



The newsletter of the 202 Squadron Association



202 Squadron Sea King over London during HM Queen Elizabeth II's
Birthday Flypast, 16th June 2012.

Crew: Flt Lt Andy Johnston (Captain), Flt Lt Paul Twedde (Co-pilot),
MAEOp Steve Larke (RadOp), Sgt Gaz Stewart (Winchman).

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The President's Piece

Those of you who were unable to make the long trek north to Lossiemouth for this year's Reunion missed a treat. The guys on the Flight and on the Station gave us a weekend to remember of fascinating visits both on and off the station. It culminated in an outstanding Mess Dinner Night with all the trimmings, commencing with a Sea King, which just happened to be passing the Officers' Mess at the time, and including a piper.

Next year's Reunion is going to be at Boulmer, on 26/27th April, and our hotel will be the White Swan in Alnwick, where we stayed the last time we were up there. Alnwick itself is worth the visit, particularly Alnwick Castle. Details of the weekend are still being worked on, but I expect us to have dinner in the Officers' Mess and a visit to the fighter control bunker is on the cards.

A thought for future events is that the 17th October 2014 is the centenary of the formation of the Squadron, as No. 2 Squadron RNAS, at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. Watch this space!

Finally, and I know that I keep banging on about this, but we need to encourage greater membership of the Association. If the Squadron finally disbands in a couple of years' time, we'll have no pool of serving members to recruit from. You all know friends who are ex 202 but are not Association members. Do a bit of arm twisting.

In Comradeship

Pete Chadwick

ADDENDUM: We recently got to hear of a member who was not so well and needed, at the very least, some tea and sympathy from his old friends. Sadly, we got to hear of his plight from a non-member, and this despite another, member, being aware of his situation!

Clearly, we, as an Association, could not undertake a regular trawl of all members to check on their wellbeing. We rely on you all to keep us in the picture if you become aware of one of our number who might need some TLC. May I repeat and emphasise the message from our Almoner, Geoff Bakewell, that we can only offer support if we hear about the need. Please let him know



202 Squadron Standard on parade in Gibraltar, 11th June 2012

News From the Front Line Apr 12 – Oct 12

Welcome to the fresh instalment of news from the front line. As I scribe these few notes on an early Sunday afternoon I am very much aware that the central heating in the house is on full and the sun's rapid dip to the horizon is already beginning to turn the sky pink and provide us with a glorious sunset over the Moray Firth. Yesterday's mountain flying sortie in the Cairngorms, although very picturesque, required a necessity to adopt snow landing techniques, and with the formal 'Winter Operations Brief' already being delivered by the Flt's QHI, it is a sure sign that winter is upon us again. The upside, however, is that I get to comment on the past 6 months and reading back over the Flt histories it seems the summer wasn't as bad as we all thought.

As the drawdown of military UK SAR draws ever closer, the import and export of 202 Sqn personnel has reduced somewhat. Internal restructuring and the cross-populating of flights has been the flavour of the month in a bid to maximise efficiency and to provide that full time requirement for SAR coverage. Commensurate with this, Sqn Ldr Stu Gwinnutt has moved from his seat in Sqn HQ to take over Command of E Flt relieving Sqn Ldr Reeks who has ventured North to take the reins of D Flt.

Aforementioned in the last edition of the Mucky Duck, the efforts of SKIOS in providing engineering support has been first class. Unfortunately there seems to be a world shortage of spare parts, particularly gearboxes. There is seemingly ever increasing pressure on the logistics echelon as the aircraft get older and demands exist by the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force both at home and from operations in sunnier climes. I include the following extract from E Flt's F540 written by Sqn Ldr Gwinnutt:

'September saw a return to normal on the rescue front, although I am sorry to report that the first 'rescue' of the month was to recover one of our own crews after a total main rotor gearbox oil loss whilst training in Bridlington Bay. The repairing of the aircraft in the field was typical of the 'One Team' approach here on E Flt with engineers repairing the aircraft within 24 hours supported by our own firemen. The fateful sortie was jinxed from the start as the crew consisted of OC 202 Sqn, the 2IC 202 Sqn, the Sqn QHI and me, OC E Flt, but we all survived unscathed!'

