AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SQUADRON (ABMTS)

As a squadron there have been several personnel broadening their knowledge through courses, Adventurous Training and Force Development. Flt Lt Guthrie took part in Ex Frozen Fondu; a week of skiing in France gaining Ski Foundation 1 qualification (SF1). As part of their Continued Professional Development, Flt Lt Furlong, Flt Lt Enright, Flt Lt Guthrie and WO Cookson took part in 'Tactics Tuesday' at RAF Waddington. This comprised of a day with the ISTAR force looking at the 4Ts planning process (Task, Target, Threat, Tactics). They also discussed

the capabilities and limitations of the current UK ISTAR platforms. WO Cookson successfully completed the Air Ops Planning course (AOPC). The 2-week course educates personnel at the operational level who will directly support either the air planning process or the C2 of air operations. The course was a mixture of briefs and practical planning exercises in which personnel see the success of their plan by computer-based war gaming. The NATO Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive was applied over the course and included a second, more detailed, practical exercise beyond the

initial planning stages to teach the application of Air C2 procedures. As a result, he is now able to apply planning and Air C2 techniques as part of a Single Service, Joint or combined team.

CTF has seen the arrival of Flt Lt James Perry which should provide even more knowledge for the trainees. However, the squadron have had to say goodbye to Flt Lt William Enright who has recently been posted to High Wycombe. Flt Lt Enright will be missed, especially within the Simulator Support Flight.

AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS TRAINING SQUADRON (ASOTS)

May was a steady month for Air and Space Operations Training Sqn (ASOTS) which saw the first iteration and successful completion of the new and improved Flight Operations Training Course (FOTC). Air and Space Operations Specialist Course (ASOSC) 7 also arrived at the start of May and successfully graduated at the end of June, with all trainees moving onto their next units. In addition to their course, they were also lucky enough to do the Climbing Walls at Shrewsbury and Stand up Paddleboarding which they (largely) seemed to enjoy. Cpl Will Moss-Jones also organised and led ASOSC 7 in helping to support the FA Disability Cup at St George's Park, with the RAF presence once again being greatly appreciated at the event.

ASOTS said goodbye to Cpl Sarah Hodson in May who was posted to RAF Benson Ops, we wish her well for the future and thank her for all her efforts. Flt Lt Will Metcalfe said farewell to the RAF entirely to move onto pastures new, after several tours his efforts have been much appreciated and he gave a great speech on his last day in work reflecting on his time in the RAF and how he enjoyed all his tours.

Cpl Rachael Openshaw and Cpl Tom Quiney took part in the week-long FD trip to Normandy in the middle of June and both seemed to thoroughly enjoy it and learnt a lot through the various stands that were allocated. Although traffic meant they missed the first ferry and had to spend a lot of the day in Brighton – what a shame!

ASSURANCE SQUADRON

Assurance Squadron has been particularly busy over the last couple months with one stand out accomplishment for FS Kelly Watkins as she received the Drapers Award. Her citation read that '[she] was the winning recipient for RAF Shawbury, for her work establishing an Induction programme for all new trainers at DCASO along with her successful application and implementation of the Shawbury Defence Trainer Course franchise which has seen trainers legally qualify to deliver Phase 2 training – prior to the establishment of the franchise many trainers were operating without the correct qualifications, largely due to a lack of courses over COVID. During this period FS Watkins independently ran DCASO Standards... with the two more senior roles not filled, she maintained the level of output required of three people, displaying capacity well beyond that expected of one individual.'

WO Coyles and Sgt Beagley attended the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Europe's largest air show, leading teams managing control of entry for some 200,000 attendees.



One of the amazing displays from RIAT

Meanwhile, WO Morley has been Project Officer for the 150 cadets and staff from Bristol and Gloucestershire, Thames Valley and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wings attending their Annual Summer Camp, many for the first time. OC Assurance also deployed throughout August in support of Op FALCULAR - the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. This is an annual series of military tattoos performed by British Armed Forces, Commonwealth and international military bands, and artistic performance teams on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle in the capital of Scotland. The event is held each August as one of the Edinburgh Festivals.



*Edinburgh Tattoo
- fabulous music and fireworks*



RAF Shawbury DCASO Australia and Singapore Visit

A lucky few, from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO) and the Professions Advisor Team (PAT), were given the opportunity to travel to the other side of the world to visit the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Royal Singapore Air Force (RSAF). The purpose of the visit was to gain a deep level of understanding of their Phase (Ph) 2 courses, specifically the Air Traffic Control course and the training delivered to enable all parties to exchange best working practices and to potentially exploit these as part of the Joint Air Traffic Control Course (JATCC) review.



UK Team with Wg Cdr Bugg and his team at AMTS, RAAF Base East Sale

The team departed Manchester for Melbourne on the 5th of June where we were met with the first of many hospitable gestures from the RAAF. Our two chaperones, Flight Lieutenants Lavender and Wares, employed within the School of Air Traffic Control (SATC) at RAAF Base East Sale, hosted us from the airport chauffeuring us that evening to our accommodation and then onto RAAF Base East Sale the following morning. The two chaperones went above and beyond, throughout the whole trip, in terms of ensuring we were well looked after and making us feel welcome.

We were picked up at 0630 am on 6th June to take the long drive to start our week of engagements. Arriving at RAAF base East Sale, we were hosted by Wing Commander Ferris at the Aviation Candidate Management Centre (ACMC) - the equivalent to UK Ph1 Basic Training for Junior Officers (JOs) to discuss the Officer Aviation (OA) concept and how it had taken the RAAF 10 years to implement. OA have

merged all Air Traffic Control (ATC), Air Battle Management (ABM), Operations Officer (OPSO) and Weapon Systems Officer (WSO) aircrew roles with Pilot roles based on their aptitude. This is the start of the filtering process. At the ACMC, JOs are taught military skills and leadership theory and during this are offered a full degree in Military Studies. Like the sorting hat in Harry Potter (they actually had one of these on display in the foyer!) the recruits are put through their paces starting with the Aviation Screening Programme. After completing the testing, trainees are selected for the OA specialisation, Pilot or Mission. OA (Mission) encompasses ATC, ABM, WSO and OPSO. The ACMC takes care of the recruits' training throughout the whole of Ph2 – so this is essentially like the Royal Air Force College Cranwell maintaining full responsibility for a trainee from Officer Training right through until the end of JATCC! As ACMC manage the trainees throughout Ph2, should a trainee not reach the standard for example Pilot training on the Friday, they could start

another stream of OA such as ATC or WSO on the Monday – such is their focus on 'Talent Utility'.

