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COSFORD
AUTUMN 2021

THE MAGAZINE OF RAF COSFORD





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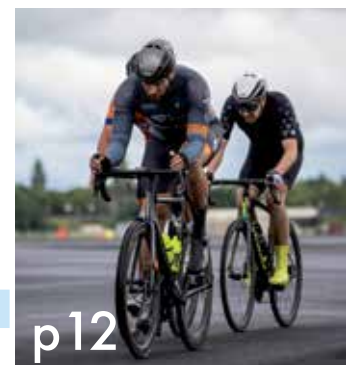
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Article submission deadline for the next issue... 26th October 2021

Please send all articles for the Winter 2021 edition to
COS-Grapevine@mod.gov.uk

Cosford Apprentice Distribution Team Members Required!

Have you ever wondered how the Apprentice gets to your door, business or waiting room? Apprentice distribution team members are needed to assist with the delivery of the quarterly Apprentice magazine.

Delivery areas include all of the Cosford married quarter sites, on station and local businesses. This duty is currently undertaken by a few to the benefit of many so, if you can spare an hour or so every three months we would appreciate your help.

A worthwhile community project and secondary duty to enhance any SJAR!

Interested? Please contact any member of the Apprentice team listed on this page.

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FOREWORD

by Gp Capt Gareth Bryant OBE, RAF Cosford Station Commander

FROM THE EDITOR



As the media officer I have welcomed the opportunity to start engaging more with local communities in recent weeks. Many of the things that we do to keep the station in the public eye have necessarily fallen by the wayside during the pandemic, but a steady relaxation of some of the COVID rules has meant that visits, parades and other activities can happen again if managed in the right way.

That greater activity is reflected in this magazine and there will be a further increase in the coming months between now and Christmas (sorry for dropping the C-Bomb in September).

As always, I'm after any interesting stories that you want to share with readers so please do get in contact if you have any ideas for articles.

Wow! I cannot believe that my first year in Command has passed in such a blink of an eye. It may not have been the year I was expecting, but it has provided the opportunity to see the very best of our people.

I have continued to be amazed at the professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of our Whole Force staff and our trainees with how we have collectively faced the challenges of the last 18 months. From transitioning to online delivery, developing our teaching and working together as a community to support each other, it has been inspiring to see what we have achieved. That our training schedule is almost back on track to pre-COVID levels is a significant achievement and I look forward to us now having the opportunity to start to enjoy the Cosford community together.

We have just started our first in-person activities over the past few weeks and it has been great to see people, indeed also meet people in person, and come together. With the completion of the 2nd phase of the vaccination programme for our trainees in September we will further adjust our posture and this will see increased normality across the site; however, I sense we are not yet fully 'out of the woods' and we need to be ready to respond to any future COVID developments.

The coming months provide a real opportunity for us to come together and restore many of the opportunities and activities that we have had to cease during the COVID period. It is great to see people coming back together to take part in sport, socialise and develop together and I encourage everyone to see what is available to do at Cosford, take part and contribute to our collective sense of community.

We have taken the opportunity to improve some of the facilities available on site and have made a number of improvements for our community: the exciting development within the Community Centre, 'The Bridge', now open; the Youth Club development in progress; designs and plans to commence development of the Stadium side playparks this Autumn. At the same time, we have also worked hard to redecorate the Fulton Common Room, provide additional café and vending facilities and the start of the programme to improve kitchens for our trainee and permanent staff accommodation. It is great to see the progress we have made in this area, but the team are focused on integrating with the long-term RAF plans to ensure more investment onto the site is secured.



“It is great to see people coming back together to take part in sport, socialise and develop together and I encourage everyone to see what is available to do at Cosford, take part and contribute to our collective sense of community.”

As ever, please keep an eye out and support each other in everything that we do. I am really excited about the opportunities ahead in the coming months but want to ensure that we keep a very strong focus on our people throughout.

Thank you for everything that you have done!

APOLLO RESOURCE CENTRE (ARC)



A quick reminder that the Apollo Resource Centre (ARC) in Fulton Block is available for small meetings and presentations. It is open between 0830 and 1530. The Chief of the Air Staff's current reading list is also available from the ARC.



