

The Royal Air Force Servicing Commando and Tactical Supply Wing Association

Representing a Common Heritage

Newsletter - Winter 2012/13

Chairman's Introduction

I hope most of you will have seen on the website or via e-mail or jungle drums, the changes in Presidency and Chairmanship of our Association. I must reiterate the debt of gratitude we owe Sir Joe French (outgoing President) and Duncan Grant (outgoing Chairman). Each has contributed uniquely to the strength and success of our Association; but as the new Chairman, I must focus on my predecessor. Duncan has provided the perfect bridge linking the Servicing Commando with the Wing and growing the strong association between the two. His legacy as Chairman is a vibrant team, growing, evolving and solvent. He has represented all of our interests with compassion; focussed, energetic leadership; charm and humour. Duncan, on behalf of the RAF Servicing Commando & Tactical Supply Wing Association, again, sincere and heartfelt thanks!

Air Vice Marshal Graham Howard, our new President, offers some early thoughts from the perspective of one who has served our military Logistics business from the bottom to the top. Elsewhere in the Newsletter there are articles on current, military activity, sports, social events, working with industry, and some more peripheral pursuits from stalwart members! There are diary dates (31 May – 2 Jun 13 be at Stafford!) and contact details...please let your Committee have your thoughts and articles on any topic are welcome for future Newsletters. After all, at time of writing, we still have a free Press.

I look forward to serving as your Chairman and continuing the good works of Group Captain Grant, whilst ensnaring more of you to help according to your strengths and interests. For now, enjoy the Newsletter which Tim Newstead has painstakingly created and I wish you a happy Christmas and prosperous and healthy New Year.

David Orr



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A Message from Our President

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honour to have been asked to be your President to succeed Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French who will be a hard act to follow. My time spent as OC TSW was one of the most satisfying and rewarding command appointments during my 34 years in the RAF. That particular period around 1999/2000 was characterised by the study that I led which recommended the transfer of the Wing from the then HQ Strike Command to the Joint Helicopter Command. Many at the time thought that this was heresy and would result in TSW being subsumed into the Army Air Corps! My view was that if you are the best at what you do, then there is nothing to fear and change should be embraced boldly. I am pleased to see that 12 years on, TSW's reputation and standing within Defence, and amongst the battlefield helicopter commanders and crews in particular, is outstanding.

Turning to my time in 2005/6 as Station Commander at RAF Stafford which was then under command of AOC 2 Group, I had the sad task of closing the station and transferring 85 Expeditionary Logistics Wing and all its Logistic Air Combat Service Support Units to RAF Wittering. Handing over the station to the Army in March 2006 could have been a problem for TSW; however, being under Joint Helicopter Command which sits within the Army command and control structure had its benefits and TSW has remained in place. Indeed, many visitors to the MoD Stafford would not recognise any changes.

As Head of the RAF Logistics Branch and Trades I am ideally placed to keep a fatherly eye on the Wing from a RAF perspective; however, my primary role as Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Logistic Operations) within the Ministry of Defence means that I can act as the champion for TSW within the joint environment.

The union between TSW and the Servicing Commandos is one of which I am particularly proud and one which has gone from strength to strength. I remember one year when 'Titch's' wife was taken ill at the Commandos' AGM and was admitted to hospital for 10 days. We moved 'Titch' and his wingman into the Officers' Mess and gave them their own bar books which they exploited to the full! Those were the days!

I look forward to being your President and will do my best to live up to the high standards and reputation that Sir Joe has established. In writing this foreword in early December, I wish everybody a happy Christmas and New Year.

Graham Howard

St Clement Danes TSW Plaque Dedication



Following the generous donations of funds from many members of the Association, the project to install the Tactical Supply Wing slate plaque in the floor of the RAF Church at St Clement Danes in London came to fruition with the dedication service held on Sunday 29th April. The church already has the badges of most past and present operational units. The service was conducted by the Resident Chaplain, Revd David Osborn BD AKC RAF, and was attended by our President, ACM Sir Joe French and Lady French, our President designate, AVM Graham Howard, Father of the Wing and first OC, Gp Capt John Craven-Griffiths, and the present CO TSW, Wg Cdr Polly Perkins, together with serving and retired members of the Wing and the Association.

