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The Magazine of RAF Shawbury



Edition 2
2023





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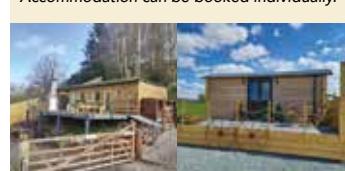
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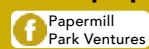
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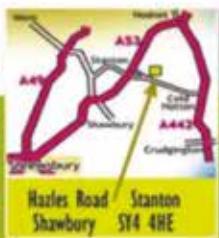
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ARIES TEAM

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 Murphy-Brown

ATC: AS2 Roberts

Distribution:

Mr Frank Young, Central Registry

Mr Colin Woolley, 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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No 1 Flying Training School Juno in
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Tel: 01536 334 222

Designed by: Jo Glen

Advertising: Darren Greenhead
Email: darren@lancemediagroup.co.uk
Tel: (01536) 680 414

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Editor's Welcome

By Flight Lieutenant Ade Vine

As this edition goes live it will be some 40 years since I first set foot on RAF Shawbury, arriving for trade training in the Air Traffic Control Assistant role of Trade Group 9.

Inevitably there has been much change in that 40 years, Assistant Air Traffic Controllers are now Air and Space Operations Specialists acknowledging the wide sphere of tasks they can engage with across Air and Space Operations. The old RAF branches and trade groups are becoming Professions recognising the depth of skills and knowledge across the rank spectrum.

Change is not to be feared but should be embraced as it provides new opportunities and allows us to be fully part of a global society that itself is evolving and changing. Indeed, this magazine is no longer just printed and is now established online at <https://www.rafmags> instantly available to be downloaded and read. As with OC Operations Wing in the Foreword, personnel move on, although many come back, and this continuous fresh invigoration of energy and ideas keeps RAF Shawbury the vibrant and innovative Station that it is. Equally, the balance of the Whole Force, military, civilian and defence partners brings both

continuity, where needed, and different perspectives that are vital to keep our Armed Forces, and of course all three Services train at Shawbury, relevant to the world that is changing around us.

We now swear our allegiance to a new Monarch, after many glorious years of her late Majesty. Helicopters crewed by RAF Shawbury aircrew were privileged to lead the Coronation Flypast, succeeding in adding to a dazzling day, despite the best attempts of the British weather to dampen proceedings – somethings do not change. It is a testament to the world-class training and aircrew that No. 1 Flying Training School led the flypast on a day that marked the change of Monarch.

What does not change at RAF Shawbury, is the quality of personnel, commitment, training, our involvement in the community and the sheer feel-good factor of the Station. The range of activities portrayed in this second edition of 2023 hopefully demonstrates this far better than my words.



FOREWORD

by Wing Commander Lee Turner AFC MA cfs RAF, Officer Commanding Operations Wing

It is an honour to be asked to write the foreword for this edition of Aries. Honour with a tinge of melancholy as I approach the end of my tour here at RAF Shawbury. Please indulge me as I reflect on a busy 3 years here on the station.

For a helicopter operator, driving back through the Shawbury gates is like putting on your favourite jumper; it feels good, welcoming, and fundamentally doesn't change a great deal. My arrival came as the country locked down in COVID. Like everybody at that time, it dramatically shaped my Shawbury experience; some of those fantastic opportunities the military can afford us were not available and being in the office everyday was a challenge as some of the workforce balanced the hybrid approach. However, the one thing that struck and impressed me was the way the Shawbury family consistently pulled together, across the Whole Force, to meet our essential outputs for Defence. My main role on station is to ensure safe flying is conducted and for us to continue meeting the required output for 1 FTS without incident during these pressures.

This is not an exhaustive list but I have a number of observations which really highlight the quality of the people here. During my tour the ATC Sqn has undergone a generational change in ATC capability with the implementation of Programme MARSHALL. This is a £1.9Bn programme to update all of Defence's Air Traffic equipment and we were the first station to transition. Many lessons were learnt and the fortitude and dedication of the sqn has shaped



the continued rollout to other stations. The Air Safety Team in collaboration with partners, notably Airbus, Ascent and the CAMO, produced the inaugural Air System Safety Cases for both our Juno and Jupiter air systems. This was a large piece of work, started from a blank sheet of paper and we have been lauded by HQ 22 Group as displaying best practice on more than one occasion. This is a living document, constantly being updated to ensure that our flying operations are mitigated to a safe a level as we possibly can.

Next, the Royal influence on my tour. Unfortunately, last autumn, we lost the monarch that we all joined under. The Queen's death happened during our Annual Reception, when the Station Commander at the time

was about to receive the salute. The comportment of the personnel at that time, and in supporting the subsequent commitments, including the funeral, was fantastic and is something that makes me incredibly proud to be part of the military. Finally, and on a more positive note was the station's contribution to His Majesty's Coronation. It was a real privilege for us to lead that flypast over London; hopefully the weather will not preclude us leading again for the King's Birthday Flypast, this time with the entire flypast on show. Once more, this displayed the type of precision and capability Shawbury can deliver.

Most importantly I must mention the support and tolerance of our local community, whose support of our flying operations and of our personnel, who are of course part of the community, allows us to meet our mission.

I wish to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone I have had contact with in the last 3 years, whether that is socially or professionally. You have shaped a tour that has been the highlight of my career and it will be a tough one to beat. I trust that you will show Wg Cdr Michael Kluth the same patience and professionalism you showed me as he assumes command of Operations Wing.

GK

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Landowners' and Rider Awareness Day

RAF Shawbury and No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS), in particular, are reliant on the generosity of local landowners who let 1 FTS helicopters use their land for helicopter aircrew training.



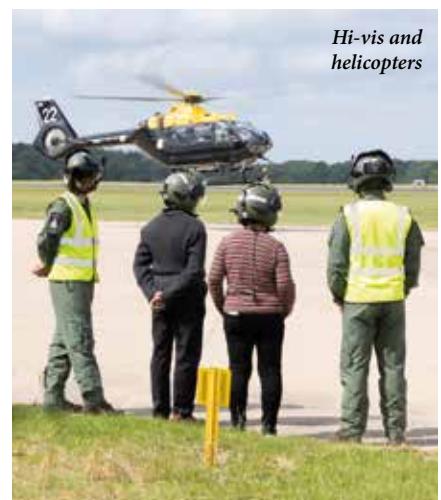
Landowners, Riders and hosts outside the Officers' Mess

1 FTS trains all defence helicopter crews and prepares them for a wide variety of roles on the front line across the three Services, be that close air support missions, carrying troops and vital equipment to combat zones, protecting warships, rescuing downed aircrew or other stricken personnel. Helicopter operations are a vital part of the United Kingdom's Defence operations. Crews may also be called upon to support humanitarian or relief operations both in the UK and globally. The skills required for such

diverse roles start at RAF Shawbury and 1 FTS. While military training areas such as that at Nescliffe can provide challenging scenarios, these areas can become familiar, therefore less well known or novel areas can provide confined spaces or natural hazards such as trees, sloping ground and unknown surfaces that allow crews to develop and hone skills that will be vital in their front line careers.

