

EASTWARD

SUMMER 2016





The RAF Butterworth & Penang Association was formed on the 30th August 1996 at the Casuarina Hotel, Batu Ferringhi, Penang Island.

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Contents

Chairman's Corner	4
From the Editor	5
General RAFBPA News & Stories	6
The Mata Kuching story continues	8
Hash House Harriers	10
Tales from the Longhouse	11
Singapore Riot Squad	12
RAF Unit Badges	13
Non-members write in	14
Venoms and Canberras	15
Important Notice - RBL Cenotaph Parade 2016	17
2016 Reunion	18
20th Anniversary Reunion Dinner Photographs	19
110 Squadron (Helicopters) photographs	26
The Big Book of Photographs 1955-57	28

Cover: The late Pete Wiggins (RAF Police) and friend.



Chairman's Corner



You will see in this issue the various photographs taken at this year's Reunion and AGM. There is no doubt that the Ullesthorpe Golf Hotel was a wise and worthwhile choice of venue. So the first task is to place on record our thanks to Len Wood for all his hard work in arranging the venue and processing all the administration involved. Judging by the amount of money collected for the staff gratuities there is no doubt that everyone enjoyed the new surroundings. For those doubtful about the location of the venue, there were sufficient of us available to collect people from Rugby Station; so we elected to return to the same venue next year. Please don't be put off by the location, we can get you to and from the trains.

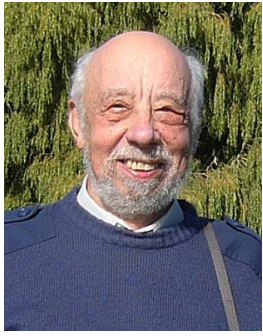
The coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum was a great bonus to the Reunion, especially for those that hadn't visited previously, or for some time. We were all amazed by the development of the Arboretum and the maturity of the trees that now block the view from the visitors area to the railway line on the other side of the River Tame. The overall presentation of the site is surely deserving of a tourism award! The visit to the NMA also gave me the opportunity to have a discussion with the Operations Manager regarding the Endowment Fund that the three Associations and others have subscribed to for the long term upkeep of the Far East Air Force Memorial. I believe that any doubts about this joint venture with the RAF Changi and RAF Seletar Associations are now resolved and the money should be handed over before 1st September. The AGM also gave me the opportunity to thank once again the members of the committee who have all worked in their various ways to make a success of the RAF Butterworth and Penang Association. It was apparent that our Secretary, Richard Harcourt, is beginning to struggle with his health and he asked that someone shadow him for the next 12 months. What a relief when Colin Bates' hand shot up, he being prepared to help Richard and to take over as Secretary when, and if, necessary.

A great deal goes on behind the scenes during the course of a year; our website will be having a makeover and update over the next 12 months and, hopefully, our photo library will be added to the website for all to see. Our Archivist and Rosemary Fell's 'Malayan Volunteers Group' have been exchanging material and our 'shop' always has items for sale. Also, what a relief when Mike Ward stepped forward at the AGM and offered to find someone to carry out the rerigging and renovation of the Boogaloo boat for next year. Despite my youthful appearance, your Chairman reaches another birthday with a 'zero' at its end in September. Checks made during the reunion revealed that I'm not the youngest member of the Association, but there is also a serious side to this statement - for those with internet access, there is a RAF BPA 'Facebook' page with a good number of people recounting their memories of times in the Far East. Many of them were the sons and daughters of RAF personnel serving at Butterworth and living on Penang Island. Before long, we as an association, must consider extending a welcome to the younger generation in order for the Association to have a longer life. It might need us to rework our simple constitution and I would welcome any thoughts on the subject - we already have one such member so let's make it official.

By the time you read this you might have been involved in Armed Forces Day on 25th June, or events linked to the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme in 1916. I believe that as generations pass into the history books it is important for those of us who served post WW2 to be involved in events and commemorations that keep memories alive and raise public awareness of the continued work of the Armed Forces to the present day. As the Military Family shrinks, so there are fewer of us to voice opinions, fly the flag and be involved. Despite the average age of our Association, I believe we have an important role to play*.

***Cenotaph Parade 2016 - 'Units of the Far East Air Force' contingent details... see page 17**

From the Editor



With 2016 being both the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and the 20th anniversary of the founding of the RAFBPA we were not in a position this year to raising a glass to Shakespeare in his home town as our reunion was taking place elsewhere. But we were able to raise a glass to both the RAFBPA and our chairman, Tony Parrini, who has been at the helm of our association since it was formed. But perhaps one of Shakespeare's lines might be appropriate when we consider Tony's role as our leader.....'**Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown**'. I'm sure we must have given him a few uneasy moments somewhere along the road towards our 20th

Anniversary?

During the AGM a question was asked about the copies of FEAF archive materials donated to the RAeS National Aerospace Library in 2013. The answer given to the members present was in a similar vein to one that appeared in the editor's page of the Christmas 2013 newsletter. At the time the lack of response from the NAL following delivery of the donated materials by Bob Margolis was cause for contacting them only to receive a luke warm confirmation of the agreed listed materials. Of the archives, apart from an agreed donation of photographs from Norman Harvey (after being copied for the archives), the library received digital copies of the originals held in the archives. It was their intention to set up a FEAF reference section based on the archive copies at the time but I have no further information as to this happening. Perhaps members might have an idea as to the future for our archives for when we finally cease as an association...the RAF Museum would seem a likely contender, definately not the RAeS National Aerospace Library.

And yet again I pass on my thanks to Laurie Bean and Len Wood for their 'behind the scenes' assistance with the newsletter. Laurie proof reads the copy and returns with a list of errors needing correction. I know from my time as a proof reader at Hawker Siddeley/BAes how easy it is for basic errors to creep in on the text and for the writer to be 'blind' to them even when checked before passing on to the proof reader. Len takes the prepared copy to the printers, collects the printed copies later and adds notices etc, before posting. They are valued members of the '*Eastward*' team, as is Bob Margolis who once again has taken (by request) the Reunion dinner photographs which appear on pages 19-25.