The dedication service was the culmination of the detailed arrangements put in place by former OC TSW and Association member, Gp Capt David Packman. The scripture readings were read by Association member Gp Capt Robin Springett and serving member of TSW, Sgt Jones. After the service, the attendees enjoyed a magnificent buffet within the church; this was an opportunity for friends old and new to catch up once again. Sir Joe and Polly Perkins spoke respectively of their appreciation of the work of the Wing and of the Association.

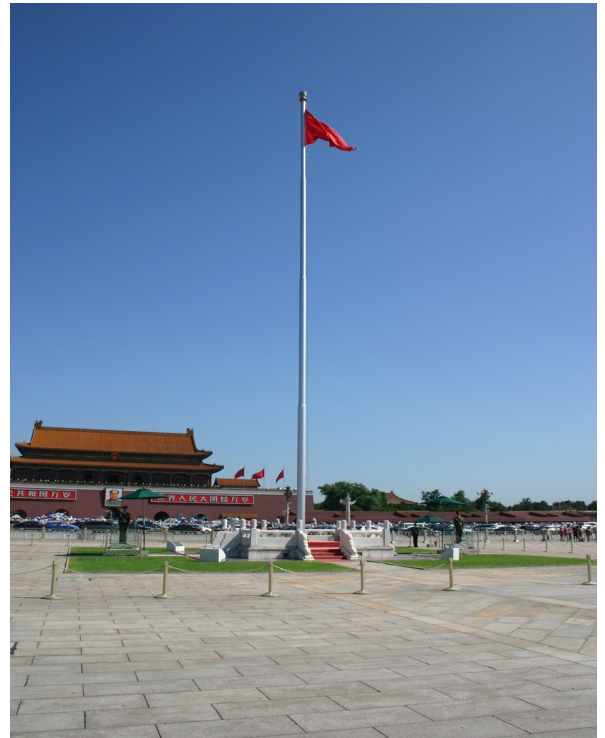


In the Footsteps of the Great Chairman — David Orr

One of the great things about retiring is the luxury of time. My wife Jenny and I were able to plan a year ahead for a bespoke 4 week trip to China this summer, using a Chinese Company, communicating solely by e-mail and paying a fraction of the equivalent cost had we booked with a more familiar, western Company. Aye!

China is vast. Trying to identify an itinerary encompassing key sights reveals the spread of history, geography and culture across this fascinating land. You could spend a month in the Capital, Beijing, and not see everything worthy of note. So be humble; accept your fate and do only what you can. For us that particularly Chinese approach paid dividends and we got a flavour of what lies under the surface. But only a taste!

We settled on 8 internal flights, 2 cruise sailings, 2 canoe sorties, several lengthy car trips, frequent treks by foot, and even a Yak encounter which left as much of an impression on my backside as my backside left on the Yak. Thousands of miles, 10 hotels, countless sites, limitless sights, endless masses of humanity and industrial quantities of local beer to wash it down.



We flew into Beijing with BA (maintaining control over the unexpected and exotic until the last!) and had several days acclimatising around the plethora of local sights, with the London Olympics providing a thundering chorus from every TV set in earshot (there was truly, no escape). We saw Palaces named after seasons; dynastic favourites; Forbidden cities; post-revolution, austere, forbidding cities...

And everywhere, the old and the new, side by side. In China, I'm sure they will build a city of a million in the time we take to get planning permission for a new shed.



Here's the old bridge (wooden slats spanning a mile over the river) and the new (millions of tons of concrete and steel linking regions across hundreds of miles):





So from the modern Capital to the ancient walled Capital (Xi'an) via a capital wall, a Great Wall, built to keep bad guys out and still experiencing ugly affray!

