

**FURTHER PHOTOGRAPHS OF**  
**ROYAL NAVAL AIR STATION STRETTON**  
**H.M.S. BLACKCAP**



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Produced by

Antrobus Heritage

Birchmoss

New Road

Antrobus

CW9 6NY

Compiled by: Derek Enfield and Eric Haworth

These photographs were either surplus to the requirements of the main book or arrived too late for inclusion. The assigned year is only approximate for many of them. If you have any comments or questions please write to the above address.



1942



T. Jones

Cottages in Pepper Street opposite football pitch



Jim Hampton (left) outside the Thorn Inn  
possibly in the 1930's

1943



Warrington Guardian

Funeral of Ann McMormick



Warrington Guardian

Ann McCormick's funeral parade

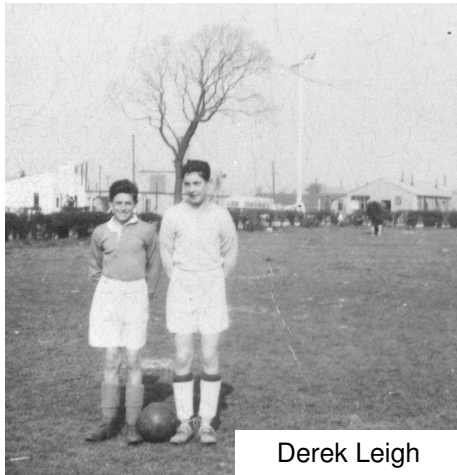


Photos from M. Robinson

W.R.N.S. Inspection



1944

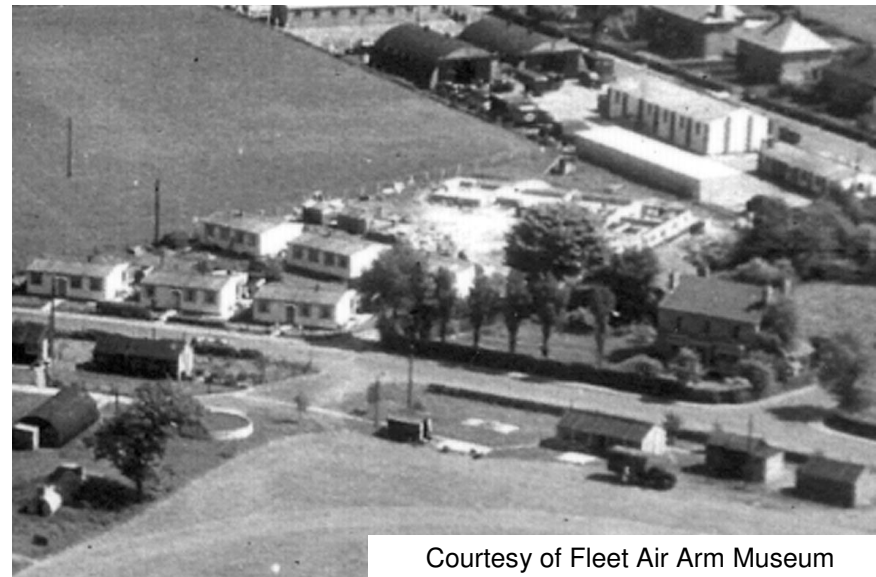


Derek Leigh

Derek Leigh and friend.  
Camp in background



Wally Symonds  
of 814 Squadron



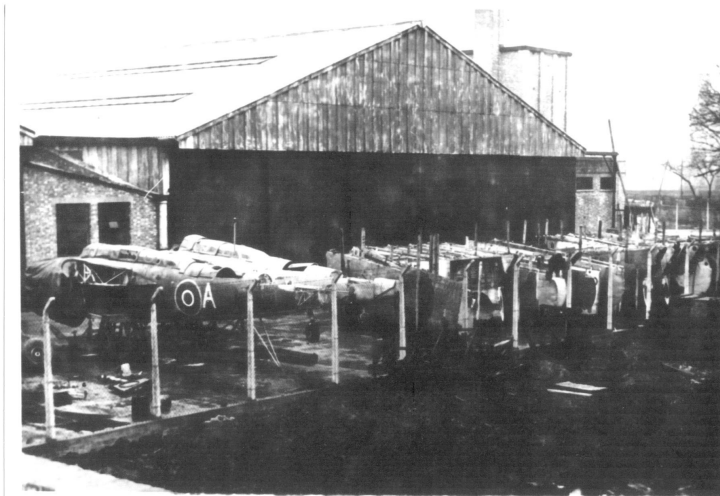
Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum

Transport Dept. top right. Prefabs centre

Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum

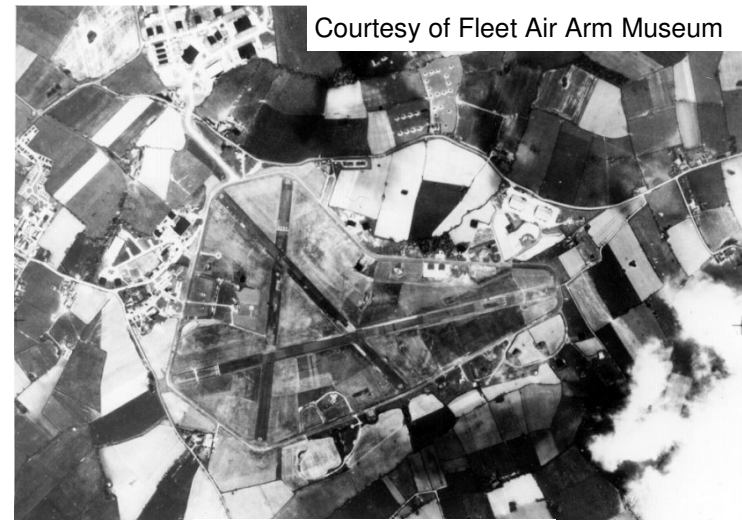


Fairey Aviation workshops and aircraft



Crashed aircraft outside Fairey hangar. Claimed to be Stretton but hangar does not match.

Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum



Aerial of Station



Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum

Rifle Butts





1945

All photos from P. Whincup



Pam Jones with Seafire  
9th September



'TARTY' JOAN  
(ANTHONY)  
(WITH SEAFIRE)  
Stretton 9/9/45



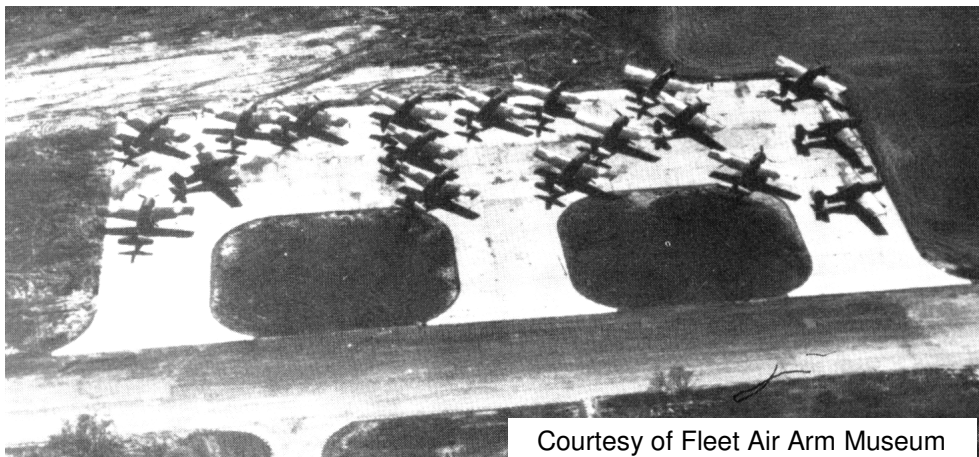
Wrens at Grappenhall Hall



THE HALL - GRAPPENHALL



Joan Applewhite



Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum

Wildcats on hard standing opposite Birchels Gorse



Courtesy of Fleet Air Arm Museum

Harvards, Corsairs, Ansons and Barracudas on SE perimeter



Air Mechanic (Ordnance) George Wisher

George worked in the Explosives Area and gives the following description of it and the work.

There were 12 huts in the area containing the ammunition such as 500 lb H.E. bombs, 20 mm cannon shells, 303 bullets, 12 bore cartridges, flares, signal rockets, smoke floats and detonators. Up to early 1946 there were no offices, messing, toilets or sleeping quarters in the area.

Work entailed checking temperature in ammunition sheds twice daily and recording them in a register. Each hut had its own key and he collected and signed for them and the register each morning from the Police Office and duly returned them each evening. Issues of ammunition had to be by request form to 3rd Officer Munday, W.R.N.S. who would send P.O. James and George to collect it. They also had to make up ammunition belts in the Belt Filling Room and put them into 'ammo' boxes. The sequence was 2 ball, 1 incendiary, 1 armour piercing, 1 tracer.

He recalls that there was one operational flight in 1944. P.O. James, Jack Trout and himself were called out in the early hours and told to pick up 3rd Officer Munday at the Wrens quarters and that she would brief them. They set off in a lorry and went to an R.A.F. 'drome and picked up twelve 400 lb armour piercing bombs and detonators. They just got back in time in the afternoon to bomb up 12 Swordfish aircraft.

