



The AnyFace Association

Q3/23 Newsletter

September 2023

Hello members,

I hope everyone has had a fantastic summer/winter wherever you are in the world.

As always, I'd like to start by welcoming our latest members to the fold and fantastic to see a mix of trades from across the Sea King and Merlin airframes and from across the world. It's particularly pleasing to see more engineers joining up! Welcome to you all.

Simon Annetts – Leonardo Merlin Chief Engineer (inc Crowsnest)

Rupert Bradley – Sea King Mk2/7 Pilot HQ, B Flt, 854

Steve Knight – Sea King Mk 2 Engineer HQ, A Flt 86-89

Ed Macintyre – Sea King Mk7 Engineer 849, 854 10-15

Chris 'Ox' Money – Sea King Mk 2 Pilot 94-97 (overseas Australia)

Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse – Sea King Mk2 Observer HQ, B Flt 96-00

Gordon 'Flash' Smith – Sea King Mk7 Engineer 849, 854 10-18

David White – Sea King Mk2/7 Pilot 849HQ, A Flt 01-04 (overseas Qatar)

Most members (both new and renewals) have paid their subscription. If you are unsure of the required details, then please drop me a line.

Upcoming events



Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance. Every November the Poppy Factory charity organise the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, which is made up of over 300 individual association plots. Last year AnyFace was allocated a permanent plot which provides us the opportunity to plant a symbol for all those fallen comrades from 849 NAS since 1952 and those from 849, 854 and 857 lost during WW2. The Field of Remembrance will officially open on Thursday 9 November and remain open to the public until Sunday 19 November. For those who wish to visit, the AnyFace plot is number 99, located to the right of the entrance to St Margaret's Church.

The Poppy Factory was opened in 1922 by Major George Howson MC to produce poppies and provide employment for veterans injured during WW1. Today the Poppy Factory still produce wreaths, crosses and symbols for the RBL and also provides support to veterans with health conditions on their journey into civilian employment. You can read more about this fantastic charity [here](#)



National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph.

Our AnyFace team for the Cenotaph parade has been finalised and we're delighted to have 15 members representing the Association on Sunday 12 November.



David Bartlett
Richard Bickerton
Tim Brooker
John Brotherton
David Burton
Danny Daniell
Jan Cox
Floppy Hoper
Steve Knight
Dave Lambourne
Dicky Lewis
Mike Luscombe
Ed Macintyre
Keiryn Moffitt
Peter Waugh

Following the National Service, we will attend the Fly Navy Federation service at the FAA Memorial on Embankment. This year the Association will be joined by the family of Tom Tracey, an observer who was killed in 1968 alongside Nick Broadway and Gordon Still in a flying accident off Okinawa whilst serving on HMS Hermes. Tom's son and daughter-in-law got in touch with the Association earlier this year to find out more about their father and I was very grateful to be able to link them with Martin Bartholomew who went through flying training with Tom at Lossie and Brawdy. It will be an honour to have them with us on Remembrance Sunday.

The AnyFace Reunion. Following feedback from members the Committee have agreed that 5 years between reunions is just too long, so the decision has been taken to hold an additional reunion within the usual 5 year period. To that end, I'm happy to announce that the next AnyFace Reunion will take place in 2025, followed by AnyFace 75 in 2027.

Latest Dits

I'm very grateful for the wide range of dits in this edition. Please keep them coming!

849 Gannet Reunion 14-17 Sep 23 - Mike Penn

The previous nine 849 Sqn reunions have always been held at the Mariners Hotel in Haverfordwest but after much arm bending from those North of the border, we moved the 10th event up to Lossiemouth and the splendid Golf View Hotel with its wonderful views of a links golf course and the sea.

With over 40 attending, a little down on previous events but understandable given the journey times necessary. Nevertheless, those who made the effort were rewarded with wonderful weather, stunning scenery and pothole free roads (who knew).

We mustered at the hotel on Thursday 14th September for a natter and to swap various ailment stories. Friday afternoon was spent visiting the RN/RAF History Room at RAF Lossiemouth. Led by 'Dodd', one of their volunteers whose knowledge of the base was encyclopaedic.

