



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
NORFOLK BRANCH
NEWSLETTER NO.229 June 2018**

President: Squadron Leader Paul Bruning (Rtd)
Chairman: Mr. Tony Leonard + Standard Bearer
Vice Chairman: Mr. Paul Rainbird + Programme Secretary
Secretary: David McEwen
Treasurer: Gill McEwen



Dear Member

Enclosed in this newsletter is your Annual Membership Receipt and Sticker. Thank you.

APRIL BRANCH MEETING

Tony welcomed members and especially Laurie Rooke for his talk 'A walk by the Canal'.

Laurie told us how at the age of 18 he was 'Called Up' leaving his home village of Beccles, was sent to RAF training, then ended up in the RAF Regiment. He was posted to the Suez and after an enjoyable journey by sea arrived at the Canal Zone where it was all sand and heat and was told it was not safe to go out alone.

Laurie told of the impression other people had on him and that he admired. And the many exploits he had in the Zone, at times lucky to be safe. The talk was enjoyed by all members who felt it came from the heart. Tony thanked Laurie for entertaining us.

BRANCH MINUTES

Chairman reported that the Spring Lunch was a success.

Secretary's Report

David read a card from Jacque Blackmore saying it was good to see members at the Spring Lunch and enclosing a cheque for £50 in memory of her husband, Bob. A 'thank you' card for her kind donation has been sent. A 'thank you' has also been sent to David Moreton for his kind £30 donation.

Secretary reminded members that the Dedication Service at Catterick is on the 19th May 2018.

AOB

Paul Rainbird reminded members that Louise's funeral is on 26th April and there will be a 'Guard of Honour'.

Everyone present agreed the Spring Lunch at the Old Rectory had been very successful and hope that it will go ahead next year. Paul has been in touch with Beckie and we are provisionally booked for 2nd May 2019.

David Moreton told Paul he had enjoyed the meal and hoped to be able to attend some of our monthly meetings.

MAY BRANCH MEETING

David welcomed our speaker Sue Pearce, who gave a very interesting talk 'The Hearts of Oak' all about the formation of the Royal Navy, how it began by adding guns to merchant ships, which caused many disasters including the sinking of the 'Mary Rose'.

Eventually specially designed ships were built and we heard all about life aboard 'HMS Victory'. The way the crew lived, the food they ate, how it was stored and how many of the 'sayings' came into being.

David thanked Sue and we are looking forward to hearing about 'Nelson's Women'.

BRANCH MINUTES

David explained that the information sheet circulated to members had been emailed from Headquarters and was about Data Protection and how it will effect the Branch. (Details are on page 10 of this Newsletter).

David read a letter from Colin Clarke apologising for not being able to attend today's meeting. He thanked members for their cards and kind thoughts after the sad loss of his beloved Louise. He appreciated the 'Guard Of Honour' by Branch Members.

A cheque for £760 has been sent to Brain Tumour Research. Sincere thanks.

A special thanks to Paul Rainbird who was the link between Colin and Branch Members when needed. Colin considers Norfolk Branch members to be more like family than friends.

The members all applauded the letter. Thinking of Colin and family, we look forward to seeing him next month.

David explained that Paul Rainbird was unable to attend the meeting as he had had a fall in his garden. Members sent him all their best wishes for a quick recovery. He was definitely missed at the meeting.

The following is from Centurion 1997 and printed with permission of the editor.

The Unsung Song of the Tung Song by Sqn Ldr E J Gee.

Sqn Ldr Gee was originally commissioned into the 4th (Prince of Wales Own) Gurkha Rifles and saw service on the North West Frontier and Java. Following the partition of India he transferred to the RAF Regiment. He served in the usual range of units and staff appointments including a three year tour with the Iraq Levies. He attended the RAF Staff College in 1965 and subsequently commanded 51 Squadron.

For the final eight years of his service he filled a retired officers post on the C Regt O's staff of the then RAF Support Command. He finally retired in 1998. Sqn Ldr Gee is a member of the Royal Air Force Historical Society.

The RAF Order of Battle in Malaya on 22 November 1941 comprised 23 units. One was the SS Tung Song with the name Plt Off G T Broadhurst beside it. The Tung Song was a twin screw oil fired vessel of some 549 tons, built in Hong Kong in 1928 and refitted in 1936. She was requisitioned as an RAF Auxiliary (RAFA) in December 1939. She was then painted grey and equipped with five Vickers drum fed machine guns (for air defence purposes) and 12 Lee Enfield rifles.

