

The Haltonian Magazine

66 Edition

July 1953

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Unsurpassed performance in bomber interception and
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D E H A V I L L A N D



At the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and at the subsequent Review of the Royal Air Force by the Queen, Halton was well represented by contingents of apprentices whose smartness and steadiness have been the subject of much appreciative comment. Accounts of both these great events are to be found in this issue of the Magazine and our congratulations are due to those who so well upheld the tradition of the School. Their reward is no doubt the memories they will treasure of those stirring days. They have been fortunate to have had the privilege of participating in such displays of national fervour, set off by a degree of ritual and pageantry which, in these rather drab and humdrum times, cannot have failed to move the stoniest-hearted amongst us. Inevitably, we are now left with some sense of anticlimax, which the melancholy prospect of Autumn and the long drag of the term ahead do little to dispel. However, we know our friend the training timetable too well to imagine that it will be long before he has us firmly in his grasp once more, too busy to reflect, too harrassed to think, too tired to regret. Which, though we all have our grumbles, is just as well.

On this occasion it is not inappropriate to make some mention of the progress of the Magazine itself. Generally speaking, the position is satisfactory, but there is still more room for original contributions, especially from apprentices themselves, who, oddly enough, are anything but mute when it comes to criticising this particular weakness. Pleading, cajoling, bribing, browbeating, cursing, swearing, and all the other classic methods of getting one's fellow man to commit himself to writing having failed, too often one is left to the inglorious alternative of *ordering* contributions from apprentices. Here then is room for improvement, and we hope that every reader's heart (particularly those which beat under blue tunics with wheels on the arms) is moved to produce something for our February issue. Apart from this, we cannot grumble. Sales are good and improving, and our 'steadies,' particularly the indefatigable writers of notes, furnish their material with faithful punctuality. We are left hoping it is all read with an equal perseverance! The Old Haltonians' Section continues to flourish, though there are plenty of places still unrepresented. It is our own belief (especially as we should not have to organise it) that something like a Reunion Dinner would give a stimulus to morale in this direction; but there we are speaking out of our province. Lastly, the advertisers; these admirable folk on

whose financial support we so largely depend, do not often get the thanks they deserve, so it is with pleasure that we take the opportunity of expressing our gratitude to them.

The latter end of last term was overshadowed by the sudden death of the Principal Education Officer at Halton, Group Captain Norman Wood, O.B.E. An appreciation of his life and work may be found elsewhere in this issue. Here we extend our sympathy to his family in their bereavement and record the loss of a hand that had helped to guide the Education Branch of the Royal Air Force over a period of many years.

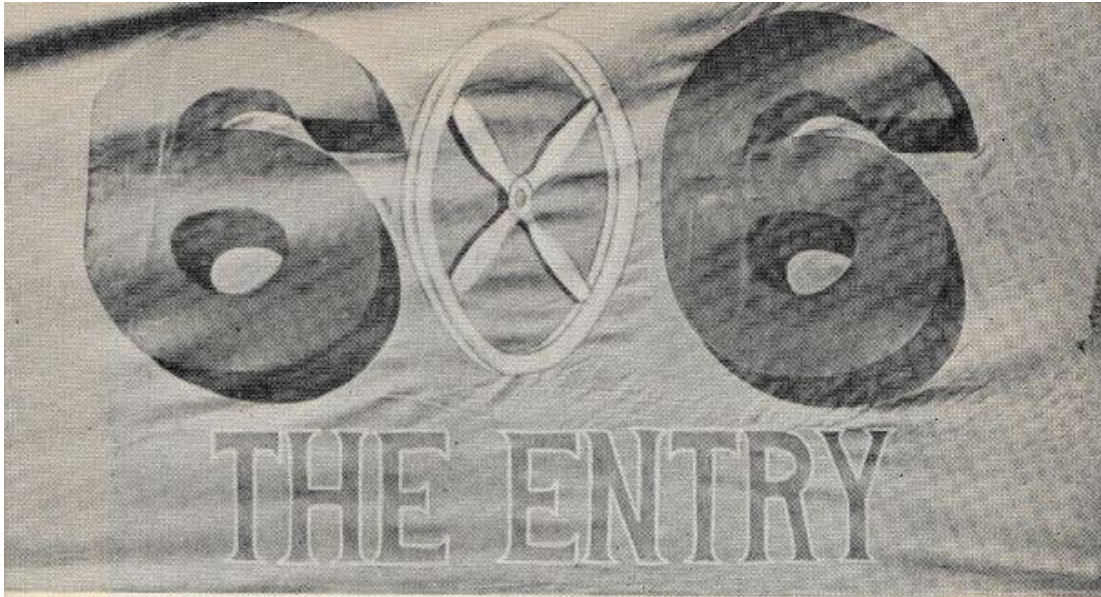
THINE IS THE KINGDOM

(This poem, by the late Group Captain Wood, was originally published in "Icarus, An Anthology of Flight." It is reproduced here by courtesy of Messrs. MacMillan and with the kind permission of Mrs. Wood.)

Swept from the ground by man-made power
I climb and soar, magnificent,
Triumphant for a short-lived hour,
Feeling like God, beneficent
Towards all petty mortal things
That move, earth-clogged, beneath my wings.

Alone in space illimitable,
I reign, a self-created king,
With territory inimitable,
Beyond the reach of ills that cling
To lesser men who only know
That narrow earth so far below.

But God himself, around, behind
Me moves, nor lets me e'er forget
That I am mortal, still confined
Within a sphere where death will yet
Prevail, and soon, if I should dare
Too much, or flout my friend, the air.



GRADUATION PARADE OF THE 66th ENTRY

The fine natural amphitheatre of the Henderson-Groves Square saw yet another Graduation Parade on July 24th when, in bright sunshine, the 66th Entry, under command of S/A/A Wells, were reviewed by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir William Dickson, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C.

Sir William was accompanied by Air Marshal Sir Victor E. Groom, K.C.V.O., K.B.E., C.B., D.F.C., Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Technical Training Command; Air Vice-Marshal J. G. Franks, C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding, No. 24 Group; Air Commodore J. G. W. Weston, C.B., O.B.E., Commanding R.A.F. Halton; Group Captain R. J. Carvell, Senior Training Officer, No. 1 School of Technical Training; Wing Commander Viscount Acheson, O.B.E., Officer Commanding No. 3 Apprentice Wing.

