

The Haltonian Magazine

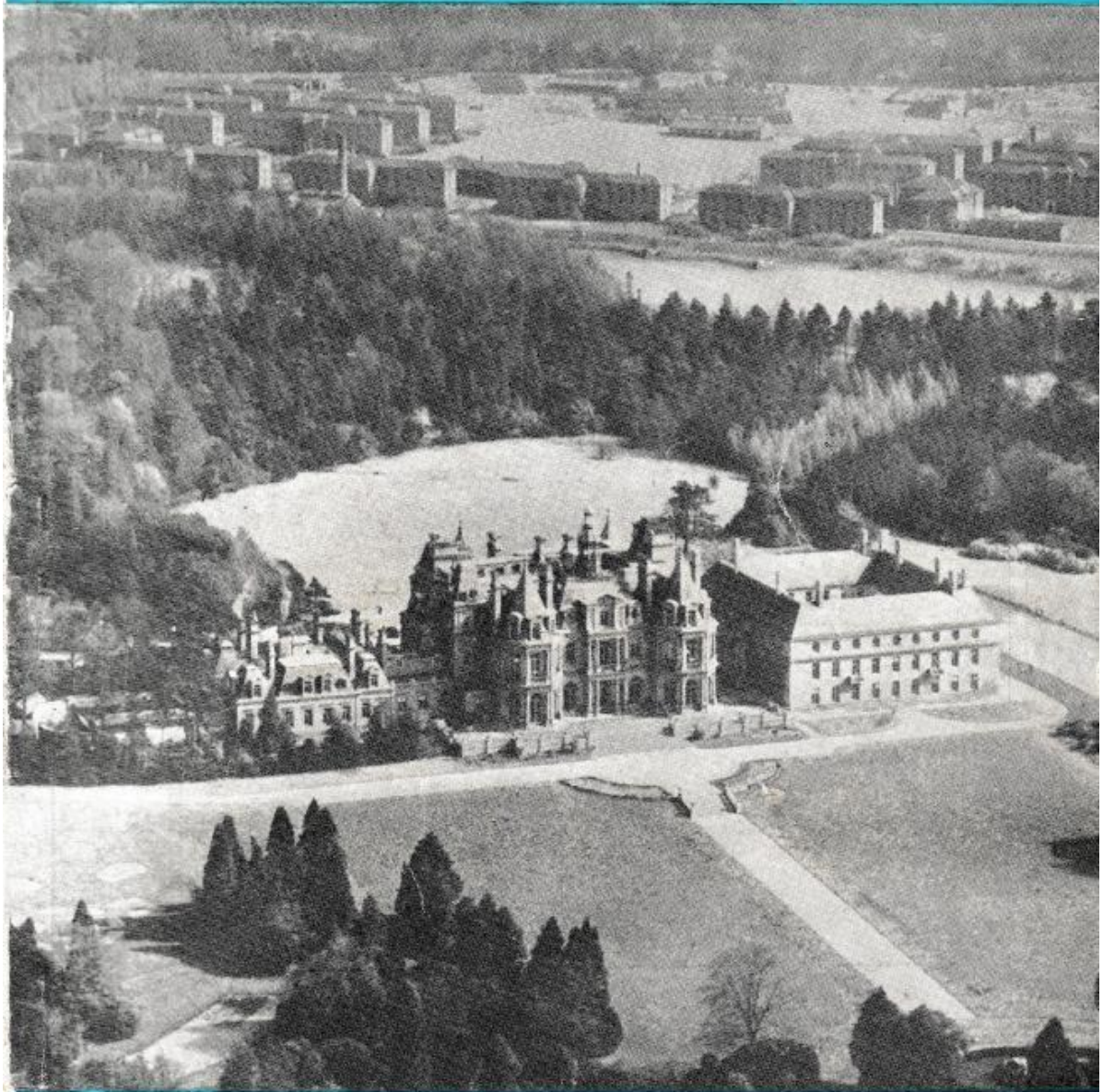
*51 Edition*

Winter 1948

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# THE HALTON MAGAZINE



WINTER - 1948



THE HALTON MAGAZINE



Christmas 1948





## EDITORIAL

To all our readers, "A Happy Xmas, a Prosperous New Year and a Pleasant Leave."

The *Halton Magazine* has reached another stage in its rehabilitation, for the response to our requests for copy has been so great that many articles have had to be pruned and some are being held over.

Once again we are honoured to be able to publish a portrait of, and a message from, a high-ranking officer—this time, Air Marshal J. Whitworth Jones, C.B., C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Technical Training Command. These messages, which have established themselves as the opening feature in the magazine, are eagerly awaited. They contain a philosophy of life and an inspiration from which all ranks benefit.

The major experiment in the previous issue of the *Halton Magazine* was the reduction in price from 1/6 to 1/- per copy. Great credit is due to the Business Manager, Squadron Leader Rea, for keeping down the costs of production and to him and the Representatives on the Magazine Committee for their successful efforts in selling enough copies to clear expenses.

