



**Newsletter March 2008**

**ANNUAL REUNION 17/05/08**

Venue: **RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly**  
Date: **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2008**  
Dinner: **1800 for 1930 with Ladies.**

Dress: **Lounge Suit: Miniatures.**  
Cost: **£33.00 per person.**  
**Vegetarians:** Please make your own arrangements with the club. Please make your cheques payable to: **'No 43 (F) Squadron Association'** & send them to: **Bob Iles, 35 Hillside Road, Aldershot, GU11 3LX.** Kindly give notice of attendance **before 1<sup>st</sup> May please.**

---

**Gone ahead on Reconnaissance**

**Peter Cunningham** on Squadron 1943/44 died Oct '07. **Ron Loader** 1964/66 died Jan '05. **Les Scorer** 1940/41 died Dec '07, **David Scrimgeour** 1959/61 died Apr '07 and **Bill Woods** 1959/60 died 'Jul '06.



**David Scrimgeour, highly respected and most popular of CO's**

---

**To mark the Squadron's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016** it has been decided to have made a solid silver model of the first aircraft type with which it was equipped, the 1½ Strutter. It could cost up to £4000, which may seem a large amount,

and of course it is. However if every member contributed just £10 the required sum would be raised! It's early days yet but it is intended that an appeal for donations will be made in the not too distant future, certainly not later than next year's newsletter, so give the matter some thought and if you can, please save up your pennies and make a contribution when the appeal is launched.

---

**One of our most stalwart reunion attendees; Tom Hughes,** (on Sqn 1943, shot down over Cassino, thus became a POW, during the Italian campaign) was, in Dec 2006, asked to be the reviewing officer at the 'wings' graduation ceremony of No 220 Basic Fast Jet course at No 1 FTS, RAF Linton-on-Ouse. Tom told me, "Although not quite the oldest and certainly not the boldest of the survivors of those days



**Tom presenting Fg Off Charlie Thompson (a future Fighting Cock perhaps), with his pilot's wings**

imagine my delight at being honoured by being asked to present the wings and prizes on such an important occasion. The day was memorable in every way as you might expect." He went on to tell me that he has been invited to perform the same duty twice more since his first appearance, and went on to confide in me that he suspected the reason for his sudden popularity was that since, a onetime Chief of the Air Staff, had arrived in a Lear Jet to present their wings to an earlier course – and this had made an enormous hole in Linton-on-Ouse's transport budget – they now much preferred having to fund

only the price of a second class return railway ticket for him!  
*(Authors Note. I'm sure Tom's being very modest. It's my belief that the powers that be know a good bloke when they meet one!)*

---

**Jimmy Beedle's Bible**

As many of you probably know each year's winner of the **Beedle Trophy** is presented with not only the trophy but also a suitably endorsed copy of Jimmy's book. They are out of print now and the Association's supply has become low. We've managed to obtain six copies from Mrs Pam Smith, Jimmy's daughter, but are hoping to further increase our stock. So if you are the owner of a second edition version and are prepared to part with it to help us in our cause please contact Neil or myself.

---

**The Gamecock Fund**

Thanks to a generous endowment from an Association member we have been able to resurrect The Gamecock Fund, a welfare fund that was created initially by the Squadron towards the end of the Second World War. The primary aim of the fund is now to reinforce and foster our tradition of being a strong all ranks Association by encouraging the widest attendance of squadron members, especially the junior non-commissioned ranks and below, at the Annual Reunion. The Association committee will administer the fund and make an annual grant to the Squadron Commander who will decide on the distribution of subsidies. Further donations are of course welcome, however existing arrangements for the support, where necessary, of retired members of the Association requiring assistance to attend the reunion remain unchanged.

---

Sec's E-mail addresses:

[n43macindoe@btinternet.com](mailto:n43macindoe@btinternet.com)

[robertiles99@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:robertiles99@tiscali.co.uk)

PS: If you've an email address do please let us know. Costs y'know!

---

**Our very best wishes, Neil & Bob**

## SQUADRON UPDATE – MARCH

2008 The last year has been another exciting and busy one for the Fighting Cocks, and things promise to continue that way as we move towards absorbing 56 Sqn in April! After a busy summer spent on detachments to Cyprus and Abu Dhabi, the Sqn enjoyed Christmas at home before cracking on with a few more local events which included a visit by the F3 Standards and Evaluation team (STANEVAL), and a fortnight at Kinloss taking part in the Night Tactical Leadership Training (TLT) course. Throughout the year the Sqn has continued to support its commitments to Northern and Southern Quick Reaction Alert (QRA), as well as manning 1435 Flt in the Falkland Islands. As we progress into 2008 the Sqn is looking forward to overseas detachments to Finland in May and to Florennes, Belgium in August.