In late 1945 and early 1946 all bombs and obsolete 'ammo' were taken to a disposal unit at Tipton. Only a few pyrotechnics, 20 mm shells, .303 and .22 rounds, 12 bore cartridges and smoke floats were kept.



G. Wisher

Armoury Section Football Team  
Winners of Station Cup 1945

1946



1947



G. Rose

Sea Fury outside Sea Fury Storage hangar. The plane was later shot down in Korea



1948



Duty Crew — AM(A) John —  
AM(E) Ray Berrington, AM(L) R. Beck

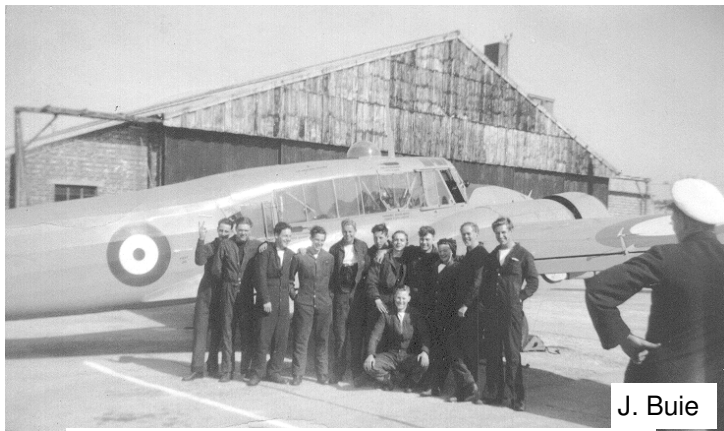


Fordson tractor  
as used by Duty Crew



AM(E) Beck and AM(E) Fletcher

L to R photos— W. Clelland



Mosquito Section personnel with Anson



Mosquito 2 Section with Expeditior



J. Buie

No. 2 Ferry Squadron and Sea Otter



1949



Checking undercarriage of Firefly



Control Tower Staff  
Ratings are Meterologists



Station Flight



ARS 'B'



C. Venables and W. Clelland in Paris

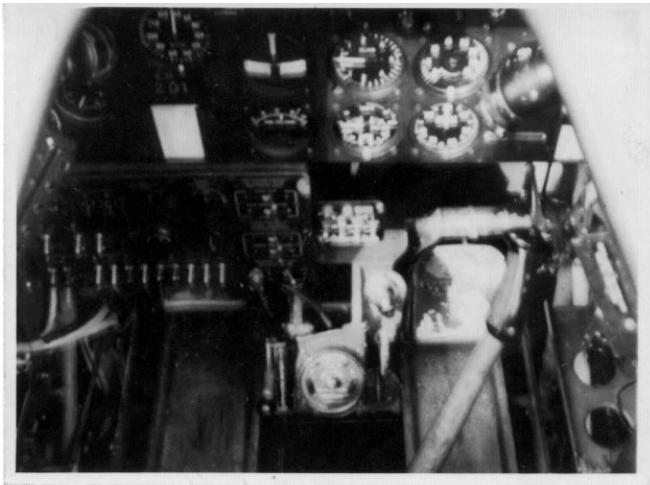


AM(E) Robertson

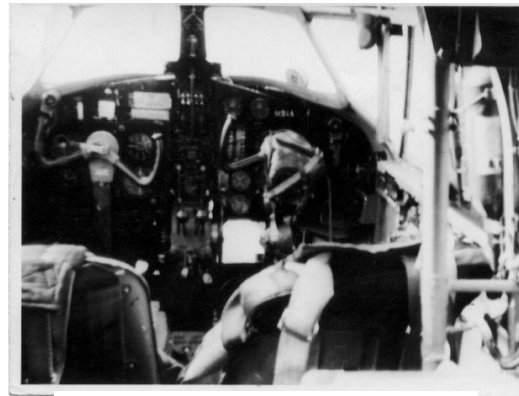


AM John in his bunk

All photos from W. Clelland



Aircraft Instrument Panel



Control Column and Panel



C. Venables in aircraft nose

1950



E.K. Knowler

Capt. Tyrwhitt  
Bandmaster T. Knowler  
Rear Admiral ?  
Drum Major ?



P.O. Tony Perrett

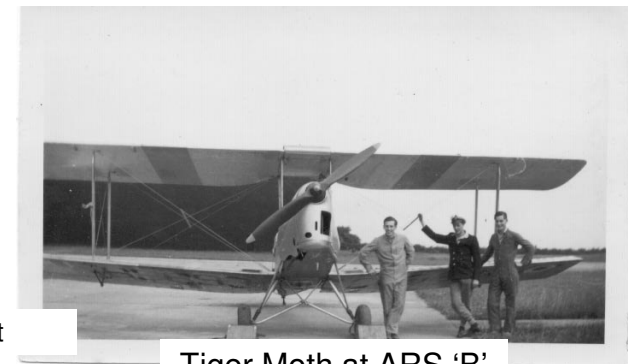


N.C.O.'s Dance



'Oxford outside ARS 'B'  
N.A. Kitchen, P.O. Ken Thompson, Airman Binns

A. Perrett



Tiger Moth at ARS 'B'



'Oxford outside ARS 'B'  
P.O. Ted Hill, C.P.O. 'Mac' McHesney



P.O. A. Perrett, P.O. (L) 'Alge' Addy



Tiger Moth at ARS 'B'  
P.O. Tony Perrett with some of the lads

All photos from A.Perrett



Tony Perrett, Ldg. Airman Binns,  
P.O. Ken Thompson



Mechanics with Tiger Moth  
at ARS 'B'



Avro Anson in ARS 'B', no. 12 hangar



Appleton Church from E Mess

1951



Grappenhall Lane to A.M.Y.



Crossing the Line ceremony—Navy Day

All photos from A. Perrett



Ken Thompson outside  
Dope Store in A.M.Y.



Tony



P.O.'s 'Taff' Allman, Jim Burgess,  
Ken Thompson



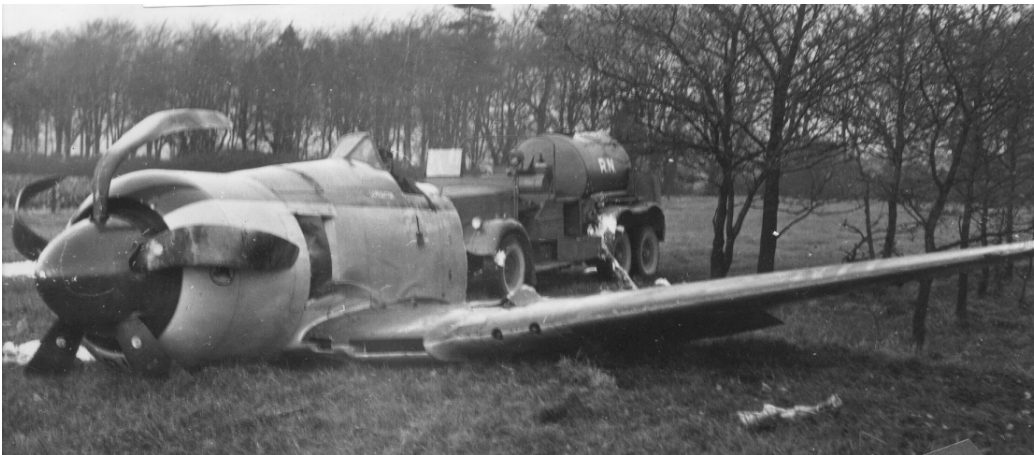
Set of 'Arsenic and old Lace'



Entire complement of ARS 'B'



1952



Sea Fury TF917 / JA 162 (Note use of JA for Stretton pre 1953). 767 Squadron.

Crash landed at High Legh 11th November 1952.

Lt. D. J. Spelling was unhurt.

Photos from J. Redfern







James Leigh, Joe Farley, Tom Ledger+Keith Brunswick, Josephine and Susan Bate, Tony Perrett

## 1950—1952

### Drama Society Productions

All photos from A.Perrett

## SNOW WHITE

12/12/50



Snow White - Stuart Wagstaff,  
Prince Charming - Tony Perrett





Mark Bentley, Jean Pont, Stuart Wagstaff,  
Tony Perrett, Jim Leigh, Margaret Johnson,

## WITHOUT THE PRINCE

29/10/51



Tony Perrett, Joan Shaw, Stuart Wagstaffe



John Robertson, Freda Gibson, Mark Bentley, Angela Stubbins, Tony Perrett

## THE BROWNING VERSION 17/03/52



Mark Bentley, Tony Perrett, Angela Stubbins



Dan Searley, Keith Chalmers, Tony Perrett

SEE HOW THEY RUN  
01/07/52



Freda Gibson, Tony Perrett, Nan Barnish



Scouse Larsen, Clarrie Gibson

1953



Ldg. S.A.(S) C. Gibson and  
S.A.(S) J. Courtney

All photos from C.Gibson



Clarrie Gibson outside E30 Mess



Joe Courtney and Clarrie 4th July



Joe Courtney and Clarrie 4th July



Clarrie outside E29 Mess



Sea Fury unfolding wings



Taxiing

These photos from C.Gibson



Sea Venom

A. Taylor



About to take off



Sea Fury TF903 / ST 160. 767 Squadron

Crash landed at Stretton 7th September 1953.

