

The Haltonian Magazine

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May 1944

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Halton Magazine



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THE HALTON MAGAZINE



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EDITORIAL

UP to now the magazine has led an elusive existence and our readers must be rather mystified by the irregularity of publication. It is appropriate that it should re-appear in the Spring after an enforced hibernation. In our last issue we said that there was a possibility that we should, owing to a shortage of supplies, be forced to go out of print. Now, after long negotiations, we are glad to announce that we are assured of future supplies, and we hope to be able to publish the magazine monthly. We thank all the people who have helped us and hope that their faith in us and the usefulness of the magazine will be justified.

THE HALTON SUNDAY

ALTHOUGH the countryside is looking particularly lovely at this time of the year, we were forcibly reminded on a recent Sunday excursion that visual satisfaction is precisely visual satisfaction. After sweating up to the top of a hill, we were stopped by a member of a party who hungrily enquired if we knew of any place where he and his friends could eat. We softened the negative reply by talking of war time difficulties and, as a parting pleasantry, hinted at the plight of the foolish virgins. Leaving them, we met scores of airmen and airwomen who were taking advantage of the weather by going for a walk in the country. It was then that we realised that the parable had no particular application. The foolish virgins had the opportunity to replenish their lamps, but had neglected it: these people, no matter how careful they might be, have no such opportunity. All this made us wonder whether Sunday, for the majority of people on the station, is a boring interlude between one working week and another.

What is there to do on Sundays? Where can one go? Walking in the country is very pleasant, but for most people the study of ragwort has only a very limited attraction. The choice seems to be between either staying in camp and feeding or going out and starving.

It is easier to state the problem than to find a solution. There seems to be some scope for organised Sunday activities, and possibly an increase of entertainment on the Station would be welcomed. We leave the problem to the Welfare and Entertainments Committees in the certain hope that they will put forward some constructive ideas.

THE RENT RAMP

WE have recently had so many complaints from people on the Station about the extortionate rents which are being charged for accommodation in the district that we can understand why the school men spend so much time discussing what a fair price should be. The 19th Century economists avoided the argument by stating that price equated supply and demand. It is true, of course, that there is a greater number of buyers than sellers, and consequently the tendency must be for prices to rise, with the result that there is moaning from the people whose demand price is too low and, therefore, ineffective. Translated into plain English, it means that most people just can't pay the prices which are asked and which can be obtained. We suggest that the W.V.S., a public spirited body, take up the matter and compile a list of householders who are willing to let rooms to service people. Such a list could give details of the number of rooms, the period for which they are available and the price.

Per Ardua ad Astra

Superna Petimus

Perseverantia

By Group Captain

The pioneer of power-jet propelled aircraft in Britain, Group Captain F. Whittle, C.B.E., reveals how he nearly failed to enter the R.A.F. at all.

F. WHITTLE, C.B.E.

DURING the past few weeks memories have been stirred by my stay in Halton Hospital, because it was at Halton that I made my first acquaintance with the Royal Air Force.

Of the three mottoes which together form the title for this article, the first requires no explanation. The second will be well known to many, but for the benefit of the few who do not recognise it, I should explain that it was the motto of the R.A.F. College and also of No. 4 Apprentices' Wing, which was at Cranwell before it moved to Halton in the Summer of 1926, after the passing out of the September 1923 entry.

JOINING THE R.A.F.

"I Didn't Get in Easily"

The third is that of my school, Leamington College. The title I have selected may seem a little strange, but in my more conceited moments it seems to me that these three mottoes, especially when taken together, are particularly apt in relation to my own career, and especially to the manner in which I joined the Royal Air Force. I didn't get in easily; it required a combination of hard work and a certain amount of low cunning.

My first attempt was at the beginning of 1923, and had things gone according to plan I would have been an apprentice at Halton.

Aged 15½, I was one of a mob of about 600 young hopefuls which left Baker Street in a special train for Wendover one day in January 1923. I was also one of a small bunch of miserable rejects deposited contemptuously on Wendover Station two days later, having failed to pass the medical examination. "Poor physique" was the reason given in my case.

I found that this meant that I was under-size, being only five feet tall. I was bitterly dis-

appointed and very much ashamed of myself.

However I wasn't going to take no for an answer if I could help it, and before I left Halton I pestered the medical orderlies without success to wangle another session with the Medical Officers in order to get the decision reversed. But my desperate efforts had one good result. Somebody, I have forgotten who but I am almost certain that it was a Service Policeman, took me along to see a P.T.I., Sergeant Holmes, who occupied a bunk in one of the barrack blocks. To him I pitched my tale of woe. He lent a very sympathetic ear (I know you won't believe that a P.T.I. can be sympathetic), and gave me a list of Maxalding exercises after showing me how to do them. He also wrote out a diet.

He gave me a trial run through, and then sent me away with a spark of hope and a request to write and tell him how things went. I carried out Sergeant Holmes' instructions to the letter. My main impression of that time is of drinking considerable quantities of olive oil which, despite several doses every day for six months, never became an acquired taste. It seemed to me that I drank enough olive oil to float a battleship. The important thing was that it all worked, and I started to put on weight and height at a tremendous rate. I grew three inches taller in six months and put at least three inches on my chest; and so in seeking to be higher with much perseverance and labour I managed to get three inches nearer the stars.

I GET A SURPRISE

Once Rejected Always Rejected

Seeing that I was making good progress I applied to the Powers-that-Be to be allowed to have another try; to my surprise and extreme disappointment the answer was "No". Once rejected always rejected. To be merely capable



of breathing wasn't a sufficient qualification in those days. I then tried less formal methods by writing to an Education Officer who, two years earlier, had been physics master at Leamington College. He did what he could but with no success.

There seemed one last desperate chance and I took it. I went through the whole procedure as though I had never been before, taking the written examinations again. I was not spotted. As before I passed the written examinations, but this time found myself reporting as one of a batch of about 600 other would-be apprentices at Cranwell in September 1923. I got through the medical and was IN. It wasn't long before I was wondering why I had gone to all this trouble. I was in under false pretences in a sense. That was nearly 21 years ago, so I think it safe to make the confession now. But you are not to conclude that I made any false declarations. I didn't, but fortunately for me no provision had been made for this sort of situation.

A HARD BLOW

But Really a Large Piece of Luck

Well, there it is, and I don't think there is any doubt now that my rejection at Halton, which seemed a very hard blow at the time,

was really a large piece of luck. In those days Halton put much more weight on games than Cranwell in recommending apprentices for Cadetships, and I wasn't outstanding at games. But it is worthy of record that the six of us of the September 23 entry who became Flight Cadets took six out of the first seven places on passing out of the R.A.F. College.

Thus a P.T.I. and a S.P. (I believe), especially the former, helped to forge a link in the chain of events which led to the successful flights of the first jet propelled aeroplane in May 1941—and to what else?

FOREIGN FILM SOCIETY

Halton Leads the Way

Do you know that a Foreign Film Society has been started on the Station and gives fortnightly Sunday evening shows in the Technical Cinema? Up to now we have been able to show first class French Films, such as "Katia", "Quai des Brumes", and "Les Bas Fonds", but we hope that we shall be able to extend our range to include films made in other countries. We believe that Halton is the first R.A.F. Station to put on a regular programme of this type.

Halton Music Circle

The Halton Music Circle meets in the Schools every Monday evening at 18.30 hours. Thanks to P.S.I. we have been able to supplement the E.N.S.A. supply of records, and are building up a good gramophone library. Units who wish to start similar circles should inform Flt. Lieut. Caulfield or Flt. Lieut. Roe, the Schools.

In conjunction with No. 3 Wing Downbeat Club we have also run an interesting series of lectures on Musical appreciation. Mr. Ralph Hill, Music Editor of the *Radio Times*, who gave most of the lectures, succeeded in communicating something of his exuberance to his audience. His discussion with Mr. Rex Harris on the relative merits of classical and jazz music attracted a very large audience.

Miss Kathleen Cooper, the well-known B.B.C. pianist, came down with him on his last visit. Although handicapped by a poor piano she gave a pleasing recital of works by Brahms and Liszt, and Mr. Hill gave a commentary on the life and work of the two romantic composers. Miss Cooper and Mr. Hill are preparing another programme and we hope that we shall be able to induce them to visit us again in the near future.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The Station Discussion Group has had a very successful winter season of lectures and talks. The list of distinguished men of affairs who came down to the station is too long to give more than a cursory review. Mention has already been made in the magazine of Air Vice Marshal Sir David Munro, Air Commodore Fellows and Arthur Bryant. They were followed by men of equal distinction.

The Hon. Frank Pakenham (Beveridge's right-hand man) gave to an audience of about 250 advance information on Beveridge's plan for full employment. Briefly, the State, he maintained, must step in to keep up present purchasing power when private enterprise failed.

