



# NEWSLETTER

MAY 2012

[www.olddux.org](http://www.olddux.org)

Compiled by LARRY CROSS



Dear Members,

After weeks of abysmal weather the Gods favoured us with a weekend of glorious sunshine for our visit to Duxford.

Most members who chose to stay at the Red Lion were joined by those staying at the Holiday Inn and others not staying overnight at 7.0pm for Dinner at 8.0pm. The new annex looked splendid, light and airy with well laid tables to seat 68.

Anne had worked tirelessly for weeks to make sure everything would be right on the night and it surely was. Her theme was a tribute to Bomber Command, our place-mats depicting the Monument and a selection of WW2 bombers. Menu Cover shown below

Allan Mc Rae continued the theme with his brilliant place cards completing the display, many thanks Allan.



Anne was presented with a bouquet for her efforts and each lady guest a red Rose, compliments of the committee. The meal was excellent, very efficiently served and enjoyed (probably) by all. It was a very enjoyable occasion which was graced by the presence of Sarah Russell, Alicia Gurney and Carl Warner of IWM Duxford.

There were those among us who awoke on Sunday morning bright eyed and bushy tailed and some who didn't, Urrgh! That's strictly for squirrels. Quite a few departed early for the airfield, to take advantage of the sunshine and time to take in all that is there to see

## AGM

There was a good turnout for the meeting with 80 members attending. A nicely framed watercolour donated by Jean Beddison (nee Gray) was won by a new member Roy Briggs who was delighted with his prize.

Bob opened the meeting in the usual way by requesting a minutes silence for those who have gone before. After a show of hands the present committee were re-elected. New members attending for the first time were:

Norman Marsh 1957 – 60 Bob Cook 1948 – 50  
Roy Briggs 1959 – 61

**Sunday the 7th is the date decided upon for our October meeting** ....The idea of a buffet preceding the meeting to make it a more of a social event was discussed once again and enquiries will be made. Members will be notified if it can be arranged at what might be considered short notice.

The laying of a wreath at the IWM Remembrance service in November was proposed, details of which will be finalized at the October meeting.

Our 17th annual dinner celebrations could be perhaps considered a curtain raiser to the momentous and memorable events taking place in June .

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations will centre around an extended weekend from 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> June

(see page 2)

I think it is worth remembering here, that we who were at Duxford in 1953 played quite an important role: with the Duxford Wing leading the Queen's Coronation Flypast, sixty years ago.

## FROM THE TREASURER

The idea of sending in post dated cheques for May 1st was well received. Almost forty member responded and your cheques were paid into the ODA account during the first week in May. Thank you all for that. On behalf of your committee thanks also to those members who sent donations. We do not solicit these, but they are helpful and most welcome. The shock increases in postage costs can become an issue for us, we have already purchased enough stamps to cover the next Newsletters, but we will feel the effects after that. Those of you who could have your Newsletter by e-mail please help ease the burden by letting Larry have your email address, four have already done so. [john\\_cross2@sky.com](mailto:john_cross2@sky.com)

If you haven't paid your subs yet, PLEASE DO SO NOW and save the cost of sending out reminders. Subs are due on May 1st regardless of the date you joined. While looking through the defaulters list I came across one who should know better, but I assure you that I have paid mine now! However 73 members have still not paid up.... and we know where you live! If you want to know your subs status Call 01494863428 or [janstandell1@btinternet.com](mailto:janstandell1@btinternet.com)

## AIRSHOWS

Jubilee Air Show 27<sup>th</sup> May (fully manned)  
Flying Legends June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Duxford Air Show 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> September  
Autumn Air Show October 14th  
Anyone who would like to assist Jim and Les on the recruitment stand contact Jim Garlinge on 01322274245

## Recently Deceased

Founder member Trevor Brinkley. Edward Tighe

## 'IT SEEMS TO BE ALL ABOUT THE SQUADRONS'

Newsletter (FEB Issue 2012)  
It was interesting to note the point raised by Mike Scrivener re the above title. An analysis of membership reveals that 64 sqn represents 23%, 65sqn.17%, a total of 40% The remaining 60% of the members come from all the other trades and disciplines that kept the squadrons functioning, and ultimately the aircraft in the air. So let us hear from the 60%. May I add my thanks here to those who have submitted to this and past issues, I couldn't do it without you... *Literally!*

## Disappointing to say the least

Arriving at the airfield for the AGM, I parked up and grabbed all the necessary paperwork together with a few leftover car stickers and my Polo mints.