Because the vessel was on charter to the RAF, the Singapore Straits Steamship Company continued to man it with British officers and a crew of 40 natives (Malays and Chinese). Before Singapore was threatened Plt Off Broadhurst's detachment consisted of two wireless operators, a nursing orderly and an armourer.

At the end of 1941 RAFA Tung Song's base was Singapore. She carried stores and the occasional passenger to Air Force installations in Far East Command. It was decided that, in an emergency, the vessel could carry 250; thus before the ship sailed on 1 December 1941 she took on board emergency rations for 250. These were to be used much sooner than expected.

She was in Rangoon harbour and Elagapore during some of the heaviest Japanese air raids, and her crew saw both these cities burning.

The stores she took to Rangoon included 2,000 bombs. The RAF had an emergency facility at Nancowry for flying boats and

stationed a lone airman to look after it - some posting!

When the ship sailed from Sabang on 9 January 1942, the captain avoided the risky Malacca Strait by sailing down the west coast of Sumatra and through the Sunda Strait to Singapore, arriving there on 22 January 1942.

When she left Singapore on 3 February 1942 the Tung Song carried stores and other material salvaged from Singapore for shipment to Sumatra where the RAF planned to set up a new headquarters at Palembang. In the cargo were 58 crates containing the complete stock of the Command's maps and charts. Embarked also was the personal kit and batman of Air Cdr B J Silly NC DFC, SASO Far East, who had been hastily despatched to Sumatra to establish a new headquarters there. The Air Cdr was accompanied in his posting by his wife, Francis Fanny Silly; they both joined the Tung Song at Oosthaven on 8 February 1942.

When Tung Song sailed from Singapore for the last time, Plt Off Broadbent's detachment had grown to 11 airmen and as well as the original two wireless operators, the nursing orderly and armourer it now included two cooks, two aircraft fitters, an airman in charge of the maps/charts, the batman and (hence this article and a ground gunner. It is believed the airman's name was Harold/Horace McKell, but this matter is still being checked out with PMan4 at Innsworth. His inclusion in the RAF detachment abroad was fortuitous in the extreme.

When he was posted to the vessel to replace the armourer, Plt Off Broadhurst initially refused to accept him because he did not have the necessary skills. However, the Sergeant who had conducted him to the ship persuaded Broadhurst to accept him saying that 'he had had a hard time in some of the early air raids' (on Singapore). Incidentally, he subsequently acquired the nickname of 'The Colonel' from his shipmates.

When the Tung Song arrived at Oosthaven on 7 February 1942 the orders for Air Cdre Silly had been changed and he was now to proceed to Batavia. For some unknown reason the charts were unloaded at Oosthaven and lost! The Tung Song now sailed through Sunda Strait to Bavaria, arriving there on 13 February. She anchored in the roads but the crew were allowed ashore in the ship's launch.

The Dutch initially refused to supply the ship with oil and water but eventually, through the good offices of the port's Chief Naval Officer (a Commodore in the Royal Australian Navy) the vessel topped up with the necessary oil and water from a RN tanker, the War Sirdar. At this point Air Cdr Silly and his wife disembarked but his batman remained on board the Tung Song.

The ship left Batavia in the afternoon of 19 February in a 'convoy' of motley ships but was not escorted. When the passengers and crew awoke next morning they were dismayed to find that the ship had pulled out of the convey at the beginning of a rain storm that had occurred during the night. Thus the Tong Song (and all aboard) found itself all alone and at the 'wrong' end of the Strait.

At daylight they weighed anchor. During the afternoon they sighted an aircraft coming straight for them. Fortunately it turned out not to be a Japanese one as they had first feared, but a Catalina of 205 Squadron. Its crew saw the RAF ensign that the ship flew by virtue of being a RAFA, waved and flew on.

It was a very long day but eventually night came without an attack materialising; the only other ships they had seen in the Straits were either sunk or beached, some burning. They had made it!

By the time that the Tung Song reached Tjilatjap on 22 February she needed urgent repairs; these involved dismantling the boilers to do some welding.

From the time the Japanese entered the war Tung Song had been lucky. Apart from a few hours on 19 February when the ship had been anchored off Batavia, she had been ploughing along at her steady eight knots, alone and unescorted for 35 days. The only enemy sighted had been some zero fighters on 3 February shortly after she had sailed from Singapore, which had for some unaccountable reason ignored her presence.

