

The Haltonian Magazine and the Daedalus

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(Scroll down)

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the halton magazine



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CHRISTMAS, 1943

A Christmas Message from

—the A.O.C.

WITH each succeeding war Christmas an ever increasing number of Service men and women find themselves forced to spend the day at or near their place of duty. For some it may be the first to be spent away from home, but for others it may even be the fifth successive occasion when they have had no choice as to where, how, and with whom they would like to spend it.

There is little need for me to mention that we, who will be spending Christmas and the New Year at Halton, can consider ourselves extremely lucky to find on the spot so many opportunities for enjoying the day in a healthy and profitable manner. Whether the spirit of goodwill will again penetrate the hearts of W.O.'s and senior N.C.O.'s to the extent of proving that they have in fact brought airmen an early morning cup of tea I know not, but in any case I do not think personnel on the station will have any chance to complain of lack of opportunity for increasing waist measurements, or attending to their spiritual or moral requirements.

But while enjoying ourselves, let us not forget our friends and relatives, either at home or elsewhere, and particularly those who will be fighting on that day or perhaps regarding it from either a prison camp or a hospital bed. And let us enter the New Year with a greater determination than ever to help bring the war to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date.

I wish all personnel a happy Christmas and the very best of luck in 1944.

THE HALTON MAGAZINE

CHRISTMAS, 1943.

EDITORIAL

IN celebrating this fifth war time Christmas our rejoicings can permissibly be tinged with a certain satisfaction for the successes of the past year. We should be foolish if we translated this legitimate matter for self congratulation into complacency. The climax of the struggle is still surely to come, and although the war will certainly be waged with an increased ferocity before final victory is ours, a proper realisation of past victories and our part in them should lead to a strengthening of our hopes for the future. We can remember the dark, sulphurous days of 1940 when, standing alone, we gambled at short odds against defeat. What was then a slender hope has now become an absolute certainty. On land, on sea, and in the air, we and our Allies have achieved notable victories: our conspiracy with the elements is succeeding, and Halton has provided quite a few of the conspirators. We remember with pride the exploits of such men as Sergeant Gray, V.C., that former Halton apprentice, whose coolness and resource won for him the highest decoration his country could bestow, and whose unselfish devotion to duty cost him his life. There are others, men nurtured in the tradition and spirit of Halton, whose deeds are the testament to the worthiness of that tradition and the strength of its spirit. There are thousands of other men trained at Halton who by the excellence of their technical efficiency have done their share towards making the R.A.F. the remarkably fine fighting weapon it is today.

We do not apologise for this show of local patriotism; rather do we glory in it. Halton is not merely a place, but a purposeful, individualistic society. The members of this society are better able to appreciate their place in the life of the nation as a whole if they first appreciate their place in the community in which they live, and the purpose

of which they can understand and appreciate. This magazine was started again primarily to record the events and personalities we find interesting. It is in effect our local newspaper. Your cold, logical analyst may say that this local news is made up of tiresome and unimportant trivialities, not worth the paper on which it is printed, nor the labour of printing. Such a conclusion is invalid, because the analysis has failed to take into account the qualities of human sympathy and imagination. Our interest in life quickens when we read about the persons we know; they cease to be names and become personalities. Were we living in more stable times, we should have the time to get to know things in a leisurely, gossipy way, but as things are, an ever changing community needs a chronicler to sustain its cohesion and record its characteristics and traditions.

It is still not generally realised that this magazine is printed and published on the Station by voluntary effort. There is, unfortunately, a very real threat to continued publication of the magazine. While sympathising with the difficulties of war time control, we believe that there is a place in the general scheme of things for a magazine such as this. We use nobody's labour but our own, and all the writing and printing is a spare time activity. If the magazine is forced to discontinue by circumstances beyond our control, we should like, in what may be the last issue to acknowledge the help which has been given so freely and unselfishly. In particular we wish to thank those airmen without whose expert, technical knowledge this magazine could never have been published. From the A.O.C. downwards, we have received on the Station all the encouragement we could have desired. If we are forced to cease publication, it will be because of shortage of supplies, not of goodwill.

A W.A.A.F. in this Month's Spotlight

Corporal Christina Leverett

HOW many people who see Corporal Christina Leverett carrying out her duties in 4 Wing Squadron office would think that this grey-haired woman, with her motherly smile and quiet charm, is on the Nazi blacklist for helping anti-Fascists out of Germany.

Yet this is the case. Like most reserved people, Cpl. Leverett has had her fill of adventures and interesting experiences.

Married to one of the earliest pioneers in the development of the motor car, Cpl. Leverett has travelled over nearly all Europe as professional passenger to her husband, who is a member of the 20th Century Club and drove in the original 1,000 miles trial in 1900.

She has always been responsible for routing and map-reading for her husband, not only on long journeys to international conferences, but

also over the winding roads and wild passes of the Alpine Trials and Monte Carlo Rally. She has been snowed up in the mountains, and has had to stay on the warmer southern side

of a pass till the roads were unblocked on the northern slopes.

In the Monte Carlo Rally of January 1929, the worst winter in living memory, the Leveretts were the only British competitors to plough their way through the driving snow of the Prussian plains and reach the starting point, Riga, on the icy Baltic coast.

So much snow fell around them that the car literally began to fill with fine flakes. When night fell they were unable to move, and were in serious danger of becoming the frozen foundation of a sizeable snowdrift. Fortunately Mr. Leverett saw lights in the distance, and made his way to a farm-house the owner of which brought out a sledge on which the snow-laden car was precariously mounted and, along with its owners, was towed to the farm to be thawed out before pushing on next day.

The purpose of Trials such as these was not only to savour the sport of pitting human and mechanical skill against the fates, but also to test new developments under the most rigorous conditions. For instance, in the Riga Rally the Leveretts were testing the Delavaud gear, a new form of transmission designed to deal with the difficulties of icebound roads. When one remembers what difficulties motor transport has had to deal with in war among the snows of Russia, the sands of Africa and the mud of Italy, the practical purpose of these trials can clearly be seen.

In this kind of work Mrs. Leverett came across many outstanding personalities of the car world, and was often present at vital discussions regarding the development of the motor car. She knows well the makers of the Riley cars; has been driven by E. Bianchi on the race-track at Monza, where they just failed



The type of roads over which Cpl. Leverett and her husband drove. This is a view of the North side of the Stelvio Pass, from Italy into Austria, which has 49 hairpin bends in a rise to nearly 9,000 feet.

THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT—continued

to touch 100 miles an hour; and has watched at Dumfries the building of the body of Sir Malcolm Campbell's "Bluebird".

She has been driven several times on the famous Nurnburg Ring in Germany, which like that at Monza, is not a stereotyped race-track but has circuits which take in the natural contours of the country.

Driving up and down Europe inevitably meant that the Leveretts tasted the flavour of international affairs. In the uneasy days of the economic crisis, when the pound suddenly broke they woke one morning to find that none of their money was accepted. They were able to get back to England only by raising money on the car as security. As they returned through Austria, Germany, Switzerland and France they saw the dismay caused by the break of our solid British standard—a foreshadowing of that profound uncertainty about values which still exists as a problem for post-war economists to solve.

While in Germany the Leveretts saw the paralysing effect that Nazism had upon free speech and the open exchange of ideas. In order

to talk with friends of long standing they would take long rides, since not a servant in the house could be trusted not to listen and report. It was one of these same friends, and another, whom the Leveretts helped with money, and by other means, to escape from a concentration camp. As a result of this the Leveretts, as early as 1938, received warning that they were upon the Nazi black-list—a fact which caused them to destroy all relevant papers at the time when a German invasion was a serious threat to this country.

Back in England at the beginning of the war Mrs. Leverett tried to join up, but she was informed that her age, and the fact that her father was Swedish, would prevent her being accepted for any of the services. It was not until 1941 that she prevailed upon the authorities to alter their minds.

Meanwhile she carried out the duties of running the house for her husband all through the London bombings; blazing Dockland, gutted John Lewis's and shattered Madame Tussaud's are memories she shares with many of the rest of us.

MEN OF GOODWILL

*Clear frosty sky, mysterious and cold,
A sable setting for the glittering stars;
There is no sound: the air, the constellations
And spinning earth seem motionless.
Only the flickering stars fade and revive.*

*On such a night the son of man was born.
Stars flickered, and the lordly planets moved
On their majestic and unthinking way
While shepherds worshipped at a shrine in Beth-
lehem,
And spoke of peace; and Herod plotted death.*

*When all is quiet, and the still heart
Is free from care,
Somewhere a sword is drawn, a dagger poised
To deal the blow; somewhere
The test awaits us, for the happy hours
Are but a breathing-space in battle.
Never is life's chemistry at rest,
The earth revolves, blood pulses through our
veins;
From unseen worlds in an immensity of space*

*To every tiny atom in ourselves, all is activity.
Peace is an illusion.*

*Yet in the maelstrom of human anguish
Some men remain serene, some men can smile
And face with steady eyes the bewildering uni-
verse.*

*They meet the enemy and are unafraid,
They are wise in the things that matter;
They know the soul's power
To rise above the shackles of flesh and blood,
To conquer the flinching body and drive it on.*

*They are the men who willingly sacrifice
The life they know in an even gamble with death,
Who leave the sun, the green grass, and the warm
Companionship of the senses, for a lonely voyage
Over an unfamiliar uncharted sea.*

*Theirs is the peace of the spirit, undisturbed
By the whirr and bustle of life's machinery.
For, centuries ago, another man
Lived and suffered and died, and hated none.*

T. P.

OUR GUEST CARTOONIST

Harold GITTINS

The editorial committee of "The Halton Magazine" is proud to be able to print in this Christmas number an original drawing from the brush of the well known London "Evening News" Sports Cartoonist, HAROLD GITTINS. Our thanks are due to Mr. Gittins for this special drawing, and to the Editor of "The Evening News."

Mr. Gittins saw service with the R.F.C. as an observer in the last war, and was in at the birth of the Royal Air Force on April 1, 1918.

HAROLD GITTINS is an old Mancunian who studied at the Manchester School of Art. He was mobilised as a Territorial for the War to end Wars and went to France, where he hung on to the rank of private for two years. Recalled from France by special messenger, and was given one illuminated "Pip"; and so by many "Duckboards" to Passchendale and Cambrai.

At the end of 1917 was dragged out of the mire and seconded to the R.F.C. For his sins as an Infantry officer was not allowed to be a pilot, and had to be content with observer's half wing.

Back to France for the third time and posted to No. 35 Squadron, R.F.C., in time for the big show, March 1918. Celebrated his advent to the Squadron with a crash landing on a telegraph, which caused Staff Officers for miles around to break out into purple spots. This brought forth the remark from his Squadron Leader, Major Vesey Holt, "That as a new observer he should understand it was not a custom of the Squadron to land in this manner."

Continued the retreat at a steady 80 m.p.h. in an old "Ack W" as far back as the Officers' Club at Abbeville. Then followed a slight contretemps with Richtofen's circus; he finished upside down among our batteries and got a free double whisky. However, had the last word with Richtofen when his body and crashed machine were brought to an adjacent aerodrome a few days later. Back to England via

Portsmouth Hospital, August 1918. THEN PEACE BROKE OUT.

Entered journalism as a sports cartoonist, and until the second war to end wars his life was one round of sport and infuriated Editors. Saw every Cup-tie at Wembley; all the Test matches, and at the Manchester Test in 1938, when not a ball was bowled, was the only journalist who did not contract "webbed feet."

Gate-crashed on to the Centre court at Wimbledon and the Paddock at Ascot and Epsom, and also frequented boxing rings, with occasional visits to Hurlingham and Ranelagh.

For the twenty years prior to the outbreak of this War flying was simply a quick means of getting to the Bal Tabarin, in Paris, or the Crown and Anchor boards at Nice and Monte Carlo. Last flip in an Ensign from Paris in August, 1939.

Mr. Gittins writes: "Somehow I feel quite friendly towards Halton as in 1941 I had the privilege of spending a day there as guest of the Air Ministry. Saw all your wonderful workshops and the school, and have a hazy recollection of a sumptuous Officers' Mess. Or did I?"

"Also during the past two winters have met your cross country team at various rendezvous under the leadership of Flt. Lieut Caddy, whom I knew quite well.