In saying "Good-bye and Good Luck" to Group Captain J. Mutch on leaving for the Middle East, we do so with a sense of personal loss. During his two and a half years as Senior Training Officer, we have learned to appreciate his cheerfulness, thoroughness, fairness and grasp of detail. The apprentices have lost a personal friend, whilst the *Halton Magazine* owes a great deal of its healthy revival to his untiring efforts as Chairman of the Magazine Committee. To Mrs. Mutch we also extend our good wishes and thanks. She will be missed, not only for her charming personality but also for her consistently high scores in the Ladies' Section of The Halton Rifle Club.

To Group Captain N. C. S. Rutter, C.B.E., who succeeds Group Captain Mutch, we extend a warm welcome. As an ex-Halton Apprentice he should not take long to settle down to his new duties.

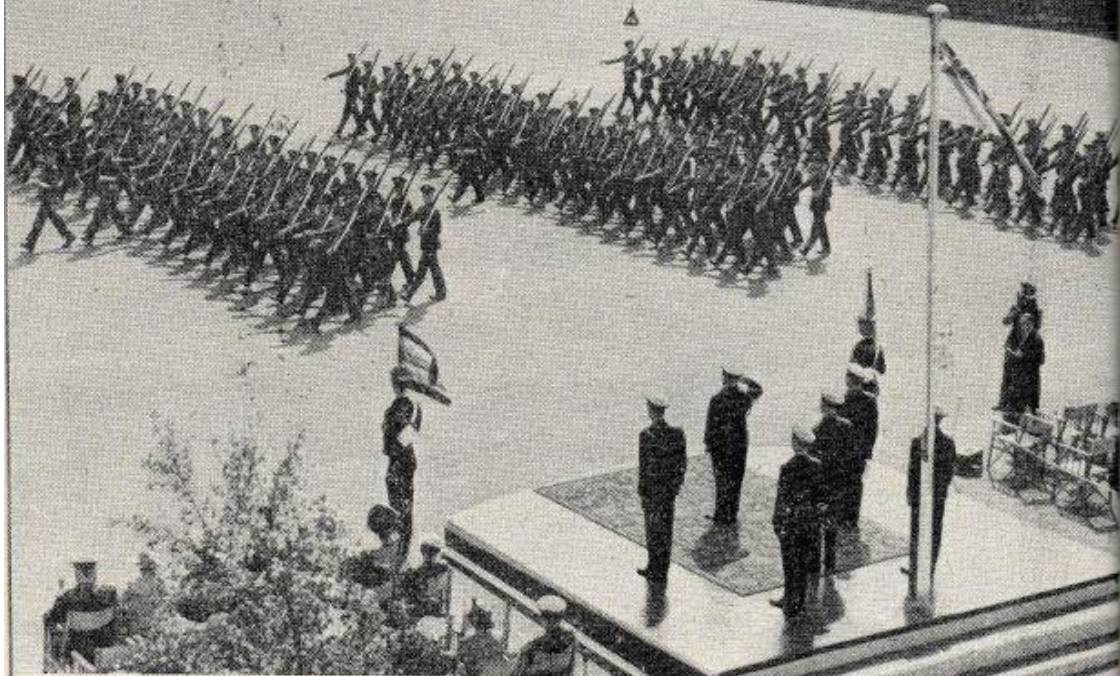
To Flight Sergeant LEWIS we send best wishes for a long and happy retirement. Although not the first of his kind at Halton he certainly outclassed his predecessors in the magnificence of his send-off, and judging by his autobiography, he will have many stirring memories to recount to his fellow pensioners at Ilford!

Finally we are proud to place on record the visit of Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, on the occasion of the twenty-first Birthday of the P.M.R.A.F. Hospital, Halton.



# PASSING OUT PARADE

## OF THE 51st ENTRY



Air Marshal Sir Leslie N. Hollinghurst, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.F.C., Air Member for Supply and Organisation, carried out the Passing Out Inspection of the August 1945 (51st) Entry of Aircraft Apprentices on the 28th July, 1948, the occasion of the successful completion of their apprenticeship.

He was accompanied by the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Technical Training Command, Air Marshal J. Whitworth Jones, C.B., C.B.E., and the Air Officer Commanding No. 24 Group, Air Vice-Marshal L. G. Harvey, C.B.

On congratulating the Apprentices on their high standard of drill and discipline the Air Marshal, drawing on his first experience in 1922 of Passing Out Parades, and on his considerable association with Apprentices' training, said the drill and discipline of the parade was up to as good a standard as he had ever seen. He was particularly congratulatory on the success of Apprentices controlling their own parade. He hoped they would not shed their smartness on leaving Halton, and felt that he could rely upon them to regain and maintain the pre-war high standards.

Recalling that Lord Trenchard had introduced the Apprentices' scheme as an experiment to set the efficiency of the Air Force on a firmer footing, the Air Marshal said that not only had the experiment been won, it was a great success, indeed the





Inspection.

development of the Service before the War and thereafter could not have been achieved without such a well trained, well disciplined, hard core of Apprentices. He thought it invidious to name all those ex-apprentices who had made their name in greater or lesser degree, nevertheless he felt it correct to mention Air Commodore Sir Frank Whittle the Jet pioneer, Air Commodore Freebody, and Air Commodore Satterly who in 1945 was the youngest Air Vice-Marshal.



