



**The newsletter of the
202 Squadron Association
Number 43 - 2022**



MR troops approach a D Flt 202 Sqn Whirlwind,
Scottish Highlands, 29th January 1978

(Image courtesy of Brian Canfer)

The President's Piece

You'll be pleased to hear that, once again, the 202 Squadron Association was represented at the Cenotaph Marchpast on Remembrance Sunday. The weather was ideal for the occasion as we gathered on Horse Guards, but, sadly, our numbers were down. We only managed to field 9 marchers. The empty files were all for very good and valid reasons and I'm sure previous participants will return for future years.

Nonetheless, it would be great if we could get to a position when there might be a competition for places in the contingent. So, a message to all members of the Association: please, take a moment to consider joining us next year.



It's actually a very enjoyable event. We gather on Horse Guards by 1000, march through onto Whitehall to witness, on big TV screens, the laying of the wreaths by HM King Charles and the Royal Family, followed by we veterans

marching past the Cenotaph (and I use the word “marching” very loosely!). On our return to Horse Guards, we march past one of the Royals; this year it was Edward (last year it was William, who, on being told that we were 202 Squadron, raised his eyebrows and was clearly wondering, “Where the *BLANK* was 22 Squadron?”). It makes you proud to be there!

After that we disperse back to the RAF Club for a few drinks and lunch. So, if next November 12th, you fancy a nice day out in London, participating in a national event, representing the Association in front of crowds of people giving you a lot of respect, let me know in an email to pete@thechads.org.

Yours In Comradeship,

Pete Chadwick



Update from the Chairman

Dear Assortation Members,

No not a typo of mine, but one spotted at Duxford, during our Reunion in September. ‘202 Assortation Members’ were signposted to where we were to get ‘refreshments’ at the start of our visit. Like so often when typos or autocorrect changes something, the ‘wrong’ spelling seems right! As I said at the Reunion Dinner, our Association does contain an assortment of people – from different eras of the Squadron (Met, Whirlwind, Sea King - and now Jupiter, by Jove), members and partners, full and associate and uniformed and honorary members), and different air and ground trades. We truly are an Assortation!

This year has seen the start of a return to pre-Covid normality, with the Association holding both a reunion and mustering a marching delegation to attend the national Remembrance event at the Cenotaph. Pete Chadwick has written about the latter elsewhere in the ‘Mucky Duck’, so I will only add my support to his plea to ask you to consider marching next year. Following

my family's recent, permanent move to Edinburgh, I participated in Edinburgh-based remembrance events, through my involvement with the Royal Air Forces Association, so couldn't attend the Cenotaph ceremony.

My thanks must also go to Pete Chadwick for stepping into the breach and organising our Reunion at Duxford in September. Some 39 Members and partners took part, an attendance that is typical for the 202-only events we've held since 202 Squadron's involvement in operational SAR ended. Our hosted tour around Duxford was especially memorable when we were shown a Hastings – and John Malcolm knew far more about the history of the type than our guide did. Attending a Reunion for the first time was Bob Botwood, who served on 202 Squadron at different times between 1964-1983. Bob didn't just join the Association in time for him to attend the Duxford Reunion, but also travelled all the way from Australia to do so. Welcome to the Association, Bob, and we look forward to seeing you again next year! We had planned on holding an AGM at the Duxford Reunion, but several Committee members could not attend the event, so we decided to postpone the AGM. We intend to hold the (overdue) AGM in the very near future...

Ian Stephenson remains indefatigable in chasing Members to renew their annual subscriptions. Thanks to Ian's ongoing efforts, Association Membership currently sits around 122 members. He recently took to lunch a 93-year-old ex-Senior Air Meteorological Observer, who spent 6 years on 202 Squadron, in an attempt to get him to join the Association. In between cruises – I'm jealous, of course! – Ian also continues to organise regular Zoom calls with the Meteorological-era Association members. Thank you, Ian. Please keep up your good work.

Jules Rutt has volunteered to rejoin the Committee as Secretary. Needless to say, Jules is now missing his left hand, after I snatched it off! Jules' appointment will need to be confirmed at our next (overdue) AGM. Jules' volunteering is much appreciated. Indeed, my ongoing thanks to all the Committee members for the work they do in making our organization tick. Brian continues to keep a firm grip on our finances, Derek continues with the solemn but sadly necessary duties of Association Almoner, and Dave

continues to make our website work! Given this article is for the MD, my particular thanks go to Charlie Logan for the masterful way he cajoles contributors to the MD to meet publishing deadlines.