To the Chengdu Panda Reserve, where we witnessed a 3 day old Panda in an incubator, securing tourist interest into the future. They are unfathomably appealing animals.

We had hoped to visit Tibet and all seemed in order until some local difficulty resulted in the withdrawal of all tourist permits a few days before we were due to travel. Our company exhibited admirable fleetness of foot, arranging instead a few days in Shangri-La, in the autonomous Tibetan prefecture of Diqing. Shangri-La means "The sun and the moon in the heart" in Tibetan, and it was spectacularly beautiful:



Cruising lakes, rivers large and small and seeing the world from the water always brings new perspective.

We took a Cruise down the Yangtze, in the wake of HMS Amethyst; I thought... I wonder how Richard Todd would have circum-navigated the 3 Gorges Dam?



617 Sqn, I'd suggest!

The people themselves were unfailingly polite, often curious, always industrious and seldom absent. Our tour included the city of Chongqing, which I admit to never having heard of. Chongqing is a city of 35 million souls! There is high culture, burgeoning educated elites, street theatre and plain old folk having fun:

There was the West's first window on China, Shanghai, which does not disappoint. The endless skyscrapers, stretching into the humid sky, dwarf the pinprick western business areas which lead the way over a century ago:



Throughout the tour, there were jaw-dropping sights. Terracotta Warriors alongside a modern military presence which makes western armies seem like Company strength. In a few words and pictures I can give you only a glimpse of what we experienced, but I can tell you it is fascinating, stimulating, amusing and unsettling all at once. The variety of climate, food, ethnicities and traditions matches the geographic and cultural differences I mentioned earlier and it is impossible to see such scale, such fast-paced change, such success without admitting respect for the country whose time has come again.

TSW Bergathon 2012

Bob McBey reports that the annual TSW Bergathon event went well and was well attended. The weather was on their side for once and even when they did get a downpour, it was refreshing and cooled the team down. The team completed the event with a few blisters and a big 'Thank You' must go to Stafford Search and Rescue for the use of their facilities and for them looking after the team's sore and aching feet. The team will have raised over £1,800 for the Wing charity – Combat Stress – a truly magnificent effort. Particular thanks go to all Association Members and friends for the generous donations in support of the team. If anyone would like to lead the team next year, please do get in touch with Bob.



The History of TSW

Members will recall that for a number of years Jim Coleman, a founding member of Tactical Supply Wing and the Association, has been striving to have a history of Tactical Supply Wing compiled and published. Indeed, a number of Members provided significant contributions to the history after a plea for assistance from Jim; they will recognize their handiwork. We are delighted to report that the work has now come to fruition with the able support of Jim's "in house publisher" and IT mentor, Sgt Chris Baker, without which

SUPPORT TO STRIKE



The History of
The Royal Air Force Tactical Supply Wing

by
James McMillan, Coleman BEM

the narratives might have lain to gather dust on a shelf.

The book is available on-line at the Blurb.co.uk Bookstore at www.blurb.co.uk/bookstore

The book can be bought in soft back and hard back versions and, once formatted, will also be available as an e-book for iPad and iPhone. "Support to Strike" can be previewed or read in its entirety by at the Blurb website above.

Just Reward

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate Gp Capt Polly Perkins on her promotion and challenging new job with 101 Log Brigade — especially in drawing down the logistics effort in Afghanistan. Perhaps her elevation will necessitate reversion to her given Christian name?

Sad as we are to see her go, we are cheered by the return of an old trooper as the new Commanding Officer of TSW: Wg Cdr Andy Males takes post in the New Year and as a symbol of his dedication, has promised to renew his Association membership! He'll do well...

TSW News

People

TSW is proud of its tradition of encouraging individual achievements and this year has been no different. The annual Awards for the JNCO and Airman of the Year were again fiercely contested with both TSW and the RAF expecting the very highest of personal standards from its personnel. JNCO of the Year for 2012 was Cpl Turner who received the Alan Mathews sword during Commander JHC's visit. A quote from the citation reads "Corporal Turner's performance over the reporting period for this award has been nothing short of exceptional. He first came to prominence operating in the high pressure environment on Operation HERRICK. Throughout this deployment he was clearly the principal non-commissioned officer on the Detachment and his level of performance was so impressive that he left his more senior and experienced colleagues in his wake".

