



# THE MERCURY

February/March 2014

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## A WORD FROM THE BOSS

My sincere thanks to everyone for all your dedication and commitment to the Wing during 2013. It was a very busy year with many great successes by our cadets and staff. 2014 looks just as busy, when you look at the Wing calendar. There are not many weekends when something is not happening in the Wing.

This year we are holding our Wing Parade in Weston super Mare on Sunday 4 May and we are delighted that Commandant Air Cadets will be taking the salute. We also have our Wing dinner on 21 June in Tiverton, all senior cadets, staff and civilian personnel are welcome.

Training has already started for Ten Tors and Nijmegen; two great challenges for cadets, which require a lot of commitment both from cadets and staff. Our RAF camps this year are at RAF Valley, St Mawgan and Benson as well as Cyprus and Gibraltar. Griffin Camp moves to a new location at Swynnerton in Staffordshire which will offer more opportunities for our cadets. We also have cadets travelling to Israel and Canada on the International Air Cadet Exchange. Additionally this year the South West will be hosting the overseas cadets on the UK tour, I hope many of our cadets will get the opportunity to meet them.

Now that Ultilearn is settling down I look forward to more cadets passing their: Leading, Senior and the Master Cadet examinations and more cadets qualifying for their BTEC in Aviation Studies, Public Services as well as music if they are in the Band. As always we are keen to increase the number of cadets and staff within the Wing and I have asked Commanding Officers to organise a recruiting campaign locally. The Wing Recruiting Vehicle was used extensively last year, it has recently passed its MOT and it is therefore ready to be used at events, schools and town centres.

I look forward to another successful year; it is all your hard work and commitment by everyone that makes the Wing such a success.

B W Wills-Pope

Wing Commander

## A VISIT FROM THE POLICE

In November, 1146 (Barnstaple) Squadron were privileged to have Devon and Cornwall Police local Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) visit with all their gear and their 4x4 BMW. Without divulging too much, there was a lot of the technical tools on show that the Police utilise in all the environments that they face. All cadets got their hands on the "tools in the box" in a very safe working environment in a closed classroom, with 2 eagle eyed police constables and 2 bug eyed RAF VR(T) officers watching every move. Cadet Charlie Lion was the first to put her hand up when asked if anyone wants to try the gear on. She's never been seen to move so fast. Lucky for the squadron Cadet Lion didn't go (too/more than normal!) power crazy and take the big red key to knock on the stores door, to get herself some more skirts and shoes..... supposedly two issue skirts aren't enough!



On a serious note the Cadets really appreciated the input that the ARV provided in regards to the dangers of gun crime and what the serious implications are when individuals make the decision to "play around" with anything that looks even remotely like a gun. It was definitely a thought provoking evening for all.

A big thanks go to the ARV crew PC HUTTON and PC BENNETT (who was an ex CGI!) who professionally dealt with the usual "inane and bizarre" question and answer session as well as being subtle in conveying the police's message to young people. And Yes, one Cadet dared to ask about PC HUTTON's moustache he was growing for Movember!.... the tools had been put away in the box by that point, luckily enough!

Pilot Officer Clark

OC 1146 Barnstaple Sqn.

## HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013 Cdt Flt Sgts Freja Woods and Rowanne Small of 1064 (Honiton) Sqn together with: Five other ATC Cadets and two CCF Cadets from the Southwest Region plus nationally, another 48 Air Cadets and a similar numbers of Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and Royal British Legion veterans were lucky enough to be selected to attend a debate in the main chamber of the House of Lords.



The run-up to the debate was very competitive with Talking Days, hosted by the British Speaking Union, held across the country. This involved local and national assessments to select the best cadets to attend this prestigious event.

On the day the cadets were given a short tour of the Palace of Westminster before having lunch in the Royal Gallery and a briefing in the Robing Room, places that the public aren't usually allowed to enter.

Just after 15:00 the cadets were shown into the main chamber where they became only the seventh group of people, other than the Lords, to sit on the red benches. The debate was also a break from tradition as it was only the second time in history to be inter-generational with cadets, adults and veterans. The Lord Speaker, Baroness D'Souza, explained her role in the debate. Also the Clerk to the Lords, who was also present for the event, explained his role.

The question for debate was: *"One hundred years after World War One, what is its legacy for the UK and how does it shape the nation today?"*

Prior to the event cadets and veterans were divided into three mixed groups each representing a different aspect of the legacy of the First World War. One group believed that: The UK is a more globally responsible nation, the second: That society is more aware of the impact of war whilst the third group believed that: The UK has not learned from its experience as a result of the First World War. A small number of cadets from each force were selected to give key speeches, after which the floor was opened up for comments and questions.