Walking past the line of parked cars (the Old Dux are allotted their own parking space), I began to notice the absence of our beautiful car sticker! Out of interest I made a count and found that of 28 cars parked there at the time, only eight members had displayed their stickers. The idea was an effort to try and increase the membership at no little expense. No wonder we have had no response !.

**John Rogers author of Betty's Café Scrapbook Duxford 1929 – 1978...** is asking if anyone would like a CD Copy. Viability and cost will depend on numbers requested. Contact John on 01462-731506

Recently, whilst browsing the Web I came across a video depicting people standing on a foreign shore taking pictures of an Air France four-engine jet airliner preparing to take off. The people were standing behind the perimeter fence at the end of the runway. To the chagrin of a woman standing watching, she was caught by the jet blast and was blown into the sea. Her companions had to wade into rescue her. This incident brought to mind a similar incident which occurred at RAF Duxford, Cambridgeshire, in the mid 1950's.

It was an idyllic summer day and some of the groundcrew of 64 Squadron were deployed at the end of the runway together with four Gloster Meteor Mk.8 jet fighters. The pilots were sitting in their respective cockpits awaiting notification to 'Scramble'. This command was communicated to the pilots via cables protruding from the ground and connected to the aircraft. Due to the very hot day the mechanics passed up paper cups, containing cool orange juice, to the pilots. Trolley accumulators were also connected to the aircraft for starting purposes. Warnings had been given to the ground personnel, in the form of instructions, to either lie down or insure that they were positioned away from the engine jet blasts to avoid being bowled over. Inevitably the warning was ignored by a couple of the mechanics, who were not only drenched by the orange juice hurriedly discarded by the pilots but, because they were thus distracted, ignored the previous warnings and were caught by jet blast which sent them rolling across the grass. The rest of the crew was helpless with laughter. It was a lesson learned by experience. After checking that they were not injured, the hapless victims also joined in the hilarity, as they lounged on the grass, drinking orange juice. Happy days!

### No Holding this Man!

During 7 days jankers, Sports day came round. I was in the station cricket team and requested that I be excused jankers for the day. This was Ok'd by the orderly officer so off I went to play cricket. I never thought anymore about it and early evening was in the billet when 2 SP's arrived and arrested me.

I was taken to the guard room and locked up. Of course my mate Jarvis arrived in his usual gleeful mood at having me in as a guest. I was locked up for the night and would face the CO in the morning.

As it happened my old mucker Jock Nicol was on "Fire Picket" and came into the guard room. We had a little chat and I asked him to unlock the cell door and close it but leave it unlocked. This was done. Around mid-night the corporal on duty was sitting feet up on the desk listening jazz records. I quietly opened the cell door and came out closing the door behind me. Coming up behind the corporal I tapped him on the shoulder and asked for a light. Must have almost reached the ceiling, "How the hell did you get out"?!!!!!

"Tell the sergeant his cell is useless and can't hold me if I don't want it to," said I.

Anyway I was cleared in the morning and had a bit of a laugh at you know who. Could never tell them how I got out.

**Gerry (Houdini) Knight**

### You can always count on the RAF



In the lighter moments of World War II, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy. During the war, the Heneger and Constable brewery donated free beer to the troops.

After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments. Some men, often called sourcers, were able to get wine or other niceties from the land or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea. The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs.

Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude

would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival. A variation of this was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel. The modification even received the official designation Mod. XXX. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the official designation. *A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.*

As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons were often sent back to Britain for maintenance or liaison duties. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings, there being very little ground clearance with the larger beer kegs.

Typically, the British Ministry of Revenue and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks. Most often, this was done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons.

In his book, *Dancing in the Skies*, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelander pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week.