The RAFSC&TSW Association/JCB sponsored Airman of the Year President's Award was awarded to SAC Johnny Anderson who was presented with his prize at JCB World HQ in Rocester. A quote from his citation reads "Senior Aircraftsman Anderson produced an exceptional performance fashioned by his boundless energy, can-do-attitude and sheer professionalism".



The presentation party. Back: Flt Lt J Harrison (OC B Flt), Sqn Ldr S Caldara (OC HQ Sqn), WO M Thistleton (WO Trg), Flt Lt K Devlin (Adjt). Front: Mr Alan Blake (JCB CEO), SAC Jonny and Mrs Claire Anderson, Gp Capt Duncan Grant, Wg Cdr Polly Perkins

Operations/Support

Now in its fifth decade of service, TSW remains the premier military organisation delivering aviation fuel support to battlefield helicopters. The main focus continues to be Operation HERRICK, where TSW provides 24/7 rotors turning refuels at both Camp Bastion and Main Operating Base Price. This capability has proven itself invaluable in support of aircraft conducting critical medical emergency response and very high readiness missions. Furthermore, TSW personnel are fully trained and on stand-by to provide Forward Refuelling Points outside the relative safety of either location in support of all ISAF rotary wing aircraft.

On the other side of the world, TSW operates from the remote Helicopter Landing Site at Fox Bay, West Falklands. The service provided is crucial in extending the range of the relevant airframes providing support to the remote mountain radar sites and search and rescue missions.

Closer to home, TSW has been an integral part of the recent Operation OLYMPICS. Primarily operating out of 3 locations, selected TSW personnel provided an ever-present refuelling capability for the duration of the Games, while others were also used as part of the MOD's security force at a number of venues in the capital. Further TSW personnel were trained and assigned to Operation ESCALIN, which would have seen them assisting in the uninterrupted delivery of petroleum products during potential fuel strikes.

As in previous years, TSW has continued to commit significant resources in support of the Joint Helicopter Command exercise programme. Most notable in 2012 was JOINT WARRIOR, which saw the Airborne Task Force and Lead Commando Group deploy to various parts of the United Kingdom. Other exercises which have received fuel support from TSW include: ASKARI THUNDER (Kenya), DESERT THUNDER (Oman), PASHTUN VORTEX (Jordan), CLOCKWORK (Norway), CHAMELEON (United Kingdom) and the Operation HERRICK pre-deployment training PASHTUN serials.

CO TSW commanded JHF (Kenya) for three months from February and oversaw the recovery of the Puma detachment and all support personnel back to UK in order to facilitate the Puma 2 upgrade programme.



Now in its fifth decade of service, TSW remains the premier military organisation delivering aviation fuel support to battlefield helicopters.

Training, Exercises and Education

This year has been an extremely busy period for TSW Training Flt, with increased workload and its commitment to providing training for personnel deploying as an individual augmentee in support of TSW operations or in support of wider Defence tasking. The Battlefield Fuel Operators Course has undergone a complete overhaul. In order to gain Defence Systems Approach to Training (DSAT) compliance, TSW instructors have completely re-written the course documentation with the aid of the Logistics and Supply Training Squadron at RAF Halton. The resulting course will now be known as the Expeditionary Fuel Operators Course, which piloted in October 2012.

To increase the capability and reduce the footprint on airlift, TSW have introduced quad bike & trailers to deploy ALARP concept. This concept has been successfully trialled on Ex DESERT THUNDER in Oman. TSW now has qualified operators and instructors.

TSW encourages personal development and education and this year has seen some significant achievements. Over the last 12 months, TSW personnel have gained several civilian qualifications including: a 2:1 in BSc Logistics Management; an IGCSE in maths and gone on to study A level maths. Trade related NVQs were also achieved in both management and transport.