The majority of 1 FTS flying is conducted over Shropshire and a little

into Staffordshire and Wales. These fairly rural areas are well known for their equestrian activities and therefore helicopter crews, who frequently operate at low level, have to be conscious of horses and riders. RAF Shawbury has run a successful campaign for several years, Be Seen Be Safer, which seeks to educate crews and riders alike and emphasises the importance of hi-



visibility clothing and quarter sheets. The Landowners' and Riders Awareness Day is an annual event where we seek to thank those landowners who allow us to use their land and also engage with equestrian groups and riders. This year saw another successful event, where our guests were able to see at first-hand the flying and Air Operations training provided at RAF Shawbury and also engage with the Be Seen Be Safer campaign.

Korean War Veterans Tea Party

Although Korea is often in the news, not so many of us are aware of the Korean War, where between 1950-1953 nearly 60,000 British troops were involved and sadly some 1,100 lost their lives.



Korean War veterans, their guests and Tea Party hosts

It is possibly less known than some other conflicts as it was so close to the end of WW2. Veterans often refer to it as the 'forgotten war'. Therefore, the Station Commander and Commanding Officer of 9 Regiment Army Air Corps were especially pleased

to welcome six known Korean War veterans living in Shropshire to a Coronation Tea Party at RAF Shawbury and acknowledge their service.



*Pictured above: The six Korean War Veterans and a partner
Pictured left: CO 9 Regt AAC and guests*

We are grateful to the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant team for making the contacts and supporting the Tea Party

**RAF
MAGS**

Photo Competition Winner

The winner of our recent photo competition is Mike Gaukwin and this fantatstic image is of Indian Mirages taxiing out for a Cobra Warrior exercise at RAF Waddington.

Congratulations Mike!

www.rafmags.co.uk



Station Engagement Event

My name is Lesley Bromwich and I am privileged to have been asked to write an article about our recent Station Engagement Event for new arrivals at RAF Shawbury.

I started my current Job as Corporate Engagement Relations Office Assistant here at RAF Shawbury in January. Completely new to working on an RAF station, plus a new career as a civil servant, this visit was a fantastic opportunity to find out what happens across the base. You hear so much about the different sections on base, but to see first-hand really made it a valuable tour. These events aim to enhance familiarisation for Civil Servants and future station arrivals. This was the inaugural engagement and familiarisation event that the station is introducing bi-annually. The day consisted of presentations, demonstrations, and tours of various facilities on the base.

We started our tour with a visit to No. 1 Flying Training School (1 FTS). 1FTS trains helicopter aircrew for the Royal Navy, British Army, and the Royal Air Force. We got to see first-hand how the student pilots learn to fly, with a visit to the state-of-the-art simulators we have here at RAF Shawbury. We also had the opportunity to have a go ourselves and feel what it's like to be behind the controls of a helicopter. We then got to visit Ascent Flight Training, a tour of their facilities including the opportunity to witness the benefit/impact of synthetic and virtual reality training. Other sections we got to visit were Defence College of Air and Space Operations. The College delivers all Phase 2 training for the 5 elements of the Air Operations Branch which includes Air Traffic Controllers, Weapons Controllers, Identification Officers, Flight Operations personnel and Air and Space Operations Specialists. In addition, it delivers pre-deployment training to those



Air Operations personnel about to deploy on operations. We got an opportunity to see how students train to be Air Traffic Controllers with a visit to the new simulators, and how students are taught to become trainers at the college. Next a visit to Aircraft Maintenance and Storage Unit. I found this little-known section very interesting. Our final visit of the day was to Airbus which helped us gain an understanding of the H135 Juno helicopter and the H145 Jupiter helicopter. We got an insight into the engineering and maintenance required to sustain operations on the station. I would have to say what a fantastic opportunity this has been to get to know more about the station and get to know the role of other colleagues I work with on the base. Overall, I found this to be a very enjoyable, informative, and educational day. I highly recommend that all new personnel to RAF Shawbury attend this day if they get the chance.



Flying Training Device



DCASO Simulator

Here are some thoughts from colleagues who joined me on this visit.

'I can honestly say it was one of the most enjoyable, informative days I've had at work, and I would thoroughly recommend it to everyone on station to attend!'

Linda Tranter
Training Support Assistant

'It was a great opportunity to venture behind some closed doors and see some of the equipment I'll be using when I start Phase 2 training.'

Fg Off Collomb

'I thoroughly enjoyed the Staff Engagement Visit around Camp and found it to be just the right mix of formal and informal information, it was great to have a snapshot of what happens around the Unit, and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to find out more about what goes on at RAF Shawbury.'

Louise Wallace

I really enjoyed the Engagement visit and found it very useful and relevant to me, I'm still relatively new to the Airbus company and I'm not local. It was a good opportunity for me to meet people from the station and see what is going on.

Hanna Ivanova

The Stars Visit RAF Shawbury

Acknowledging RAF Shawbury's essential role in Defence, the Station has recently had several high-level visits. From the rank of Air Commodore (1 Star) and upwards to Air Chief Marshal (4 Star) Air ranks are also known by their Star Number.

These visits have recognised the success of No. 1 Flying Training School as part of the UK Military Flying Training System in providing world-class helicopter crew training, the Air Traffic Control

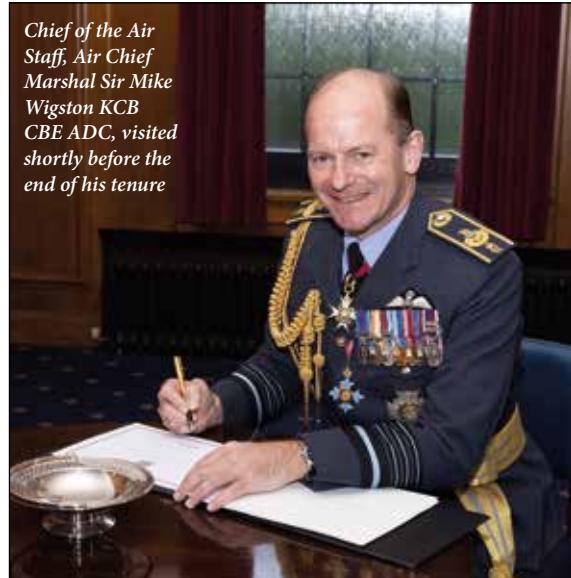
Squadron in leading the way with the MARSHALL Programme roll-out of a new Air Traffic Control system and the significant Community Support and Engagement.



Air Officer Commanding No. 22 Group, shortly before taking on that role,
Air Vice-Marshal Townsend Ian Townsend CBE MA RAF



The then Deputy Commander Capability, now renamed Deputy Chief of Air Staff RAF, Air Marshal Richard Maddison OBE MA



Above: The then Deputy Commander Operations, now renamed Air and Space Commander, Air Marshal Harvey Smythe CB OBE DFC



Left: Warrant Officer of the RAF, Warrant Officer Murugesvaran Subramaniam RAF



Shawbury 10km

Saturday 25 February saw RAF Shawbury host their annual 10km race on a very cold and blustery day. The event is organised by a mixture of permanent staff and trainees and raises vital funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund. This year's race managed to raise a whopping £3,800.

