

## **One ex Brats personal view of the day.**

Apart from the pleasure of meeting 2 old entry friends and getting the chance to talk to several ex brats of all ages and a wonderful display by the Battle of Britain Lancaster the day for myself was more about evoking several old memories.

Some of these memories listed below are facts, others half truths, and others pure fantasy - you decide which is which.!!

Although during the day for security reasons we were not allowed to visit the blocks both Dave Gingell & myself went full 'ninja mode' and let ourselves in to our old York Flight block. The echoes of Sgt Price voice could still be heard bouncing off the walls and the memory of collecting our vast wages from Flt Lt. Plumpton - £2;50? - So much cash what to spend it all on?

If you look at the first photo recently posted by Bob 13/8/22 on the entry website this shows a large gouge in the floor as you enter the block - caused by a bumper dropped from the top level - still there 51 years later.

Everyone was required to park their cars on the old 3 wing parade ground where I could still remember the feel of the itchy new uniform horse hair trousers chaffing my thighs - Who was it that had the bright idea of sowing in their pyjamas for extra comfort? - Must have been one of you ponsy electricians.!! We then boarded a coach up to 1&2 wing for the days events.

The short journey to 1&2 wing went past the small field where Air Com Weighill used to keep his two horses which I am advised one horse was named 'Everard' on account that he would become sexually aroused to the beat of the big base drum as the band marched past. I personally do not recall this happening but several ex brats assured me this regularly occurred. Makes you wonder what would have happened to the drummer if Everard had managed to hurdle the fence.!!!

The other memory that came to mind near Everards field was at Main Pont where Dick Bothamley stapled his RAF woollen glove to his orange arm band which he let slip to the end of his arm therefore allowing the glove to drag on the floor like a gorilla ( or like most of our riggers). The look on the face of the civvy driver stopped on his way to work at 08:00 in the morning - Priceless.

At the top of the hill up to 1&2 wing the guard room //armoury is still there & another memory - this time smuggling a certain apprentice D.Tanner who happened to be on Jankers over one weekend & as we all new had a girlfriend in Wendover. Unable to keep it in his trousers for 48 hours he persuaded me to smuggle him past the guard room in my car hidden under a blanket for an illegal liaison with the fore mentioned girlfriend. By the way Don you still owe me the petrol money - at todays rate £25.

Just past the guard room to the right is a road heading towards sick quarters etc. This road Dave Gingell calls 'Pickwell' Hill where he was given his first driving lesson in Paul Pickwells Ford Prefect (a type only driven by the best) - while attempting a hill start the hand brake came off in Daves hand - Oh sh\*t - Paul assures me he learned how to tighten nuts correctly before being released to work on proper aircraft.

Moving on to 1&2 wing parade square much of the days events took place here. This included Pipe Band performance, RAF Falcons Parachuting display and speeches by Viscount Trenchard and President of the Halton Apprentices. However all of this could have been ruined by some very nasty 50 year old oil slicks where we used to park our cars on the parade square. As a model former apprentice I reported this to the SWO on duty. He thanked me especially when I was able to report those responsible for the oil slicks.

As a result the following ex apprentices may receive a bill for Barrack Room Damages - Bothamly (Ford Anglia) - Hovey + Francis (Morris Minor) - Lowe (Mini van) - Jones (Cambridge?) - Stockton (Corsair) - Bunfield (Vauxhall?). Apparently there is a 55 year statute of limitation for offences.

The highlight of the day was the Lancaster display but the final act of the day was the mass march past by all ex apprentices present approx 700. We all lined up in order of entry seniority and I was surprised to see how many people attending were older than ourselves and as a result we were fairly near the back. the pipe band almost overtook us on its second lap.

After the days events ended I took a trip to the pub in Great Missenden where just before Christmas 1971 several us P1 guys went to a pub which was interrupted by the local plod Sgt & constable who ordered us out and started to take our names when outside. A certain M.Carter had the presence of mind to rapidly leggit as soon as they got us outside. The rest of us were booked. Again as a model apprentice I feel it is my duty to inform the Buckinghamshire constabulary of this unreported offence - sorry Mick but I know this has played on your conscience for 51 years plus you never got your round in.

Dave Shephard