Royal Observer Corps Association

16 Group (Shrewsbury)

Newsletter

August 2013

Also in this issue: Sir Keith on the Rails again

Operation Secret Squirrel
Editorial

In the April issue editorial, I ended by hoping for a 'lovely summer' – I certainly wasn't expecting what we've seen over the past few weeks and that the excuse for not mowing the lawn would not be that it was too wet, as in recent years, but that it is too hot. We're never satisfied!

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the unveiling of the new ROCA memorial at Alrewas in May although a large number from 16 Group were able to get along. To have both the existing grove of trees and the new stone in this national centre is a wonderful way to mark the history of the Corps.

In fact the ROC heritage seems to be well catered for at the moment. The ROCA Heritage Group is working hard to keep the Corps in public awareness and, hopefully, the museum at Bentley Priory will be in operation in the not too distant future. Preserved posts are popping up all over the country, such as at Broadway Tower, and it appears that the public are eager to turn up and descend those ladders to see just what it was like to work in a post environment. Add to that the preserved Group Control at York, as well as a number of museums, and the Corps is not forgotten.

The recent publication of the Queens' speech written for a 1980s exercise seems to have whetted the public's appetite for information about the Cold War. It would seem then that the campaign to restore Gnosall post (see page 12) has been launched at a good time. There will be a lot of work to be done, and equipment to source, if the scheme is to succeed but Paul and his team are well aware of the challenges that lie ahead. We wish them well in their project.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

David Owen

____________________________________________________________

Call up the Groups : 14 Group, Winchester

The annual exhibition held at Great Bedwyn Royal British Legion Hall, which featured assorted military vehicles and various displays, was held on 23rd March. This year a mock-up of a wartime ROC post was its central feature. Clearly a rural post, it had a resident Buff Orpington Chicken laying eggs in a tin helmet!

Sadly there is a possibility that this might be the last occasion on which this popular event can be held.

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Cover Photo

The ROCA party visiting RAF Shawbury on 26th June.
See "Group Activities" on page 11 and further photographs on pages 22-23.
Triathlon Challenge

Celia Lewis (formerly of Crew 3 and currently working for Customer Relations at Severn Trent Water at Shelton) is pleased to have completed her first full triathlon on 21 April 2013 at the age of 60: 400 metre swim, 20 km bike ride and 5 km run - with an overall finish time (including transitions between the disciplines) of 2 hours 3 minutes 55 seconds. She is also extremely proud to have won an age group trophy - 2nd place in the 'Female Ultra Vet' category.

Having survived a number of illnesses and hospital stays, Celia likes to set herself a new challenge each time as part of her recovery process. She is also asthmatic and she feels that keeping mobile is the best way to manage her health issues. Although not doing anything very quickly, trying to persevere and achieve a goal helps her motivation.

A few years ago she did a mini triathlon - much shorter distances and not to full British Triathlon rules - when she could only manage breaststroke for the swim section. However, she has since learnt front crawl and has joined the SYtri (Shrewsbury Triathlon) club, where she has received a lot of advice, support and encouragement.

Celia would like to thank everyone who has encouraged, supported and sponsored her over the years, in various challenges (Parachute Jump, Abseiling, Mountain Challenge, London Marathon, Mile Swim, etc).

We certainly wish her well for the future (and sooner her than me! Ed.).
Sir Keith on the Rails Again

At 11:16 on Saturday 31\textsuperscript{st} August there will be a recommissioning ceremony on the Severn Valley Railway for Battle of Britain Class locomotive 34053 'Sir Keith Park' at Kidderminster station. Following this, the loco will haul a train to Bridgnorth where, at 14:00, two aircraft of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will fly over in salute. Local RAFA standards (and possibly our own 16 Group standard) will be on parade.

Ron Bubb has compiled this information from the \textit{National Directory of Biography}:

Sir Keith Park was a remarkable man; not an Englishman as assumed by many, but a native of New Zealand where he was born on 15\textsuperscript{th} June 1892, the ninth of ten children. He served in both World Wars, the first in the army / RFC and the second in the RAF.