At Tjilatjap, however, her luck seemed to have run out. For before the work to her boilers (which was being undertaken by some Dutch engineers from a vessel nearby) had been completed, the workers were recalled by the immediate departure of their ship. The decision was then made that the ship would be towed up river and scuttled. To say the least this was not a pleasant prospect! It was decided therefore, that some DIY

was called for and the two engine fitters and armourer as having the skills (?) most suitable for the job were to help the chief engineer to finish the work. Fortunately the Dutch engineers had done the welding required but had left the boilers partly dismantled. To reassemble them someone had to get inside the boiler and hold the tubes while they were fixed in position.

This task fell to the armourer who remembers seeing the sky as he looked through the funnel! Eventually the tubes were replaced and all that was left to do was to refit the boiler face plates. Consternation-no-one could find the face plates bolts removed by the original workers before they disappeared.

(Author's Note: Why MGM or J Arthur Rank did not snap up this story for a film will never be known).

Then someone found some lengths of threaded rod of the same diameter and thread as the missing bolts in a corner of the engine room, with a supply of nuts to fit. Breathe again. Then the chief engineer, wielding a heavy hammer, squashed the end of the piece of rod over the nut. Thus were the bolts made serviceable enough for the Tung Song to steam all the way to Freemantle in Australia, but more drama was to occur before that came about.

While all this was taking place, 205 (Catalina) Squadron, now with only one aircraft left serviceable, had fallen back to Tjilatjap. When Tung Song was ready to sail (2 March 1942), therefore, most of the personnel, including one complete Catalina crew, went aboard by launch.

Just as the Tung Song was raising steam to sail, the last serviceable Catalina returned from its final patrol so the 'spare' aircrew aboard the ship disembarked to fly the aircraft to Broome in Western Australia. This was an ill-fated decision as will be seen as the story unfolds.

When the Tung Song had raised steam she moved towards the wharf only to run aground on a sandbank! Despite repeated efforts at going full steam astern she remained firmly stuck. Then in the gathering gloom a small Dutch tug appeared out of nowhere and pulled her free.

At last she made fast alongside the wharf where a mixture of RAF and RAFA personnel were lined up waiting to embark.

They were scruffy, having only the clothes they stood up in.

However, theirs was no panic evacuation as they had been mustered from other units in Batavia after taking into account their specialist skills/trades.

When they had boarded Tung Song another party appeared and embarked also. By this time it was dark and the harbour deserted of all shipping. When it was time to sail, Plt Off Broadhurst asked the RAF officer supervising the embarkation if he was coming with him. He (Wg Cdr O G Gregson) said that he would stay with the men left behind and walked ashore. At least one member of the RAF detachment (the armourer Ron Lovell) considered Gregson to be a 'great man' and that 'if there had been more like him Singapore would never have fallen'.

The Tung Song then sailed, rumour has it the only chart to help it navigate from Tjilatjap to Fremantle was a Phillips school atlas!

As may well be imagined the vessel was very crowded. Three officers' wives (Mrs Patricia Lockwood, Mrs Ellen Cecily Evans and Mrs Jane Powell) were aboard and occupied the cabins on the poop deck. The officers were on the boat deck which became so crowded that some had to sit in the ship's lifeboat. The airmen were on the main and lower decks. Toilet facilities were strained especially as one toilet on the lower deck was reserved for VD cases!

No doubt this was to preclude the subsequent excuse.....'but I caught it off a lavatory seat doctor'.

Food was plain but adequate - Army biscuits, bully beef and McConochie stew. The troops occupied themselves as they have done since time immemorial - talking, playing cards and sleeping. One day a stupid gunner decided to test one of the Vickers guns and fired a few rounds without warning. Panic until the cause was discovered.

The luck of the Tung Song held and apart from a Japanese float plane sighted on the morning of 4 March, no other vessels were sighted. Unbeknown to the company their luck was even greater than they knew, for just over the horizon in front of them a convey was attacked and sunk by a force of Japanese cruisers and destroyers. One of the ships lost was HMS Yarra.

On 12 March 1942 Tung Song at last reached the safety of Freemantle and landed its

passengers. Among the few records that existed which make mention of the Tung Song, is an entry in the unit history of No 5 Personnel Depot, Freemantle which reads:

'13 March 1942, 29 officers, 166 other ranks (Nos 205 and 211 Squadrons RAF), three officers' wives' one officer Royal Artillery, disembarked ex Far East per RAFA Tung Song'.