I should like to end my round of thanks with a thank you to Martin Jarvis, Josh Ryznar and all the 202 Squadron personnel who not only keep the nameplate alive and conduct valuable training in maritime flying skills for military helicopter crews but also keep us in the Association apprised of what is happening in the RAF generally and on 202 Squadron specifically.

Sadly, this year has also seen us say goodbye to members of our family. Geoff Bakewell died on 8 September. Tragically, the cause of Geoff's death was predominantly the same disease from which Irene was suffering when she died...but the disease is not communicable. Geoff, of course, made light of this fact in his email updates and also noted wryly that he was in the same hospital ward as Irene had been. Thank you to the many Association Members who sent messages of support to Geoff during his illness. He repeatedly said how grateful he was for receiving these messages. Pete Chadwick laid a wreath at Geoff's funeral in RAF Halton's church on 3 October. The funeral was attended by several other Association Members. No 202 Squadron was also to be formally represented; unfortunately, Covid put paid to that plan. Several Association members also attended a simple interment ceremony for Geoff and Irene's ashes on 28 October. Geoff's passing was also marked formally at the Reunion Dinner for his enthusiastic and long-term support for the Association generally and specifically for organising so many successful reunion events.

On behalf of the Association, Derek Whatling attended the funeral of Frank Pole on 22 July. Frank was well known among the rotary community, had served on D Flight, 202 Squadron, flying Whirlwinds, and had been an Association member for many years. Thank you, Derek.

Our President wrote formally to Mike Pain to express our condolences to Mike on the passing of Ann, his wife. Ann and Mike have been regular attendees at Reunions, and Ann will be sadly missed.

As we think about absent friends, it seems pertinent to repeat here Mike Hamill's eulogy for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which he posted on the Association's Facebook page. Subsequently, I read it out at the 'Assortation' Reunion.

I saw today, Her Majesty in repose.
Her guards surround her, in sentinel pose.
As she lay beneath her standard bright,
watched over through day and night.
The symbols of Monarchy above her lay,
as people together did come to pray.
They came in multitude, to stand before
Our Queen, in dignity and to honour.
To say farewell in thoughts and prayer.
To stand in supplication; foursquare!
Race, colour; nor creed was seen,
just sadness at the passing of our Queen!
Rest In Peace ma'am each heart will sing
As now we turn and cry. God Save The King!

Season's greetings to you all and best wishes for 2023.

Steve Garden



News From the Squadron

Unseasonably excellent weather in January allowed us to get some courses through ahead of schedule. In fact, the wind was a bit too light for our liking/needs at times. The Meteorology Gods certainly had their revenge in February though, with Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin all having their say. Fortunately, the worst of it did hit further south in the UK but our flypro was obviously affected!

We had a couple more setbacks that paused our live winching capability, but as of the end of February, 202 Sqn was live winching again. We looked forward to a steady 2022, training new staff and students with up to 4 H145 Jupiters here at any one time.



During an official government visit to North Wales in February our Pilot Training Officer, Flt Lt Dom Sanderson had the opportunity to explain to our then Prime Minister how to fly a Jupiter. By all accounts he was enthusiastic and enjoyed getting his hands on the controls, albeit a static aircraft! OC 202 Sqn, Sqn Ldr Martin Jarvis, achieved his A2 instructional category despite his full schedule as the Boss. We were getting up towards our full quota for staff with Ascent recruiting some more rearcrew and pilot instructors.

202 Sqn was a hive of activity in Q2 2022. The number of trainees flying with us had been undergoing a surge and our pool of qualified staff was ever increasing. Our Senior Pilot (SPLOT), Lt Cdr Al Lockett, is the President of the Royal Naval Association on Anglesey and recently had the pleasure of hosting a visit for a number of the RNA members. It's always a privilege to update the old guard – we'll all be there one day!