1914 Joined New Zealand Expeditionary Force and awarded first stripes.
1916 Transferred to Royal Flying Corps.
1917 Learned to fly at Netheraven, became flying instructor at 48 Squadron RFC.
1918 Became 48 Squadron Commander. Awarded MC (twice), DFC, Croix de Guerre.
1918 End of war, married daughter of Lt. Col. Parish, Director of Buenos Aires, Great Southern Railway.
1922 Air Force College, Andover.
1926 After 3 years service in Egypt to HQ Air Defence, Uxbridge.
1937 Appointed AdC to King George VI for coronation duties.
1938 Promoted Air Commodore, deputy to Sir Hugh Dowding, Fighter Command HQ, Bentley Priory.
1940 Promoted Air Vice Marshall for Battle of Britain duties.
1941 Promoted Air Chief Marshall.
1942 Knighted, KBE.
1944 Air Marshall, C in C Middle East Forces.
1945 Knighted (again) KCB.
1946 Awarded GCB. Retired in rank of Air Chief Marshall, highest rank Commonwealth officer in British forces. Returned to native land.
1975 Died of prostate cancer in New Zealand hospital.

Locomotive 34053 was built in Eastleigh, Hampshire in 1947, a sister locomotive to 34050 \textit{Royal Observer Corps}, and retired to Barry scrapyard in 1966. After many years' restoration the locomotive returned to passenger service on the Severn Valley Railway in 2012.
Memorial to "The Few" : Cliff top service and parade on 14th July

The National Memorial to "The Few" was unveiled at Capel le Ferne Kent, by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, on 9th July 1993.

The memorial was inspired by Wing Commander Geoffrey Page who flew Hurricanes with 56 Squadron during the Battle of Britain. The Memorial Day Service, in July each year, draws many thousands of visitors to the cliff tops - above which the battle was fought and won by the pilots and ground crews of RAF Fighter Command and other Allied Air Forces.

The memorial has, over the years, developed from a simple memorial stone into a magnificent statue of a lone fighter pilot, looking skywards over the English Channel. The figure sits on a central plinth which forms the hub of a large three-bladed propeller set out on the grass of the cliffs. The Hunting Lodge Visitors centre was added in 1995, funded by Clive Hunting, and opened by Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, then Chief of the Air Staff and now President of the Memorial Trust.

In 2005 the Christopher Foxley-Norris wall was unveiled by HRH Prince Michael of Kent. The wall carries Winston Churchill's immortal words "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few", and lists the names of all 2,937 members of those who took part in the Battle from July to October 1940. The site also boasts two replica aircraft, a Spitfire and a Hurricane, the two fighters most associated with the Battle of Britain. The Hurricane Mk 1 replica was generously donated by the Tory Family Foundation, and represents the aircraft in which Pilot Officer Geoffrey Page was shot down on the 12th August 1940. The Spitfire replica is a tribute to Jeffrey Quill OBE AFC who left the RAF in 1935 to become assistant to Mutt Summers, the Chief Test Pilot at Vickers Aviation. After flying the prototype Spitfire on March 26th 1936 he managed to secure an attachment to No. 65 Squadron based at Hornchurch in August 1940, in order to appreciate more fully what pilots were demanding of the Spitfire. He shot down an ME Bf 109E and shared in the destruction of an He 111 bomber.

Recent additions to the site include a bust of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park unveiled in October 2010 by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, and an inscribed copy of "Our Wall" a poem by Flt. Lt. William Walker AE, a much loved veteran who died in November 2012.

[NB: Much the above text was adapted from the official 2013 Souvenir Programme]

On 14th July this year, the day's events started with music from the band of 305 (Ashford) Squadron ATC, followed by the entry of the Central Band of The Royal Air Force. Marching on to form up for the parade were the Kent Wing of the ATC, followed by the Standards and Banners including the Polish Air Force replica standard, and the RAF Silk Ensign paraded by the Queen's Colour Squadron.
The twelve remaining veterans of the Battle of Britain then entered the arena, to the emotional applause of all the people gathered there. The general salute was taken by HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO, patron of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust.

At this precise moment the silence was shattered with the arrival of the Spitfire and Hurricane of the BBMF. As the unforgettable sound of the Merlin engines filled the air, one wondered what memories went through the minds of the ageing but proud veterans watching from below.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon GCB CBE, president of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, introduced Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton GCB ADC BSc FRAeS CCMi RAF Chief of the Air Staff who welcomed all to the service which was conducted by the Venerable (AVM) Ray Pentland CB QHC Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force. Assisting him were the Reverend (Sqn Ldr) Matthew Buchanan RAuxAF and the Reverend Brian Williams, priest of St. Radigund's Capel-le-Ferne.

Among the laying of tributes was our National Vice President Mrs Joyce Shrubbs MBE, who laid a poppy wreath on behalf of the Royal Observer Corps Association. The Spitfire and Hurricane returned to give another superb flying display, and the whole day was rounded off with a sunset ceremony and the National Anthem.