Just prior to the newsletter being prepared for printing I received an e-mail from Brian Symondson in answer to a query I made following the reunion. It is printed here due to space restriction on the rest of the pages at this stage of preparing the newsletter. 'With regard to the Riot Squad (see page 12), I was appointed as Guard Commander to take a group of 100, mainly from 487 SU. I can't remember who was the Senior Officer in overall control. The training was quite specific - if met by a mob the Senior Officer was to read them the "Riot Act" and order them to disperse. If they didn't, he was to repeat the order several times saying that force would be used, and should that fail then one prominent rioter was to be selected and on the Senior Officer's order, - shot! Fortunately we never went down to Singapore and the riots in Penang were contained by the Malay Police.' Brian also confirmed the photographic record of the *Spider's Web* (see page 19) was written by Agatha Christie. He also adds 'It was interesting that the production, and *Doctor in the House*, were world amateur firsts because they were not released for general performance and we were only given approval because we were so far from the UK, and it was for Service entertainment. I am hoping to find the pictures of *Doctor in the House* soon!

Finally, I was recently preparing notes for a future meeting on wildlife and decided it was time I updated myself on the subject of camouflage. I contacted my local library to see if they had a copy of *The Book of Camouflage: the art of disappearing* and the librarian from the reference section confirmed they had but hadn't seen the book since it was received.

RAFBPA Correspondence and Stories

Recent News

Violet Downey. The Association was sad to hear of the death in April of Violet Downey, wife of member Les Downey. Both Violet and Les have attended the annual reunions for many years and it was always a pleasure to see them. Despite poor health latterly, Violet still attended the reunions at the side of Les, and she still had a smile for her friends.

Peter Saddleton. The Association was informed of the death of member Peter Saddleton on April 18th. Peter was Sqn Ldr OC Ops Sqn, RAF Western Hill, November 1967 to May 1971, and at the forming of the RAFBPA in 1996 suggested that Tony Parrini become Chairman of the newly formed association, a far sighted suggestion at the time.

Dave Martin. Although not a member of the Association, Dave Martin was a popular entertainments feature at the Butterworth NAAFI in the mid 1950s and he is remembered here by member **Don Brereton** (1956-



57): 'It is with great sadness I report the death of Dave Martin on the 7th April 2016. He was a mate in the RAF at Butterworth and remained a friend until the end. Dave was an Engine Mech on Station Flight from 1956 to 1957 where he was well respected. As well as at work, Dave was well liked on the social side of the camp. His piano playing in the NAAFI bar (*left*) was legendary. At square bashing he played piano for a singer named Jim Smith who later became Jim Dale of the *Carry On* series of films fame. After he left the RAF he occasionally played the piano at the famous Iron Door Club in Liverpool, and it was Dave who

suggested to Kenny Ball that he should play and record his big hit 'Samantha'.

We had some great times at Butterworth and an adventurous leave in Singapore where we stayed at the ToCH, but that's another story. I am going to miss Dave , but not as much as his wife Joyce and their son, Paul, will miss him.

Peter 'Dinky' Toy. Len Wood received a returned '*Eastward*' marked '*Return to sender no longer at this address, deceased.*' No further information was forthcoming. 4090781 SAC Peter Alan Toy served as a Clerk Accounts at Butterworth, 1953-1955.

Correspondence

John Muter writes: 'What an interesting article about Western Hill. I visited the site a couple of times when I was at Butterworth while it was under construction, and after completion, and remember being told that the tops of two hills were removed to provide a level surface for the transmitters/receivers. I would have thought that the gradient inside the camp was in excess of 1:5 as it was certainly steep enough to cause a parked and braked Land Rover to slide backwards, with the wheels locked, and fall into a hole that had been excavated for some foundations. I was one in a group of interested observers and I have often wondered what the resulting FMT4 looked like?

The steepness of the surrounding terrain was a challenge to the construction crew when the perimeter fence was being installed and I heard reports that several sections were washed away during a monsoon. There was also a story - possibly an urban myth - that an SAS team was challenged to breach the defences by approaching Western Hill through the jungle and avoiding all roads and tracks, but failed because of the terrain.

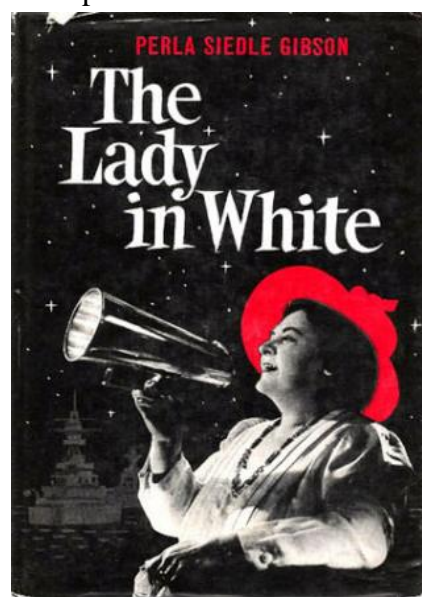
Space was at a premium of course, so much that the construction of the guardroom was unique in the RAF

as it was built above the road (right). Two other interesting events linked to Western Hill are when a RAF Police Corporal received a C in C's Commendation for saving the life of a female Malaysian labourer who had been severely injured in an accident on site. I regret I cannot remember the details. Also, the Royal Engineers Staff Sergeant who was Clerk of Works during the construction and received a BEM for his efforts. He did an outstanding job and many thought he deserved more. Another memory is wondering how the 15cwt Bedford I saw on site got there as it could not have been driven there, and was too wide to pass through the funicular railway tunnel? I was told that it was dismantled at the bottom, went up by rail in pieces, and a Chinese welder reassembled it on site.

Don Brereton has sent in a follow-up to Sam Mold's piece in Issue 44 of 'Eastward' regarding the role of range officer i/c No. 27 APC: "I am one of the 'Robinson Crusoe's' who spent six months at No. 27 APC Bidan. From my experience the Officer i/c the Range was usually the Officer i/c the Armoury. In my time there he never came up to the Range, but his presence was felt as he organised the four day runs by the HSL from Glugor, which provided the four range personnel (one General Mech, two Ops Clks and one Arm Asst) with food supplies and materials for making the targets. He also made sure we had the four times a day radio calls from the armoury - after all there were pirates in those waters.