In total 91 females and 146 males completed the race, which is a 10km run around the airfield.

Despite arctic winds blowing across the airfield on the day, the first three men all finished inside 34 mins. Adrian Puchala crossed the line first in a

stunning time of 34:29, closely followed by Jack Agnew, of Telford AC, in 34:36 and James Lewis in 34:45.

For the females, it was Megan Tibbets, of Lawley Running Club, who crossed the line first in 40:42, closely followed in second place by Alexandra Walkley

in 41:28 and in third place was Nicola Shipp, of Oswestry Olympians, finishing the race in 42:02.

In the Battle of the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO), it was Cpl Jamie Arkle who stole the show, finishing 5th overall in a fast time of





36mins, leaving the DCASO Executives of Wing Commander Paxman, Squadron Leader Munro and Squadron Leader Mortimer trailing in his dust.

Young George Jordan, also ran an impressive race, finishing in 54mins. He also raised a staggering £740 for

the National Covid Memorial Wall, in London, in memory of his Grandad. Well done George!

And last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to all staff and trainees

George Jordan raised a staggering £740 for the National Memorial Covid Wall in memory of his Grandad

who helped on the day. Without their help and support then the Station would not be able to put on a race of this calibre.

Thank you for giving up your Saturday to make the race happen!





Looking back as the helicopter wave lifts in the rain

Coronation Flypast

No.1 Flying Training School recently took part in the flypast for the King's Coronation.

London below





Codenamed Operation GOLDEN ORB, the fly past was to encompass almost 70 aircraft from across Defence in multiple waves over Buckingham Palace. RAF Shawbury's own Sixty Squadron had the honour of leading this iconic flypast with three Juno Helicopters. Captain of the lead aircraft was Flt Lt Knapp, an experienced Sixty Sqn instructor, who had also been tasked with the mammoth job of organising the entire flypast. He coordinated crews from all corners of Defence Aviation in order to maintain a seamless flypast; a significant feat given the aircraft operating speeds ranged from 90 to 300 kts ! Naturally, the planning for such an event began many months in advance

with the need to co-ordinate the whole force. This included engineering, air traffic control, operations and aircrew to name but a few. Many late meetings took place around the normal busy schedules of those involved to ensure that every detail was scrutinised and accounted for, with redundancies factored in at every step. In order to maintain safety, numerous airfields and holding areas were utilised by the flypast aircraft; then came the task of meticulously timing the join up procedure to feed in wave after wave of aircraft to fly along the Mall and over Buckingham Palace right on cue.

On the day of the Coronation the British



London through the cockpit

weather threatened to cancel the entire flypast! With cloud-bases forecast as low as 300 ft along the route it became clear that not all waves would be able to safely join up. A 'weather ship' aircraft was launched (another Juno from Sixty Squadron, piloted by Flt Lt Pickett) ahead of the other aircraft to provide accurate feedback on the conditions at the time. Overhead London, and reporting a 1200 ft cloudbase and 8 km visibility, the minimum weather limits were met and approval granted to allow the helicopter package and Red Arrows to conduct their flypast. Flt Lt Knapp led the formation of 16 helicopters overhead thousands of spectators as they tracked through London and overhead Their Majesties the King and Queen as scheduled, exactly at 14:30. It was a great privilege for Sixty Squadron to lead such a flypast for the King, formed in 1916 the Squadron has a long history of operations and honours in the service of the Crown. The motto 'I strive through difficulties to the sky' is just as fitting now as it has been for the last 107 years.



Damp but happy crews – a job very well done

1 FTS NEWS

New AircREW Conditioning Programme Suite arrives at 1 FTS

Firstly, I hear you ask, what is an AircREW Conditioning Programme? Is it a new series on NetFlix or is it keeping the precious AircREW... well... precious? The AircREW Conditioning Programme or ACP as it is often referred to is a physical conditioning programme which develops and strengthens the neck, core and other key muscle groups to enhance performance and reduce the risk of injury.

WHY?

Musculoskeletal injury (MSI) within military aircrew occurs at a rate higher than observed in the equivalent general population. ACP has been in force for several years but has often been focused on the fast jet aircrew. In military rotary aircrew, MSI is multifactorial in nature, influenced by individual, environmental and occupational factors. Body worn equipment results in increased axial loads and rotational force moments, leading to increased neck extensor muscle fatigue. In rearcrew, 89-100% of their occupational role involves heavy manual handling, dynamic torso and neck movement, and prolonged awkward postures.

Physical conditioning programmes have been effective in reducing the prevalence of flight-related neck pain reported by aircrew. Rotary wing aircrew who perform regular aerobic exercises, weight training and neck strengthening have a lower incidence of neck pain. Low level muscle control of neck and core muscles, with strength and endurance training of the large muscle groups is recommended for rotary wing aircrew.

SO WHAT?

Several barriers were identified preventing aircrew attending regular ACP sessions. This varied from flying commitments, programming, day/night routine etc. Also, the station Primary Care Rehabilitation Facility (physio department) and PTIs identified that the original ACP



Air Marshall Maddison opens the Maddison Suite

required developing for rotary aircrew. Flt Lt Dorey, Cpl Sam Henson, Cpl Pip Wilson and Cpl Alex Joyce have been fundamental in this project. Their enthusiasm and passion has been greatly received by the aircrew who now understand what a 'Kettle bell' is, rather than thinking it was a bell that rang when the kettle boiled in the crew room.

The Rotary Aircrew Conditioning Programme has been developed to enhance performance and help minimise flight-related MSI and pain. It is a preventative strategy designed to be delivered to qualified aircrew and all student aircrew within the flying training pipeline.

THE RESULT

This project has been in the background

for 3-4 years. It has been a joint venture between the aircrew, Ascent, station physio department and PTIs. The teams have worked behind the scenes to gather evidence, design and ratify the Rotary ACP and source funding through 22 Group. By working collaboratively with different sections, the result has been the opening of the Maddison Suite within 1 FTS.

THE GOOD NEWS STORY

Air Marshal Maddison was very supportive of this project during his previous role as Air Officer Commanding 22 Group and recognised the potential risk to rearcrew when operating in the Juno and Jupiter cabin. The Suite is now fully operating and can be used in and around the flying programme, synthetic training, and ground briefings commitments. The aircrew can regularly conduct their own ACP after they have received the appropriate training from the PTIs. Trainees should embrace this facility and start on their ACP journey now and onward into their flying careers. This fantastic facility is evidence that improvements can be made by working as a team, putting in the effort and gaining support from the Chain of Command. Ultimately, ACP is there to educate and focus on injury protection rather than cure.