The cadets from all of the cadet forces spoke well, speaking with conviction and confidence.

At 16:45 a vote was taken and the result was: That 73 supported the concept that the UK had not learnt from its experiences (or at least had not learnt enough), whilst 61 agreed that there was an increased awareness of the impact of war on society and 43 voted that the UK is now a more globally responsible nation.

## HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE (CON'T)

Before the debate was closed The Lords present each spoke about the outcome of the event and were full of praise for the quality of speaking.

The event was televised on the Parliamentary Channel and will appear on the House of Lords' YouTube site. In the meantime, a report of the event can be found on the House of Lords' news site.

This event was an experience of a lifetime and something the Cadets are unlikely to ever forget.

I would like to thank Flt Lt Les Tanner and Flt Lt Tam Woods for giving up their time to act as escorts for the event.

Sqn Ldr G Fisher

## GETTING KNOTTED

Recently four Sea Cadets and a member of staff from TS Excalibur (Glastonbury & Street SCC) were invited over to teach the Cadets of 914 (Glastonbury & Street) Squadron seamanship that would be useful in everyday situations as well as knots which they could use to help save lives. Cadets from 914 Squadron enjoyed the experience and now want to do further activities with the Sea Cadets. Cpl Barfoot-Franks said "It was so nice to do something with our fellow cadet forces and have an insight into what they do".



The Sea Cadets also had a tour of the squadron facilities and really wanted to come and do more with the Air Cadets in the future. "We have never worked with air cadets before, so it was a little nerve racking at first, but I am so glad we did" commented Ordinary Cadet Wilson "I can't wait to come back and do more with them!"

914 Squadron have started plans for an inter service cadet activity that will involve the Glastonbury Platoon of the Rifles ACF as well as TS Excalbur Sea Cadets.

## WING SPORTS TROPHY

During 2012-2013 cadets from 1064 (Honiton) Squadron were selected to represent the Wing in Sporting activities: Football, rugby, hockey, netball, athletics and swimming. Some of 1064 were selected to attend further sporting events, as part of the region team: Cadets Branson, Rosen, Small, Turner, Rogers, Neve, Scott-Perry, Wilson and Morris have all competed for the Wing and are pictured with the trophy they won for the year , They have amassed an



impressive total of 19 representations for the Wing. The trophy was presented to the Squadron by Air Chief Marshall Sir Peter Squire GCB DFC AFC DL on 21<sup>st</sup> January during an inspection of the Squadron.

## CONGRATULATIONS

On Remembrance Day, the Barnstaple Branch of the Royal British Legion awarded the best Barnstaple cadet award to 1146 (Barnstaple) Squadron ATC cadet George Wicks. Cadet Wicks beat stiff competition from the Army Cadet Force and the Sea Cadets in winning. George's accolade is that he has: A 90%+ attendance record, attends all public events that the Sqn participates in, raises money individually at charity functions and strives to improve himself and the squadron at all times which meant that he easily swept away any chances the other units had in getting their grubby mitts on George's well deserved award. Cadet Wicks has been with the Squadron for two years and truly represents what can be achieved within the ATC in such a short period of time and therefore is a great ambassador for 1146 Sqn and the ACO. Here he is proudly receiving his trophy shield from the Mayor of Barnstaple, Lesley Brown at the award ceremony at Barnstaple Royal British Legion.



Pilot Officer Glyn Clark

OC 1146 Barnstaple Sqn.

## AIR COMMODORE JOINS WING BAND'S REHEARSALS.

Cdt Symes-Podic of 200 (Torquay) had the rare honour of being presented with a Commandant's Certificate by Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty herself. She received the organisation's top commendation for her outstanding contribution to music in the region

The commodore was visiting the Devon and Somerset Wing Music Flight which rehearses at the Torquay Boys' Grammar School and 200 Squadron on Friday evenings.

Jenny has been a member of the flight for nearly three years and has represented the South West and the Devon & Somerset numerous times at prestigious events, parades and competitions. In February she will be joining the ACO National Concert Band who are planning on visiting Cyprus this year.

Air Commodore McCafferty said that the evening had "far exceeded her expectations" adding that the cadets were "talented young people led by inspirational staff". She also said "I am very much looking forward to taking the salute at the Wing parade at Weston in May".

Jenny plays tuned percussion, violin and is an outstanding vocalist. As part of the Wing ensemble she won last year's Air Cadet National Competition and this year helped to secure silver medal position for the Wing in the national marching band competition. Additionally she was part of the percussion group gaining a third place in the percussion team section nationally.