"A cheery greeting to all at Halton and a speedy return to civvy street, for those who can tear themselves away."

NURSERY RHYME

Sing a song of sixpence
And what it cannot buy;
Christmas toys and other things
Whose price has gone sky-high.

The Woolton pie when opened
Shows carrots in a row,
But there is better stuff to serve
To people in the know.

The dealer in his counting-house
Counts black-market money.
The lady in his parlour
Eats off-the-ration honey.

The habits of the profiteer
Make up a nasty tale.
Down will come a flying squad
To put him in jail.

P. M.



"... Don't worry about delivery old man; our Pathfinders can show you every chimney between here and Berchtesgaden."

Service Education

What Are You Going To Do After The War?

BEFORE you answer the question, stop for a moment and examine your conscience. Ask yourself what you are doing to hasten the end of the war. Victorious living can come only from a victorious peace. It is easy to be optimistic about the early end of the war, but we should do something to justify our optimism.

We all admit most readily that our primary responsibility is so to increase our personal efficiency that we can honestly say that we are doing the best job of which we are capable and thus making our maximum contribution to winning the kind of peace we want.

It is obvious that the peace will bring with it many difficult problems. A modern, highly industrialised state is a very complex machine, and it is not an easy matter to re-adapt it to perform the tasks of peace. A cursory examination of the problem is sufficient to realise its enormity. We can leave the detailed examination to the experts, but we can do something ourselves.

Even the most carefully thought out schemes will come to nothing if the people for whom they are designed do not co-operate, and are not qualified to play their part. We are not suggesting that you should give all your spare time to work; we are suggesting that, in your own interest, you should give some of your spare time to helping yourself: you must do this before you have the right to ask for help from somebody else.

Make an analysis of the way in which you spend your leisure, and then ask yourself whether some of it could be spent to better advantage. You don't need to tell us the answer; we know.

What You Can Do

First of all keep your mind alert. It is the easiest thing in the world to get mentally lazy, and we can always make excuses for not doing something. An airman candidate for aircrew, on being reproached for not knowing how to do examples in vulgar fractions, said in all seriousness that, of course, it was a long time since he had left school. He was twenty, and he left school when he was sixteen! This is an extreme case of dotage.

Here then are some of the things you can do to keep yourself mentally active. First of all, try to do some serious reading: literacy is too valuable to be wasted entirely on our exuberant

contemporaries. The Station Library is in Room 71, The Schools. If we have not got the books you want, we shall do our best to get them for you.

You can make an excellent start on preparing for a post-war career by taking a correspondence course. Some far-seeing airmen are taking advantage of the courses, and by doing so are increasing not only their service efficiency but also personal capital—a long term investment which will pay a large dividend in the post war years.

There are, to mention a few, courses in Accountancy, Banking, Law, Secretarial Practice, and Estate Management. You can get details of these and other courses from: The Station Education Officer, Room 71, The Schools.

Another Suggestion for your Leisure

Learn a language. There are elementary intermediate and advanced classes every evening at 18:30 hrs. at the Schools in the following languages:

Monday	Elementary German	Room 74.
	Spanish	31
Tuesday	Advanced German	74.
	French Conversation	79.
Wednesday	Elementary French	74.
Thursday	Advanced French	74.
Friday	German Conversation	79.

Tailpiece:— We have just heard an airman remark that life is a bind; There is nothing to do on this camp!

TO A PILOT

(Killed in action, 1940)

*Twenty-one years you lived and laughed and played
Your glowing youth, and all who knew you laid
Returning tribute at your winged feet
That danced so blithely down the golden street.
With all your Good Companions in the sun
You lived and laughed and played and found it fun.*

*I was not with you on your last long flight
(Through what tempestuous skies, through what
black night!)
But I would wager all that you were gay
And smiling as they took the chocks away.
You made your life a party to the end,
And even Death must call you now his friend*

Jeanne. D. Crossley.

HOSPITAL NOTES and NEWS

SUSSEX CORSETS To The RESCUE

THE good ladies of Sussex are giving up their whalebones to bring new life to the crippled air-crew casualties.

Until the other day I must confess I was not aware that these ladies still wore whalebones, but evidently they do (or did), for large quantities of these adjuncts to feminine support are coming to the Hospital, through the good offices of the W.V.S., of Sussex.

They are used by Cpl. E.J.R. Challen, of the Burns Centre, together with scrap metal, in the construction of special splints, which have been designed to prevent contracture of the fingers after severe burning. His ingenuity and resourcefulness are responsible for the restoration and preservation of the power of movement in the hands of those who might otherwise go through life with a fearful disability. It is to be hoped that this happy result has not had too disastrous results on the contours of the Corporal's home county.

Cpl. Challen has been honoured with a Certificate of Good Service from Headquarters, Technical Training Command. This certificate is awarded for outstanding service by non-operational members of the R.A.F.

FLIGHT SERGEANT'S A. F. M.

A CRIPPLED patient in the Hospital was decorated with the A.F.M. by His Majesty the King, at Buckingham Palace, on October 12. The modesty of brave men is proverbial, and I had the greatest difficulty in obtaining from F.Sgt. Tobias details of his exploit.

He gave me a first class description, worth more space than can be accorded it, of the investiture, which seemed a combination of impressive Beefeaters, stately rooms and a kindly Monarch.

I don't know the wording of the official citation, but this is what the Flight Sergeant finally told me:—

"We were returning from.....(Security!)....., and it was very foggy. I happened to be first pilot, and we hit a tree. The second pilot was thrown out when we crash landed. He was pinned under the port wing, with part of the engine on his chest. The petrol was running out, and things were a bit urgent. The flare path crew lifted up the wing, and I pulled him out." Here the Flight Sergeant paused unhappily. "Well, that's all," he said.

So that was all! But he omitted to mention



Sergt. D. C. Blair, of the School of Hygiene, did this charcoal drawing of the School's C.O., Squadron-Leader A. W. H. OAKEY. Sergt. Blair also drew the cover design.

that the engine weighed 1,100 lbs., plus the weight of the leaning wing. We can surmise the length of time the straining sinews of a flare path crew could stand this fearful weight.

BACK TO BLIGHTY

THE outstanding event in the past few weeks has been the arrival of a contingent of the repatriated prisoners.

During the short period they were with us, there was the feeling of a holiday—an atmosphere of great excitement and of happiness within the compound. The repatriates seemed to be surrounded by an aura of joy, too deep for adequate expression. This was felt by every member of the Hospital staff, from the small U.T. who, dizzy with excitement, was accosted by a lordly Sergeant Pilot—a god from another sphere—with a sudden smack and a friendly "Hiya, Chiefy!" to, I feel sure, the C.O. himself.

Many now serving in the Forces have had to spend Christmas in strange parts of the World under peculiar conditions. Here are a few stories by service men on this station of memorable Christmases in strange places.

Group Captain Muschamp

MY squadron was in Belgium (1918). I had been given one week's local leave and my pass was made out for Paris, but as I had not seen my grand-mother in Switzerland since 1914 I meant, if possible, to spend Christmas with her.

By using my wits, and with the help of a considerable amount of luck, I managed to reach the little frontier town of Bellegarde early on Christmas morning. From there I took a local train to Annemasse. The line ran along the frontier and after St. Julien there was only a road between the railway and Swiss territory. Every hundred yards along that road was a French sentry.



I got out at the station of Bossey. I showed my Annemasse ticket and said that I should be going on with the next train. Two military policemen looked at me with suspicion, for a British uniform was an unusual sight for them. I walked towards the frontier road, but before I reached it, they caught me up and asked to see my pass and wanted to know what I had come to Bossey for. I said that I was stopping between two trains to have lunch with some people by the name of Nangod.

After an excellent lunch, I said goodbye to the Nangods and ran down the village as if I were going to catch the train. The two policemen were on the look-out and I ran past them with a friendly word of farewell.

On the frontier road, between two sentries, I suddenly stopped, look round quickly and then dashed down the embankment over the border. The trick was done; it had been easy. I soon reached the little village of Troinex where a Swiss letter box was the first visible proof that I was in "Helvetia." An hour later I was with my old grandmother.

W.O. Beaumont

ONE of the best Xmas's I have spent away from home was at Bangalore, India, in 1921. I was a Flight Sergeant in 'C' Flight, 28 (AC) Squadron, then at Quetta. Members of the Flight who had been at Bangalore the

previous year told us that "this was the place" and it certainly lived up to expectations. After the aircraft were picketed down, the Flight Commander, to our great joy, informed us that we should not be required for four days.

The people at Bangalore had not at that time seen much of the R.A.F. and they gave us a marvellous welcome. On Xmas morning, with our early tea, we received small gifts of fruit from the natives whom we had brought with us from Quetta. Later in the morning

A CHRISTMAS

we played football, our opponents being our hosts, the Royal Tank Corps. During the match we were from time to time given "refreshments" by the spectators. Afterwards we went to a Dog Show!

The first prize was for the world's worst dog. Dogs had been collected from all over the Cantonment and what an assortment there was! The prize was eventually won by a particularly handsome dog with three legs and half an ear!

Air Commodore H. G. White

HAVING seen to both the spiritual and physical needs of all personnel in the squadron, (stationed at Peshawar), there fell a silence in the Officer's Mess which was so obviously the forerunner of discordant snores that I was literally forced to suggest that perhaps a spot of exercise might do us all a damn sight more good than losing consciousness on a perfect Indian sunny afternoon.

Thus did I shout 'Koi Hai' which has much the same effect in India as Alladin found when he rubbed his lamp. The magic words were barely out, when behold a fine looking bearded Sikh, in spotless white garments and R.A.F. puggaree and cumberbund stood before me. "Yes sahib?" He spoke, softly, and I observed a familiar twinkle in his eye. "Donkeys" I shouted, and everyone sat up with a jerk. "Donkeys and polo sticks for all Sahibs, ach dum" (at once). "Achi tart (O.K.) Sahib" my bearer said, as he salaam'd and withdrew.

Soon we became aware of something which sounded too much like a second Indian mutiny or another of those murderous raids by hillmen.

Donkeys by the thousand, with their owners using stout sticks on their own mounts and rival jockeys, were converging on our Mess from all directions. As we, the Mess and all, were about to disappear underneath an avalanche of asses, I let fly with a forlorn "Koi Hai," which once again produced my calm and spotless bearer. "Fourteen" I ordered, "and let me see no more—ever."

He turned about and donkeys now entering the Mess through every door or gazing longingly through windows were brought to a sudden standstill, and soon departed after my bearer had selected the number required. The game itself, played on a dusty aerodrome, produced far more exercise than we had bargained for, as

TO REMEMBER

it frequently became necessary to dismount and lift our donkeys round to face the direction we wished them to follow.

The only casualty was my Flight Sergeant, who was so surprised at encountering his Flight Commander riding a donkey en route to the Mess, that he overbalanced owing to the magnificence of his salute, and fell backwards into an open drain.

W.O. Shaw

While with the Royal Flying Corps at Kabegh in Arabia, in 1916, our eagerness for Christmas mail got us into a spot of trouble which might have had disastrous results. Our Flight, detached from No. 14 Squadron in Egypt was accommodated on a small liner in the harbour, and instead of marching to work we were taken ashore in boats. The skill at rowing which we thus acquired gave us the idea that we knew something about seamanship.

The launch belonging to our guard ship, a naval sloop, was having engine trouble and we were invited to give a hand. This we did and tested the results of our work by cruising round. This was Christmas Eve. The supply ship from Egypt, carrying Christmas mail, was due in, and we thought it would be fun to go outside the harbour and see if she was in sight. We had a lovely run out, picked up the mail ship about a mile or so outside, and turned to follow her back to harbour. Then the fun began.

The launch was not the same boat going back against the breeze and sea, and in two or three minutes we had shipped a wave which swamped the engine and we drifted broadside on.

We dried out and restarted, only for the same thing to happen again. So it went on, starting up, going a few yards and then being washed out. It took us almost two hours to get to the harbour where we had to fend our craft off a small reef with the boat hooks, while the engine was coaxed into action. We eventually reached the side of the ship and as we had all been sick and were thoroughly drenched, we looked a sorry party as we climbed the gangway

Squadron Leader Chambers

Christmas in the Service, did you say? Well yes, I have seen a few! I remember one at a place named Dardoni in Waziristan. Now the chances are that old Campbell of the B.B.C Brains Trust has never been to that place; in fact if he goes there now there is nothing to see.

