

# *Scratchings*

*from*

# *The Pen.....*



*January 2012: A monthly memo and scribblings for and from members of the Pen & Sword Club*

## **Happy New Year!**

Welcome to 2012 and what we hope will be a fantastic year for *The Pen*. The Club continues to grow as members put forward their personal recommendations for invitations.

Particularly pleasing is the number of new members drawn from the government information services and from the UK Police Force whose expertise and long experience will contribute to our success.

**January Lunch:** The first P&S lunch of 2012 will be at the RAF Club in Piccadilly on Tuesday, January 10. . Host for the day is Squadron Leader Malcolm Davidge. Please let club secretary Doreen Cadwallader know if you wish to attend. Assemble at 1230 in the club foyer.

## **President Hugh's new role:**

Our year has started well with the appointment of the Club's President, Hugh Colver, to the prestigious position of Chairman of The Reform Club. This is a demanding task in which we know Hugh will set high standards.



## **Two new Vice Presidents:**

Lieutenant Colonel Graham Barnett, below right, a former Commanding Officer of the TAPIO Pool and Founding Chairman of The Pen & Sword Club takes on the role of Vice President in addition to his chairmanship

of the Club's South West Region. We owe much to Graham's enthusiasm and careful stewardship during our first decade. As a Regular he served in Malaya, Northern Ireland, Berlin and Bahrain before becoming a Squadron Commander with the Trucial Oman Scouts. Graham served two tours in Army PR with the British Army of the Rhine public relations teams based at HQ BAOR and at 2 Division. After leaving the Army Graham worked in local government public relations and for land agents, Strutt & Parker



Captain Mike Davis-Marks, RN, current Director of Recruiting and former Director of Communications for the Royal Navy is an enthusiast for military media operations. Mike commanded the nuclear powered, hunter killer submarine HMS Turbulent and also served aboard six other submarines. He twice went to the North Pole under the Polar ice pack and was a graduate of the legendary Submarine Command course, The Perisher.



## New Jobs:



Colonel Angus Taverner, Regional Chairman for Scotland and the North of England will also represent the interests of Northern Ireland based club members in future

Major Rolf Kurth, who completed a deployment to Afghanistan late last year, takes over as second-in-command of the Media Operations Group (V) in mid-January. We wish him well in this important role.



## New Honorary Member:

The Club welcomes a new honorary member in world-renowned charity worker, Phil Packer, the un-paid Chief Executive and Founder of the BRIT Trust. Phil is a welcome and valuable addition to the club.

Phil, pictured below climbing in California, served 17 years as a Provost Officer in the Royal Military Police and has won the title of BBC Sports Personality of the Year and Pride of Britain Fundraiser of the Year.

Injured during a deployment to Afghanistan, Phil, also holds the appointments of Vice President, Ambassador, Special Ambassador, Patron or Envoy to some 19 charitable organisations in the UK.

**Says National Chairman, Mike Peters: I sincerely hope that in 2012 the club can assist Phil in his activities. With our depth of experience and geographical spread there are any number of ways our membership can help.'**



## **7644 Squadron - a successful 2011:**

**Faced with an annual inspection a few days before the start of the Festive Season, 7644 Squadron RAuxAF can look back with some pride, writes Squadron Leader, Dylan Eklund. It's been a good year for the squadron which until recently only had ten officers!'**

**'The inspection was conducted by Air Vice Marshal Julian Young, the Executive Officer Air Command and was followed by our annual dinner at Halton House Officers' Mess at RAF Halton.**

**Guests included the Honorary Inspector General of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Air Vice Marshal Lord Beaverbrook, ACOS Media & Communications Group Air Commodore Gordon Bruce, Inspector RAuxAF, Group Captain Gary Bunkell, DACOS Reserves, Group Captain**

**Martin Routledge and DACOS Reserves Media & Communications Group Captain Adrian Maddox. It was fitting climax to a year in which the squadron's contribution to Operation Ellamy drew many plaudits, including one from the Chief of the Air Staff. In consequence of its comprehensive and professional work in raising the profile not just of the RAuxAF but also the Royal Air Force, the squadron received the Clyde PR Trophy, one of the four annual awards given to RAuxAF units.**

**When the green light was given for Op Ellamy 7644 officers were quickly on the move. Within a few hours Flying Officer Tom Calver had arrived at RAF Brize Norton to lead a Mobile News Team filming the first strike missions from air-refuelling tankers. Tom flew out on the first Hercules into Gioia del Colle and did not return home for more than four months.**