To understand the OA even further, we were later met by Wing Commander Bugg and his team at the Air Mission Training School where all OA candidates learn Aerodynamic Fundamentals with ATC thrown in. This forms another part of the sorting hat process based on an individual's cognitive function. From here a trainee has several opportunities to change their preference of specialisation from ATC, ABM, WSO and OPSO with regular feedback from the course staff as to their progress in each area – essentially, they shape their own destiny!

Later we visited the new ATC tower and the SATC where the DCASO staff were given the opportunity to act as a 'trainee' and take part in a Tower Circuit or Approach Sequencing exercise. Suffice to say, age is definitely a contributory factor in one's cognitive function. FACT. The ability to be able to use this data to ascertain whether someone displays the skills for ATC has assisted with their first-time pass rate. This information was a key takeaway for the team to aid the JATCC review. That evening the RAAF hosted us within the local town for a superb dinner giving both Air Forces a chance to network in a more informal setting.

We were transported, in style, on Wed 7 June from RAAF Base East Sale to RAAF Base Williamtown in a C27J Spartan aircraft that was laid on especially for us. What a fantastic way to see the expanse of Australia – this was definitely



RSAF AWO School team and RAF DCASO team

a highlight of the visit for most! Upon arrival, we were chaperoned to No 44 Wing ATC, responsible for delivering aerodrome and RADAR control services and then onto their new ATC tower. Although the new tower was not yet operational, it was the best place available to watch the F35 display pilot hone their display sequence.

The 8th June saw us meet with Wing Commander (Wg Cdr) McDermot at the Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU), which is their equivalent to the Ph2 training for ABM and ASOS. SACTU own 30 courses consisting of Initial Employment Training, Control and Reporting Unit (CRU) training, Jindalee Operational RADAR Network, Space Courses, Integrated Air & Missile Defence, Technician Training and believe it or not, Driver Training! The Sim Pilots (SPs) at SACTU impressed the team as we found them to be extremely knowledgeable, motivated and proud of their role as part of 3CRU (UK CRC equivalent). SPs streaming commences at SACTU, recognising aptitude during their initial training -effectively cherry-picking talent for their next employment.

The following day we set out to conduct more data gathering with SACTU on ABM and SP training, sharing best practices within the training environment before meeting with some of the ABM cadre currently employed on the E7 Wedgetail. It was a great opportunity for Flight Lieutenant (Flt Lt) Furlong and Flight Sergeant (FS) Tudor-Smith to catch up with some old 8 Sqn E3 AWACS mission crew colleagues - Flt Lt Rob Stewart, Flt Lt Jase Ward and Sergeant Stu Harris. Later that afternoon, the team took the train from Williamstown to Sydney to take in the light display and enjoy the following day sightseeing, prior to departing for Singapore.

Arriving in Singapore on Sunday



JATCC 398 in 2014

11th June, we spent the evening preparing for our final day of fact-finding, concluding with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF). It would be a chance for Wg Cdr Paxman and Flt Lt Hodgson to also reunite with two former trainees, Captain (Capt) Liew and Capt Ong who completed JATCC 398 at RAF Shawbury back in 2014. Arriving at the Air Force Training Command (AFTC) we were met by SLTC Sen Kiat Ho and Capt Ong. Unfortunately Capt Liew was on another tasking that day so the photo opportunity was missed; or so we thought.....

The AFTC is home to the Air Warfare Officer (AWO) school delivering specialisations within Air Battle Management, Air Defence Weapons and Air Traffic Control. The benefit of the training at this school is that, despite your selected specialisation, all trainees come together for a 2-week common course and gamification war fighting exercise to learn about each other's roles and more importantly, compete for the War Fighter trophy! Prior to joining the AWO school, the trainees conduct a compass test, at the recruitment stage, consisting of psychomotor and geometry skills which forms the streaming process.

The emphasis on digital services does not stop there - the AWO school have moved away from manual book and pens and provide all trainees



Reunited. Left to right Flt Lt Hodgson (JATCC398 trainer), Capt Liew and Wg Cdr Paxman (former JATCC398 trainees)

with laptops to access a self-directed learning platform, using a digital package and AI to enhance the trainees learning experience. They concentrate on 4 pedagogies: Experiential Learning tailored to kinaesthetic learners exposing them to actual or realistic equipment, Role Playing using emulators allowing for more practical training, Problem-Based Learning giving the ownership to the trainee to demonstrate solutions the team and Case-Based Learning using a full-scale real word scenario to solutionise. As an ATC trainee, you are given access to a RADAR simulator, a 360° tower simulator and a Virtual Reality (VR) ATC providing the trainees with a realistic Aerodrome Control environment. The VR headsets are used with a gaming headset and mic to navigate around the aerodrome and give commands to aircraft in a simulated environment.

After exchanging gifts, the RSAF invited us to sample the local cuisine prior to our departure later that evening back to the UK. Entering the airport prior to customs, Flt Lt Hodgson received a phone-call from Capt Liew who didn't want to miss the opportunity to say "hello", albeit it very briefly, and managed to finally meet up with his fellow course mate and trainer of JATCC 398. What a fabulous way to end a very manic and jam-packed trip across the other side of the world.

Our thanks to everyone who made the trip a success. We were privy to world-class training delivered within world-class training facilities and so many of these aspects will assist with the JATCC review. A special heartfelt thanks go to Flt Lt Lavender and Flt Lt Wares of the RAAF who went far beyond the normal call of duty in hosting and organising our entire schedule for the duration of the trip, we are extremely grateful for their generosity. We hope the British crisps were enjoyed!