I remember in 1924 we spent Christmas in Dardoni Fort; I was a corporal at the time. Dardoni was only 8 miles from the Afghan frontier. To get there it was 79 miles from Kohat, and then 45 from Bannu. Tucked away like that it was a case of the lads making their own fun.

Our cook was a character known from one end of the frontier to the other as "Butch." Nothing on either two legs or four was ever safe when Butch was about—that is if it would fit into his oven or cooking pots. It always struck me as strange that we should have turkey for Christmas dinner and the sacred peacocks of the Rajputhan Regt. should disappear about the same time, but it was no good asking Butch for an explanation—he had the best poker face on the frontier.

The lads really let themselves go at a comic football match in the afternoon. The costumes would have done credit to Southend Carnival.

The day was marred slightly by Butch having to be put to bed about teatime. Then someone had the bright idea of forming a wall of empty bottles round his bed. When that was completed a lighted candle was placed in each corner bottle. When old Butch awoke he had the shock of his life; he thought that all his sins had caught up with him.

Ten years afterwards I met Butch again. He still says the best Christmas he ever had was at Dardoni; and his chief reason for saying so was due to the fact that the nearest white woman was 45 miles away.



THE FORT OF AEGEL

MANY an old town in England, lying asleep in the starlight, holds in its silent streets the ghosts of departed centuries. When the last bus rumbles off, and the last reveller has sung his erratic way homeward, the quietness becomes alive. Saxons, Danes and Normans, who built England and fathered Englishmen, seem then to move among the shadowy buildings, and the past is as if it had never died.

Walk in Aylesbury in the cruel light of day, and you will see a maze of narrow streets in which buses, cars, cycles and human beings struggle for possession. It is not an inspiring sight.

But you are looking for somewhere to have tea, then for a cinema, or a pub, or both. All these you will find. Then you will stand in a queue in the darkness of Kingsbury Square, waiting for a bus; while matches flicker occasionally, periods of silence are broken by muffled laughter and snatches of song, and you wonder if it will rain. If you saw the ghost of a Saxon then, you'd tell him to go to the back of the queue.

Yet Aylesbury, though time has invested it less with charm than with a twentieth-century dinginess, is not unworthy of your interest.

The name is a development of "Aegeles burgh", meaning the fort of Aegel—who was a hero of Saxon times. Aylesbury was a settlement when England was a land of forest and swamps, and its importance derived chiefly from its strategic position in the valley which bears its name. It appears in historical records in 571, when it was captured by the West Saxons from the native Britons. This gave the Saxons command of the Vale of Aylesbury, and was an important stage in the expansion of their influence—whose growth determined the future of England.

When William the Conqueror carried out the last successful invasion of England, Aylesbury became a manor royal, divided among a number of tenants. They held their land on condition that they would supply litter or straw for the King's bedchamber three times a year, and provide three eels for him in winter and three green geese in summer.

The town's last experience of conflict was during the Civil War, when it favoured

Parliament. Several skirmishes were fought nearby. At the scene of one of these about 200 skeletons were unearthed in 1818.

In more recent times it has been famous for its Aylesbury ducks, though disappointment awaits any who expect to meet these birds wandering in its streets.

A tour of the town these days usually resolves into a round of the hostels. This is fortunate, for they include some fine old buildings. Many of them face into the cobbled Market Square, where you can acquire a thirst on Saturday afternoons by looking for bargains among the stalls.

The Old King's Head is said to date from the fifteenth century, but the present building is of Tudor construction. It has a beautiful mullioned window and a hall whose ceiling is almost in its original condition.

Equally ancient is the Bull's Head, where there are some exquisitely carved oak beams. Some of these are made from ships' ribs.

From the Square you can go by Temple Street and Temple Square to Church Street, the most picturesque in the town. There you will find the parish church of St. Mary, originally a Norman building, but with only the crypt and font remaining of the early structure. The rest has been altered or added to—for example, the clock tower was erected to commemorate the Restoration of Charles II.

In Church Street is the County Museum, with relics that recall many of the outstanding episodes of Bucks history. Not everybody cares for museums, but for those who do—and for anyone who likes to realise that the present is but an echo of the past—it must be comforting to know that admission to this museum is free, and that it is open on Saturdays in winter until five o'clock.

These are some of the unusual places in Aylesbury. There are many more—quaint corners in out-of-the-way streets where beamed and gabled houses transport you to another era, and you are visited by a chastening reflection: that years ago men talked here in a strange language that we would not understand, though it was the parent of our own; men who were convinced that the Vale of Aylesbury was the central point of a flat world, and that only gods could fly.

No. 1 (APPRENTICES') WING

MID-TERM week-ends have now been enjoyed by all entries, and we have now "entered the straight" leading towards Christmas leave.

On November 13 we were honoured by the presence of the A.O.C. in C. Group, Air Vice Marshal Fraser, who took the salute at a ceremonial parade of the Wing.

The previous Saturday the Bishop of Oxford had confirmed some 40 apprentices. After the ceremony tea was taken in Mrs. White's excellent Naafi.

S/A/A. Mullins and L/A/A. Oxenford had the privilege of playing the Royal Salute for Their Majesties the King and Queen when they recently visited an R.A.F. Station "somewhere in the Midlands".

The Rugger team continued their success until they lost the return match with Stowe. The following week they also lost to R.A.F. Ruislip in a close game, in which their opponents averaged 2½ stone more per man. Against Aylesbury they returned to form again and won in attractive style.

The Soccer team has improved vastly. New young players have been tried out, and these have certainly not let down the side. The XI has now really learnt to play together as a team, and, while it is difficult to pick out any individual, C/A/A. Richmond has shown consistently fine form at right back. A great deal of coaching has been put in by Sergeant Bedford, and he is most gratified with the results achieved.

The Wing Cross Country team has won its matches when representing No. 1 Wing, but as we always provide 95 per cent. of the Station Cross Country team you will find their achievements reported under that section.

The start of the inter-Squadron Barrington-Kennet trophy matches was on November 27, with Hockey and the Cross-Country Race. These matches are great "upsetters" of form

and there are no certainties.

The Wing was pleased to have a visit from two ex-aircraft apprentices early in November—Ex C/A/A. Carruthers and Ex C/A/A. Howard. They passed out in July 1942.

Ex C/A/A. Carruthers now displays Sergeant's stripes and Flight Engineer's Brevet, and is on Ops. in Liberators.



Ex C/A/A. Howard also wears a Flight Engineer's Brevet, and holds the King's Commission as a Pilot Officer. He is on Ops. in a Halifax Squadron.

THESE MEN WILL TELL YOU

A number of eminent men have been persuaded to come to Halton to give talks. These are public meetings, open to everyone on the camp.

AIR VICE MARSHAL SIR DAVID MUNRO, K.C.B., C.I.E., M.A. At present Rector of St. Andrews University, Member of the Factory Welfare Board, Secretary of the Industrial Health Research Board and Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Supply.

He will speak on "A State Medical Service." Date—Wednesday, 15th December.

Other speakers in the New Year include Air Commodore P. F. M. Fellowes (leader of the Everest Air Expedition, 1933); Sir Walter Monckton, M.P., K.C.V.O., K.C., a leading Parliamentary figure; Mr. Tom Driberg (ex-William Hickey of the Daily Express) the present M.P. for Maldon; Mr. Ralph Hill, Music Editor of the Radio Times; and Mr. Arthur Bryant, the well-known historian and author.

FALL IN FOR A GOOD TIME ON

Entertainment Parade

WITH "YORICK"

CHRISTMAS will be the chief entertainment event this month. I can't say what form the entertainment will take—that's up to you; but I hope you will enjoy it, and can walk home afterwards.

THIS month the Station Orchestra is giving another concert of light classical music, encouraged by the success of the November concert. The programme this time is much more ambitious.

Music by Any Name

THE principal item will be Schubert's Unfinished Symphony in B Minor. I've no doubt a lot of people will shudder at the thought of listening to music with a title like that. This, however, is so well known that you can forget it is a symphony, and just sit back and enjoy the exquisite melodies. After all, what's in a name?

AT THE CONCERT HALL

- Dec. 6, 7, and 9—Station Orchestra.
- „ 8—E.N.S.A. Concert.
- „ 14—E.N.S.A. Variety.
- „ 15—Polish Concert.
- „ 28—E.N.S.A. Variety.

Two overtures are included in the programme—"Light Cavalry" (von Suppé) and Rossini's "William Tell". It is to be an international affair, for the orchestra will play a descriptive patrol, "Wee MacGregor", by Amers (this should please Scottish listeners); "Glory of Russia", by Yakov Krein; and a selection from Bizet's opera, "Carmen", with its lilting Spanish tunes.

The concert will start off with a march, "Martial Moments", and will include a suite by Rosse with which I'm not familiar, and a selection from "Show Boat", by Jerome Kern, with which I am. Aren't we all?

Soloists

THE orchestra have quite a job of work in hand with this programme. They're playing music which appeals to most of us, and I hope you'll reward Sgt. Carter's enterprise by

turning up to listen. Frederic Kuper will conduct.

It is expected that Dennis Noble will appear on Monday evening. Soloists for the three evenings will be Diana Male, Frederic Kuper, and Norman Hillam.

E.N.S.A.

THE E.N.S.A. shows continue to improve. Henry Hall's visit was a sign that Halton is at last getting some of the top-liners. This month there will as usual be variety shows on alternate Tuesdays.

The next Wednesday concert will be given by six solo artistes, at present anonymous. Don't forget, the Wednesday concerts will be mainly of classical music. If you don't like the classics, don't go. I'm afraid some of the people who went to the Boyd Neel concert last month were bored stiff.

Obviously the entertainment policy on the Station at the moment aims at pleasing people of all tastes. It's no use sneering at the other fellow's likes or dislikes; he has as much right to them as you have to yours.

Incidentally, the Boyd Neel concert was most enjoyable, particularly the two concluding items. There was some disappointment at Harriet Cohen's absence, but the young lady who deputised for her put up quite a creditable performance.

On January 5 the Fleet Street Choir—a choir of mixed voices—will visit the Station.

P.T.I.'s Take the Stage

THE Station concert party is still touring the country. Cpl. Okin and Cpl. Howard hoped to present the show on the Station this month, but owing to booking difficulties (yes, the concert hall's in great demand these days) had to postpone it till January.

When the concert party visited a building site 12 miles beyond Oxford recently they were told after the show that it was the best the men there had seen since the beginning of the war.

Some turns which could not be taken on tour will be seen on the Station. One of them

Entertainment Parade—continued

will be an acrobatic act by four P.T. instructors. (But why should they practise on us?)

What About It?

JILL WINSOME, who with Frankie Middleton does the "glamour girl" act in the concert party, expects to be leaving the Station soon. Here is an opportunity. Somebody will be required to take her place—preferably a W.A.A.F. on the permanent staff, who can dance and sing.

Other new-comers will be welcomed too, of course. The Wings are still backward in sending recruits—only No. 5 Wing seems alive in this respect. To bring fresh talent to light an audition will be held in the concert hall in January, and a special invitation is extended to the bright sparks of No. 1 Wing. What about it, boys?

Sid Fazakerly, who has been accompanist for the concert party since its inception, was "discovered" at one of these auditions. There must be others at the Station who could play an equally valuable part in its activities.

Male Wallflowers

I'VE HEARD good reports of most of the dances run on the Station so far this winter. There's a generous crop of them this month.

Is it true, as a recent Tannoy broadcast implied, that there are numerous timid "male wallflowers" at Station dances? Have a go, gentlemen!

Carols in the Wards

SGT. Summers is training a small choir to tour the Hospital wards on Christmas Eve. Dennis Noble, it is hoped, will be soloist.

Sgt. Summers wants two good basses and tenors. He is to be found at No. 4 Bay, Old Workshops.

Tailpiece

EDWARD SHARP'S production of "Love in a Mist" will be reviewed in the next issue.

One Sunday recently the Station Military Band visited Aylsbury to head the Mayor's Procession to church, and provide the fanfares. In the afternoon a section of the Station Orchestra played at the Officers' Lawn Tennis Club. Then in the evening a dance band was provided for the W.A.A.F. dance. Some of the bandmen played on all three occasions—not bad for a day off!