Regrettably Air Cdr Silly was taken prisoner and died on 7 December 1943. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Hong Kong. Wg Cdr Gregson became a POW and was senior officer of a camp on Java. He survived and lived in Australia after the war. It may be the cause of some wry amusement that Air Cdr Silly's batman lost no time in disposing of some of his kit - he sold a dress suit to a Malay quartermaster.

Returning to the 'spare' Catalina crew (captained by Flt Lt Garnell) who had disembarked at Tjilatjap. Captain FV-N arrived at Broome (W Australia) on 3 March carrying them as a second crew. At 0950 hrs a Japanese air attack destroyed all 15 flying boats still on the water in Broome harbour. Garnell's crew were still aboard FV-N; he and three others were killed instantly, one (a flying officer Man Nohan Singh RIAF) was drowned and two others were wounded. Such are the fortunes of war.

Some of the airmen were posted to 54 Squadron (Spitfires); first at Richmond, NSW and later at Darwin. The fitters and the ground gunner went to India. The latter embarked in the transport 'P4' on 6 September 1942, by which time he would have automatically become a member of the RAF Regiment.

The Tung Song subsequently became a US Army supply ship and served in the New Guinea Area. In November 1945 she was returned to her owners (the Straits Steamship Company) and arrived back in Singapore on 21 November 1945. She then resumed her usual service until, on a visit to Indonesia in April 1958, she was bombed by Indonesian insurgents during the civil war then prevailing and sunk in a small harbour in Sulawesi (Celebes).

Sic transit gloria mundi!

This article is based on original research carried out by Hugh Campbell and Ron Lovell (the armourer of the story), both of Australia.

MEMORIES

I took part in the Coronation Parade at Dusseldorf. Representing 2 Wing. I belonged to 54 Rifle Squadron, stationed at at Wildenrath near Munden Gladbech. We had just finished a big exercise when we were told to go to 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards Barracks at Krefeld.

I'm writing this because a couple of really funny things happened whilst there. The first few days the food was awful. The canteen had rough wooden tables and many sparrows flew in and out pinching crumbs from the table.

After complaining to our officers the food improved, but at Wildenrath we used to get a one and only fried egg on a Sunday morning. All we got at Krefeld was a burnt kipper and gluey porridge which wasn't worth getting up for on a Sunday.

During this time we became friendly with some of the Guards who shared our table at meal times. There was always plenty of bread but no butter, so we kept onto them that they ought to make a complaint about no butter.

At one tea meal we were all sitting eating our meal when the Orderly Officer and Sergeant made their round. The usual 'Any Complaints?' was called out. Here's your chance we said to the Guards and working them up to boiling point about No Butter.

The big burly Sergeant and Officer came to our table. 'Table attention and stop chewing' barked the Sergeant. Any Complaints? 'Yes Sir', said one of the guards, 'No butter on the table Sir'. 'No butter' said the Sergeant apparently amazed anyone complained. 'No butter eh. Right stand up and say the Lords Prayer Guardsman'.

The Guard stood up and when he got to the piece 'Give us our daily bread'. The Sergeant said 'stop is their any mention of butter?' 'No Sir' said the Guard. 'Then sit down and keep quiet,' said the Sergeant. Also 'take his name' said the Sergeant to the Corporal with him.

All this time we Regiment lads were creased up. I had a mouthful of food which I nearly choked on. We couldn't laugh or we would have been on a charge.

I can tell you that more than a trickle of warm water ran down my leg.

After they moved away we just laughed and laughed. The guards all took it well too.

The other funny thing was while we were on the Coronation Parade, we had done the open order for inspection and we had a long wait in complete silence.

I was in the centre row, when an airmen just to my right had a wagtail tit alight on his flat cap and started pecking bits out of it. Everyone started to quietly giggle trying to suppress laughter and I expect a little trickle escaped down some trouser legs.

Yours faithfully,

H.W.Millen

THE BAND THAT NEVER WAS

(This article was first published in Band International - The Magazine of the International Music Society - in March 1986 and reproduced by kind permission of the Author).

One of life's regrets is that I never actually got to play in a military band. This is in spite of being, at 18, a reasonably competent instrumentalist and serving - reluctantly, but faithfully H M King George VI for a fair stint from 1941 to 1946.

Yet there was an occasion when I came within a whisker of such an achievement, cheated only by well, even now, I don't know what went wrong.

At the beginning of the time mentioned, no one could have been at a lower status in the Royal Air Force than that of Aircraftman Second Class, Ground Gunner, Group V. Yet from such unpromising material as I, was shortly to emerge that illustrious and elite Corps, the Royal Air Force Regiment.