Later repaired by MARU.



Photos from J. Redfern





1954



Parade in Warrington



At Peninsula Barracks



Lt. Cdr. J.C. Lavender

Photos from Warrington Guardian



Expeditor



Crash at Warburton 26th January



Harvard



Sea Hawks starting



All photos  
by A. Taylor

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY DEREK LEHRLE DURING 1955,  
INCLUDING NAVY DAY.

The camera was a Box Brownie



Attacker over Arley Road



Fairey Gannet and Sea Fury



Firefly



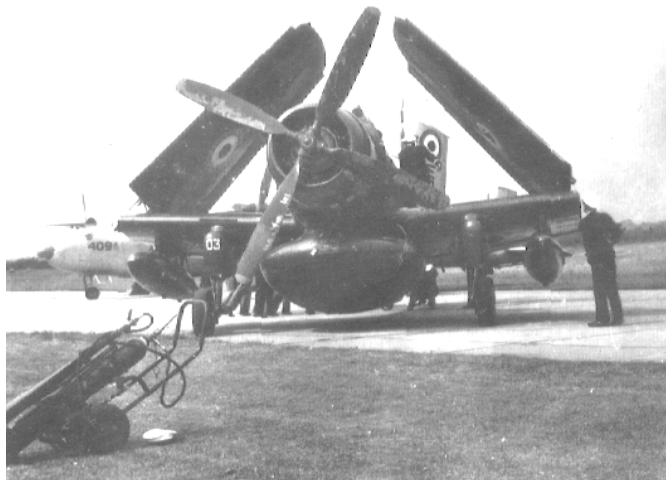
Sea Hawk



Firefly



Slingsby Glider



Douglas Skyraider



Dominie



Sea Fury over Arley Road, looking south



Fuel Bowsers outside Hangar11 on A.M.Y.



Sea Venoms



Sea Vampire



Attacker landing



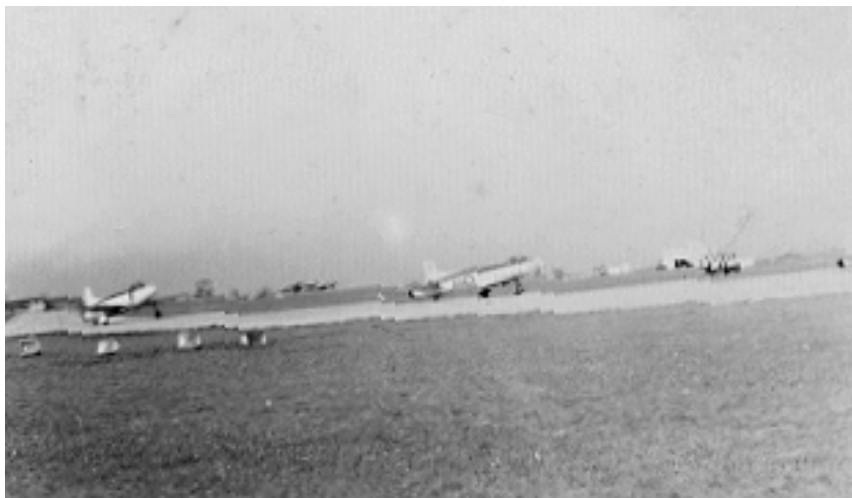
Attacker over Arley Road, looking north



Attacker over Arley Road, looking south



Sea Vampire



? and Attacker



Dominie, air traffic control vehicle to right



Fairey Gannet



Sea Hawk





2-seater Firefly trainer



de Havilland Venom outside old Fairey Aviation Hangar



1955



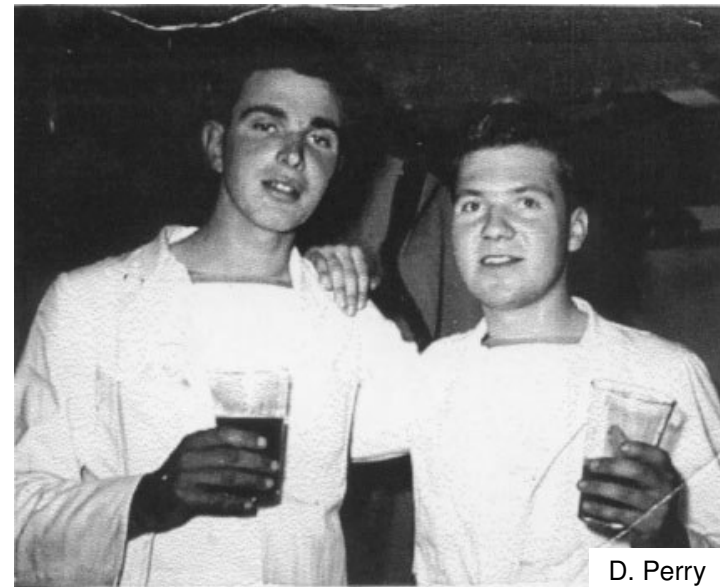
D. Perry

**Seahawk Rectification, 8 hangar**

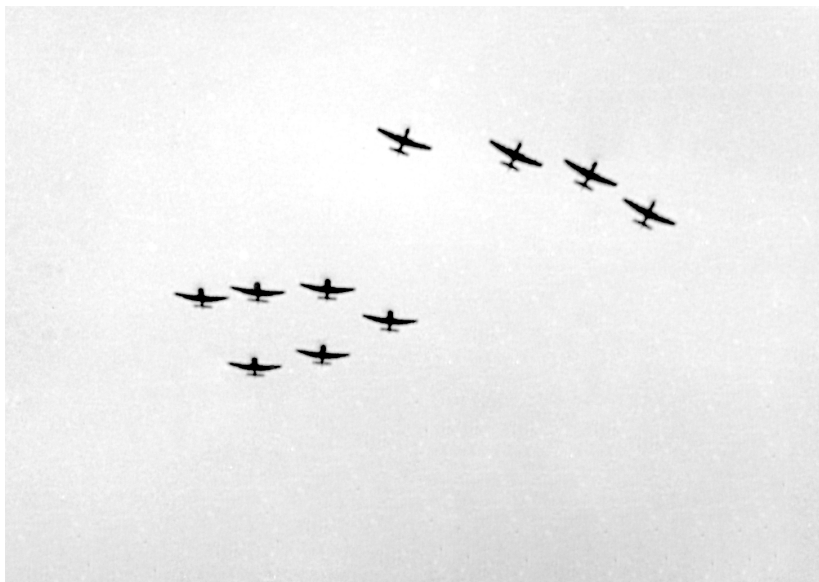
Back- L4 AA2 Don Parsons, L6 AA3 A. Crouch, L9 C.P.O. Pat Foley  
Middle- L6 Roy Smith, L9 Bob Astle, L10 Brian Williams, L11 Len Hirons, L12 J. Dunkle  
Front- L3 Don Perry, L4 'Ginger' Vaill



Venoms outside Venom and Vampire R.D.U.



'Bungy' Williams and Don Perry  
waiting on at P.O.'s Dinner Dance



Avengers



Firefly landing

Photos by  
A. Taylor



Sea Balliol



Neptune



Hiller 360



Sea Balliol

Photos by  
A.Taylor



Meteors



Sea Furies

**CONFIDENTIAL.**  
 N.C.W. 504 (10/1/55)

*By Command of the Commissioners for  
 Executing the Office of Lord High  
 Admiral of the United Kingdom, &c.*

To *Lieutenant Commander J. R. Bradbury, RN*  
 THE Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty hereby appoint  
 you *Lieutenant Commander, RN*  
 of Her Majesty's Ship *BLACKCAP addl.*

and direct you to repair to your duties at  
*Stretton* on *10.2.55*

Your appointment is to take effect from that date\*, and as  
*1st Lieutenant vice leftie, 17.2.55*

You are to acknowledge the receipt of this Appointment  
*forthwith*, addressing your letter to the *Commanding Officer,*  
*RN Air Station,*  
*Stretton,*  
*Warrington, Lancs.*  
 taking care to furnish your address.

*By Command of their Lordships,*  
*Hutton,*  
*Warrington,*  
*Lancs.*  
*J. S. Lang*

(\* "Appointments. Time of joining.—Officers appointed to ships at home are to join by 0900 on the day of appointment, with the exception that officers appointed to shore courses are to join after noon on the previous day unless otherwise ordered."—Q.R. & A.I. Art. 0205.)

*Admiralty, S.W.I. 11/1/55*

(379) Wt. 30794/P5805 1,500 (J) 6/54 S.E.R. Ltd. Gp. 647

Lt. Commander Bradbury's appointment



Talking to a visiting Rear Admiral





BLACKCAP officers in cinema





R.A.F. Hunter

D. Lehrle



Venom over Arley Road

D. Lehrle



Sea Prince

D. Lehrle



The Thorn Inn

1956



Armistice Sunday Parade



N. Boulton

Venom R.D.U.

\* E. Barton \*

VENOM RDU 1956.  
NM8 BLACKCAP  
RNA8 STRETTON.