When the range was in use officers from the squadron would arrive to man the radio comms to the aircraft. I must say in the six months I was on Bidan we were never let down once, and I can say that truthfully because on one side was land thirty miles out in the Malacca Strait that was very important!

Mike Gregory writes: I remember this lady as though it was yesterday! I was posted from the RAF trade training station at Compton Bassett in Wiltshire to RAF Butterworth in upstate Malaya. We shipped out of Southampton on the HMT Orwell, a 22,000 ton former German liner converted to a british troopship after being seized as part of the post-war reparations (I wish they had kept it!). The six week voyage itinerary included the Canary Islands, Cape Town, then north to Durban and across to Colombo (then Ceylon), and finally Singapore. On entering the beautiful city of Durban we were greeted by Perla Gibson, the famous 'Lady in White', who, as the ship slid into its allotted berth, sang operatic arias to us through her huge megaphone while we leaned over the rails cheering and applauding. Although the majority of the troops on board were probably more attuned to Radio Luxembourg and the Top Ten, they showed great respect for her vocal performance and the arias sung with full mellow voice, elegance and grace. On leaving Durban, as the ship slipped her moorings, she, resplendant in her sparkling white dress, with megaphone in hand, walked alongside us on the dockside singing her heart out and wishing us Godspeed. As the tugs moved us out into the main channel we left this grand lady still singing.....



A request. An e-mail with a request for help finding John Jones, son of Flt Lt John Briscoe Jones of RAF Butterworth 1952 was received from Wendy Khoo. Flt Lt John Briscoe Jones featured in the Easter 2013 issue of Eastward and Wendy writes: 'I read with interest in the Easter 2013 newsletter about John Jones who was trying to obtain photographs of his father's (John Briscoe Jones) funeral in Butterworth Malaysia 1952. I believe that John Briscoe Jones is my uncle, which would make John Jones my cousin. My Mother told us some time ago that her elder brother, John Bristoe Jones, who was in the RAF stationed at Butterworth, had accidentally been killed. She believed that he had a wife and son although she did not know who, or where they were, and I don't think that she had ever met them. Unfortunately my mother passed away recently and when going through her belongings we came across a copy of the family tree on

my Mother's side. This family tree shows John Briscoe Jones but doesn't record he had a wife and son. We also found some early photographs of my uncle which were also among my Mother's belongings.

I am one of five children from this family line (two of us live in Perth, Western Australia, the others in the UK). I discussed with my two sisters about following up with you as we would very much like to make contact with John Jones to establish a link on my Mother's side of the family, and to find out more about the Jones family (there are gaps in the family tree that he may be able to help with). He may also be interested to find out more information about his father's side of the family, if he doesn't have any! Would it be possible for you to let him know that I have been inquiring after him and if he would like to make contact to let me have his e-mail address? Interestingly, one of the photographs in the newsletter bears a remarkable resemblance to my oldest brother Harry. Also I am married to a Chinese Malaysian who has a sister who lives in Butterworth. I have visited on a number of occasions, but was not aware that my uncle was buried nearby.

Wendy Khoo (nee Eastham)

Unfortunately I removed the e-mail address from my records during a periodic clean-up of addresses. Should anyone be aware of where John Jones can be found, or if John Jones reads this himself, please contact me, Dave Croft. Contact details are to be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

New Members

The Association extends a welcome to the following new members: **Roy (Jess) Jesson**, Cpl/Cpl Tech, Instruments, 110 Squadron (Helicopters), 1960-61. **Hugh Brentnall**, SAC Radar Op, 114 MCRU/Western Hill, May 1966-November 1966. **Anthony (Tony) Parker**, Cpl RAF Police, P&SS (Det) RAAF Butterworth. 1968-69.

The Mata Kuching Story continues

On becoming the RAFBPA Archivist many years ago, I received a photograph of a BOAC aircraft on a strip from member **Des Clifford** (1954-55). Written on the back of the photograph was *Mata Kuching*. The name puzzled me, where or what, was/is Mata Kuching?

A number of years (yes, years!) the question arose again and was put to members **Laurie Bean** and **Bob Margolis**, both with strong Malaysia connections even to this day. Between the three of us, but truthfully all the hard work was done by Bob and Laurie, further clues and answers surfaced but there never appeared to be a satisfactory answer, something that one could pin down and say "This is it!".

Then a further clue appeared. An article called *Letting Bagan be bygones*, written by one Syed Nadzri, appeared in a Malaysian newspaper towards the end of 2015. The article dealt with the proposed future of Butterworth air base and the name Mata Kuching was featured, identifying the area around Butterworth by this archaic name. With this article in mind, Bob contacted Syed and they arranged to meet when Bob visited Malaysia earlier this year. Following the meeting (in March 2016), Syed, a former NST group editor, wrote an article for the New Straits Times (29 March 2016) of which an edited copy is shown below.

'Mata Kuching' piques a traveller's interest by Syed Nadzri.

It was the name of a humble suburb north of Butterworth that got it all started. "Mata Kuching", which I mentioned in this newspaper column about two months ago, that rang a bell with Bob Margolis some 10,600 km away in Yateley, not far from London. "I am a member of the RAF (Royal Air Force) Butterworth and Penang Association through being at Butterworth from 1947 to 1952 with my father, a civilian weather forecaster at the base." he wrote. "The name *Mata Kuching* has puzzled myself, another RAFBPA member and the association archivist for a number of years. There are numerous references in various archive materials, but your article is the first to state clearly that it was a local name for what is now TUDM (Royal

Malaysian Air Force) Butterworth."

As it turned out Bob, previously a lecturer in the Mathematics and Computing Department at the Open University, is a regular visitor to Malaysia, having been here nine times since 1997. We met in Kuala Lumpur last Monday when he had already finished his three-week tour of Ipoh and Penang.... "When I left (for Malaysia) it was 3°C in London and over here it has been 34°C over the past few days. I was in Penang for about three weeks and people said it was too hot!"