**Back** in March 2007 the Sqn welcomed 2 new Ab-initio crews and the flying focus fell largely to training in order to bring the Sqn back to full combat ready status. Despite this we still found time to participate in such multi-national exercises as Neptune Warrior in May and Wycombe Warrior in July, both of which proved very useful to those crews involved and provided some realistic training with various other types of aircraft. From May the Sqn provided a crew and an aircraft in support of the RAF Role Demo, an air display involving Tornados, F3's, GR4's, Hawks, AWACS, Apache and Chinook, which toured the country attending all the major air shows, giving the public an insight into the airborne teamwork required in the modern Air Force. This display was led by 43(F) Sqn for 2007, and is set to continue in 2008 thanks to the great work of the crews involved.

**Away** from the regular flying tasks the Sqn took part in a few varied events: a day of golf was enjoyed by all fighting for the Rooster Cup, the winners of which were of course - the aircrew, making them winners for 3 years running; in association with RAF Brize Norton the Sqn launched 2 aircraft to take part in the charity event 'Cherished Memories', which gave terminally ill children the chance to fly in a VC-10 and watch fast-jets flying in close formation and tanking (you will be glad to hear nobody missed!); and on 3 May the Sqn hosted a visit by TV chef Gordon Ramsey who spent 2 days with the Fighting Cocks filming and teaching them how to cook. The subsequent footage appeared on Gordon Ramsey's TV series 'The F

Word' and subsequently made the 'Top Ten' in their Christmas special!

**During** May and June work began on resurfacing the main runway at Leuchars, the impact of which forced the Sqn to operate from the short runway. During this time Northern QRA moved to Leeming, where it was held by 25 (F) Sqn. In return crews and engineers from 43(F) Sqn were sent down to Coningsby to man Southern QRA for periods of 10 days at a time. Once the work on the main runway reached the intersection with the short runway in July, the Sqn deployed to Cyprus where it would wait out the completion of engineering work until flying operations were once again permitted from Leuchars, which was scheduled for September. In total the Fighting Cocks spent 5 weeks at Akrotiri in Cyprus, which, you will be glad to hear, was not all Brandy Sours and Kebabs! For the first two weeks the Sqn took part in an eagerly awaited Air-to-Air Gunnery competition, which, to everyone's disbelief, was won by one of the most junior pilots. We then completed the combat ready work-ups for the new crews, and upgraded a few of our more seasoned members, which resulted in the Sqn being back at 100% combat readiness. Following our stint in the sun we re-deployed to RAF Leeming where we undertook currency flying as well as continuing to supply crews and engineers to Southern QRA at Coningsby.

**With** the Runway complete the Sqn and associated QRA duties returned to Leuchars on schedule in September. The Russians had obviously heard that we had a new runway and seemed keen to find out if it was any good. The subsequent spate of significantly increased activity by the Russian Armed Forces gave the Sqn a renewed sense of duty and purpose on QRA, validating the high readiness state that the Sqn has long held. We made multiple intercepts of various Russian aircraft including 'Bears' and 'Blackjacks', at all times of day and night and almost all of our crews were **involved**.

**The** Sqn was not at home long until its next detachment was due. We deployed 10 crews to Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, for 4 weeks over November and December in support of the Advanced Tactical Leadership Course (ATLC). This multi-national course provided crews with the chance to train alongside an impressive array of other fighters including USAF F-16's, RSAF F-15's, FAF Mirage 2000 RDI's, PAF F-16's and Mirage 2000-9 and F-16's from the UAE. The Typhoons from 3 Sqn also

made an appearance for 2 weeks during the exercise. All in all the detachment proved extremely valuable for all crews involved and 43(F) Sqn put in an excellent performance earning special praise from the Course staff on more than one occasion. Once again 43(F) Sqn proved that it has a platform, and more importantly, people to be proud of. We must not of course forget the 'home team' who continued to cover QRA back at Leuchars whilst maintaining currency and giving 111(F) Sqn a few lessons in how business should be done!

**With** the whole Sqn re-united on return from the UAE, and after a well-deserved Christmas break; we were ready for the next challenge. For the pilots this meant the dreaded STANEVAL. They (STANEVAL) arrived at the end of January to assess our flying skills and you will be glad to hear that all of our pilots passed with flying colours. Over the next couple of weeks in February the Sqn deployed to Kinloss where we took part in Night TLT. This offered the chance to operate as part of a large package in various scenarios at night using the Night Vision Goggles. Concurrently we also received a new crew fresh out of the OCU, and as we go to press they are progressing well through their Combat Ready workup.