He was followed by Lieut. Kimnring of the Free French who gave a fascinating account of the underground resistance movement in France and what we must expect when we land in Europe.

Mr. T. Driberg, M.P., the well-known journalist, gave to a crowded audience a witty account of how the Mother of Parliaments transacts the business of the nation and how it affects the youngest A.C.2. He showed the importance of question time in the House and how in a parliamentary democracy individual grievances are aired and remedied. The discussion which followed was keen and stimulating.

Captain the Hon. Quintin Hogg was the next M.P. who visited us. His review of world affairs was well prepared and competently delivered. Although his forecast of future trends was not wildly optimistic, he believed that we should have a considerable part to play in the building of a saner and better Europe.

* * *

Some people have expressed some doubt as to whether airmen have the desire or the ability to discuss current problems.

It is our opinion, after listening to groups on the Station, that they have ideas and know how to express them. The Wing discussions have been instructive and entertaining and have justified the time spent in organising them. There is no doubt that, given keen and enthusiastic leadership, discussion groups have a vital part to play in building up an informed post-war democracy.

In addition to the Wing Discussion Groups a voluntary Group which is open to all personnel on the Station meets every Thursday evening at 19.30 hours in Hut F, the School of Cookery. If you are interested in the problems of the modern world this is one show on the Station that you should attend.

INFORMATION ROOM

Do You Want to

Read Newspapers, Periodicals and Pamphlets?

Keep yourself abreast of the War News? Consult Reference Books or Time Tables?

Find out what educational facilities are open to you?

Find out about Post War Careers?

The Information Room in the Schools is the best reading room on the Camp. It is open during the week from 09.00 hours to 21.00 hours. You should visit it, and if you cannot get what you want, we shall do our best to get it for you.



A MEMENTO of COMPANIONSHIP

IN the Christmas number of *The Halton Magazine* the arrival at Princess Mary's Hospital of a contingent of repatriated prisoners of war was reported.

They have now left the Hospital, but before going a few of them had a final request to make: Could the Magazine take a collective photograph which they would be able to preserve as a memento of a companionship which had meant much in the dark days behind them? We are glad to be able to publish this record of true friendship.

Fiji Patriotism

"Fiji now bans recruiting." It was not until I read that heading in a newspaper the other day that I connected recruiting with the Fiji Islanders at all.

I am afraid that my knowledge of these islands is rather hazy and was largely derived from *Coral Island*, and my naughty adolescent reading of *The Blue Lagoon*. As a matter of fact the Fiji Islands have an Air Force, or to be exact an islander in the R.A.F. Sgt. Pilot Komaisavai, who is at present in the Hospital, is the only member of an air crew from the Islands. He enlisted at Suva, where he was a Civil Servant, before Pearl Harbour.

He spoke with great enthusiasm of the patriotism of the islanders, one-third of whom have joined the forces. Hence the ban on new recruits.

"Some of them have been in action in the South Seas," he said. "They are born and bred to jungle ways."

Sgt. Komaisavai asks me to say this: "Ki vua na *Halton Magazine*, av Kaya, Bula Balavu!"

Hospital Sport

The Hospital football team has maintained its high standard this season. In the semi-final of the knock-out cup they were beaten 3—1 by No. 1 Wing after a fast and keen struggle.

The Hospital hockey team has also done well, beating No. 4 Wing 5—1 in the Victor Ludorum Cup. This victory fired the ambition of the team to challenge the Station team.

With the cricket season now under way friendly matches are being arranged with local teams on Saturday afternoons. The Hospital team are also competing in the Station League.

Certificate of Service

Some months ago we were able to announce that a member of the Hospital staff had been presented with a Certificate of Service from H.Q. Technical Training Command. This Certificate is granted in exceptional circumstances for devotion to duty, and we are proud to say that another member of the staff, Flight Sergeant W. Fogg, has also received this honour.

This Was the Air Force . . .

IN THE BEGINNING

By Sqdn. Leader W. THOMAS, M.C.

TO be "in at the beginning" of any enterprise is something of which to be proud. Sqdn. Leader Thomas, Station Engineering Officer, was in at the start of the Air Battalion, the first form of military flying, in 1911, and recounts some of the excitements of those pioneer days. "Thirty-three years," he says, "is a long time, so forgive me if my memory is a bit hazy."

SOMEWHERE about the end of 1910 an advertisement appeared, reading somewhat as follows:—"Required six mechanists, rank of Mechanist Staff Sergeant, etc., etc." After lots of interviews and tests, six were finally chosen out of about 2,000 applicants. Soon afterwards the Air Battalion was officially formed on April 1st, 1911, from the Balloon Coy., R.E., and was divided into two sections—heavier than air and lighter than air.

We inherited from the Balloon Coy. spherical balloons, Cody man-lifting kites and two small non-rigid airships—but no aeroplanes. The engines of the airships had been looked after by civilian personnel of the Royal Aircraft Factory. Among the personnel of the Balloon Coy. who transferred to the Air Battalion there were no "fitters", or "mechanists" as they were then known, although there were all other trades, including carpenters, plumbers, copper-smiths, blacksmiths, sailmates and riggers. So the six mechanist Staff Sgts. automatically became the engineers of the Air Battalion!

We were first given air experience. This meant going up in a captive balloon to about 600 feet and swaying about in the air for about an hour and afterwards going up in a Cody Kite. This was thrilling and certainly more bumpy than any aeroplane.

As there were then no aeroplanes we took

over the engines and mechanical side of the airships. These, the "Beta" and the "Gamma", each had one "Green" water-cooled engine, the former 35 h.p. and the latter 60 h.p., and they were great fun.

The Beta had two propellers, chain driven from engine. One of these chains would often break and the ship simply went round in circles; or the tow rope, dropped for landing, would get entangled in the top of a tree, and there the airship had to remain until someone climbed the tree and freed the rope.

I remember the Gamma was going to make an historic flight—Farnborough to London and back by night. It got as far as Woking with pressure dropping rapidly in the gas bag, so turned for home. The nose of the envelope had become inverted and, instead of being pointed, was like the interior of an egg cup. The difference of temperature between the heated airship shed and a frosty night had not been taken into calculation!

On another occasion the Gamma engine suddenly ran all main bearings. It was discovered that the mechanic (a civilian), to make a nice fit, had lapped them in with fine emery powder!

The great day came when the first aeroplane arrived, a Farman bi-plane, designated F.I., of the type usually referred to as a box-kite. It was assembled by French mechanics and we looked on and picked up as much as we could about it. The engine was a 50 h.p. rotary Gnome and although simple, by present-day standards, was as temperamental as a *prima donna*. It had no carburettor proper but a jet and air inlets on the rear end of the fixed bellow crankshaft, the mixture being drawn from the crankcase through automatic inlet valves in the piston head.

The piston or obturator rings were L section (like a pump plunger), made of bronze, and



these would seize up on the slightest, and often without, provocation. Pure castor oil was pumped through the engine and this came out of the exhaust valves in a glorious spray. The result was that clothes, hair and even our skin became permeated with castor oil, and one could always smell and taste it. Hair oil and medicine were unnecessary!

The rigging of the F.I. was a problem. Each bracing wire—there were about 100 of them—was made of piano wire with a turn-buckle for adjustment. It can be imagined that the looped ends of these wires easily stretched, and it was necessary after each landing to check over the rigging.

CALM WEATHER ONLY

Flying this box-kite was restricted to perfectly calm weather, and even the bumps caused by the sun's heat were too much for it. Normal flying hours in the early summer of 1911 were therefore from 04.00 hours to about 08.00 hours, and 18.00 hours until dark.

The heavier than air section moved to Salisbury Plain and soon acquired more aeroplanes—Bristol bi-planes, very similar to F.I. In August we left with all six to take part in Army manoeuvres. First stop was Port Meadows, Oxford. One arrived, and this one eventually reached the manoeuvre area.

A varied assortment of aeroplanes began to arrive during this period—Breguet biplanes, Bleriot, Nieuport, and Deperdussin monoplanes with Renault and Anzani engines—and each brought a fresh headache as regards rigging and engines. Forced landings were the rule rather than the exception, but fortunately changing engines was a simple job.

It is worth noting that the Air Battalion had only horse transport, so that a spare engine was taken to a forced landing in a G.S. wagon, generally with four horses ridden postillion fashion and led by an officer on horseback.

We lived under canvas in summer and at Bulford Camp in wooden huts in the winter of

1911, being transported from the Camp to the Plain in horse wagons daily, working in unheated sheds all day and returning to camp in the evening. It was a pretty strenuous life, but every one seemed to thrive on it. It is perhaps as well to point out that at this period there were no "Courses of instruction", A.G.S. parts or A.I.D. inspection.

PLUGS ALL PRESENT and CORRECT!

There was the case of the coppersmith repairing his first petrol tank without ensuring that it was clear of petrol vapour. The result was disastrous to the tank, but fortunately the coppersmith only had a severe fright.