Notable Events

On the 15th September 2012, TSW commemorated the Battle of Britain and exercised their Freedom of Stafford, which was granted in 2008, by parading through the town with swords drawn and bayonets fixed. A large crowd was in attendance with the local community applauding their support.



TSW annual Families' Day was another very successful and well attended day. With the extremely busy output of TSW and time spent away from loved ones, we realise the importance of family support for all of our personnel. By way of thanks there were many activities including



face painting, dunking tank, bouncy castle and a Puma which always makes small children smile – and some big kids as well!. The presence of ex-TSW members and Servicing Commandos from the Association, provides great opportunity for story-swapping and adds another angle to this special day. The day raised £2000, with a percentage of the proceeds going to 'Combat Stress'.

TSW continues to support several activities at MOD Stafford, providing manpower and displays in support of the MOD Stafford Open Day and Neighbours Day which allowed TSW some exposure to the local population.

Diary Dates

Don't forget to fill in the following dates in your new diaries and iPhones and Androids etc for 2013:

Friday 31st May 2013:

Meet and Greet

Saturday 1st June 2013:

Association AGM

TSW Families Day

Reunion Dinner

Hangar Bash

Further details will follow in the Spring; meanwhile, please note the dates!

Future

TSW will remain focused on continuing to deliver the highest levels of support in Afghanistan and preparing for the inevitable changes to our posture and lay down as we move closer to transition. Our focus is equally on developing TSW's supporting role to the JHF (Contingency) and therefore the Airborne Task Force as the UK's Transitional Intervention Capability. Work has begun to gain closer interoperability with 16 Brigade and with other command enablers to provide the best possible support solution.

The long awaited introduction of Joint Operational Fuels System (JOFS) is expected to be approved and further equipment received during the following year and the recently reformed TSW Capability Development Cell will be reviewing current TTPs and Trg packages to ensure its introduction has no detrimental impact on our capability.

Planning has also begun for the redeployment of JHF (Kenya) from May 2013, which will see TSW again providing fuel support to the Ex ASKARI THUNDER serials in addition to the BATUK casevac requirement.

New-look Newsletter

We very much hope that you like the new-look Newsletter, compiled using Microsoft Publisher. Please let us know what you think — and what you might wish to see published in future editions.

Once again, the majority of copies of this latest edition of the Newsletter are being distributed electronically — please do let us know if this causes difficulties for you.

Supreme Group and the RAFSC&TSW Association

**Nick Atkinson – Business Development Manager – Supreme Group UK
(more importantly, OC TSW 2007-09)**

Supreme Group will be a familiar name to many on TSW who have served both in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a few who have subsequently joined Supreme Group working on fuel installations in Afghanistan and Africa. Supreme Group having come from humble beginnings as a food service provider to US Forces in Germany and has grown into a global market leader, specialising in developing and operating end-to-end customised logistics, supply chain and associated service solutions to military and privately owned organisations operating in some of the world's most challenging locations.

Why is this of interest to the RAF SC & TSW Association? Well firstly Supreme Group owns and operates the supply chain bringing 90% of ISAF's food and fuel into Afghanistan to amongst many other locations Kandahar Airfield and Camp Bastion, where TSW operates at the end of the fuel supply chain. Supreme Group is also tendering for future MoD contracts in the UK home-base to be able to deliver contracted support from the home base to the operational space in the future. This will also, as now, offer not only opportunities for Supreme Group to support TSW operations, but opportunities for ex-TSW personnel to work with Supreme as part of the Group's potential contracted requirement to deliver fuel in the home base and operational space. Thus they would be following in the footsteps of characters like Gary Rockliffe-Fidler, Gerry McGeary, and Mick Ryan, to name but a few.

So as Supreme Group reaches into the home market, and wider logistic support market, there will potentially be opportunities for ex-TSW members, not just in the specialist fuel field, but wider logistics support areas as well. However, current opportunities within Supreme are in the Afghanistan theatre and UN operations in Africa. As a Group, Supreme are looking to expand business in Africa and this may well provide some opportunities in the fuel environment.