Lt. Lloyd.

C.P.O. 'Charlie' Godling.

C.P.O. Gilbert Thorpe.

C.P.O. Heaney.

C.P.O. Chitty.

P.O. 'Chris' Raynor.

P.O. 'Bomber' Brown.

P.O. 'Lex' Sturges.

P.O. Dale.

P.O. 'Taff' Woolrich.

P.O. 'Rock n Roll' Johnson.

P.O. Bainbridge.

P.O. Storer.

N.A. Roy 'Mandy' Millar.

" Stan Stanford.

- Dave Gill.

- Rex Whitehead.

L.A. Mac. Ross.

" Arthur Rogers.

N.A. Pete Bond.

L.A. Ted Barron.

N.A. 'Tug' Wilson.

" Jim Gibbons.

N.A. 'Tall Story' Birtles.

" 'John' Johnson.

" 'Plum' Warner.

" 'Paddy' Collins.

" Alan 'Blondie' Summers.

" 'Bill' Wells.

Mandy Millar

N. Boulton



Attackers

Photos by A. Taylor



Special bake



C.P.O. and Duke of Edinburgh

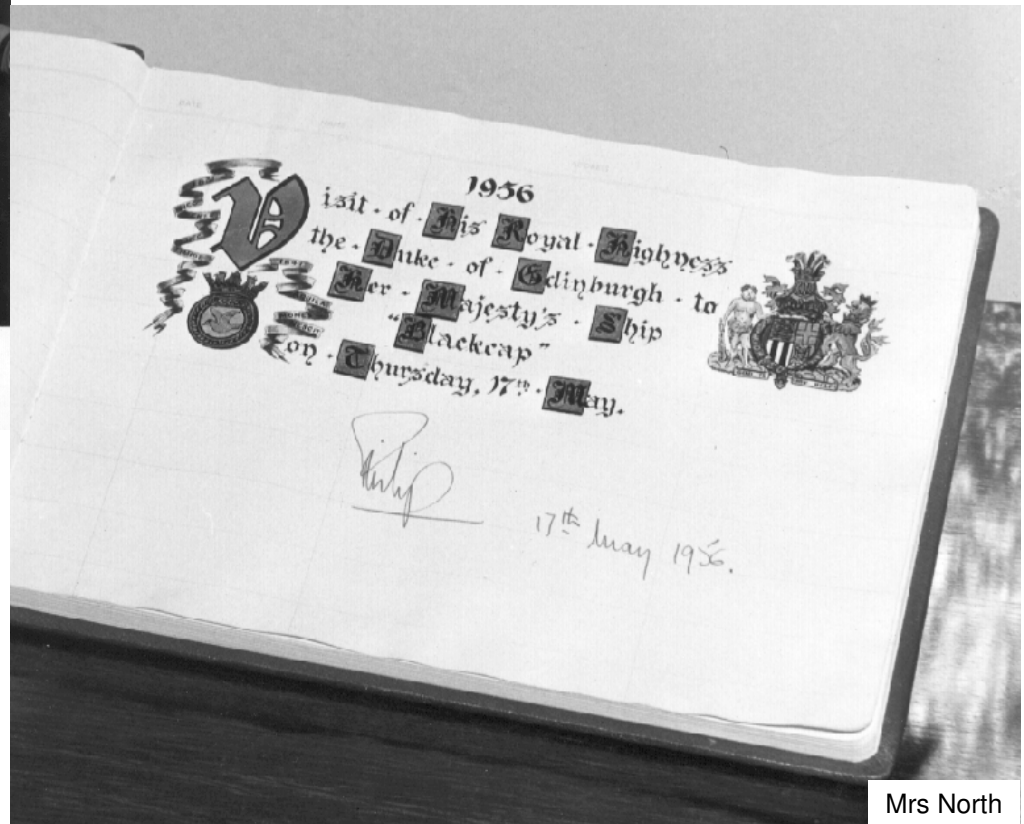




*Captain Harvey*

*Before Dinner*

Mrs North



Mrs North





Location of third Fromson hangar  
In A.M.Y. behind 12 hangar, in front of cannon butt

FROM	ADMIRALTY	ROUTINE
TO	BLACKCAP	UNCLASSIFIED
INFO	F O AIR HOME F O R A	151631Z NOV

PERSONAL FROM FIRST LORD..

I WAS MOST INTERESTED IN ALL I SAW DURING MY VISIT TO YOUR AIR STATION YESTERDAY. IT WAS VERY EVIDENT TO ME THAT A LOT OF HARD WORK MUST HAVE GONE INTO THE PREPARATIONS FOR MY VISIT. WILL YOU PLEASE SEE THAT ALL THOSE WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AND FOR ARRANGING MY PROGRAMME ARE INFORMED OF MY APPRECIATION OF THE TROUBLE WHICH THEY TOOK.

151631Z NOV Mrs North

Signal from Lord Hailsham



1957



Venom 2 RDU personnel  
(J. 'Buck' Taylor marked)



Mrs North



Mrs North



Mrs North

Chief Petty Officer Stanley Taylor of 48 Rydal Avenue, Warrington leaving the Royal Navy after 33 years service including a record 9 years at R.N.A.S. Stretton. He was Chief Bosun's Mate there, responsible for the general running of the station.



Mrs North

Burial of Northern Air Division  
10th March 1957



Mrs North

Capt. Harvey hands over to Capt. Stopford, 9th April 1957



Mrs North



Mrs North



Inspection by Flag Officer Reserve Aircraft  
19th, 20th June 1957

1958



Motor Transport Dept.



Presentation to Driver Harry Brazendale by Capt. Stopford



1974

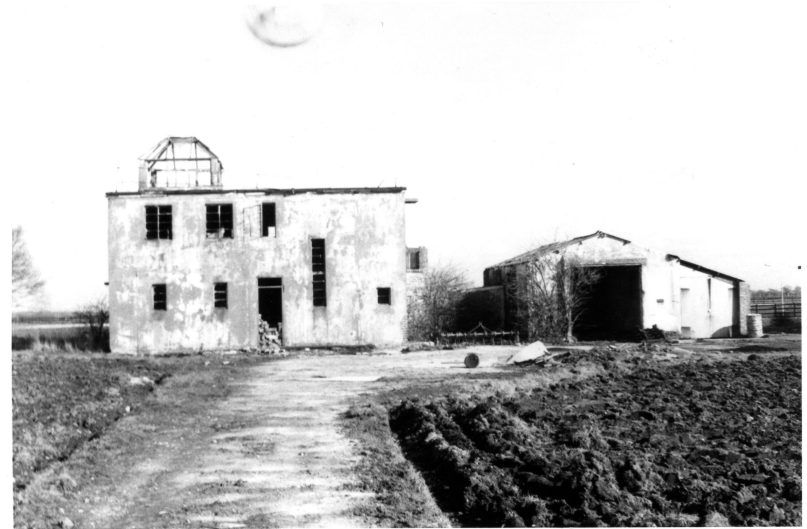


D. Lehrle

M56 under construction across airfield



1976



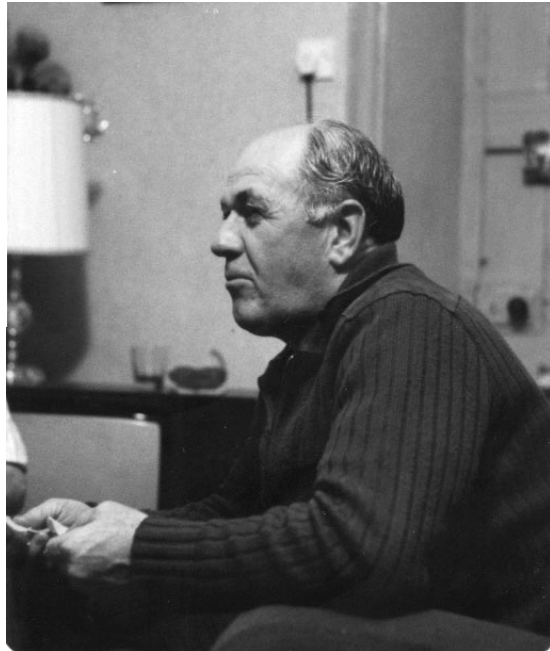
Views of control tower by A.P. Ferguson



Aerial showing the M56  
cutting the runways

A.P. Ferguson

1977



ex A.M.(E) William Clelland

2004



Plaque and display mounted at Shearings Coach Station



Grappenhall Hall today



2005



Former hangar from R.N.A.S. Stretton  
Now at farm in Appleton  
Dimensions — 69' 7" x 60' 5"



D. Enfield

Former blister hangar from R.N.A.S. Stretton  
Now at farm in Lymm  
Dimensions — 45' 9" x 92' 8"



D. Enfield



**FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT**

**Three stories about BLACKCAP**

**written by**

**Naval Airman (AH 3) John Redfern**

**(Names have been altered to protect the guilty)**



# DEER, DEER WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE

Ever since I was a youngster during the war, I never let the opportunity pass of 'Making a Few Quid' whenever the occasion presented itself. Particularly when I was drafted to the RNAS Stretton, HMS Blackcap, near Warrington, Lancashire (Now Cheshire) during the mid 1950's. The once front line Fleet Air Arm operational base was slowly and systematically being 'run down' prior to 'de-commissioning'. Following my preference draft following a spell on HMS Albion together with a few shipmates with homes nearby in Liverpool, Manchester or the Lancashire Mill Towns. After a brief spell at the Fire Station I was re-assigned to the 'Barrack Master's Party based on the Main Camp Site. This allowed me to combine my daily duties with that of helping to manage the 'Slipstream Club' on the old airfield. The Buffer's Party were all 'Blue Card Special Duty men' which allowed them to come and go virtually as they pleased.