Bob was a child who attended the local school at Butterworth when his father was at work at the RAF Base, and it was with a very heavy heart that the family had to return to England when the posting ended in 1952 when he was 10 years old.

The first time he returned to Malaysia in 1997 he found many changes to those remembered. At that time the airport was still in Subang. When he came a second time five years later, the aircraft landed at the modern sprawling KL International Airport. His visits became more regular thereafter, either in the course of work or as a tourist. In 2004 for instance, he was here for two weeks to conduct studies and make recommendations to the Kuala Lumpur Open University. But Bob's heart has always been in Penang where there are 'big changes' taking place. In 1950, he said, George Town stopped where the Komtar (the 65-storey landmark that holds the heartbeat of the Penang Government Administration right in the city centre) is sited. Today there are buildings everywhere.

But somethings have remained the same he noted, like the Penang Swimming Club and the Chinese Swimming Club in Tanjung Bungah, which have great memories for him. However one of the 'modern' changes that really impressed him was the vast improvement to the public transport system which is tourist friendly to use. He showed me a travel card issued by *Rapid Penang* which, for just RM30, entitled the holder to travel anywhere within Penang in one week.

Now, back to the inquiry made about Mata Kuching in his e-mail two months ago. "I wonder if you could clear up which of the various proposed translations of Mata Kuching (*correct spelling for this part of the story*) fits the best? Cat's eye, as a description, sounds very odd, but it does fit the old spelling system for what is 'kucing', but otherwise doesn't have a lot to recommend it. That it might refer to the tree bearing the mata kucing fruit is a bit more plausible as perhaps the trees grew around the (Butterworth) base? There is also a theory (also used for Kuching in Sarawak) being that it might be a corrupted form of a Chinese term meaning 'old well'. The eye of a well could mean its opening I suppose, and it is plausible there might be an old well on site at the base?"

In my reply I explained that Mata Kuching used to be where Telek Air Tawar is now. The name is hardly used nowadays, except for it being a parliamentary constituency for elections, but that too has been changed to Bagan. As for the origin of the name Mata Kuching, as with the names of many villages around Butterworth, seeming to start with permatang*. followed by the name of a fruit - Permatang Durian. Permatang Manggis, Permatang Pauh etc, Mata Kuching is the Malay name for longan (an edible fruit of South East Asia.

*Permatang - a ridge or small road slightly raised above the surrounding land.

I trust this explanation leaves the reader better informed even if non the wiser?

Annual subscriptions: members are reminded that these are now due on the 1st January of each year due to a change in the RAFBPA accounting year, as voted by members at the 2016 annual reunion.

Hash House Harriers



A story with a difference: The Hash House Harriers, as a social non-competitive running club, was founded in Kuala Lumpur in December 1938 by a British ex-patriate chartered accountant of Spanish descent, Albert Esteban Ignatius **Gispert** (pictured left) who had a liking for the then very British activity known as the 'Paper Chase', or 'Hare and Hounds'. With a group of similar minded ex-pats, meeting at the Selangor Club (Royal Selangor Club since 1984) under the name of Hash House Harriers, named in deference to the unimaginative and monotonous food served in the club, the philosophy behind the Harriers was to:

- promote physical fitness among members
- get rid of weekend hangovers
- acquire a good thirst and to satisfy it in beer
- to persuade the older members that they are not as old as they feel.

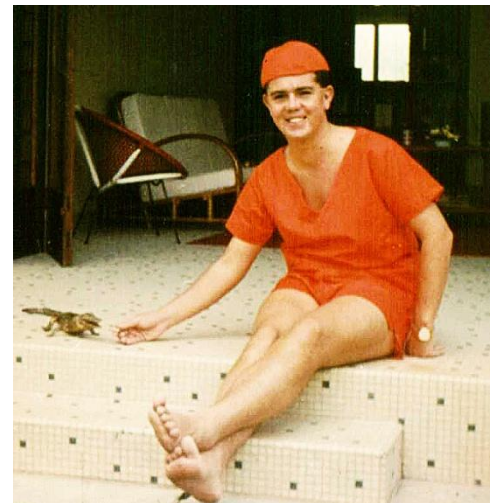
This was achieved by a sort of non-competitive run through the local scenery ending up with beer and food to celebrate another successful running/social outing. The activity was suspended during the Japanese occupation of Malaya but started up again in 1946.. The founder, Albert Gispert, also a Captain in the FMSVR, and then seconded to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders as a Second Lieutenant, died in action on 11th February 1942 in the Battle of Singapore. Post-war the concept became international with chapters throughout the world, all still adhering to the philosophy from 1938.

The Penang chapter of the Hash House Harriers was formed on the 10 May 1965 and sometime around



1970 we find **Tony Parrini**, as an active member of the chapter, honing his organisational skills in preparation for the day he would become Chairman of the RAFBPA. Also, as related in a recent communication, it was very evident that he upheld at least two of the four points outlined above from the organisations philosophy - that of keeping fit

and making sure beer was available to welcome the returning 'runners'. Tony writes: *I confess I was among the tailenders on most runs. I had my own outfit made for two good reasons - firstly, I hoped the colours would be caught in the lights of the Search and Rescue helicopter (should I ever become lost). Secondly, as the Hon Sec, I could short cut to the finish in full sight of everyone in order to make sure the beer had arrived without the Australians and occasional Kiwi shouting "SCB" (Short Cutting Bastard). Made me (the outfit that is, not the uncouth shouting) look quite distinguished don't you think?*



Penang Mystery House. Fast forward to 2013 and the Penang chapter was still going strong. In this year they discovered a mysterious house deep in the forest near the Teik Quarry close to Tanjung Bungah. The Star (Malaysia) newspaper for 13 January 2013 reports: 'For decades Hash House Harriers have been discovering the secrets of the Penang Hills. Their latest discovery is a mysterious abandoned, and dilapidated, house with a distinctive character that lies some 5 km inland from the Mount Erskine market. Hasher Gurdial Singh, with two other members from the Tuesday Hash Kakis chapter, took pressmen on a short visit to the house that overlooks Penang's northern tip. The house is known as the 'haunted house' or 'green house' by Hashers who know the area. "I suspect that it has been there for over 100 years " he said,

while leading a group on a two-hour hike to the site. Gurdial said the house, made from wood and mounted on stone slabs, was likely to have been owned by a British family due to the style of the home and its remaining furnishings. Among the 'little treasures' found in the four-bedroom house were an old oil lamp, a large drawer-less structure that was possibly an altar or a stand, a metal barrel ring, a wooden dining table, the remains of a rattan sofa set and several broken chairs and bed frames.