Thus for those ex-TSW members and those who will leave the RAF in the natural ebb and flow of life there will undoubtedly be opportunities for jobs in the fuel side of the business, as well as wider logistic activities. Supreme Group very much relies on ex-military fuel operators and managers to run the installations as they are regarded as a well-trained and professional source of employees, and there are currently a mix of British, Australian and New Zealand ex-forces operators fulfilling such roles in Afghanistan and Africa. Operations include the operation and management of permanent and 'temporary (TFHE/JOFS)' fuel installations, rail and road-tanker operations, RTR and fixed-wing refuelling, Petroleum Laboratory analysis, accounting, H&S and QA management, contract management and, naturally, customer interface to ensure they are getting what they have paid for!

Therefore, through the TSW Association networking system if there are opportunities for those of you who have left the RAF or who are in the process of leaving, then it is worth touching base to see if there are opportunities. Afghanistan, Somalia and Mogadishu (all the nice places as usual) are Supreme's current fuel operations, but there are other potential opportunities 'in the pipeline'.

For further information on Supreme Group, and potential job opportunities visit: www.supreme-group.net

The FRANKTON Walk

December 2012 marks the 70th anniversary of the 'Cockleshell Heroes' raid on German shipping in Bordeaux harbour (Operation FRANKTON). Only two of the party of 10 Royal Marines who carried out the canoe raid survived they were Major 'Blondie' Hasler DSO and Marne Bill Sparks DSM. To mark the occasion, David Packman and his younger son, Julian, will be walking the first 160 kms of the route followed by Hasler and Sparks when they came ashore from the Gironde estuary and before they linked into the Marie Claire escape line at Ruffec. David and Julian will be covering the ground on the same days as the evaders (13 to 18 December). To add a touch of realism, the Tactical Supply Wing has provided them with a few, modern ration packs. Quite apart from commemorating some very brave men, who were the predecessors of the modern Special Boat Service, they will be raising money for Le Bleu et de France (the French equivalent of The Royal British Legion) and for SSAFA Forces Help. If any Association members would like to make a donation to this very worthwhile adventure will they please contact David on packmanpacky@aol.com or on 01432-851724



OC TSW, Wg Cdr Polly Perkins, reported on the latest Wing news

2012 AGM and Reunion Dinner

The 2012 Association Annual General Meeting and Reunion Dinner was held at Stafford on 15th and 16th June. This year, the weekend reverted to the more popular format of a 'meet and greet' at the Tillington Hall Hotel on the Friday evening followed by the AGM on the Saturday morning, the TSW Families Day in the afternoon and the Reunion dinner, again held in the Sergeants' Mess, on the Saturday evening. The dinner was timed to enable those with stamina to attend the TSW Hangar Bash later in the evening.

Overall, the event was well attended, though no doubt, the damp and windy weather will have dissuaded some from attending. While it would have been good to see more members at the AGM we, nevertheless, had over 60 members and guests sitting down to dinner - including our outgoing and incoming Presidents - Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French and Air Vice Marshal Graham Howard.

The main points arising from the AGM:

- Thought was given in a moment of reflection for those members of TSW on active duty and Association Members who had passed away.
- Thanks were given to David Packman for his work on the TSW plaque in the floor of the RAF Church St Clement Danes and to Jim Coleman on his book telling the History of TSW "Support to Strike".
- OC TSW, Wing Commander Polly Perkins, reported on the current commitments of the Wing.
- The Treasurer introduced the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2011 and reported the funds continued to be in a healthy state. Proposals continue to be sought for the use of some of the Association funds.
- Current paid-up Membership stood at 235. There had been a noticeable increase in new members since the introduction of an on-line membership application facility.
- David Orr had agreed to take over the Chairmanship of the Association from Duncan Grant in the autumn and David Packman had now taken over committee responsibility for Welfare and Publicity; both appointments were unanimously agreed.
- Two Associate Members were proposed and unanimously agreed – Mr Rae Taylor and Miss Pauline Lockett.