Entries on Parade were the 66th to 73rd. Parade appointments were as follows:

Colour Bearer: S/A/A G. A. Talbot
Colour Escort: C/A/A J. G. Darnell, C/A/A M. McConnell
Apprentice in charge of Junior Entries: S/A/A G. T. Milne
Parade Warrant Officer: S/A/A E. Benson
No. 1 Flight Commander: S/A/A D. King
No. 2 Flight Commander: S/A/A D. Stewart
Drum Major, Military Band: C/A/A R. S. Gaylor
Drum Major, Pipe Band: A/A D. May

Later, in the Burnett Gymnasium, the Commandant, after welcoming the Chief of the Air Staff, read his report on the 66th Entry before a large audience.



A combined total of 125 British and Pakistani Apprentices were graduating at a generally very satisfactory standard. In particular, the Airframe and Electrical Fitters were well above the average for previous entries, and the Armament Fitters did much better in educational subjects than their trade usually does. Thirty-seven per cent. of the Entry obtained the Ordinary National Certificate in Engineering—a figure slightly above the usual. The Entry did well in General Service Training, especially in Ground Combat, while in Sport their standard has been very high. Twenty-five apprentices gained School Colours and some did very well outside the School sports—for example, A/A Haynes represented Technical Training Command in the Two Mile Walk and S/A/A De Ste Croix won the Apprentices' and Boy Entrants' Foil Championships 1953.

A NEW TROPHY

During his speech the Commandant also referred to two matters affecting the School in general. There have been changes and modifications in the educational syllabuses to enable apprentices who are capable of it to achieve a higher standard than before.

The R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. Ex-Boys' Association have presented a Trophy, to be available by December, for the apprentice in the Graduating Entry who is judged to have achieved the highest standard in technical training. This is in memory of the time spent by members of the Association in the old North Camp.

THE CHIEF OF AIR STAFF'S SPEECH

After presenting the prizes mentioned in the list below, Air Chief Marshal Dickson addressed the 66th Entry. Having congratulated them on their parade he went on to reflect upon the great events of this year, and especially the Coronation Review of the Royal Air Force at Odiham. Everybody who saw it felt proud, not only of the Royal Air Force, but also of their country. "The Review at Mildenhall by the late King George VI was an immense undertaking, but this was far bigger and



The Commandant making his report on the 66th Entry

far more masterly in organisation of every detail, precision of every movement on the parade and on the ground generally, and their fly-past in the air, and keenness and spirit shown by everyone, had the hall-mark of efficiency. In fact, as we all know, there is a much wider efficiency than we saw that day. It really was the culmination of the work of a whole generation, of devoted effort, and devotion to duty."

The Royal Air Force now has a tradition, gained in two World Wars, and whenever one thinks of the horrors of future warfare, one sees how much the people of this country look to it for safety. Just now "the principle of the R.A.F. is so to demonstrate its efficiency that the enemy should know and should think twice about going to war, and, having thought twice very carefully, should decide against it." The 66th and the apprentices who follow them will have the great responsibility of helping to maintain the Force of Peace—and they will be well able to bear it.

AN AIM IN LIFE

Here at Halton a sound education is given to every apprentice—an education which will be of permanent value to him. Now, the 66th will be able to make use of it if they set themselves an aim in life and always strive for it.

The great thing is never to allow Halton standards to drop. "You are going out in the Service now," he went on, "going to meet all sorts, including a large number of National Service airmen—some better than you—but most of whom have not had the chance you have had. Those who have not had the same chance will tend to bring you down to their standards. We look to you to keep your standard up, to keep your aim high, to maintain your enthusiasm. It is so easy to lose your keenness."

Finally, Sir William gave a special word of encouragement to the Pakistan apprentices and concluded by wishing good fortune to the whole Entry.

So the audience moved out of the Gymnasium to see the various points of interest in the School and prepared themselves for the celebrations which rounded off the 66th's three years of training at Halton.

CADETSHIPS

S/A/A Talbot

Shaftesbury Grammar

PRIZE-WINNERS

Monsignor Beauchamp Prize (for the Best All-Round Apprentice)

F/S/A/A Wells

Spalding Grammar

Highest in Order of Merit, All Subjects

S/A/A Benson

Wintringham Grammar, Grimsby

Highest in Order of Merit, General Service Efficiency

F/S/A/A Wells

Spalding Grammar

S/A/A King

Rochester Technical

Highest in Order of Merit, Educational Subjects

S/A/A Benson

Wintringham Grammar, Grimsby

C/A/A Collins

Marr College

Highest in Order of Merit, T.S. Practical Fitting Test (and Winner of Crebbin Robinson Cup)

A/A Brooks

Stockton Technical Institute

Highest Average for Practical Fitting Tests Over 3 Years Course

L/A/A Marker

Frays College, Uxbridge

Highest in Order of Merit, General Studies

(and Winner of Elliott Memorial Prize presented by Royal Aeronautical Society)

A/A Mallen

Berwick Grammar

Highest Pakistan Apprentice in Order of Merit (Winner of Azhar Trophy)

A/A Syed

Highest Ex. A.T.C. Cadet in Order of Merit (Winner of Quinton Trophy)

A/A Laurie

South-East Essex Technical

Best Tradesmen in T.S. Test

Airframe Fitter F/S/A/A Wells

Spalding Grammar

Engine Fitter C/A/A Hannam

Weymouth Grammar

Armament Fitter S/A/A Benson

Wintringham Grammar, Grimsby

Electrical Fitter (Air) L/A/A Chatfield

Charlton (Central) Secondary

Electrical Fitter (Grd) C/A/A Unwin

Brampton Ellis Modern

Instrument Fitter (Nav) L/A/A Marker

Frays College, Uxbridge

Instrument Fitter (Gen) S/A/A Stuart

Hastings Grammar

Sergeants

De Ste Croix

Southall Technical

Stuart

Hastings Grammar

Benson

Wintringham Grammar, Grimsby

Sturgess

Bitterne Grammar

Talbot

Shaftesbury Grammar

176 King

Rochester Technical

66th ENTRY POSTING LIST (in order of merit)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Benson, E. | Binbrook | Darnell, J. G. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Wells, F. | Binbrook | Davies, R. D. | 52 M.U. St. Athan |
| Talbot, G. A. | Cadetship | Sergeant, B. | Waddington |
| Wall, D. E. | Henlow | Goulding, D. L. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Laurie, R. I. | Scampton | Gaylor, R. S. | Bassingbourne |
| Collins C. R. | Henlow | Marker, J. | Lynham |
| George, C. F. | Horsham St Faith | De-Ste-Croix, R. A. | Linton-on-Ouse |
| Hannam, M. J. | 39 M.U. Colerne | Enstone, J. A. | Waddington |
| Sturgess, R. F. | Topcliffe | Gostick, A. L. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Stuart, D. J. | B.C.S.B. Lindholme | Collen, W. A. | Rufforth |
| Brodie, D. | 39 M.U. Colerne | Mallen, A. | 45 M.U. Kinloss |
| Swain, J. A. | 39 M.U. Colerne | Dallas, R. E. | Aldergrove |
| Hogarth, P. W. F. | 32 M.U. St. Athan | Unwin, B. | Topcliffe |