The traditional(ish) 'up spirits' was followed by an excellent dinner and after the Loyal Toast a rendition of 'The Forgotten Aviation Mechanic', brought riotous applause from all including Lt. Hugh (Bomber) Brown, who flew Gannets in 1955 and was our furthest travelled coming all the way from Florida to dine with us.

Saturday morning saw a run to the Lossie Windswept Brewery for those with the constitution to make the effort. The Saturday afternoon BBQ at the magnificent Royal Navy and Royal Air Force Heritage Centre saw bright sunshine and food provided by Dave and Stacey Clark (both retired RN). Trips up to the top of the Lighthouse were encouraged but taken up only by the very brave.

Sunday saw 'Survivors' answering the call from the local RNA for 'a pint of heavy' to round off a fantastic weekend.

My thanks to Dave and Stacey Clark without whom this event would not have been so brilliant and to Rhona and her team at the Golf View Hotel. We will be back.



From Bagging to Blood Bikes – Dicky Lewis



Hurrah... we are all (mostly) retired. There was always something to look forward to during those long Dog Watches of chipping paint and whatever else we did to dream away the hours as we planned the perfect retirement. Bang! and here it is, Retirement; many years of experience under the belt and nothing prepares us for the void of nobody telling us to chip paint.

So, a great big cheer for the National Association of Blood Bikes and from me, Cornwall Blood Bikes: a group of self-funding volunteers operating as a registered charity to provide a free 'out of hours' delivery service to our NHS partners throughout Cornwall. All volunteers, we operate to professional standards and comply with current legislation relating to our activities.

For me, this means about 10 duties per month riding a BMW R1250RT motorcycle ferrying blood and other medical products between the many and varied medical facilities in Cornwall. Most of the riding is done during the hours that the NHS loses its funded courier service; typically, between 1700-0700 and all weekends. A typical shift could be up to 6 hours in the saddle and 100-250 miles. All great fun on a sunny August evening but not so much at 0200 on a soggy February morning.

Cornwall Blood Bikes (Charity No. 1140165) was founded at an inaugural meeting of seven volunteers held in Pensilva, Cornwall on 27 January 2011 and received 'Registered Charity Status' on 2 February 2011, becoming fully operating July 2012.

We are members of the Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes (NABB) whose membership of blood bike groups is countrywide and encompasses hundreds of motorcyclists who freely volunteer their time to the service, some groups boasting in excess of three decades of continual service to the NHS and the wider community.

An update from Flying Training – Commander Chris Jones, CO 824 NAS.



Its been another busy year so far for 824 Naval Air Squadron – we train engineers and aircrew to fix, fly and fight the Merlin Mk2 helicopter in both the Anti Submarine and Airborne Surveillance and Control, or ASaC (new money AEW) roles. Some 14 months in to my Command I am pleased to report that I occasionally have days where I am able to think back to an earlier point in this role and draw upon some recent experience or wisdom, but there are plenty of days that give me new and interesting challenges to overcome!

In the world of ASaC, I am delighted to report that Programme Crowsnest, the replacement for Sea King Mk7, has now reached Initial Operating Capability. With mixed emotions, including a good measure of jealousy, we bid farewell to the ASaC element of 820 NAS who have embarked in HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH with their Bagger Merlins for Operations in the European theatre for the remainder of the Autumn.

Back here, we are working hard to train the next generation – we sent 2 new ASaC Observers to the front line in July (their formal wings parade is in December, and I hope our Chairman will be able to represent us all there), and the next 2 have just started their conversion to ASaC role. I have 2 more in the pipeline behind them, currently learning the basics of Merlin; it is a constant effort, and I am so very proud of what our small cohort of ex SKASaC instructors can produce. Our engineers continue to work through task books and other On Job Training; in 824 NAS it is focussed on the ASW variant of the helicopter, with personnel selected from here to move to 820 NAS via an extra training course to maintain the ASaC role fit.

We do try and have fun as well – in July we held a families day, providing air experience flights for over 500 family members. We also held a whole Sqn Adventurous Training Day, where every Service person got the chance to test their limits with a choice of paddleboarding, coasteering, go karting, paintball or even skydiving for 4 lucky people. This came hot on the heels of a successful detachment to Norway and an embarkation of our own at Easter. Next year I look forward to another embarkation, another trip to Norway, and I am dreading the moment where I must hand over Command in July 2024. For now, though, all of my focus is on producing the best possible people for Operations – I feel very lucky to be surrounded by the best “raw material” money can buy!