- OC HQ Sqn and TSW Liaison Officer - Sqn Ldr Sam Caldara - briefed the AGM on the forthcoming demolition and rebuilding of the Officers' Mess and the need to safeguard the RAF memorabilia currently housed within the Mountbatten Room of the Mess. The Wing kindly undertook to facilitate the removal and storage of these artefacts, which included several items related to the Servicing Commandos, during the refurbishment for subsequent display in the new Mess.
- The Chairman expressed the Association's gratitude to Sir Joe French for all his support during his tenure as President - he had played an active role in opening doors for the Association. The incoming President, AVM Graham Howard, former OC TSW and Stn Cdr at RAF Stafford, who was present was welcomed as the new Association President.
- It was hoped that the 2013 AGM and Reunion would follow the now customary and successful format of this and previous years. The Chairman appealed to members living locally to give up an hour of their time on the Friday and/or Saturday morning to help with setting up the Association's hospitality tent.
- OC TSW read the citation for the President's Award to SAC Jonny Anderson who was the recipient of the award for 2011. Unfortunately, Jonny Anderson was unable to be present to receive his award at the AGM as he was on route back from his latest deployment to Afghanistan.
- Life Vice President, Alan Robinson, previously Chairman of the RAF Servicing Commando Association, addressed the meeting to express the SCdos' gratitude to the Wing and the Association for ensuring that the RAF Servicing Commandos' service during WWII was not forgotten.
- Robin Springett concluded the meeting by paying tribute to the work of the outgoing Chairman, Duncan Grant, in picking up the ball of forming and amalgamating the Association into what it is today - this was whole-heartedly echoed by all those present.



Squire of the Morris Ring

Robin Springett of TSW 1970 to 74 and on Ascension Island for the Falklands War and Commanding TSW (Gulf) for the First Gulf War (1991) left the RAF in 1999 with the rank of Group Captain. In February 2012 he was elected Squire of The Morris Ring and took up the appointment on 2nd September the same year. Here, he tells us something about being Squire.

Strangely, it was whilst stationed at Rheindahlen that I got into the Morris. In my early 30s at the time, I really had had enough of wet muddy fields in winter, but knew I would miss the exercise and the company – not to mention the beer! Talking about this to an Army colleague, he asked if I had ever considered Morris dancing. Well, obviously the answer was no, but we discussed it and agreed that if he could find another 4 people we would form a side (that is 6 dancers) there. I didn't think much more about it, but to cut a long story short, we formed The Extraordinary Rheindahlen Morris Dancers, and after a bit of practice and mastering 6 dances, we started performing, initially in the messes and clubs around the Big House, but soon out into the wider community. I found I really enjoyed it! Two years later, I was posted home and by chance at a pub (where else?) I met my local Morris side, Dartington. That was 1980 and I have been a member ever since. Dartington is a member of the Morris Ring www.themorrisring.org one of the 3 Morris bodies in UK and the oldest having been founded in 1934, and forms part of the Joint Morris Org (JMO) www.morrisdancing.org for more links. The Morris Ring supports the Morris as danced by men, but musicians can be men or women. It encompasses the familiar Cotswold Morris with bells, hankies and sticks, Border with blacked faces, Longsword from the North East, Rapper Sword from mining areas, Lancashire Clog, Mummers and Molly dancing. All in all, a very broad canvas!

So coming up to date, wherever I served, I managed to continue dancing, either joining a local side – for example Grand Union, when I was at High Wycombe – or travelling



Robin Springett

www.tswscoassn.co.uk

Don't forget the Association website which gives all the latest Association news.



The site lists all the current members and has links to the Guest Book as well as to other associated sites such as PayPal and the Association's Facebook page.