In the Band No. 3

VIC SAYWELL

MOST people, when they think of a euphonium, have a mental picture of a brass band, with a few of its members marching behind huge funnel-like efforts that emit a monotonous "oompah-oompah" sound. That is not fair to the euphonium. It has a beautiful rich tone, and is in fact a fine solo instrument.

Vic Saywell, leading euphonium player in the Station Orchestra, has a high opinion of its capabilities; and he should know, for he was playing one in a band when he was five, and the euphonium was bigger than he was.



Born in Gillingham Kent, Vic was taught music by his father, who is a leading authority on brass bands and choral singing. Vic was a soloist at the ripe age of twelve.

When he was sixteen he went to London—he was a clerk by now—and became soloist in one of London's brass bands.

With the band he did several broad-casts and gramophone recordings, in which some of his solos were featured.

Just before the war he was invited by a well-known recording firm to make two records, with solo euphonium and piano accompaniment. These records were the first of their kind, because hitherto the deep notes of the euphonium had had too drastic an effect upon the wax, and in brass band recordings it was always put as far away from the microphone as possible.

As his recordings were in the nature of an experiment, he had to put up with a certain amount of messing around. First of all, he had to play his selections over for timing; then he had to make a wax impression which was played back to him to let him know what he sounded like. Finally, there was the problem of where to put the microphone. He would play a few bars, the engineers would stop him and move the "mike", and he'd play a few bars more; and so on until they were satisfied.

Vic became A.C. Saywell about three years ago, and in due course reached Halton. He is now with Station Flight.

George Carter, on the look-out for talent, soon had him in the Station Military Band. George also introduced him to the trombone, which Vic had not played before, and to-day he is quite at home with this instrument. He is a member of all three Station bands.

Being in the band has advantages, but a church parade on a cold morning is not one of them. On one occasion, Vic remembers, it was so cold that the valves of the instruments froze up, and they could play just one note. When the order to march was given, instead of a triumphal chord the band produced a series of mournful blasts that were like the last trumpeting of a dying elephant.

Station Shows Reviewed

"PRIDE of the REGIMENT"

A BURLESQUE is not so easy to put over. It entails steering a careful course between over-emphasis and straight playing, and demands a good deal of imagination from every member of the cast.

It would be an overstatement to suggest that these demands were met completely in the recent Station production of "Pride of the Regiment". There were occasional lapses, but on the whole the atmosphere was maintained with sufficient subtlety, and the result was a very fine evening's entertainment.

Inaudibility

I saw the show on Wednesday, when the audience was not at first very responsive. The opening scene, feeble in itself, was not improved on this occasion by the inaudibility of much of the dialogue. A stranger to the plot would have had difficulty in knowing what it was all about. From then on, however, it picked up, and when L.A.C. Conrad Vince was heartily hissed on his second appearance it was clear that the audience had entered into the spirit of the piece, and all was well.

Highlights were de Vavasour's dastardly wooing of Millicent in the first act, and the chorus with which the act concluded. In the second act the delightful scene between the General and the Prime Minister, and their subsequent capture by Miss Adelaide and Miss Agatha, was cleverly done. Some of the best comedy was put into the unmasking of de Vavasour as the Terror. This was real burlesque, beautifully sustained, and the departures from the original script helped it along. The "disguised" label on Brown's back was a stroke of genius; but surely it should have disappeared when the disguise was discarded.

Vince's Performance

The best all-round performance in my opinion was given by L.A.C. Conrad Vince as Captain de Vavasour ("Call Me Rudolph"). He got all the fun he could out of his part, which was a lot. His songs came over well, and every word was distinct. The sinister character of de Vavasour was laid on thick, but it was maintained: even when he was only standing

at the side of the stage de Vavasour was thoroughly bad.

L.A.C.W. Middleton rose to the occasion superbly as Miss Millicent Blazes. Her acting was good, and her singing true and pleasant. She was the incarnation of Victorian dependence on the male, of womanhood on the rack of indecision, and lacking courage to do anything about it. (This was before the W.A.A.F. era.) An excellent performance.

Sgt. Sieverdink, as General Sir Joshua Blazes, was obviously determined to carry all before him, and succeeded. His little homily at the end was a lovely bit of work, but indeed it can be said that he was outstanding throughout. His foil, the Prime Minister, was played by Sqdn. Ldr. Cashell: a delightful characterisation. The caricature in this case was not overdone; Sqdn. Ldr. Cashell's Prime Minister might have stepped out of a novel of Disraeli.

Joy to Behold

Flt. Lieut. Gottlieb played Lieut. Brown adequately enough, but I felt did not quite convey the whitewashed priggishness of a comic opera hero. His singing was good, and his gypsy disguise a joy to behold.

Miss Adelaide (A.S.O. Tilley) and Miss Agatha (Sister Church) suffered from the concert hall acoustics; much of what they said could not be heard distinctly. But on the whole they made the best of their not very exciting parts. In the small part of Miss de Lacy, Cpl. Boys was very good indeed.

Efficient Production

The settings and costumes were excellent, and the production (in the hands of Flt. Lieut. Steiner) very proficient. The Station Orchestra, directed by Sgt. George Carter, was efficient and unobtrusive. I think the chorus deserves a special word of praise. Except for a slight raggedness here and there, it was well drilled, and backed up the principals admirably.

Altogether "Pride of the Regiment" did what it was meant to do: it entertained the troops. I hope, however, that for the next show the cast will be provided with better material.

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

THERE was a time when the Station Orchestra presented programmes which were neither straight music nor swing, but a mixture of the two. As a result it pleased only the few who enjoy both. Nowadays it leaves dance music to the dance band, and gives lovers of straight music a chance to hear their favourite compositions. The change is welcome.

Under the direction of George Carter the orchestra has been built up until now it is really worth hearing. The concert it presented last month was excellent, and many of the audience must have been agreeably surprised by its precision and tone. That is not to say that all was perfect. Despite the inspiring leadership of Frederic Kuper, the violins were still the weakest section, though they are much better than they were. Unfortunately violins are easily affected by the atmosphere, which perhaps accounts for an occasional falling off on their part.

One of the most interesting items was the "Alpine Echoes" fantasia, in which Roy Swinburn and Jock Tassart were heard to advantage. The "Morning, Noon and Night" overture was very well done; the players in this case particularly showing a responsiveness to the demands of the conductor which is seldom encountered in part-time orchestras.

I was disappointed in the rendering of Edward German's "Nell Gwyn" dances, in

which the violins were slightly out of tune. But the whole orchestra, violins included, rose nobly to the occasion in the concluding item, "Orpheus in the Underworld". This came over splendidly, and made a fitting finish to an excellent programme.

Frederic Kuper led the orchestra with great verve and enthusiasm. His conducting I heard criticised as being rather flamboyant. I'm far from agreeing with this judgment. Any conductor who wants to get into the spirit of the music must let himself go. The effect on the orchestra is to make them play music, and not just a series of notes.

His solos were beautifully played, as one expected. The other soloist from the orchestra, Norman Hillam ('cello), gave a very enjoyable performance.

Kathlene Flynn, making her first appearance on the Station, was a distinct success. Although her voice did not appear to have a very wide range, it was well controlled, and of a pleasing quality. George Carter's piano accompaniment was just right.

I think the fairest comment on the show is that one could listen to the music without having to make allowances for the fact that it was being played by an amateur orchestra. The phrasing and attack reached a professional standard, and—most important of all—the spirit of the music was properly interpreted. There was nothing wooden about the performance.

STATION CINEMA

Best film on the December list is a re-issue—*Lost Horizon*, starring Ronald Coleman. *Quiet Wedding* can also be recommended.

- Dec. 6—*After Midnight* (Chester Morris).
- .. 9—*Laugh Your Blues Away* (Jinx Falkenburg).
- .. 12—*Always in My Heart* (Kay Francis, Walter Huston).
- .. 13—*Crime Smasher* (Frank Graham, Edgar Kennedy).
- .. 16—*The Desperadoes* (Randolph Scott, Clare Trevor).
- .. 19—*Quiet Wedding* (Margaret Lockwood, Derek Farr).
- .. 20—*Redhead from Manhattan* (Lupe Velez, Michael Duane).
- .. 23—*Something to Sing About* (Don

Ameche, Janet Blair).

- .. 26—*Navy Blues* (Ann Sheridan, Jack Oakie).
- .. 27—*Rhythm Serenade* (Vera Lynn, Peter Hill). Children's shows at 2.30 on these three days.
- .. 30—*Lost Horizon* (Ronald Coleman)

Note:—The camp cinema runs two shows on Monday and Thursday—17.15 and 20.00 hrs.—and on Sunday—14.00hrs. and 18.00hrs. Other nights 19.00hrs. Seats at 1s. and 1s. 3d. may be booked in advance by telephone-ext. 65- or at the cinema. The booking office is open from Monday to Saturday from 10.00 to 12.30 hrs. and 16.30 to 20.00 hrs.; and on Sunday from 13.30 to 20.00 hrs.



A FEW weeks ago two members of the Station Rucker team had the honour of appearing in a R.A.F. trial on the Uxbridge ground. This has set me thinking. I know there are not many big matches going round, and the competition to stage the few that there are is intense. We congratulate Uxbridge on staging the Rucker trial, and beg leave to put in a plea for Halton to be given some future opportunity of putting on a "star" sporting fixture.

Pep Up the Interest

THERE is intense interest in all forms of sport on this Station. So far only the top layer of possibilities has been touched, and even at this most of the sports are reporting improved performances and better results. What is wanted now is something to stir some of the talent, now lying dormant, into activity. I have never been one to plug the "Big Game" complex—many internationals do not produce as much classic play as a match between school-boys—but here is a case where something "a bit different" would pep up that extra interest in Station sport.

All the Facilities

I REALISE that in putting forward this idea I am quite likely to get few thanks from those who undertake the arduous job of organising the various games and who might not fancy the extra effort entailed by the "big occasion". But, I submit, Halton is big enough to warrant something out of the ordinary and, what is more, has the facilities to put it on. I have heard the cricket ground spoken of in envious terms by more than one County man; the stadium is an ideal setting for Soccer; and both Rucker and Hockey are well catered



for. We have the means and it remains to secure the end, if possible without too much delay.

SOCCER

DESPITE the disappointment of an exit from the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup in the second round the Soccer side is settling down satisfactorily and winning matches. The ever-present difficulty of securing a regular team, due to duties, week-ends, leave and postings, proves a big handicap and one which is perpetually hovering in the background.

Wanderers' Win

IN the first round of the Cup the Station was drawn against R.A.F. Wycombe and won, a very good performance. Another Wycombe side had to be met in the second round, this time the famous Wanderers, in pre-war days prominent members of the Isthmian League. Halton rarely looked like a winning team, but the score, 3-1, does full credit to the fine play of Sgt. Smith, at centre half, and L.A.C. Robinson in goal. Only amateurs are allowed to play in these matches, and as it was an away game the Station did well.

For Charity

CONVINCING wins have been gained over R.A.F. Wing and Intalbury, and in both these games Sgt. Spencer did some heavy scoring. Several of the games arranged with army units have had to be cancelled, but the fixture list provides for a number of home matches in the next few weeks. Proceeds of some of the games are earmarked for charity, and already more than £20 has been devoted to benevolent funds.

No. 5 Wing Leading

ALL the games for the first half of the season in the Station Soccer League have been completed. No. 5 Wing, champions last



SPORT

Hooker"

season, are leading again, having won six games out of seven played. The tabl. reads:—

	P.	W.	D.	L.	Goals		Pts.
					F.	A.	
No. 5 Wing -	- 7	6	0	1	26	12	12
Hospital -	- 7	4	2	1	20	13	10
No. 3 Wing "A" -	- 7	4	2	1	17	12	10
No. 4 Wing -	- 7	3	1	3	19	18	7
No. 2 Wing "A" -	- 7	2	2	3	16	16	6
Polish T.T.S. -	- 7	2	2	3	20	23	6
No. 3 Wing "B" -	- 7	2	1	4	10	17	5
No. 2 Wing "B" -	- 7	0	0	7	9	24	0

The R.A.F. Regiment Squadron are entering a team for the second half of the season, which was due to start on December 4.

ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS, and particularly cross-country running, is the only sport in which the apprentices come in with the rest of the Station. What would happen if this were not so I dread to think. The cross-country team is over 90 per cent. apprentices, has an average age of 17½, and has been beating up some of the best distance runners in the South ever since the season started. The credit goes to Sgt. Jones (No. 5 Wing) and Sgt. Donovan (Hospital), who have spent long hours bringing the boys on carefully, and to F. O. Sellers, who is responsible for this sport.

Ran for R.A.F.

F. O. SELLERS brings a wide experience to bear on Station athletics, and we are fortunate to have so worthy a successor to Flt. Lieut. Caddy. While at London University he ran three times at White City in the U.A.U. championships; he appeared for Middlesbrough Harriers, London Athletic Club, Worthing and Watford Harriers, and joined Ranelagh Harriers in 1937, being mainly instrumental in starting a track section for the Ranelagh Club. In 1941 he ran for the R.A.F. against the

SPORTS GALLERY NO. 3

F. SGT. HURST

THOSE who watch Station Rugby will very quickly have noticed a short, thick-set, very active man playing either at stand off half or scrum half, and doing his best to keep the game open. No 2. Wing personnel will have more intimate acquaintance with this enthusiast for whom Rugger is little short of a religion. Any one who admits to the slightest keenness for Rugby will have Flt. Sergt. HURST on his track in quick time. And with his wide knowledge of the game, played in all circles in many different parts of the world, he is no mean judge of a player.

Flt. Sergt. Hurst, born at St. Helens, Lancashire, developed an early interest in all forms of sport, and particularly in Rugby. At 14 he was playing in Junior Rugby Championships, combining his skill at handling with an ability to cover 100 yds in something approaching even time. Flt. Sergeant Hurst might have made a reputation on the track, but his first love was Rugby and sprinting always took second place.



At the age of 18 he joined the R. A. F. That was in 1932, and in the same year he was sent forward for R.A.F. trials. In 1933 came a posting overseas. This, far

from putting an end to his Rugby, started him off on a tour which was to cover all parts of Egypt, the near East and India. Soon after his arrival out East he was chosen to represent R.A.F. Iraq, and the following season was a member of a team which toured the Middle East, playing matches with all the Services at Cairo, and against the Police in Palestine. It was while in Iraq that he met and played with that great Ireland and R.A.F. rugger forward, G. R. Beamish.

After several years in Iraq, Flt.-Sergt. Hurst was posted to India. Karachi was his home base, and while there he met one of the R.A.F.'s great long distance runners, Sam Ferris. In 1936-37 he was playing Rugby for R.A.F. India in such widely separated centres as Karachi, Bombay and Hyderabad.

It was while he was at Karachi that a R.A.F. fifteen was entered for the first time in an all-services tournament at Bombay. They did well, going down in the final by 8-4 to a strong Duke of Wellington's side. R.A.F. Karachi's four points came from a dropped goal from the foot of Flt.-Sergt. Hurst, the first, he says, he had dropped in big Rugby.

In 1939 he returned to England, became captain of R.A.F. Sealand, and made appearances in a number of leading club sides including Sale and Birkenhead Park.

It looked as if Flt. Sgt. Hurst's Rugby had ended in the Spring of 1942 when he was posted to the Outer Hebrides. But the following October he was back helping to build up the Halton side.

STATION SPORT—continued

Army Northern Command and the Northern Counties.

All Experience

THE cross-country team's first big test was on October 16 in a Southern 5 miles' race at Wimbledon Park. Not a lot was expected of a very young team, few members of which had any experience of big racing, but Halton finished tenth out of 23 teams. Out of 158 starters L.A.A. Salmon was first Halton man to finish, in 45th place. More experience was gained in a team match at Oxford, lost by 50-86, and then the Station team competed in its second Southern race of the season, at Dartford on November 13.

For a Special Trophy

A GAIN a young team faced up to a hot field, and excelled itself by gaining fourth place out of 14 teams. In this race the R.A.F. Regiment were represented by Sgt. Thorpe, and L.A.C.'s Webb and Morgan, and A.C. Bohr (No. 5 Wing) ran well in his first race. The Southern organisers are offering a special trophy for the team which shows the greatest improvement in the series of war-time races this season. Our chances of carrying it off will be quite strong with successes like this. The next Southern race is on December 11.

Medals for Apprentices

THE latest success of the team is to gain third place in the North of the Thames race on November 20. Three apprentices, L.A.A. Day (8th), L.A.A. Salmon (11th) and A.A. Hayward (13th) gained medals. Three other Halton teams were entered in this race and all did well. It shows the strength of cross-country on the Station, although it is mostly No. 1 Wing. What about it, the other Wings? The Station championships are on January 8. Are you going to let the apprentices get away with it?

RUGBY

THE two members of the Rugger side who played in the trial at Uxbridge were Flt. Lieut. Smith and Flt. Sergt. Hurst. Both did well, Hurst appearing in the unaccustomed position of centre. Flt. Lieut. Squires was also selected, but was unable to play. In any future trials it would not surprise me to see more of Halton's fifteen appearing. The record of the team, which is still unbeaten after eight

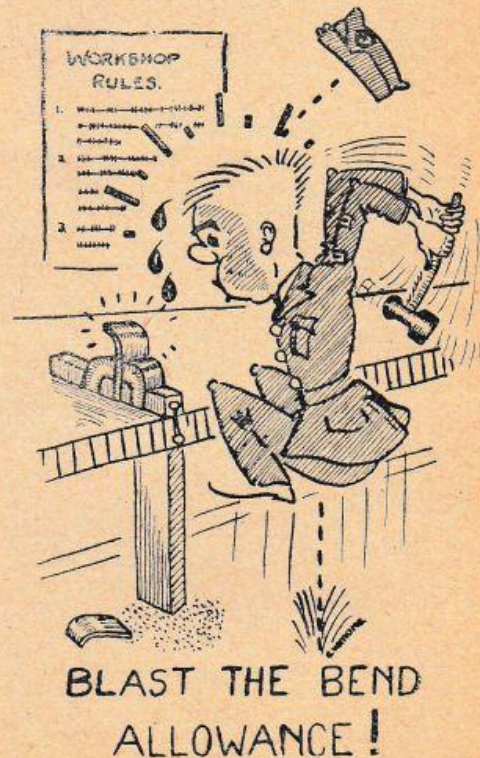
matches and has scored 183 pts. against 18, suggests plenty of first-class talent.

Recruit from Halifax

FOLLOWERS of the Northern League game will be interested to hear that the latest recruit to the side is L.A.C. Brereton, who used to play for Halifax. Brereton's play typifies that subtle difference between the Northern League player and the average Rugby Union man. Although a good, big, heavily built forward, packing in the middle of the back row, he handles and runs like a "three"—a decided acquisition. He played for the R.A.F. last season. Brereton intends to become a Flight Engineer.

Scrum Half Problem Solved

THE problem of scrum half, which had been puzzling Flt. Lieut. Roe, has been solved. Flt. Sergt. Hurst has moved from stand off, his favourite position, to the base of the scrum and settled in comfortably. Hurst takes all



these changes—stand off, scrum, and centre—in his stride, like the born Rigger player. His partner at stand off is Lowe (Hospital), who has played for Leigh in the Northern League.

From Rhodesia

BY the time this column appears I expect that another new-comer, Pike, a centre three-quarter from Rhodesia, will have made an appearance in the side. Pike, by the way, is a heavyweight boxer.

Referees, Please!

BY the way, if any old player considers he is past active playing, Flt. Lieut. Roe would be very glad of help in refereeing the matches. If it's a question of getting fit, the regular Thursday evening practices in the Burnett gym will soon put that right!

SWIMMING

THE Station 100 yards champion, A.C. Wray (No. 4 Wing) was in first-class form when the team competed in the Merchant Navy Gala at Eltham baths on November 20. He won the 100 yards open, beating his previous best time by $\frac{1}{4}$ second.

Challenges

THERE is plenty of initiative among the swimmers on the Station. No. 2 Wing, for instance, fancied their chance and issued a challenge to the Rest, which was taken up. The challengers had the bad luck to have two of their best men sick on the night of the match, but went through with the challenge. They won the diving, but the Rest were too strong at swimming. I gather that the swimmers of No. 4 Wing are now ready to back themselves against all-comers. Any takers?

Water-Polo Recruit

BY the way, No. 4 Wing have a useful new recruit in Cpl. Brown, who has just returned from overseas. He played water-polo regularly for his overseas command, and strengthens the Station team at left back.

HOCKEY

THE position of a team organiser who finds, just as his side is ready to travel, that he is one man short, is not one to be envied. Flt. Sergt. Patching found the Station Hockey side in this unfortunate position for a recent match. A lightning dash round the hockey

pitches, where scratch games were being played, solved the problem. Flt. Sergt. Patching found A.A. Walters changed and ready for a game. He was hustled on to the bus and in a short while was appearing at centre in the Station team on an away ground. Many would be put off by this quick change. Not so Walters. He rose to the occasion superbly, scoring two goals to give Halton the victory.

Strong Team—Few Players

THIS incident serves to remind us of the trials of organising matches. The hockey team is a strong one—unbeaten this season with 17 goals against 7—but the number of players on which to draw is limited.

Discovery

ONE of the discoveries of the season is Sgt. Pettit, a left half. F.O. Partridge and F.O. Day, both of No. 4 Wing, are playing, and this Wing should have a strong team if all the players are available together. This is the big difficulty facing hockey selectors, and they are correspondingly grateful to Sqdn. Leader Crowe for permitting apprentices to play when they are not required for the Wing team.

BILLIARDS

BOTH the billiards and snooker competitions continue to flourish and are, indeed, attracting considerable interest among Wing personnel which do not normally play either of the games. No. 4 Wing are leading at both billiards and snooker, and the latest results show that Cpl. Calvert's 46 break at Billiards, made quite early in the competition, still stands. Cpl. Martin (No. 3 Wing) has taken the lead at Snooker with a break of 25. The latest tables are:—

Billiards

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
No. 4 Wing	-	6	6	0	12
No. 2 Wing	-	6	5	1	10
No. 5 Wing	-	6	3	3	6
Hospital	-	5	1	3	3
No. 1 Wing	-	6	0	4	2
No. 3 Wing	-	6	0	5	1

Snooker

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
No. 4. Wing	-	7	5	2	10
No. 2 Wing	-	6	3	1	8
Hospital	-	6	3	1	8
No. 3 Wing	-	7	2	3	6
No. 1 Wing	-	6	2	3	5
No. 5 Wing	-	6	0	5	1

News from the Wings

No. 2 WING

ONCE again it is gratifying to note that the Wing at "The Top of the Hill" is maintaining its position as "Top of the Station" in most events.

Our social and sports activities for the past month have been very successful, due in all cases not only to the enthusiasm of the Wing personnel, but in an equally large measure to the hard work of the various organisers.

Two very popular and well supported dances were held in the Station Concert Hall, the second of these being a week or so earlier than usual.

In addition, the Tuesday night dances in the Wing Concert Hall, organised by Cpl. McGrath, had their usual good attendances.

It is proposed, after Christmas, to run these dances on alternate Sunday nights, as well as Tuesdays, for the Wing personnel, and a hearty invitation is extended to W.A.A.F.'s from all Wings to come along and join in the fun.

The Sergeants' Mess held a Gala night in the Central Sergeants' Mess on October 2, and this was voted by all present a most enjoyable evening, a credit to the Entertainments Committee of the Mess and that indefatigable worker, F/Sgt. Grange.

"Love in a Mist", produced by Sgt. Sharp, was presented last week. A wealth of hidden talent has been discovered for this production, and for the Wing Christmas Pantomime "Queen of Hearts", now being rehearsed, produced by Cpl. McGrath and managed and directed by W/O. Collins. In addition to these two shows, a very full programme of festivities is being devised for the entertainment of Wing personnel over the Christmas period.

The formation of a Discussion Group in the Wing has been an outstanding success, no fewer than 80 members being present at the opening meeting. The Group is in the very capable hands of Cpl. Keane and Cpl. Budd, and is chiefly concerned with post-war problems. Discussions will be led from time to time by prominent guests, who are authorities on problems connected with post-war reconstruction. Meetings are held every Thursday at 7 o'clock in Hut D, near the Wing Stores.