Everyone on the Party had their own little 'Fiddles' which earned them a few quid from time to time including the 'Buffer' with his nearby 'Smallholding' a few pigs and chickens and a fairly large allotment for fresh vegetables. His pigs were fed on the 'gash food' from the base which we used to deliver and then 'boil up' in a copper. I had a wonderful relationship and regular liaison with the nearby USAF Base from which everyone on our Base profited.

About 11.30 pm. one evening, having missed the last 'Pusser's Bus' from Warrington I was compelled to take a Taxi following

a 'Business Night Out'. It was a clear moonlight night with a little frost on the ground. About a mile from the base the Taxi Driver pointed out that there was something lying in the road ahead. We stopped and in the headlights I saw a Deer lying a few feet from the grass verge. We could see that the animal had not been dead long as it was still quite warm to the touch. I asked the Taxi Driver if he would give me a hand to get it back to the Base at Blackcap. He was reluctant at first but when I offered him a fiver he changed his mind. Pulling out a tarpaulin cover from the boot we covered the animal and placed in on the luggage step on the passenger side strapping it in. Fortunately the animal was not too large so we were able to secure it fairly easily. Reaching the Base and turning down a side road adjacent to the Main Camp the Driver helped me to push the animal over the high fence and onto a grass verge behind some unoccupied Mess Huts near to the Galley.

Making my way through the Main Gates I retrieved my Station Card from the Reg Office after bidding a pleasant " Goodnight" to the Duty RPO and Bosun's Mate, I quickly ran around behind the Paint Store intending to retrieve the animal and leave it overnight in the Buffer's Equipment Store. As I passed I noticed that the lights were still on in the Main Galley Kitchen. Peering through the window I saw my old mate 'Scouse' the kellick Chef was still working. tapping gently on the window 'Scouse' looked up, saw it was me and quickly opened the door "What the bloody hell" "Shhhhhhhh" I hissed motioning him to be quiet. "Wait here a minute"? I whispered, disappearing momentarily to retrieve the deer carcass. I explained that I needed a big, big favour in helping

me to cut up the animal. I explained what had happened and pointed out that if we 'screwed our nuts' there was a nice little earner in it for us. "Fair enough, just let me take this tray of 'Kiy' and 'sarnies' over to the Reg Office and I will be with you"? Whispered Scouse, now sensing the need for silence.

Returning a few minutes later "That should keep those Buggers quiet now let's get busy" He said rubbing his hands. "I will cut you can clean and scrub out" Scouse ordered. Now I know why Royal Navy Chefs are among the very best as I watched Scouse expertly and systematically butcher, dismember and trim before stringing the joints into manageable sizes. He also prepared a selection of steaks which would have been the envy of any Chef in the land. While he worked I scrubbed, cleaned and polished. "What shall we do with the meat"? I enquired. I'm Duty Breakfast Chef this morning so put all the meat into this cardboard box and mark it 'Wardroom Do Not Touch' then put it in the cold room but make sure you collect it before dinner time as I am away on Week-End at 1pm."? Scouse replied. "What about the gash"? I asked him "You will have to get rid of that yourself, why don't you take it down to the Buffer's pigs, those buggers will eat anything"? He replied. "What a damn good idea, I hadn't thought of that, I must be slipping". I found myself thinking. Carefully putting all the carcass remains into a Hessian sack and newspaper I carried them outside and placed them onto the PO Chef's trade bike nearby. Whispering to Scouse that I would see him later I carefully wheeled the bike through the Main Gate which again was fortunately unmanned. Climbing onto the bike and quietly cursing that there were no lights and grateful that there was a bright moon shining, I sped off down the road turning right by

the pub and down the lane towards the Buffer's Piggery, which minutes later greeted my arrival noisily. Intending to empty the contents of the sack over the wall I heaved it onto the top when it was suddenly wrenched from my grasp "Oh! Shit" I thought then all hell broke loose as the inmates of the Piggery began to scrap noisily for the sack and it's contents. Realising I had better make myself scarce I pedalled away as quickly as I could returning the PO Chefs bike to the Galley past the unlocked and unmanned gate. I finally got to my 'Pit' around 2.45 am.

After breakfast at 8.am 'Both Watches of the Hands' fell in as usual outside the Regulating Office. As members of the illustrious 'Buffer's Party and 'Blue Card' holders we were excused mustering. Today being Friday was an extremely busy day for us. We had to make the weekly 'Firewood and Fuel trip and delivery. The a few 'private calls' comprising the usual week-end deliveries to the Senior Rates Mess and collect the 'Bets' It was customary on Fridays for me to visit a local Farmer to collect our 'Meat' for distribution to the RA men and the married quarters, at a greatly reduced charge and much cheaper than going into town for it. This was a very popular little earner and very much appreciated. On this particular day I decided to treat my customers to 'Prime Fresh Venison' My regular customers included Officers. Senior Rates and even the Regulating Staff looked forward to this excellent service.

Having duly collected 'The Venison' in the cold room I borrowed the 'Buffer's Landrover to make my deliveries and collect my dues. Visiting the Reg Office first the gasps of surprise and admiration confirmed that Scouse had done a superb job with the Butchery. Subsequent visits to the Wardroom and Senior Rates Mess also confirmed his expertise. All chores, collections and deliveries made and many satisfied customers together with a nice

little earner, I handed Scouse a well deserved £20 for him to enjoy his week-end as I ambled over to the Dining Hall for my 'Tot' and early lunch before meeting our 'Bookie' with the regular daily bets from Blackcap.

At 2.45pm 'Long Week- End Liberty men' was piped over the Tannoy, they, began to muster outside the Regulating Office. Leave Passes issued, Station Cards collected, Ratings inspected, 'Pusser's Buses' awaiting outside the Main Gate. Finally the 'Jossman' bellows. "Liberty men, Shun". Turning to face the OOD he salutes smartly. "Permission for Liberty men to Carry on Sir"? He enquires politely. "Carry on please Master at Arms"? The OOD replies. The 'Jossman' turns to face the assembly. "Liberty men, turning right, dismiss". A huge cheer as the chaotic exodus of 'Mad Matelots' charges towards the Main Gate much to everyone's amusement. "Now for a bit of peace and quiet" the 'Jossman' mutters to no one in particular. Spotting me watching the proceedings he beckoned me over to the Reg Office steps. Taking me gently by the arm he steered me out of everyone else's earshot. "By the way JR, I have just had a couple of very strange telephone calls"? "Oh! Yes Master" I smiled. "One was from your local Farmer friend who usually supplies the week-end meat asking if we had forgotten to order this week. The other was from the local Police"? Really, Master" I replied, desperately trying to feign disinterest"? The Joss fixed me with a beady, piercing stare. "It seems like someone reported running over a Deer near the Base and when they searched for it couldn't find it anywhere"? "Perhaps it just crawled away"? I suggested pleasantly. "How the f.....g hell could it when it was stone dead"? The Joss whispered placing his face perilously close to mine. "I asked you JR because you were late back last night and may have seen

something and by a sheer bloody coincidence we had venison this week instead of the usual beef, pork or lamb"? I looked him straight in the eyes "Master", I said emphatically, realising he was just fishing. "How on earth would I be able to pick up a Deer on my own, in the middle of the night and cut it up without anyone seeing me, besides I get our meat from reliable sources". The Jossman glared at me for a few seconds before turning on his heel to disappear back into the Reg Office muttering "Why am I not entirely convinced that you know nothing about it at all"?

## **I STILL WONDER IF THE 'JOSSMAN' EVER BELIEVED ME**



## JUST OUR LITTLE SECRET

One day just before lunchtime the telephone rang in the Buffer's Office at the RNAS Stretton of HMS Blackcap. I picked it up and for a laugh I put on my best Oxford English accent. A voice whom I failed to recognise enquired, "May I please speak to JR"? I just could not resist saying "It is he whom you are addressing". There was a silence before the voice again enquired "May I please speak to JR it is rather important".? Attempting desperately to finish eating a 'Stand Easy' custard cream biscuit I managed to splutter "It is JR here, how can I help you"? A rather relieved voice answered. "Hello JR, we haven't yet met but they told me at the Senior Rates Mess that you may be able to help me with a problem.

"Well, whoever it was in the Senior Rates Mess is quite correct, just how I can help"? I replied politely "I'm afraid I can't place your voice". I added a little cautiously. The caller spoke again "I'm awfully sorry, my name is Petty Officer Hall and I am the Captain's new Senior Steward". "OK PO how exactly may I help"? "Well, it is rather an unusual request so I was just hoping that". I interrupted "Well PO the improbable I can do almost immediately, the impossible might just take a couple of days if that helps you at all". A rather relieved PO Hall continued "Well JR, if I may call you that". "Please do PO, everyone else does, I never answer to anything else anyway.