Prizewinners of the 66th Entry

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| King, D. | Binbrook | Beames, B. J. | South Cerney |
| Goodacre, P. M. | Waterbeach | Cook, C. S. | Lindholme |
| Pollock, J. | Topcliffe | Walton, B. C. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Stevens, E. S. | Waddington | Monk, K. L. | Lyneham |
| Simpson, E. G. | Little Rissington | Reeves, G. W. M. | Topcliffe |
| Brooks, A. T. | Dishforth | Farley, P. W. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Campbell, A. C. | Lyneham | Mason, T. J. C. | Topcliffe |
| Davies, M. J. | South Cerney | Phillips, T. | 49 M.U. Colerne |
| Devall, D. C. | 32 M.U. St. Athan | Tickner, J. W. | 45 M.U. Kinloss |
| Neal, G. J. | B.C.A.M.S. Binbrook | Clark, J. R. | Lyneham |
| Cooper, J. D. W. | Lindholme | Grierson, I. R. | Benson |
| Freeman, P. G. | 32 M.U. St. Athan | Lazarus, P. A. | Hendon |
| Bartrop, R. W. | Binbrook | Davison, J. P. | 7 F.T.S. Cottesmore |
| King, E. G. | 39 M.U. Colerne | Stevens, M. | Topcliffe |
| McConnell, M. | Hendon | Burchell, D. J. | 39 M.U. Colerne |
| French, A. G. | B.C.A.M.S. Binbrook | Bairstow, A. | Leconfield |
| Jones, K. J. R. | 45 M.U. Kinloss | Goatham, J. R. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Guthrie, T. E. | 32 M.U. St. Athan | Seddon, M. R. | Leuchars |
| Peeling, T. E. H. | 39 M.U. Colerne | Kerley, J. W. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Leale, R. | 45 M.U. Kinloss | Lawson, T. Mc G. | Lyneham |
| Usher, A. W. | Aldergrove | Moore, B. A. W. | 39 M.U. Colerne |
| Mallett, B. R. G. | 49 M.U. Colerne | Porter, M. E. J. | Ballykelly |
| Turvey, D. M. | Lindholme | Chapron, R. J. | Pembroke Dock |
| Kidd, A. W. | 40 M.U. Rufforth | McKay, R. | Hendon |
| Watts, D. | 7 F.T.S. Cottesmore | Boyle, J. | Bassingbourne |
| Southwell, F. A. | St. Eval | Newman, K. W. | Little Rissington |
| Edwards, P. B. | 63 M.U. Edzal | May, D. E. J. | Lyneham |
| Gilmore, I. J. | Henlow | Tolley, F. | Aldergrove |
| Heath, F. P. | 45 M.U. Kinloss | Adams, I. S. | Hendon |
| Cussell, P. J. | 49 M.U. Colerne | Bowen, J. H. | Topcliffe |
| Epton, D. J. | Lindholme | Holyer, F. C. S. | Scampton |
| Holloway, T. A. D. | Bassingbourne | Abraham, B. L. | 45 M.U. Kinloss |
| Waters, J. | Rufforth | Gascoigne, G. R. | 39 M.U. Colerne |
| Daniels, J. F. | 32 M.U. St. Athan | Jones, D. R. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Gowan, H. T. | Rufforth | Ratcliff, G. | Leconfield |
| Neate, A. G. | Hendon | Kay, L. | Kinloss |
| Jarvis, G. H. | 45 M.U. Kinloss | Taylor, A. | Benson |
| Chatfield, R. C. | 7 F.T.S. Cottesmore | MacDonald, I. S. | 32 M.U. St. Athan |
| Mercer, B. G. | | Snow, R. | Kinloss |
| Smith, T. E. | | Latham, D. | 7 F.T.S. Cottesmore |

The following ex-65th (May 1950) Entry also Qualified as Junior Technicians

| | | | |
|---------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Brooks, G. | Lyneham | Lach, T. J. | Lyneham |
| Ducker, R. L. | Pembrey | Simpson, G. M. | Pembroke Dock |
| Knight, J. A. | Henlow | | |

ROYAL PAKISTAN AIR FORCE

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Syed, Z. M. | Naqvi, S. M. | Mirza, M. I. | Sheikh, A-U-R. |
| Shms-ul-Huda, K. M. | Jaffar, S. M. | Choudhry, S. H. | Khan, A-L. |
| Siddiqi, M. A. | Khawaja, A. A. | Sadiq, M. | |
| Sheikh, A. | Shamim, H. O. | Aziz-Ul-Haque, M. | |

OUR PART IN THE CORONATION

As 1953 dawned, a thought in the minds of all British subjects was "this is Coronation Year." It had an especial significance for Halton as only six months previously we had been honoured by a visit from Her Majesty when she presented the Colour to the Apprentice School and we were wondering whether we would be called on to play some part in the Coronation. We had not long to wait.