GUILD OF AVIATION ARTISTS



It was great to welcome members of the Guild of Aviation Artists back to Cosford on 24 June, a year and a half after their last visit.

We are always amazed by what these fabulous artists are able to produce in such a short space of time, but, to be fair, it's not too shabby an environment to do some aviation sketching in, is it?



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The Royal British Legion is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year with a special programme of activity, culminating in a Centenary Poppy Appeal. Born in the aftermath of the First World War, the RBL's founding mission was to fight for the rights of those who had given so much and come back to so little.

Over the last century the RBL has successfully campaigned for a series of landmark changes which have benefitted serving personnel and veterans. More recently the charity has been at the forefront of calls for the Armed Forces Covenant to be enshrined in law. For the first time in history, a military question was included in the Census in England and Wales this year after a successful campaign led by the RBL and Poppy Scotland.

With 100 years of experience, the RBL provides lifelong care and support to all serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. This ranges from [expert advice and guidance](#), to [recovery and rehabilitation](#), through to transitioning to civilian life.

One of the RBL's earliest interventions after the First World War treated tuberculosis, rheumatism and arthritis which were widespread among the veteran population. In an age before the National Health Service, the British Legion implemented specialist treatment facilities for these conditions. Twenty years later these hospitals and wards became some of the foundation building blocks of the newly established NHS.

At the height of more recent combat operations in 2011, the RBL opened its Battle Back Centre in Lilleshall to support wounded and injured service personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. That same year, the RBL also helped fund and establish the Centre for Blast Injury Studies at Imperial College London. This was the first collaboration of its kind, bringing together civilian engineers, medics and scientists to work alongside military doctors to reduce the effects of roadside bombs and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). In 2018 the Royal British Legion also funded the Complex Trauma Gym at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Stanford Hall.

The Royal British Legion's Head of Armed Forces Engagement, Alexander Owen said:

"Over the last 100 years the military community has helped the RBL build our proud legacy which continues to this day. In this special year we pay tribute to the passionate and dedicated support given to us by generations of serving personnel and their families."

"From volunteering during the Poppy Appeal, to taking on fundraising challenges or being a part of our Remembrance and commemorative events, these contributions help make the RBL what it is today."

"For a century the Royal British Legion has been a symbol of hope for the Armed Forces community, and we want to inspire the next generation to support our vital work to create better futures for all those who serve with the British Armed Forces."

The Armed Forces Community is being encouraged to visit the Centenary Hub online at www.rbl.org.uk to get involved and also find out about volunteering opportunities.





AIRCRAFT PHOTO SHOOT

On 18 August, for the first time in nearly 2 years, Cosford hosted an aircraft photo shoot on the airfield. Photo shoots such as these allow aviation enthusiasts and keen photographers to get access to some of our aircraft that aren't usually available to members of the public outside of the Air Show. It was great to be able to get 4 Tornados out and to create a unique line up of Jaguars.

SAC Sam Dale was on hand to get some excellent images.







COSupport ties together our existing Welfare committees and experienced personnel by allowing everyone to understand how to access signposting and support through a branded recognisable network. If the member of COSupport you approach is not skilled or experienced to support your query, they will be able to link into their team and the wider network to signpost and support you quickly.

COSupport at 605 Sqn – A Reserve's Perspective

—by Sgt Nicola Tait, 605 Sqn HR

COSupport was the brainchild of Sqn Ldr Suzy Watts (OC PMS, now HRC Ops OC), and was launched at RAF Cosford on 01Feb21, under very different circumstances than was hoped.

Under the cloud of a global pandemic, COSupport was needed more than ever. With people and teams isolated (literally and hypothetically), it was very apparent that mental health needed to be high on the agenda of Line Managers and Colleagues alike.