The Saluting Base





Air Marshal Sir Leslie Hollinghurst  
and Cpl/App/Air Smith T. F.

ashamed to be ambitious: ambition properly controlled is a very good thing." There was ample opportunity to all now in the plan to provide the bulk of Engineer Officers from Apprentices.

As regards flying, the Air Marshal re-affirmed the policy that ex-apprentices would be given the opportunity to become aircrew by quoting that of the 129 from the August output who volunteered, 46 had been accepted for flying training, and of the August 1947 output 80 of the 159 who volunteered had been accepted. However for those who aimed at Technical Commissions the policy was that they also should become pilots.

As President of the Services Committee, the Air Marshal quoted from a report of the Middle East during the Battle of El Alamein, "The average ex-Aircraft Apprentice commissioned as an Engineer Officer proves himself to be an ideal Commander for the Maintenance Unit, not only from the point of view of the technical angle but from the point of view of welfare, clothing, feeding and equipping of personnel." In saying that the period referred to was a testing time, he drew attention to the future by quoting the Minister of Defence who said, "In the light of the circumstances with which we are faced, my own opinion is that in the defence reconstruction the structure and the striking power of the R.A.F. takes priority, followed by a most efficient Navy to keep our seas free, then we will do the best we can for the Army."

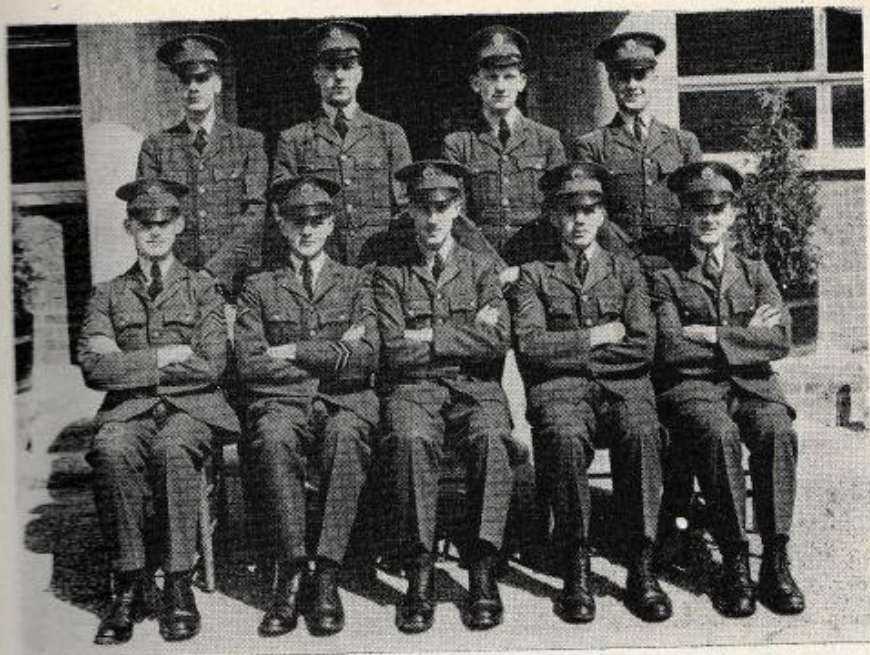
Finally, the Air Marshal gave the Passing Out Entry a personal message of good wishes from the Chief of the Air Staff. To this he added his own good wishes. J.M.

Of others who had left the Service, perhaps the most outstanding was Mr. Pegg, Chief Test Pilot to the Bristol Aeroplane Company who would shortly test the Brabazon I. Of all these apprentices he could say they had been ambitious in the right way and in hoping that this spirit would be maintained he re-affirmed Lord Trenchard's statement to Apprentices, "Don't be



Air Marshal Sir Leslie Hollinghurst  
and Sgt/App/Air Becker





51st Entry Cadetships

Back Row (l-r). Cpl/App/Air Gillard L. F., Cpl/App/Air Smith J. F.,  
 Sgt/App/Air Faulkner B. E., Sgt/App/Air Becker, A. F.  
 Front Row (l-r). Sgt/App/Air Thomas A. R., Ldg/App/Air Ashworth,  
 R. C. B., Ldg/App/Air Bugg, S. L., Cpl/App/Air Gill, M., Ldg/App/Air  
 Wirdnam K. A. C.

Guard of Honour





# Station Flight

The weather during the past few months has been fairly good and Station Flight, taking advantage of this, has carried out a large number of sorties.

Within the four months, June to September, the flight, including 23 Group and 24 Group Communication Flights, flew a total of 573 hours.

Of this amount, 108 hours has been devoted to App/Air training, mostly in one hour details, ably conducted by Pilot 1 "George" Wiczorek, A.F.C.

Sqn. Ldr. R. J. A. Leslie, D.S.O., A.F.C., remains in command, but unfortunately our Flight Commander, Flt. Lt. Haughton, is in hospital at the time of writing and will probably be indisposed for a further month.