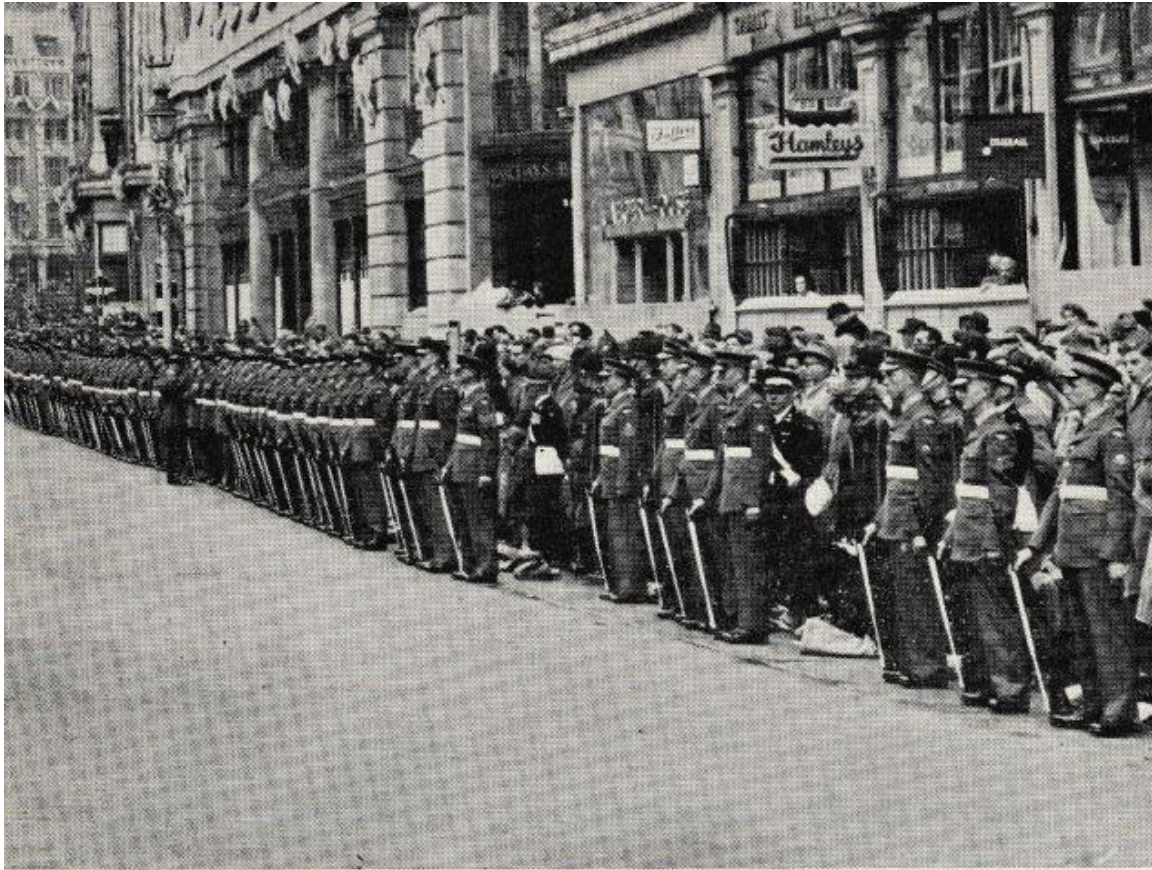
On 27th January we were told that we were to provide one officer, 29 N.C.O.s and airmen, 45 apprentices and the Apprentices' Military Band and Colour to form part of the Route Lining Force. Also two airwomen were to take part in the State Procession from Westminster Abbey. Later, I was selected to command No. 4 Wing of the Route Lining Force which would include the Halton contingents.

The R.A.F. Route Lining Force was representative of all home commands and comprised six wings divided into squadrons and flights. No. 4 Wing consisted of No. 15 Squadron (Apprentices and Boys), No. 16 Squadron (personnel from 22 Group units), No. 17 Squadron (personnel from 24 Group units), No. 18 Squadron (personnel from 27 Group units) and the Halton Apprentices' Military Band. We were to line the major part of Regent Street and would be required to be in position from 0930 hours until about 1700 hours with at least 45 minutes continuously at attention and 15 minutes at the "present." It was obvious that we would require rigorous training to fit ourselves for such a test of physical endurance and to reach a standard of drill fitting to the occasion.

On 13th April we started training with a daily programme of two hours' drill and one hour's P.T. and games. It was tough but enthusiasm was high and in a very short time our arms drill was "as good as the Guards," we could endure long periods at "attention" and we were undertaking route marches of 8 miles. The sisters from P.M.R.A.F. Hospital and the selected airwomen of the station trained alongside us. Their keenness was outstanding.

The preliminary training passed quickly and on 14th May we moved to R.A.F. Cardington for two weeks' full-time training. There No. 4 Wing was formed; the apprentices became 'A' Flight of No. 15 Squadron and training started in earnest—arms drill, foot drill, route marches, stamina drill, crowd control drill, P.T. and games day after day. Ostensibly not very interesting, it was freed from boredom by the marked enthusiasm shown throughout by everyone. Also at Cardington, the Wing was fitted and issued with the new T.63 uniforms—and very proud of them we were. During our stay we were inspected by the Commander-in-Chief and by the Air Officer Commanding, No. 22 Group, and had a visit from the Press. An informal visit by our own Commandant was very much appreciated by all from Halton.

Two weeks is not long when you are busy and early on the morning of 28th May, we entrained for the R.A.F. Coronation Camp in Kensington Gardens. The railway station at Cardington was about half-a-mile from the apprentices' accommodation and kits had to be carried. It was enlightening to see young apprentices struggling manfully with a kitbag, a rifle, a carton containing a T.63 uniform, another carton containing a T.63 hat, four blankets and a ground sheet. They arrived all complete but some of the methods adopted, although displaying a fine team spirit, would have aroused envy in Heath Robinson.



On my final tour of inspection, it was with some chagrin that I noticed the letters "15 SQDN" in white paint high up the chimney of a bath-house. Special paint had been supplied from Command for use on ceremonial belts and I was a little uncertain how higher authority would react to its use in advertising the apprentices' squadron. To my relief, the Station Commander's sense of humour prevailed—even at 0630 hours.

Kensington Gardens was a tented camp bordering Bayswater Road. Naturally, we had all hoped for fine weather here but most of our stay was cold and wet. This restricted training but we completed the essential parts of the programme. Coronation Day dawned cloudy and cold. Slowly the time for parade drew near and with it the rain clouds. Would we have to hide our fine new uniforms under inadequate ground sheets? Yes—ground sheets to be worn. A disappointment but unavoidable. So off we marched with the Band proudly in the lead over the start-line at 0930 precisely to be greeted with loud acclaim by the assembled public as we wheeled into East Carriage Drive. To continuous waves of cheering, we marched through the Marble Arch, along Oxford Street, and with our unbuttoned ground-sheets giving us "a certain élan" (according to one newspaper) into Regent Street where we took up position. Time—approximately 1000 hours.