Recruiting to the band is closed to beginners now but musicians of grade 3 or equivalent and above can still join. We are particularly after trombones and low brass, but all instrumentalists welcome.

Please contact the bandmaster on [band.devonsomerset@aircadets](mailto:band.devonsomerset@aircadets) or joining the Facebook group at [www.facebook.com/groups/dswmf/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/dswmf/)



## A NEW ERA AT HONITON

On Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1064 (Honiton) Squadron were fortunate to be paid a visit from the Wing President Air Chief Marshall Sir Peter Squire. Escorted by the Wing Commander, Sir Peter inspected the Sqn staff and cadets before being given a tour of 1064. FS Neve and Woods presented information on what the Sqn have done over the past two years and our planned activities for the future. Other NCO's gave an insight into what cadets get up to on a regular night, including a first class session with FS Small. While at the Sqn Sir Peter presented SGT (ATC) Steve Keene with his Jubilee Medal; Sgt Neve was promoted to FS; and Cpl Branson received his Master Air Cadet badge. The biggest event of the evening was the Squadron command handover from WO Woods to Flt Lt Justin Felice. After two years of command all of us at 1064 would like to thank Chris for his hard work in running the Sqn after Flt Lt Sharp left for America in 2011 and we wish Chris luck in his role as Region Warrant Officer and Sqn Warrant Officer. Furthermore, good luck to Justin - may 2014 bring you and 1064 many great things.



## 914 ENROL SIX CADETS

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 914 Squadron enrolled six new cadets into the squadron. Parents were invited to the event and enjoyed the evening as it was a proud moment. The cadets have now taken their first step of their cadet career and all of them can not wait to get stuck into all the activities the Air Cadets have to offer.



## CONGRATULATIONS

Cadet Flight Sergeant Sam Liew, 1146 Barnstaple Squadron, was amazed when shown a master class of efficiency and "can do" attitude by Wing Commander Wills-Pope, straight after being interviewed by the Wing Commander for scholarship and promotion aspects. Sam was promoted that night to Cadet Warrant Officer. Sam has been impressive throughout his career in the ATC. Completing NCO courses, gliding scholarship, becoming a master cadet, and his ultimate accolade (although currently a work in progress) becoming a "Junior Leader", whilst being ever present at Squadron as the SNCO and effortlessly managing to juggle this with working and college work as well (even when broken and ill!!).



CWO Liew is a fine example of how an un-assuming individual with a subtle and discreet manner can go on to fulfil personal and squadron and even ATC goals. Sam is a unique leader and individual and has made this happen for himself. He has been supported in the background by the Squadron, with minimal input as he's that great (although he would be embarrassed if told that!). These attributes will benefit when he pushes himself to his next goal of becoming a pilot in Civvy street or the RAF world. He fully deserves making his dreams become reality.

## Cartoon Corner

(c) Gaz 2014

Visit the Gaz website to see many more cartoons, you never know you may be in one.....



## RAF CONCERT IS A SELL-OUT!

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December saw a full capacity audience at the annual fundraising concert featuring the Central Band of the Royal Air Force held at Millfield School concert hall. The concert is organised by 1955 (City of Wells) Sqn and Mid-Somerset RAFA. The band, as usual, was excellent, with a full and varied programme. It being so close to Christmas, the band donned Santa hats and had decorated their instruments for the second half.



Mid Somerset RAFA works with four squadrons in their area, and a cadet representative from each unit paraded their squadron banners as well as the RAFA standard. The cadets marched the standards on at the beginning of the concert to the newly composed RAFA march – a great sight.

For the first time, members of the Wing band were present at the event to perform a few pieces to the audience, as they waited to enter the concert hall. The Wing president, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, listened to them play before making several presentations to band members.

Highlights from the concert were the rousing rendition of “The Dambusters March” and an interesting performance of “All I Want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth”!

Following the concert, Flt Lt Blackburn remarked “I always enjoy the band playing The Dambusters March, but the screening of pictures from the movie during the performance added to the experience”.

Cadets were on hand to help with the collection at the end of the concert. Proceeds will be shared among charities who support troops returning from operations in Afghanistan.

## NEW REGION WARRANT OFFICER

I was asked to apply for the post of Region Warrant Officer, after WO Tonks stepped down due to ill health. When the phone then rang, and the Regional Commandant announced "congratulations" there was no one more surprised than I.

It now means that I have to reassess my Cadet priorities. I've already handed over command of 1064 Honiton to Flt Lt Justin Felice, who was originally going to be "just" the Wing D of E Officer. I'm not ashamed to say I'll miss running the Unit. It's a complex and demanding role so don't any of you get the impression that being CO is easy – if it looks that way you probably have a pretty good CO!