UK Team with Wg Cdr Ferris at the ACMC, RAAF Base East Sale

Recent DCASO Graduations

ASOSC 7 - Congratulations to Air and Space Operations Specialist Course 7 who graduated from the Defence College of Air Space Operations on 30th June. The Reviewing Officer was Group Captain Tina Jessup MSc MA BSc (Hons) RAF – Station Commander RAF Cranwell.

The Salesian trophy was won by Air Specialist Patten.

The Daren Hucknall Memorial Trophy was won by Air Specialist Sunderland. We wish all the Graduates every success with their future careers.



ASOSC 7 Group- ASOSC 7 with Reviewing Officer Group Captain Tina Jessup.



The Salesian Trophy presented to Air Specialist Patten



The Darren Hucknall Trophy presented to Air Specialist Sunderland

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Recent DCASO Graduations

Congratulations to Air and Space Operations Specialist Course 8 who graduated from the Defence College of Air Space Operations on 4th August.

The Reviewing Officer was Wg Cdr A Jones CertEd BSc PGDip MSc IEng MIET MCMI RAF - OC BSW RAF

The Salesian trophy was won by Air Specialist Elizabeth Ashcroft

The Daren Hucknall Memorial Trophy was won Air Specialist Joshua Wrighton

Congratulations to Joint Air Traffic Control Course 458 who graduated from the Defence College of Air Space Operations on 4th August. The Reviewing Officer was Wg Cdr A Jones CertEd BSc PGDip MSc IEng MIET MCMI RAF - OC BSW RAF

The Bunting Trophy was won by Flying Officer Jonathan Lee

The Marshall Trophy was won by Flying Officer Charlotte Thomas



ASOSC 8 - The Salesian trophy was won by Air Specialist Elizabeth Ashcroft



ASOSC 8 Group



ASOSC 8 - The Daren Hucknall Memorial Trophy was won Air Specialist Joshua Wrighton



JATCC 458 - The Bunting Trophy was won by Flying Officer Jonathan Lee



JATCC 458 Group



JATCC 458 - The Marshall Trophy was won by Flying Officer Charlotte Thomas

News from CFS(H) Squadron



The Central Flying School (Helicopter) Graduation Dinner

Another very busy period for Central Flying School (Helicopters) Squadron! The main event was the graduation of Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) and Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor (QHCI) Course 393 at the very first RAF/military wide combined Central Flying School (CFS) graduation, which took place on 18 May. The occasion toasted newly qualified instructors as they all came together from a wide variety of backgrounds and platforms across the 3 services to celebrate their achievements with Air Marshal Maddison in attendance as the Reviewing Officer. A great evening for all involved, many congratulations to all the new instructors, the future looks bright!

After the graduation of 393 Course,

another strong cohort, 394 QHI/QHCI Course rattled through their training and assessments then celebrated their new instructor status on 17th August in a smaller more traditional event. No rest for the Squadron as a tight turnaround was required due to the arrival of another batch of trainee instructors before the previous course even left the door. 395 Course have hit the ground running with a projected finish date of 23rd November. Best of luck!

CFS(H) is a Squadron dedicated and responsible for providing a stable flow of instructors into helicopter fleets for the Navy, Army and RAF. Upon completion of the course, new instructors are then assigned to one of numerous trainee units, conversion units or front line types flying a multitude of platforms across the 3 services. The training is fast-paced

and culminates into an end of course check to ensure that the individual has reached the necessary standard of instruction that the UK Military demands.

But training future instructors isn't the only way that CFS(H) Squadron have been keeping busy. A secondary duty we provide is support to the renowned RAF Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows. Their busy schedule during display season sees numerous flypasts, air shows and displays at numerous sites right across the UK. We are heavily utilised to fly the Team into locations where their jets (or any fixed wing aircraft!) could not land - examples are beach displays and the Silverstone GP. This is so that they can meet fans, speak to enthusiasts and more importantly, allow Red 10 to get into a suitable position to provide commentary. Recently, our own Flt Lt Charlie Logan dropped Red 10 at the RAF Honington Families Day and managed to capture these epic snaps! This support for "The Reds" display season will continue through until the Duxford Airshow taking place in mid-September, so be sure to keep an eye out for our Juno H135 helicopters!



393 Qualified Helicopter Instructor and Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor Course Graduation



Juno Helicopter with Red Arrows overhead

RAF Shawbury Gliding Club (RSGC) displays at the 2023 RAF Cosford Airshow

Spectacular and noisy displays from the Red Arrows, Patrouille Suisse and the Royal Jordanian Falcons contrasted with the graceful and almost silent routine of RSGC's Ian Gallacher as he displayed in the club 2-seat K21 glider above a crowd of 55,000 at this year's RAF Cosford Air Show. It is a polished performance that people living in Shawbury may have seen during Ian's mandatory practice sessions. Ian has recently been cleared by the CAA in line with CAP403 to loop to 100ft AGL. Meanwhile, down on the ground, a glider simulator and static single seater glider drew large numbers of enthusiastic youngsters all day.

FANCY SOME AEROBATICS TUITION YOURSELF?

Well, you could. Whilst the emphasis lies firmly with training the uninitiated and introducing servicemen, civilian MOD employees and their families to this safe but exhilarating aviation sport, at the other end of the spectrum we



RSGC students set up the gliding simulator

hope to see you progress so that, one day it's you who is displaying above the crowd at an air show.

Flying fees are very low, our aim being to encourage participation at an early

stage of your Service career. Various grants are available to support your gliding journey to solo and beyond for students of any rank drawn from both RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury who are attending a training course.

RSGC's Ian Gallacher's makes a final pass in front of the crowd at the end of the K21 aerobatics display.

If you want to know more then please contact Squadron Leader Alan Swan alan.swan143@mod.gov.uk, or Ian Gallacher Ian.Gallacher375@mod.gov.uk, both of whom will be delighted to answer your questions. They're also available on ModNET Skype or Teams and you can also find more details on our website at <https://www.rafshawburygc.co.uk>



Normandy Staff Ride

On 6 June 1944, nearly 7,000 vessels and 1,200 aircraft carried 150,000 allied troops across the channel to begin Operation OVERLORD or what General Eisenhower had coined 'The Great Crusade'.