Several plastic bullet cartridges were also discovered inside the single storey house that bore double plantation shutters on all sides of the structure. Another interesting feature of the hut, pointed out by a Hasher, was that it was surrounded by pine trees. "You don't normally find pine trees in this area. Here they only surround the house so the people who stayed here would likely have planted them." "These trees can play a role in keeping certain insects out, which is perhaps why we don't find any mosquito nets inside the house." said (another) Hasher.

The hikers agreed it would be nice for the structure to be restored and improved, but said such a proposal may be impractical due to its extreme remote location.'

Anyone any thoughts about the Penang Mystery House?

Tales from the longhouse.

Barrie Davies, formerly a Sergeant Pilot with the Army Air Corps, 1963 - 1966, has sent in more short stories about his time in Borneo (*Flying in Borneo: 1963 - 1966 appeared in 'Eastward' from 2012 to 2013*), but this time with a RAF bias.

1 "Did you know there might be a head hunter (if still alive) walking around Sarawak called Belvedere?. His mother was having difficulty in childbirth and was shipped out to hospital in a Belvedere helicopter. She actually gave birth in the helicopter before being taken out to the waiting ambulance at the destination. All went well, and the mother was so happy that she named her new born son, Belvedere."

2 "I wish I could remember the name of the RAF (Flt) Sgt chopper pilot who moved a whole long house of head hunters from the border area to a safer place. He moved everything, furniture, belongings, tools, weapons, eating plants, animals (pigs etc.) and lastly, the people...in fact everything that could be moved or dug up. The Indonesians were raiding their long house for food etc, and were merciless if the people tried to stop them/ It took him a week or two flying up and back all day long, every day, about 10 miles from the border. The Army had dumped wood, bamboo, saws, tools and woodscrews etc, for them to build another long house alongside the jungle airstrip. You could see on their faces how happy they were. I was taking the basics in food, medical kit and temporary tents for them, but that was all I could do with the Beaver. I saw him get out of his chopper after the last flight and as he walked towards us he was twisting left and right from the chopper vibration. Great chap and pilot, and he was guest of honour in our AAC Sgts Mess. You know the banter that goes on between the RAF and AAC? I never allowed that in the presence of the Flt Sgt, and definately not with him!"

3 "The Twin Pioneer did some really good good stuff. I think one crashed on landing at Bario (*11th September 1964, aircraft XP294 skidded on a wet runway and slid into a ditch to become a write off!*). The engines were taken away but the fuselage was left at the side of the strip. Eventually the local headhunters asked if they could have it to use as a meeting place for their headman and other dignataries? So the RAF gave it to them." The fuselage of XP294 was still in place at Bario in 2015 as the photograph (right) shows.



The Singapore Riot Squad (with a twist in the tale)

From members **John Rutland** and **Bill Wardle** is a tale where it sometimes pays to be detailed for a not very popular duty....to one's advantage! This is their story: 'This is an account that is very much centred around 487 Signals Unit whose area of work was some five miles or so north of Butterworth. As a radar unit sited in the centre of three large padi fields, 487 SU consisted of about 100 men, and a good number of the radar operators had been there since the unit had become operational in early 1956.

A shift system operated and those of us waiting to go on the 'late' shift one Sunday morning were very surprised when our CO, Squadron Leader Port, arrived and called us all together. About a dozen of us were numbered off and told to report the following morning to the Gurkha Police Station, some two or three miles north of Butterworth, to be trained as part of a Singapore riot squad. It seems the students in Singapore would latch onto a problem, complain and then riot! Of course those not detailed had their morning made, and with much loud laughter voiced 'helpful' comments and remarks.

At this point our CO pointed out that the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, with the Duke of Edinburgh on board, should have been heading for Singapore, but due to bad weather in the Indian Ocean was delayed and instead would be docking at George Town, Penang. The Duke would disembark from the yacht and arrive at Butterworth in order to fly to Singapore to continue with his itinerary, with *Britannia* following later. He then added, "A guard of honour is needed and the remainder of you airmen will be detailed for that duty, collect your white webbing and start cleaning it (for the parade). The previous helpful comments and remarks were now offered back to those originally quick to mock"

Those of us on riot duty duly arrived at the police station and over the following week were shown how to go about the task in hand.....all done with the aid of ropes and commands by whistle. After a weeks training we were told that on the last day we would be put to the test and to be sure to wear plenty of padding. We soon found out why! The Gurkha's became the 'rioters' and we attempted to calm them down. The first attempt was a complete mess on our part, and after being given plenty of good advice, we made another attempt to 'calm the situation'. Thanks goodness for the padding for feet, arms and anything else were flying everywhere. Whatever happened to the ropes and whistles, but eventually we did improve. Finally a voice shouted "Stop", it was time for refreshments and we all sat down together as friends once again.

Then at the end of the week we were told we would not be needed. The Duke of Edinburgh's visit however did take place and the guard of honour was needed. At a later date we were told it was the forthcoming royal visit to Singapore that had started the students off.'



The 487 SU Riot Squad (L to R)



**Julien Stallman
Adrian (lofty) Pierce
Bill Wardle
Dave Howes
John Rutland**



The following article is an extract from the RAF Butterworth magazine of 1958 and donated to the archives during the reunion by member **Brian Symondson**. In his covering note Brian (who helped design the 487 SU badge) says: 'The original badge showed a black cobra coiled around the Prince of Wales feathers (Penang), but was rejected as the Prince of Wales feathers are specific to the Royal Family. The motto was intended to be "We seek to strike" in Malay, but turned down on the grounds that the unit could not actually strike! It was replaced by "Never unprepared*" (in Malay), for a

unit that was not operational on a 24 hour basis.