MAcr Matt Lingham



Flying Milestones

Flight Lieutenant Norman achieves 3000 Flying Hours

"I feel very lucky to be back in a flying appointment and to have achieved this milestone with Sixty Sqn at RAF Shawbury. Most of my previous flying was on the Chinook Force from 2002-2012, where I spent lots of time away in the hostile environments of Iraq and Afghanistan, or on other deployments around the world. The following 9 years of staff jobs in the UK and Italy provided some interesting experiences, but it's great to be back flying over the beautiful Shropshire countryside and not having anyone shooting at you! If my desk officer reads this, I'd like a re-tour please..." - Flt Lt Norman



Flt Lt Norman presented with his 3000 hours award



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DCASO Dits

The DCASO Diarists

ANNUAL DCASO DINNER

The Annual DCASO Dinner was held on 23rd March and we were honoured to welcome Air Commodore Kevin Cowieson, Air Officer Airbases, and Mr Michael Stoller, Aquila CEO, to the event as our VIP guests. With 121 attendees it was certainly a lively affair, and the RAF Salon Orchestra entertained us all admirably throughout the evening. We also took the opportunity to ask Air Cdre Cowieson to present the Dziuba Trophy which is awarded annually to the top performing RAF Joint Air Traffic Control Course Graduate who produced the highest combination of theoretical and practical assessment scores in the previous Training Year. We were delighted to present the Trophy to Sgt Harper, currently keeping the skies safe down at 78 Sqn, Swanwick. Throughout the meal we were also treated to vignettes on the Battle of Britain (Cpl Chapman), 9/11 (Cpl Rowe) and Operation HERRICK (WO Wosik), all of which were informative and entertaining.



Huge thanks must go to AS1 Greenslade and Fg Off Mannion and their team for organising such a fantastic evening and we are all looking forward to the next DCASO shindig.

Pictured right: Air Cdre Cowieson presents the Dziuba Trophy to Sgt Harper



AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS TRAINING SQUADRON (ASOTS)

April came as welcome relief for the Assurance Sqn, as the new Flight Operations Training Course (FOTC) was finished and put into action immediately. The new course takes on a modular approach, with the aim of allowing personnel with previous experience to complete only the required modules in order to qualify.

FS Watkins has spearheaded the

application to hold franchised DTc training at RAF Shawbury. The first two courses, run in Nov 22 and Feb 23, saw 16 people through the training, the next course is due to be held in May. Primarily aimed at upskilling DCASO trainers, the courses can be opened up to the wider station should space become available. The upcoming May course will see two external trainees attend for the first time, one from the

Apprenticeship Centre and one from the PEd Flight.

It was farewell to Sqn Ldr Martin, who has left on promotion to RAF Boulmer. The return of Sgt Beagley from the Falklands was appreciated by all baking fanatics within the Sqn, his skills were immediately tasked to supply cake for the inaugural use of the new crew room.

AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SQUADRON (ABMTS)

On the 23rd March we saw personnel of all ranks and services, along with a number of our civilian colleagues, come together to celebrate at the DCASO Anniversary Dinner which was a memorable night for many. The Anniversary Dinner included many traditions as well as entertainment for the night. The evening had a great atmosphere which showcased the standards and core values the military prides itself on.

ABMTS personnel have continued to be busy, frequently participating in Force Development (FD) and Adventurous Training (AT) opportunities. We have had a few members of SSF participate in the Winter Eagle scheme which saw two AS1's, (McGeachy and Baldock) go skiing. Many personnel took advantage of courses all over the country with members from SSF, AS1 Greenslade, AS1 McGeachy and AS1 Gisborn travelling to RAF Boulmer to participate in the ICT NVQ course. We also saw AS1 Morris participate in the Tedder Leadership Academy course to further develop her leadership and management skills by delivering presentations to large audiences. AS2 Collings supported UK Border Force on Op ILKANE at five different ports as a Primary Arrivals Control Agent. Checking arriving passenger's passports for counterfeit documents and legitimate entry, he

passed a variety of cases over to Border Force officers to investigate further. Cpl Thomas represented the RAF at the UK's biggest Gaming Festival that saw service personnel from all three services compete against one another and civilian teams. The event was held over four days and the RAF was reflected in an excellent light with the general public.

CTF and STF have also been very busy as multiple people have been involved in FD and AT. Flt Lt Davies has been involved in teaching people how to surf and he is currently away utilising his skills demonstrating how to successfully manoeuvre using the board. Flt Lt Hobbs has been away at RAF Waddington participating in Tactics Tuesday, and we also saw personnel from ABMTS attend the Air and Space Ops Symposium at Cranwell. The Surveillance team organised an All Ranks Paddleboarding afternoon which saw almost every member of STF get involved.

Unfortunately, the Sqn has seen the departure of FS Wright who has recently been posted to the Falklands and is set to leave the RAF on his return. We wish him all the best in his future career. Air and Space Operations Training Sqn The end of spring has been the calm before the storm for ASOTS, with only

ASOSC 6 in house for most of March. This allowed personnel to attend a range of different courses including the Risk Assessors course. As well as being good training for personal development, our personnel will also provide an invaluable service as a station asset by risk assessing events and Community Project days. This quieter period also allowed personnel to undertake RAF sport – with WO Williams attending the Basketball AIRCOM in Germany, Cpl Walker working his way towards cricket qualifications and Cpl Arkle competing for RAF Athletics at the Teddy Hall Relays. ASOTS also put forward 3 teams for the first iteration of this year's CO's cup, with one counting towards the overall trophy. ASOTS 1 (made up entirely of trainees) came an impressive joint 2nd giving us a good platform to try and win the CO's Cup outright. ASOTS would like to wish Cpl Lockwood well as he departs RAF Shawbury on promotion to Sgt, starting a new post at RAF High Wycombe. A massive congratulations from ASOTS as well to now FS Dale who has been promoted and is heading off to Assurance Squadron – we wish her all the best.

June and July are set to be very busy months for ASOTS with multiple courses going through at any one time, we are looking forward to the challenge!

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING SQUADRON

Fg Off Mannion managed to escape the UK's wintery weather this February by deploying to Oman and participating in Exercise MAGIC CARPET 23, an annual air combat training exercise hosted by the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) at Thumrait Airbase in the Southwest of the country.

Designed to strengthen the long-standing relationship between the two nations, Exercise MAGIC CARPET enables integration with the Omani Air Force, a key component to maintaining bilateral relations and security in the wider Gulf region.

Typhoons from RAF Coningsby and a Voyager from RAF Brize Norton operated alongside Omani Typhoons and F-16s, with sorties including a series of air-to-ground missions, extended by the air-to-air



Fg Off Mannion in the RAFO ATC Tower at Thumrait Airbase.



Exercise MAGIC CARPET

refuelling capability of the Voyager.

Fg Off Mannion deployed as a Liaison Officer in the ATC tower, providing SME guidance and support between the host nation ATCOs and RAF pilots, whilst also assisting with the running of the daily flying program.

The deployment gave Fg Off Mannion the opportunity to provide advice to the RAFO on UK ATC operating procedures whilst also learning from the RAFO about their ATC procedures.

Returning to the UK was a bit of a shock for her, leaving the sunny climate that averaged 30 degrees and arriving back to be greeted by snow!