We said goodbye and good luck to Mr Jonathan Clarke-Pickering (C-P) in May, who retired from aviation at RAF Valley. Following a career in the RN, C-P worked as a QHCI with Cobham and then Ascent on SARTU and 202 Sqn for many years. We also dined out MAcr Macca MacGregor at the delayed Burn's Night dinner in the Officers' Mess. Somehow he managed to bring the entire MacGregor clan and the emotions ran high, celebrating his many decades in the Royal Air Force. He's already back with 1FTS as an Ascent QHCI!

It was a scorcher of a summer for us here on Anglesey! We started off with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June and on through to the RAF Valley Annual Reception in July and Families' Day in August. 202 Sqn had its part to play and we'd like to think that we stole the show for Valley based aircraft at the Annual Reception Flypast and the Families Day Flying! Sqn Ldr Jarvis (OC 202 Sqn) captained his crew of 4 to conduct a Jupiter role demonstration for the friends and family on 11th August and reached 3000 flying hours during that sortie to boot!



Of huge significance, the RAF Valley Golf Tournament held at the Anglesey Golf Club on 14th June was dominated by 202 Sqn, with Flt Lt Ryznar, Flt Lt Rob Paul and Mr Dave Brown claiming a decisive victory in front of hordes of fans..... Fortunately the Texas Scramble format allows for a mixture of abilities.

Into the summer, 202 Sqn continued to complete courses on time, with trainee RAF pilots and rearcrew, and RN observers, pilots and aircrewmen all passing through. A break in the courses in early August even allowed us to have a couple of Force Development days, with a fishing trip on the Smit

Don, some kayaking to the Rhoscolyn Beacon and a mountain biking outing in Snowdonia.



We welcomed Air Cadets to the Sqn over the summer and even managed to fly 6 members of Cambridge UAS during their visit to the Station in August. We crept closer to conducting wet winching to the aircraft and managed to conduct our own wet winching drills in Holyhead Harbour with the Jupiter and ELRS. We are still awaiting a modified sea tray for this as the year comes to a close.

Autumn 2022 has been a challenging period with some interesting Anglesey weather, with the remnants of storm Antoni resulting in consistent gusts above 50kts preventing the aircraft from being moved out of the hangar. Despite this the Sqn has been busy with delivery of the Maritime syllabus with hitting the milestone of having full concurrent courses running with 25 trainees sharing the resources. In early November the Sqn had the pleasure of the visit and flying of Gp Capt Hoare (new RAF Valley Stn Cdr). This was a great opportunity to show him the beautiful Anglesey landscape at a more

appreciative speed. His handling of the mighty Jupiter was not bad considering his background and the landing was of a good Naval (heavy) standard. There was a great Sqn turnout for the Remembrance events with a particularly strong presence at the Rhosneigr ceremony.

A customer liaison event was held at Shawbury with several key 202 Sqn stakeholders making the journey to meet with the frontline OCU reps. Air Cadets were hosted again in mid-October, which also saw the arrival and increase in background noise on the ASP with the Hawk T2s using the alternate ground running spot.



On the social front, 202 Sqn had an impromptu celebration of the Royal Navy Taranto night, with the trainees delivering the vignettes and all attending enjoyed some pizza (Italian reference there!). The remainder of this period on the run up to Christmas will hopefully see the completion of a further 3 courses of aircrew including rearcrew, RN observers and pilots. The highlight of this time was the Sqn Christmas dinner on 1st December at Libertine's in Menai Bridge. As we took over the place with a private event everyone was able to let their hair down a bit more than normal.....!

Early in the New Year, Sqn Ldr Jarvis is moving on to a new career as a SAR commander with HM Coastguard on the Resilience Team. We wish him all the very best after a superb tenure in charge of us all. We will welcome Sqn

Ldr 'Shiny' Allen, our next OC 202 Sqn and the first rearcrew Boss in a while here.

We are thinking of those of you who we have lost this year, including Geoff Bakewell with whom I always enjoyed my interactions - what a true enthusiastic gentleman. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you in the 202 Sqn Association a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Nadolig Llawen and Semper Vigilate.