In contrast, on the 12 June 2023 RAF Shawbury sent an intrepid band of 18 travellers loaded in two vehicles to begin their journey to Normandy – Exercise LEOPARDS LANDING. The drive was going smoothly until the convoy arrived at Newhaven ferry port. Whilst it was evident that the ferry was still in port, there were no staff in sight. Soon word came down the line, we had missed the check in time by an hour, no movement until 5pm, for the time being just like on 5 June 1944, we were stuck in Britain!

There followed an impromptu trip around the picturesque seaside town of Brighton, until we once again travelled to the ferry port, this time being allowed onto the ferry.

After a slightly relaxed start to Tuesday, we made our way to Juno Beach. It was on this beach that soldiers of the Canadian Army's 3rd Infantry division and 2nd Armoured Brigade stormed Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The remains of the bunkers that faced the Canadians still occupy the sand banks, so the group stopped and reflected at the site of a bunker that had developed a distinctive tilt. This, we found, had developed as a result of the fighting on D-Day. Named 'Cosy's Bunker' it owes its name to Lieutenant (Lt) W. A. 'Cosy' Aitken of The Royal Winnipeg Rifles who, along with 10 platoon, B Company, assaulted the position with machine guns and grenades, capturing the bunker with aid from following engineers who



detonated explosives, toppling the structure to give it its distinctive tilt. Of the men from B company, only 26 survived the fighting on Juno Beach, Lt Aitken himself being badly wounded. Our first stands, which look to reflect on past actions and consider today's tactics, were presented in the shadow of the Croix de Lorraine, which marked the place where General De Gaulle returned to France after four years of exile. Here we heard presentations on the how (today) the use of uncrewed and autonomous systems, as well as modern air power could have brought the fighting on Juno beach to a swifter conclusion.

In a similar vein, the following stand was on technology vs mass. One of the standout features of Operation OVERLORD is the number of personnel and vehicles involved, certainly beyond anything most modern militaries could

muster today. Yet it became apparent throughout this discussion that there would not be the need to create a force of this size owing to, among other factors, new technology and processes. After a lunch stop in Courseulles-sur-Mer, we made our way to Sword Beach and learnt about Colour Sergeant Major Stan Hollis VC, the only person to be awarded the Victoria Cross on D-Day. Landing with the 6th Green Howards on Gold beach, his citation states: *"Wherever the fighting was heaviest, CSM Hollis appeared ... he displayed the utmost gallantry and on two separate occasions his courage and initiative prevented the enemy from holding up the advance at critical stages. ... It was largely through his heroism and resource that the company's objectives were gained and casualties were not heavier, and by his own bravery he saved the lives of many of his men."*

Standing in the territory the Green Howards had to assault, one could easily get a feeling for how daunting the task was, with high ground to the rear, the Germans would have had easy sightlines down to the beach. Having retraced the steps of CSM Hollis, the group made its way to the British Normandy Memorial. Unveiled in 2021, this striking structure lists the names of all those service personnel under British command who fell in the Battle for Normandy. Here we discussed the ethics of modern warfare before a wreath laying ceremony in which we paid our respects to those who died in the effort to liberate France from Nazism.



The team at Pegasus Bridge



First activity for Wednesday was a trip to Pointe-du-Hoc, where the US 2nd Rangers famously ascended the cliff face to assault a gun battery. Here we talked about leadership and how we may approach the challenge differently. With the power of hindsight this was much easier than the task faced by the men under Lieutenant Colonel Rudder's command, who scaled the rocks in the face of enemy fire.

The ground at Pointe-du-Hoc still shows the scars of the Second World War. Several craters are evidence of the bombing raids against the position in efforts to make the position untenable for artillery positioned there. These efforts proved worthwhile, as the Rangers found on D-Day the guns had been removed from the headland and left unattended further inland. Further talks on leadership were followed by a visit to the Overlord Museum at Le Bray, displaying various aspects of the fighting around Normandy during 1944.

The afternoon was spent walking around the site of the battery at Longues-sur-Mer where the team was able to re-enact scenes from The Longest Day in the bunker where the Germans first spot the invading fleet. After talking about the attack on the battery on D-Day, we moved to the neighbouring Advance Landing Ground (ALG) B11. We heard about the history of the ALGs and how they link in with today's Agile Combat Employment. ALG B-11 was constructed in three days between the 18th and 21st of June and was used by four squadrons of Spitfires during its three months in operational use. It was also the site where the first

Free French pilots landed in France. ALGs were constructed for use by tactical air forces and were used until the front moved out of range of the aircraft stationed there, which would then move to an ALG further forward. RAF Commandos, who landed on D-Day, Royal Engineers and the 2nd Tactical Air Force's construction team were used to set up or occupy existing airfields.

Our final activity for the day was to visit Ryes War Cemetery. A small but tranquil place, we discussed how information advantage can aid casualties. Day 4 was spent looking at the British airborne operations that took place on D-Day. Standing on the very bridge the men of D Company, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry took in the early hours of D-Day, we heard about tactical leadership and technological solutions to holding key infrastructure.

Lunch would turn out to have a special connection to the airborne landings of D-Day. In an unassuming café on the banks of the Caen Canal, the team was served by a lady who was present when the Ox and Bucks landed, who recounted the events with great passion.

The afternoon saw a talk on fighting spirit in relation to Major John Howard, who commanded D Company Ox and Bucks Light Infantry. Working his way through the ranks Howard was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Ox and Bucks in 1940. As D Company commander, Major Howard led the assault on Pegasus Bridge with surprising ease. The gliders carrying



Paying respects at the Normandy Memorial

the troops landed only 40 meters away, catching the Germans completely off guard. The Bridge was captured in 10 minutes and defended successfully until Lord Lovat's commandos could provide reinforcements. Famously, they were accompanied by Lord Lovat's personal piper, Bill Millin.

Leaving Pegasus Bridge, we moved on to Ranville Cemetery. This cemetery houses many of the airborne casualties from the Normandy campaign. Here we heard about modern casualty evacuation and processing after which we each had a personal reflection in the cemetery to think not only about all we had learnt over the three days but also the cost of the invasion and further fighting on France. Dawn of the fifth day revealed some tired faces. Fortunately, our trip to the ferry was uneventful and this time we made it with plenty of time for our voyage home.

A thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all, with many interesting topics covered and locations visited. Many thanks should be directed towards Warrant Officer Griffin and all those who helped organise such a fantastic staff ride.

Drapers' Company Medal

On 29th June, Warrant Officer Buckley from Air Traffic Control and Flight Sergeant Watkins from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations were invited to Central London at the request of the Drapers' Company to attend an awards ceremony in recognition of their hard work and dedication to training provision at RAF Shawbury.

The nominees were escorted by the Station Commander's representative – Officer Commanding Operations Wing, Wing Commander Turner, who addressed the Drapers' panel and read the citations for both candidates.

THE DRAPERS' COMPANY – BACKGROUND AND LINKS TO RAF SHAWBURY

The affiliation between the Drapers' Company and RAF Shawbury began in 2007. As well as RAF Shawbury the Company is also affiliated with several other military units including the Welsh Guards and 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment. Each year all affiliates nominate two people who have made an outstanding contribution to education, learning and training and/or welfare within their units or the wider Service community.

The Drapers' Company dates to the 14th Century when a group of merchants came together to promote and protect their trade in the woollen industry. The group grew significantly over time and philanthropy became a core part of the Company. Today the Company has evolved into a grant giving organisation that attracts people from all trades and professions. One of the main areas of focus remains education, training, and welfare, with the Company providing grants and support to fund endeavours in these areas.

The Company also raises awareness of the work carried out by individuals at its affiliated units through an annual awards ceremony. Deserving personnel from each unit are put forward, however, only two candidates per unit are chosen to be presented to the Drapers' panel. The citations are read and considered by the panel before a winner and runner up are chosen.

AWARD PRESENTATION

The awards day was an early start with both nominees and Wg Cdr Turner travelling to Central London. Arriving in time for a coffee and chat with other nominees before a quick change into uniform ready for the awards ceremony in the formal Drawing Room. Nominees from each unit were invited to stand before the council as their citations were read out. The Clerk for the Drapers then announced the runner up and winner, both were presented with a certificate to mark their achievements with the winner also receiving a medal.

FS Watkins was the winning recipient for RAF Shawbury for her work establishing an Induction programme for all new Trainers at the Defence College for Air and Space Operations along with her successful application and implementation of the Shawbury Defence Trainers Course franchise. The franchise has seen trainers qualify to deliver Phase 2 training. Prior to the establishment of the franchise many



The Master, Wg Cdr Turner, WO Buckley and FS Watkins. Image courtesy of the Drapers' Company

trainers were operating without the ideal qualifications, largely due to a lack of courses over COVID. During this period, FS Watkins independently ran DCASO Standards, with the two more senior roles not filled, she maintained the level of output required of three people displaying capacity well beyond that expected of one individual.

After the presentation of medals and certificates all attendees were invited to lunch with the council members. Over lunch the Master, Clerk and various council members discussed the role of the Drapers' and how they are affiliated with the Armed Services.

The day finished with a guided tour of the building, taking in the various reception rooms including the splendid formal dining room – all set up for a 70s themed dinner event!

FS Watkins said, "the whole day was an amazing experience and, as one of the nominees from RAF Shawbury, I was honoured and humbled to be put forward for the award and invited down to London for the ceremony. To actually win the Medal was an amazing feeling and I am grateful to my Line Manager who took the time to nominate me for this award."



Awaiting the Winner's decision in the Drawing Room. Image courtesy of the Drapers' Company

Station Honours & Awards

On 1st August Air Commodore Ian Sharrocks, Director of Flying Training was delighted to present Honours and Awards to Station personnel at the Honours and Awards Ceremony.

Air Officer Commanding

Commendations were presented to:

Lieutenant Commander White, Flight Lieutenant Burns, Flight Sergeant Marcinkowski, Mrs Forrest-Thompson and Cardiac Incident Team.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and Clasps were presented to:

Lieutenant Commander Griffiths, Sqn Ldr James Medal and Clasp), Squadron Leader Oxford (2nd Clasp), Warrant Officer Morley (2nd Clasp), Warrant Officer Murphy-Brown (Clasp), Flight Sergeant Anson, Flight Sergeant Clasper, Flight Sergeant Sharpe (Clasp), Staff Sergeant Jones and Lance Corporal Taylor.



Awards were presented to:

Staff Sergeant Badham – UK Armed Force Sport Colours, Corporal Colton - RAF Sports Colours (2) and Best Aviator Award, Mrs Griffiths - Aries Award, Employee Engagement Team – Aries Award.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Making way for Wildflowers

On a wet August day, students from No 1 Flying Training School (Course No 455-019) teamed up with Councillor David Walker of Grinshill Parish Council for a weed busting community project. The mission: clearing overgrown verges to make way for a wildflower resurgence. This joint effort rejuvenated the landscape and showcased the power of community engagement.

Facing a tangle of nettles and stubborn ground elder, trainees got stuck into the task despite the wet weather. The focus was on thorough clearance, particularly eradicating the ground elder's roots to prevent regrowth.

The collaboration with Councillor David Walker underscored the potential for connections between military personnel and local communities.



Thirsty work

Beyond ecological changes, it was an opportunity for the trainees to understand the impact of RAF Shawbury on its neighbours. For example, night flying is a crucial skill to learn but it can cause difficulties for local people with pets and young children.

Also, at the heart of the project lies the importance of conserving biodiversity through wildflower planting. The cleared verges provide a canvas for upcoming wildflower plugs. This



Finished project

eco-conscious effort enhances aesthetics while providing vital habitats for pollinators and wildlife. RAF Shawbury's support reflects a commitment to environmental preservation.

This partnership also offers multifaceted advantages for military personnel. Engaging with the local community nurtures a sense of shared purpose and belonging. It fosters empathy and reinforces values like discipline and teamwork.