**The** next year will no doubt be an interesting one for the Fighting Cocks. While the F3 continues to draw down at Leuchars 43(F) Sqn is set to merge with 56 Sqn in April. The new 'Super Sqn' will retain the 43(F) Sqn colours but will be housed at the 56 Sqn site on the 'Waterfront'. Much work has been done to ensure the smooth integration of the two units, but one problem remains – where to house Thruster, our trusty mascot? I am sure a suitably prominent location will be identified shortly! Once merged there will be little time to rest and reflect, as there are more overseas detachments to plan for. The majority of the Sqn is expected to deploy to Finland in May, and a smaller, but nevertheless equally important detachment to Florennes will see several crews take part in the Tactical Leadership Program in August. Throughout though 43(F) Sqn will of course continue to be at the forefront of UK Air Defence, and you can rest peacefully in the knowledge that the men and women of 43(F) Sqn will be standing by 24hrs a day, in all weathers, day or night whether it be on QRA at Leuchars, in the Falkland Islands or deployed globally in support of another international exercise.

**Gloria Finis**

## Addendum

It's pretty common knowledge now, but for those of you who've not already heard, 43 (F) and 56(F) Squadrons are to be amalgamated in late April of this year. 43's nameplate will remain, no doubt a bitter pill for all the personnel of 56 to swallow, (it is always a very sad occasion when a Squadron is disbanded, especially one, such as 56(F), that has such a proud history and fine record of achievement), but that is how it is to be for the time being. It is very much to be hoped that those presently serving on 56(F) Squadron will be made most welcome by the men and women of 43, and that time will heal the hurts and grievances that they are, no doubt, presently feeling. However the pill has been made a little easier to take by the fact that 56's present CO, Wg Cdr David Hazell will be 43's new boss with effect from the date of the merger. He's been gracious enough to take the trouble to contact me to say hello and has provided the Association with his biography. It is as follows:

**David Hazell** was born on 22 April 1967, in Marlow, England. His main childhood years were spent in Wales before his parents finally settled in Bristol. He was awarded a Sixth Form Scholarship, gaining his PPL in 1984 before joining the Royal Air Force as a Direct Entrant in November 1985. David is married to Claire, a marketing manager, and has three children, Thomas (1991), Oliver (1995) and Rosie (1997). In addition to family life he enjoys playing golf and running.

He attended Initial Officer Training at Royal Air Force College Cranwell where he graduated in March 1986 with the British Aerospace Trophy for academic studies. David then underwent professional aviation training to become a pilot. Flying Officer Hazell graduated from the Phantom Operational Conversion Unit in February 1989 and was posted to Royal Air Force Wattisham in Suffolk, serving on 56(F) Squadron. During his time with 56(F) Sqn he saw three tours of operational duty flying Phantoms with 1435 Flight as part of the integrated defence force at Royal Air Force Mount Pleasant, Falkland Islands. Flt Lt Hazell converted to the Tornado F3 in August 1992 and was posted to 29(F) Sqn at Royal Air Force Coningsby. Here he saw an additional three operational tours of duty with 1435 Flight and his first tour air policing in the Balkans as part of Operation Deny Flight. In July 1995 he graduated from the Tornado Qualified Weapons Instructor (QWI) course and was assigned a post as a QWI on 29(F) Squadron. During this tour he was responsible for working up the Sqn for another operational tour of duty air policing in the Balkans. In October 1996 he was posted on exchange to the US Navy serving on VF-101 Sqn, the F-14 Replacement Air Group, as an instructor. He completed Intermediate Staff Studies in 1997.

In July 1999 Squadron Leader Hazell was posted as an instructor to the Tactical Leadership Programme at Florennes in Belgium. Following an assignment to the CJFTHQ during Saif Sereia in October 2001, he was posted to 56(R) Sqn as a flight commander. During this tour he was responsible for moving the Sqn from Coningsby to RAF Leuchars. He completed Intermediate Staff and Command Course in 2002. In March 2004 he was posted as OC 1435 Flight in the Falkland Islands. On his return he attended the Joint Services Command and Staff College at RAF Shrivenham.

Promoted to Wing Commander in January 2005 he graduated from the Joint Services Command and Staff College in July 2005 with a Masters degree in Defence Studies. On posting as Plans 1 to the Directorate Equipment Capability (Theatre Airspace) (DEC (TA)), in MOD, he quickly became involved in the planning round and was the lead for the Defence Acquisition Change Programme within DEC (TA). He is currently commanding 56(R) Squadron, the Tornado F3 Operational Conversion Unit, at Royal Air Force Leuchars and is CO designate 43(F) Squadron with effect 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008.