**During that time he produced excellent media coverage of RAF operations in Italy. For his outstanding performance Tom was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from UK Air Component Commander, Air Cdre Gary Waterfall. Tom is pictured above left receiving the certificate from Air Cdre Gordon Bruce.**

**The dinner was also the first occasion for The Pooley Sword to be formally presented to former 7644 OC, Group Captain Steve Dargan. The sword is awarded, as and when deserved, to an officer of the RAuxAF judged to have displayed outstanding leadership. Steve attended Buckingham Palace earlier in the week to receive the Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal.**

**The dinner followed the graduation of four officers from RAF College Cranwell a couple of days earlier. For the first time the Reserve Initial**

Officer Training Course joined its Regular counterparts in the Graduation Parade, a marvellous event for the quarter and their families.'

One 7644 graduate, Pilot Officer Natasha Knowles was awarded the Trenchard Trophy for the best reservist on the course. Congratulations to her and the other graduates Meg Fairhurst, Cameron Rennie and Tony Durrant.

'The final month of 2011 saw no let up in squadron commitments Flying Officer Tony Newton deployed to Afghanistan to gather Christmas messages and stories. He and photographer Corporal Dylan Browne's performance was described by Wing Commander Patrick O'Donnell as *the most industrious and prodigious Mobile News Team (or equivalent) during my time as Director of Joint Media Operations.*

'Nearer to home, with two photographers, I covered the award to an RAF navigator of the Croix de la Valeur Militaire ( Cross of Military Valour) with Bronze Star by the French Prime Minister, at an air base in France, a story which appeared in the national press.

The photographers continued to Austria to meet with Wing Commander Peter Clarke, OC 7644, and the RAF bobsleigh, luge and skeleton association who were training at Innsbruck.

## Sliding on a tray at 140kph:

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Mills sent *Scratchings* an e-mail from his winter 'office' in the Swiss Alps. A former Royal Navy submariner, Andrew is now a member of the RNR media operations specialisation and the joint owner of Nephria an international beauty and skin care company.

Says Andrew: who spends three months of each year in in St. Moritz as the assistant secretary of the Cresta Run: 'What a job!'

Andrew writes: 'Since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the aristocracy of Europe, and particularly the United Kingdom, would spend their summers in the Alpine regions, partly to avoid the polluted air of London and partly for the pleasure of the mountain life style. As the cold autumnal weather approached they would return, until an enterprising Swiss



hotelier, Johannes Badrutt, invited certain key gentlemen to remain in Switzerland. He assured them that they would not receive a bill, if they did not enjoy the experience.

‘Following a blissful winter in the early 1880’s, in which the crisp and dry snow fell by night, the sun shone by day, and the environment was particularly pleasant, the word spread very quickly that it was the winter season that was to become the attraction. So began an entirely new concept in vacationing abroad.

‘To keep the gentlemen occupied, toboggan runs were formed in and around the steep roads of St. Moritz, the longest and most exciting being Cresta Hamlets toward Celerina. This became the Cresta Run in 1885.

‘To organise and administer the Run, principles of military leadership were encouraged and the Club traditionally is overseen by retired military officers. To this day, the core of the club committee is a combination of fabulously wealthy, titled, privileged or retired military personnel and I happen to be the most recent addition (and only qualify in the latter category.)

‘Following my 26 year Royal Navy career, in which I competed for 14 seasons out of 16 on the Cresta Run in the Inter Services Championships, I was given the huge privilege of taking over from a former Army helicopter pilot to become the Assistant Secretary in 2008. My specific responsibilities are the run itself, instructing novice and advanced riders and other club social duties.

‘As a retired submariner to spend three months on duty in S. Moritz is an absolute pleasure. I awake to the darkest of skies and arrive daily at the clubhouse at 0700 to greet riders be they beginners or members.

‘We begin with the novice riding at 0800, as the pink and yellow light of the rising sun illuminates the mountains around. We continue to about 1300, by which time the warm air softens the surface of the ice. The secretary announces ‘Termonata” and we retire to an exclusive hotel terrace bar to while away the afternoons. This largely involves comparing bruises, having fun with young and old and planning the evening social whirls, which inevitably follow.