A rigger erected a box-kite and put all struts in reversed. He was certain that they were made so that the sharp edge cut through the air. Another rigger forgot to cross the control wires of the elevators. The pilot luckily realised the error when taking off and made one of the most alarming flights I have seen, but nothing like so alarming as his language after he had managed to land safely.

There is also the historic story of the Sgt. Fitter who, when a pilot, after landing, told him one of the plugs was "missing", immediately went and counted the plugs, rushed up to the officer and, with clicking heels and the smartest of salutes, reported, "Plugs all present and correct, sir!"

Well, this may give you a little idea of what life was like from April 1911 to April 1912. Although I have pictured the lighter side, it was actually a period of hard work, long hours and seven days a week, but everyone was full out to learn everything possible about this new science of aviation and really enjoyed the life. We were a small, self-contained sort of community, almost isolated on Salisbury Plain, and this continued until the Air Battalion was, on 1st April, 1912, absorbed into the Royal Flying Corps, a corps that had the efficiency of the Royal Engineers and the smartness of the Guards. But that is another story.



All This – and Heaven too ?

IN an adventurous life, full of thrills and not without its dangers, Padre Gawne, one of the C. of E. Padres on this Station, has travelled all over the World as globe trotter, engineers' mate, Japanese War correspondent, waiter and stockbroker.

Before he was 21 he sailed to New York in the *Olympic*, and after a few days spent in style in the well-known Pennsylvania Hotel, paid his bill and went round to the back door to get taken on as a waiter. He was determined to see if he could make enough by tips to work his way to Canada, which he did, going via Chicago, at that time riddled with bootleggers and gangsters.

Gawne was walking down an apparently peaceful street when rival gangster cars appeared, spraying bullets in all directions; the locals took cover with rapidity born of habit, but Gawne's interest in the scene cost him a bullet through the knee.

After some time in Canada, Gawne decided to work his way back to England. He signed on a cattleboat, where his job was to clean out the stalls, and arrived in Liverpool with no money but plenty of experience.

Since travel under his own steam had proved far more interesting than luxury cruising, Gawne now planned to work his way round the world with only a £5 note sewn into his shirt in case of emergency.

Method of Approach

He asked a famous shipping line to take him on in any capacity, but they refused, pointing to stacks of letters from students making similar requests. The orthodox approach thus being closed, Gawne, by some

private sleuthing, discovered the name of the next ship to sail, the name of her captain and where he lunched. He greeted the captain as a long-lost friend. He was, in fact, an utter stranger, but the captain did not object to a free drink.

The well-known melting effect of alcohol plus Gawne's persuasiveness resulted in his being signed on as an assistant engineer on a round trip; England—Vladivostok—Shanghai—England, at the enormous pay of 1/- a month—to cover insurance!

Mutiny on the High Sea

The ship had a Chinese crew and white officers. They sailed on the thirteenth, in the middle of a heat wave. When they were passing through the Red Sea the temperature in the engine-room was 126 degrees.

By the time they reached Penang the sustained heat—which had made Gawne lose a stone in six weeks—had so frayed the tempers of the Chinese crew that they were ripe for mutiny at any small incident. This was unfortunately provided by one of the Engineer Officers kicking their ricebowls out of his way when he was hot and fed up at the end of his shift. Immediately the Chinese fell upon him and carried him bodily to their own quarters with the intention of meting out leisurely and revolting retribution.

The orders of the Chinese bo'sun had no effect upon the fury of the crew, and the Captain was quite unable to control the emergency; so Gawne and some of the Engineer Officers seized hatchets and rescued the captive.

Out of Bounds

They reached Shanghai without further incident except for encountering a 100-200 m.p.h. typhoon which washed the cook and the dinner to the bottom of the ship and a piano straight through the side.

At Shanghai no Europeans except police were allowed into the Chinese City, for the Japanese were busily goading the Chinese into disturbances. Strictly contrary to regulations Gawne persuaded the police to take him into the town with them on a night patrol. A fight developed between the Japanese and Chinese, Gawne found himself in the middle, and was suddenly knocked into the gutter by a hit from behind. When he came to, one side of his face and nose was smashed and both his





Life in Dutch Guiana. Above, a hut in which Padre Gawne stayed and right, some of the natives.



arms were broken; but he managed to crawl to the end of the street, where the police gave him a cold reception, as they were afraid they would be blamed for taking him into danger. Their coolness went so far as leaving him to get back unaided.

Reaching the ship on the point of collapse, he was promptly sent to a hospital ashore.

Army Correspondent

When convalescent and penniless he got in touch with an American paper, and asked if they would pay him for an eye-witness account if anything should occur in Manchuria, where the Japanese were massing ominously. The Japanese were agreeable to his being attached to their Army as correspondent, because they hoped to impress the world by getting the campaign into the news as much as possible. He marched with them from Dairen onwards, and was as struck by the fanaticism of their discipline in battle as by the utter lack of it afterwards.

Incidents, such as the shooting in cold blood of a whole village of smiling peasants who came out to welcome the army, so sickened Gawne that one day he just broke off from the Japanese, and in desolate country wandered foodless for forty-eight hours until he struck the line to Harbin.

After more adventures he reached Yokohama, where he persuaded the barman of an American ship to smuggle him aboard, in exchange for his doing most of the barman's work and yielding him 50 per cent of the tips.

After a total of two years wandering, Gawne caught another boat home, and arrived in

England with exactly a penny half-penny, and with the intention of joining the Church.

He spent a year on the Stock Exchange before making a final decision; then he disappeared into the depths of Devon to think things out in peace. The result was that he went to a Theological College and was ordained in 1935; then spent three years in a Dockland parish.

On his first holiday after this the old itch to travel returned; he flew the Andes in a Clipper; stayed with Bush negroes in Dutch Guiana; worked in a Jungle Mission to relieve a sick colleague; and met his future wife on the boat home.

After Effects

When the war came he was offered a job by Toc H as Chaplain to all three Services; he had known Tubby Clayton for years, so was naturally interested in the work. Later he was asked to go abroad to serve with isolated units of the Eighth Army; but to his keen disappointment failed medically owing to the after-effects of his clash with the Japanese in Shanghai.

However, his loss is our gain, for as an alternative he joined the Chaplain's branch of the R.A.F.

FALL IN FOR A GOOD TIME ON

Entertainment Parade

WITH "YORICK"

Apparently the Entertainment Committee on the Station have no high hopes for the summer weather; although the long days are with us, they are preparing for the worst, and plans for indoor shows during the next few months are well under way.

Record Winter.

I'm sure the past winter must have set a record for Station entertainment. It had variety and—in many instances—a very high standard. Since Christmas we have had "Quiet Wedding", performed by the Hospital; "Love in a Mist", produced by Eddie Sharp for No. 2 Wing; a show by the Station Concert Party; "Band Ahoy", by the Station Dance Band; and numerous Wing productions, including Christmas pantomimes.

Visitors have been more numerous and more distinguished than in the past—Henry Hall, Harriet Cohen, Eric Portman. We can't say we have been neglected.

Coming Shortly.

Two shows are planned for next month, both Station productions—and both ambitious. "Night Must Fall", the Emlyn Williams play in which the author starred (and you'll remember Robert Montgomery in the film), will be staged early in June. "Desert Song", which has been in rehearsal for some time (as the Tannoy keeps reminding us), will be produced for several nights, starting on June 19.

I have no information about the cast of either production, but it can be said that the principals in both have a hard job to tackle. It will be interesting to see with what degree of success they overcome the difficulties imposed by the Concert Hall's inadequate stage and unsatisfactory acoustics.

Sometime in the future three one-act plays by Chekhov are to be produced. This, too, may happen in June.

E.N.S.A. Carries On.

The ENSA shows, which have been attracting quite reasonably large audiences, will

continue during the summer. The only change is in the time—they will begin at 20.00 hours instead of 19-30.

As before, there will be a variety concert fortnightly on Tuesday evenings, and a monthly concert of classical music on Wednesdays. The dates will be found on the notice-boards.

Changes.

Wing Commander Weeks, who can be contacted at the Dental Centre, has succeeded Flt/Lieut. Steiner as Station Entertainment Officer. He has plans for other shows in the future, and will be pleased to meet anyone who would like to take part in them.

Good-bye Henry.

A partnership which did a great deal to keep variety going on the Station has been broken by the departure of Henry Howard. Henry, with another corporal, Wally Okin, produced variety shows at intervals over a period of about three years.

Finally they got the Station Concert Party going, and put on "Spotlight on Variety", which in the winter months netted a considerable sum for various war funds.

Now that Henry has gone, the Concert Party has been disbanded. Wally Okin, however, is still with us, and will probably turn his attention to producing plays.

Going Places.

The Station Orchestra, directed by Sgt. George Carter, had quite a successful winter. The same can be said for the Station Dance Band, which has literally been going places.