Reproduced with thanks to the www.rocatwentytwelve.org website

The memorial to "The Few" at Capel le Ferne, Kent with the wall in the background
Autumn Activities

With this edition you will find a pro forma for a series of events this autumn. Please complete for one (or all!) of the events and return to David Jones together with a cheque by the dates highlighted with asterisks. David's address is at the foot of page 10.

**Group Ghost tour on the Sabrina Boat, Shrewsbury**  **Monday 16th September**

Meet at 6:45pm at the Welsh Bridge - departure 7pm prompt.

Cost: £7 per person

**Limited numbers**

**Reply by 7th September using the pro forma only**

As a medieval market town, Shrewsbury has a reputation for being one of the most 'haunted' towns in the UK. During the trip guides will tell of strange happenings and spooky tales of the River Severn and bygone Shrewsbury. Whilst sightings cannot be guaranteed, spirits will definitely be available in the on-board bar!

**Group Lunch at the Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury**  **Sunday 27th October**

The Group Lunch is to be held, once again, at the Lord Hill Hotel, Abbey Foregate.

Meet at 12:30 for 13:00

Cost £17 per person

**Reply by 15th September using the pro forma to enable David to send you a menu**
The Spaceguard Centre is the National Near Earth Objects Information Centre (NNEOIC), and is the only organisation in the UK dedicated to addressing the hazard of Near Earth Objects. NEOs are asteroids and comets that come close to, and sometimes collide with, the Earth. Such impacts can have devastating effects - they have in the past and will in the future unless we use available technologies to prevent them. Spaceguard UK operates the Spaceguard Centre from where timely information is provided to the public, press, media and education about the threat of asteroid and comet impacts, and the ways in which we can predict and deal with them.

The aim of Spaceguard UK is to develop and maintain a world-class facility for astronomical research and science education, with a specific emphasis on the Spaceguard project. We want to bring the wonders of the universe to everyone in a fun and understandable way.

Meet at 7pm

Cost: £7 per person

Limited numbers

** Reply by 19th October using the pro forma **

All forms to be returned to D.W. Jones, 33 Sunnybank Road, Shrewsbury SY2 6RG
Cheques payable to D.W. Jones.
OK, Facebook may not be everyone’s cup of tea with its text speak language of lol (laugh out loud), cul8r (see you later), soooo (so!) and the like but, like it or not, this huge worldwide phenomenon plays a major role in modern day life and, ever up to date, the Royal Observer Corps has a presence. The Association has its own page www.facebook.com/pages/Royal-Observer-Corps-Association and it is a good way for observers spread out across the globe - especially those not so nimble these days - to keep in touch and reminisce.

Currently the page has tributes to two Observers that have passed on recently and is instantly transmitting the funeral arrangements. In addition someone has posted a cutting from the Scottish Daily Record on how residents living near to a nuclear power station are being advised to survive a meltdown! There is an invitation for anyone to attend an ex-ROC 'camp' to be held next year, a Caledonian/Hibernian reunion and a get together in the Hand Hotel, Llangollen on 9th May 2014.

If you're looking for copies of Attack Warning Red or Forewarned is Forearmed, on the lookout for a set of GZI cassettes, a BPI gasket or an ROC flag, or simply trying to find a link to listen to Skywatch in MP3 format, then this is the place to come.

An unofficial site entitled Royal Observer Corps (All Groups/Posts) www.facebook.com/groups/4930413020/ is also the home for much discussion. A photograph that I put up of our recent Shawbury visit, for example, sparked off an interesting conversation with members recalling helicopter flights from the base when in camp at Cosford in the 1970s. One member, Justyn Keeble, is doing research and asking Observers a number of questions such as "if the balloon had gone up would you have turned up and, if so, would you have tried to smuggle a rifle into the post?". He was also interested in speaking with Observers serving during the Cuban missile crisis.

Other parts of the site include a discussion on AWDREY, aircraft recognition, Waddington International Airshow and an American 1951 propaganda film 'Duck and Cover' on You tube. Coupled with photographs of restored posts (and some rapidly disappearing into the undergrowth!) it's always an interesting read.

ROC Heritage 1925 - 1995 https://www.facebook.com/groups/335679113179492/ does pretty much what it says on the tin concentrating on the history of the Corps and is also a favourite site for post preservation groups … speaking of which, https://www.facebook.com/groups/266588756748446/ is the page for those reconstructing Kettering post, keeping followers up to date with progress, open days etc. Other post restoration projects have their own pages too.