With the friendly, happy banter of the crowds behind us and with plenty to watch (particularly the cocktail parties in the buildings opposite—and we were not really envious), time passed quickly enough and soon the N.A.A.F.I. trollies were moving down the lines handing out the sandwich lunches. This caused some speculation among the public who had appreciated our drill and no doubt were wondering whether we would "eat by numbers." The orders of one flight commander who had

sensed the questioning air were "Flight, attention—ground arms—stand at ease—(pause)—EAT!" All consumed their rations with real good humour despite the fact that as I walked along the lines, I was asked light-heartedly whether the rolls had been left over from the last coronation! It was fair comment. But soon the N.A.A.F.I. trollies were coming back collecting the empty cartons and we were ready to acknowledge the Crowning of Her Majesty at about 1230 hours on hearing the first of a 41-gun salute from Hyde Park.

Afterwards we were able to relax again. During this period we had planned to have the band marching up and down the wing but except for a short spell heavy rain prevented this. As 1515 hours approached ground sheets were removed. Almost immediately the heavy rain changed to a light drizzle and an air of expectancy could be felt as furtive glances were made towards Oxford Circus. The Colour, which had been unfurled only for the Crowning of Her Majesty, was again unfurled and we were ready to receive the State Procession, the head of which appeared round Oxford Circus at about 1540 hours. Our real test was about to begin. Would we complete it in this cold, damp atmosphere without casualty? As the head of the procession neared, the Wing came to attention—a position we were to hold for at least 45 minutes, a longish time!

Past us filed an array of brilliant ever-changing colour—the Armed Forces, the Colonial Rulers (here we came to the "slope"), the Prime Ministers, the Princes and Princesses of the Blood Royal (here we came to the "present"), the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, Her Majesty's Procession and then the magnificent State Coach carrying Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh. Fifty minutes of splendid pageantry and then, in so short a time it seemed, it was over and not one casualty





in the Wing. But one small incident. Orders had been given that nothing must hold up the progress of Her Majesty and that if any carriage broke down, it was to be manhandled off the route and up any side street speedily. A carriage containing Royalty halted within the flight of Halton apprentices and could not get going again aided. Would the apprentices act spontaneously and without shouted orders?

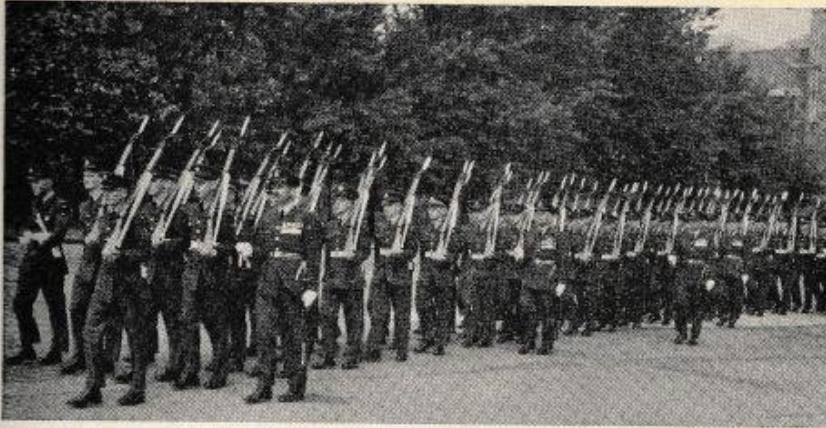
Lord Trenchard's Coach on the way to the Abbey
Calmly and without fuss about six quickly grounded arms, got the coach moving and smartly fell back into position. The procession went on its way with no ill-effect upon the progress of the Queen's carriage some distance behind.

And so a rather damp but proud Wing marched its way to the strains of our band through the retreating crowds to Kensington Gardens. Only spasmodic cheering this time but our step was sprightly, despite a little stiffness, from the inward glow of a job loyally done. The T.63 uniforms were paraded proudly in London that night. J.W.T.

(All photographs by courtesy of Air Ministry Photographic Reproductions Branch.)



The Halton Apprentices' Military Band in Regent Street



The Apprentice and Boy Entrant Squadron Marches on Parade

HALTON AT THE R.A.F. REVIEW

Did those who actually saw the Royal Air Force Review, either at Odiham, on the television, or later in the news reels realise the amount of strenuous training, combined effort, and personal pride that went to make the ceremonial march-past a credit to the Royal Air Force?

The conditions for training were possibly the most difficult ever experienced, for personnel were drawn from all units to form squadrons to represent Commands. Our own particular effort was to send four N.C.O. Apprentices and seventeen Aircraft Apprentices to help form No. 12 Squadron, the Apprentices' and Boy Entrants' Squadron. The Apprentices selected to represent No. 1 School of Technical Training were drawn from No. 1 Squadron, 1(A) Wing, members of the 68th Entry, and were put under the command of Flt.Lt. R. L. Ramsey and Flt.Lt. W. R. Simpson, D.F.C., for one week prior to departure to R.A.F. Uxbridge, on 15th June, 1953.

At Uxbridge No. 12 Squadron was formed from representatives of R.A.F. Locking, St. Athan, Cosford, and Yatesbury. S/A/A J. R. Lees acted as Squadron Warrant Officer. Training started in earnest on the day after arrival and final selection for all squadrons was made within a week. At first the ceremonial rehearsals were performed with the Band of the Women's Royal Air Force but as the time for the actual Parade approached the Central and Regional Bands came to R.A.F. Uxbridge and formed the Massed Bands of the Royal Air Force.

Although the training was intense there were moments of laughter such as the time when a terrific downpour started as the dummy Colour was being marched on. The Band had to dive for cover as the best instruments were on parade, the Colour Party stopped undecided, and so Group Captain Ford, O.B.E., officer in command, roared out "Carry on marching—we'll all whistle your music!"

Prior to the actual day three rehearsals were carried out at Odiham. This meant a 55-vehicle convoy leaving Uxbridge in the early hours of the morning and returning the same day from Odiham. After these rehearsals the airmen had a chance to see the static parade and a rehearsal of the fly-past. In this rehearsal Sqn.Ldr. Neville Duke broke the sound barrier in his Hawker Hunter. This was an unexpected thrill, and gave quite a shock to some airmen resting after the parade.