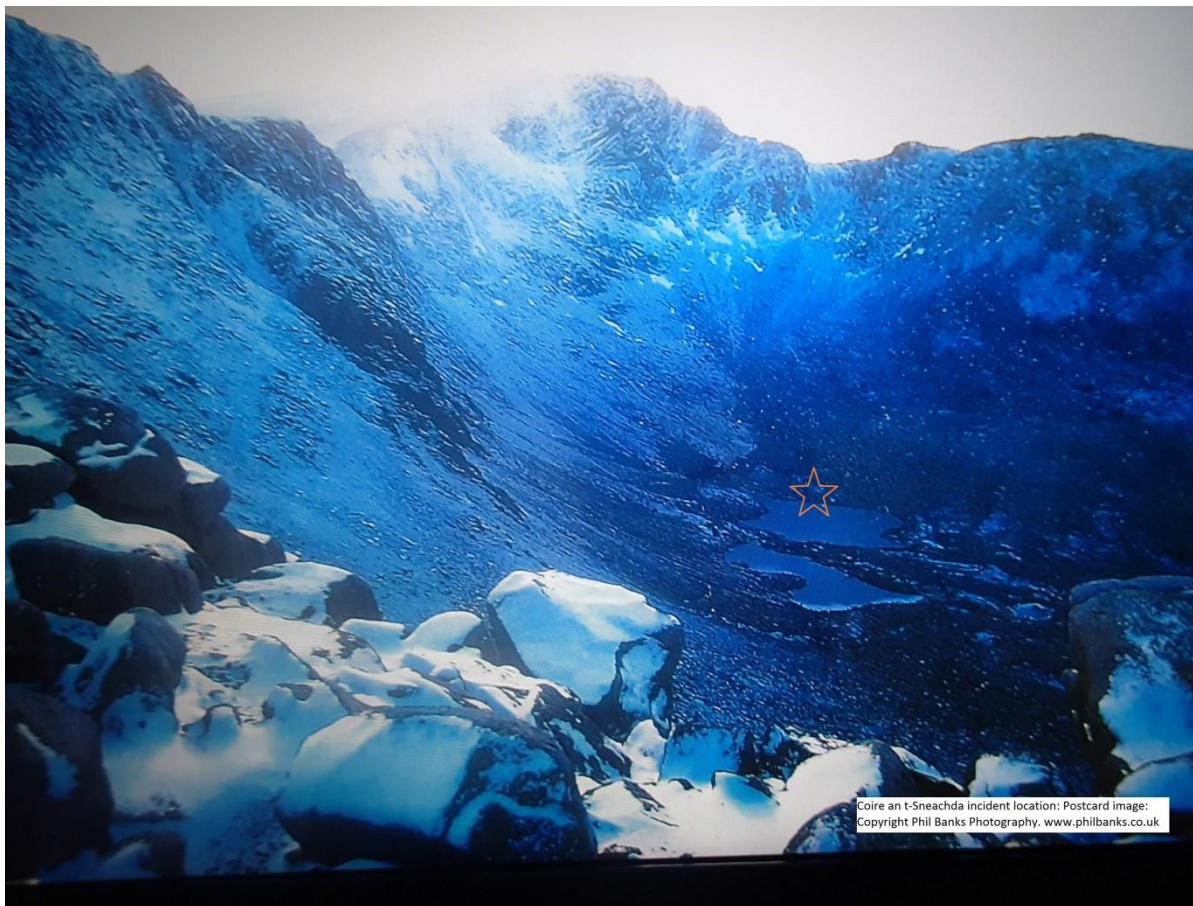
Flt Lt Josh Ryznar



Coire an t-Sneachda Avalanche, February 11, 1995

Ian Mitchell, known as Mitch, spent many years as an MRT member in the Scottish Highlands. He is a member of the RAF Mountain Rescue Association (about which more at the end), and has recently joined our Association as well. He has kindly given permission for this account, which was published on the RAFMRA website earlier this year, to be reproduced here.

Early 1995 featured heavier than usual snowfall in the Highlands, and mountain rescue teams were kept busy throughout January and February. On Saturday 11 February, I was guesting as a civvy with Leuchars MRT whose leader was Bill Batson. We were based in Aviemore village hall and that weekend we had good number of troops out. I had guested with the team since around 1993 and had been introduced to LMRT by Joe Wiggins (Wiggy) who I had known since 1973 when we were both in 2414 Sqn ATC.