Highlight of the Dance Band's season was an engagement to play for the Royal household—an event which the players will long remember. The King and Queen were present, and the officer in command—Sqn./Ldr. Jackson—was introduced to the King, who through him complimented the band on its performance.

In the near future the dance band will present "Band Ahoy" for the Royal household.



WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO, ARNOLD?

On Parade.

The Station Military Band too has had a busy time. "Wings for Victory" parades, church parades—it has led them all. The "Salute the Soldier" campaign means that it is again on the march.

The Salute.

The Station's "Salute the Soldier" campaign has now started. From the entertainment point of view, No. 3 Wing will be the centre of interest. Look out for the gen. Another attraction will be a dance in the Concert Hall on May 17.

The Station Dance Band will be playing at the Odeon in Aylesbury on Sunday, May 21. It will be responsible for half a "Salute the Soldier" show in which Vic Oliver, Stan Holloway and several other variety stars will take part.

STATION CINEMA

THE Camp cinema has booked some excellent films for June. Specially recommended are *Mutiny on the Bounty* (June 1), *We Dive at Dawn* (June 8), *For Ever and a Day*, with Brian Ahearne and Merle Oberon (June 12), *Appointment in Berlin*, with George Sanders (June 15) and *The Lamp Still Burns* (June 22).

* * *

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 18.30hrs. 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.

The change over of the seasons is usually taken as the time for review of the past and an examination of hopes for the future. This is particularly true of sport, so here goes. For the past, and by that is meant the winter season, with certain reservations we can say the Station has made a good show. The future rests on so many things outside actual sporting ability that the best that can be said now is that, providing plans are not subject to too much interference, another active and profitable summer of sport is promised.

Where Are the Players?

The reservations on the winter season concern one rather prominent feature noticeable throughout all the sports. I mean that strange, unaccountable failure of players to come forward until it is too late. The Rucker people found this out when they staged end of season seven-a-side tournaments, and discovered considerable hidden talent—too late to be of assistance to the Station teams. Lack of enthusiasm is hardly the cause, for inter-wing and even inter-entry rivalry is keen enough. Better liaison between wing representatives and Station team organisers, hard worked though both are, in passing on names of prominent players, would, I am sure, do the trick.

RUGBY "Altogether a very good season" is the way Flt. Lieut. Roe speaks of the Station Rucker side—an example of understatement which exemplifies the spirit of the fifteen to the full. Hard work and enthusiasm by a small band of players carried the side from one success to another. Stiffer opposition than for several seasons made little difference. The fifteen won 18 of its 19 matches, scoring the big total of 493 points, with only 65 against. The second fifteen, which consisted mainly of willing bands from No. 2 Wing, played seven games and won three, scoring 108 points against 52.

Shock for Wasps

The writer was behind the scenes when Flt. Lieut. Roe was arranging his fixture list. A suggestion that Halton try to get a fixture with the Wasps, in the first dozen of London clubs in pre-war days, resulted in a game against that club's extra "A". Much was expected of the fixture, and I find it difficult to say which club was more surprised at the result. Halton won by 75-0, and so impressed were the Wasps' committee that they straight away offered the Station a match with their first fifteen! It is a matter for regret that it had to be scratched;



perhaps next season will see it played, and for the sake of the game at Halton I hope it will be on our ground.

Missed the Train!

The only defeat was at the hands of Welwyn, but as two of the forwards missed the train the side was badly handicapped. Other big victories included a defeat of London Fire Forces by 54-6 and De Havilland 23-6. The fifteen proved that it is well-nigh up to its pre-war standard.

Fast and Clever Backs

There was never any need to worry about the back division of the side. No team could have been better served by a speedy and thrustful set of outsides. Sgt. Rattray, given his chance to show his great pace on the left wing, played consistently well; Sgt. Jones, who came into the team at Christmas, was equally good at full back or centre. Sgt. Bright and A.C. Latchford fitted in admirably and Flt. Sgt. Hurst was his usual polished self at the base of the scrum. With Sqdn. Ldr. Jackson, in his third season with Halton, the backs showed a scoring power superior to anything of its kind in the last few years.

Honours

The pack can hardly be said to have come up to the same high standards, although at times the forwards have shown plenty of vigour and bustle. Perhaps their lack of cohesion was due to their ever-changing formation: no sooner had they settled down for a couple of weeks than two or three were posted and their places had to be filled by new comers. The only "permanent" forwards were F/Lieutenant Smith, F/Sgt. Golder and Cpl. Bathgate.

The R.A.F. Selection Committee's invitation to F/Lt. Smith and F/Sgt. Hurst to take part in the R.A.F. South of England trial at Uxbridge last November was an honour justly



SPORT

looker"

due to the Station. I note also that L.A.C. Brereton, who for his burly physique sold a very pretty dummy to a great number of ready purchasers, was picked to play for the combined Rugby League XV against the Rugby Union XV at Bradford on April 29.

The "Sevens"

The season ended on a note of furious domesticity. The Victor Ludorum championship, after much battering up and down the arena encouraged by shrill clamour from the touch line, was carried off by 4 Wing. Hardly had the combatants recovered the use of their limbs and the spectators their voices than the "local" seven-a-sides were hurling themselves into the fray. In spite of the ground being as hard as concrete, the tackling, especially by both 1 Wing teams, was first-rate. Medals went to 1 Wing "A".

The open "sevens" rounded off the season on April 22. No. 1 Wing band and a supply of oranges helped to make conditions comfortable. Eight teams arrived but it was a Halton final. The Station team was too fast for 1 Wing and won by 20 points.

Charmingly Coy

One final comment about these local tournaments. It was not realised how much Rugby talent existed in the Wings until these games were played. Then it was soon apparent that several good players nurtured in Rugby League districts had been bashfully holding themselves aloof under the impression that they were not "good enough" or that Rugby Union was a completely different kettle of fish. If they had not been so charmingly coy Halton could have turned out two strong teams every week. Will Wing representatives please note?

SOCCER Soccer players have every right to be satisfied with the season. Enormous difficulties had to be surmounted, and I doubt if anyone envied Flt. Lieut

SPORTS GALLERY No. 4.

SGT. F. H. GRAY

IN recent years the interest in swimming has increased by leaps and bounds. We at Halton are well provided for in this respect, not only in having a first class indoor swimming bath, but also because instructors are available for those who are still in the novice class.

One of the instructors is Sgt. F. H. Gray, a man with a life time's experience in swimming who has been winning championships ever since he was five years old.

A Londoner, Sgt. Gray learnt his swimming at Paddington Baths, the nursery of many well known internationals. He competed in schoolboy championships there for a number of years. At this period swimming was not his main sport. Football and boxing in his shared activities and at both he appeared in schoolboy competitions. In 1921 he was in the London stage of the English Schoolboys' Boxing Championships. Here he came up against



another boy who in later years was to appear at Halton, Sgt. Hedger. Hedger, by the way, went on to win the title, but very soon after Sergt. Gray transferred all his attention to swimming.

Long distance swimming seems to have most attraction for Sergt. Gray. For four years he won the Whiteley Bequest 1,000 yards race in the Thames at Hammersmith, as well as competing in open races in all parts of the country.

1930 saw Sergt. Gray make a bid for the English long distance title, swum over five miles from Kew to Putney, and incidentally an expensive one as each competitor has to pay for a boatman to accompany him. Sergt. Gray finished sixth, a fine performance on his first attempt.

From racing in the Thames Sergt. Gray turned to racing in the Channel, winning the Pier to Pier race at Brighton in 1932 and finishing second in the next year. All this time he had been competing regularly in Southern Counties championships and playing a good deal of water-polo for the Penguin S.C. He was a member of the team when the club won the English title in 1928.

Sergt. Gray, although he was keen on long distance championships, never had any ambitions to tackle the cross-Channel swim. He did, however, test out his reactions by lending a hand in the training of the Egyptian Channel swimmer, Fahmy, swimming with him for twelve hours in the Serpentine.

Swimming and life saving usually go hand in hand. Sergt. Gray is no exception to the rule, and has received five letters from the Royal Humane Society for saving life.

His favourite stroke is the back stroke, though he is equally at home in all styles of swimming, as he demonstrated in 1932, when he won the Webb Memorial Shield, a half mile breast stroke race, which was held at Willesden baths.

Holbrook his job as organiser last October. Hard work and genuine enthusiasm pulled the side through to show a final record of 23 matches played, 14 won, three drawn and six lost. Ninety-seven goals were scored and 63 against.

A Splendid Finish

After an early exit from the Bucks and Berks Cup, the side pulled itself together to such good effect as to be undefeated in its next nine matches, seven of which were won. Towards the end of the season Service demands caused the cancellation of some fixtures. This was unfortunate as a really useful team was settling down well and in its last two home games was at its strongest, victories of 6-4 and 8-1 by no means flattering its skill and speed.