* *Never unprepared*, being a direct translation from *Pantang Ta'sedia* has been previously described in '*Eastward*' as *Always at the ready*.

In October 1957, the AOC, Air Vice Marshal V. E. Hancock presented 487 Signals Unit with its Unit badge. But have you ever wondered when looking at this, and other Unit badges, in messes and rest-rooms just how these badges came into being?

Clarenceaux King at Arms Did you think that some individual of the unit decided he liked the design and the motto, and so the badge was born? If you did, you were far from the truth about the award of Unit badges. Have you ever heard of that resounding title "Clarenceaux King at Arms?" Perhaps you thought he was just a ghost of the past! Nothing of the sort; he is really alive, has his office in St James' London and performs amongst his duties that of Inspector of Royal Air Force badges. He is the medium between the Unit and Air Ministry when a Unit's eligibility for a badge is to be considered. Then there is the long and patient negotiation between the conception of the idea and the birth of the finished article.

Initially Air Ministry consent must be obtained. This is given only when the formation is long-term in its establishment and role. Once consent has been given the real task lies ahead.

How to begin

Firstly there is the question of a suitable design for the badge itself. This must represent the Unit's activities and its current geographical location.

Secondly the choice of a motto looms largely in the minds of all. This must be concise, apt and have a direct bearing on the unit's role. For Units overseas it is often the practice to use the local language for the motto. To do this to the satisfaction of the Air Ministry, certificates of true literal translations from the English must be obtained from a scholar well versed in the local language.

It is the usual practice for a small committee of representatives from the various sections, with the Commanding Officer as Chairman, to be formed. After intensive, and often heated discussions, designs and suitably worded mottoes are called for and a final choice agreed upon. The Unit now has the two major components of its badge. But do these conflict with badges and mottoes of other Units and do they meet with the approval of the Air Council?

At this stage the Inspector of Royal Air Force badges takes a hand in the proceedings for it is he who finally presents the finished painting for consideration by the Air Council. He may state categorically that the design is unsuitable or unwieldy, or that it bears a strong resemblance to badges of other Units. Perhaps the centre-piece is rather clumsy, perhaps the colouring is inapt; in each case suggestions are made for alterations and reconsideration by the sponsoring Unit. Before agreement between the Unit and Inspector of Royal Air Force badges on the design, layout and the motto, a hand painting is prepared in London and this formally presented before the Air Council. When their approval has been obtained the painting is formally placed before Her Majesty for her final approval and signature. From that time onwards, after presentation by the AOC, the painting belongs to the Unit and must be preserved at all times.

The cost

The Officer Commanding the Unit is personally responsible for its safe custody and preservation, and should the Unit at any time be disbanded or lose its name or number plate, the badge has to be returned to the Air Ministry Archives Branch for safe custody until required for reissue to the Unit should it be re-formed. Mention must be made of the financial cost involved. The original painting of the Unit badge costs fifteen guineas and as this cannot be paid out of public funds small Units are faced with a financial hazard at the outset. However, an understanding AOC will usually provide, from funds which only he administers, a generous contribution towards the total sum required and this, together with a sum raised by members of the Unit, finally enables that Unit to find itself the honoured possessor of its badge and a motto of which to be proud.'

Flying visits in the 60s

Just before leaving home for the reunion, an e-mail was received by Len Wood from **Ian Hatch** (a non-member living in the USA): 'A quiet day at work so trawling around the internet and looking at Penang and points close. I was at RAAF Butterworth from mid 1966 to mid 1967 - the cooling off period from Confrontasi (and) working with 60 Squadron detachment. Many happy memories of Penang and Malaysia generally. I was interested in the picture I found of a Japanese float plane (*Issue 41 perhaps?*), it reminded me of the time I conned a flight on a Bristol (Belvedere) twin rotor chopper and we landed at an overgrown airstrip somewhere north east of Butterworth where there was the wreckage of a Japanese fighter.

Usually I would go by Twin Pin (Twin Pioneer) to a jungle strip somewhere beyond Grik - there was a particular monsoon flood where the local paper reported crocodiles swimming in the main street. I can't remember the name of the jungle strip, but recall that it was a short grass runway, usually wet and with a large rock wall at one end, so approach was by flying along a small river valley, then nose up and stall almost onto the strip. Take off was reverse order, but on one occasion one engine wouldn't start. It was fascinating to watch the crew use a lasso on a pole to turn the prop - which worked! A one engine take-off would probably not have worked well.

I missed out on the PJM medal, too late in and not long enough before transfer to Tengah to greet the 74 Squadron Lightnings. I eventually left the mob in early 70 and went into field engineering after a boring year of electronics testing, eventually migrating to the USA. Of those Butterworth guys still around from the 60s, all the best.'

Another request.

The following e-mail was received from **Keith New**: 'This is a long shot. I came across your magazine 'Eastward' whilst researching my late father's RAF service in the Far East. My brother came across the "ubiquitous box in the attic"; it was a small treasure trove of his service documents, including his pay book. I also contacted the RAF Records Office and have a copy of his service record. His paybook shows him aboard a troopship from 14-4-41 to 12-5-41 and then at Singapore followed by Alor Star from 22-5-41 until 4-12-41. His paybook was signed by E R Hemmings P/O. I know from my research the airfield was overrun by the Japanese...he arrived at Padang early 1942 followed by Drigh Road.

From various censored letters to my mother he mentions he had a hard time in Borneo (*I think he might mean Sumatra and Java*) and Singapore but I cannot find out much about what happened during these times as records were destroyed. I wonder, as archivist, you can provide any information as to what happened in the Malaya/Borneo area at this time. I work part time in the research and archivistment at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, but we hold no information (for this period). Dad was JWT New 1169155 AC2 Wireless Operator.'

The RAFBPA archive was in a position to help Keith with his request, also some books were recommended.