There is a page for the ROC Benevolent Fund https://www.facebook.com/RoyalObserverCorpsBenevolentFund?fref=ts, oh - did I mention the ROC Bunkers Group on https://www.facebook.com/groups/205928806138004/ in which radio hams discuss using old post sites for their broadcasts?

So Facebook on the worldwide web is well populated by the Royal Observer Corps -and I didn't see 'lol', 'cul8r' or 'sooo' mentioned once. We still have our standards!!
Group Activities

In April the annual Master Test Quiz was held at Reabrook Social Club and, as usual, a good time (!) was had by all. Can it really be 22 years since we were seated in those exam rooms across the group trying to get the old grey matter to work and hoping for that Spitfire Badge? The democratic process was, once more, undertaken in May with the AGM. Officers and committee members were re-elected for another year and a discussion held on the presentation of the annual accounts, which the treasurer is investigating. On Saturday 18th, a number of 16 Group members, including Mike Bradbury with the standard, were in attendance when the new memorial was unveiled at Alrewas.

Memories of air experience flights, Parade Flight Training and other formal visits were rekindled in June when 25 members met at RAF Shawbury for lunch and a guided tour of the base. Meeting outside, we boarded a bus and were escorted onto the base by Sgt. Liam Armstrong. Lunch was taken in the Junior Mess (the first occasion for many years that many of us had received the title 'junior'!) before the group rejoined the coach to take us on the short journey to the Air Traffic Control training block. An ATC Squadron on their annual camp, who were leaving the mess, had to march back across the base - so we can count ourselves lucky I suppose!

On arrival at the training block, there was no sign of any members of the Air Traffic course - maybe they had been tipped off! - but this meant that we had ample opportunity to get a close look and photograph the simulators used in the training process. On a level above the students were the seats that the instructors used as they monitored progress and injected other items into the exercise. You know the sort of thing - just as everything appears to be going well ... !!!

Following this, the party reboarded the bus to No 4 hangar where Shawbury's helicopters are maintained and to No 1 hangar which included viewing the reconstructed HORSA glider and, curiously enough, a mobile NAFFI canteen. Finally we were driven to the far side of the airfield (across the runway) to the maintenance hangar. Several aircraft were present, including an ex-Red Arrows Hawk, still in its distinctive livery, and a completely refurbished Hawk which was due to be taken out by a test pilot the next day before going back into service.

Several of the braver souls volunteered to clamber into the Red Arrow (we were assured that the ejector seat had been disarmed!) to see just how compact the cockpit is. It was difficult enough in civvies to clamber in and out, let alone in a full flying suit!

Photos of the visit to Shawbury can be seen on pages 22 - 23.

Unfortunately, two trips planned for July - a walk in the Newport area planned by Marion Keeping, and the Llangollen Railway trip, had to be cancelled owing to lack of support.
"Operation Secret Squirrel" The proposed restoration of Gnosall Post

My respect is reserved for the unsung heroes of the Royal Observer Corps. I too am a former serviceman mainly serving with NATO Forces during and after the Cold War era in various roles and on Operational Tours, but never with the ROC. My only small relationship with the ROC is that I was an NBC Instructor. At the moment I am a Parish Councillor in Gnosall and I feel that the Gnosall Monitoring Post is worthy of preservation. For well over a year and a half I have been researching the potential of the restoration of the Gnosall Monitoring Post. The main reason for this project is to preserve the memory of those who monitored our skies during the Cold War in my local area and who helped protect our nation. I hope to learn many of the stories and facts about the post which will no doubt include some humour. Even in my 40s I believe it is important to learn from the mature element because to me you are mine and our nation’s living history which I feel is important and your service and dedication must never be forgotten. You all, like many, deserve the respect and gratitude of our nation!

I am inspired by a man I have much respect for - former Wing Cdr John Adams MBE, ROC (and formerly the 16 Group Commandant) who has given me, through his stories, an additional push. As well as providing information about your ROC antics, John has offered me his support for this potential restoration.

In the near future I will be having meetings strictly with former members of the ROC and Staffordshire County Council (who own the land that Gnosall Post is on) to look at the restoration feasibility and to see if we can proceed formally. However, I have indirectly had the go-ahead in the form of a letter from Staffordshire County Council subject to a restoration group being formed, and have been offered the lease of the former installation for £1 per year. The tenant farmer of the area is also onside for this to go ahead. I have the permission of Staffordshire County Council to access the post when I need to, strictly for legitimate investigative reasons.