For Charity

As usual, Station Soccer players gave of their best in games for charity. On April 22 we supplied no fewer than seven men (Sgt. Shaw, Spencer and Smith, Cpl. Saunders and L.A.C.'s Howe, Glaister and Sutherland) for a R.A.F. XI who beat a strong team representing an Army Training unit at Aylesbury by 7-5. A good crowd watched a fast and clever game in which Spencer and Sutherland scored two goals each. Sgt. Spencer has been a most consistent scorer, and Cpl. Saunders in goal and Sgt. Smith in defence have given outstanding service. Sutherland, Glaister, Howe, Thomas and Stevenson arrived towards the end of the season and greatly strengthened the side. Sgts. Burnikell and Coombes were extremely helpful on and off the field and Sgt. Barman did great work with the whistle.

Station Winners

The Station knock-out cup was won by the R.A.F. Regiment, who defeated No. 1 Wing 2-0 in a hard game, and the League by No. 5 Wing, the hospital just managing to win the position of runners-up on goal average.

The final of the football section in the Victor Ludorum Cup was won by No. 2 Wing who beat the Hospital 4-3 after extra time. The game was very exciting throughout and No. 2 are to be congratulated on their success, for they played the extra time and a good part of the second half with only ten men.

CRICKET Team building is the order of the day with the cricketers. With an England Test cricketer, Sqdn.-Ldr. the Rev. E. T. Killick, and a first-class County

player, Sgt. T. Spencer (Kent) available, the team has good solid foundations, particularly on the batting side. Padre Killick opened for England against South Africa in two Tests, and Sgt. Spencer will be already known to Station cricket fans as an entertaining and fast scoring batsman.

Bowlers' Good Start

PERHAPS the difficulty at first, until the team settles down, will be to find bowlers. The bulk of the hard work last season fell on A.C. Buse (formerly of Somerset) who took over 50 wickets in the season. A newcomer to the Station, Sergt. Groves, showed promise in the opening match of the season. He took six wickets for 16, including the hat trick, helping materially to put Amersham out for 47 runs. The Station got 67 for 5 wickets, Padre Killick getting 26.

Batsmen Fail

THE game against R.A.F. High Wycombe on May 7 was not so successful, despite the fact that the visitors were sent back with the small total of 48. Cpl. Foot took 6 wickets for 3 runs, including 4 wickets in his first over with four consecutive deliveries. Halton batsmen could not get cracking and were dismissed for 36.

The 2nd XI. had a very favourable draw with Halton Civilians on May 6, just failing to capture their last wicket before stumps were drawn. The next day, in a low scoring game, they lost to the Apprentices by 4 wickets.

SHOOTING The winter season, just concluded was a good one with the possible exception of competition in the S.M.R.C. Winter League, where the team hardly came up to expectations. The pistol shots did particularly well, being in the first three in each Division of the S.M.R.C. Revolver League, the third team gaining bronze medals. In the junior spring competition, for which an all-boys' team was entered, Halton gained second place. In the monthly Station pistol shoot the March spoon was won by Cpl. Foster (5 Wing) and the April spoon by Flt./Sgt. Scriven (5 Wing).

Station Championships

Entrics closed last Saturday for the Station Service Rifle Championship. The present holder is W.O. Stigger, who is defending. The final stage will be fired over the Kimble long range on June 3. The Station knock-out competition (.300) is going strong. Survivors

of the first round were No. 1 Wing "A", Polish "C", 4 Wing "B" and 2 Wing "D". The second round is being shot.

Well Done W.A.A.F.

W.A.A.F. personnel on the Station are taking an increasing interest in shooting. The number who are visiting the miniature ranges for .22 rifle and pistol work is very encouraging, and I am told there are some good shots. No doubt when the Station small bore championships are staged in July we shall see some of the W.A.A.F. competing. There are to be special competitions for them at this meeting.

ATHLETICS The story of athletics is largely of the efforts of apprentices, and a splendid show they have put up. The all-out effort over the country was crowned with success on Feb. 12 when the Station team won the North of the Thames Jubilee race at Woodford. Apprentices formed the bulk of the team, and in addition all-apprentice A and B teams were fielded and secured 3rd and 5th places respectively. LA/A Day was second man home, E.A.C. Webb 5th and LA/A Salmon 6th.

Apprentice's Successes

L.A.A. Day was first man home in the Station championships early in the year in which A Squad, No.1 Wing won the team race. This promising young runner received a fourth place in the Southern Counties race on March 3.

SWIMMING Easily the outstanding event has been A.C. Wray's success in lowering the bath record for 100 yards. His time was 60 $\frac{1}{2}$ secs., compared with the 61 secs of A.C. Wallace (formerly of No. 2 Wing) set up five years ago. Wray's record was all the more meritorious when it is revealed that on the same day he had travelled from Loughborough and walked from Tring just before entering the water. Hardly the best training for breaking records.

Out for New Record

While at Loughborough Wray swam in the College baths, and did the 100 yards in 57 secs. He is now in training to try to break his Halton record.

BADMINTON The only grouse I have heard from the players is that shortage of shuttles cut down the amount of practice. But despite the handicap, plus the

effects of frequent team changes, the side has done well. W.A.A.F. personnel have been very keen, and the mixed team has had some good games, particularly against the local Hastoe Village teams who specialize in hard smashing and intimate knowledge of each others' positional play.

CHESS The League formed under the presidency of Sqdn. Ldr. Kershaw was one of the most successful of the winter indoor competitions. Much to the surprise of some Wing organisers there was competition to get into the teams. No. 4 Wing won the League, but only after a keen struggle with No. 2 Wing in the final match.

Still Going Strong

The arrival of the light evenings has not caused any loss in enthusiasm. Under the leadership of Sqdn. Ldr. Vine and with the assistance of Cpls. Gratton (5 Wing) and Ensor (4 Wing) various matches have been arranged. Dr. Aitken, a player of international reputation, visited the Station and gave a simultaneous display against 26 players. He won 22 of his games, losing to Cpl. Browning and Cpl. Darby and drawing with Cpl. Wiltshire and A/A Buley, a remarkable performance.

Beat the Foreign Office

Suitably impressed by Halton's chess skill, Dr. Aitken returned to the Station last month as the leader of a Foreign Office team in a twelve-a-side match. He must have gone away with the certain conviction that Halton chess players mean business, for his team was beaten in a close match by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ games to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$.

For Beginners

Chess evenings have been arranged every Friday in the Church hut and every Tuesday in No. 4 Wing Library. Experienced players are welcome, and can be sure of plenty of practice, but it is the beginners whom the organisers want to help. Matches arranged for the future include visits from High Wycombe and Oxford University.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTOR

He loves the bayonet,
And has a lot to say 'et.
"In, out, on guard!"
It's all very sard.

Apprentices' Passing Out

*Address by Sir Bertine E. Sutton,
K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.*

THE Passing-out Parade of the 44th Entry took place on Monday, February 14. The salute was taken by the Air Member for Personnel, Air Marshal Sir Bertine E. Sutton, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. The A.O.C.-in-C. Technical Training Command, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Barrett, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.C., the A.O.C. No. 24 Group, Air Vice Marshal K. M. St. C. G. Leask, M.C., and Air Commodore H. G. White were also present. Afterwards the A.M.P. presented the prizes in the Burnett Gymnasium and addressed the apprentices.

Air Marshal Sir Bertine E. Sutton said:—

IT is always a pleasure for me to come to Halton and see the work of the School of Technical Training, and find that apprentices' work has been so satisfactory. But before I say anything more on that, I am going to say a few words on the Second Front because my mind is full of its requirements—perhaps the most important and hazardous operation of this war.

THE SECOND FRONT

What I want to impress on you to-day is that the Second Front has already begun. It began some weeks ago, and this should be obvious to everybody. The advance fighter sweeps and bombing attacks that we and the Americans have been carrying out for some months or more now are part of the preliminary bombardment and the softening up process. But it isn't obvious to the public. If it were, I'm sure we wouldn't have the strikes, the absenteeism, the waste of fuel and the unnecessary travelling that we now have in this country. There was none of that during the Battle of Britain, and there would be none now if the public realised that the Second Front had already begun.

DISCIPLINE.

The Foundation of Efficiency

The Second Front has begun and you are engaged in it. In fact, you have, in a manner of speaking been so engaged for the past two years, ever since you came here to train. It was very important during the Battle of Britain that everybody worked to his utmost: the whole of Britain worked and had the skill, the guts and the discipline to carry on during the battle; yet it was of far greater importance

for that battle that during the previous five years the Royal Air Force had worked and trained and made itself fit to beat the Germans in it. The extent to which you have profited by your training here will be reflected in the efficiency of the Service during the battles of the Second Front. I was glad, therefore, to see to-day your bearing on parade, your great spiritedness and smartness. I hope these are signs that you have established the real foundation of discipline. Real discipline does not consist merely of good appearance, good behaviour and smartness, but also the ability to maintain zeal and interest during periods of boring inactivity and, what is more, the capacity to work courageously under bombardment. It is under such conditions that you will need real discipline. That is what should have been inculcated in you here. That is what is going to make the difference in the Second Front battles, and I hope that you all have enough spirit to impose that discipline on yourselves.