**Submitted by Les Millgate**

## *The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations*



*The Old Dux Association sends Loyal Greetings to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, on the sixtieth anniversary of her accession to the throne.*



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations will centre around an extended weekend on 2, 3, 4 and 5 June, the late May Bank Holiday being moved to Monday 4<sup>th</sup> and the additional Jubilee Bank Holiday on the 5<sup>th</sup>

*The Old Dux Association thanks God for her Majesty's years of inspirational service to the United Kingdom and wishes her Majesty a Happy and glorious Diamond Jubilee.*

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June The Queen will attend the Epsom Derby and at high water on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> up to 1000 boats will muster on the Thames in preparation for Her Majesty The Queen to lead the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

A concert organized by the BBC to be held at Buckingham Palace on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June will be attended by the Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and other members of the Royal Family - we can all be there to see it – courtesy of the BBC.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

11<sup>th</sup> March 2012

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, shown in the Newsletter heading will be awarded to the following serving personnel who have completed five full years of service on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

- members of the Armed Forces (regular and reserves)
- emergency services personnel.
- operational prison services personnel.
- all Police Community Support Officers
- living holders of the Victoria Cross and George Cross
- members of the Royal Household

Not to be outdone, our very own Allan McRae Esq. put his considerable skills to designing a Card of Congratulations to The Queen on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee on behalf of the Old Dux Association

Dear Mr. McRae,

I have been asked to thank you and the Members of the Old Dux Association for your kind letter enclosing a message of loyal greetings to The Queen, sent on the occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary of Her Majesty's Accession to the Throne.

Her Majesty much appreciates your thoughtfulness and sends her best wishes for an enjoyable Diamond Jubilee year.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Sandamas  
The Chief Clerk to The Queen

Allan McRae, Esq.

## MY CONFRONTATION WITH DOCTOR TANK by Biff Haves (Continued)

But what, you will be asking, has all of this to do with the famous Doctor Kurt Tank? Well, by 1942 dad was a Warrant Officer, a billeting officer, in a job which had him travelling all around the western Home -Counties arranging accommodation for the troops, and during which he didn't get regular meals or rest. Mother and I were living in digs in Slough at the time when dad had a haemorrhage on a train. He was found covered in blood in the toilet and was rushed to hospital, and mother was told he would probably die. But he didn't. We went to see him in hospital at Swindon, he was in a pretty bad condition and I was frightened because he hadn't been shaved and had a beard! He was discharged from the army as unfit for further service in December 1942, so we went back home to Yarmouth, which was when I was reunited with Rajah and the Rupert books - but by now I was nine years old, too old to want a toy dog and so I don't know what happened to poor Rajah.

The house had been empty since 1940 and dad spent his convalescence painting the windows and doors outside, using paint that had been stored in the attic, and he had just finished when Doctor Tank at last made an appearance. Great Yarmouth had experienced fewer air raids in 1942 than in the previous year: only 26, and with 324 alerts, though the parish church of St Nicholas had been fire bombed and left a shell. On May 7th 1943, at 07.11 hrs the Focke Wulf 190 fighter-bomber, Doctor Tank's new brainchild, made its first attack on Yarmouth, it was probably the A3/U1 variant, which carried one 500 kilo bomb, in shackles under the fuselage, and was armed with two 20mm cannon. This was the first of the 'scalded cat' raids on Yarmouth - so called because the FW190s suddenly appeared, dropped their bombs and flew off like scalded cats. These aircraft became known to the locals as 'F...ing Wolves'.

On this first raid twenty FW190s flew in low under the radar cover with the sun behind them, crossed the coast north of Yarmouth and then attacked from the north-west, firing their cannons and dropping a total of 19 bombs randomly, one of which landed in the railway station and failed to explode - and was defused by a naval Bomb Disposal Officer who happened to be waiting for a train! I presume the 20th bomb was a hang-up. The last bomb was the one that got us, we lived nearest to the sea-front, it landed about twenty yards from our house - any nearer and I would not be writing this! It was lucky that it had been Mum's turn to make the early morning tea, dad and I were still in the Morrison (indoor) shelter so as soon as she heard the noise of the bombs and BMW engines mum dived back into the shelter, dad wouldn't have bothered to take cover.

There was none of that dramatic whistling beloved of the movie makers as the bomb dropped, just a whooshing sound, followed by the explosion, which deafened us for some time, and then the ceiling started to descend in a cloud of plaster and dust. Dad had reached out to pull mum into the shelter and he was the only one of us injured, he received some shrapnel in the arm that was still outside the shelter, only a minor injury. Time does get distorted in such incidents, it seemed like after only seconds I was being carried out over the shoulder of an ARP rescue man. Mum was hysterically asking: "Where's my front door?", which the ARP men put down to shock, but in fact her coat had been hanging on a hook there and her purse was in the pocket. The whole front of the house was gone and the upper floors were dangling precariously; it was like one of those dolls' houses with the front open, and it had to be demolished later. The only real casualty was our tiny black and white kitten, we hadn't had her long and she hadn't even been given a name, she was found sheltering under the kitchen sink and was completely mad and had to be put down. Another tiny victim of the Nazis. For a short time we became refugees, but moved in with my grandmother and aunts until we moved again when dad was given engineering training as a turner and started making shells. My grandmother had an Anderson (outdoor) shelter and I spent many nights sleeping in that and there were many near misses on that house as it was next to the Royal Naval Hospital with a communications centre which the Germans kept trying to get. You can still see the repairs in the wall around it, although the site is now occupied by expensive flats.