"Well, then JR, the Captain has instructed me to arrange for his horse to visit the 'Smithy' tomorrow morning, does that make sense to you"? I chuckled "It certainly does PO, I've

mucked out old Khan's stable a few times when I have been Under Punishment, the old boy and I are pretty good chums". Realising that might sound odd I hastily added "I meant the horse not the Captain". It was PO Hall's turn to chuckle this time. I should perhaps point out that the former Captain and Commanding Officer of the Air Station was an avid horseman of almost Olympic standard. He owned a magnificent stallion named 'Khan' who was kept in the stables at the rear of the old mansion house which formed part of the former Earl's vast estate and was formerly the shooting lodge. The house was on permanent loan to the Commanding Officer and the Estate was now run by a Manager.

Petty Officer Hall had been newly assigned as the Captain's Personal Steward and normally would have had two more Stewards to assist him in the huge house. It seemed however, that Annual leave and Defence cuts had taken their toll and the PO had to fend for himself. The former Captain of 'Blackcap' was a rather mysterious figure and unless you were up and around about 4 am, you would scarcely see him at all. There is no doubt that Khan and he were devoted to each other and it would be true to say that the villagers saw more of him riding his horse around the many country lanes than we did back at the base.

Petty Officer Hall continued with his conversation. "Well JR, the President of the Senior Rates Mess apart from thinking very highly of you, seems to think that as you know a little about horses, you may be able to help me out of a bit of a spot"? "Well PO' put it

this way. I did work on a rather large Riding School when I was a youngster so there isn't much on four legs or two come to think of that I haven't been aboard, seriously though, if you want me to take old Khan down to 'Clinker' Moyes's Smithy tomorrow is that correct"? "That's right JR you would be doing me a big favour, do you know Mr Moyes by the way"? He asked, sounding very relieved. I laughed aloud. "I certainly do, the old bugger, of course I'll do it".

Next morning, after breakfast a quick glance at 'The Telegraph' my prestige newspaper, for obvious reasons. If an Officer saw you he was immediately impressed if anyone else saw you they became apprehensive. I made my way to the 'Mansion House' and Khan's stable, the old familiar smell of carbolic and freshly scrubbed cobblestones hung in my nostrils. Khan was waiting, magnificent as usual, saddled and ready to go. Holding his reins was the familiar figure of 'Old Rueben' a regular from my local The Thorn'. He had been the Head Ostler to the late Earl for donkey's years. "Hello Rueb you old bugger I thought you'd retired about 100 years ago"? "Morning JR, I'm just standing in for the Guvnor's Groom who has been called away suddenly" He said "I see you've managed OK so far then"? I grinned sarcastically. "You cheeky young sod, I was looking after horses before you were an ache in your Father's ball bag". Cackled Old Rueben. "By the way, when you see Clinker this morning remind him there is a Domino Match tomorrow night at the pub and to pick me up"? "Will do old son, will do". I promised. As I attempted to climb aboard Khan's broad back "You mount from the left you know just in case you've forgotten." Rueben cackled again. He held Khan's head as I put my foot in the stirrup, grabbed the saddle and reins. I

hailed myself upright and swung my right leg across Khan's middle. As I settled down into the saddle he took a pace forward. "Whoa boy, whoa there, easy now" Whispered Rueben as he adjusted the girth and stirrups slightly. A gentle slap on Khan's rump and we were off, clop, clopping across the stable yard. "Don't forget" Shouted Rueben as I waved. "Don't let that old bugger Clinker get you in the pub or you will end up paying". Cackled Old Rueben as I waved again.

A leisurely plod along the country lanes on this lovely Summer's day made me think that I could really get used to this. It was about a mile and a half to Clinker's Forge and by nine thirty we were there. A short stocky little red faced man with shoulder like a barn door and arms like 'Popeye the Sailor' and dressed in a short sleeved shirt and moleskin trousers topped with a leather apron indicated I was at Clinker Moyes's Forge. The broad Birmingham accent merely confirmed it. "Are yo all roight JR, oi aint sin yo fer ages". He greeted me as I swung down from Khan's back. "Is that good or bad for me, how are you, you old bugger"? We shook hands and I almost cried out as a huge hand like a steak plate crushed my fingers in a vice like grip". Clinker grinned, showing gaps in his teeth like a NAAFI piano, one black, one white and one missing. "Before I forget, Clinker old son, Rueben asked me to remind you about the Domino Match tomorrow night and to pick him up as usual". Clinker looked skywards, as if for inspiration. Dominoes, Cribbage, Skittles, Bowls together with Whippet Racing and Pigeons were regarded as almost a compulsive religious pursuit in this part of the country and such matches were eagerly contested between rival public houses.

Clinker patted Khan and rubbed a gnarled hand gently across



his nose “Do yo know oid know this orse anywhere, just giv im a drink an turn im out inter th paddock till oim reddy fer im”. Said Clinker. Girths undone, saddle and bridle off a little slap and Khan was off to graze on the far side of the paddock . “Ays a luvly oss and thiz no mistake about that”. Said Clinker admiringly. “Is little uns ud make a gud proice they wud an all”. He said as he carefully took out a battered old tin from his waistcoat pocket. Carefully removing a previously rolled cigarette and walking towards his forge fire. Poking a paper spill into the glowing embers he lit his cigarette and blew a cloud of almost overpowering ‘Churchman’s Counter Shag’ towards me. He thought for a moment, walking back towards me said. “As the Old Captain ever thort o breedin im”? “I honestly have no idea Clinker old son, no idea at all why do you ask “? Clinker looked up, “Lewk JR yo know mae and ar no yo, an az wae ar both men o the world wae buth on us loike ter mak a bob or tew along th way don’t uz”? I nodded. “I have to admit Clinker old son that is perfectly true what have you got in mind”? Clinker gave me an old fashioned kind of look and said. “There’s a bloke wot I know lives only 10 minutes from this very spot wud giv three undred quid fer Khan ter cover iz two mares” I stared hard at him “That is damn good money and no mistake”. I had to agree. As is to emphasise his point Clinker then said. “Just think how much it’d bay fer a thoroughbred race oss ter dew it then. “I’m already thinking Clinks old son, I’m already thinking”. I repeated” Realising the distinct possibility that Clinker had maybe unwittingly, struck a chord nearest my heart by making a few quid. He pressed home his advantage by blowing another cloud of choking cigarette smoke towards me. “Now if yo wuz ter bugger off fer an hour yer wudnt ave ter no owt about it wud yer. After all, osses allus get up ter all sorts

dunt they, an yo can’t turn yer nose up at 300 quid a time can yer”. He smiled triumphantly “An no bugger wud ever no uz it’d bay our little secret”. I thought for approximately 5 seconds. “OK Clinker, cash in hand”? “What else but”. Grinned Clinker spitting on his hand and extending it towards me. “Done” He said, and I had that sinking feeling that I may just have been.” Perhaps old Khan might even enjoy it”? I consoled myself as I went into the nearby pub.

The pub next door to Clinker’s Forge was none other than the ‘Half Way Inn’ colloquially nicknamed by the lads at Blackcap as ‘The Discontented Virgin’. It was a dark, gloomy, Dickensian type of building and reminded me of a mausoleum or at least an ‘Undertakers Parlour’. The stark but scrupulously clean wooden furniture, would have been at home in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The stone flagstones and sombre meticulous ticking of a huge wall clock gave me the creeps. The main bar was deserted so I entered the ‘Smoke Room’ ‘Smoke Room being the operative word for despite the bright sunshine outside there was a recently lit coal fire occasionally puffing plumes of smoke from a badly cleaned chimney. The rays of the sun through the window caused swirling shapes in the smoke from the fire. Apart from the Landlord polishing glasses behind the bar with a practised precision, there was no one else to be seen anywhere. The Landlord looked as though he had just stepped out from a Victorian melodrama, short, thin with a moustache and slicked down hair quite reminiscent of that period long ago. He had a starched white apron tied at the waist. A waistcoat and watch chain with what appeared to be a ruby and a gold medallion dangled from it.