‘Riding the Run evokes every emotion possible, including elation, disappointment, frustration, and generally physical pain. It is said that when ice, flesh and toboggan meet, the flesh always loses. Even with riding suit protection akin to an American footballer, we all happily

display and discuss our bangs and scratches as if they were Heidelberg duelling scars - especially when our ladies enquire after our health.

‘Over its 127year history, five deaths on the run are officially accepted, along with numerous broken bones, including skulls, shoulders, spines and hips. But still the members and their guests arrive every morning to accept the challenge.

‘Currently ladies are only permitted to ride at the end of the season to protect their dignity and health and to allow the gentlemen an element of stupidity, undisturbed by the fairer and clearly more sensible sex.

‘The St. Moritz winter offers a combination of deep blue skies. occasionally with a daily snow fall of up to three feet or more and all this happens to the sound of the chink of champagne flutes. The members proudly partake of a rather strange concoction which is made from compote of beef stew and is very, very alcoholic. A jug of Bullshot is designed (and indeed administered) to warm the bones and lift the spirits and it succeeds on both counts.

‘Statistically the Cresta Run is three-quarters of a mile long and winds its way down a steep gully through ten testing banks and bends. The total drop in elevation is 514 feet and the gradient varies from 1 in 2.8 to 1 in 8.7. The first Run was completed in January 1885 and it is still built from scratch every year using the natural contours of the valley and earth banks to provide a framework on which to pile the snow.

‘The Run usually opens two or three days before Christmas and continues until the end of February. There over 30 highly competitive races and riding takes place every morning of the week.

‘I arrive in late November to oversee the construction and assist in the administrative preparation for the season and usually depart St. Moritz in mid March following around ten competitive weeks. The season in St. Moritz is not, as would be thought, a marathon – it is more a series of short sprints with no time to catch ones breath before the next sporting, social or official need to sprint again.

‘It is said the Cresta Run can be compared to a mistress, who would break one’s heart, while encouraging the suitor to return for more and more and more. Personally I love it, and will be back next season to ride and to support the needs of those who wish to take the challenge.’

**Editor’s Note:** Our lady members may be more interested in [www.nephria.com](http://www.nephria.com) and the range of exclusive beauty products on display.

**Chance meeting finds ‘historic’ painting:**

**A chance meeting at a London soiree with Guild of Aviation Artists' member John Cutts, of Walton-on-Thames has resulted in the presentation of a painting depicting an historic event to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust at RNAS Yeovilton.**



***National Chairman, Mike Peters, above right, with Deputy Chair (RN) Sue Eagles.***

**Mike Peters had dined alongside John at a London event and found that not only did their respective spouses know each other but John was looking for a home for some of his paintings.**

**A call to Commander Sue Eagles, the Campaign Director at FNHT, indicated that the painting of the first ever jet aircraft landing aboard a Royal Navy carrier by Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown, CBE, DSC, AFC would be much welcomed for display at the Fleet Air Arm Museum.**

**The Trust is a Service Charity which raises money to help preserve and promote the nation's naval aviation heritage and the support of the Royal Navy Historic Flight, the Fleet Air Arm Museum and the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church. The historic flight's aircraft display to audiences of over three million every year at air shows around the country. The Trust is also the official charity of the Goodwood revival.**

**Captain Brown, the Navy's most distinguished and decorated test pilot who made the first jet deck landing in the Sea Vampire aboard HMS Ocean in December 1945 said: 'John's painting is an outstanding gift to the Trust. The first jet deck landing was one of the highlights of naval aviation history. It is vital that this history - our naval aviation heritage -**

the aircraft, the pioneering technology and the young men who laid down their lives in the service of naval aviation is not forgotten. The painting will have pride of place in the Fleet Air Arm Museum helping to ensure that the nation's naval aviation heritage is preserved for future generations. ‘

John, has agreed to produce a painting to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic in 2012 which will depict a Swordfish operating from a MAC ship accompanying a convoy. He has a number of aviation paintings that he is prepared to donate to military organisations. Anyone interested?

## Christmas Spirit:

Wales & The Marches Regional Chairman, Colonel Bob Purvis, suffered a leg injury in the days before the Festive Season and writes to *Scratchings* saying that the Spirit of Christmas Present was certainly about in Wales.