The great day arrived and with all personnel keyed up we again made the journey by road from Uxbridge. The party changed into their T.63 (special uniforms) at Odiham, and by then the tense air of expectation was felt by all concerned. Dark clouds rolled up and we feared rain, but just before we formed up in the hangar the sun broke through.

The march was executed perfectly, with precision that the Guards could have been proud of. A fanfare was sounded by six Apprentice Trumpeters from Halton and the Royal Standard was broken. The moment we had all waited for had arrived. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Duke of Edinburgh mounted the dais. The Royal Salute was given, and it is with pride that all participating remember the distinctive crashes of the "Present Arms" when the Parade worked as one man.

Her Majesty then inspected the entire parade on foot and asked several questions about the Apprentice and Boy Entrant Squadrons before returning to the dais. The March Past followed the Advance in Review Order and all members of the Royal Air Force can be proud of the turnout, bearing, and standard of drill shown by the airmen, airwomen, apprentices, and boy entrants representing them.

There was not one person who could say that the training, the hours on parade, the soakings by rain had not been well repaid by the final day when we were able to march past our Queen as a Force that she would always be proud of—just as we in turn would always be proud of the uniform we wore and the Queen and country we serve.

R.L.R.



School Notes

On the 20th July, 1953, the School was shocked to learn that the Principal Education Officer, Group Captain Norman Wood, O.B.E., had died suddenly. An appreciation of his work by the Director of Educational Services, Royal Air Force, follows these notes. The School staff tenders its sympathy to his family in their great loss.

The 66th Entry has now entered the larger world of the Royal Air Force. Our best wishes go with them in their fuller life. The Entry acquitted itself well in the final examination in Educational subjects and gained 30 Ordinary National Certificates, including 9 distinctions out of 41 candidates who were presented. One apprentice was awarded a cadetship. Congratulations to the armament fitters of the Entry. At long last their trade has emerged with the highest average mark—indeed the only apprentice to obtain an A1 educational pass was an armament fitter, E. Benson. We hope this is the shape of things to come and that armourers of succeeding Entries will continue to assail the proud position so long held by others.

By the time this Magazine is printed, the 67th Entry will have completed their Final Examination in Educational Subjects. The Entry has worked hard during the final year and deserves any success which may come its way. The 68th, 69th and 70th Entries will now have to give of their best to emulate the results achieved by their predecessors. Considerable promise has been shown in the Intermediate Examination by the 71st Entry, and we hope by the time this is in print the same can be said about the 72nd. It is perhaps too early to appraise the progress of the junior Entries, 73rd and 74th. Although the testing time for them is still some way ahead we urge them to get down to some serious study now instead of leaving everything to the last minute.

A new system of educational training, affecting all Entries from the 71st onwards was introduced during June. At the end of the first year of training apprentices now proceed to either (a) an advanced course of instruction, or (b) the normal course of instruction. Most of them who complete the advanced course are expected to qualify for the Ordinary National Certificate in Engineering. The normal course may lead to selected apprentices taking the City and Guilds of London Institute Examinations. To be eligible for training in the advanced syllabus a candidate must do well in the Intermediate Examination. Apprentices who do not reach the prescribed standards will be trained in the normal syllabus. This seems the time and place to remind apprentices that any worthwhile diploma, be it National Certificate or City and Guilds, can only be won by sustained effort throughout the three years of training and they must be prepared to put in serious study of School subjects in their leisure hours.

We are happy to welcome Wg.Cdr. G. W. Whittaker, D.S.O., no stranger to Halton, who takes over the appointment of Wing Education Officer No. 2 Wing. We also welcome Sqn.Ldr. Smith who has joined the staff as Officer i/c Electrical and Instrument Science filling the gap left by Flt.Lt. Gilbert and Flt.Lt. Wilson. Flt.Lt. Gilbert now holds a civilian appointment in Pakistan and his many admirers will wish him good luck in his new venture, while Flt.Lt. Wilson takes with him our best wishes for his success in the new post in the Technical Branch he is filling at the R.A.F. Technical College, Henlow. Flt.Lt. E. A. Short has also left us

after the expiry of his term of service. He will be missed by the apprentices for whose sport he did so much, and by the Halton Magazine Staff on which he held the post of Sports Editor.

The School had its share of staffing and other difficulties during the Summer Term, but despite the rocks and shoals, the broad stream of instruction flows steadily on.



OBITUARY

GROUP CAPTAIN

NORMAN WOOD

Group Captain Norman Wood, O.B.E., Ph.D., M.A., F.R.Hist.S., who died suddenly at Halton on the morning of 20th July last, had been Principal Education Officer of No. 1 School of Technical Training since October, 1949. Although his health had been impaired during recent years, his death came without warning while he was discussing with a colleague the result of a recent apprentices' cricket match. He was buried with military honours in the

Halton village churchyard, within a short distance of the School where both began and ended his long career of service with the Royal Air Force.

Group Captain Wood was born in 1893 and took an honours degree in Modern History at Armstrong College, University of Durham. During the first world war he was commissioned in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, retiring from the Army with the rank of captain. He obtained the further degree of Ph.D. (London) in 1928.

Joining the R.A.F. Educational Service in January 1924 he was posted first to Halton where he taught History and English in the Apprentices School. Later he held a variety of instructional and administrative posts, including those of Senior Education Officer on the formation at Ruislip of the Apprentice Clerks School (now the Administrative Apprentices Training School), Command Education Officer, Fighter Command and Lecturer in History at the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell. Whilst Command Education Officer at Fighter Command he had taken a part in working out the plans for the interception of enemy aircraft which were operated during the Battle of Britain, and when war broke

out in 1939 he was immediately transferred to Headquarters, No. 12 Group where, in the rank of Wing Commander R.A.F.V.R., he served on the Air Staff (Operations). He was mentioned in Dispatches in March 1941 and January 1944 received the award of the O.B.E. With the end of the war in sight he went as group captain to the Air Ministry to assist in planning the scheme of Educational and Vocational Training (E.V.T.) which was being prepared to assist the resettlement of wartime personnel on their return to civilian life. He later held appointments in the Directorate of Educational Services, Air Ministry, before his posting to Halton as Principal Education Officer in 1949. At the time of his death he was the senior group captain in the Education Branch and was shortly due for retirement.