The Landlord looked up. “You are a bit early but as there are not many customers this time of day, you are welcome to have a

drink”? My first thoughts were that there probably hadn’t been many customers since Queen Victoria’s Funeral in 1901. I ordered a pint of best bitter and gazed around the room. There were sporting prints of every kind from Horse Racing to Bowls. Pictures of moustachioed players some with their foot on a football with their arms folded. There were prints of men with beards or long sideburns. Cases of stuffed freshwater fish and other relics from a bygone age adorning the brown nicotine stained walls. A strong smell of carbolic and wax polish filled the room which was spotlessly clean. It was just like stepping back into time and the pages of our Country’s Social History. The Landlord saw me inspecting a highly polished brass oil lamp which hung above the bar. “Worth a lot of money is that”? He announced proudly as I took a long pull at my pint and was immediately impressed by the prime quality of the beer. “Converted that meself from paraffin. Came off an old sailing barge did that” He smiled, obviously very pleased with himself. I complimented him on an excellent pint of bitter as one of the best I’ve ever had. That’ll be one and ninepence he said casually”? Worth every penny too I thought. “You’d better take one for old Clinker too, he will be in directly”. I suggested. The Landlord looked up at the big clock on the wall opposite, with almost meticulous precision took out a large pocket watch from his waistcoat pocket. “He won’t be in for at least another hour”. He observed. He handed me my change which I placed in the ‘Swear Box’ on the counter. “But you haven’t sworn yet”? He said, looking surprised. “I dare say I may well be tempted to when old Clinker comes in”. “You know old Clinker then”? Said the Landlord. Obviously deciding to have some conversation with his only customer. I laughed. “Yes, I’m afraid I do, he’s not a bad old bugger really”. I replied. “Maybe not but

the Brummie bugger is as tight as a gnat’s chuff box”. We both burst out laughing which broke the ice well and truly. “I agree with you, I’ve always thought old Clinker had very short arms and low pockets”. We both chuckled again. “I see you’re from the Navy Base then”? I found the remark did not call for a reply particularly as I was wearing No8’s with my name over the breast pocket and a cap with HMS Blackcap on it so I merely nodded.

The Landlord squinted at my name tag “ Ah, yes, JR, I’ve often heard old Clinker mention you, by the way call me Harold”? He said extending his hand. “May I buy you a drink Harold”? I enquired. “That is very kind, if I may I will have a small Barley Wine”? I handed him my glass. “I will also have another pint of your delicious ale”. I grinned. We spent the next hour or so completely uninterrupted discussing practically everything from sport to the hitherto unmentionable pub taboos of Politics and Religion. It was well past 11 o’clock when we heard old Clinker stomping into the Bar with the usual beam on his red face. “Hey up Arrold, arm just about bloody parched to death”? He grumbled as Harold handed him his beer and from which he took a huge gulp before replying again. “Oi’ve ad a right old mornin I ave and no mistake.” Nudging me and winking, he handed me a folded newspaper. “Yo can ave yer paper back now oi’ve finished wi it”. Said Clinker, loudly. He took another large gulp at his beer, drew his finger along the outside of the glass and wrote the figures 600 on the bar top. Harold had his back to us and did not see the gesture so Clinker quickly wiped it away. “Well JR he’s reddy fer yer trust moi”? Harold sniffed audibly. “I wouldn’t trust him if he sat on the Altar with a Crucifix up his arse” He scoffed to which Clinker replied “Oi, Arrold yo swore, that’s a penny in th box that is”? Draining his pint he led me outside “Cum on oive got me werk

tew dew, see yer in a bit Arrolld”? He called over his shoulder.

Khan was already saddled and bridled and tethered to the top rail of the paddock gate. I noticed that there were another half dozen horses in the paddock awaiting Clinker’s attention. Khan seemed a little edgy and kept tossing his head and pawing the ground. “Its cos it’s an ot day, tak it easy wi im an eel be foine”? Said Clinker to reassure me. I saw that he had done his usual good job and even tarred and leaded Khan’s hooves for good measure. “E wants ter bay orf an I’ve got loads ter dew yet so tarra ter yer”? Clinker waved “Don’t forget Rueben tomorrow night”? I reminded him. As we walked Khan kept tossing his head. Just for a brief moment I thought of something. No, it couldn’t be. I immediately checked the contents of the folded newspaper which Clinker had given me. Sure enough there was £600 in £20 notes inside which I placed in both pockets of my No 8’s shirt. Funny, I just had a strange feeling like someone just stepped on my grave. Plodding up the hill caused Khan to puff and pant, surely two mares hadn’t tired the old boy out, he was in his prime I thought. Reaching the top of the hill I looked back down towards Clinker’s Forge. The paddock was now completely empty, how very strange. I knew that Clinker was one of the best Blacksmiths in the entire County but shoeing six horses in less than half an hour that is quite impossible, he couldn’t possibly. Wait a minute, the penny dropped at last. Those bloody horses were all mares. The craft old bugger, he’s only got Khan to service six mares at £300 quid a time and he gave me £600 for only two. That old ‘Brummie Bugger’ has done me like a kipper for £1200 notes. You just wait, you old sod, you just bloody wait.

Khan and I were walking slowly back, this time downhill. The old bugger, I reluctantly had to admire him as it was

probably the sort of scam that I would have tried myself. I chuckled quietly and patted old Khan. “Did you enjoy yourself old son, I wonder”? I found myself thinking. I just don’t believe that I’ve been well and truly done by a bigger bloody rogue than myself. I was already plotting my revenge and the opportunity to exact retribution was not long in coming. It seemed that quite a number of locals had, over the years, also been hapless victims of old Clinker’s ‘Roguery’ and were only too willing for the chance to return the favour. With the help of the ‘Buffer’s Party’ lads and a ‘Pusser’s’ five tonner and a borrowed ‘Furniture Van’ our chance came one afternoon when old Clinker was taken to the Races as a ‘Special Birthday Treat’. We completely dismantled his entire Forge, tools, equipment, everything and drove them to a farm several miles away where a willing owner locked them in an old barn. We left a Birthday Card nailed to Clinker’s Forge door together with a Map Reference and wishing him a Very Happy Birthday.

## **REVENGE NEVER TASTED ANY SWEETER THAN THIS**



## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN – ‘IN THE RED CORNER’

Stand Easy's in the Buffer's Party Office at HMS Blackcap or the RNAS Stretton back in the 1950's were more of a Social Gathering than a short break for a cup of tea. Every day at 10.15 am seemed like an AGM as it seemed like everyone from their own particular 'part of ship' was represented. Perhaps it was more to do with what was on offer than just tea. For a start there was real ground coffee, courtesy of the nearby USAF Base. In addition, there were cakes and sandwiches and occasionally 'oggies' or sausage rolls were found on the 'Bill of Fare'. It had been known for the odd Senior Rate to wander in just about 'Scuttlebutt Time'

It was hardly surprising really as the 'Buffer's Party' or to be more precise, the 'Barrack Master's Party' had their fingers in just about every pie there was. As usual I was engrossed in the 'Telegraph' with one ear on the proceedings, just in case something financial advantageous should manifest themselves. "What do you think JR"? Someone asked. "About what"? I Enquired. It transpired that the discussion involved the local 'Village Hall' needing funds to complete a major restoration. Many of the villagers and old Ships Company had enjoyed the Dances and Socials on the Base at the 'Slipstream Club' but as this once venerable institution had recently closed its doors for ever, the Village Hall was the venue for the usual 'Saturday Night Hop', so perhaps it was only fitting that we should be asked to support the project. My immediate question was of course. "How much do they need"? "Well, it seems that the roof

will cost at least five hundred quid." Someone else replied. "You could donate that yourself JR"? Someone else suggested amid laughter.

Having already disposed of the 'Why', the additional questions posed were 'How, What and Where'. As I at one time or another been either directly or indirectly involved in 'Social' functions and the odd financial enterprise, I suppose it was a perfectly logical question to ask. Having unanimously agreed in principle to support the venture I respectfully asked to a temporary postponement of any arrangements until I had the opportunity of making further enquiries. The reason for this request was mainly to allow me to place the Senior Rates Mess Daily Bets. The office emptied like magic leaving my pal Jock to man the telephones and hold the fort.

Several suggestions had already been put forward including Dances, Raffles, Sporting events involving our pals 'The Yanks' who were always included in our plans as they had been greatly involved many times in the past. I felt that on this occasion something quite unique and a 'one off' were called for. At such times of crisis I inevitably telephoned my cousin Ray who ran an extremely successful 'Working Men's Club' about 20 miles away and who had some marvellous contacts some of whom I had already done business with in the past.

Acting on Ray's usual sound advice I telephoned a mutual friend Frank, an extremely wealthy Scrap Metal Dealer from

Manchester. Frank was a larger than life character and if he happened to take a shine to you, nothing was impossible. Frank absolutely adored my cousin and I got on well with him too mainly due to some profitable dealings in the past. “How much do you want Kiddo”? Laughed Frank in that unmistakeable gruff Mancunian accent of his. I explained exactly what it was for and I guessed around £800. “In that case Kiddo I will get some of the lads to make a donation, you’ve already met some of them so you can count on at least a grand. I’ll leave the money with John at ‘The Thorn’ will that suit you”? Thanking Frank most sincerely I had a secondary thought. “By the way Frank, I would like your advice on how to organise a ‘Wrestling Match’ at the Base here”? There was a loud chuckle at the other end as Frank answered. “You need to talk to my old mate Morrie Burman, he runs all the Wrestling in Liverpool and Manchester. He owes me a couple of favours so if I give him a call and get him to ring you will that be OK”? “Absolutely perfect Frank thank you”. “Look Kiddo, I’ve got to dash now so if you’ve got any problems just give me a bell OK”? I felt quite elated when I hung up the phone. I don’t know why Wrestling even cropped up at all. Perhaps it’s because it was all the rage throughout the Country at this time.