So that was how my confrontation with Doctor Tank occurred, metaphorically of course, not literally, but then why let the literal truth spoil a good story, as Mark Twain once said. Kurt Tank was not personally responsible for the death of the 13 people killed in that raid, nor the 8 seriously wounded, nor the 43 slightly wounded. Neither were the German aircrew, they were following the orders of their politicians, just as Bomber Command aircrew were following the orders of our politicians - though the Germans did seem to enjoy randomly spreading bombs and 20mm cannon shells around on civilian targets. And those 'scalded-cat' raids were a purely terror tactic.

On balance I think that our politicians were less responsible for all the deaths caused by bombing than the German ones, as the Germans started it all by flattening Guernica, Warsaw, Rotterdam and Coventry anyway. They even invented a new verb: 'to Coventry', so I am not impressed by those bleeding heart liberals who bleat about Dresden and Hamburg. But our politicians were - are still - despicable in failing to recognize the bravery of Bomber Command aircrews by not awarding a campaign medal for the only campaign that lasted the whole length of the war, and by letting Harris take the blame for the German civilian casualties. Even Churchill tried to avoid the metaphoric flak, and he'd approved the Bomber Command offensive. But then, Churchill was a politician!

And Doctor Tank? He was one of the scientists taken to America to work on their missile programme, and he lived to a ripe old age.

Final Result: Doctor Tank 1, Biff Haves 0

### "Seniors At Brunch"

A group of seniors were sitting around talking about all their ailments "My arms have got so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee," said one. "Yes, I know," said another. "My cataracts are so bad; I can't even see my coffee." ... "I couldn't even mark an "X" at election time, my hands are so crippled," volunteered a third. "What? Speak up! What? I can't hear you!" "I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a fourth, to which several nodded weakly in agreement. "My blood pressure pills make me so dizzy!" exclaimed another. "I forget where I am, and where I'm going," said another. "I guess that's the price we pay for getting old," winced an old man as he slowly shook his head. The others nodded in agreement. "Well, count your blessings," said a woman cheerfully "thank God we can all still drive."

*Thank you Mr Swindale*

- When I was born, I was given a choice - a big pecker or a good memory....I can't remember what I chose.
- Impotence: nature's way of saying, "No hard feelings..."
- There are only two four letter words that are offensive to men - 'don't' and 'stop' - unless they are used together.

*This chapter about Duxford - and my experiences there in 1960-1961 - is extracted from an amateur autobiography written solely with my family, and extended family, in mind. I have had to provide therefore some explanations not normally required by a readers with service backgrounds. This can make for somewhat laborious reading in parts. Secondly, it is not an account of any historical importance or accuracy - it contains personal reminiscences with some service humour thrown in. I treat my subject selfishly from a very junior pilot's perspective at the expense of talking about our groundcrews, for example, and I don't want to diminish or undervalue the enormous and essential contribution they made to 65 Squadron's operational role and status.*

Alan Love and others often frequented a dubious establishment in Nicosia called " *Charlie's Bar* ", which was subsequently put out of bounds on hygiene grounds, but which at this time provided the most impressive Greek mezze food for a ridiculously cheap price washed down with very cheap Cyprus wine or Keo beers. I was persuaded without difficulty to join them one night and thoroughly enjoyed this new gastronomical experience: it was superb food, and we all enjoyed the seemingly endless supply of small dishes of exotic foods, washed down by the aforementioned cheap wine, taking about three hours over the entire banquet. The next day I went down with the most appalling stomach cramps and diarrhoea, subsequently diagnosed as amoebic dysentery, which laid me low in the Medical Centre for three terrible days during which I lost nearly two stoned in weight! The guys on the squadron were very good, and visited me regularly, but few showed any sympathy whatsoever for my indisposition. This Alan Love fellow was becoming a bit dangerous for my health, I decided.