Shrewsbury Flower Show 2023

On Friday 11 July 2023, students from 2 Maritime Air Wing (2 MAW) spent the day engaged in community outreach at the Shrewsbury Flower Show. Ran annually by the Shropshire Horticultural Society, The Shrewsbury Flower Show is a long-standing event for the town and one of the country's premier floral events. The show features: floral displays; TV personalities; live music and numerous craft and food stands that attract top exhibitors from all over the country.

Taking a break from the classroom and busy flying schedule, the course arrived eagerly on Friday morning; ready to help in any way possible. They were quickly put to work, helping to set up event stalls and ensuring that the grounds were looking pristine ahead of the arrival of the general public.

The gates were opened at 10am, and 2 MAW were quick to assume their positions and help at various stands. The tasks were varied, ranging from supporting the show jumping/equestrian event to assisting with the administration of the judging for the amateur competitive classes for Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables. The show was a resounding success, and the presence of 2 MAW personnel seemingly helped to ease the pressure on the small workforce of permanent staff and other volunteers.



It was a great way to interact with the community and strengthen an enduring relationship between RAF Shawbury the surrounding villages and towns. It also acted as a significant opportunity to gain an insight into an important event in the town's history. We would like to give a special thanks to Donna Hamer and the committee for helping to arrange this event and hope to return to offer our services next year!

Lieutenant AC Meager AAC



Floral Entries



Equestrian



Group Photo

Shawbury Military Wives Choir

The choir get together every week at the Station Church, on a Wednesday evening.

One of the brilliant aspects of the military wives choirs' network is that it's worldwide and so leaving members can simply pick up again where they left off at another location where there is a Military Wives Choir. With over 70 choirs in the UK alone, it's such a quick and easy way of making friends as soon as you arrive at a new place.

Shawbury MWC have performed recently at local events, several low-key performances in Residential Nursing Homes in which we are always warmly welcomed, and a particularly poignant

afternoon at a private family memorial service held at Soultton Long Barrow in Wem.

Traditionally in August the choir takes a short break, however on Thursday 10th August members of the choir spent the day supporting the RAF Shawbury Families Day. We held various stalls: freshly baked cakes, the ever-popular tombola, plus a few new fundraising ideas we had which went well. This is a popular day for us to attend, keeps us in contact with the base and it's a chance for us to fundraise to keep our little choir going. We do hope to have inspired some ladies to come and join our choir. If we have, then we can't wait to welcome you. If you are unsure, please get in touch and come along for a taster session.



The Choir at RAF Shawbury Families Day

We now start to prepare for events after the summer, which include a unique NHS event in Shrewsbury, a special memorial service in Wales for a member's father, Remembrance and Christmas. We are also very honoured to be asked to perform at a member's wedding later this year.

SO WHY NOT COME ALONG AND SEE WHAT WE DO?

You don't need to read music, most of our members do not.

We learn and practise together in groups, you are not left on your own. Our choir is a social place, where we meet weekly, chat, drink tea/coffee and usually eat cake!

We have social outings such as theatre trips and quiz nights. We are all ages, backgrounds, and live in the local area.

We have a fabulous Musical Director, Catherine, who leads us every week. We always start with a warm-up which sometimes involves a little gentle exercise.

We sing songs written especially for us, as well as songs we just all like!

So, if you are looking for a new hobby or have just arrived at Shawbury please do contact us:
shawbury@militarywiveschoirs.org

Shawbury Village Litter Pick

A hot, sunny day at the end of May saw students from RAF Shawbury pilots' courses visit Shawbury Village in support of the local community.

After celebrating their start on 705 Naval Air Squadron and 660 Squadron, the basic rotary training squadrons, volunteers gathered themselves and donned hi-vis equipment to descend upon Shawbury football ground. Much to the amusement of local dog walkers and park goers, the team formed an extended line and conducted a full litter sweep of the area. From sweet wrappers to cigarette butts, plastic balloons to water bottles, several refuse bags were filled and disposed of back



The start of the litter pick at Shawbury Football Ground

at camp. The students understand how much the local community supports their training and wanted to give back with a small gesture to help clean up the area. Navy representatives even

went above and beyond, supporting local businesses by purchasing baked goods and caffeinated beverages in the garden centre to appease their daily requirement for Officers' coffee break!

RAFA Rides

Each year the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) organises RAFA Rides to raise funds for the Charity. RAF personnel and RAFA members and supporters participate in events across the country. And RAF Shawbury was no exception. Our Senior Air Traffic Controller, Squadron Leader 'Pips' Pipkin, organised a series of events during a week in August.

The Airfield Time Trial was a great success over 2 evenings! The first was a windy evening and saw Wing Commander Sills come out on top on his TT bike. He was, however, closely pushed by Sgt Riley on a gravel bike! The second evening saw Flying Officer Byrne of ATC come out on top - however, all those present witnessed his 'Mark Cavendish' esq tactics of drafting behind Sergeant Riley until the very last minute!



Pips' Spinathon

a little over six hours moving time. He was most grateful to all those who dropped in to support during the day with mainly kind words of encouragement. The Station Executives participated in a spinning session for their weekly physical training event, joined by SATCO the day after his solo-spinathon - his legs were not impressed!

SATCO himself did a day's Spinathon in the Gym foyer and managed to do an impressive 105 miles on a WattBike in

Overall the events raised just shy of £300, but the fun is not over, as there will still be a social ride organised in mid-October which will hopefully add a few more pounds to the pot.



Ready for the Airfield Time Trial

10K Cheque Presentation

Earlier this year almost 240 runners set out on a very chilly morning for the RAF Shawbury 10K Race.

Their brilliant efforts raised £2,886.32 for the RAF Benevolent fund. Recently, on a much warmer day, our two incredible organisers, Corporal Openshaw and Corporal Lowies, along with the Station Commander and Officer Commanding Base Support Wing, presented the final amount to the RAF Benevolent Fund Area Director, Neil



Cheque presentation to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Sturtridge and the Regional Business Support Executive, Liam Horsley

Sponsored walk for Hound for Heroes

On Friday 7th July, a group of Flight Simulator Operators from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations took part in a sponsored walk in Shropshire.