Flt. Lt. Kemp, who has recently returned from the Far East, has taken over the duties of Flight Commander temporarily.

On Saturday, 18th September, Battle of Britain Day, an "At Home" was held at Halton and the flying display on the airfield drew a vast crowd of spectators. Flying exhibitions were given by Spitfires, Meteors, Lincolns and Yorks of the R.A.F., Super-Fortresses of the U.S.A.A.F. gave a display of formation flying, and a pilot in a civil Topsy put his aircraft through its paces.

Flt. Lt. Sinclair entertained spectators both at Halton and Henlow with some very well executed low-level aerobatics in a Tiger Moth.

In addition to the flying display, a static exhibition was held in the hangar and several aircraft were parked on the tarmac for inspection.



Atomic Ejector Seat



## CATERING SECTION



Paine Dining Hall

The Catering Section during the past twelve months has experienced an anxious period, due to two reductions in the Ration Scale and the shortage of Cooks. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties a very good standard of Cooking and Catering has been maintained, which is due, in the main, to the untiring efforts of all members of the Catering Staff coupled with the appreciation of these difficulties by personnel catered for in various messes. Incidentally the manning of Cooks is gradually improving.

The Catering Section was called in in an emergency to administer the catering arrangements on the occasion of the Annual Children's Christmas Party, December 1947, when 550 Parents and Children enjoyed what was considered by all a first class Christmas Tea Party.

On the occasion of the Air Training Corps Rally in August the Section supervised all cooking and catering for 2,000 Officers and Cadets, receiving congratulations for the successful catering from Headquarters Reserve Command.

The Contingent from Iran were messed in Paine Airmen's Mess during last winter and were high in their praise of all that was done for them, particularly on Christmas Day, when they sat down with 300 Airmen and Airwomen to a really good Christmas Dinner.

The weekly A.T.C. Contingents continue to be messed at Paine Airmen's Mess and are appreciative of all that is done for their welfare.



Other functions:

- i Catering for the W.R.A.F. Anniversary.
- ii Passing Out Dinner for the 51st Entry.
- iii Dinner for the Band and Pipes (with the assistance of our friends, the School of Cookery).
- iv Demonstration of New Ration Scale to all Wings and Messes.

During the period of preparation for the Battle of Britain Week, the Section catered for contingents from all Commands, who were very satisfied with the fare provided. It is worthy of note that over 300 Civilian Guests visited Paine Airmen's/Airwomen's Dining Halls and Kitchen at the Station "At Home" day.

The event of the year has been the reorganisation of all Dining Halls and installation of new and up-to-date equipment, resulting in a more pleasant atmosphere in all Messes; S.H.C. Paine Mess is the first Unit in the Royal Air Force to adopt the Tray System of Service.

S.L.D.

## WORKSHOP NOTES

### Fitter II (Engine) Section

Since the last issue of the magazine, certain changes have taken place in the equipment used for instructional purposes. In the principles of the I.C. Engine Phase, the Gypsy Queen or VI series have been replaced by Morris 6 Commercial Engines. This is not considered a retrogressive step because the simplicity of these engines enables young apprentices to grasp more quickly the essentials of an engine both theoretically, and practically.

The Centaurus Sleeve Valve engine is being replaced by the Hercules Series 100, and it is hoped that, in the near future, training on Gas Turbines will be carried out on the Derwent V or Goblin Series.

C.F.E.



Airframe Bashers



### **Fitter II (Airframes) Section**

The 51st Entry results were very satisfactory, and we congratulate App/Air Dixon on passing out top of the Entry on Technical Subjects with an aggregate of 84% and on winning the Crebbin Robinson Cup for the best C.T.T.B. Test job.

Our best wishes go with the Entry during their future career in the R.A.F.

The 52nd Entry will very soon be showing their form, and there is every hope and indication that they will do well.

L.A.W.D.

### **Instrument Makers Section**

Although the 51st Entry did not manage to reach the high mark of the 50th Entry, a satisfactory percentage of 59.3 was obtained.

We offer our congratulations to Cpl/App/Air Gillard on obtaining a Cadetship in the Technical Branch.

The 52nd Entry are now approaching their final examinations, and will only have a few weeks to go when these notes appear in print. This Entry have always pulled their weight, and a very high average passing out mark is expected from them. There is always room for improvement in all things, so, with the C.T.T.B. in sight, we advise one final effort.

The 54th Entry do not appear to have settled down for their final year, so a lot of hard work will have to be done. Get down to it now and you will find that it is a lot easier than leaving it until the last moment.

R.P.

### **Electrician Section**

It has been found generally, that not until they become senior entry do apprentices realize their responsibilities. Then we see how they really can work, but this attitude has spoiled many a passing out result. Previously there has been six months between entries, and now there will only be four. The senior entry attitude is a trap into which many have fallen, having left everything to the last six months. It is hoped that future entries will not be caught so easily.