We did enjoy a bit of mixed social life in the Mess. There were several British schools in the near neighbourhood of the base, and in Nicosia itself, for the children of the many servicemen stationed out there with their families. Since most of the schoolteachers were female and single, they were always game for a party or to come to a social function in the Mess. They were good fun, but enjoyed the same sort of social relationship with *all* the fighter pilots on squadrons rotating through Nicosia: and so they were not so easy to impress. Some were clearly waiting for " Mr Right " to come along and were not going to pair off with anyone on 65 Squadron - despite the serious, amorous objectives of some of our bachelors. I became friendly with one of the teachers called Jean Hunter - a wholly appropriate

Operationally, Cyprus had much to offer and, although a day-fighter squadron, we did some ground- attack training - firing our *Aden* cannons and concrete-tipped 3" rockets - on Larnaca Range on the coast to the south of Nicosia. I fared pretty well at the cannon firing with scores around 20-25%, but found the rocketing very difficult indeed; my scores in " rocket projectile " firing were usually around 35 yards away from direct hits, though once I did have one as close as 7 yards. I reckoned, however, that if called upon to attack an oil tanker or similar, I would have a reasonable chance of scoring the odd direct hit!

I must recount the most exciting trip of this detachment as far as I was concerned, and a trip which was to become the envy of my more senior colleagues. As mentioned, two fully-armed aircraft were always on standby at the end of the runway between the hours of daylight, manned successively by pilots doing an hour-long stint in the cockpit. Since I was still very much under training, and " *Non-Operational* " in the parlance, I was not rostered for such standby duties. However Tim Barrett decided that he *would* put me - with a senior, lead pilot in the other aircraft - for the dawn stint on a Sunday morning in early December. The fact that nobody could remember when these two on-call aircraft had last been 'scrambled', and the fact that there was going to be a big Saturday night thrash in the Mess which everybody wanted to go to, might just have influenced Tim's decision to put me on the roster just for one slot. It certainly was not because he considered me close to being declared " Operational ", even though I was learning the ropes quite quickly. Dawn came, and with our aircraft ready for a 30-second scramble, I settled down uncomfortably to listen to music and the occasional chatter from the radar controllers through the 'telebrieff' landline connection. Imagine our excitement as the music was switched off and this chatter to us increased as an unidentified aircraft was spotted at 40,000 feet, north of the island, but heading for a direct overflight of Cyprus, pointing roughly towards Cairo.

Shortly afterwards we were told to scramble, but my leader's aircraft refused to start, leaving me with a fully fired-up *Hunter* straining to get airborne in about 12 seconds flat, at the end of the runway! The decision was taken instantly for me to scramble on my own, something usually unheard of, and so in a matter of a few seconds I was airborne and climbing furiously to 40,000 feet, and being vectored northwards to intercept this target, under full operational radar control. For a change the interception manoeuvre worked out quite well, and I ended up just about two hundred yards astern of the aircraft, which by this time had entered Cypriot airspace and was maintaining its course, probably unaware of my presence. I identified it as a Soviet civilian airliner equivalent of the Tupolev Tu-16 '*Badger*' medium bomber, which could cruise at least as fast as my dear old *Hunter*, and thus it took ages for me to catch up with it. I was instructed to fly not closer than 100 yards behind, make a note of its precise heading, and then to move out to its port side so that its captain and aircrew would see me. I was then to escort it out of Cypriot airspace to the south of the island - which I duly did - before being told to return to base.

Sometimes during *practice* interceptions, we used to film our targets using the camera mounted above the gunsight, as I have talked about earlier, and I was half expecting to do this when astern of this Soviet intruder. I later found out that someone from 65 Squadron (probably my leader who was still on the ground) must have told the radar controller that I was an inexperienced pilot and that this would be a rather dangerous thing to ask me to do: one switchery error and I would have blown the airliner out of the sky with all four *Adens*, which might have started World War Three! The sequel to the story is that the Soviet Air Force often used civilian aircraft for espionage; it was not uncommon for some of these Tupolev Tu-104 '*Camel*' aircraft to be fitted out with a battery of cameras in their underbellies just for this purpose. My target, ostensibly a perfectly innocent civilian airliner, was miles off its Flight Plan course and was suspected of overflying British military installations to take photographs, listening-in to our communications, and timing the reaction times of our fighter defences. This was quite an experience, and still vivid in my memory.