The AnyFace Shop

AnyFace Ties



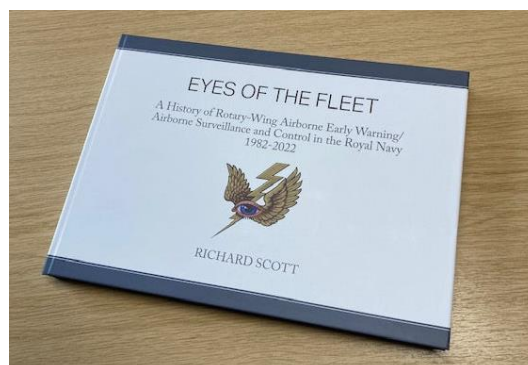
We have another batch of AnyFace Ties in production and expect to receive them in around 5 weeks time. The ties are eco-friendly, made using yarn created using plastic bottles rescued from landfill.

Cost is £15 including UK P&P. Overseas members may have to pay slightly more depending on location.

If you would like to pre-order then please complete the form at this link [AnyFace Tie Order Form](#)

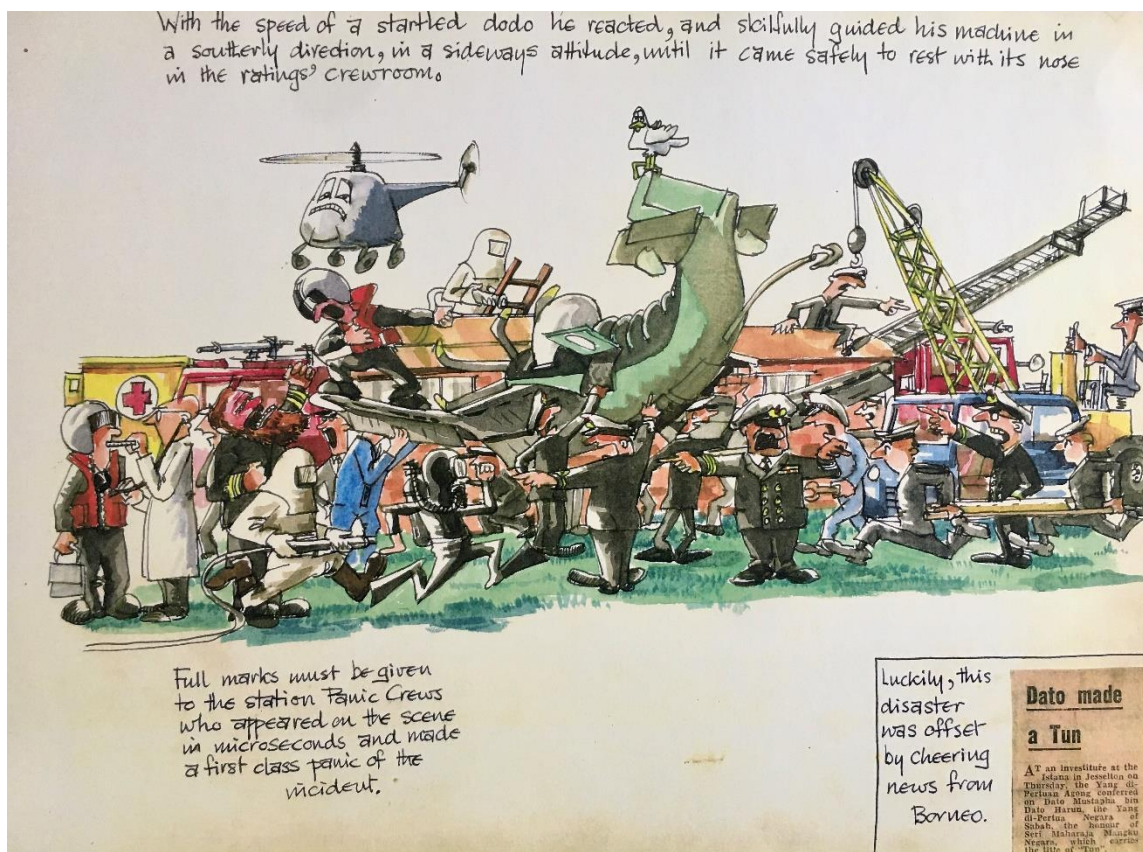
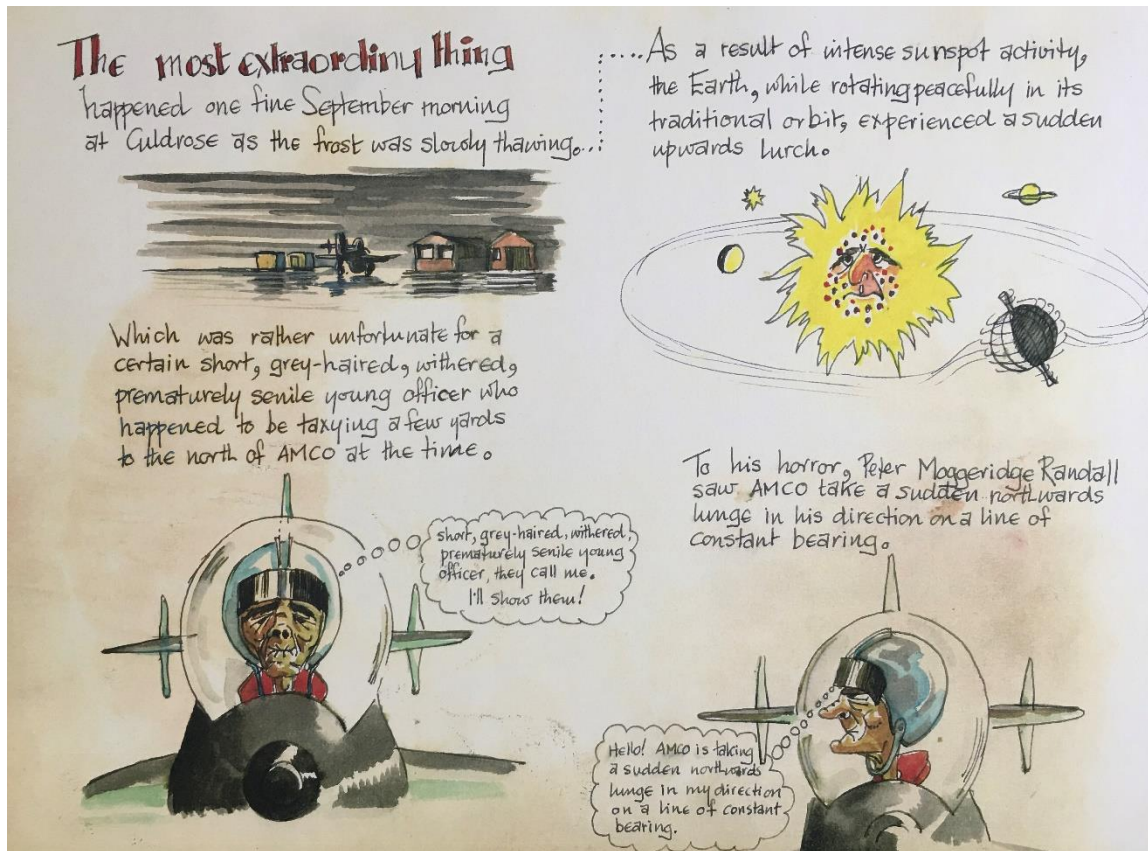
Lady members, I'm still investigating a suitable female alternative and hope to have a solution soon.

'Eyes of the Fleet' Book. I still have a number of copies of Richard Scott's fantastic book about the history of Rotary Wing AEW/ASaC from 1982. All members are entitled to a complimentary copy of the book and all we ask is for a small payment to cover P&P. £5 for UK members and overseas members slightly more dependent on your location. If you would like a copy then please complete the form [Eyes of the Fleet Book Order](#)



Down Memory Lane.

September 1964 and an exciting morning at 849 which inspired yet another classic line book entry from PAF Grant.



And if you'd like to hear Peter Randall's story in his own words, then please follow this link [Breathless and Brakeless at Culdrose](#)

And staying with PAF as I finish this edition, I was recently invited to an event at the WO & SRs Mess at RNAS Yeovilton and was delighted to see this hanging proudly in the bar!



Yours aye,
Serena
Admin Director