In the near future I hope to place an advert in our local Parish newsletter to see what the following is like, but I would like a group of activists rather than a 'talking shop' and trouble-makers. There will be some issues, but I like people with solutions and an "I’ll do it or can do it" attitude. Unfortunately some people talk a good deal, but very few do anything - and once the work is done everybody wants the credit!

I will, at a public meeting, be looking for a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and the group may take the form of a Corporate Interest Company. I won’t be standing for any of these positions, but will instead concentrate on the restoration despite this being my mad idea - I like to get my hands dirty you see. I will help guide the Chairman in the right direction for information etc. so once the restoration is complete he/she will have the skills and knowledge to head a group combined with the in-depth functional knowledge from former ROC members, who will be the information and educational leaders.

A Chairman, Vice Chairman etc. will have to be 'hands on' and not just sit back until the restoration is complete, as there will be work to do from the start. I am aware of a few funding outlets and the need to observe health and safety as well as other regulations.
However, with the skills and help I have already been offered, I envisage the cost to be relatively low for the restoration; this is based on my research in this area and an inspection of the current condition of the post. There is no reason why this restoration (less the artefacts and memorabilia gathering) cannot be completed by late summer 2014. This date also coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the start of the First World War which, of course, was the first war where chemical weapons were used.

I have already gathered a few 'hands on' people from our parish who have artisan skills and are very enthusiastic to see the Post restored. I also am aware of one person in our parish who is trying to get former ROC uniforms - which will no doubt add to the effect at the end of the restoration. A finished view of some of the restored posts in other areas can be found in this link: [http://www.roc-heritage.co.uk/england.html](http://www.roc-heritage.co.uk/england.html)

Images of the inside condition of the Gnosall Post can be found in this link: [http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/roc-posts/20579-gnosall-roc-post-staffordshire-group-24-09-07-a.html](http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/roc-posts/20579-gnosall-roc-post-staffordshire-group-24-09-07-a.html)  The inside is now dry, but has been vandalised further - however, the general construction is OK considering the abuse it has sadly received. There are no outside services such as water linked to the post as it was self-contained as many of you will be aware.

The future is that informative visits could be arranged for interested groups, guided by former members of the ROC (because you are the experts). Some of you may know who they are in Gnosall. This may also be closely linked to the Cold War part of the museum at RAF Cosford and will be a local information point regarding the history of the Cold War in our area. Publicity and visits, ongoing maintenance and memorabilia gathering will be some of the tasks controlled by a formal restoration group. Once the main restoration is complete it will then be in the hands of the Chairman of the restoration group and its members as well as the former ROC members.

Obviously there is a lot more to this restoration than I can write here and of course once the feasibility meeting has been completed then it’s partly over to our Parish and the public to form a restoration group. In the words of Bob the builder “Can we fix it? Yes we can”. If you are interested in this restoration and being involved please let me know.

Any interested people can email me, Paul Boston: gnosallroc@btinternet.com or please visit: [www.gnosallrocpostrestoration.wordpress.com](http://www.gnosallrocpostrestoration.wordpress.com)
We need your photographs ...

Many thanks to those who have already responded to our appeal for photographs of 16 Group (or maybe 27 group!) at work and play.

As explained in the last issue, in 2016 we will be marking the 25th anniversary of the stand down of the Corps. One of the most enjoyable features for us in producing this magazine has been the "As you were..." feature where we publish old photographs, or sometimes documents, usually related to 16 Group. There are, potentially, hundreds of photographs, press cuttings and other documents sitting in albums and drawers of ex-observers and we would like to collect them together as a record of the group from the war years right through to stand down in 1991.

We would like to publish a book for members to mark the anniversary which can be deposited in local libraries and local history centres - not only that, but in these days of digital technology we may well be able to store them on-line so that future historians will be able to see just what we did, how and why.

Photographs of post or crew operations, exercises, training, camp, social meetings etc. are ideal, as are newspaper cuttings, training programmes, test papers - you name it!

At this stage, we are not asking for your actual images, but if you could let me know approximately how many you would be able to supply, and a rough list of what they are, it would be very helpful. As usual, the contacts are roca16news@yahoo.co.uk, telephone 01743 356423, or by post to 73 Portland Crescent, Belvidere, Shrewsbury SY2 5NL.

When the time comes we would prefer the photographs to be emailed to us. But, if you don't have scanning facilities, we will get it done one way or another!