As the engineers continue to provide, so too do the crews. In July, D Flt racked up a tally of 33 jobs for the month. I believe the last time this was achieved

was 5 years previous. The workload, however, on rearcrew remains high and fatigue is now an everyday factor in decision making. At one point, earlier in the year, A Flt was reduced to a single RadOp as the flight was blighted by injury. In preference to down-declaring to a three man crew, both internal and external manpower support was provided but, at times, this was not even enough. Recent months has seen policy changes and implementation of a new, mandatory stand-down entitlement so as to enable adequate R&R post SAR duties. The flow of Winchmen involved with the SAR commitment to MERT in Afghanistan has been stemmed but the provision of detachments to 1564 Flt in the Falkland Islands remains.

Training with external agencies continues and the summer months brought with it extra responsibilities in support of a truly Great British year of celebrations. D Flt played host to a detachment of Griffin helicopters from SARTU whose task involved the provision of route security as the torch runners of the Olympic flame snaked its way through Scotland. A and E Flt were not to be left out as they provided assets in support of the Op OLYMPIC armed response teams as well as conducting flypasts on Alnwick and Bamburgh Castles during the passing of the torch relay.

E Flt were further singled out and were invited to provide a crew and aircraft for the Queen's Birthday Flypast. This was a great honour and required careful planning, training and qualification of the crew, which was led by Flt Lt Johnston. Everyone pulled together to provide 2 serviceable aircraft for the big day with the aircrew helping the engineers prepare the aircraft. The aircraft was polished using some 'secret formula' that the engineers kept for Royal occasions. The result was impressive and the Flt received laudatory comments despite the BBC reporting it as an aircraft from Flt Lt Wales' Flt on Anglesey! Concurrently, the Sqn Standard was paraded in Gibraltar for the Queen's Birthday Parade, which is an annual event involving personnel from across the Sqn. This year the Standard Party was led by Flt Lt Lynch who again did a sterling job, despite coming home with a heel injury following all the drill! As this year marked the Queen's Diamond Jubilee the Reviewing Officer was the Earl of Wessex which attracted lots of interest from the media.

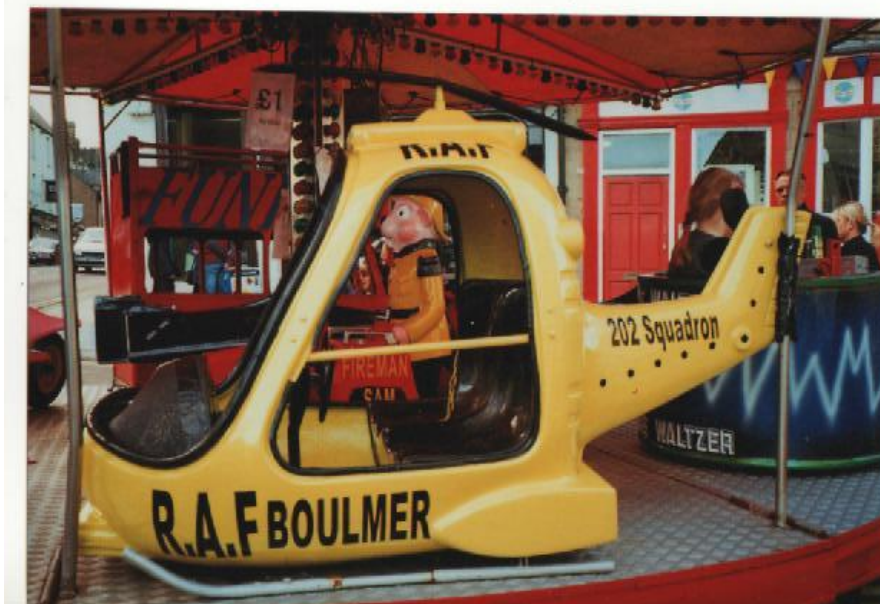
Two noteworthy jobs during the period included the tragic mid-air collision of 2 Tornado GR4 aircraft stationed at RAF Lossiemouth. Rescue 137 was scrambled in response to an Air Traffic loss of radar contact of the aircraft over the Moray Firth. Hindered by a confusing Intelligence picture and spurious

homing signals R137 arrived on scene which happened to be in a bank of sea fog. R137 extracted one of the pilots who had safely ejected and recovered him to hospital. Within the hour a further crew from D Flt had been mustered and routed to the scene. Air and Maritime assets in the vicinity meticulously swept the impact area with no further success in finding the other aircrew. I am pleased to say that the survivor has been making steady recovery and has since paid a visit to the Flt to meet those crews involved.

In July A Flt conducted the rescue of a 12 year old boy who had fallen 200 feet at Stickle Tarn in the Lake District. Due to the life threatening injuries he had sustained he was taken to the specialist trauma centre at Newcastle RVI. A few days later the father of the boy visited the flight to thank the crew and everyone was delighted to hear that not only had he survived but that he was awake, talking and will make a full recovery. These are the moments that make the training all worthwhile and the reason why we are here.