The Corporals' Club is flourishing, and its members have played a big part in the success of the Wing in the Station Snooker and



Billiards League. The Wing share the top place in the Station Table Tennis League with the Polish Wing, a position for which credit is due not only to the excellence of the players, but to Cpl. Gray.

As usual, our football teams are forging ahead, and have struck a winning vein since the start of the season. Our various other sports activities are noted in the sports columns of this issue.

The Wing Pipe Band, under the direction of Cpl. Mackay, is now in full swing, as can be heard any day when the troops are marching to and from workshops. There is, however, still room for more volunteers, particularly from the permanent staff. It is hoped to form the nucleus of the Band from the permanent staff, so that as the trainee members leave the Station at the end of their courses, the Band will continue to function while fresh volunteers are being instructed in the mysteries of keeping the bag full of wind, and uncovering the right holes at the right time!

News from the Wings

No. 3 WING

ON Hallowe'en No. 3 Wing perpetuated a tradition, the origins of which go back to pagan antiquity. Our curiosity was piqued by the Hallowe'en party, and as a result we did some private, though not very profound, research and discovered some interesting analogies. It appears that Hallowe'en is a Christian replacement of a pagan festival which took place at summer's end, when the sun's power waned and the strength of the gods of darkness, winter and the underworld grew great! It was also the time when evil spirits walked abroad and the powers of darkness had to be propitiated. The Hebridean natives placated their sun god, Shony, by pouring libations of ale on the waters.

We brought all these customs up to date and adapted pagan practice to modern usage. The weaker gremlins were exorcised with stoups of N.A.A.F.I. ale, and their more resistant brethren, unaffected by the potency of the beer, could not withstand the wailing of the pipes, and the frenzied cries and the furious limb thrashing of the dancers.

On arrival everyone received a ticket bearing the name of some personality, and at once proceeded to find a partner. "Fred Astaire" looked for "Ginger Rogers", "Cleopatra" sought her "Antony" and so on.

High praise must go to the Station Band, which did everything asked of it; to the Boys' Pipe Band who provided the right atmosphere, especially for the Eightsome Reel; to the cookhouse and W.A.A.F.'s for the food provided; to the boys who so ably served the beer; and, last but not least, to Flight Officer Klingenberg who made the show possible and acted as M.C.

This month, we hope, will see the beginning of the Ballroom Dancing Classes scheduled to take place in the Dining Hall each Friday at 19.30 hours. We are trying to engage as Instructors two of the leading professional Ballroom Dancers in the country. Names cannot at present be mentioned, but it can be revealed that the female partner has the A.I.S.T.D. Diploma, which guarantees her dancing instructional abilities, and the male partner is an ex-Southern Counties and West of England Ballroom Dancing Champion, who will appear by permission of G.B. Studios. Final details will be announced in the near future, but interested persons can contact

either Cpl. Bottomley, Block 3; Room 2, or Cpl. Hudson, Block 3, Room 5, for immediate "gen".

No. 3 Wing "A" Soccer team are still making excellent progress in the inter-Wing League. On October 16 they opposed No. 5 Wing, who until that date had not conceded a point to any other club. However, the fine team work displayed by our boys was superior to that of No. 5 Wing and an easy victory of 4-0 was recorded. To date the No. 3 Wing "A" team have collected 10 points from the 7 games played, winning on four occasions, with 2 drawn games and only one defeat against.

In these matches LAC. Tatham has distinguished himself at centre-half, and AC. Sharp has put up a stout show in goal. The left wing has proved particularly strong, with AC. Melton at inside-left, LAC. Osborne at outside-left, and LAC. Allan at left-half.

The Billiards and Snooker teams have enjoyed all their matches without meeting with consistent success. They were very pleased at having held the Hospital to a draw in both matches. The Billiards team won two of their last four matches, and were very unfortunate in losing their away match to No. 5 Wing. The reasons for the defeat are aptly given in "The Mikado". Like the billiards sharp, we were condemned to play, "On a cloth untrue, with a twisted cue, and elliptical billiard balls".

Although we have lost two of our best players, and are finding some difficulty in raising a team worthy of the Wing, we can say in all humility, that we are still good enough for the best.

An innovation was made in the "Downbeat" programme on Thursday, November 25, when Mr. Ralph Hill, the Music Editor of the *Radio Times*, gave the first of his series of talks on British Music. The commentary was illustrated with records of compositions by Elgar, Delius and Vaughan Williams. In a 15-minute discussion which followed, the interest taken in this new approach to music was evident.

Christmas Entertainment plans are well under way, and will begin with a Grand Christmas Eve Party Dance in the Concert Hall. Watch out for the full Christmas Day programme to be announced shortly.

News from the Wings

No. 4 WING

CONGRATULATIONS are extended to W/O. W. Shaw and Cpl. W. Okin, who were recently awarded "Certificates of Appreciation".

Recent decoration of some of the barrack rooms and huts has been very much appreciated by the occupants. Decorating has been carried out under the self-help scheme, owing to the acute shortage of labour. The speed at which all rooms can be decorated depends largely on the help received from the occupants during their off-duty hours. N.C.O.'s i/c rooms and huts, RAF, and WAAF, wishing to organise a working party for the decoration of their own rooms should contact the Officer i/c Squadron, while necessary materials are still available.

Something for Everybody

No. 4 Wing is doing extremely well in all games and entertainments. Keep your eyes on the "What's On" boards. There is something on every week, for everybody.

Billiards and Snooker.—Each Monday. Games on inter-wing basis proceeding. We top the League. F/Sgt. Morrell and Cpl. Calvert i/c.

Chess.—Each Tuesday. Won the match against No. 5 Wing, and drew with No. 1 Wing. Any keen chess players should contact Cpl. Ensor who will be pleased to see them. In the near future an expert chess player is to visit Halton to play 20 simultaneous games.

Table Tennis.—Each Thursday. Games are proceeding on inter-wing basis. N.C.O. i/c, Cpl. Steer.

Whist Drives.—Friday Bi-weekly. Although quite recently re-opened these drives are going well. Really good prizes given. N.C.O. i/c, Cpl. Goldby.

Darts.—Competition going on. An inter-wing league is now being formed. Also inter-section games will soon be played. N.C.O. i/c, Sgt. Offa.

Successful Dances

Dances.—A most successful dance has recently been held. Watch No. 4 Wing Dances in future. They'll be good. Remember our New Year's Eve dance, and don't be late

getting your ticket. Available on the 20th at Squadron Offices.

Swimming.—We competed with No. 2 Wing on Wednesday, December 1. Our team are hoping to obtain full points in the Victor Ludorum competition. Any keen swimmers RAF, and WAAF, should contact Sgt. Gray, N.C.O. i/c.

Soccer and Rugby

Soccer.—Our Soccer team has had quite a good first half of the season. Although now without the services of the Regiment, they look forward to finishing the season well. Sgt. Coombes and Sgt. Burnicell will welcome players.

Rugby.—Our team made a good start, beating No. 2 Wing 21-10 in a friendly. They play them again shortly in the League. Having four or five players in the Station XV, it is often difficult to field a wing XV. Therefore more players are needed, and Sgt. Bright will be very pleased to get assistance.

The WAAF section have still many interests. Their Sunday dances in the Concert Hall are going well. Collections for the Red Cross are now being taken at Pay Parades, or when visiting the Squadron Office. This is helping a splendid cause. In the near future a series of Lectures on various parts of Europe will be held in the two NAAFIS. Further information later. No. 4 Wing WAAF Section are now busy producing a pantomime for the New Year. Watch for this, it should be good!

Jam Session

A Jam Session held on November 23 by the RAF Regt. was a great success, and it is hoped to hold more of this form of entertainment from time to time. The aim is to hold some form of entertainment once a week in the Institute.

Facilities exist for Miniature Rifle Shooting at No. 4 Wing Rifle Range. (Situated next to the R.C. Church.) Practice takes place each Monday evening. All Ranks in No. 4 Wing are cordially invited. Come along and see what you can do. Inter-section matches will shortly commence and should prove attractive. W/O. Greaves i/c.

Polish Air Force Twenty-five Years Old

TWENTY-FIVE years ago on November 5, 1918, the first three Polish Aircraft took off for their first operational flight. That event started the history of the Polish Air Force, but for a long time before this the Poles had developed the ideas of aviation and as long ago as 1885, long before the experiments of the Wright brothers and Lillienthal, the Polish scientist, DRZEWIECKI, had worked on the problems of flight and the theory of the airscrew.

Between the two Great Wars Poland undertook the hard task of building up and developing her Air Force. The land was completely devastated and the State had to pay her War Debts. The financial situation was very critical and Poland could not create as enormous an Air Force as Germany did.

International Successes

But in spite of financial difficulties the Polish Air Force achieved many successes in International competitions. We may mention the flight around the Mediterranean in 1925 by Col. Rayski; the flight from Warsaw to Tokyo and back by Lt. Orłowski in 1926; the flight from Warsaw to Baghdad, Iraq, by Major Idzikowski and Major Kubala who made two attempts to cross the Atlantic Ocean, but the last ended tragically, Major Idzikowski being killed in a crash over the Azores.

In 1931 two Polish officers started on a flight around Africa, and afterwards around Europe, covering a distance of more than 4,000 miles. A year later Col. Karpinski flew from Warsaw to Kabul, Afghanistan, and back through Syria and Egypt, a journey of about 10,000 miles. In 1935 Col. Skarzynski crossed the southern Atlantic en route from St. Louis de Senegal, West Africa, to Maceio, Brazil, in a low powered tourist plane.

Germany Beaten

In 1930 Polish pilots took part in a "Challenge" competition. The conditions were hard, and the first three places were won by Germans. In 1932 the second Challenge was won by the Polish Crew, Lt. ZWIRKO and WIGURA, the designer of the victorious sporting aircraft RWD-6. The Victory in this "Challenge" was of a great importance to Poland, as Germany had the better Air Force

at that time. The next Challenge competition, in 1934, brought a great victory for Polish Wings, when the first two places were won by Polish pilots, Capt. BAJAN and Lieut. PLONCZYNSKI.

Heroic Deeds

On the September 1, 1939, the Polish Air Force had 400 aircraft (some obsolete) against the 3000 modern and strongly armed German aircraft. These 400 aircraft had to oppose the heavy German attacks and no one wonders now that the courage and skill of the Polish pilots could not stand up to the heavy German war machine. Owing to the mobility of modern warfare many aircraft were required for operational tasks, and the Polish Air Force was much too small to withstand the heavy pressure of the German war machine, though during these September days heroic deeds were done to stop the enemy. But all these endeavours ended tragically, though in spite of their inequality in strength Polish pilots shot down about 130 enemy aircraft.

In 1939, the Polish Air Force and Army were re-formed in France, and in 1940 some of the flying units flew together with French squadrons over the battle-front and some were used behind the lines for defence. On the 24 May, 1940, one Polish Bomber Squadron was ready for action, but did not fly as France collapsed soon afterwards. During the French campaign Polish pilots shot down 55 enemy aircraft.

Battle of Britain

After France collapsed, the Polish Air Force came to Britain and here the first Polish Squadrons were formed. They took part in the Battle of Britain and their achievements up to October 1, 1940 included 605 enemy aircraft destroyed, 159 probably destroyed and 208 damaged. Polish Bomber pilots have made many operational flights over Germany and have dropped an appreciable percentage of the total load dropped by the Royal Air Force.

The Polish Air Force is bigger now than ever, and is fighting at the side of the Allied Nations for the final victory and for the establishment of a free and strong Poland.

The Eyes of the Fleet

Thrills and Comedies on the "Floating Ditty Box"

So much is heard these days of the great part which aircraft carriers are playing, and will play, in this war, particularly in the Pacific, that it pays to look back to the days when this deadly weapon was in its infancy. A.C. Allen, now with No. 3 Wing, spent two years on board H.M.S. "Argus" just after the Great War. Here he recalls some of his experiences and the thrills (and occasional comedies) of the early days of experiment with carrier-borne aircraft.