Here are just some of the photographs we've used in the past to give you some ideas:-
Behind every Memorial is a band of people who have worked to make it possible. Not least amongst these are you the members and individuals who have given so generously to raise the funds. The Project organiser Jenny Major sends the following message of thanks:

Following the Successful unveiling and dedication of the memorial stone at the National Memorial Arboretum I put pen to paper to offer you all a most hearty and enormous THANK YOU for your support in this venture. The appeal for funds was most heartening and exceeded my expectations.
Snippets from the National Secretary, continued ...

The donations came in all shapes and sizes, from all parts of the country and from all manner of ways of raising money: individuals, small group activities and much larger group activities. Well done to all of you. My apologies to those of you expecting individual confirmation of your donations but the range of values was too great and I have in many cases no indication of source apart from perhaps a name on a cheque. I hope that the memorial meets with your expectations and fulfils the reality of a permanent memorial. You have all been very supportive in your comments and donations.

My grateful thanks to you all. Jenny Major

Donations continue to come in and a list of the Groups and individuals who donated will accompany the 2013 end of year accounts.

Through Jenny Major’s artistic vision and determination to make it happen the magnificent memorial now stands at the far end of the ROC Grove. The National Committee on behalf of all members give grateful thanks to Jenny for her design and liaison over many months with the Arboretum and stone mason.

National Reunion - 11th to 13th October 2013 ~

* Note booking closing date of 31 August - Do not delay - do it NOW! *

The 24th Reunion at The Britannia Country House Hotel, Palatine Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2WG. Full details, booking form and directions are with your Group Secretaries and available at www.rocatwentytwelve.org

The cost of the weekend package remains at last year’s prices.
The 2 nights package is £135 per person for 2 nights in a double or twin (total £270 for 2 people), £155 per person for 2 nights in single occupancy (total £155 for 1 person).
The 3 nights package DBB (Thursday or Sunday) will be for a total cost of £185 per person double/twin (total £370 for 2 people), £200 for single.
The hotel has 255 en-suite rooms with no restriction on the number of single rooms.
Please send your bookings (with £30 per person deposit) to your Group Secretary/Organiser.

Weekend Programme: We will provide a note on other main attractions and transport options that are easily accessible from the hotel. If you prefer to stay in the hotel Saturday afternoon to meet, greet and recall ROC times we are looking at the possibility of ROC related presentations that will include a DVD on the Memorial Dedication.

Annual Delegates Meeting on Saturday morning, 12th October ~

Become involved - have your say on how your Association functions and evolves. If you cannot attend, speak to your Group Committee/Area Reps on any aspect of ROC Association business/policy on which you seek clarification and would like discussed at the ADM.
Dates for your 2013 diary ~
Full up to the minute details available at www.rocatwentytwelve.org, for specific heritage related items see www.roc-heritage.co.uk.

17th August (Saturday) ROCA Open Day, Broadway Tower Museum, Cotswolds.
15th September (Sunday) Battle of Britain Service, Westminster Abbey.
11th to 13th October: ROCA 24th National Annual Reunion, Britannia Hotel Manchester.
12th October (Saturday) Annual Delegates Meeting, Britannia Hotel Manchester.
7th November (Thursday) Field of Remembrance, St Margaret’s, Westminster.
10th November (Sunday) Remembrance Parade Cenotaph.

Broadway Tower Post Open Day & Informal ROCA Reunion,
Saturday 17th August 2013, 10:00 to 16:30 ~
A ROCA National Open day will be held in conjunction with the Broadway Tower Post Open Day. Following last year’s successful Open Day a similar event will be held on the Post Open Day in August; an ROC display will be provided by the National Heritage Team. All are welcome to come along to meet the Post Crew & ROCA members. Enjoy the lovely Cotswold’s vista, visit the Broadway Tower Museum and view the Post. Broadway Tower website: broadwaytower.co.uk.

Newhaven Fort update ~
Ian Burrows has sent me the following news on the Museum:
Many readers may have heard or read that Lewes District Council wishes to dispose of Newhaven Fort. Kevin Kingston, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development, Lewes District Council, informs us that the Council proposes to go out to tender to interested parties to take over the running of the fort on a long term lease arrangement. Amongst the terms of the lease was the Council’s desire to see the fort remain, if only in part, a museum. The tenders are due to go out shortly, with a projected date of June or July for a preferred bidder to be chosen. We may know later in the year how our position at the fort stands. The fort is an ancient monument, and there are severe restrictions on what can or cannot be done with the buildings. We are continuing to carry on as normal with updating and improving our collection. We feel that any interested party would look upon our collection as well maintained, a source of historical interest, and educational to the many school trips and public that visit the site.