There was the routine familiar with slight variations to every 'erk' of the day, kitting out at Cardington, square bashing in the streets of Boston, charging with a fixed bayonet over the golf links at Whitley Bay, as a full blown AC2, having the defence of RAF Oakington thrust into my care.

Then it all happened. To Blackpool for tropical kit, thence to Liverpool to discover the delights of cruising from a hammock on D Deck aboard the Canadian Pacific liner 'Duchess of Richmond'.

Two months later, by way of Freetown, Durban and Bombay I was put ashore at Basra on the Persian Gulf and whisked across the Iraqi desert to Shaibah.

Anyone who has been to Shaibah will not have forgotten the experience. Before the war it had been a staging post for Imperial Airways and a point where a 150 strong RAF contingent with a clutch of ancient biplanes kept order under the term of the British Mandate and later Treaty. The charms of the place were extolled in that mildly obscene ditty known as the 'Shaibah Blues'.

In 1942 the station was bloated to about twenty-fold. Its main function was to assemble and test Baltimore aircraft shipped over from the United States around the Cape. Before being handed over to the taciturn Russian technicians and pilots the white stars were carefully over-painted red.

The place was a complete backwater, remote from the attentions of the enemy, but prone to all sorts of horrible disease generated under conditions of fierce heat which seemed to beat like drumsticks on the pith-helmet in the noonday sun.

Apart from that, the biggest enemy was boredom. There was the little peace time open-air cinema, the occasional squadron concert. But beyond them only fly-swatting and frequent trips to the water cooler.

So that, when a notice appeared to the effect that a military band was to be formed on the station, the rush of applicants was truly astounding. The bandmaster-elect was a tall, bespectacled man with little military bearing - but then, which of us had?

The story was that he had been a professional horn player with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, so he should have known his stuff. He interviewed us all and very soon the notice board boasted a 50 strong aggregation with lots of clarinets, saxophones and brass of every description.

All that was lacking was the instruments. These were reliably reported as being 'on the way'; to while away the time, the bandmaster has regular classes in musical theory, the repertoire, band instrumentation and even drill movements drawn on a blackboard. After some weeks of this the finest tacet military band in the entire Middle East.

But still no instruments! Next to a pub with no beer, there can hardly be a more frustrating circumstance than a band with no instruments.

Then the joyous rumour went round. The instruments had arrived! Well, not exactly

arrived in Shaibah - but they were in Bombay and only needed collecting. However, Bombay is quite a distance from Iraq; they would have to come by sea and were well down the list of War-Effort priorities. Then our intrepid Sergeant-bandmaster set off with the avowed intention of getting transport organized and his band in full blowing order.

He was never seen againat least not by me.

I survived that Iraqi hot season and the winter which followed, avoided a second dose of the heat since the War required my services elsewhere. There was a Commando course in Amman and a Gunner course with the Royal Artillery in Heliopolis.

Then our squadron settled down to a nomadic life, I helped trundle that Bofors gun up and down the Western Desert, over to Italy, then to Greece, back to Italy and up the peninsular to finish the War in Austria. I had my demob suit on when next I had the chance of a serious blow.

The Story of the Shaibah RAF Station Band, the Band That Never Was, happened in a remote outpost a very long time ago. Yet it is possible that someone may remember the events as I have related them.

What happened to the Bournemouth bandmaster? Did he get to Bombay only to discover 'they' had sent only a couple of clarinets and a cornet? Who could blame him for not wanting to face again his fifty frustrated fellow bandsmen?

W HORWOOD

Formerly LAC Harwood W

2927 and 2926 Squadrons RAF Regiment

TRIBUTE TO THE GODDESS OF WIFI

Hedy Lamarr is remembered as a raven-haired screen goddess, the pouting Delliiah who seduced a Hollywood Samson.

But she had another incarnation as a scientific pioneer-coming up with the technology that has led to modern wireless communication, or wifi. Now a documentary has been made about Lamarr's life, her scientific achievements are coming under the spotlight.

In the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Lamarr's invention which she called 'frequency hopping' was used on U.S. warships. Today we owe much to it: modern Bluetooth communication, the GPS positioning systems in cars and phone maps, and wireless internet.

DID YOU KNOW? TAX EXCUSE

A man claimed he was unable to file his tax return because his wife had seen aliens and refused to let him in the house, according to a list of bizarre excuses seen last year by HMRC. Another said he was unable to get his tax return from upstairs as he had vertigo.

Tax payers who miss the January 31 self-assessment deadline without good reason face a £100 fine.