The walk started and finished at Carding Mill Valley car park. The group began the walk up to the waterfall – a steep rocky pathway, where a member of the group encountered an angry bee. We followed the path up to a viewpoint where we were treated to the beautiful sight of the Shropshire hills. Further along the pathway we encountered some wild ponies with their foals. After a short detour we were back on the trail, where we helped a runner who had fallen and cut her knee. On this part of the trail, we could see the hills - Lawley, Caer Caradoc and the Wrekin in the distance – stunning views! We then walked through some woods which gave us some well needed shade and stopped to have our lunch. The next part of the path was undulating, and our legs were tiring, but we carried on to then find some difficult steps cut into the hill. This was a challenge to all of us and we were all relieved to be at the top in the knowledge we only had less than two miles left on the trail. Eventually we saw the car park and more importantly the ice cream shop! This was a lovely but demanding 8.4 mile trail with waterfalls, hills, ponies, sheep, and bees.

The group raised £92 for Aquila's nominated charity - Hound for Heroes.



Top Goat (Part Deux)

2022: Top Goat. Dragon Boat racing time : 1 minute 04 seconds.

2023: Top Goat (Part Deux) Dragon Boat racing time : 1 minute 01 seconds.

SCENE:

Saturday 22nd July 2023; 18 brave, sea-faring aviators from Sixty Sqn, RAF Shawbury set sail on the high seas (River Severn) under the pseudo name of "Top Goat Part Deux". Our aim was to participate in the annual Dragon Boat Race in support of an amazing local charity, The Severn Hospice (for the second year running). 45 teams (across the two days) took part in less than desirable conditionsAKA British summertime.

THE MISSION:

Beat Crossfit at all costs (whilst raising as much money as possible for this fantastic cause).

I repeat:

Beat Crossfit at all costs (whilst raising as much money as possible for this fantastic cause).

THE WHO

After last year's narrow victory over Shrewsbury's CrossFit fraternity, OC Sixty, Squadron Leader Summers had a vision to partake (once again) in this established charity event; He promptly voluntold one of his Flight Commanders to organise it, who subsequently and promptly voluntold junior course 445-19 to get fund raising. The team was once again established and led by Flight Lieutenant Gary Carr with credible support from Flight Lieutenant Zoe Wilson-Chalon. We must not forget our excellent catering team of Cripps Ramsay and his budding sidekick/ sous sous-chef, Higgie D'Acampo; Critics believe the key to our success was in part due to the efforts of these fine, budding amateur chefs.



THE HOW AND THE WHY

In order to enter this worthwhile event we were required to raise £350 for our entry fee and agreed to raise a further £1000 for this worthwhile cause. Flight Lieutenant Carr used the fog and distraction of Christmas spirit in order to raise the entry fee by raffling off sub-standard cheese boards and hampers at the Squadron Christmas do. By the time the frivolities had finished it would have been cheaper for Jordan Jones and Jim Porter to fly down privately to Fortnum and Masons and pick up the hamper themselves; well done on an impressive bidding war! The trainees across several courses within Sixty Sqn, 1 FTS got involved (special mention to 445-19) who raised an incredible amount, iro £1000, selling bacon/ sausage baps for £6 a time (exorbitant you may say); however, after speaking with Nicky Green (Severn Hospice chief fundraiser), she informed us that just 3 of those baps would support a whole hour of care for somebody needing it at the most sensitive of times; sobering yet very thought provoking. Suffice to say, after all the hard work and effort, from too many people to mention, **Sixty Sqn raised just over £2000 in total; this will support 40 hours of care at a hospice in our local community.**

THE BIG DAY IN SPARTA / SHREWSBURY

Saturday 22nd July saw hundreds of people descend on the River Severn in biblical, Arc like conditions for the big event. The atrocious weather didn't deter; money was raised and continued to be raised all day; however, now the focus, as you can imagine, was on victory; especially when we found out one of our rival teams had just rowed the Atlantic.

Side note: our fancy dress, (as you can see by the pictures, was subtle....

Flying suits and a Tee reading 'Top Goat part Deux'. We weren't trying to say that we were the GOAT (greatest of all time as many thought), merely a nod to our sqn history (Markhor



The Top Goat Team

Goat due to the Sqn's time spent in Afghanistan).

This year we were powered not only by Molly Brown of Ascent (our ringer from the rowing club), but also the much-required firepower from our international trainees. The Instructors filled up from the front iot stop a scene from Shallow Hal and put our Vorsprung durch Technik powerhouses to the rear. Unsurprisingly (wearing flying suits and Goat masks) we were quickly established as the team everyone wanted to beat, albeit the spirit was well humoured yet competitive throughout. The only complaints muttered were when several teams kept stealing our trainees iot win their own races... By heat 3 it was obvious we were making the final four boat head to head! With amazing support from family and friends we set off for our final race. Suffice to say, all previous rhythm, cadence and ability departed the boat immediately after start (similar to last year); however, through brute strength, chaos and determination we established a commanding lead, passing the finish line in 1:01 (3 seconds faster than last year).

Absolute awesome race with mutual respect for all involved. At the prize giving we were reliably informed that this time was the quickest time ever recorded in the 18 years of the event running. Great event with an even greater cause. It would be fantastic to have some in house rivalry next year from around camp....PEd don't have enough firepower (that's a given); however, maybe a DCASO, Execs, 1FTS dual could be on the cards....?

If you're up for it and think you can topple "Top Goat Part Deux" please get in touch and I can pass on the details.

Flt Lt Gaz Carr

Bundeswehr MilFit Cup 23

At the start of the year, two German Army rotary trainees, OLT Andy Gärtner and Lt Corbi Huber, decided they wanted to take part in a military fitness competition back in Germany. To compete, they needed a team of five, with at least one female and one over-36-year-old. Thankfully for us they saw it as an excellent opportunity to present a united UK-German line-up. Cue my arrival, swiftly followed by Flt Lt Elsie Rennie (OC SD&PS) and then Maj Andy Martin 'aka 'old guy'.

The event was to take place at the Bundeswehr Sports School in Warendorf – a small, quiet and extremely crisp-looking camp tucked away in the German countryside. On arrival, the team received a brief in the main sports hall, together with an overview of the competition. The aim was to test military fitness, functional fitness and team cohesion across three events: two individual best-effort courses and one longer team slog. It was at this point we came across our international competition – a team of American Joint Tactical Air Controllers. They all looked pretty capable!