Team Leaders and Team Members were set up across the Station including permanent staff on 605 Sqn. Reserves are no more immune to life's ups and down than anyone else, so it was important that we were part of this vital network. It was also key that we had peer support from the Reserves cadre. Reserves can work disparately; in their own trade groups most weekends, we only come together at social events (which we couldn't do at all last year), or for short periods like meal times or tea breaks. Trade Co-Ords or HR may not be accessible due to the nature or location of the training, so I wanted to ensure we had Team Members across

the trade groups. I put out an invite for Team Members to join me, and was really impressed by the response. Five willing volunteers stepped forward, all with qualities, qualifications and experience of being in support roles. Since coming forward, two members have either qualified or are booked onto a Mental Health First Aid course, adding further to their expertise.

Over the last 2 months I have introduced those members to the wider Sqn, via a monthly Newsletter. The Newsletter will take shape over the coming months, serving as a communication tool raising important topics and providing resources that are widely accessible to the Reserves. No topic should be taboo when it comes to mental health or needing support. My aim is to normalise those difficult circumstances, allow people to speak up when they need help at the earliest opportunity, and reduce the stigma that accompanies those issues. By doing this we can prevent many issues from building up into something much more difficult to tackle. But even if that does happen, the Team are here ready to help.

THE TEAM ARE:

Sgt Nicola Tait, SNCO HR Cpl A.B, RAFF

"Mental health issues impact many of us, in different ways at different points in our lives. Unfortunately, there has often been a level of stigma attached, making it even more difficult for people to tackle the challenges they face or seek the help they need. I joined the COSupport team having over the years, been close to friends and colleagues experiencing a variety of personal challenges."

A/Cpl Pamy Sandhu, RAFF

"I am very much a people's person, easy going, always having time for a chat and really care about being able to offer support and guidance where I can. There is nothing worse to see someone suffer in silence or feel they have no one they can confide in or offload to."

A/Cpl Kev Potts, RAFF

"I have come forward as a support team member as I feel that it is very important to have a point of contact amongst your peers, who can offer advice or be able to signpost to the relevant support network. Although a rank structure is very necessary within the military framework, sometimes your immediate supervisor may not be the best person to speak to."

LAC Mike Bevan, Supply

"As a reserve unit, we have colleagues that come from all walks of life that have their own stories, concerns and pressures, whether in their reserve or civilian roles. My aspirations for the squadron COSupport network is for the team to be approachable for anyone, regardless of rank, at any time to be that all important person to talk to."

LAC Jon Penny, Chef

"I have volunteered for COSupport because I believe I am a good listener, and I have worked in an advisory capacity with people experiencing crisis in their lives for 15 years"

In Memoriam

Eric Carter

The funeral of Royal Air Force WWII fighter pilot, Eric Carter, took place on 17 August 2021 at St Cassian's Church, Chaddesley Corbett in Worcestershire. He died of old age on 26 July 2021, aged 101.

Family members and mourners were joined by personnel from Royal Air Force Cosford who lined Eric's route into the church. As Eric was laid to rest following the church service a Spitfire from the Boulton Paul Academy provided a flypast by Spitfire Mk9 RR232, one of the aircraft that Eric flew during his Royal Air Force career.

Eric joined the RAF in 1939 at the outbreak of the war and, after pilot training, initially flew Hurricanes over the Irish Sea to protect convoys. He then flew Boulton-Paul Defiants protecting the skies over Liverpool. In July 1941, he was selected as part

of Force Benedict to deliver Hurricanes to Russia and train their pilots to fly them in defence of the port of Murmansk, the only all-year ice-free port that allowed Russia access to the Atlantic. Eric also flew sorties over the port against the Luftwaffe. Murmansk was vital to Russia's continued fight in the war.

Following his time in Russia, Eric converted to flying Spitfires and in 1943 was posted to Burma to fight the Japanese. Eric was awarded the Arctic Star in 2013. He was the last surviving member of Force Benedict.



In Memoriam

Wilfred Dawson

On 21 August, personnel from Cosford joined family members and mourners at the funeral of ex-RAF Bomber Command Wireless Operator, Wilfred Dawson, at the Telford Crematorium.

Wilfred flew on both Wellington and Lancaster bombers during World War Two, serving in Malta and North Africa.

We were honoured to be there to see Wilfred off on his final sortie.