OTIS BLACKWELL (1932-2002) The American songwriter penned Elvis Presley's 'Don't Be Cruel', Jerry Lee Lewis's 'Great Balls Of Fire' and Peggy Lee's 'Fever'. A music publisher once told him: 'You can write about anything - write about this!' and shook a pop bottle. The result was the Presley hit 'All Shook Up'.

On 18th April 1930, during its 8.45pm bulletin, a BBC announcer said: 'There is no news.' The rest of the programme featured piano music.

Breakfast cereal Shredded Wheat was invented in 1892 by American Henry Perky, who built a machine that made a 'biscuit' from boiled then baked wheat. He planned to sell the machine, but sales of his cereal were so good he changed his mind and The Shredded Wheat Company was born.

Police have arrested a man suspected of breaking into a museum and stealing some valuable medieval musical instruments.

So far they've recovered a mandolin, a harp and a dulcimer, but they've yet to discover where he's stashed the lute.

It's true hard work never killed anybody, but I figure why take the chance.
Ronald Regan.

A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man.
Lana Turner.

I never worry about diets. The only carrots that interest me are the number you get in a diamond.
Mae West.

PHRASES EXPLAINED.

Nineteen to the dozen.

Meaning doing something at breakneck speed: derives from the 1770's when steam-driven pumps were installed to clear the water at Cornish tin and copper mines; at their optimum, the pumps could clear 19,000

gallons of water for every 12 bushels of coal used.

THE THREE R's:

The most important lessons at school: reading, writing and arithmetic. From when a Lord Mayor of London raised his glass to 'Reading, riting and rithmetic'.

AND FROM KEN DODD

Good evening, my name is Kenneth Arthur Dodd, singer, photographic playboy and failed accountant.

In the 1880's, one of the MP's in London decided to introduce tax. In those days it was 2p in the pound. I thought it still was.

Self-assessment. I invented that.

My act is very educational. I heard a man leaving the other night saying: 'well that taught me a lesson.'

It's a long show here tonight. If you look under your seats you'll find a will form.

I'm a sex symbol for women who don't care'

It's very nice to be here. But at my age it's nice to be anywhere.

This morning the BBC sent a car for me. Luckily it missed.

When we played doctors and nurses, I was the ambulance driver.

Be honest girls is this first time you have seen a Chippendale?

There are some very dodgy questions on these forms. Sex? I put, 'Well, occasionally'.

How does a hen know the size of an egg cup when it lays an egg?

This lady stopped me the other day. She said, 'Hello handsome, can you tell me the way to the optician's?'

I don't do much television these days. Why? Because I can't cook.

DO YOU REMEMBER

February 5, 1953. All sweets are off the ration today and they are off for good.

Official price control is also ended. The announcement was made by the Food Minister, Major Lloyd-George, in the commons yesterday - and an hour later there was chaos in the sweet shops.

Editor: If I remember the ration was 4 oz of sweets a week. Now we can eat that in an evening.

SECRET MEANINGS OF OUR PUB NAMES

Ever wondered how your local got its name? Albert Jack, who did exhaustive research for his book *The Old Dog And Duck, The Secret Meanings Of Pub Names*, says : 'There's something about a good honest boozer that can't be beaten so I decided to find out where their names come from and what they mean.

Some of the most interesting names are unique and don't appear on the list. For example, the longest pub name in the world is *The Old Thirteenth Cheshire Astley Volunteer Rifleman Corps Inn* in Stalybridge, near Manchester, named after a Victorian Army Corps. Oddly, the shortest name is also in Stalybridge *The Q Inn*.

And in Hampshire there's an inn called *The Pub With No Name*. It used to be called the *White Horse* but it's said the locals tore down the sign to make it hard for strangers to find. Here's the history of some of the most popular names.....

RED LION

The lion was part of the coat of arms of John of Gaunt, uncle of Richard 11, who, became king at the age of 10. When Richard suppressed the Peasant's Revolt in 1381 many pubs showed their support for John Gaunt by displaying his lion rampant.'

THE CROWN

During the English War many pubs showed their support for the monarchy by calling themselves *The Crown*.

ROYAL OAK

This name commemorates the tree in which the future King Charles hid to escape from Oliver Cromwell's Roundhead forces after his defeat at Worcester in 1651, the final battle of the English War.

WHITE HART

As more Red Lion pubs appeared Richard 11 retaliated by ordering every pub around London to display his crest, a white hart or deer.