On that weekend we were looking forward to some climbing in the Northern Coires but with the high avalanche warning and continuing poor weather the prospects were dubious. Saturday morning saw me and Joe along with Innes Cronshaw set off in the LMRT Sigs Land Rover for Coire Cas car park

accompanied by another couple of LMRT wagons. Various parties of troops were either hillwalking or going in to look at climbs. About 6 of us set off for Coire an t-Sneachda to look at climbs there. After plodding through the snow we arrived at the foot of the coire and had a look about. It was snowing steadily. Wiggy was very keen to have a go on a route but even as we unpacked our harnesses and kit the rucksacks were covered in snow and he reluctantly agreed with us that the avalanche risk was simply too high. A collective decision was made that cocoa at the ski café was the order of the day. Meanwhile all around us on virtually every crag there were parties of climbers and Stu (Jessie) McBain said something along the lines of “maybe we should hang around; I reckon we are going to get a job today”.



We trudged out and made our way to the café. The cocoa was good, and the place was busy, many skiers and climbers. Finishing up we got back in our Land Rovers and took off for Aviemore. Somewhere around Glenmore Lodge the radio squawked into life. It was a call-out and it was in Coire an t-Sneachda. We blue-lighted it back up the hill and met Davie Taylor, the DTL, who I believe was acting team leader that weekend. All we knew at this point was that one perhaps more people had a problem and Davie chose a fast group to go in immediately using the ski centre's tracked piste machine

to get in part way. By chance that weekend we had two paramedic trained troops out with us, Steve Heaney and a second troop whose name I cannot remember. The snowfall had increased slightly and hanging onto the rail on the machine was not very easy with the machine pitching and rolling over the ground. The driver got us about half way and we assembled in line and started trekking in for the second time that day through the snowfall.

Close to the head of the coire a 202 Sqn Sea King flew over us heading out and over the radio we heard a snatch of discussion about one casualty on board with a broken limb and another casualty being walked out. I can't remember if we were told then (by radio) to keep going in as there were more casualties or if we decided to leg it in the rest of the way to see if we could assist.



We arrived at Sneachda to a bizarre sight. There were numerous civvy climbers milling about in the coire (and some still on the crags) and several knelt over in the snow attending to injured people. We quickly realised that there were 5 casualties from two separate parties who had been avalanched down Goat Track Gully and ended up at the bottom together. Some rapid triaging determined that one climber (Ian Twaddle) was fairly seriously

injured and still partially buried with a suspected broken femur, with another climber (Philip Birch) also partially buried and presenting injuries which were not as life-threatening, but would nonetheless require hospital treatment. The remaining three suffered minor injuries and I was assigned the least injured who had a sprained ankle. My casualty was an Englishman called Miles, whose crampons I removed before rapidly zipping him into the Snug Pak 2-season bag I always carried, and keeping him calm.

Joe Wiggins was the designated On-Scene Commander, and after Steve and the second paramedic had looked over the casualties, Wiggy made a rapid decision to give the On-Scene Commander tabard to (I think) Steve Heaney in order that the winchman from the hoped-for helicopter would make straight for Steve and get a rapid appraisal of the situation from a medical viewpoint. That decision by Wiggy undoubtedly saved valuable time in the end which was sorely needed.



It continued to snow and I kept my casualty calm and positive. Periodically Wiggy provided updates on the progress with Ian Twaddle, now assessed as T1. At this point it was looking as though he had a broken left femur, a crushed pelvis and several broken ribs. I was told Steve Heaney was

administering Entonox as troops worked as fast as possible to dig Twaddle out of the snow and stabilise the injuries. Meanwhile other troops worked on Philip Birch, still partially buried, and the remaining casualties. An LMRT troop called Drew was instrumental in organising the casualties for the stretchers. Other troops had ushered the civilian climbers away from the danger zone as we were concerned another avalanche could come down. I seem to remember hearing later that the Scottish Avalanche Service had an observer in the area who counted 14 avalanches in the area that day.

Whilst all this was going on Davie Taylor had organised the second group to go in which included LMRT's Andy Fowler and that group was bringing more folding stretchers. I believe the second group also included Cairngorm MRT members.



Second party en route: Screengrab:
BBC Scotland, Inside Story,
Mountain Rescue 1995, Copyright
Triple Echo Productions Ltd,
Newtonmore, Scotland

Wiggy rotated around the groups working on the five casualties, with the poor weather making us wonder if a helicopter could get in. Given the seriousness of the injuries sustained by the buried climber, there was real trepidation that we would have to carry him out, perhaps taking 2 or 3 hours, and his blood pressure would drop below a critical point on the way.