Air and Space Operations Specialist Course 6 Graduation was Blessed

All graduations at RAF Shawbury are special as they mark the transition from training to the professional role. Those from ASOSC 6 may have

been a little more blessed than others. Usually the Reverend (Wing Commander) Alastair Bissell would give the blessing at graduations, a role he had undertaken during his 9 years at



RAF Shawbury. On this occasion though Alastair was invited to be the reviewing officer for the graduation by the Defence College of Air and Space Operations to mark his 31 years of service shortly before he retired.

As a special surprise the Deputy Chaplain in Chief, Reverend (Group Captain) Ruth Hake kindly agreed to give the blessing in place of Alastair. Reverend Alastair would often walk around the Station of a morning visiting.

CFS(H) NEWS

Course 392 Qualified Helicopter Instructor and Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructor Graduation

On Thursday 9th February 2023, CFS(H) Squadron celebrated the graduation of QHI/QHCl Course 392. The tri-service graduates, share a variety of Front Line experiences across a range of airframe types including Chinook, Wildcat, Puma, Merlin and Apache.

The QHI/QHCl course takes Qualified Pilots and Rearcrew and teaches them the instructional techniques required to provide training across a spectrum of abilities for teaching inexperienced ab-initio students the basics of flying. They leave the course as B2 QHIs (Qualified Helicopter Instructors) or B2 QHCl's (Qualified Helicopter Crewman Instructors), a number of which will stay at RAF Shawbury to teach flying trainees on No. 1 Flying Training School. Others return to Front Line Squadrons and Operational Conversion Units. CFS(H) Squadron would like to wish the graduates of 392 Course all the best in their future instructing.



392 QHI/QHCl with Group Captain Baron

AQUILA 'Treasure Hunt' Force Development Day

The recent Force Development Day in March saw a group of Aquila Flight Simulator Operators (FSOs) take part in two 'team building' activities as part of the 'One Force' initiative designed to bring together closer working relationships between military personnel and civilian contractors.

The first event was run in collaboration with the station's Physical Education (PEd) Flight, led by Sgt Glencross, a 'QR Town Trail' around the streets of Shrewsbury. Sgt Glencross met the eager group of FSO's on the town square outside the Old Market Hall on a chilly morning to explain the day and hand the teams their information packs that they would need to complete the task, which involved scanning a QR code on a smartphone giving a link to a series of questions related to locations in and around Shrewsbury town centre. Once complete, the teams had to submit their answers digitally before receiving their scores and any answers they had not managed to get correct. The second part of the task involved plotting these locations on a map and walking/running/shuffling (depending on which team you were in!) around town in an effort to obtain facts and answers to questions about the said locations. There were several miss-steps along the way, some huffing and puffing about how much walking there was, many dogs stroked along the way, one team stopped to allow a member to make a detour to ASDA to see if they had any of the 'YouTube generation's' favourite drink of choice in stock (we're not paid enough to advertise it here!). There were even several baffled locals, as one of the extra tasks the teams had been set, was to get a photograph taken with the best 'local character' they could find. After around three hours of fun, the teams reconvened and were met again by Sgt Glencross who went through the scores (and some of the disputed answers!) as well as explaining



Town Characters



Concentration!



On the trail

to everyone the benefits of the activity and discussing what experiences everyone had taken from the day. Sgt Glencross commented on how he was very impressed with all the teams' scores, all being above 40 and stated how these compared very favourably against military teams who had completed the same task. The eventual winners were the team of Phil Hannay, Kev Lutman, Dave Williams, Chris Basson and James Holloway, but all teams had enjoyed the day and gained something from the experience that they had not had at the beginning of the day.

The second event that was running concurrently to the 'trail' was a DCASO golf day, held at the very chilly and hilly Church Stretton Golf Club. The personnel were split into teams, each playing a version of Texas Scramble/best ball with Stableford scoring system. The FSO team, comprised of Fraser Rees, Callum Greybrook and Paul Berrick proved to be a match for almost

everyone present, finishing second place overall with a score of 48 points, just point one behind the eventual winners.

Two very successful outings for the FSO's, who now return to normality back in the DCASO simulators supporting the delivery of Programme Marshall. Everyone who took part would like to express thanks to Sgt Glencross and the PEd team for their running of the QR Trail as well as to DCASO for extending an invitation to the FSO's for the golf day.



A hilly, chilly golf course



Town Centre briefing

On 20th March, after a busy period at No. 1 Flying Training School, 2 Maritime Air Wing were able to release staff away on Force Development (FD).



2 Maritime Air Wing Force Development Day

There had been a plan to conduct an arduous walk in the Shropshire hills but alas, who would have known, there's a six-week lead-time to complete documentation for Armed Forces personnel to walk on public land. After a rapid replan, and hotly contested vote, it was decided that Karting at Rednal would be a suitable replacement activity. There was a good turnout on the day and those attending were met with some wet and blustery conditions. It became readily apparent that a few instructors were taking it more seriously than others; Lt Cdr Bane arrived in his Aston Martin with his own racing gear...not that this helped with his ranking in the end!

After a comprehensive safety brief from the staff, we all donned our race attire and the inevitable banter commenced! The qualifying laps warmed the tyres and determined our grid positions for the epic 50 lap endurance race to follow. Once in position, and after some furtive glances to check out our nearest rivals, the race began! The usual first

few laps of carnage ensued and there were a number of 'incidents' but these set the scene for the remainder of the event. The puddles on track throughout led to some amusing crashes, akin to a live version of Super Mario Kart. Some drivers, like Capt Levien, took a laissez-faire approach to the race, preferring to politely wave people past whereas others like Capt Evans, broke two karts before finding one that could stand up to his unique driving style.

In the end, the race was down to who had the best kart...nothing at all to do with the skills of the driver. They say, 'history is always written by the winners', but not in this case! Luckily I'm not bitter in the slightest.

On completion of the race, a hot debrief was conducted and the prizes were awarded to those with the best karts. Congratulations to Lt Andrews who clinched the win over Lt Cdr Butler, the first loser.

The day was topped off with a social evening in Shrewsbury and a team building dinner at the Beefy Boys restaurant. This was an ideal

opportunity for a thorough wash up of the day's activities and resulted in 'hands in the bar' on a number of occasions. More personnel, from across the School, were able to join us at the feast. Although everyone present ate more than their annual recommended allowance of meat, the award for daring had to go to Lt Cook who signed his life away on a disclaimer and consumed the 'Hell Boy 2.0'; I'm glad to say that he's still alive but he had an emotional time the following day. Special mention should be made to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, who were kind enough to contribute to elements of this team building event. These types of activities and the ability to get our teams together, outside the work environment, are a vitally important facet of military life, team cohesion and maintaining the morale of our personnel.

Thanks to all the participants for their good humour and enthusiasm and special thanks to Capt Evans and Lt Andrews for organising the day's events.



Royal Navy Force Development Experience

The Joint Air Traffic Control Course is a high intensity, mentally challenging course that is delivered within the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO) at RAF Shawbury by RAF, RN and Babcock personnel.