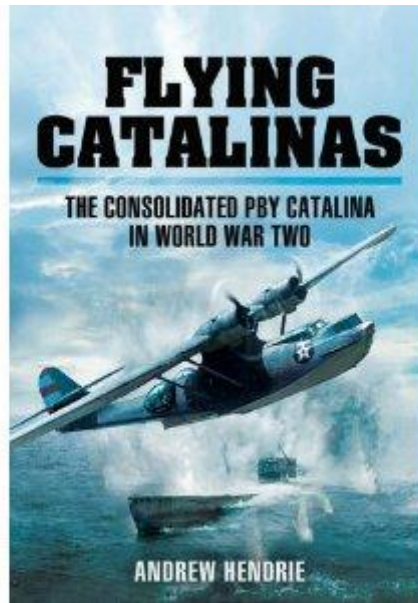
Until the next time, I hope you all enjoy the festive season and I am looking forward seeing you all again at the Annual Dinner and Reunion to be held in 2013 at RAF Boulmer courtesy of Sqn Ldr Frayling and A Flt.

Flt Lt Dave Punchard



Seen in a fairground at Alnwick...caption competition perhaps?

Book Review



Flying Catalinas: The Consolidated PBY Catalina in World War Two by Andrew Hendrie (Pen & Sword Books Ltd, £19.99, ISBN 184884780-7)

This is a new edition of a book first published in 1988; the author was himself a Coastal Command man, with tours on Hudsons and Wellingtons under his belt. In 20 chapters plus appendices and glossary, he provides a comprehensive chronicle of the various activities undertaken by Catalinas and their crews from the very beginning of the war to the very end. The action ranges from the Aleutians to South Africa, and from Brazil to Australia, and there are numerous photos spread throughout the text, as well as maps and diagrams. Because of the number of countries which used the aircraft, there is no shortage of gripping tales of skill and heroism performed by Catalina crews, and the author has gone to great lengths to contact the people involved to get a remarkable level of detail and accuracy. Perhaps the only downside of this title, for those interested particularly in 202 Squadron, is that the sheer breadth of operational activity by the aircraft means that RAF Coastal Command's use of Catalinas is confined to one 13-page chapter; 202 gets a few mentions, primarily with regard to Leigh Light operations, and Flt Lt Charles Page and Fg Off Jack Chandler both provide first-hand accounts of their experiences while flying with the Sqn.

Charlie Logan

(thanks to Pen & Sword Books for the review copy)



The National Coastwatch Institution



“Eyes Along the Coast”

If you live on the coast in many parts of England and Wales and are happily retired from Service, you might be interested in having a second stab at life in the SAR world with the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI).

The NCI currently mans 46 visual lookout stations around the UK coastline from Mablethorpe to Fleetwood, with 2 or 3 new stations coming on line annually. (There are plans afoot to expand into Scotland in the not too distant future.) The stations are the eyes and ears of The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's maritime rescue control centres and once they have achieved Declared Facility Status are considered to be a fully integrated part of the National Search and Rescue Organisation. All stations, which report directly to HM Coastguard, are equipped with powerful binoculars and marine band VHF and very many have radar and AIS; the vast majority open every day of the year, although a few just open only at weekends and bank holidays. Like our partners the RNLI, we receive no government money (so no jobsworths with clipboards) and all members are unpaid volunteers, these volunteers being drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds – but previous expertise in the world of SAR is invaluable, not just for the volunteer him or herself but also in passing on experience to those who have no such, or similar, background.

The NCI website - www.nci.org.uk – gives full details of the NCI; take a look via the Home page at the 'Stations' link to see where we are currently operational and at the 'Incidents' link to see what we get up to. The website gives full contact details for the NCI itself and also for local station managers, and I am more than willing to chat directly with anyone interested if they want to give me a call or drop me an e-mail.

(Ex 22 and 203 Sqns)

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Editor's End

This is my first attempt at producing an edition of the Mucky Duck, and so I will be very grateful for feedback (positive or otherwise!) on how I can improve the newsletter in future editions. I was lucky enough to get a lot of help and guidance from Hugh Cumming – many thanks Hugh, for helping me and for all the issues you have produced over the years, and I hope that you, in particular, approve of my efforts! Many thanks also to the contributors to this edition. ~~Season's Greetings~~ Happy Christmas to one and all for next month.

Charlie Logan