As always with a rescue and the adrenaline going, time seemed to take a back seat. I think it was around 30 or 40 minutes after we arrived that a Sea King approached through the snowfall and landed around 30 yards from us. You could feel the atmosphere change to a positive mood with the arrival of the helicopter and we now felt this guy had a good chance of making it. Morale soared.

Rescue 137 (ZE368) was captained by Robert Somerville, and winchman Mick Lambert jumped out and immediately made his way towards the On-Scene Commander tabard of Steve Heaney.



For a full 45 minutes, Rescue 137 sat on the ground while the troops continued to dig out Ian Twaddle and stabilize him, with Philip Birch and the other 3 casualties already stabilized and prepared for loading.

Eventually Ian Twaddle was ready to move, and some two hours after the incident he was raised on the stretcher and loaded onto the helicopter. I secured him on board and as I did the look in his eyes told me he knew he

had a chance now. Swiftly the other four were loaded and I jumped out clutching my Snug Pak after Miles had been secured.



Loading Ian Twaddle onto Rescue 137.
Author foreground left (yellow jacket),
Jim Bain background right (blue
balaclava): Screengrab: BBC Scotland,
Inside Story, Mountain Rescue 1995,
Copyright Triple Echo Productions Ltd,
Newtonmore, Scotland

Rescue 137 took off in conditions that remained marginal; the crew had done a great job getting in. The casualties were on their way to Raigmore.

We gathered our kit (and also the casualties') and set off for Coire Cas; with the adrenalin gone, we were feeling the effects of our afternoon's return visit to Coire an t-Sneachda. Needless to say, there were few takers for the pub that night. As I remember it, during the afternoon Bill Batson had arrived with more Leuchars troops, and with continuing bad weather on the hills, RCC Pitreavie was calling out teams for more jobs. The next day LMRT were requested to join another job in Glen Coe; I can't remember if Bill agreed to send them over immediately but I headed back to Edinburgh and several other troops and wagons took off for Leuchars. Over the next 3 weeks the troops were continually called out and I seem to remember that elements of the team stayed on the road those 3 weeks and certainly the 4-tonners were away all that time.

Interviewed in hospital, the casualties defended their actions in going on the hill in high avalanche conditions and insisted they were merely caught out by the weather. They would probably never know that LMRT troops had been standing at the foot of the Northern Corries looking up wondering why folk were on the hills on such a day.



4 months later I went to Alaska with Joe Wiggins, Phil Dyer and Kevin Taylor. After the exped I was away for 8 months. On my return to Scotland a friend said “you were on the telly last year and I videoed it”. It transpired that a BBC film crew had shadowed Rescue 137 for a few weeks and had jumped out on scene and started filming. We were not even aware of their presence. The images in this article are taken from that documentary.

Ian Mitchell (Mitch), Västerbotten, Sweden, 2nd July 2022



CHRISTMAS ISLAND 1958

In the 1950s, several Met Observers from 202 Squadron were detached to various Shackleton squadrons for the British Nuclear Tests, held first in Australia and then at Christmas Island. One of their tasks was to complete Meteorological Reconnaissance Flights prior to the Nuclear Tests.

Where and what is Christmas Island? It is a stunning coral atoll with blue skies and clear water, 6 hours flying time – in a Shackleton – south of Hawaii!



I joined 269 Sqn at Ballykelly in July 1958 for a three month detachment called 'GRAPPLE Z'. We left for the nine-day journey via the Azores, Bermuda, Charleston, El Paso, San Francisco and Hawaii. Instead of the right-hand seat in the Hastings, the Met Observer had a very comfortable leather 'sofa' in the nose of the aircraft. This gave a fantastic view and the ability to confirm the navigator's accuracy!

On arrival we found the living accommodation was in 4-man tents and other facilities were basic, thanks to all the construction by the Royal Engineers. The domestic site was close to the beach but swimming, because of the dangers of the surrounding reef, was banned. The meals were cooked in a

corrugated shelter, with outside seating. There were, however, two problems, the 'visitors': mosquitoes, controlled with a daily flight by an Auster spraying a mixture of DDT and kerosene, then, at night, an invasion of land crabs!