*Continued over*

As is usual in these circumstances, the flight commanders always find some unwritten rule in the squadron's 'SOP's whereby someone who has been scrambled operationally has to buy drinks in the Mess for everybody else - and sure enough, that happened to me. I might have had the most interesting flight of the detachment, but my personal bar bill took a real hammering. I was interrogated repeatedly about the experience by all my envious colleagues, but I hope I didn't embroider the story too much that Sunday evening as the brandy-sours began to flow. Privately, both the squadron commander and the somewhat embarrassed Tim Barrett congratulated me on carrying out this mission so professionally. My colleague who should have led the mission was as sick as a pig at the thought of what he had missed.

The detachment to Nicosia continued until mid-December - a great mixture of good flying in superb weather and a predominantly Mess-based social life. We returned home to the UK in time for Christmas; I flew home with Dinger Bell in the T7, which had a slightly shorter range than the F6 Hunters, which meant a journey to El Adem in Libya, to Malta, and then to Orange in southern France for an overnight stop. The next leg, direct to Duxford from Orange, could only be made without a refuelling stop if we had favourable tailwinds; on this occasion we did reach Duxford, but with very little fuel left on landing. In some ways it was good to be back 'home', but the excitement and enjoyment of life in Cyprus on a fighter squadron was something I missed greatly upon returning to a rather bleak Cambridgeshire airbase in the latter part of December. Whenever I have a Greek meal, and usually a mezze, even to this day, I am reminded of those very pleasant few weeks out in Cyprus when we ate out quite a lot - though my unpleasant experiences after visiting *Charlie's Bar* are not easily forgotten.

I can't remember exactly when I was declared " Operational " on 65 Squadron, but my new flight commander - Tony Neale - probably made this important decision around March 1961 when I acquired the requisite " Green Instrument Rating ". It was in February or early March that the squadron commander received the dreadful news that 65 Squadron was to be disbanded at the end of March, and that we all faced postings to unknown destinations. This was a bitter shock to everybody, but with the *Lightning* squadrons gradually taking over the Air Defence role throughout the UK, it was inevitable that there would be casualties amongst the day-fighter *Hunter* squadrons - and 65 Squadron was one of the unlucky ones. I remember ruefully observing that I had *joined* 65 as the junior pilot and would be *leaving* it as the junior pilot! I suppose, putting a nicer complexion upon that fact, would be to say I had the honour of being the *last* pilot to join one of the most famous fighter squadrons within Fighter Command before it was disbanded. [65's fame concerned 15 enemy aircraft shot down on one single day during the Battle of Britain, this extraordinary feat being depicted by 15 swords on the Squadron's official crest]. I also like to think that 65 Squadron was not closed down *because* I had joined it! Much to my personal satisfaction, I had served my apprenticeship and had become an operational fighter pilot, some three and a half years after joining the Royal Air Force. It was an ambition achieved.

Quite quickly after the disbandment news, information came through of our postings from the Air Ministry - the predecessor organisation to the Ministry of Defence. Six of us were posted to Stradishall, near Bury St Edmunds, three to join No1 Squadron and three to join No 54 Squadron. Both of these squadrons were *Hunter* fighter/ground-attack units of the Strategic Reserve and were equipped with *Hunter Mk 9* aircraft specially modified for the ground-attack role and with a long-range overseas deployment capability. With two colleagues, I was to join 54 Squadron at the beginning of April 1961. Things were not so bad after all.

FINIS

### Well I Never !

Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarves are not happy.

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. - When I quizzed him on it, he reckoned he could stop any time . . .

I knew a man who was suicidal. He was really depressed, so I pushed him in front of a train. He was chuffed to bits.

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed 4 grave diggers walking about with a coffin . . . 3 hours later and they're still walking about with it. . . . I thought to myself, they've lost the plot!!

I was at a cash point yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance. Not being one to disappoint, I gave her a push and she fell over.

My wife was hinting about what she wanted for our upcoming anniversary. She said, 'I want something shiny that goes from 0 to 150 in about 3 seconds.' So I bought her some scales.

Out driving I saw an RAC van parked up. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable .I thought to myself 'that guy's heading for a breakdown'.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, has announced that he intends to make it more difficult to claim benefits. ---  
From next week, all the forms will be printed in English.

On holiday in Spain, I saw a sign saying, 'English speaking Doctor - why can't we have them in our country?'  
Submitted by John Porter



After you with the magnet, Mate!  
("Tinkle tinkle little spoon -  
Knife and fork will follow soon.")  
380  
1/12