Jock, Paddy and I together with a few of the other ‘Buffer’s Party’ were still conducting a daily survey and inventory of the old Aerodrome and remaining items which had been left for final disposal. All the abandoned, obsolete and wrecked aircraft, minus ‘compass alcohol’ had gone for scrap some time ago. The massive hangars were now completely deserted, apart from the huge empty fuel containers and diesel tanks which still had to be disposed of at some stage. As we surveyed the scene we could

not help but dwell on the fact that up until a comparatively short time ago, this Operational Air Station would have been alive with the daily routines and the general hustle and bustle. As each Squadron had dispersed and each hangar systematically cleared and it’s massive hangar door closed for the last time and padlocked. I could not help but imagine just how many people these huge hangars would actually hold. Ah! Now there’s a thought to consider, how about holding the Wrestling in one of the hangars, well, perhaps one of the smaller hangars”??

In the meantime, our allotted task for the moment completed, Jock and I returned to the Main Base as it was almost ‘Tot and Lunch Time’. Back in the Buffer’s Office the telephone rang shrilly. Jock picked it up to answer and immediately called out. “It’s for you JR, some guy called Burman”. I almost leapt to the phone. “Hello Mr Burman, so good of you to call”? The voice at the other end chuckled. “Frank, asked me to call you. Any friend of Frank’s is a friend of mine, what exactly can I do for you.”? He enquired. I explained our situation and hopes to fund raise and told him that Frank and his business colleagues had already agreed to contribute”. The voice at the other end chuckled again. “In that case, I guess I will never hear the last of it if I don’t do something for you will I “?.

Mr Burman went on to explain, unofficially of course, that he had a ‘Pool of Wrestlers’ under contract who appeared at all of his venues, for which of course, he had the sole franchise. Much to my surprise he even disclosed that all of the bouts in his fights were ‘Pre Arranged’. “You mean, they are fixed”? I asked rather naively “? Another chuckle at the other end of the phone. “I would prefer it if you used the word ‘Pre Arranged’, the reason being quite simply

that each Wrestler was paid the same money and the bouts were averaged out on a weekly basis to ensure that they were all paid the same at the end of each week. “You mean the guys know beforehand who is going to win”? I asked still incredulous. Still yet another chuckle from Mr Burman at the other end of the phone. “Absolutely, how else do you think that the guys can make a bit of money by side betting just to improve their earnings. Of course the Bookies don’t know so that is how we make a few quid.” He replied. “But that’s bloody illegal Mr Burman isn’t it”? This time a laugh. “You bet your bloody life it is but who the hell knows”? He added.

“Look young man, Frank obviously thinks the world of you so this is what I’m going to do for you is this. I will let you use my contracted Wrestlers absolutely free of charge. You will of course have to pay their Match Fee plus expenses which will be around eighty quid. I will waive my commission as a favour and my contribution to a good cause is that fair or not”? He asked. I was flabbergasted, I simply could not believe it. “Now I will leave you my number and you just let me know the details as soon as you can and leave the rest to me OK”? I replaced the telephone. My mind was in an absolute whirl and thinking to myself, the possibilities are unthinkable. Making a mental list I thought of possible snags. First of all I simply had to sound out the situation. My next port of call was the Senior Rates Mess President who had proved invaluable in such situations as this. Explaining the idea in principal, he promised to have an unofficial word with ‘Jimmy The One’ just to ‘sound out the situation’. The very next day a delighted Chiefs Mess Pres told me to put in a request for ‘Permission to hold a Fund Raising Event to Support Local Charities’ in one of the old aircraft

hangars. I did this immediately and as a result my Divisional Officer spoke to me at some length regarding it. I omitted of course the finer points of the arrangements between Morrie, Frank and myself just in case things might be misconstrued. The following day rather surprisingly my DO said that the Commanding Officer had agreed and I was to go ahead with the arrangements and keep his Office informed of events.

Another visit to the smaller of the hangars revealed that fortunately the electricity and power were still connected and therefore the overhead strip lighting would be adequate enough even with the doors open. The question of seating however would present a major problem. Our entire complement at the base at this time was no more than 500 or so chairs of the tubular kind with every possible source having been raided. There was therefore, no other alternative other than to scrounge from other sources which included the USAF Base, (Where else) local Church Hall and even John’s Wedding Room at the ‘Thorn’ was systematically raided. The magnificent overall total was 800 chairs and at that point I decided that enough was enough. The next issue was of course the date and following much searching August 30<sup>th</sup> was decided upon which of course just happened to be a Bank Holiday when a full house should be guaranteed. The Captain’s Secretary was duly informed and almost expired on the spot when told that the Fund Raising would in fact be a Charity Wrestling Contest. However, as the Captain had already given his approval we were told to go ahead with the arrangements.

Things seemed to move pretty quickly after that and I was soon on the telephone again to Mr Burman with all the details. “Just one question young man”? He interjected as my obvious enthusiasm had temporarily run away with me. “What about the Ring”? I was

poleaxe “Oh! Shit, I’d completely forgotten that”. Another famous chuckle from Morrie. “Frank said you would forget that”. He chortled. “Don’t worry son I will get it over to you in plenty of time, I’ll even send over a couple of my Riggers to help you install it, how about that”? He countered. “Wonderful, absolutely wonderful MrBurman, how can I ever thank you”? I managed to stammer. “ Now listen JR, I’m going to tell you something now. If you want to make a few quid on the side. My lads know who’s turn it is to win, now if you wish to make you arrangements with them that is up to you. I have already spoken to them and they know the score. If you want someone to win just tell them. I know there will be Bookies there on the day and if you ‘Screw Your Nut’ you can make a killing if you know what I mean”? Morrie replied. “In the meantime, I will get a few posters done and even put em up for you OK”

Morrie, Bless his heart, was as good as his word for two days later the posters began to appear all over the place. There were even a stack of them waiting for me at the ‘Thorn’ together with one of those familiar brown envelopes from Frank. Meanwhile the chairs had begun to arrive in dribs and drabs and little by little the hangar had started to take shape. Morrie’s crew had arrived and with the assistance of the redoubtable ‘Buffer’s Party the ring was erected and the chairs arranged into rows with the Captain and his Officers and their wives occupying ringside seats. Morrie’s posters were indeed, colourful and attractive and featured such ‘dreadnoughts’ as ‘The Masked Monster’ ( Crewe) V ‘Young Snowball (Birmingham), ‘Dave Adonis’ (Manchester) V ‘The Irish Assassin’ (Belfast), ‘Judo Al Devis’ (Manchester) V ‘Ice Man Morris’ (Newcastle), ‘Phil

Martinez’ (Stoke) V ‘Ludo Caruso (Italy) The Main Feature being a ‘Tag Contest’ between the ‘Big Bad Pye Brothers. Bill and Reg V Don Cutler and Alby Thomas (London). Admission £2 pay at the door and all proceeds to charity.

The great day dawned and we were all up early putting the final touches to what promised to be a fine day. We had about half a dozen of the ‘Buffer’s Party’ on duty and stationed at strategic points. Scouse had provided one of his very ‘Special Buffets’ for the Officers, VIP’s and their wives in the now defunct former ‘Slipstream Club’ nostalgically opened perhaps for the very last time and with the kind permission of the Captain. The Bar facilities being provided by John from ‘The Thorn’. Paddy, Jock and Dutchy were stewarding whilst I was madly dashing from Club to hangar on the PO Chef’s motor bike. The Captain had very generously agreed to allow all the remaining stock from the Club to be ‘disposed of’ and this seemed a fitting and appropriate occasion to do so.

The Wrestling was due to commence at 1400 and by 1330 most of the audience was already assembled and availing themselves of the free beer provided by John. Whilst the VIP’s and Officers and wives were enjoying the informal cocktail party in the club I was showing the Wrestlers to their Dressing Rooms in one of the old Squadron Lecture Rooms which had both showers and toilets attached. Whilst they were changing we agreed on who was going to win their respective bouts. Jock, who was taking the gate money, informed me that all the seats had now been taken and the Bookies were operating outside the hangar rear entrance. I noticed that their odds were evens on the ‘masked man’ and 2-1 the remainder. Checking my slip of paper on which ‘only I’ knew the results. I



immediately placed a £25 accumulator with all the Bookies and instructing Jock and Paddy to ‘watch them like a Hawk” as there was probably a ‘nice little earner’ for all the lads at the end of the day. I quickly dashed over to Dutchy at the main door who handed me a bundle of notes which I quickly counted out and handed to the Captain in a ‘brown paper sack’ which modestly contained “£1500 pounds and which our delighted CO was happy to present to an equally delighted Chairman and Secretary of the Village Hall Community Fund which greatly exceeded the amount originally envisaged and enabled them to almost completely rebuild the hall, which the Captain later re opened.

The lads of the ‘Buffer’s Party’, including Paddy, Jock, Dutch and Scouse and as a direct result of the generosity of the Bookmakers all received a welcome ‘Ton’ each for all their splendid efforts on the day, whilst I also found myself on a nice little earner too of a relatively substantial sum most gratefully received.

**WHICH SIMPLY GOES TO SHOW THAT  
IT IS NOT WHAT YOU KNOW BUT WHO  
YOU KNOW**