The 52nd Entry are well aware that they are in the last lap. They are the first Apps/Air to reap the benefit of continuity in instruction; it is three years since our Civilian Instructors commenced their duties at Halton and it is expected that this Entry will provide us with our best C.T.T.B. results.

R.P.

### **Fitter Armourer Section**

At the present time the Armament Trade appears to be "Freewheeling" with regard to the introduction of new equipment, and there appears to be less progress in our trade than the others since the end of the war.

Atomic Bombs, Guided Missiles, recoilless guns—we hear of these things continually, we read articles in newspapers and periodicals, but we know nothing in reality as to the progress that is being made.

It is quite obvious that future aerial warfare will differ vastly from that of the past, due to the increased speed of fighters and bombers, and much of our present equipment will become obsolete, and it is foreseen that the Fitter Armourer of the not very distant future will be a different type of Tradesman from that of to-day. Instruments, Electronics and Rocket Projectiles are the possible key-notes of the Trade.

M.F.H.



## WING NOTES

### No. 1 Apprentices Wing

It is common knowledge that friendships owe much of their lasting qualities to the memory of experiences shared and that the bonds which unite the Service are often of a very personal character. On the occasions when former apprentices meet at Halton, the conversation heard centres round individuals of past entries; each one has something to add to the experiences under review, some character to revive. Halton magazines increase in value to the individual as each year passes and it is only necessary to touch the chord of memory to enable the full score to ring again in one's ears—Wing Notes can do little more than supply the chords.

For the sake of record, the entries now in the Wing are the 53rd, 56th and 59th. The latter entry, which includes ten ex-Boy Entrants, arrived during May last. The 51st Entry passed out in July on a day remarkable for heat and sunshine. To their lasting credit, those on parade gave a fine performance of entry drill in spite of the conditions which only they were able to realise to the full, and thereby won the approval of the Reviewing Officer, Air Marshal Sir Leslie N. Hollinghurst, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.F.C., and a great gathering of parents, distinguished guests and personnel from all formations in Technical Training Command. Sgt/App/Air Thomas commanded the parade in accordance with the traditional high standard of the Wing; he and eight other apprentices are to be congratulated on gaining Cadetships and we wish them, and the many now at St. Athan, success in their careers and good luck.

The 53rd and 56th Entries attended the Summer Training Camp at Little Marlow, near Maidenhead and, in spite of indifferent weather, thoroughly enjoyed the experience of life under canvas and all that goes with it. Our thanks are extended to the Camp Commandant, Sqn.Ldr. D. K. Kempston, and his staff of enthusiastic Officers and N.C.O.s for the excellent spirit which pervaded the camp and for the value of the constructive training carried out.

The Wing played its part in the "At Home" day (18th September) when we were pleased to show the many parents who took advantage of the occasion, the reality of the wide range of facilities provided at Halton. Early in October, the Air Officer Commanding No. 24 Group, Air Vice Marshal L. G. Harvey, C.B., carried out his annual inspection of the Station. The announcement, delivered by loudspeaker, that the Air Officer Commanding, in recognition of the high standard noted on his inspection, had granted all personnel a 48-hour pass for the weekend, had an electrical effect of high voltage upon all Aircraft Apprentices.

We bid "Au revoir" to Flight Lieutenant N. J. Brown who was our Physical Fitness Officer for two years; everyone appreciated the example he set of true sportsmanship, which is the



essence of Halton at its best. In his place we welcome Flight Lieutenant J. Cobb who will carry on the good work and who already commands our friendship and respect.

H.M.S.

### **No. 2 Apprentices Wing**

At the time of going to press, we await another change in the structure of the Wing—a scheme has been evolved whereby each Wing is to be responsible for the Apprentices' Training in one Trade, one for Engine Fitters, one for Airframe Fitters, and one for Ancillary trades—the last a far more salubrious title for the Armourers, Instrument Makers and Electricians than "O & S," by which name they are generally known. Perhaps by the time this magazine is produced the change will have taken place. It will bring Technical Officers into the Wing and should result in a better understanding of the problems with which we are faced and a closer affinity between trainees and those responsible for their training.

The 52nd Entry, having produced a Guard of Honour for the Passing Out of the 51st Entry, are due to leave the Station themselves in early 1949. Their passing out may well be the last of that very colourful ceremony as we now know it, and from our knowledge of the Entry we are sure they will provide a display fitting to the occasion.

The 54th Entry are well on their way to the conclusion of their training and show great promise. This is an extremely good Entry and has provided the Wing with some of its outstanding sportsmen. We were unfortunate to finish just behind No. 1 Wing in the Barrington-Kennett Trophy, but our failure was in no way due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of our hard-working P.F.O., Flt.Lt. Sears and the participants in the competition.

It seems strange to see members of the 57th Entry walking around with a Good Conduct Badge, as it seems only a few weeks ago that they arrived—but they have been with us a year. They are the first Entry to come to this Wing after the introduction of what might be termed more selective selection, and the policy certainly seems to be paying dividends.