The reconnaissance flights were very similar to the BISMUTHS completed by 202: a 'straight out and back' track or a 'triangle pattern', usually with a climb, rather slowly in the Shackleton, to 18,000 feet. Wind measurements at various levels were important. A different task was to keep a look out for the 'strange' fishing boats that were often seen on the edge of the prohibited area. Overall, the flights were completed in very good weather conditions, except on one occasion when a lightning strike forced an early return.



With regard to the Nuclear Tests, after flying late the day before, we were taken early in the morning to a beach where we sat, listening to the commentary, and watched the Valiant flying high overhead and then dropping the nuclear weapon. The subsequent flash, heat, blast and sight of

the distant explosion was memorable and one that no person would ever wish to see again.

Two days later we were airborne and heading back on the same route, as outbound, to Ballykelly. Then back in the rain to Aldergrove, and flights on tracks round the Atlantic in the quieter Hastings and in very different weather conditions.

The detachment was a great experience. It was a pleasure to serve on 269 Sqn and join with them their love of flying in the aircraft of 10,000 rivets.

After 60+ years the Prime Minister announced on the 22nd November that those who served in the Nuclear Tests would finally be recognised with the award of a medal.

Now the island is called Kiritimati and the Airport is quiet with just a few aircraft bringing mainly anglers to fish the deep waters for record breaking catches. May peace remain there.





As a follow-on to Brian's article, this photo from the same era was submitted by John Malcolm. John recalls:

During the concerns in 1962 about Russian nuclear weapons tests, we had two radiation filters fitted under the nose of the aircraft. One was opened during our low level legs - 1500 feet with two runs at 200 feet; and the other during the high level leg; 500 millibars - FL180. After each sortie, these were sent for analysis to the Radiation Centre at RAE Harwell.

The attached (posed) photo of me removing one of the filters was taken to accompany a newspaper article; might have been the Daily Express - I don't remember.



Travels in Northern Ireland

In March of this year, I spent a few days in Northern Ireland. While there, I visited Castle Archdale, on the shores of Lough Erne, 202 Squadron's home for the last 8 months of WWII. I also came across an intriguing map of Ireland, that shows a yellow Sea King sitting off Fair Head on the north-eastern coast.



Castle Archdale

In truth, there is now little to see of the RAF base at Castle Archdale, especially through the mist that lay over the area on the day Isabel and I visited. There are a few, obviously ex-RAF buildings still in use but the area is now used for a caravan park. The aircraft slipways are still in use, as can be seen from the photos, and there's a small museum but it wasn't open on the day I was there, so I have a reason to return!



On a slightly frivolous note, the caravan park's leisure facilities include a 'Pilots' Nook', that sold alcohol and (unsurprisingly?) seems to be slightly elitist...