LET THE **RIDE** BEGIN

THE STATION HOSTED ONE ROUND
OF THE 2021 BRITISH CYCLING WEST
MIDLANDS ROAD RACE LEAGUE



On Sunday 4 July, the station hosted one round of the 2021 British Cycling West Midlands Road Race League. The event was made up of three different classes, Men, Women and Elite Juniors and used a track

marked out along the northern end of the Airfield.

Although the event is different to what we normally expect at Cosford, it is not completely new as the station used to host

a stage of the race series all the way up to the end of the 1990s.

The event was supported by the RAF Benevolent Fund, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity and British Cycling.





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CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY AT RAF COSFORD

Over the last year a newly formed Green ASTRA Pillar has come together at RAF Cosford. It's our mission to raise awareness of the issues associated with Climate Change and consider new initiatives that help us to improve Cosford's carbon footprint - like the rest of Defence we have a legal requirement to be NetZero by 2050.

The Green Team already have a few projects underway including: regeneration of the Conservation Area; acquisition of 2 allotments; securing the future of our station bees and looking at ways of reducing single use plastic (hot drinks cups in particular).

The Conservation Area has fallen into disrepair over the last few years with nettles taking over, fallen birdboxes and the pond full of algae. We are planning to resurrect the Conservation Club and bring this area back to its former glory. Once completed, this space will be a haven for wildlife and humans alike, offering a quiet place for reflection. With meandering paths through wildflowers, log piles and complementary seating, all personnel and their families will be welcome to enjoy this peaceful retreat. Want to get involved? **Get in touch!**

Conscious that a growing interest in gardening and allotments may have left 'livers in' behind, we were keen to include everybody. Two allotments have now been secured for our project, and generously funded by Station to get the plots up and running with ease. These plots will be available to a community of people who want to grow their own veg, cost free, risk free. Want to grow your own fresh vegetables? **Get in touch!**

Bees are a keystone species, and most people will be aware that losing them will result in the death of most life. The Conservation has an active beehive, but it isn't currently managed. To ensure their survival, and to help them thrive, we want to create a Bee Club at Cosford. They are fascinating creatures, and the more you learn about them, the easier it is to love them. If you have an interest in Bees, or want to start learning about them, **get in touch!**

If you have been at Cosford since before COVID, you may remember the overflowing

bins in the Oak and Apprentice village...disposable cups. You may not know, but despite going to recycling plants, the innocent looking cups can not be recycled unless they go to a specialised service that remove the plastic liner. The easiest way to reduce waste is to use your own mugs, widely available in all retailers, and even bagging you a discount at the till! We are working with the onsite retailers to help encourage less waste. Watch this space in coming months for events and offers!

There are so many more ways we can reduce the carbon footprint, both personally and professionally. There is no limit to the number of ideas needed to do this work, and ASTRA encourages everyone to get creative and be innovative.

Do you have an idea, but need some support to get it going?



Bird box

Not sure if your idea is viable? Get in touch with the Green Team and we can work with and support you to see it through.

The time is now. We can't undo the damage already done but we can change our behaviour and adapt as we prepare for our future. Watch this space for ongoing updates regarding all our projects over the coming years.



Conservation area



Allotment

The Dambusters Ride

Sqn Ldr Ian Gould travelled to Lincolnshire to take on 'The Dambusters Ride' to celebrate the 100th birthday of the last Dambuster, Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson DFM and to help raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

On the night of 16-17 May 1943, the RAF's 617 Squadron carried out an audacious bombing raid in the Ruhr valley, the heart of Germany's war machine. They were disciplined, courageous and determined, and Ian channelled that when he took on the 100 miles of the Dambusters Ride to honour the service of the Dambuster crews.

The RAF Benevolent Fund is the RAF's leading welfare charity and has been there, through thick and thin, for the RAF for more than 100 years. In 2019 they helped more than 71,700 current and former members of the RAF and their families.



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RAF COSFORD PIPES AND DRUMS

Attention all playing or potential Pipers and Drummers. RAF Cosford now has a full time Pipe Major appointed to form a Pipes and Drums within RAF Cosford. This will allow RAF Cosford to have an established Pipe Band and further enhance and promote Piping and Drumming within the RAF and the wider community.