H. M.S. ARGUS, veteran aircraft carrier, the first carrier built to enable planes to land on her while at sea, did not begin life as a unit of the British Fleet. She was being built for a foreign power at the outbreak of the Great War. Commandeered by the Government she was converted and launched in 1917, and nicknamed "The Floating Ditty Box" by the personnel of the Fleet. I spent almost two years aboard her as an A.B. during 1922-24. During that time I saw many a crash at sea, and spent hours in boats assisting to salvage the "overshoots" and those that fell in the sea for divers reasons.

Comedy Boxing

There was endless amusement for the crew in those days. Perhaps some readers will remember the aircraftman who supplied the ship's company with great fun in a comedy boxing role. He did his training on the flying deck, dressed in shorts and sweater and carrying on his chest and back the lead weights of a diver's equipment. His feet were encased in the diver's heavy, lead-soled boots. (P.T.I.s please note.)

Many were the types tested from *Argus*. The "Cuckoo", Fairey "Flycatcher" and "Panther" were among the now museum pieces that were used as training craft. The "Queen Bee" radio controlled aircraft was tested from the deck of the ship, the whole ship's company, or those of us who could dodge our appointed tasks, lining the nets of the flying deck on this memorable occasion.

Ironic Cheers

"Wings", our name for the Wing Commander O.C. R.A.F., paraded the flying deck and explained to us ignorant men of the sea how, what and why. I have often wondered what

"Wings" thought when, after the failure of the first flight, and the midget plane had crashed in the sea to be cut in two by the moving ship's bow, an ironic cheer rose from the said men of the sea.

A short time elapsed, improved launching arrangements were made, and we put to sea early one morning with an escort of two destroyers. The arrival overhead of the controlling aircraft (yes, it was controlled from the air) was the signal for the flying tests to commence. The lusty infant roared along the deck and rose gracefully into the air. The cheers were different now; they were cheers of success. But alas, the duration was short. The midget plane turned, banked and looped, but owing to lost height crashed into the sea. The men above had no means of ascertaining her height!

Hole in the Deck

During the time of my service aboard there were no fatal crashes, but some were spectacular. One pilot, who struck the edge of the flying deck and landed across the two after A.A. guns, was taken from the wreckage with a broken leg, saying: "What have I done!"

A pilot who was slightly nervous of landing made several attempts, coming to within inches of the arrester wires and each time opening up and pulling away, much to the chagrin of the flying deck staff, one of whom was heard to say: "Why the hell doesn't he get down?" He did. By an error of judgment he dropped the extra inches, the grips on his undercart touched the wires and held, unknown to the victim, who as usual opened the throttle. The wires stretched, but there was a limit, and the aircraft struck the deck with a resounding thud. Result—one damaged aircraft and a hole in the deck. The pilot? Oh, just a few teeth missing.

One other item of interest. While on a trip to Scapa Flow in 1925 a machine was flown off to L———, an R.A.F. station in the North. This plane conveyed the ship's mail for posting ashore. This, perhaps, was the first ship-to-shore air-mail.

Now there are bigger, better and faster carrier ships afloat. But the old veteran *Argus* played her part.

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The Halton Society

THE brief history of the Society, given in our September article, referred to its development from the original Halton Debating Society. It is, therefore, only fitting that the Debating Section should now have become a regular weekly feature in the activities of many of the present apprentices.

The reconstituted Debating Society serves a double purpose—as a recreational debating society, and as an outgrowth of the English and general studies' Syllabus, providing some training in the art of the spoken word. This latter aim finds its realization in purposeful activity which has its full portion of wit, humour and amusement of a very real kind. Variety in form is the keynote—with only one unchangeable requirement: that the apprentice members should get the opportunity of practice in the art of oral self-expression.

The society now has an active membership of over sixty. To date there have been debates, a mock trial, open discussions, lecturettes and a Brains Trust meeting. The Society meets on Wednesday evenings in No. 1 Wing Gymnasium at 19.30 hrs.

A new feature of the Society is the recently formed Records Section. It is not generally realised that an average of one in every six apprentices has obtained a commission since leaving Halton. A full record of this large body of ex-Haltonians exists, and one object of the new branch is to keep it up to date. The list of ex-apprentices who have been decorated or mentioned in despatches is being completed. Lastly, a Roll of Honour is being prepared, which will be a memorial worthy of those who have fallen in their Country's service.

The most recently arrived Entry of apprentices, have almost unanimously elected for membership of the Society. Enquiries should, where possible, be addressed to the Officer in charge of the particular section in which the enquirer is interested, but information may also be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Flt.-Lt. Read, in Room 69, The Schools. A special invitation is extended to budding printers, since the present exponents of this art, though very keen, are few in numbers.

A piano, in first-class playing condition, will shortly be at the disposal of those members who would like to spend an occasional hour in playing it. This facility may only appeal to a few, but it is thought that by those few it will be much appreciated.

'God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen'

THE idea in the minds of many people when they wish each other a "merry Christmas" does not go down very deep, and might be generally interpreted "hope you have a good time, and that the bills won't be too bad on January 1st!"

The padres of this Station would like to take this opportunity, not only of wishing all who read this magazine a merry Christmas, but also of trying to say what they mean by the wish. By "Christmas", of course, they mean the mass or feast of Christ's Birthday, the celebration of the first Christmas present—the Gift of God to the world.

By "merry" they mean to suggest a sense of satisfied good fellowship, a sense of being happily related to God and to our fellowmen.

All the cares and anxieties deep-seated in the heart of man and mainly inspired by doubt and worry concerning the quality of his life in relationship to God, are dispelled once he adopts and realises the good fellowship of Christ's brethren; so that far from Christmas being a mockery in war-time, and the Christian faith, as some suggest, vain it seems to us that the Star of Bethlehem shines with a more transcendent glory in the darkness of this war-torn world than in the years when our Christ-masses were, as we think, superficially carefree and merry.

All that has quenched that sort of merriment, all that has filled the world with trouble, is seen more clearly than ever to be due to either the rejection or the forgetting of Christ, Who is the only unfailing Light and Joy and Peace that the world has ever known. So, in His Name, we wish you to enjoy, as He would have you enjoy it, "a merry Christmas!"

ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

WHETHER Halton is a high-class vineyard is a subject for academic debate. But nobody will contend that any fault can be found with the labourers therein. Now, as we go to press, we hear that two of them, Padres Groves and Little, are posted. We should like to pause from our labours and, in a state of suspended animation, thank them for all the hard work they have done here. Many individuals have been helped by their good counsel and the whole camp has benefitted from their endeavours. We wish them every success in their new state of life.

NIGHTMARE

IT MAY be argued that recurrent nightmares are no subject for a camp magazine, their true place being the medical psycho-analytical journals; but I have reason to believe that my particular type of the affliction has been experienced by many others under the stress of the unnatural conditions in which we are living. In any case, after suffering it last night for the fourth time, I feel it will afford me some relief if I set it down on paper.

The main theme is always the same. I am compassed about by many faces; human faces, I suppose; but only as a death mask may be said to be human, for all the light of reason and intelligence has been drained, leaving the form, without the spirit of humanity. No speech issues from those lips; the eyes are closed, or open in a trance-like stare.

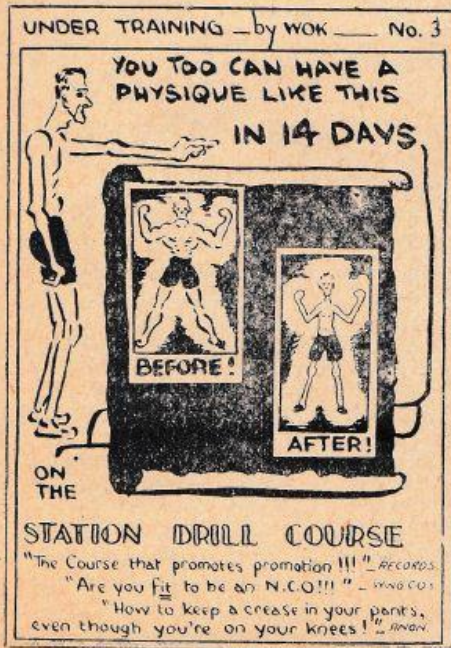
Movement there is, but it is not the animation of volitional beings: all are yielding to the same jerking, swaying rhythm, as in some macabre dance. From time to time all come to rest simultaneously, only to resume their tremulations a minute later. With horror, I realise that I too have joined in the grotesque fandango, swaying as they sway, motionless

only when they are still. Time has suspended its progress. I have been at one with these same quivering automatons since the dawn of history.

At long last a purposeful movement does actuate my grisly companions. It is momentary only but I am swept sideways by the mutual urge, and find myself in new and even more forbidding surroundings: The swarm of moronic faces about me has increased a hundred fold, and now presses closer and closer. The light is dim, and strange breathings, grunts and semi-articulate cries arise from the encompassing gloom. Then comes that strange dream experience of rising in spasmodic stages, without conscious effort, to a height of about ten feet and subsiding again to my original level.

Finally I undergo the age-old nightmare horror of striving to force myself forward to a frantically-desired goal, yet taking an eternity to reach it. I cannot go back, an impassable wall is on my left, and to my right is a new array of dread figures. They stand in a single line, aloof from my somnambulant companions. Their faces, too, are devoid of human feeling and understanding, but they are not vacant; instead, they burn with a devilish, searching intensity. Shall I call them abnormal—or sub-normal?

One last, desperate effort; I pass through a narrow opening—and I am free. The stars are above me, cool air about me, the pressing throng is melting away—and one more nightmare journey from Baker Street is over. A.R.R.



Chess Notes

CHESS is officially on the map. Hitherto, this has been a game for the non-gregarious. In quiet corners of the N.A.A.F.I. embryo Alekhins and Capabiancas have silently pushed their pawns to and fro, unheralded and unacknowledged. But now they have joined forces and organised themselves. A meeting of Unit representatives, under the presidency of Sqdn.-Ldr. Kershaw, was held on November 8, and a committee was elected. Here is their programme. An Inter-Wing League was formed from The Hospital, No. 1 Wing (A), No. 1 Wing (B), No. 2 Wing, No. 3 Wing, No. 4 Wing and No. 5 Wing, each team consisting of 6 players of any rank or sex.

The British Chess Federation have been approached and it is hoped to arrange a simultaneous match against a guest player.

Short Story

The Airman who Didn't Swear

COLIN was different from the other men in the hut. He didn't swear.

There is something about the Service that encourages blasphemy. Perhaps it is the reaction from civilian conventions; or perhaps it is because a uniform brings with it more of the incidents that demand an outlet in picturesque speech.

But Colin, though he had a quick Celtic temper, seemed satisfied with namby-pamby epithets such as curates use when tea is spilled, or they can't find their notes.

"Well, I'll be bothered," he used to say when his frozen fingers dropped a nut, just when he had it in position for screwing on to an almost inaccessible bolt.

Coming from his six feet of Scottish brawn, this mildness seemed inadequate and impossible. Yet try as we might, we could never catch him out. When we chaffed him about it he would smile, and drawl quietly:

"It's no' worth while. There's enough to be done without wastin' time on words that dinna mean a thing."

* * *

Because we liked Colin, we decided that he must be brought into the fold. We agreed that it was bad for him to bottle up his wrath without any means of relief, and finally Taffy, Brummie and I solemnly swore that we'd make Colin swear.

Colin's personal possessions became strangely irresponsible. His treasured razor was missing one morning and he had to borrow mine. He turned out to work like a Red Cross exhibit. Then some occult power swiped his bottle of hair oil, and for days his brown locks wandered over his eyes, and his field service cap bobbed up and down springily as he walked.

He bore this with a patience which endured even when he found bootlaces broken that had been serviceable the previous night; when a Gremlin filled his mug with water so that he almost drowned himself on taking it hurriedly from his locker; when muddy footmarks appeared magically upon his newly polished bed-space.

"I canna understand it," he confided to me. "There must be a jinx on me these days."



Nevertheless, although we had Colin puzzled, we had created resignation rather than anger. It was clear that other tactics must be employed.

When Colin came back from his next weekend the hut was in darkness. He stumbled along to his bed, lit a match—and found no bed. He stood staring at the empty space in bemused silence until the match burned out. Then he lit another, and looked round.

Three biscuits were perched on the rafters. Tied to the rafters were the smaller parts of his bed.

As the match flickered and died, Colin gave a snort of anger.

"Ach, I'll be kicked round the building. For evermore!" he muttered.

In the hush that followed while he thought things out, Brummie exploded.