The Tradition to be Maintained

I would like you to remember that you have already begun to be what you expect to be. Among the apprentices who were here when I had a Wing in 1926/1929 a number are already Group Captains, and one is now an Air Commodore. They have attained those ranks because when they were at Halton they realised that their career in the Air Force had already begun. I have myself, several old school ties. The Halton Old School Tie which I think I earned here in 1926 to 1929 is one of which I'm particularly proud. Your list of battle honours too, is a most inspiring one, and if I only read out those of double honours and highest honours the list is impressive.

One Victoria Cross ; one George Cross ; two ex-Halton boys with D.S.O., D.F.C. and bar ; four with D.S.O. and D.F.C. ; four more with D.S.O. alone ; four with D.F.C. and bars ; and a great many with single honours. This is a great achievement.

Now, ten years after I left this School, that is in the Spring of 1939 when the Germans marched into Prague, it was quite obvious to anybody who did not delude himself that we were in for another world war and one probably before the end of the year. I had been working hard for the previous three years to try and get my own Group ready for the war. I knew we were not expected to be at fighting strength until 1942. In 1939 our numbers were still too small and our aircraft were few and not very modern. The country seemed asleep, lazy, soft. We were all rather tired and perhaps I was a little dispirited. But there seemed to be in England in September, 1939, at least one set of people who were ready to fight, who were fit, who were trained to fight, who were well worth every effort that had been made for them, and those people were the N.C.O.'s of the R.A.F. They were fit, skilled, disciplined, frugal in their living, eager to put the service they could give before any comforts that they might like to enjoy. It is a great tradition. A great tradition for all the apprentices here and for all the instructional staff to whom they owe so much.

It is on that firm foundation of Halton trained boys that the expansion of the Air Force was built. The Battle of Britain was won, and the bombing of Germany is now being carried on to such an extent that it is crippling the enemy. Carry on in that tradition and remember that successful operations rest upon good maintenance and good discipline, whether you are in an operational unit, a training unit or a maintenance unit. Do not be disappointed if you do not get to the unit which you want, because the efficiency of the Service rests upon all Units and upon every man in every Unit being as efficient and fit as he can be.

I will say one word more. The esteem in which the R.A.F. is held reflects the confidence which the general public has in the Service. The public knows very little about the actual work, but the Service is for them a well-run fighting show. They judge our efficiency very largely by our behaviour. It is up to you to do your best to uphold the name of the Royal Air Force, and it is also important that our Allies in this country, many of whom think it an honour to wear our blue uniform, should see in us a model of what a Service should be.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you every good luck and good fortune in the coming operations and in the future."

No. 1 (APPRENTICES') WING

SO much has happened and there have been so many changes since we last reported our progress that it is difficult to ensure that at least all the bigger plums are pulled from the pudding which has been simmering these last few months.

In March, Sqdn. Ldr. Crowe left us, after having commanded the Wing for over 18 months, and we welcomed Wing Commander F. S. Scott. Flt. Lieut. Saxby was posted in February, and Sqdn. Ldr. Salthouse took over command of "B" Squadron.

Sport has continued to play a very large part. When the 44th Entry passed out there were many gaps left in the various Wing teams, but players have come forward and filled their places nobly. The Soccer team, recently captained by Sgt. Apprentice Richmond, was beaten in the final of the Station Knock-out Cup by the R.A.F. Regiment after a hard and uphill battle.

L.A.A. Luxon skippered the 1 Wing "A" Rucker team which lost in the final of the invitation Sevens to R.A.F. Halton, but the same team, this time strengthened by Sergeants Rattray and Jones, won the inter-unit competition.

The success of the Shooting Team, so ably coached by Sgt. Ramm, is best illustrated by the positions of the four teams we entered for the S.M.R.C. Junior Spring Competition. Out of 99 competing teams we finished 2nd, 3rd, 16th and 22nd—Well done!

Probably nothing gave us greater satisfaction than the result of our visit to the Army Apprentices. One very successful afternoon in January we beat them at Soccer, Rucker, Hockey, Cross-Country running and Shooting, losing only at Boxing.

Ft.-Lt. E. R. Gorwood, M.B.E., is going to coach the Athletic Team, which should certainly thrive under this former Athletic Coach to the R.A.F.

No. 2 Wing Notes and News

Pantomime and Pipers

Since the publication of the last issue of *The Halton Magazine* 2 Wing has, in common with other Wings, undergone quite a number of changes. Although he has now been with us for some time, we take this first opportunity of welcoming our new Commanding Officer, S/Ldr. V. C. Humfrey. Another newcomer to the Wing is F/O Muspratt, commanding "C" Squadron, who has also taken over the reins of Wing Entertainments Officer. We feel sure that he will carry on with the good work for which the Wing has always been noted.

THE PANTOMIME

Among the outstanding events of this year, so far, the Pantomime, "Queen of Hearts", produced in the Wing Concert Hall in the first week of January, calls for more than a moderate amount of praise. The greatest regret of those responsible was that the show could not carry on for a longer period to enable all the Station to enjoy it. On every evening crowds of people had to be refused admission as the Hall was full. Over 3,500 people saw the performances, while over 400 children of Station personnel, with their parents, were entertained at the matinée on Monday afternoon.

The thanks of the producers, organisers, and audiences are due to those 32 R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. personnel who made the show such an overwhelming success. Conrad Vince, in the role of the "Witch", brought the house down, especially during some of those wordy duels with the "Yellow Ogre", played by F/Sgt. Eddie Sharp. What an opportunity this was for the "Erks" to fulfil a long ambition and hiss their P.T. Instructor! Probably the most enjoyable part of the Show was the Children's Matinée, followed by tea in the N.A.A.F.I., when the kiddies (and from appearances, the parents also) had a most hilarious time. Full marks must be given to the managing director of the company, W/O Collins, for his excellent and untiring work.

SCOTS WHA HAE

Another very successful function was the visit to 2 Wing on Saturday, February 12, of the Massed Pipe Bands of a Highland Division. A brilliant performance of piping, marching, and counter-marching was given on the Square before a large crowd.

The visit to this station was organised by No. 2 Wing Corporals' Club, and after the performance the Club entertained a portion of the band, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, to tea, followed by a dance and cabaret in the Wing Concert Hall. After a few jars of ale had flowed, the visitors revealed further talent with an exhibition of Highland dancing.

DANCES

The Monthly Wing Dances in the Station Concert Hall continue to be very popular, and that 2 Wing speciality "Grand March" has always the desired effect of fetching everybody on to the floor. The small weekly dances in the Wing Concert Hall have been resumed, but of late have suffered from overcrowding. While W.A.A.F. personnel from the Station are cordially invited, owing to the limited accommodation it is necessary to confine admission to R.A.F. personnel of 2 Wing only.

In the course of a few days a new feature in 2 Wing will be an "Information Room", off the writing-room in the Institute. This will deal with such things as current affairs, Station sports and social information, technical information, etc. Watch for opening date.

SPORTS

In the Inter Sergeants' Mess League our team were winners at Billiards and Snooker, and top scorers at Darts. In the Chess League the Wing team were runners-up, having lost 1 match and drawn 1 match during the season. We were also winners of the Station Billiards League.

The outstanding game of the Soccer season was that with 5 Wing in the Knockout Competition. 2 Wing lost centre forward and centre half early in the game, but fought back and were only just defeated. The Wing made amends by winning the Soccer final of the Victor Ludorum Cup.

At Rugby we consistently supplied a large proportion of the Station 1st and 2nd XV's but were narrowly defeated by 4 Wing in the Victor Ludorum Knockout. At Swimming we were generally on top, and the season was crowned by victory in the Victor Ludorum gala, thanks to LAC Lindsay. At Hockey we gradually built up a suitable team, only to be beaten by 4 Wing (1-0) in a tough game.

School of Cookery

SPRING COMES TO COOKERY NOOK

The "Pin-Up" Girl Gets a New Setting

When the cuckoo was heard early in April in the wood behind the School, and when the landscape began to lose its drabness, so the Cookery School donned in layers its spring and summer coat. U/t cooks were heard to mutter: "Schickelgruber started this way", as they sloshed distemper over barrack-room walls. Surprising to a degree is the amazing improvement this unskilled labour has brought to the interior decoration of the living quarters. Miss Grable now has a fitting setting for her charms as soon as drawing pins can be found!

Sergeants' Mess

All this decoration made the Sergeants' Mess look somewhat sick by comparison, but fortunately F/Sgt. Marsh took a leaf from Lady Mendi's book and has seen to it that the Mess also is adequately daubed. To date the green effect is reminiscent of Neptune's Grotto, though a nice line in oak panelling is promised.