Norman Wood was one of the small group of Education Officers who, coming into the Service in the early 1920s, played a major part in shaping the educational system of the R.A.F. For all but 30 years, with an interval of Air Staff duty during the war, he co-operated in the task of creating and maintaining in the Royal Air Force an educational structure based on liberal principles and governed in its aims by sound professional standards. He was an able scholar, a good teacher and an efficient and painstaking administrator.

He possessed a clear logical mind and was not easily persuaded to deviate from the conclusions to which it led him. Where, in matters of principle, his professional convictions were engaged, he was not readily susceptible to compromise: his preference was to follow the course of action he judged to be right rather than one which might have invited fewer difficulties. He frankly and cheerfully agreed that he was not always what is called "an easy man to work with" and indeed he would not have regarded such a description as a worthy epitaph. Those who knew him best valued and respected the integrity which inspired his always sincere attitude of mind.

In his personal relationships he was friendly and unassuming, always ready to help and to appreciate the difficulties of others. While he looked for a high standard of endeavour and of conduct in his subordinates, he was equally ready to encourage and support them, and to defend their interests should the need arise. All who worked with him, whatever their rank, learnt to appreciate his unfailing courtesy of manner and his unruffled composure, even when he deemed it necessary to express his views without equivocation. He liked others to speak forthrightly and without disguise, as he was prepared to do himself.

Group Captain Wood's death is a loss to the Service, and in particular to his Branch and to Halton where his keen interest in the progress and well-being of the apprentices was always in evidence. His ripe experience and balanced judgment, the products of so many years of varied service, will be hard to replace. He was an able and conscientious officer, a loyal colleague and, to many who had known and worked with him for over a quarter of a century, a firm and trusted friend.

To his family, who have suffered so tragic a loss on the eve of his retirement, all at Halton and his friends and colleagues throughout the Royal Air Force will wish to extend their sincerest sympathy.

C.L.M.B.



SUMMER CAMP

(R.A.F. WOODVALE, FORMBY, LANCASHIRE)

This year we have received accounts of Summer Camp from two of those who attended it—C/A/A Ettridge (69th) and C/A/A Hutchings (71st)—and we give their impressions below.

With the aid of the Entry Band we easily mastered the trek to Tring Station and we were soon on our way to Summer Camp. On arrival we were allotted out tents and we collected our kit and stored our rifles in the armoury. The 68th Entry from Locking was also at the camp and made the fatal mistake of displaying an Entry banner on the first night. Within minutes it was in shreds and evenly distributed throughout the 69th Entry.

Training was naturally organised by the Regiment—delightful people—who thought up such interesting pastimes as crawling through sand with a rifle wrapped round one's neck, or digging trenches which they glibly told us to fill in again as soon as we had finished them. Shooting on the ranges was another aspect of training enjoyed by all—especially when we used the Brens with which we hit everything except the target and, unfortunately, the sergeant. There was also a night-op which meant getting from A to B within a certain area without being seen or caught. This got a bit disorganised and ended up in a mild free-for-all between the opposing factions. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Sport was played in the evenings, and although we lost our athletes and cricketers because of School matches, we were only just beaten by Locking in the competitions.

The camp was rounded off with a day manoeuvre during which thousands of rounds of blank ammunition and thunderflashes were let off in wild abandon. We all enjoyed this, except a few whose lunch overturned in the fire.

We returned to Halton tired and broke, but feeling it was great fun, despite the rain and flooded tents.

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It was with mixed feelings that we of the 71st Entry surveyed the uniform rows of khaki tents that were slowly gliding past the train windows as we drew into the station at Freshfield. So this was the camp that had been the subject of so much anticipation and speculation! This was

the place where we so fondly imagined we would be able to run wild for ten days. Alas! R.A.F. Woodvale, however remote it may have been still came under Queen's Regulations.

We were soon introduced to Sqn.Ldr. A. D. G. Jordan who was Officer Commanding Apprentices' Summer Camp and, after welcoming us to his domain he gave us a brief lecture on discipline and hygiene. He did not say much but, as several of us found out to our cost, he meant all he said.

Then we were divided into our squadrons, handed over to the R.A.F. Regiment Corporals responsible for us, and left to ourselves for the remainder of the day. After stowing our kit in the customary manner we explored the camp surroundings. Bounding the North of the camp ran the Liverpool-Southport electric railway which ran at regular noisy intervals, as we discovered to our disgust during that first restless night. To the South ran the perimeter track of the airfield, and several hundred yards to the East and West constituted the remainder of our area of freedom: to go outside camp bounds we had to book out at the Guard Tent.

At first sight the ablutions took the wind out of our sails. In order to have hot water in the morning we had to fill an angry looking boiler with water from a large open tank, and contrive to obtain heat energy from ungainly pieces of damp wood that usually refused to enter the "furnace" at the bottom of the boiler and which would not burn even when they did enter. We performed our toilet at wooden tables in full



The Ablutions!

view of the icy winds and of the railway. I will take any odds on the fact that the frequenters of this railway used to catch early trains purely for the enjoyment to be had out of watching semi-nude apprentices painfully scraping stubborn bristles with "safety" razors in water that formed icicles of blood as it trickled down sore chins.

There were five squadrons of us there—three from Halton and two from Locking. Inter-squadron competition was keen, though not half as intense as inter-camp rivalry turned out to be. This was a pity really, at least for us, for if we from Halton had concentrated more on the inter-squadron sports, and less on conjecturing how we might get the better of our counterparts from Locking, we might have had greater success on the sports field. I congratulate Locking on defeating us hands down. No. 4 Squadron (Locking) were first in the inter-squadron competition, with No. 5 Squadron (Locking) second, and No. 1 Squadron (Halton) a close third.



The Pleasure Beach, Southport

full uniform from the stern of a small yacht, through attempting to be in two boats at one time.

Though we were not there long there will remain indelible imprints in the memories of many Southport maidens of the dashing young "air-cadets" from Halton. Not the least of these will be those of a certain boat-load of girls who witnessed one of our Rhodesian friends taking a dip in the boating lake in

The days sailed rapidly by leaving in their wake many happy memories; memories of fieldcraft in the golf-links; of night manoeuvres and bren-firing; of sun-bathing and of baling out waterlogged tents. We remember the hair-raising experience of the speeding "bath-waggon" and the fun we had fighting gorse fires. Among the many souvenirs is a photograph, unfortunately unfit for publication, of a prominent member of No. 1 Squadron in the suit his mother gave him for a birthday present. We also 'affectionately' remember Flight Sergeant Lucas's notorious tin-room where several minor criminals whiled away many happy hours.