We welcome the 60th Entry—they arrived at the end of September and were fortunate in that they were received by a team headed by Flight Sergeant O'Keefe, who has the distinction of having personally received every Apprentice in the Wing. This little man with the big heart has made smooth the sometimes difficult change-over period from civilian to service life of many members of the Royal Air Force who are now carving for themselves a successful career in this great Service.

H.G.

### **No. 3 Apprentices Wing**

In these times of stress in the outside world it seems strange to report that inside the sanctuary of Maitland Area, all is calm, ruffled only by the ever-prevalent and elusive rumour. The Wing remains largely the same in composition, although there have been a few issues and receipts: the arrival of seven Boy Entrants from Locking as Apps/Air has compensated for the occasional medical discharge. Our senior entry, the 55th, having now survived that awful crisis the second year: and our junior entry, the 58th, still



being in the first flush of youth: we have yet to win our honours and have naturally managed to avoid any deep disgrace.

The staff however has changed considerably. Our late Commanding Officer, Wg.Cdr. Hilton, is now attending a Staff Course in America and Sqn.Ldr. Harrison, who has returned to flying duties, is in Pakistan: both, we hope, are reaping the benefits of all those countries can offer. At the same time, we wish to welcome our new Commanding Officer, Wg.Cdr. F. J. Manning, C.B.E., by saying that we hope he will stay with us for a long while. Sqn.Ldr. F. H. Fearnside, an ex-Cranwell Apprentice, has taken over "B" Squadron, and we should mention in passing the advent of Sqn.Ldr. (second class) Johns who, under expert parental tuition, is due to commence his rugby training with the rest of the Wing as soon as he is six months old.

In sport we have not, unfortunately, done too well judging by the results of the B.K. Trophy competition. But under the circumstances, since we are amongst the youngest of both senior and junior teams, we feel we did pretty well, and particularly the juniors. It has at least given us high hopes for next year.

We must also mention that for the Halton Battle-of-Britain "At Home," one of No. 3 Wing Blocks was opened to visitors, a high honour to which all the Wing responded well in backing up the occupants of that Block, and even the other Wings had to admit it was a wise choice.

F.H.F.

## WING SPORTS

### Visit to the Army Apprentices School at Chepstow on June 26th, 1948

A party of 48 Apprentices under Wing Commander F. J. Manning, C.B.E., were entertained at the Army Apprentices' School at Chepstow, to compete at cricket, athletics and shooting in the annual inter-school match.

The party arrived without mishap on the Friday evening, and settled down to overcome the effects of the long drive.

On Saturday morning the contest started with the shooting match, which continued very evenly until the last detail. When points were totalled, Chepstow were found to have won by 16 points—a very even match over a range of possible points of 1600. The best score of the match was made by Army Apprentice Shirley with an aggregate of 194 points out of a possible 200, and the best performance on the Halton side was that of App/Air Galley, the team captain, with 189 points.

As the shooting finished, the athletics began with the long jump. This event went to Chepstow with an aggregate of 37ft. 10ins., the best jump being 20ft. 1in.

The half mile team race, won by Halton in 2mins. 9.2secs., was an exciting event won individually by App/Air Weekes. In the high jump which followed, Chepstow went ahead, although App/Air Hayward of Halton, and Army Apprentice Crawford of Chepstow, tied at 5ft. 4ins.

Halton won the shot-putt with an aggregate of 79ft. 8ins. but Chepstow regained the lead by winning the 4 x 110yds. relay race in 47.4secs. and the 4 x 440yds. relay race in 3mins. 50secs.



## HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

### HALTON—*Continued*

#### PERIOD 1926

On the 1st January, Wing Commander W. R. Read, M.C., D.F.C., A.F.C., took over command of No. 2 Wing from Squadron Leader F. Sowrey, D.S.O., M.C., A.F.C., and on the 15th July, Wing Commander B. E. Sutton, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., took over command of No. 1 Wing from Squadron Leader H. I. Hanmer, D.F.C.

On the 7th January, the 1923 Entry was inspected on the occasion of their passing-out by Air Vice-Marshal Sir Philip Game, K.C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., Air Member for Personnel.

The total number left to pass out was 396. Results of the passing out were:—Leading Aircraftmen 64, Aircraftmen 1st Class 223, Aircraftmen 2nd Class 98, Failed 9, Not examined 2.

During July and August, Cranwell Apprentices were transferred to Halton, complete with their own staff of instructors. As a result of the remustering of entries there were now at Halton:—September, 1924, Entry (6th Cranwell Entry) becoming 10th Entry. January, 1925, Entry (5th Halton Entry) becoming 11th Entry. September, 1925, Entry (6th Halton Entry) becoming 12th Entry. January, 1926, Entry (7th Halton Entry) becoming 13th Entry.

September saw the arrival of the 14th Entry, numbering 508. This Entry was placed for the time being in No. 4 (Cranwell) Wing but was soon transferred to No. 1 Wing when re-organisation took place.