THE BELL

In the early days of the railways, a bell was rung at the station to tell people a train was about to depart, which is why you'll often find a pub called *The Bell* nearby.

ROSE AND CROWN

This name celebrated the end of the 30 year War of the Roses in 1485 between the houses of York (symbol a white rose) and Lancaster (a red rose) to decide who should be king - Henry V11 eventually winning.

THE CHEQUERS

The Romans hung a sign of a chequered bar outside a drinking establishment which also had a money-trading counter. It is the origin of the word *exchequer*.

THE RISING SUN

In the 14th century, Edward 11 adopted the rays of the rising sun into his royal crest. The nobility followed suit and pubs and their land adopted the name.

BLACK HORSE

Usually named after Dick Turpin's legendary ride from London to York in 1737, though a jumping black horse appeared on the banner of Widukind, the last pagan king of the Old Saxons in Germany. Some believe the symbol was brought here by ancient invaders.

CROSS KEYS

Crossed keys are the symbols of St. Peter, the apostle of Jesus who traditionally guards the gates of heaven.

THREE HORSESHOES

The Worshipful Company of Farrier's coat of arms dates back to 1356. It depicts three horseshoes to illustrate their trade.

GEORGE AND DRAGON

St. George is the patron saint of England and his conflict with a dragon is essential to his story. This sign is a symbol of English nationalism and grew popular as a pub name after the English Civil War in the 17th century.

THE NAG'S HEAD

Smugglers would hang a lantern round a horse's neck on the clifftop to signal to ships at sea it was safe to land contraband.

BIRD IN HAND

Taken from the phrase 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush', the pub sign dates back to the 16th century. It's reckoned to refer to the days when falconry was practised.

THE ANCHOR

By the sea, the connection with sailors is obvious. But inland? The pubs were named after the strong men who acted as an anchor while tethering hot-air balloons or were the bulkiest members of a tug-of-war team.

JOKE

Patient to Doctor.

'Sometimes I think I'm a wigwam and others a tee-pee'.

Doctor. 'I know your trouble you are two tents'.

OBITUARY

Editor. It is with regret that I inform you of the death of my wife, Louise, who died aged 78 years on the 8th April 2018. Louise and I had been married 57 years.

Louise's funeral Service was on the 26th April at the Waveney Crematorium, Beccles. Family and friends attended including many members from Norfolk Branch, who formed a 'Guard of Honour'. Thank you.

I, my daughter Louise and Amber thank everyone for attending the Service and their kind cards, and messages of support in what as many of you also know is a difficult time. It really does make a difference that so many people are thinking of you and praying for you.

Louise died from a brain tumour and I express my sincere gratitude to everyone for their kind and generous donations to Brain Tumour Research, which has now raised a final total of £900 to help find a cure for this horrendous disease. Thank you all.

Louise was a member and great supporter of Norfolk Branch. She was treasurer for several years and I am indebted to her for all the help she gave me with the newsletter.

We have so many wonderful memories of holidays, re-unions, visits and meetings full of fun, laughter and friendship since Norfolk Branch was formed in 1994. Norfolk Branch a large happy family.

I was so lucky to be loved by such a wonderful lady.

Love Is A Many Splendored Thing.
WE WILL REMEMBER HER.

JUNE BRANCH MEETING

The meeting started with Alan Womack showing two films all about Norfolk'. The first 'A Moving Postcard from East Norfolk' took us from coastal towns and villages of the North Norfolk coast along the rivers into Norwich showing all the historical areas that are rarely seen on a visit to the 'Fine City,'

We learnt about the Cathedral, the Castle and the Market. Then we went to Cromer and down to the coast visiting churches, villages and places of interest and to Caister on Sea.

The second film was about 'South Norfolk'. Travelling from Diss to Hadiscoe and Broadland, we arrived at Great Yarmouth famous for its fishing and Herring Fleet.

Three famous authors have written about Great Yarmouth - Anna Sewell, Daniel Defoe and Charles Dickens. It's great that we live in a lovely county and there is always something different to see.

Paul thanked Alan for a very interesting film. We all showed our appreciation.

BRANCH MINUTES

Chairman's Report - Paul standing in for Tony had nothing to report.

Secretary's Report. David said he had a timetable for the Commemoration Service at the Arboretum on Armed Forces Day, June 30th for members wishing to attend.

He thanked members for sending in their subscriptions which have now been forwarded to Headquarters.

A big 'thank you' has been sent to Cliff Hewitt for his kind donation of £100 to Branch Funds.