Recently, the ten strong Royal Navy contingent of Trainers and Trainees seized an opportunity to escape the simulators and classrooms for an afternoon of Force Development which consisted of a team lunch followed by Indoor Climbing in Shrewsbury. Though the Project Officer was criticized for the running order, with many citing the lunches 'extra weight' as the limiting factor to reaching their full climbing



Royal Navy or Mountain Goat?

potential, all thoroughly enjoyed the day. As a seasoned 'boulderer' Lt Huggett led the charge scaling the wall like a Mountain Goat, with the novice SLt Dennington keeping up as best he could more closely resembling a Sloth. The group would like to extend their thanks to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for the kind donation towards their much needed break from the workplace which consisted of some good bonding, a healthy dose of banter and even a little exercise to boot!



It's higher than it looks – honest!



Time to bond

1 FTS – Course 317-006 Community Project

Four members from 1FTS course 317-006, Lt Trass, Lt Knight, Lt Duncan and Lt Radford, have used their DIY skills by building an outdoor shed as a community project for the RAF Shawbury Youth Activity Centre.

The lieutenants, who are all trainee pilots from 2 Maritime Air Wing at 1 FTS, decided to take on the project to give back to the local community and help provide a functional space for the Youth Activity Centre for the summer.



The finished shed is now being used by the Youth Activity Centre as a storage space for equipment and as a shelter for outdoor activities. A great addition to the popular hangout spot for young people in the community.

Lt Trass said, "We wanted to do something that would benefit the local community and after reaching out to the Community Development Officer we thought that building a shed for the youth activity centre would be a great way to do so. It was hard work, but we're really pleased with the finished product and it's great to put our mark at RAF Shawbury."

Flight Sergeant Alison Bowyer, who manages the Youth Activity Centre, was very grateful to the lieutenants for their hard work in building the shed. She said, "It's made a huge difference and saved a lot of time and effort for the Community Development Team." The project is a great example of the Military working with the local community to make a positive impact. The lieutenants' time and effort in their spare time to carry out the project is a testament to the values and ethos of the British Armed Forces, and their contribution to the local community is greatly appreciated.

What are you doing on a Wednesday evening?

Can you be at the RAF Shawbury Station Church from 7.30pm-9.30pm? Would you like to meet new friends, learn new skills, have fun, all in the company of others who have a military connection, in a local, respectful, and safe place?

Did you know that every Wednesday evening at Shawbury the Station Church comes alive with singing?

Are you a Military wife, mum, serving, retired, or connected to the military in other ways such as working on the base? We have members who have been in the choir for over 10 years, members who have joined recently, as well as others who have moved

around and arrived from other military wives' choirs from around the world. We have members who come from all over the local area, from Wolverhampton to Cheshire, who are now part of a worldwide network of over 2000 members.

So why not try something new?

No experience necessary.
No auditions.

No need to read music.
We would love to see you.
Pop along for a cup of tea, cake, and see what we do.

A warm welcome and new group of friends awaits.

Email us:

Shawbury militarywiveschoirs.org
or find us on Facebook
<https://www.militarywiveschoirs.org>
#SingShareSupport
#StrongerTogether



GLIDING CLUB NEWS

'WE'RE OFF TO FLY IN THE ALPS'

During the year there are a number of opportunities for our club members to take part in gliding expeditions that allow service personnel to further develop their flying skills. This year four RAF Shawbury Gliding Club (RSGC) members, led by RAF Cosford based RSGC's Ian Gallacher as the expedition CFI, have been selected as some of the lucky participants to take part in the annual tri-service expedition, Parcours Combattants 29 Apr 23 – 14 May 23, to Sisteron in France and joining with pilots from the Royal Navy and Army.

If you haven't flown there before then you have to be prepared for the magnificent setting of the splendour of the French Alps. Sitting at over 1,700ft, Sisteron airfield lies on a large

plateau bordered to the West by the valley of the River Durance, and to the North, East and South by the Alps.



The expedition is open to all post-solo pilots and is a fantastic and challenging opportunity for young service personnel to fly in the southern French Alps, with the surrounding area making unique demands on the flying skills and personal courage of pilots of all experience levels.

We look forward to hearing how they get on later. However, if this has attracted your attention and you'd like to know more then, for an informal discussion about learning to fly with the RSGC, 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. Also available on ModNET Skype or Teams.

RSGC's R22 over Mountain Le Gache (4450ft) looking South towards Sisteron town with the Army Gliding Associations ASK21 A12



RSGC's Sgt Riley on the launch point with Navy Gliding Instructor WO Jamie Steel



You can also find more details on our website at:
<https://www.rafshawburygc.co.uk>
#rafgsa #gliding #raf_shawbury #raf_cosford.

Station Personnel Receive Awards

At a recent Ceremony the Station Commander was delighted to present awards to highly deserving personnel from the Whole Force at RAF Shawbury.

AIR OFFICER COMMANDING 22 GROUP COMMENDATION

Mr Seth

Mr Seth provided invaluable support to his Operations Manager in creating an Operations and Flight planning room from scratch. He has been integral in designing a robust training package for colleagues joining the team, then delivering this training on numerous occasions, demonstrating impressive capacity and commitment.

Sergeant Smart

Sgt Smart recognised a shortfall in Heat Illness Awareness Training and created and delivered an excellent training package on the subject to Senior Managers, which had a significant positive impact on the Station. His selfless dedication has made a significant difference to personnel at RAF Shawbury, and in the Wider community. His impact, contribution, and support to the veteran community and those ex-Service in need cannot be understated.

Corporal Quiney

For consistently performing above and beyond both his role and rank and his outstanding contribution to the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO) and RAF Shawbury. He invested his own time and know-how to enhance existing Defence Learning Environment Lessons with videos. As ProjO for the DCASO Estate Infrastructure Reformation, a task usually reserved for Junior Officers, he liaised closely with the Site Estates Authority Team and created a detailed plan to facilitate the re-situation of personnel and equipment across the 10-Building DCASO estate.



Mr Seth presented with his Commendation



Sergeant Smart presented with his Commendation



Corporal Quiney presented with his Commendation



The Air and Space Operations Training Squadron Course Design Team

The Air and Space Operations Training Squadron Course Design Team has an exceptional work ethic, proactive planning, and creative thinking. Through creative innovative thinking by the team, their work resulted in a twenty-five per cent reduction in training time on the new Air and Space Operations Specialists Course. Commanding Officer's Commendation

Cpl Mackinnon

Awarded in appreciation for selfless dedication and professionalism, contributing to enhancing the moral component of the Station. By making vast improvements in Force Protection information management, across training and operational areas, he has positively affected the operational efficiency of the Service and its personnel deploying on Operations.



Corporal Mackinnon presented with his Commendation.