The Mess has got well on to its feet since the opening last January. One of the high spots of its recent history was the Dance at the C.S.M. held in conjunction with 3 Wing on March 31st. Members are eagerly and thirstily looking forward to another.

The School Dance

Wistful eyes of non-ticket holders still turn in the direction of the School on Thursday evenings when the weekly dance is held. Whether the longing is like that of the Bisto kids or that of the "zoot suit" wearer has not been fully discovered. Such delicacies are provided that cooks are wondering whether it's "oomph" or Mr. Brown's secret recipes, plus their skill, that draw the partners.

Sgt. Galvin still M.C.'s in his own inimitable way. A leading London amateur in pre-war days, he was the winner of 300 contests, a member of the English Dance Team in Denmark and the Riviera from 1933 to 1936, and partnered Miss Phyllis Smith (who won last year's All-England Amateur Championship). It is no wonder that we, who shuffle round, watch spell-bound when Sgt. Galvin takes the floor. Most of us still pin our hope on the spot

waltz for the prizes that Sgt. Pratt, armed with P.S.I. funds, is still efficiently hunting up.

Instructor Weds

On April 22, at Halton Parish Church, F/Sgt. Sturgeon, R.A.F. Instructor of the School of Cookery, was married to Cpl. Ford-Rooke, W.A.A.F. of No. 2 Officers' Mess, by Padre Gawne. The School staff and students were late with their congratulations as F/Sgt. Sturgeon emulated former Tory leader, Earl Baldwin, and adopted a "sealed lips" policy; but they were able to take this opportunity of wishing the couple all happiness. Prospective wives should be warned that being a cookery instructor is no guarantee of skill or willingness on the domestic Regulo.

Sport

The most lively section in sport is undoubtedly the Miniature Rifle Club. In a triangle shoot against 3 and 5 Wings, the School lost to 3 Wing by the narrow margin of 6 points. Cpl. Hine, a Member of the Committee, won a silver spoon in last month's Station Pistol handicap.

The School is rapidly evolving a species of game, on the field adjoining, reported to be football. This is resorted to in the evening and has something in common with the Eton Wall Game and a Hog Calling contest. Vocal chords have the same importance as feet.

General Education Scheme

Prominent among out-of-hours activity are the evening classes. Non-cooks still come to prepare for post-war domesticity; a small band also are studying for the City and Guilds of London Institutes Examination in Plain Cookery, and twice weekly there is the headache class in arithmetic.

Salute the Soldier

In the coming drive for savings the School of Cookery's target figure is £250. The weekly dance on May 18 will be a "Salute the Soldier" special and plans are being formulated for draws and contests to swell the funds.

No. 4 WING

IS EVERYBODY HAPPY?

The Great Upheaval is over. No longer does one meet a diminutive W.A.A.F. struggling along under a mountain of kit, or a dignified W.O. carrying all his worldly goods towards Block Two. No. 4 Wing has regained its wonted calm, and there is nothing to show that some airmen have been prised out of corners they had occupied for years, and relegated to the second division, or huts. Still, they say a change is as good as a holiday. Is everybody happy?

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD.

At Wing H.Q., Flt./Lieut Miller has become adjutant in place of F/O. Partridge. Sqdn/Ldr. Kershaw has had letters from several other officers who have held this post, or have been otherwise associated with the wing—particularly Sqdn/Ldr. Farmer, Flt./Lieut. Duncan, F/O. Day, and F/O. Hunter, all of whom are now overseas or on operational duties. They send their good wishes to all 4 Wing personnel.

SWING.

A discussion group begun during the winter didn't quite catch the popular taste, but other ventures have been more successful, especially the "jam sessions" held on Fridays in the Airmen's N.A.A.F.I. Members of the Station Dance Band swing it on these occasions with great gusto.

The next Wing dance is due on Friday, May 26.

For members of the Wing at the airfield, a new recreation room has been provided—and full use is being made of its facilities.

BACK HOME.

The W.A.A.F., after a brief excursion to other lodgings, are back in the Wing area again, and have been heard to pray fervently that this will be their last move. In view of women's love for spring cleaning and moving furniture, this may seem strange; but at home there are men to move the furniture, and it isn't in kit-bags.

The Sunday night dances are more popular than ever, but Spring is in the air, and many of the girls prefer to explore the Bucks countryside—at its best at this season. The P.S.I. bicycles are in great demand.

Perhaps Spring is responsible for the spate of weddings in the Wing. In recent weeks five W.A.A.F. have been married—and in almost every case to an airman in this Wing.

TARGET.

The "Salute the Soldier" campaign will soon be under way. No. 4 Wing topped the list on "Wings for Victory" week, and no doubt will again set a saving example.

A.C. Clayton, who assists the Wing Sports and Entertainments Officer, won a recent competition for a slogan for the Aylesbury "Salute the Soldier" week. His slogan: "Lead for Liberty."

LOOKING BACK.

The winter season in sport had its disappointments. The Wing did not shine in football, though there was an encouraging number of unofficial friendly matches—and after all, this was probably more useful than a brilliant display by a select few.

The snooker team came second in the league, for the second year in succession. Mainstays of the team were Sgt. Keeling, Cpls. Churchman and Whiting, L.A.C.'s Claxton, Dennis, Dougherty and Walker, and A.C. Clayton. A Wing darts tournament was won by the S.P. team.

Our Rugby seven-a-side team lost in the final of the Station tournament to No. 1A team, after a thrilling encounter with No. 18 in the semi-final, when extra time had to be played.

A splendid achievement was the breaking of the baths' 100 yards swimming record by L.A.C. Wray (Station Flight). His time was 60½ secs., and he hopes to lower the record again soon.

LOOKING FORWARD.

There has already been a good deal of activity at the nets, in preparation for the cricket season. The Wing team, which will be able to call on most of last season's star players—including that fine all-rounder, Sgt. Spencer—is expected to do well.

Athletes should note that July 15 has been fixed provisionally as the date for the Wing sports.

No. 5 Wing

New Faces to Welcome

Among the Wing's new faces we are pleased to welcome Technical Training Command Band "B", under the direction of Bandmaster F. A. Gale.

Bandmaster F. A. Gale has been associated with R.A.F. Central Bands since 1921, and has toured many thousands of miles round the country, also France at the beginning of this war.

Bandmaster Gale hopes to give occasional

ridden in France, Belgium and Spain, and can recall being present at the Derby when the King's horse was pulled down by a suffragette.

"The weather in the Straits of Dover" being fine this year, the Entertainments Committee have decided to abandon the weekly N.A.A.F.I. concerts, but still hold whist drives, tombola and dances under the direction of W.O. Paley and Sgt. Jones.

No. 5 Wing once again made certain of the



concerts in the Wing and the Station as soon as engagements permit, but his first call will be the Hospital.

Another new face to welcome is F/Lt. D. G. Bayley, "C" Squadron's Commander, who last visited Halton in 1928. Since then he has served out East where he held the Middle East Epeé Championship 1933-6, and met our present Wing Warrant Officer—W.O. Paley. In this war he served in France.

Cupid appears to have been busy recently among the 5 Wing Permanent Staff Corporals; congratulations being due to Cpl. B. Brook, Cpl. Hart, Cpl. Herd and Cpl. Hall, on their recent marriages.

Cpl. Hall is fifty years of age. In the last war he served in the cavalry and has spent all his life with horses as a free-lance jockey. He commenced his career on the turf in 1911 under Joe Cannon (trainer and jockey), has

Soccer League Championship, losing only two games this year. Fortunately such stalwarts as Carr, Doolan, Murray, Patrickson, stayed with us long enough to see it through.

S/Ldr. D. M. Rees, M.B.E., C.O. 5 Wing, was heartily cheered by a large and enthusiastic crowd of supporters when he presented the prizes and congratulated the winners of the Inter-Entry Knock-Out Competition which rounded off the Wing's highly successful Soccer season. No less than sixteen teams took part in this Competition. The finalists 147 Entry (captained by A. C. Wilkinson) beat 149 Entry 3-1 after a previous ding-dong struggle at the Stadium on Wednesday, 26th April, when they drew 4-4.

The Wing's biggest disappointment was in the Victor Ludorum Cup. In the semi-final we drew with the Hospital 0-0, yet in the replay were defeated 3-0.

CONVERSATION PIECE

OUR tame reporter was condemned to spend an evening in the N.A.A.F.I. last week—drinking N.A.A.F.I. beer, God help him. He sat and listened, and this, with a few words missed out, is what he heard.

"Won't it be wonderful to walk round after the war and feel you're not being watched!"

"That depends on what you're doing after the war."

"She asked me what the red stripes on my arm were for. I said for endurance."

"They say you get a star for five years' service."

"Should be a halo."