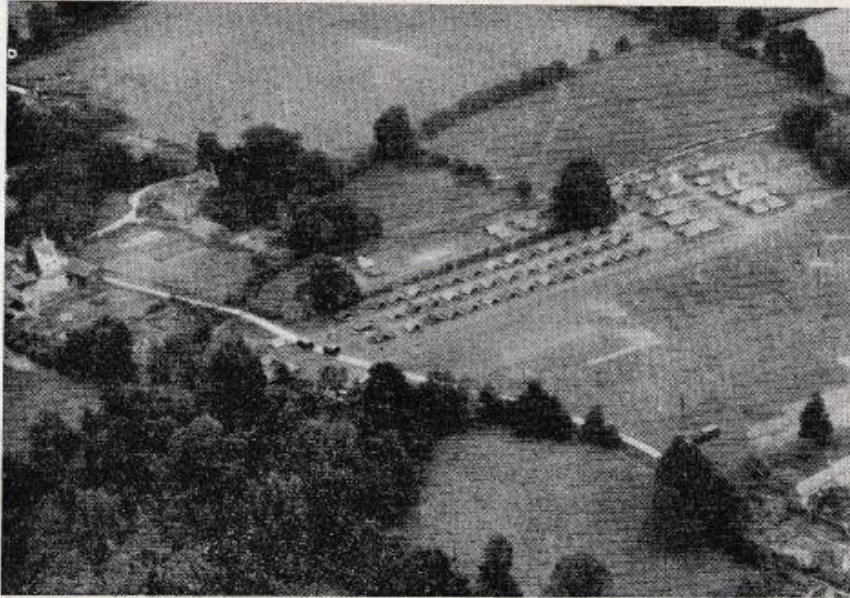
During this year a new system of grouping in wings was arranged, so that instead of an entry being split up between Wings as previously, the entry was attached to a definite Wing en bloc, so that by the end of the year entries were placed as follows:—No. 1 Wing: January 1925 Halton Entry—11th Entry. September 1926 Halton Entry—14th Entry. No. 2 Wing: September 1925 Halton Entry—12th Entry. January 1927 Halton Entry—15th Entry to come in. No. 4 Wing: September 1924 Cranwell Entry—10th Entry. January 1926 Halton Entry—13th Entry.

This change involved a re-arrangement both in workshops and school organisation and from now onward there were Wing workshops and Wing schools with their appropriate staffs.

**Passing Out of the September 1923 Entry.**—On passing out this entry was inspected by Sir Philip Sassoon, C.B.E., C.M.G., M.P., the Under Secretary of State for Air, accompanied by Air Vice-Marshal Sir Philip Game, K.C.B., D.S.O., and Group Captain N. D. K. MacEwen, C.M.G., on the 29th July, 1926. Results were as follows:—Total number attested 575, Passed out as Leading Aircraftmen 81, Passed out as Aircraftmen 1st Class 207, Passed out as Aircraftmen 2nd Class 215 (In Group 1 Trades). Training in the trade of Carpenter Motor Body Builder ceased.



## THE SUMMER CAMP AT LITTLE MARLOW



Spade Oak Meadow—and the Camp—from the air.

It was a step in the right direction, certainly, when the "Powers-That-Be" gave their authority for the Aircraft Apprentices 1948, General Service Training Camp, to be sited away from Halton—within a radius of 30 miles. My instructions were to find a spot suitable for the encampment of a maximum of 350 people for eight weeks commencing the first Monday in June, 1948.

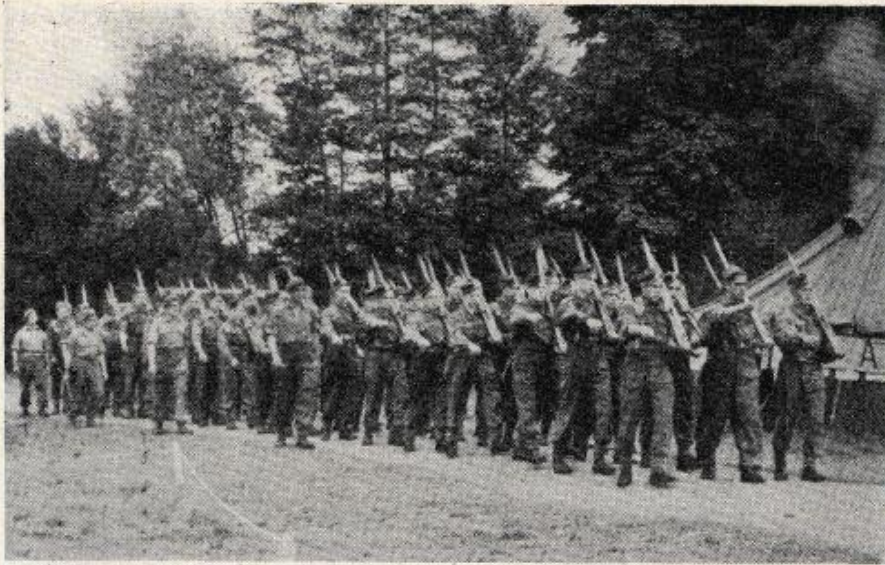
Many things had to be considered in the selection of an area—condition of the ground for the camp, water supply, proximity to suitable land for tactical exercises and sports, safe river-bathing facilities and the thousand-and-one issues that spring forth in the building of an "active service" unit 'out in the blue.'