ROYAL WARRANT

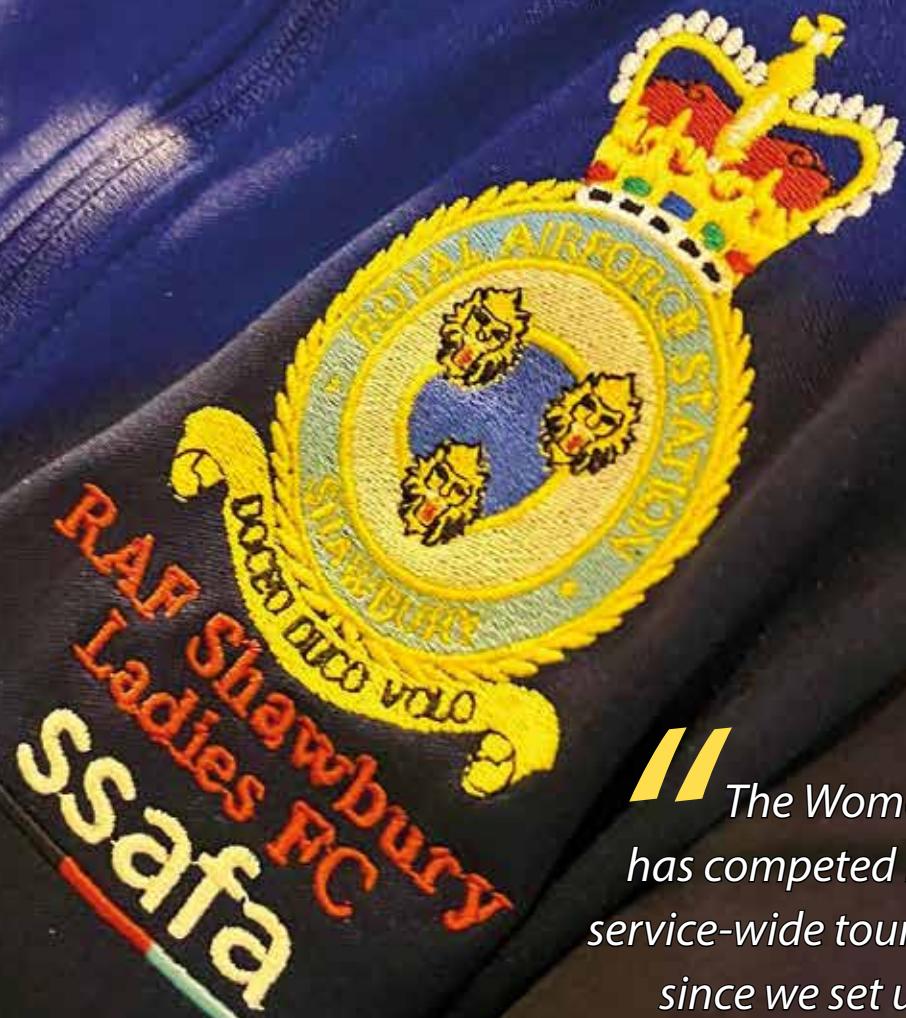
Warrant Officer Owens

Promoted to Warrant Officer in December 2021 he became Station Warrant Officer at RAF Shawbury.

Throughout his distinguished career, he has deployed in support of Operations on numerous occasions including Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and The Falklands.

Warrant Officer Owens presented with his Royal Warrant

SSAFA Support RAF Shawbury Women's Football Team



“The Women’s team has competed in several service-wide tournaments since we set up 3 years ago, and has allowed women to enhance their physical fitness which in turn leads to a more positive mental health, along with this the sense of team spirit and achievement”

Team badge showing SSAFA support

SPORTS AND FITNESS NEWS

SSAFA was set up in 1885 and they have been providing support to people for over 130 years at any stage of their career, both serving and veterans.

SSAFA, now with over 4000 trained volunteers, help the Armed Forces in several ways, providing support to individuals in need of physical or emotional care. At RAF Shawbury the SSAFA Service Committee have supported the women's football team by generously providing the funds for the team to purchase new training tops for the players.

The RAF Shawbury Women's football team offers a sense of belonging to many women, providing integration across whole force at Shawbury. The team is made up of serving personnel, dependants, and civil servants. We offer support to each other, especially in times of loneliness when partners may be deployed away, single parents and those who are away from family while living in the block.

The Women's team has competed in several service-wide tournaments since we set up 3 years ago, and has allowed women to enhance their



physical fitness which in turn leads to a more positive mental health, along with this the sense of team spirit and

achievement. This is what brings the women together week in week out.

RAF Shawbury
Women's Football
Team





Flt Lt Al Molloy showing the Appeal logo at the DEB School in Gilgil

RAF Football Association Linked Charitable Appeal Completes Huge Kenya Delivery Visit

The charitable appeal operated from RAF Shawbury has completed its largest delivery visit in the 17 years since its inception, to Kenya in East Africa.



A little girl enjoying her new Shrewsbury shirt at Saidia Children's home in Gilgil

The RAF Football Association (RAF FA) Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal delivers 'Aid through Football' by collecting donated items of football kit and redistributing them to children and adults across the globe. The Appeal, which is organised by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE and Squadron Leader Mark Smales, was set up in 2006 to deliver kit to Africa. It quickly became global and to date has delivered 348570 items of kit,

including over 98935 football shirts to 63 countries worldwide.

The Appeal team departed for Kenya on 10th April with a mixed Military and Civilian group of 16 people and completed 34 separate deliveries in and around Nairobi and in Gilgil, 2 hours north of the capital on the Great Rift Valley. In total, the team delivered 19000 items including 5800 football shirts. In completing the deliveries, the team interacted with



The team at the Trophy presentation at the Charlotte Hope Tournament, organised by the Hearts of Ruiru in Nairobi, Kenya

One Family



Neil and Chris Hope at the Charlotte Hope Tournament held by the Hearts of Ruiru in Ruiru, Nairobi

children and adults in the major slum areas of Kibera, Kibagare and Mathare as well as schools, orphanages and football teams who were all in need of essential, life changing aid. Kibera is Africa's largest slum with over one million people living in an area of around 3 square kilometres with no permanent running water or electricity supplies and no sewerage system. In Gilgil, the team were honoured to be able to spend 2 nights at the Restart Centre, founded by the incredible Mary Coulson MBE.

The centre is beloved by the Appeal as Neil's daughter Charlotte volunteered there for a month in 2019. Charlotte was tragically killed in a car crash on 9th April 2022 and her mother Helen was seriously injured. As the first trip since Charlotte passed away it was poignant that 2 of her university flat mates and one of her work friends joined the team on this trip. Additionally, the Hearts of Ruiru, a group which the team have worked with for many years, organised a brilliant Tournament in Charlotte's name which the Appeal provided trophies and kits for.

Neil said, 'This delivery visit was superb in allowing the Appeal to renew its friendships across Kenya. Building on our huge successes of 2022 coupled with this being my 17th Kenya delivery trip and now with over 100 people taking part over the years was special, especially given the emotional issues in returning to the country and people my daughter cherished. Charlotte intended to gain her Primary Education degree and move to teach in Kenya to allow her to continue her voluntary work with the Restart Centre.



Cpl Pip Wilson shows her football skills at the Dr Krapf School in Eastlands with a child from the Musa Otieno Academy in his QPR shirt

The trip was emotionally difficult but made easier by the excellent team of people joining and supporting me. Helen and I continue to raise funds for the Restart Centre as a legacy to our beloved daughter. More detail at <https://justgiving.com/fundraising/helenhope28>.