VENOMS and CANBERRAs

by Air Commodore G S Cooper OBE*

This article was first published in the RAF Historical Society Journal No. 21 (2000) and is reproduced in *'Eastward'* by kind permission of Wing Commander C G Jefford MBE BA, Editor of the RAF Historical Society Journal.

45 Squadron's first FIREDOG strike with Venoms was in January 1956, a week or so before I arrived. Jet operations had begun in 1951, with 60 Squadron's Vampires. These were replaced in 1955 by Venoms at Tengah, where they were joined by the Venoms of New Zealand's 14 Squadron. So we are talking about three Venom squadrons, two at Tengah and one at Butterworth, with 16 aircraft each.

There were also eight UK canberras detached to Butterworth from March '55 to September '56 provided in turn by 101, 617, 12 and 9 Squadrons under Operation Mileage. Thereafter a few Canberras appeared every three months for a couple of weeks until 45 re-equipped with Canberras at Tengah in December 1957. Sadly Venoms could not longer because they were lifed at only 750 hours. It was ironic that when we were struggling against poor serviceability the aircraft that were most reliable, and so flew the most, would be the first to be grounded.

The Venom's low-high-low radius of action was some 200 miles. To give an example, dawn and dusk strikes with rockets and cannons in the Seremban area in June of 1956, which was a busy month for operations averaging two strikes a week by four to six aircraft, were managed comfortably from Butterworth. For targets further south in Johore we would operate from Tengah.

The rapid build-up of heavy storms posed a threat to jet operations, particularly for short-range aircraft like the Venom. Kuala Lumpur was half-an-hour away might also be under a storm. In an emergency you could land at Alor star in the North, or Ipoh, but there were no landing aids. Butterworth itself could only offer a DME-assisted QGH¹. Quite often we would advise those airborne to fly for endurance and come in behind a storm as it passed over. It could be a nail-biting experience. Even the Canberras were unhappy at times. They liked to be back in the circuit with the amount of fuel that we took off with. Our maximums were their minimums!

For operations over the jungle we both shared the disadvantage of having too much speed to cruise around looking for our targets in hills covered by patchy cloud. When flown at their normal speed at low altitudes, Canberras suffered badly from metal fatigue in the swirl vanes of their engines due to the hot turbulent air, which also made flying conditions difficult for their crews,

RP (Rocket Projectiles) could be delivered by Venoms with accuracy, the squadron average being 7 yards, but even if we were able to locate a terrorist camp there was nothing suitable for semi-armour piercing 60 lb rocket heads to hit. They would go deep into the ground before exploding. According to surrendered terrorists, however, strafing with rockets and 20mm cannon shells was greatly feared and had a marked effect, so such attacks were often tasked for flushing operations. Some examples being:-

1. Small clearing in the jungle about the size of a tennis court spotted by an Auster on 22nd February 1956 close to the Thai border. One or two sheets in the clearing, so it was presumed they were doing some threshing. Strafed on 23rd by four Venoms with 16 rockets plus cannon. No troops, no assessable results. 25th, repeat attack by 8 Venoms.

2. For Operation EAGLE SWOOP north of Kroh on the Thai border, 8 Venoms were tasked on July 7th 1957 to deliver one rocket every half minute for 15 minutes along the banks of a mountain stream. The area was then raked with cannon fire, the whole object being to flush the terrorists away from their source of

water into the waiting ground forces. On another occasion I was asked to fire rockets into a clearing , also on the Thai border, just to make it safe for a helicopter to land.

The Venom's heaviest punch was its bomb load of two 1,000 pounders. With a full load of bombs, ammunition and fuel, the aircraft was just 100 lb under its maximum take-off weight of 15,610 lb. On take off three quarters of the 2,000 yard runway disappeared before the Venom shivered into the air, then took two minutes to reach climbing speed. Engine failure at Butterworth would have meant finishing up in a monsoon ditch at one end or the sea at the other.

We started bombing practice with the steep glide delivery system favoured by the Middle East Venom squadrons, then concentrated on 60 degree dive-bombing from 8,000 feet down to 4,000, with an average accuracy of 35 yards. Two bombs released in a dive from 10,000 feet to attack a tiny clearing perched on the tip of a 1,600 ft spot-height obliterated the top of the hill, leaving it flat and bare.

Unfortunately Boscombe Down stopped our fun by banning dive-bombing, fearing that if one bomb hung up the aircraft might break up during the pull-out. The ban was lifted later, but by then we had taken to level formation bombing from 2,000 feet, the minimum safe height for bomb blast.

Level bombing has two advantages. Strikes were less restricted by cloud cover, and pattern bombing was judged more likely to achieve kills than hitting clearings with pin-point accuracy. The system doubled our average miss distance from 35 to 70 yards.

The bomb-sight may not have been the first illustration of 'smart' technology in history, but it was certainly the cheapest - take a chinagraph pencil and draw three lines on the inside of the windscreen. Sighting through the gunsight's fixed cross, line up the smoke marker with the vertical line and give an R/T bomb release call to the formation when the marker is level with the two horizontal lines. Accuracy depended on steady flight at 250 knots and a hunch allowance for wind. We used the Venom's bomb distributor setting, which delayed release of the second bomb for a fraction of a second to lengthen the kill zone from about 90 to 180 yards. For example:- January 26 1957, two waves of four Venoms attacked a terrorist clearing in the Slim River area using the distributor setting - the target disappeared completely as the first wave of bombs went down. The Auster could not find anything to mark for the second wave.

The most successful jet strike was 12 Squadron's on February 21st 1956, when four Canberras laid a pattern of 24 bombs on a smoke marker dropped by an Auster near Kluang in Central Johore. Two 1,000 lb bombs straddled the camp with a spacing of 80 yards designed to produce sufficient concussion to kill all life between them. Fourteen bodies were identifiable and allowed as kills, with up to eight more believed to have been blown to pieces.