With this interesting task in mind, I gathered my traps and reconnoitred the depths of the Thames Valley where, it was decided, the nature of the terrain and the fact that the natives were friendly, would allow the pitching of a tented, self-contained unit, 'cut-off' from Halton, in which we could simulate the everyday atmosphere of an active unit.

After many experiences in which I and my Regiment Officer advisors found that the local authorities were quite co-operative and the local land-owners very dubious, we found a spot of land outside the hamlet of Little Marlow, equi-distant from Marlow-on-Thames and Bourne End in Buckinghamshire, and a quarter of a mile from the river itself.

Hitherto, the local land-owners had been unable to see the funny side of having 350 R.A.F. personnel stamping all over their pasture land for eight weeks in the height of the summer, but Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs of Spade Oak Farm, Bourne End (the owners of our meadow), after a little initial uncertainty, were very friendly all through the eight weeks period of the camp and treated us with the utmost tolerance.





Some of the 55th Entry on the march

In these days of intensive food growing, in which all farmers keep a minimum of ground for the grazing of livestock, every square yard of pasturable land counts. Consequently, Mr. Burroughs, the farmer, was worried about damage to turf, hedges, fences and the digging of holes in his fields, and he asked us very seriously to do a minimum of damage to his grounds. We respected his wishes and it can be put on record to the credit of all, that he stated his entire satisfaction after we had cleared away and tidied up on July 28th 1948. In fact, he said he would have us again next year if we wanted to come—which speaks for itself!

Having chosen the site, which, with the one draw-back of being rather low-lying, was ideal for the task we had in mind, we



The Mail arrives





The NAAFI Counter—most popular place in Camp

set about locating training areas, and sports fields. This was not much of an obstacle however, and having found what we wanted, plus a good, safe swimming enclosure, the wheels were set in motion with the 'equippers' at Halton in order to get the bits and pieces together and down to Spade Oak Meadow in time for the scheduled pitching of the camp. Mention must be made here of the canteen, for the N.A.A.F.I. authorities certainly gave of their best and supplied and maintained a first class field canteen for the period.

During the six weeks of the training period, 1,262 Apprentices (53rd—58th entries inclusive) experienced conditions of field cooking, hygiene and sanitation. Weapon training and open range rifle firing instruction were given at Kimble ranges; camouflage, battle drill, and tactical exercises were passed through and on the Saturday morning of each week, all personnel enjoyed an eight miles route march. These labours naturally led to voracious appetites which were dealt with in grand style by the cookhouse staff, and although there were complaints of bruises and blisters during the day, in the evening, judging by the numbers playing football or cricket, or booking out of camp for a browse round the Thames valley, the afflictions seemed to disappear.

The weather in June and July, 1948, could have been much better and many a period of arduous field training had to be cancelled (to the dismay of all concerned) because of the weather conditions. However, in spite of this, a "camp spirit" was built up. Each Entry soon sensed this and the atmosphere "In Bounds"—although one of discipline—was a happy one. Outside camp bounds, the appearance and bearing of the Apprentices of all Wings was praiseworthy and made a very favourable impression upon the local civilians. As a further advertisement for Halton and all that it means, the Apprentices' Military Band played twice for the public in the grounds of Garden Court, Marlow-on-Thames,



and the Pipe Band concluded the period by 'beating the Retreat' up Marlow High Street on the last Saturday of the camp.

Each week was marked by the appearance of some distinguished personage on a tour of inspection and we were all very gratified when our efforts reached their zenith with the visit of Air Vice-Marshal, H. T. Lydford, C.B., C.B.E., A.F.C., the Commandant General of the R.A.F. Regiment; Air Commodore F. W. Long, C.B., the Director of the R.A.F. Regiment; Air Commodore R. G. Hart, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., Director of Technical Training Policy; Air Commodore J. F. Titmas, C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding Halton; and many associated Staff Officers. The A.V.M. and party inspected the camp bounds on the morning of Thursday, July 8th, 1948, lunched with us and spent over an hour touring the training areas and watching the training in the afternoon.

Of the General Service Training and the Sports, space does not permit me to say much, but it can be said that with very few exceptions, all Apprentices gave of their best and showed a spirit of keenness and grit that was very good to behold. And in amongst the mud and training, we had many laughs. One comes to my mind as I write. This is a picture of the Orderly Officer doing his rounds one murky midnight and noticing one of the guard patrol approaching him with a tell-tale pin-point of light broadcasting his presence in the darkness. Aforesaid Orderly Officer pounced:

"Guard, what do you mean by smoking on patrol?" (This in a tone of voice calculated to instil terror into the wretched guard.)

Came back the calm reply: "I'm not smoking, Sir, it's a glow-worm . . . ." And it was!

Yes, I think it can safely be said that although the Apprentices had quite a hard time, both from the weather and the R.A.F. Regiment Instructors, their only grouse was that one week in the unit was not long enough—in other words they enjoyed themselves. Fair enough!

D.K.K.



The Staff