Next Steps Report from the National Committee – The way ahead ~
The Volunteers (Murray Whitcher, Chair, Gordon Johnson 8 Grp, Tim Kitching 20 Grp, John Lawrence 14 Grp, Mick Marks 7 Grp, Jenny Morris 12 Grp and Terry Penn 3 Grp) are currently re-familiarising themselves with the discussion documents, proposals and options. Shortly Murray will ask them to bring ideas to the table on the best options to address the following questions:
Snippets from the National Secretary, continued ...

- Review the options for the selection and election of the members' representation.
- The N/Comm will look at the viability to reshape itself away from the Area focus and, if this is appropriate, to replace with an alternative selection process.
- To look at who is best placed to be the members' representative. For example, should this be a representative selected by the Group Chairman, on a regional, geographical, or Group Cluster basis, based on membership levels?
- Part of the review will include the overall Committee structure and the current process for election of the officers.

It is planned for the group to meet to share and discuss their ideas prior to the Reunion. A brief update on their initial thoughts and discussion progress on the format of the National Committee will be presented to the Delegates and Reunion meeting in October. Once firm practical ideas are agreed the sub-group will consult with all Groups and members before any final proposals are submitted to the National Committee. This is likely to be sometime during 2014, following which any proposed change to the Constitution of the Committee will be made in the form of resolution(s) to the ADM or, if necessary, an EDM either in 2014 or 2015. It is anticipated the process will follow this time scale to ensure all options are fully considered and to allow for members to be widely consulted.

John Simmonds, Midland Area Rep ~ Many members attended John’s funeral. He will be greatly missed but his enthusiasm will be remembered, and his ideas to promote the Corps Heritage will continue. Our thoughts and condolences go to Pauline and the family.

Heritage Team News ~ Edwina Holden reports that the Heritage Website set up and managed by Simon is so successful it is in danger of overwhelming us. The average hits each day is a 100; on 23 June there were 166 hits. Simon monitors the site and sends requests for information to the appropriate member of the Team. Requests can range from "what size is the bolt used to fix the FSM?" to "can you tell me where my relative served and what he did?".

We continue to support the WWII War Room in the Guild Hall at Bury St Edmunds. Recently John Shere and I visited; it is a lovely building and the War Room is intact having a preservation order on it before the Corps stood down. Andy Bowles did an amazing presentation for students which included showing how aircraft were tracked on the plotting table. Air Vice Marshal Jackson is also planning to set up a Cold War display in an adjacent room.

The Team are proactively promoting the Corps' roles. Cheryl in Scotland is currently communicating and going the extra mile for the producers of the TV programme The Heir Hunters because they wish to learn about two brothers who served on a post in the war; it is proving very difficult to find someone after all this time. Lawrence came up from Cornwall to give advice to the producers of The One Show which was a success, and Neville
appeared in the programme depicting life in the 1940s. The National Display set up by Simon went to the National Veterans Weekend, this year held at Nottingham. Diana and Gordon Johnson, and Roy Sherwin from 8 Group joined Simon, John Shere and me on mounting the display. Over 70,000 people attended this event – we do not have the Association recruiting brochure freely available for passersby to take but do have the Heritage business cards available; these are not so attractive to the children filling their plastic bags! We do however take details of anyone wishing to join or looking for other information to follow up later. An Air Vice Marshal stopped to say how pleased he was to see the ROC represented.

Justyn is currently helping a writer in East Anglia about the Cold War and especially the Cuban Missile Crisis – Lawrence’s excellent article on this subject was produced.

We are much indebted to Lawrence and Neville for all their help with information - although not officially members of the team, they are always very willing to help when we need extra input.

Finally, I must thank all of the Heritage Team for keeping the flame burning all around the UK. The requests which come through the Heritage website are very complex and varied but there is always someone who has the expertise (or knows someone who has) and every request is answered in a positive manner.

*Edwina Holden, National Heritage Officer*

**Bentley Priory Museum ~** The Museum to commemorate the Battle of Britain is taking shape with the official opening, by invitation only, planned during Battle of Britain Week. The Museum will open to the public from 15th September 2013. The venue of our ‘spiritual ROC home’ is still in dire need of donations to enable the Museum to go ahead with all the planned features including the Filter Room (Ops Room as we would know it) where the ROC reports during the Battle would feature. If you wish to donate privately to the Trust, cheques should be made payable to: The Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust or visit www.bentleypriory.org and donate through Charity Choice which allows you to Gift Aid your donation. Cheques should be sent, stating your Gift Aid declaration, to Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust, Wendleberie, Moor Common, Lane End, Bucks, HP14 3HS. Please mention the ROCA in your communication. Details of how to purchase a commemorative badge is available on the web site.