Confined to bed for a few days and unable to drive Bob's problem reached the ears of club members. As well as a spate of get-well e-mails Bob was helped by Major Patrick Morgan, whose wife Sheila also baked him a Christmas cake; by Captain Mike Buckingham who kept a watchful eye and by Major Doug McArthur, his wife, Lu and daughter Helen, who invited Bob to Christmas lunch, collected him from his rural home and then arranged his return.

‘ I had a host of Christmas cards from members that revealed to me both the value of the club and its camaraderie. This was an example of the true BuddyBuddy assistance and thoughtfulness that we have enshrined in our club principles. May I extend my thanks and gratitude to all who remembered me at Christmas time.‘

**Editor's Note:** Bob remains confined to his home and welcomes any who may wish to exchange e-mails ([bobpurvisalpha@aol.com](mailto:bobpurvisalpha@aol.com)) or telephone him at 07891197390

## New Members:

The following new members have been confirmed:

### RN & RNR

Cdr David Carpenter, RNR. Partner at DCA Architects, Edinburgh

Cdr Chris Hardinge, RNR at MoD

Lt Cdr Sheena Thomson, RNR. Director at Four Communications, UAE

Lt Cdr Ian Aitchison, RNR. Group Communications NYK Group

### Army

Lt Col Paul Tilley MBE. Strategic Communications ,MoD

Maj Rolf Kurth, 2 i/c designate MOG(V)  
Maj Andrew Reeds, late SO2 Media Ops. Director Crown Media  
Maj Gary Hedges, MOG(V.) Hampshire County Council  
Maj Patrick Jackson MOG(V.) Strategic Messaging Afghanistan

Maj Paul Mitcham, MOG(V)  
Capt Joe Oliver, MOG(V). Director Blue Turret Communications  
Capt Joanna Timmerman MOG(V). Champion Communications

#### RAF & RAuxAF

Flt Lt Tim Blakey, 7644 Sqdn. Senior Editor Oxford Press  
Flt Lt Paul Tester, 7644 Sqdn.  
Flt Lt Stephen Jolly, 7644 Sqdn. Olympic Delivery Authority  
Flt Lt Tracey Parrott, RAF. Media Ops Basra

#### NATO

Ms Shona Lowe, Public Affairs Officer Operation Ocean Shield

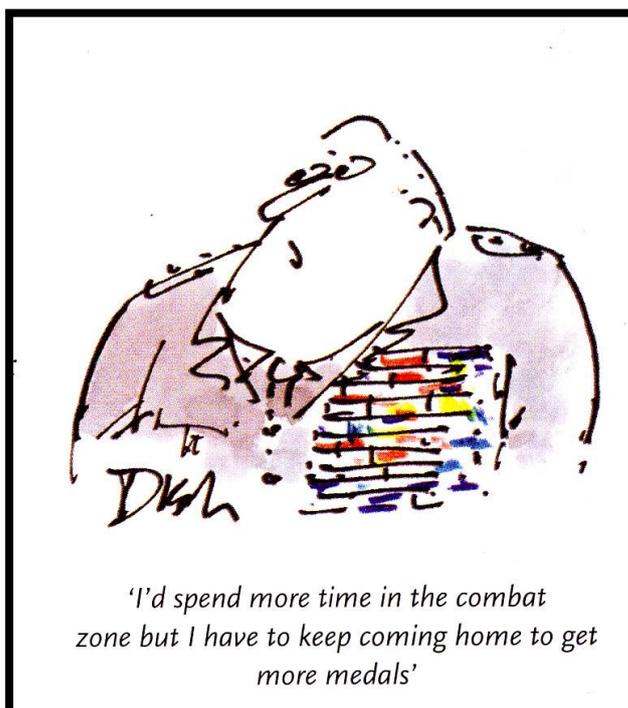
#### MoD

Mr James Clarke, former Director of News and Press Secretary to SoS,  
MoD. Consultant at the Cardew Group, London  
Mr Ken Johnston, Chief Press Officer (Northern Ireland)  
Mr Raymond Routledge, MoD SIO at Aldershot

#### Police

Chief Superintendent Gavin McKinnon, Head of Communications Kent  
Police, late UDF & RUC

### Humour in Uniform:



Supplied by Major Chris Vere with acknowledgements to Oldie Magazine.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST**

**Won something: Done something: Are you in the news? You're colleagues in *The Pen* want to know. Please e-mail your story suggestions to the National Chairman, Mike Peters on [michaepcoms@btinternet.com](mailto:michaepcoms@btinternet.com). Or call 07884 473368**