IN ENGLAND, NOW

In England, now, the trees are bare,
The leaden skies are grey ;
And in the streets of everywhere
The carefree children play,
And there are queues all day.

Oh ! To be in England, now,
And sniff the Northern breeze,
See frost a gleam on grass and bough,
And very gently sneeze
While toes and fingers freeze.

For there the redbreast hops around
And seeks a meagre crumb,
But never any crust is found ;
Salvage experts come
To palace as to slum.

In England, now, the stars look down,
The raiders come and pass,
And life goes on in farm and town ;
The staff of life, alas,
Is one-and- six a glass.

The English countryside is white
And beautiful by day ;
But in the blacked-out inky night
It's very hard to say
How people find their way.

We toil and sweat unceasingly ;
No rest the times allow ;
Yet many a German wishes he
Were safe with his good Frau
In England, now—and how ! P.M.

THE AIRMAN WHO DIDN'T SWEAR—continued

I've never been able to decide exactly what happened next. All I know is that a tornado hit me. When, half-an-hour later, I had succeeded in disentangling myself from the ruins of my bed, Taffy was still buried ; and Brummie, shivering in his shirt, was searching for some blankets. Colin was comfortably tucked up in Brummie's bed.

We decided after this that Nature must take her course. While we still hoped one day to hear Colin open up, we were no longer prepared to furnish the cause.

* * *

A few weeks later it happened. We were out at dispersal when half-a-dozen Jerries raided the airfield. I was with Colin, who shouted to me and made for the Lewis gun mounted beyond the dispersal huts.

I wanted to lie down and die peacefully, but Colin was already at the gun, swinging it round. I flopped down beside him while hell was let loose. Whining, zooming aircraft ; bumps, hot blast and dust ; the rat-tat-tat of machine-guns.

My stomach was performing its usual acrobatics, but—as sometimes happens during such moments of stress—my mind seized on something quite irrelevant.

I looked round at Colin. Jolted by the gun's vibration, he was staring with furious intensity

at the diving Huns, and his tight lips were moving.

"Hell," I thought with wicked satisfaction, "that's done it. He's swearing !"

There was a sudden lull. Brown clouds were billowing from bomb craters. The Jerries were streaking away, and one had smoke pouring from an engine.

In the deafening stillness I heard Colin whispering to himself.

"That got you," he was saying. "That got you . . . you Thing !" T.P.

"ON 36"



PAY ACCOUNTS TELLING YOU

THE WHYS and WHEREFORES of THOSE PAY DEDUCTIONS

We are still not being flooded with enquiries, although four individuals have found something to write to us about. It is hoped that readers will realise that, unless they send us questions, we cannot supply answers. This month's questions and answers are as follows:—

Pay as You Earn

Question. I am a Group 3 Corporal. I have a wife and child, am living out, and in addition to my Service Pay and Allowances, I receive £2 10 0 per week from my Civilian Employer. How am I affected by the "Pay as you earn" income tax scheme?

Answer. There is such a lack of uniformity among Government bodies and civilian firms in regard to the charging of Income Tax that it is necessary to consider each case on its own merits. If you will attend at the Accounts Section on the day and time set aside for queries (see Station Orders) your case will be explained to you; but it is pointed out that the "Pay as you earn" scheme has not become law and is still likely to be subject to a great deal of amendment.

Wife's National Health

Question. I am a married man and my wife is not working and is not a voluntary contributor to National Health. Is she eligible for any National Health benefit?

Answer. The answer to your question in its present form is "No". There is, however, an entitlement to Maternity Benefit but that is purely as a result of your participation in Health Insurance as a serving airman. See also answer to Question No. 1 in last month's issue.

Those Pay Deductions

Question. I am a Corporal ACH.-GD. What are the deductions from my pay (disregarding allotments) and why are they made? Are there any conditions under which a refund of these deductions can be made?

Answer. The only standard and recurring deduction made from your pay is in respect of Old Age Pensions Insurance and amounts to 6d. per week. The advantages of this Insurance are obvious. No refund can be made.

Deductions may also be made for General Barrack Damage and General Barrack Stores charges. The former include damages to buildings and hutments, broken windows, etc., and the latter the loss or breakage of such items as brooms and brushes, cups, saucers and plates.

Where these losses and breakages can be traced to an individual that person is charged, but in a large number of cases the responsible person does not come forward or cannot be traced and the charge has to be divided among the personnel of the Unit. It follows that, if every guilty party "played the game" general charges would not occur or would, at least, be considerably reduced. These charges are normally about 3d. per month at this station. Income Tax is another charge against an account but this would not apply in your case as your Income as a Corporal ACH.-GD is below the taxable figure.

Any other charge against an account would necessitate voucher action and the signature of the individual concerned, admitting liability, would have to be obtained. Refund of these deductions can only be made if any deficient article for which a charge has been made is subsequently recovered.

Superannuation Rights

Question. Before joining the R.A.F. I was an elementary schoolmaster. My Service Pay is made up by the Local Authority. I have just been accepted for aircrew (P.N.B.) and I anticipate that my Service Pay will be greater than my civilian pay. What action must I take to ensure that superannuation contributions are paid and who is responsible for their payment?

Answer. When your Service Pay exceeds your civilian pay you should notify the Local Authority under which you are employed. They in turn, will notify the Board of Education, Pensions Branch, Marine Hydro, Rhyl, who will then get in touch with you and instruct you to forward superannuation contributions direct to them. Provided you continue to pay your contributions, you will retain your full superannuation rights.

Halton Brains Trust

Flight-Sergeant to A.C.H.: "Get me a big pen. This form has got to be filled in with block letters."

* * *

We should like to know the name of the 13-stone member of the Station Rugger Fifteen who was enquiring in a hoarse whisper at the Naafi "Have you any refills of Coty Vif?"

Around Main Point

By "Onlooker"

IT IS with sincere regret that we say good bye to Group Capt. G. R. A. Muschamp, who is leaving the Station. We wish him good luck and every success in the new duties that he is to undertake overseas.

Born in 1898 Group Capt. Muschamp was educated in Switzerland entered the service in 1915 and got his wings early in 1918. During the last few months of the war he was on active service in France as a pilot on Camels with 80 Sqdn. After the war he specialised in engineering and spent two years at Cambridge, followed by overseas service in Malta, Egypt, Singapore, Hong Kong and with the aircraft carriers Eagle and Hermes. At home he served with 10 and 37 Squadrons and in 1930 established a new R.A.F. bombing record.

Since 1938 he has been in Technical Training Command. He came to Halton in May 1942. Group Captain Muschamp recently went on a mission to Africa during which he travelled over 1600 miles by air, and it is to Africa that he will shortly be returning.

Group Capt. Muschamp is keen on most games, and in his younger days was a useful middle-distance and long-distance runner. Before the war he spent most of his holidays in Switzerland, for he is an enthusiastic mountaineer and a member of the Swiss Alpine Club. His hobbies—photography and writing accounts of his travels. His pet aversion—bits of paper and cigarette ends round the workshops!

Other familiar faces will no longer be seen in S.H.Q. Squadron Leader Thompson will be missed not only as the life and soul of most parties, but also for the helping hand he was ready to give in any department of Station life. Flight Lieutenant Catchpole—surely the most urbane and imperturbable of Adjutants—has followed, too, the call of duty; we shall not forget his immaculate handling of the billiards cue and tennis racquet. These officers, whom we had come to regard as foundation members



Group Capt. Muschamp



Group Capt. Thornton

of Halton Society, have folded their tents. We are genuinely sorry to witness their departure. Eheu fugaces!

"Home Again Every Ten Years"

THIS is how Group Captain E. Thornton describes his arrival at Halton, where he succeeds Group Captain Muschamp. He is no stranger to this station, having sojourned here for long periods in 1919 (1st Engineering Course), in 1923, in 1933 and again in 1943. In the workshops and on the Station Cricket Ground he has spent more time than most of us, and it is hoped that next summer we shall see him at the wicket finding relaxation after the ardours of the day. His cricketing record is one to be envied. He played for the R.A.F. from 1920-24 and on two occasions captained the side against the Navy and Civil Service. Although he complains that he now finds difficulty in timing the ball (don't we all!), he is still playing cricket—which he clearly considers to be the best game in the world.

Group-Captain Thornton has a long service history. He went out to France in 1915 with the 21st Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. After six months with the R.E. Signals, he joined the R.F.C as an Observer in October 1916 (No. 9 Squadron). He returned to England to learn to fly and for the rest of the war was a pilot in No. 60 Squadron. After the Armistice he had a varied career in the R.A.F. (including 5 years in India), and among other dangerous things, took part in the R.A.F. Display at Hendon on the first public occasion that aircraft were flown tied together.

Our impression was that Group Captain Thornton is a man who does not like talking about himself and his achievements. But after some pressure he admitted that his leisure interests are in photography, that he has a partiality for country life, and that his pet aversion is the use of the expression "Pro Forma."

AROUND MAIN POINT (continued)

Squadron-Leader the Rev. E. T. Killick

TO be selected for England in two Test Matches, to earn a Cricket Blue at Cambridge three years in succession, to score 200 runs three times in County Cricket—these are achievements which have made E. T. Killick recognised as one of the best amateur opening batsmen of the last 20 years. With this reputation, we welcome him to Halton, where he is to succeed Sqdn-Leader Groves as Senior Church of England Padre.

In a parish of this size the Senior Padre has a big task to perform. A heavy programme of church services, masses of administrative detail, visits to the hospital and sick quarters, personal contacts with individual "cases," welfare work in abundance (he is Chairman of the Welfare Committee); this is all in a day's work.

During the last few years Sqdn. Ldr. Killick has not had much time to give to cricket, having been engaged in remote places with Bomber Command and Combined Operations. We hope that next summer he will be able to take an occasional Saturday afternoon "off" and enjoy himself at the wicket.

* * *

We have tried with moderate success to extract further details from Sqdn-Leader Killick about his past. Here is a brief account. Educated at St. Paul's he captained a Public Schoolboys' team against the 1926 Australian Touring Side. Then to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he got his Blue, and represented the college at Rugger, Soccer, Hockey and Hurdling. Played for Middlesex and was picked as opening bat for England in 2 Tests against South Africa in 1929.

Thereafter he joined the staff at Harrow School as Assistant Chaplain, obtained his first curacy at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, and later became Rector of Letchworth Garden City.

He has served in the R.A.F. since February, 1940, and claims to have established one record, of being the first padre to have flown in a Stirling. We note in his quiet, amiable personality (with one shocking eccentricity—he likes a cold bath every morning.

Heart-throb from St. Athan

WE have received a nostalgic letter from Sgt. Izzard, who, in his time at Halton, was a popular and successful boxing instructor with No. 1 (Apprentices) Wing. He sends his

best wishes to his old friends in the Wing and declares; "I look forward with the greatest of pleasure to my return to Halton in the near future." Here's hoping, Sergeant!

Bless 'em All

IT is our opinion that W.O.'s and N.C.O.'s are much maligned men. We know that the general public consider that they are at best, benevolent despots whose chief skill lies in their ability to get other people to do the work. That is emphatically not our view. We have always found them willing, hard working and conscientious and we are gratified that the Air Ministry confirms our views, for they have sent letters of commendation to W.O.s Beaumont, Shaw, and Worosnop, and Cpls. Challen, Okin and Hinch.



We congratulate the Air Ministry on their perspicacity in recognising the virtues of

honest toil. Hearts of oak are our men!

P.T. to Pictures

WHAT is the affinity between physical training and photography? I am still trying to puzzle this out after saying goodbye to a number of P.T.I.'s and finding that in many cases they intended to remuster to photographer.

Among those who have deserted the gymnasium for the dark room recently is Sgt. Wales, who had been in 4 Wing for quite a time.

Many will remember Sgt. Wales for his at times horrific descriptions of gas warfare and his demonstrations of respirator drill. Not so many will know that before he came into the Service he had achieved international fame as a gymnast, and had captained British teams in gymnastic competitions both at home and on the continent. He made a solo appearance for Britain in a Sokol Olympic Tournament in Czecho-Slovakia.

To paraphrase a Scottish expression Sgt. Wales was an outstanding example of "good gear in small bulk." His ability was amazing, as those who saw his performance on the pommel horse will testify.

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