**Area Reps National Committee ~**
Snippets will follow the meeting to be held at the Reunion.
For an e-reminder of all ROCA events: send an e-mail to roca16news@yahoo.co.uk and we will send you a reminder beforehand.

September

3 Tue  Northern ROCA : Beetle Drive
15 Sun  Battle of Britain Sunday
16 Mon  16 Group ROCA : River Severn Ghost Cruise at Shrewsbury

(See page 9)

October

1 Tue  Northern ROCA : Annual General Meeting
27 Sun  16 Group ROCA : Group Lunch at Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury

(See page 9)

November

5 Tue  Northern ROCA : Trivial Pursuits - Kath Bloomfield
10 Sun  Remembrance Sunday
11 Mon  Armistice Day
20 Wed  16 Group ROCA : Visit to Space Guard Centre, Knighton

(See page 10)

December

3 Tue  Northern ROCA : Christmas Nosh
16 Mon  16 Group ROCA : Christmas Party

16 Group ROCA - Usually meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Reabrook Social Club, Shrewsbury at 20:00. The club is situated off Old Potts’ Way in Shrewsbury. Turn opposite Cineworld (adjacent to the Jaguar Garage) into Scott Street. Go straight ahead and the club is the last building on the right, before the railway bridge.
Contact: David Owen - 01743 356423  roca16news@yahoo.co.uk
NGR: SJ499117    SatNav: SY3 7PX

Northern ROCA - Usually meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at Wincham Hall at 20:00. Wincham Hall is on the west side of the A559 (Hall Lane) as it leaves Lostock Gralam east of Northwich. Visitors welcome.
Contact: David Blades - david.n.blades@talktalk.net
NGR: SJ685753    SatNav: CW9 6DG
"As you were..."

Somewhere in Wales, or Training Crew 3 style!

During the 1980s Richard O'Gara arranged a number of voluntary adventure weekends for members of Crew 3. From the left: Caroline Harper, Richard, Gill Hulme, Keith Varney and Lynne Borlaise are seen fully kitted out and prepared to take on the elements.

Speaking Personally

Welcome to new ROCA member, former Group Officer Charlie Gordon. He admits that he has no one to blame but himself for not joining before but says it feels good to be “back in the family”! There will be plenty of opportunities to make up for lost time Charlie.

Get well wishes to Bob Edwards (Crew 3) who has been under the weather recently, and Hugh Budgeon of Northern ROCA who has had a spell in hospital.

Condolences to Jim and Rose Went on the loss recently of Jim’s mum Barbara. She had attended a number of ROC events in the past including the RAF Uxbridge visit in 2008.
Visit to RAF Shawbury - see page 11

Control desk of the ATC Simulator

Training helicopters at Shawbury
The Red Arrows' Hawk Cockpit

Janet Pritchard experiences a tight squeeze at the controls of a Hawk
Air Chief Marshall the Earl of Bandon GBE, KBE, CB, CVO, DSO, MiD, BSN, DFC (US) the 5th Earl of Bandon, was ROC Commandant from 7th October 1945 to January 1949. An Irish peer, he had a distinguished career in the Royal Air Force.

An article recently published in Javelin (newsletter of 12 Group, Bristol) on the career of Paddy, as he was popularly known, showed him to be quite a character.

At the Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo in 1942 he accompanied some of his pilots, all wearing scruffy flying overalls, and was immediately upbraided by an immaculately dressed army officer. "I am Major the Honorable 'blah de blah', assistant Provost Marshal. You and your men are improperly dressed and must leave."

The reply? "I am Group Captain the Earl of Bandon and therefore outrank you on both counts. Now do push off, there's a good chap!"

### Membership Matters

Please remember, if you have not already renewed your subscription, now is the time to do so. For those who have not renewed, this will be the last newsletter - either hard copy or electronic.

Please send you renewal as soon as possible to Mike Bradbury, 15 Fairford Place, Salter's Lane, Longden Coleham, Shrewsbury SY3 7DL

The fees are as follows:

- Life members are asked to contribute £5 per year (to cover the newsletter and admin. costs)
- Ordinary membership £7 per member per year