Brp . . . eek . . . brrrp . . . This is zone control speaking. This is zone control speaking. If you can't hear me, ring me up at once . . . brrp . . . brrp . . . glop.

"I bet they give us a course in walking with a slouch before we're demobbed."

"Don't worry, we won't need it."

"That doesn't mean we won't get it."

"Anyway, in the suits we'll get you won't be able to slouch."

"When I was in Libya we used to do repairs at night by torchlight. No time off there."

"I was out there too. Used to work in the dark, with Jerry upstairs looking for us. Gave us the shivers."

"Shut the hangar doors."

"Hello, mate! O.K.?"

"Yeah. You O.K.?"

"Yeah."

"O.K., mate. Cheerio!"



Brp . . . eek . . . brrrp . . . This is zone control speaking. This is zone control speaking. If you can't hear me, ring me up at once. Repeat at once . . . brrrp . . . brrrp . . . glop.

"They won't

get me in a queue when this lot's over—not even for the dole."

"There's a few people I want to meet in civvy street. I'd queue for that."



"You blokes want to get some in. When I was in Iceland—"

"Shut the hangar doors."

"There was an S.P. sergeant standing at the corner of the street. Looked at me as if I hadn't a pass."

"What did you do?"

"Looked at him as if I had."

"If they take Boy Scout service into account I'm due four."

"If they took war service into account you wouldn't be due any."

Brrp . . . eek . . . Brrp . . . This is zone control speaking. Repeat zone control speaking. If you can't hear me, repeat can't hear me, ring me up at once, repeat AT ONCE. Brrp . . . brrp . . . GLOP.

"Civvy street won't be a bed of roses. Imagine having to work for your living."

"Who said we don't work, now?"

"Who said we're living?"

"They seem very fond of courses nowadays. I could suggest a few."

"So could I—how to get your ticket, for one."

"Who wants to get his ticket?"

"Who doesn't?"

"We will fight on the beaches . . ."

"Close the hangar doors."

"So he said to me, 'Isn't it about time you went on leave?' That's when I socked him."

Brrp . . . eek . . . brrp . . . This is zone control speaking. This is zone control speaking. If you can't hear me, I DON'T CARE. I'M GOING HCME. . . Brrp . . . brrp . . . glop.

Pay Accounts Telling You

THE AIRMAN'S INCOME TAX

Question. I am a sergeant, Group 1, married, no children. What income tax is deducted from my pay? My civilian firm make me a percentage allowance of my pre-war salary from which income tax is deducted at source. Should Service and civilian pay be added for income tax purposes?

Answer. Your Income Tax as a Sergeant, Group 1, married, with no children would, assuming no other reliefs, be approximately £11 a year. You are given an A.M. Form 63 to complete at the beginning of each Income Tax Year. On this form you should state your full income, both from service and civilian sources and make a notation that Income Tax from civilian pay is being deducted at source. Provisional deductions of Income Tax will be made in the Pay Ledger based on your service pay only, until an actual assessment is received from Air Ministry. A statement accompanying this assessment, addressed to you, will show, in detail, how the assessment has been arrived at, and in the event of any query arising, you are at liberty to take up the matter personally with The Assessors of Income Tax, Air Ministry, Stroud, Glos.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Question. Unemployment benefit is deducted from my pay while serving. For ten years prior to the war I was outside the income limit and did not contribute. In the anticipated event of my returning to my old job after the war, what happens to the contributions paid while serving?

Answer. It is presumed that you mean that Unemployment Contributions are being deducted from your pay. This, however, is not the case.

While airmen are serving, their employment being continuous, insurance against unemployment is unnecessary. When, however, the airman is discharged or transferred to the reserve (with certain exceptions), the Air Ministry will pay the Unemployment fund a sufficient sum from Air Force funds to qualify him, if resident in the United Kingdom after discharge or transfer to the reserve, for unemployment benefit under the general conditions applicable to the payment of such benefit.

Also, whilst an airman is serving, his conditions of service secure to him maintenance, medical treatment and, subject to good conduct, full pay during sickness unless the sickness is due to the airman's own fault. There is accordingly no necessity during service for him to be insured, with a view to the provision of sickness and medical benefits such as are applicable to a civilian insured person. In order, however, that on discharge or transfer to the reserve, his right to all ordinary benefits under the National Health Insurance Acts may be secured, and that he may be placed in as advantageous a position on entering civil life as he would have been had he been continuously insured in civil employment, contributions are paid by the Air Council from public funds in respect of him during his service as an airman after the age of sixteen. These contributions cover payment of maternity benefit to an airman's wife during his service. No deduction is made from an airman's pay in respect of these contributions.

Under the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1936, contributions are payable in respect of every serving airman over the age of sixteen years. The employers' contribution is paid from Air Force funds and the employee's contribution is deducted from the airman's pay. The amount is 6½d. per week.

GRATUITIES

Question. As a volunteer reservist who enlisted in April, 1939, I drew one half year's gratuity (£5 annually), before being mobilized in August, 1939. What happens to gratuities for the intervening years while on active service up to the five years' reserve service for which I signed?

Answer. This gratuity ceases immediately you are called up for regular service. Under existing regulations no gratuities are admissible for V.R. personnel called up for regular service, but it is pointed out that you will have the benefit of the post-war credit, which is being accumulated on your behalf and which will be paid on a specified date after hostilities have ceased. This amounts to 6d. per day and is effective from 1st January, 1942.

Around Main Point

By "Onlooker"

BY the time this Magazine appears, the Salute the Soldiers' Campaign will be in full swing. In attempting to reach the ambitious target of £8,000, the Station is setting itself no easy task, but judging by the way in which they are tackling the job the workers are determined to succeed. Signs of their activity are evident everywhere.

* * *

Never have so many been waylaid to buy tickets for dances and competitions; and the ticket-vendors have an irresistible power of charming the coins out of one's pocket. I have observed, too, the dutiful marching on parade-grounds by airmen, W.A.A.F.—and the N.A.A.F.I. staff, looking very spruce in their khaki—with each contingent preparing to impress the local townships and villages who will shortly watch them march by in the parade.

* * *

On the Station itself, there are plenty of forthcoming attractions, including dances in 2 Wing Concert Hall, a Fun Fair on Tuesday, 16th May in 3 Wing, and a 5/- dance in the Station Concert Hall on Wed., 17th May. The Salute the Soldier Campaign is one feature of Halton life about which nobody can complain of lack of enthusiasm.

GROUP CAPTAIN WHITTLE

GROUP Captain F. Whittle has honoured *The Halton Magazine* by contributing an article which appears on another page, in which he tells of the reluctance of the R.A.F. to make use of his services when he tried to join as an apprentice. However, the determination of the Group Captain—obviously backed by Mr. Maxalding ('you can be as strong as me') did the trick. It is disconcerting to realise on what slender threads of destiny the future of the Jet Plane hung, and how near the Air Ministry came to missing the boat.

SQDN.-LEADER PORTER

SQDN.-LEADER Porter's service at Halton, which appears so long, is only a small slice out of his military career, for he is now in his 30th year on the active list in the Indian Army and is expecting his promotion to Lieut. Col. in November. After being com-

missioned with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in the last war, he was transferred from France to the Indian Army and saw service on the North-West Frontier, Persia and Iraq.

His only respite from military life was in 1937-38 when he started dairy-farming at Prestwood, six miles away. 1938 was the year when he first became connected with Halton. Since then he has seen many changes. It must be an impressive number of Apprentices, airmen and W.A.A.F. Flight Mechanics who have been trained under his command.

A NATION OF SPECTATORS

G. K. Chesterton once said that a game is not worth playing if it isn't worth playing badly. Evidently public opinion disagrees; or why do 90,000 fans make for Wembley for every Cup Final? Observers often lament that we are rapidly becoming a nation of spectators. If so, Halton would seem to be in the fashion. For the visit of Flt.-Lieut. A. D. Matthews on April 25 to lecture on cricket attracted five officers and one small apprentice, the only cricketers on this Station sufficiently keen to pick up a few tips from one of the leading fast bowlers in County Cricket at the outbreak of war. This kind of apathy among sportsmen drives one to take a jaundiced view of present-day cricket, modern life, the younger generation, the war, and everything that takes people's minds off cricket.

FOR GOLFERS ONLY

DO you want to become a golfer? I cannot promise that by some magical wand waving you will become a plus man in a brace of shanks. But, if present plans mature, there will be opportunity for divot slingers to improve their game and would-be players to learn what is the fascination behind hitting a small ball into a hole in the ground. So look to your cleft and polish up your niblick.

* * *

We have on the Station Cpl. L. R. Dunning, in peace time a well known professional golfer, who has spent many years in a close study of the game. Cpl. Dunning is hoping that, in conjunction with the sports officers on the Station, it will be possible to open up an indoor golf school where spare time facilities will be available to teach the game properly.