AOB.

A friend of Branch Member Alan Barkes who owns a light aircraft took Alan for flight over Boston and his surrounding home area. He really enjoyed it and has been promised a further flight in the near future. The flight was reported in his local paper. (See page 11).

Paul will need to know the numbers attending the Museum of the Broads visit at the July Meeting.

Alan Womack reported that Johnny Johnson who went on a previous trip to Germany with the Branch had recently passed away.

WORLD STINGING NETTLE EATING CHAMPIONSHIPS. Marshwood, Dorset, 14th July 2018.

How do you ruin a perfectly good beer festival? By holding a nettle-eating contest in the middle of it, that's how. This brilliant barmy custom, held in the thatched 16th century Bottle Inn, began in 1986 with an argument between two farmers about who had the tallest nettles. The fatal vow 'Well, if yours be longer, I'll eat mine' led to the whole new tongue tingling sport of nettle eating.

The festivities kick off at lunchtime, but it's not until 6pm that the doughty participants are given a pile of long nettle stalks from which they must eat the leave.

Whoever has stripped and eaten the greatest length of nettles after an hour is the winner.

As you would expect from world championships the rules are strict.

Only the organiser's nettles can be eaten and no mouth numbing aids are permitted, though beer between mouthfuls is encouraged (this is a pub after all). Most contestants give up before the hour is up, but the winner one year managed to eat the leaves from a heroic 80 ft of nettle stalks.

Taking part results in a black tongue and a funny taste in the mouth-the flavour of raw nettles is said to be like eating spinach mixed with a cow pat. Having said that, the contestants are not particularly prickly and will sometimes share tips about how to avoid being stung.

The festival continues for the whole of the weekend, whether that's long enough to blot out the memory of eating nettles is doubtful.

DATA PROTECTION - UPDATE

(1) Changes to membership subscription, returns and new membership enquiries.

Trustees have agreed to reduce the exposure of data protection responsibilities at national level to a few individuals and accordingly have reverted the membership subscription process, (for Branches and the HQ Roll), back to the National Treasurer, Tom Magee.

There will be no requirement for Branches to send subscriptions to Linda Taylor with immediate effect. National Treasurer will administer all matters relating to membership

The National Secretary, Frank Xavier, will take on the responsibility for the promotion and inquiries of new memberships. There will be some minor changes to the new membership application forms, to reflect the GDPR and a electronic copy will be sent out to the Branches by 25th May 2018.

(2) GDPR information for Branches.

The NMC will shortly be sending out a briefing note to all Branches which will help local officials understand their area of responsibilities. However, the most important action the Branches will have to take is to appoint one of its members to be the Branch Data Protection Officer.

It is envisaged that the role may fall to the Branch Treasurer (who normally deals with members information) or the Branch Secretary. Branches are encouraged to contact the National Secretary if they need any advice or queries.

The following is an update received from SO2 Engagement and Protocol.

Corps Parish e-Notices are currently managed within the FP FHQ at RAF Honington.

The future intent is to use social media and websites more widely to update the RAF Regiment family. Corps Parish e-Notices will be phased out with the information passed through social media and/or the RAF Regiment Association network and websites. Veterans are encouraged to be members of the Association in order to receive Corps updates, amongst other advantages.

The 75th Anniversary Special Edition of The Centurion Journal will be the last in its current form and funded through/ produced by the Centurion Fund (previously the RAF Regiment Fund).

This important communications and engagement tool will transition to the RAF Force Protection A9 Office (SO2 Engagement & Protocol) which is exploring new approaches including 'coffee table style pictorial glossys' and digital publishing.

The forthcoming Centurion Journal will be the last in hard-copy format and was paid for by subscribers in April 2107, as the annual subscriptions are paid in advance.

Association members may therefore, wish to consider cancelling their Direct Debit Subscription payable on 1 April 2018 to Debit Finance quickly, as it will likely be initiated the week before to hit the bank transfer deadline. If there is to be no hard copy in 2019, the 2018 subscription would be for something not ultimately provided.

The Commandant General's Commendation will continue to be facilitated through the Force HQ. Submissions from serving members and members of the Association should be sent to : SO2 Engagement and Protocol, RAF FP Fce HQ, RAF Honington, IP31 1EE.

Per ardua
Frank Xavier
National Secretary
RAF Regiment Association.

That's all for now folks! I look forward to the pleasure of your company at the Branch Meetings - 3rd Tuesday of the month Feathers Inn, Wymondham 12.30pm.

Colin Clarke.