Neil would like to thank all the people, clubs and schools that donated items delivered on this visit and to the Appeal, as well as all who have helped us achieve this amazing success, especially the team at Shawbury who help with the Appeal including Supply Receipt and Despatch and also at RAF Brize Norton, BATUK, and Braeburn Garden Estate School. The Appeal has started 2023 strongly with 16 deliveries across the world completed to date, including new countries added with Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Georgia. So far, this year we have dispatched an incredible 14711 items, including 4528 shirts to 9 countries. We look forward to continuing another exciting year.'



FS Alison Bowyer, Service Community Support Officer at RAF Shawbury, taking delivery of the Air Fryers.

The RAF Shawbury Community Support team manage Contact Accommodation, supported by RAFA, to provide temporary accommodation to support welfare cases for Service personnel and their families. The Shrewsbury Branch of RAFA recently donated equipment to be used in Support Accommodation. Paul Sharp, the Branch Chairman said, "Shrewsbury Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association greatly value the support and friendship that we receive from RAF Shawbury and as a small thank you we are delighted to be able to provide a replacement Condenser Tumble Dryer and 3 x Air Fryers for use within the Station Contact Accommodation."

Funky Socks

for World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) 2023 took place on 23rd March. The 21st day of March (the 3rd month of the year) is selected and celebrated each year to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which results in a diagnosis of Down Syndrome – medical name Trisomy 21.



Jazzy socks in ATC

W DSD is designed to show the joy anyone with Down Syndrome brings to the world and to help reduce the stigma that still surrounds it. Through education and initiatives it allows children to attend mainstream school and allows adults to work; not to encounter barriers but to be embraced within society. For this year's WDSD the RAF Shawbury Air Traffic Control Squadron, and other personnel across Operations Wing, supported World Down Syndrome Day by wearing a selection of bold, funky and colourful socks! Senior Air Traffic Control Officer (SATCO), Sqn

Ldr Pipkin's son, Albie, has Down Syndrome and he actively fundraises on behalf of Down Syndrome UK and Positive About Down Syndrome (PADS), charities which have provided exceptional support to his wife and him since the diagnosis early in the pregnancy. SATCO is passionate in helping to dispel the unwarranted stigma that still surrounds Down Syndrome and help to promote the support of those charities associated. WDSD and the wearing of bold / colourful socks is designed to symbolise the uniqueness of every chromosome – each one valuable, and one-of-a-kind!



SATCO's funky socks

Down Syndrome and never was this more evident than some of the very early conversations, with medical professionals, which included lots of 'sorry for the diagnosis' etc. As you can imagine this was not only unhelpful but also very upsetting and disheartening.

Thankfully, we were very quickly introduced to the charity PADS who I can honestly say have been phenomenal with their support and guidance! Through online learning, specialist baby classes, Makaton signing courses and many more events, our knowledge of Down Syndrome has continued to grow and we can't wait to continue to see Albie grow and lead an independent life. We cannot thank PADS enough which is why I continue to support and thank them through my running and other sporting events.

Sqdn Ldr Pipkin ran the 2023 Manchester Marathon, in April, in support of PADS. This is ultimately to try and help dispel the stigma surrounding Down Syndrome and show just how amazing people with Down Syndrome are!

festival at the edge

21-23 July 2023

Hopton Court, Cleobury Mortimer,
Kidderminster DY14 0EF



Join us for our 30th Birthday celebrations to enjoy superb Storytelling, music, workshops, and much more, in beautiful South Shropshire

"Amazing music, wonderful activities, excellent!"

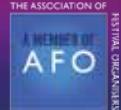
"Lovely atmosphere, beautiful landscape."

"Great festival... there's nothing quite like it!"

Our festival takes place in the stunningly beautiful Hopton Court, set in 1,000 acres of captivating countryside, with fabulous views across the Shropshire landscape, providing a magical setting.

Artists appearing include:

Adam Beresford-Brown, Andy Harrop Smith, Angeline Morrison, Dan Serridge, The Daring Young Men, Gitân, Honor Giles and Helen Stewart, Jon Buckeridge, Jordan Campbell, Keith Donnelly with Lauren Smith, Linda Moylan, Liz Weir, Lucy Wells, Mart Van den Abbeele and Tom Van Outryve, Michael Harvey, Nell Phoenix, Peter Chand, Pete Morton, P J Roscoe, Sarah McQuaid, She Shanties, Taffy Thomas, Talis Kimberley, Tamar Eluned Williams, Tom Brown with Hopeless Maine, Transglobal Underground, Xanthe Gresham Knight, *with more to be announced.*



Weekend and day tickets available, please see our website for details.

taking storytelling to the edge

For more information:

email: info@festivalattheedge.org

www.festivalattheedge.org

tel: 07544 044 126

festival at the edge

Festival at the Edge (21-23rd July) reaches maturity this year as it celebrates its 30th Birthday in style with a combination of festival favourites and emerging new talent, keeping the festival creatively "on the edge" and constantly evolving. This delightful festival takes place in its new home at Hopton Court, near the market town of Cleobury Mortimer, with stunning views over the South Shropshire Hills. Whilst FatE has always been unique in presenting storytelling alongside folk music, this year they are bringing storytellers and music performers together on the same stage in "Stories and Songs" shows, creating distinctively blended performances for a vibrant festival.

There is something for everyone including Greek epic tales, trickster tales and sensuous stories for adults. Highlights include Xanthe Gresham-Knight with thrilling tales of Goddesses and Heroines; Liz Weir, from Ireland, sharing tales of Banshees and Selkies; and Michael Harvey with mesmerising shows for adults and children. Newcomers this year include: Tamar Eluned Williams (UK Young storyteller of the year, 2013; Gwobr Esyllt Harker Award for a Welsh woman storyteller in 2016), she believes that "stories and storytelling should be for everyone"; and Jordan Campbell (drawing on stories from Africa and the Caribbean). Fate couldn't celebrate its 30th Birthday without the inimitable Taffy Thomas (MBE and first Storytelling Lauriat), sharing his wit and wisdom and "Tales from the Tale Coat".

FatE's fabulously diverse music programme is headed by Trans-Global Underground, who pride themselves on genre-breaking

music. Meanwhile, songwriter Sarah McQuaid (dual Irish and American citizenship), has been compared to Joni Mitchell, Karen Carpenter, and Lana Del Rey. For something gentler, but no less genre-breaking, Gitân's sonic tapestry of Indian harmonium and Celtic lever harp, combines music and poetry from Indian and Celtic traditions. And if this doesn't float your boat – perhaps the fabulous She Shanties will hit the spot? Eleven strong female voices singing traditional shanties and songs of the sea - boisterous and emotionally stirring.

The Children's Marquee returns this year with a full storytelling programme, while Panic Circus work-shoppers will be touring the site, teaching stilt walking, juggling and unicycle riding.

For a more hands-on experience immerse yourself in the various workshops including: storytelling; music; laughter yoga; tai chi; introduction to sword handling; and creative making workshops. Or bring your instruments (and voices) to join the music sessions in the bar.

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