Welfare & Publicity

David Packman has taken over committee responsibility for Welfare and Publicity. He is a former RBL county field officer and county secretary for SSA-FA Forces Help in Herefordshire and will be particularly pleased to field queries about welfare matters. If he cannot answer a question, he is pretty sure that he will know 'someone who can'. David's e-mail address is packmanpacky@aol.com; his telephone number is 01432-851724.

back to Devon for the weekend. Even on one overseas tour, SHAPE, I managed to find and join a Morris side in Brussels! There was a time in the 90s that the RAF could – but never did – put out a full Morris side, as an Air Cdre, me, a Sqn Ldr, WO and 2 SNCOs all danced! Since retiring from the RAF, I got more involved on the administrative side of the Morris Ring and was elected as the Area Rep for the South West & Wales. The Morris Ring has 3 elected national officials, Squire, Bagman (traditional Morris name for secretary) and Treasurer, as well as elected Regional officials; we are all volunteers! As Squire, I am required to attend Meetings of Morris Ring Clubs. Traditionally there are 5 a year, and the Squire presides at each one. They comprise a weekend of dance, starting on Friday, and a full day tour on the Saturday, followed by a Feast, which follows a format service personnel would find familiar. After the feast there is dancing and singing (and the odd pint sunk as well!!). On the Sunday we traditionally process to church and then dance outside the church, before lunch in a local pub and off home!

In 2013, in addition to meetings in Stoke Newington in Bucks, Thaxted in Essex, and Nottingham, there are meetings in Adelaide and Copenhagen (I know, but someone has to do it!).

As Squire, I represent The Morris Ring and am required to uphold its traditions. I have an Advisory Council, comprising the last 3 past squires and representatives from the regions; 9 in total, and it is their combined wisdom that I can call upon if necessary, and must meet with them at least once a year. I get to choose the massed dances that will be danced at Morris Ring Meetings. I also get invited to Days of Dance, Ales, Feasts and Festivals. In all cases the host side pays for me, and offers overnight accommodation, but generally I pay the travel. Living in South Devon, with Morris Sides strongest in the Midlands and North, it is a consideration; however, I only get 2 years as Squire, and it is the pinnacle of my hobby, so I try to make the most of it. I am also keeper of the Squire's Regalia which comprises a silver Badge of Office, a silver Chain which I wear with the Badge at formal occasions, a Staff of Office, and a Ceremonial Tankard! Finally, I am called upon to represent The Morris Ring at funerals of significant members who have passed on. Sometimes these are family affairs, and sometimes huge celebrations, as at a recent one I attended in Yorkshire, when over 200 people were there, and the wake was probably something only those "lads" could put on. But as I said earlier, someone has to do it!



To begin 2013 as I intend to go on, I am attending Stafford Morris Men's Feast on 12 January. So if you are around and about in the Stafford area look out for me and say hello. If TSW want to book Stafford Morris Men for their next Open Day here is their website: <http://edwardsce.netfirms.com/staffordmorris/index.htm>. After that, I will be getting ready for my month long trip to Australia, where I shall preside at their Ring Meeting and enjoy 2 weeks of Morris Dancing. Wassail!

Air Vice Marshal Don Hills

It is with sadness that we record the death of Air Vice Marshal Don Hills on 27th January, the day after his 95th birthday. AVM Don endorsed the original TSW concept and was also Station Commander at RAF Stafford in the 1960s. He retained his links with the unit since then. He was a great friend to TSW and was a frequent visitor and member of the Officers' Mess. He will be greatly missed.

In Remembrance

We record with sadness the passing of the following members:

3205/08 SC	Mr Joe Brooks	Died 26th May 2012
3206 SC	Mr Ronald Leonard	Died 2nd March 2012
3208 SC	Mr John Loud	Died 10th November 2011
3208 SC	Mr Arthur Bond	Died 13th November 2012
3210 SC	Sqn Ldr Geoff Hoddinott	Died 26th February 2012
OC TSW 1979-81	Wg Cdr Simon Baker	Died 8th February 2012

Your Committee

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A Final Plea

If you change address—or e-mail address—please do let one of the Committee members above know.

Thank you!