I'm hoping to stay connected with the Wing as the Wing's Training Warrant Officer – as training is one of my passions. All those of you who have attended courses at Chickerell, or spent time with me at Griffin over the years doing drill – or whatever – know that I love delivering training. I enjoy making it memorable for you in ways which maybe the school system does not quite allow, nor approve of !!

Whether a "career" above Region might follow – only time will tell. I have asked to be considered for the CACWO (Corps Warrant Officer) post, so we will all have to wait and see what comes about. In the meantime, I'm still planning furiously to make beds and classrooms available for a cadet training weekend in March, despite the best efforts of the Regular Army units to out-book us at Chickerell. Devious and alternative methods of securing beds and training space are being worked on even as you read this!

I look forward to a long and continued relationship with Devon & Somerset Wing – you are not my first Wing, but I feel more at home here with you than I have for a very long time elsewhere. Long live Devon & Somerset Wing!!



Chris Woods

RWO SW

## WHAT A WAY TO SPEND BOXING DAY

So how did you spend your Boxing Day morning? Maybe a bit of a lie in after all the excess of the previous day, perhaps playing with whatever presents you got for Christmas?

Well In Torquay around 50 people braved the icy chill of Torre Abbey Sands for the annual dip organised by the 200 (Torquay) Squadron Air Training Corps.

The cadets were joined in the water by not only their Squadron Staff but also the Chairman of Torbay Council. This year all the funds raised at the event will be split equally between the RNLI who kept a watchful eye on proceedings and the squadron funds.



## WING CONFERENCE 2014

Towards the end of January the Wing held it's annual conference at Chickerell. Instead of having to battle snow to get there, as we did last year; torrential rain and high winds were the order of the day.

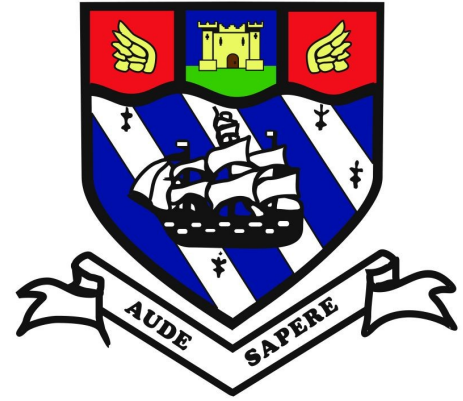
The weekend started on the Saturday with the second Senior NCOS and Warrant Officers Conference. It was pleasing to see that turnout had increased, however it was definitely not an equal split across the two Counties, with Devon being somewhat under represented. Hopefully next year this can be addressed. The day was very informative with plenty of opportunities for staff to raise their concerns with both the Wing Warrant Officer and the Wing Commander. The day came to a close, with a very thought provoking video produced by WO Bird. This reminded us of how important we all are and the difference we can make.

On the Sunday all the staff joined together for the main conference. As in previous years the Wing Commander and Wing Staff Officers provided information on achievements in the previous 12 months and also opportunities available in 2014. During the day we were also joined by the Regional Commandant and Regional Gliding Officer, to give their perspectives on highlights from the Region.

During the afternoon in a change to previous conferences we were joined by Derek Redmond. Derek as you may remember was part of the four by 400 metre British relay team which won Gold at the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo. This was a surprising win as on paper the Americans should have easily won, something they had been doing for many years previously.

Derek talked through his experience of this race: From how as a team they took what seemed to be a crazy change to the order of runners the night before the final, through to their experience on the day of the race and the race itself. How together they worked as a team to produce something that on paper should not have been achieved, that of winning Gold.

Afterwards Derek also talked about his experience at the 1992 Olympics where in the semi finals his hamstring snapped. He hobbled to a halt, and then fell to the ground in pain. Stretcher bearers made their way over to him, but Derek decided he wanted to finish the race. He began to hobble along the track. He was soon joined on the track by his father, Jim, who barged past security and on to the track to get to his son. Jim and Derek completed the lap of the track together, with Derek leaning on his father's shoulder for support. As they crossed the finish line, the crowd of 65,000 spectators rose to give Derek a standing ovation. However, as his father had helped him finish, Derek was officially disqualified and Olympic records state that he "Did Not Finish" the race. A truly inspiring athlete and a reminder to us all of what a can be achieved as a Team .



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IS PRODUCED BY THE MEDIA  
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM FOR DEVON AND  
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Devon & Somerset Air Training  
Corps would like to thank  
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for their continued support.

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BE SUNDAY 30 MARCH 2014