Event 1, 'military fitness', the sky was cloud-free, and the late-morning sun was bearing down on the stadium. The course itself was setup inside the 400m racetrack, with each wave consisting of starting in parallel at one end. Each team member had the task of completing the course as fast as they could before tagging in the next, it boiled down to around eight minutes of work each, but after an 800m run, 70 reps of shoulder press with a 15kg ammo box and 400m of leopard crawling, sprinting, casualty dragging and ammo box shuttles, it was safe to say we were all exhausted. There was also a grenade throw into a target area, giving you a five second time bonus if successful, but with only one of the team nailing this we won't talk any more about it (well done Andy M). To note, Elsie's flying start on the 800m track put the team comfortably in the lead from the off, leaving the Americans sweating.

Event 2, 'functional fitness', the sun was still beaming down and this time we'd be adding body armour and helmets! The theme of this event was the building and dismantling of a defensive position, with a casualty drag thrown in to break it up. To build the position you needed to move 12 x 10kg sandbags, a filled water jerry can and a 15kg ammo box from the start into the taped area, 15m away. The catch was that you could only move a maximum

of three items at a time, and they had to be lifted over a 5ft shelf and then dragged through a low, 3m tunnel. Once all the kit was moved forward, and the casualty drag was done, you were halfway... Now to collapse the position, by crossing the shelf, crawling through the tunnel, picking up the three items and getting back across the balance beam and over the shelf. Just like the first event, it amounted to around 12 minutes of total work, but with the heat and the addition of helmet and body armour, you really felt it. But importantly, we held our overall lead ahead of the Americans.

Day 2 brought event 3, 'team cohesion'. The temperature was cooler, which was a blessing as this event was a 20km boot march/run interspersed with stands covering various tasks and military skills. No body armour for this one, but we did have to carry a minimum of 17kg in our bergans and a mock HK G36 rifle. Time cap: 6 hours. Starting ahead of us were the Americans, and so the target was set – catch them. Andy M took this literally of course and 'ex-para mode' kicked in, running the squad for the first 5km.

Stand 1 was a recce task: move up silently and observe a target complex without being seen. Of course, we were seen, and after a rip of gun fire, our referee was delighted to tell us Elsie had been shot in the leg and could no longer walk. To add to the fun, Corbi had also 'run into trees' whilst trying to take cover, which rendered him blind. We needed to get them out of there. So, with Andy G now leading a blinded Corbi, Andy M and I took it in turns to carry Elsie on our shoulders, splitting the bergans amongst us. It would be another 2km before we'd reach the next stand. Thankfully, Elsie and Corbi were declared healed (phew), we were back on the road. Next up, navigate 3km to a meeting with a 'village elder' using only a series of left, right and straight on instructions scribbled down in a notebook. Once at the checkpoint, and with the meeting in full flow, the peace was disturbed abruptly by a large

individual bursting out of the trees with a fake knife. Still processing what was happening, I leant forward and this 'unit' rolled over me into the grasp of Andy M, who immediately tackled him to the ground. A moment later the guy was up, smiling and shaking our hands – bizarre. Then into rifle range, where we swapped the G36s out for what looked like air rifles and patrolled into the forest. After knocking back almost every target it was time for the long patrol back. We were then diverted through sections of tunnels into water, before being funnelled into a 'chemical agent environment'. With respirators now on, we raced through the building, dragging a tractor tyre over various obstacles. At the end was a 'decontamination area' (changing rooms) prepping us for the next checkpoint: the pool. The next stand was simple: drag a weak swimmer over and under obstacles along the swim lane, before reciting a list of items shown to us at the beginning and completing a kids' jigsaw puzzle against the clock. I wasn't expecting that from a military fitness competition. We filed a 'mission report' for everything we'd seen and done, with penalties for any errors we'd made. Those penalties for were paid for just around the corner, on the assault course... Luckily, we'd only made two, and that meant two jerry cans had to be carried over the first two obstacles. It was then that our referee happily announced that it was the last stand. Now it was just a race back to the stadium - total time: 4 hours 19 minutes.

Having caught the Americans up way back at stand 1 we were feeling confident at the award ceremony. That confidence was justified, as the team was awarded the 'Fittest International Team' trophy – a 16kg kettlebell fixed to a laser engraved wooden base (I could feel my already tight luggage allowance disappearing). Our German hosts put on a big BBQ for all 27 teams. It was a great atmosphere in the evening sunshine. It was then, over a couple of well-earned Weißbiers, that we all decided it was only right to return next year. After all, we now had a title to defend.

Captain Jonny Riley



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Moreton Hall Celebrating Double Award Success

Staff and Pupils at Moreton Hall near Oswestry have plenty to celebrate at the start of the new school year with the news that the school is a finalist in not one but two prestigious awards.

The nomination for the Independent Schools of the Year Performing Arts, Music and Drama category recognised Moreton Hall's impressive and dynamic creative arts programme with local community initiatives such as the Face2Face Performance Academy and opportunities for musicians with the North Shropshire Music Orchestra and Training Orchestra all recognised. In addition, with The Holroyd Community Theatre located in the grounds and drawing audiences from across the region to enjoy a broad range of cultural and artistic performances, the theatre has become a cultural hub for Shropshire, North Wales and beyond.

The nomination for the Talk Education Innovation Awards for Business and Entrepreneurship, celebrates the school's ethos that Moreton means Business, with initiatives such as the in house, Moreton Enterprises, run for the girls by the girls, the International Women's Day Business conference and the prestigious Moreton Hall Business Lunch all putting entrepreneurship at the heart of the school community. Talk Education commented "We're rewarding schools who are forging boldly ahead with new, revolutionary ideas which are changing the face of independent education. Schools who are not just thinking outside the box, but setting fire to it and then building something new, cleverer, better.

To find out more about Moreton Hall's award-winning educational provision, join us for the whole school Open Day on **Saturday 30 September, 10am**. Visit www.moretonhall.org/open-day for details.