On the final day, after we had struck our tents and tidied up the area, we marched cheerily to the station to the skirl of the pipes, played by A/A Honeyman. We were not a little sorry to say goodbye to R.A.F. Woodvale but we had one consolation. The earwigs had at last come into their own and would not have to sleep with apprentices again—at least not for another year.



The 70th Entry in Camp

Visit to B.O.A.C. Maintenance Base, London Airport, on 8th July, 1953

The party of 35 from Halton arrived at No. 1 Hangar, our rendezvous, where we met our guides. We were asked to split into three parties, and strangely enough, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Wings were just about equally represented, so for the remainder of the day we were identified by our guides as the "Red," "Blue" and "Yellow" parties. The guides explained that the Corporation's strength of approximately 75 aircraft is divided into three fleets according to type and route. These are Hermes and Argonaut comprising one fleet, Stratocruisers and Constellations the second and Comets the third. Each party visited each fleet in turn, changing over at pre-arranged times, so by following the fortunes of one party, the "Yellows" in this case, the whole visit can be covered.

We were conducted to the "Argonaut" hangar by Mr. Timmins, an ex-apprentice of one of the early Cranwell entries, who kept us entertained by his lively description of his experiences as an engineer during the early pioneering days with Imperial Airways, when the old Empire Routes were being developed.

The Argonaut Hangar is under the control of Mr. Keogh, another ex-Halton apprentice. Mr. Keogh explained that the Argonaut is in actual fact a Douglas D.C.4 aircraft, which was modified by Canadair Ltd. to take the Merlin 620 Engine in place of the original Pratt and Whitney power Unit. The modified aircraft was designated the D.C. 4M, by Canadair, Trans-Canada Airlines call it the "North Star," and B.O.A.C. the "Argonaut." An interesting characteristic of the aircraft is the "cross over" exhaust system, whereby the exhaust ejectors from the inboard blocks of the four engines are taken across the top of the engines to the outboard blocks. This considerably reduces the noise level in the passenger compartment.

The work carried out in this hangar is known as a "Check 4," carried out after 600 hours' flying. During each of these checks a certain section of the aeroplane is completely overhauled. This work is progressive, so after a specified number of these checks the aircraft has been completely overhauled, including engine changes. The engines are returned to the makers for overhaul.

We then adjourned for lunch. After lunch we boarded our coach for a rather long ride to the other side of the Airport to visit the Comet fleet. Mr. Bede, another ex-Halton apprentice, met us when we arrived. He showed us over one of the aircraft, starting from the flight deck and working through to the passenger compartment. The fleet is very small, consisting at present of only seven aircraft. Mr. Bede said, that although the aircraft were actually in service, the technique of operating and servicing them is still being developed. The aircraft is operating at speeds and altitudes which have never before been attempted with a passenger aircraft. This has raised problems which have still yet to be solved.

We saw an aircraft undergoing a servicing check. The four-wheeled bogie undercarriage, with the rear tyre of the new "Dimpled" pattern, the pressure refuelling system, and the "Spill" method of measuring the fuel tank contents on the ground were points of special interest. While in the hangar, we also met Mr. Heywood, another ex-Halton apprentice, who is at present engaged on development work on the Comet II. This aircraft is the long-range version which is fitted with Rolls Royce Avon engines, and has just returned from Khartoum after tropicalisation trials.

Time was getting short so we reluctantly took our leave, because most of the party found the Comet a fascinating aircraft. Our next call was on the "Strat and Courier" fleet, our guide on this occasion being Mr. Esson. This fleet is used for the North Atlantic route, the most competitive air route in the world. Mr. Esson explained that the Stratocruiser is a development of the B.29 Bomber. The wings and engines are identical, but the fuselage is of the "double Bubble" type, fully pressurised, with the passenger accommodation in two decks. These aircraft are used for the two "Monarch" services to New York and Montreal. Each of these aircraft is named after one of the pre-war fleet of Short Empire Flying Boats of Imperial Airways which were so instrumental in raising the prestige of British Civil Aviation on the old Empire Routes. We were shown over one of these aircraft, which had arrived from New York that morning. The lower deck is a passenger lounge complete with bar. The bar was definitely not opened for the party.

The major checks and overhauls on the Stratocruisers are carried out at Filton, only minor checks and repairs are carried out at London. The aircraft are so large, that getting them into the hangar at London is a major operation. The first task is to lower the fin, which is hinged for the purpose, because the overall height of the fin exceeds that of the main roof trusses of the hangar by quite an appreciable amount! The Constellations are the veterans of this route, having been in use on it since 1946. They are now used for the new tourist traffic and have been converted to take 74 passengers. The type at present in use is the 749.

Our final visit was to the Component Repair and Overhaul Section under the control of Mr. Taylor. All components on the Corporation's aircraft have a laid-down life in flying hours, after which they are removed from the aircraft, and returned to this section for overhaul. The work covers Auto pilots, all flight and navigational instruments, electrical equipment, carpentry, upholstery, and for good measure, a detail fitting shop to cover the manufacture of modification sets and repairs of cowlings. One of the most striking things about this section was the endless variety of test equipment which had been designed and constructed in the section. One of the simplest and most effective was a five-ton hydraulic jack fitted into a frame to test the compressed length of Oleo-pneumatic compression struts. Another was constructed of two old motor car self-changing gear boxes coupled together to give a speed range of 0—9,000 r.p.m. to test the output of hydraulic pumps. These were coupled to an electric motor. Mr. Taylor explained to the party that in spite of all the elaborate test equipment, the final result depended on the skilled hand of the man at the bench. If he was not up to scratch the section could not carry out the task required. This impressed the party and made us realise that the long hours spent at the bench in the basic fitting shop at Halton are really worth something after all.

After a rather long and full day we climbed into the coach to go home. Some of us may have been depressed by the thoughts that the majority of the fine transport aircraft we had seen were of American manufacture. Our thoughts were interrupted when we heard a high-pitched scream, and looking up saw a Comet streaking down the runway. What price the American "prancing pistons" now? We are well beyond that stage.