

Old Dux Association Newsletter



Compiled by A. McRae

Winter/Christmas 2003

Introduction

I am getting this edition out quickly to let everyone know about the 2004 dinner date so this will be the last newsletter of 2003. There's a few items to help get the Christmas cheer going, feel free to laugh so long as no one is looking, after all this is a serious journal!!

Annual Dinner 2003

A total of 119 members and guests attended the annual dinner on the 25th October and all enjoyed the meal and the opportunity to meet old friends for a good old fashioned chin-wag. Contrary to our normal 'no speech rules' Bob Hope somehow managed to coerce Dick Johns into making a short speech. I am pleased to report that our President 'rose' to the occasion and delivered the goods in a light hearted and witty manner as befitted the mood of the evening. The usual long drawn out raffle duly took place enlivened only by the futile attempts to make a portable voice amplifier system work. Once again a huge thank you to all those who contributed a prize for the raffle, as you know we have to pay corkage on the wine and the proceeds from the raffle help defray this extra cost.

Sunday Meeting

The meeting was also well attended, almost too well, as we had to hold the meeting in a far smaller room than normal so plan B (Standing!) also came into operation. Several new members followed the now customary routine of introducing themselves to the rest of the meeting, (why do ex-policemen always get cheered?) One of the topics under discussion was the closure next June of the Officers mess for conversion into a hotel and the implications this would have on the 2004 (10th) Annual Dinner. A majority vote decided that the first and best option was to investigate the possibility of bringing the dinner forward to coincide with the May meeting. Read on!

Annual Dinner 2004

Following on to the above the mess were pleased to accept our revised arrangement so the dinner will now take place on the evening of Saturday 8th May 2004. Please make a note of this date and pencil in your booking for the 10th Anniversary Dinner. Remember also that the AGM will now be held on Sunday 9th May. See the following notes for dinner/meeting details. Keep these somewhere safe to avoid a host of last minute queries, Where? What time? How much? Etc, and put the money saved by not having to make a phone call toward the Airspace Appeal.

Dinner/Meeting Notes

Dinner Notice

The dinner is held in the old Officers Mess and there is ample parking right by the door. If you are staying at one of the local Hostelrys and you let Bob Hope know where in advance of the evening, he will try and arrange a taxi service to and from the mess. Considering the date of the dinner it may well be advisable to reserve your accommodation now. Bookings for the dinner will also be accepted as of now!

The cost is the same as the 2003 dinner (£28 each) and you can either pay in full or leave a deposit. When you book please also give the names that are to be printed on the place cards, any dietary restrictions, and any seating preferences. The evening starts at 7pm when the bar is declared open, which gives an hours chat before the call to diner at 8pm. Donations of raffle prizes will be gratefully accepted. We are asked to leave at mid-night so that the staff can get on with the washing up.

Meeting Notice

Prior to the meeting we have to submit to Security a list of attendees that are coming in their own vehicles. For that you need to let us know the registration of the vehicle, drivers, and passengers names. Colour of vehicle and MOT status is not required! Everyone coming to Duxford *for the meeting*, even if they don't actually come to the meeting proper, will have to pay (to George) an attendance fee of £2.50. This we give to the Museum so that we may have the use of one of the classrooms, (handy if it's raining.)

Duxford Airspace Appeal

The Imperial War Museum have launched an appeal for donations to help fund the building of the Airspace display area which will house 30 aircraft, with some like the Canberra and Mosquito, suspended from the roof. Initial funding of £19 million is already in place but another £2.5 million is needed to get the project off the ground. Donations that exceed £250 will have the name of the donor engraved on the Airspace Skywall for all to see in the future and we would like to see the Old Dux Association join that listing.

What we are proposing is that if each member were pledge a contribution of a £1, or more, we will match each donation from the treasurers kitty and hopefully by the time of the May meeting we can make an official presentation to the museum. Start now by getting in touch with any committee member and leaving your name and the amount of your pledge. Collection details will be given later.

Help Wanted

Terry Betchley who works in the Fire/Security Dept. at the museum is hoping to produce a photo gallery of the Duxford site and surrounding area entitled "Then and Now". In particular information is required for Chrissal Grange, Triplow Gun Site, Sawston Hall, Hinxton Hall, & Triplow Hospital. If any member has any photographs they believe falls into that category and are willing to lend them to Terry to have them copied, please get in touch with him with the details to:

Mr. T M Betchley
Fire/Security Dept.
Imperial War Museum
Duxford Airfield
Cambs CB2 4QR

He also intends to come to the meeting next May.

The Merry Christmas bit.



Jokes?

How can you get your name in lights the world over?
"Change your name to emergency light"

How do witches tell the time?
"With a witch watch"

What do you get if you cross a whale with a bird that quacks?
"Moby Duck"

Why does Santa have three gardens?
So he can Hoe, Hoe, Hoe

What's an Ig?
An Eskimo home without a loo!

Can I have a puppy for Christmas?
No, you can have turkey like everyone else.

Knock Knock
Who's there?
Wenceslas
Wenceslas who?
Wenceslas train home.

What do you get if you cross a snowman with a vampire?
Frostbite.

For those who like a more serious look at the Christmas scene read the following scientific study answering the question each of you must have asked at least once in your life. **Does Santa Exist?**

Finally, the committee wish all members, their families and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year, and thanks for your continued support.



As a result of an overwhelming lack of requests, and with no research help from a renowned scientific journal - I am pleased to present a scientific inquiry into Santa Claus.

1) No known species of reindeer can fly. BUT there are 300,000 species of living organisms yet to be classified, and while most of these are insects and germs, this does not COMPLETELY rule out the flying reindeer which only Santa has ever seen.

2) There are 2 billion children (persons under 18) in the world. BUT since Santa doesn't (appear) to handle the Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist children, that reduces the workload to 15% of the total - 378 million according to Population Reference Bureau. At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, that's 91.8 million homes. One presumes there's at least one good child in each.

3) Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 822.6 visits per second. This is to say that for each Christian household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, get back up the chimney, get back into the sleigh and move on to the next house.

Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false but for the purposes of our calculations we will accept), we are now talking about .78 miles per household, a total trip of 75-1/2 million miles, not counting stops to do what most of us must do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding and etc.

This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle on earth, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second - a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour.

4) The payload on the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized lego set (2 pounds), the sleigh is carrying 321,300 tons, not counting Santa, who is invariably described as overweight. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds.

Even granting that "flying reindeer" (see point No1) could pull TEN TIMES the normal amount, we cannot do the job with eight, or even nine. We need 214,200 reindeer. This increases the payload - not even counting the weight of the sleigh - to 353,430 tons. Again, for comparison - this is four times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth.

5) 353,000 tons travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance - this will heat the reindeer up in the same fashion as spacecraft's re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 QUINTILLION joules of energy. Per second each! In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them, and create deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team will be valorised within 4.26 thousandths of a second. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to centrifugal forces 17,500.06 times greater than gravity, therefore a 17 stone Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force!

Mmmm... but remember, when you stop believing in Santa is when you start getting clothes for Christmas...