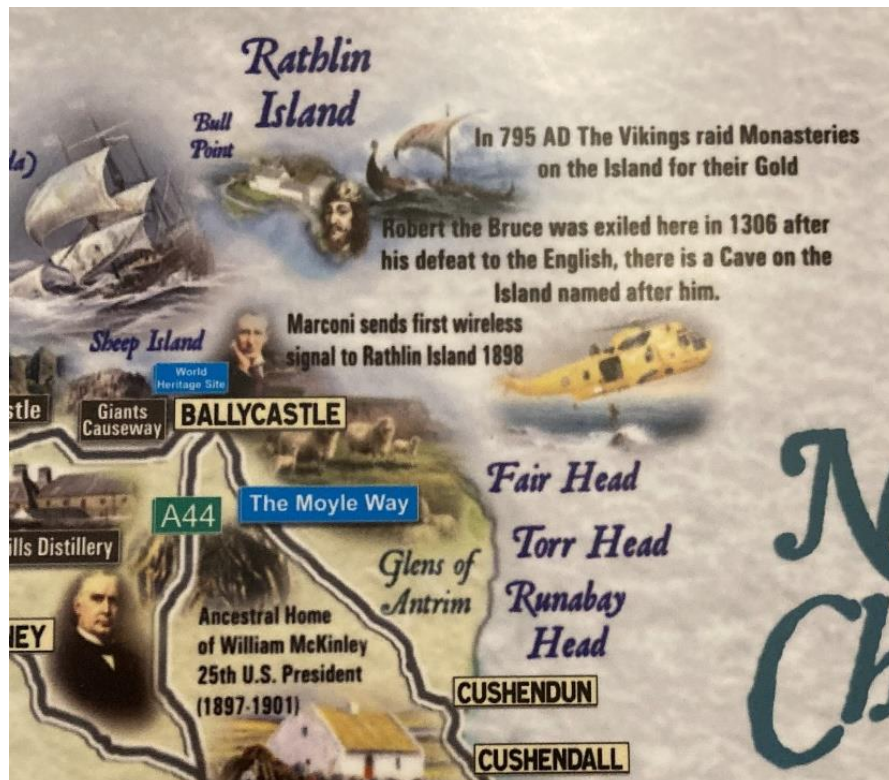


Eating lunch in a lovely café in Belleek, on the western border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, I spotted this photo, which provided a timely reminder about why Castle Archdale's location was important. It shows a Sunderland of 201 Squadron in August 1945 making the last flight down the Donegal Corridor. This route that provided a much shorter transit for aircraft from Castle Archdale heading out into the Atlantic and so allowed more time on task, namely hunting German U-boats.



Antrim Princess rescue

In the following extract from a map of Ireland marked with historical sites, there's a yellow Sea King off Fair Head, and I didn't know why. I initiated a discussion on the 202 Squadron Association Facebook site, and it was suggested that it might represent the rescue from the Antrim Princess on 9 December 1983. The rescue was conducted by four 72 Squadron Wessex and four SAR Sea Kings, of which only one was a yellow RAF one. During the rescue, a Wessex got a tow line wrapped around its tail rotor – a story for another time/publication.



Answering my request for more details, Paul 'Gramps' Challice wrote:

'The Sea King was XZ595 from 'D' Flt 202 Sqn, RAF Lossiemouth. We were scrambled on 8th December to search for a Citation aircraft missing off Stornoway with, I believe, a couple of VIPs on board. My logbook shows 4 hours 'night' with nothing found. The following morning, we continued the search and found some wreckage. A Leuchars Wessex joined us, bringing another Sea King crew to relieve us, as we had been on duty half the night. The Wessex recovered a couple of bodies from the sea and the Sea King was about to depart for Lossie with its new crew when we, together with the Wessex, were ordered to Northern Ireland for the Antrim Princess job. I think the idea was to have night SAR cover in case Antrim Princess dragged her anchors in Belfast Lough.

'I was the Radar/WinchOp on the initial crew, now relieved, but we were unsure how to get back to Lossiemouth. We opted to stay with the Sea King as passengers, reasoning that at some stage we would get back to Lossie! Now I had been a crewman on 72 Sqn from 1968-72, so was quite used to operating in Northern Ireland. When the Sea King was told to land in a field in the middle of nowhere, I was therefore

somewhat alarmed, until I spotted the men with guns surrounding the field, already occupied by a few Wessex! I wandered over to see if I recognised any old friends from 72 Sqn and, when I saw an old face, my greeting was "Uncle Al, the crewman's pal". Someone said "Oh, you know Sqn Ldr Waldron, then?" The rest of the day was spent in the Sergeants' Mess, where I was able to have a few pints in the bar during the Mess Christmas Dining-in night. The Sea King crew were the only people in the Mess dressed in flying suits!

Thanks to Gramps for that information. If anyone has more details of the Antrim Princess rescue that we can publish in the next edition of 'Mucky Duck', please get in touch.

Steve Garden



Editor's End

In the creation of this issue, I have been enormously helped by some very generous individuals: sincere thanks both to those who wrote the articles and to those whose initiative resulted in the articles being passed to me.

As alluded to earlier, the gripping account of the avalanche rescue written by Mitch Mitchell has also been published on the RAF MR Association website, and I urge everyone to visit the site (www.rafmountainrescue.com) and enjoy the range of material contained therein. Next year is a significant year for the RAF MRS, being 80 years since its foundation, and I'm pleased to say Mitch has already furnished me with an account of another rescue which I will feature in the next edition!

Charlie Logan

crgilogan@hotmail.com

www.202-sqn-assoc.co.uk