Piping and Drumming has a very firm tradition within the RAF, going back virtually to the formation of the Service. The RAF Pipes and Drums regularly combine to represent the RAF in State Ceremonial and other major public events within the UK and abroad, gaining an increasingly high profile and being held in high regard across the wider Piping community.

The Pipes and Drums have played at many high-profile events around the world including

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Jools Holland Hootenany (New year programme) and International Tattoo's in Basel, Berlin, Melbourne, Sydney and Wellington.



Within the Station, Staff (Military or Civilian) or Students, if there are any playing Pipers or Drummers, or anyone wanting to learn the Pipes or Drums to be part of, and continue, this long standing tradition, Please contact PMaj (WO) Stuart Mackenzie on 07789256438, Stuart.Mackenzie115@mod.gov.uk



WELCOME TO THE NEW STATION WARRANT OFFICER

We said goodbye to outgoing Station Warrant Officer, Brian Hagan, on Friday 30 July. We also welcomed the new Station Warrant Officer, Derek Edwards the same day.

Warrant Officer Hagan had a great three years at Cosford and made a hugely impressive contribution to the station. We wish him all the on tour overseas.

Warrant Officer Edwards is no stranger to Cosford, having served here in the past. He is very welcome back on the Cosford team.



NO.1 RADIO SCHOOL COMMAND HANDOVER

Command of No.1 Radio School was handed over from Wing Commander Gareth Roberts to Wing Commander Helena Ramsden on 5 August.

We wish Gareth all the best in his new tour and welcome Helena to RAF Cosford.



HANDOVER OF NO 1 SCHOOL OF TECHNICAL TRAINING



At a small ceremony on Friday 11 June, command of No 1 School of Technical Training was handed over from Wing Commander Williams to Wing Commander Justin Blackie.

We wish Wing Commander Williams all the best in his next tour and welcome Wing Commander Blackie to the Cosford team.

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RAKSHA BANDHAN

On 19 August, Cosford Raksha Bandhan with friends from the local Hindu community.

Raksha Bandhan is one of the key events in the Hindu religious calendar. For the Hindus of the Armed Forces, the festival holds a special significance, as the Raksha Bandhan ('bond of protection')

ceremony emphasises the core values of Courage, Commitment, Discipline, Respect, Integrity and Loyalty, as well as Dharma ('Duty') that is the foundation of them all.



This relationship is especially pertinent as we commemorated the centenary of the First World War and the 75th anniversary of the Second World War, in which a combined 2 million Hindus fought alongside British and other Allied forces. Further, those pivotal events give us cause to reflect on a long and proud tradition of Hindu contribution to UK defence, going back some 4 centuries and continuing to this day.

SPITFIRE TO STOKE

Spitfire RW388 is back in Stoke-on-Trent after a 3-year restoration and Cosford-based aircraft technician, Sergeant Andrew Dodd, has been part of the Operation Spitfire team that returned the iconic aircraft to its home.

A team from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, The Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford and Royal Air Force have returned the Spitfire to a purpose-built extension at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery.

Andrew, who originally hails from Stoke and has previously served with the Battle of Britain Memorial



Flight (Official), answered a call for volunteers some years ago and has remained a staunch supporter of the project ever since. He said: 'It was a no brainer really. I'm a local lad and I've worked on Spitfires with the BBMF. I'm glad to have helped returned this historic aircraft to the hometown of the man who lead the team that

originally designed it, R J Mitchell.'

The new Spitfire Gallery will open to the public in September.



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You get your own mortgage advisor to guide you every step of the way. They're experienced at arranging mortgages for the Military family, so you can be confident they'll recommend the right mortgage for you and your circumstances.

Fee-Free Mortgage advice on

- Buying your first home
- Forces Help to Buy
- Looking for a better rate
- Investing in buy-to-let

PMGI Limited, trading as Forces Mutual acts as an intermediary for the purposes of introducing its customers to Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited, part of Tenet. You will not receive advice or any recommendation from Forces Mutual. Such services will be provided by Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited.

**For a helping hand
with your mortgage
call Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited**

0333 222 4486 Lines are open:
Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm.

**Forces
Mutual**



A mortgage is a loan secured against your home. Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

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