We were concerned that Auster target marking eliminated the element of surprise, giving the terrorists time to run away. The time lag between marking and bombing was about two minutes. As we could adjust formation fly-pasts to arrive overhead with plus or minus five seconds we tried persuading the Auster pilots to co-ordinate their marking runs with our 5-4-3-2-1 minute approach time, and cut their marking time to less than a minute before the bombs arrived. They were keen aviators, but not that keen to test an Auster's resistance to bomb blast!

Finally there was the ground radar controlled bombing system introduced in mid-1956, using old Army anti-aircraft No. 3 Mark 7 radars². The formation leader followed course directions from the Target Director Post (TDP) controller, who kept the aircraft's radar response in a narrow beam passing over the target before ordering bomb release at a pre-computed moment. An average accuracy of 175 yards was claimed.

**Air Commodore Cooper entered the RAF in 1944 and in 1956 he assumed command of 45 Squadron at Butterworth flying DFGA Venoms. When the Venoms were replaced by the Canberra he completed the last*

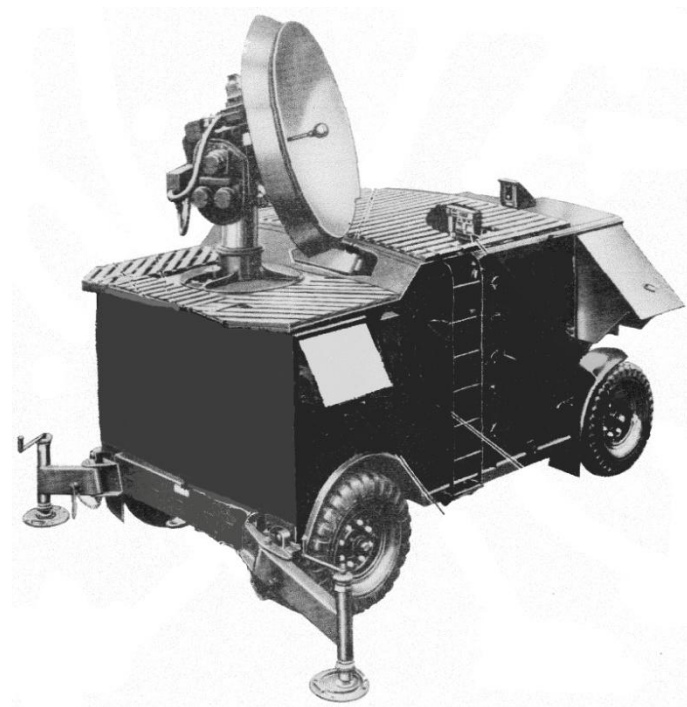
six months of his tour in the JOC (Joint Operations centre) at Kuala Lumpur, tasking offensive, air transport and helicopter operations.

Note ¹ DME-assisted-QCH

DME - Distance Measuring Equipment where ground beacons provide range information

QGH - Code letters for procedure of recovery to the airfield and controlled descent through cloud.

Note ² Ground Radar Controlled Bombing System - AA Mark 7 Radar



The latest Army post-war light weight mobile radar controlled AA Fire Control (FC) unit, improved from the original design throughout WW2, the AA Mark 7 Radar (Blue Cedar) was the primary AA radar in use by the Army until made surplus to requirement in the mid-50's. From AP2899 AB : *As a FC radar under the command of the TCO (RAF TDP). In this role a selected target can be tracked automatically, and a continuous measurement of its present range, bearing and elevation passed to a predictor.....* Additional to the radar cabin trailer (left), there is also a separate generator. The unit was towed onto site by a heavy duty vehicle!

The AA Mark 7 Radar information was kindly provided by Mike Payne of the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum.

Important Notice: Royal British Legion Cenotaph Parade 2016 by Tony Parrini

'Our application to attend the Remembrance Parade in London on Sunday 13th November 2016 has been approved - we will march as Units of the Far East Air Force. The number of tickets we have requested is not the number of tickets that we are guaranteed to receive, so a first come, first served policy may have to be enforced. A security requirement has been imposed by the Metropolitan Police as they will need to conduct individual security checks on all participants. Ticket holders will need to bring both photographic ID and a document showing proof of address with them for access to Horse Guards Parade, via the manned police entry points on the day.'

Therefore if you wish to participate in the 'Units of the Far East Air Force' contingent, I (Tony Parrini) will need the following information by **1st September** please:

FULL NAME AS PER THE PHOTO ID CARRIED WITH YOU ON THE DAY

PLACE OF BIRTH DD/MM/YYYY

FIRST LINE OF ADDRESS

TOWN

POST CODE

MILITARY NUMBER IF APPLICABLE

In return you will receive a non-transferable ticket to enter Horse Guards parade. Please e-mail me or write as per my address as shown under Chairman on page 2 of this newsletter.



THE REUNION

**We were all so much younger then
Now, as old men we meet again
Looking through spectacles, trying in vain
To recognise strangers with forgotten names**

**Icons present in our minds
Match not those features of this time
And names that once epitomised our youth
Now confront us with the truth**

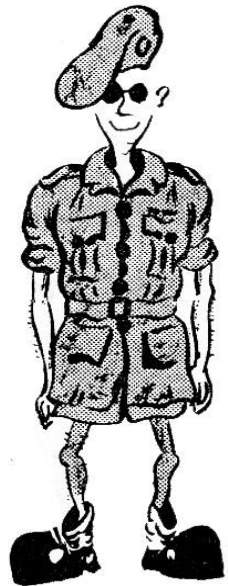
**Yet happy memories do unfold
And long forgotten stories told
As we stand and reminisce
And speak about those we miss**

**So with the passing of the years
There is laughter now - no more tears
We were, once, all the same you know
But that was forty years* ago.**

* And more

Gavin Manton

Newspaper cutting from John Rutland and Bill Wardle



The 2016 annual reunion, held at Ullesthorpe Court Hotel & Golf Club, Lutterworth, Leicestershire over the period 22/23/24 May was a fitting venue in which we, as an association, were able to celebrate our 20th Anniversary in pleasant surroundings. It was difficult to fault anything about the hotel in terms of the rooms, quality of the food and friendliness (and helpfulness) of the staff. Over the past few years we have held our reunions at the Falcon in Stratford. This year we were unable to do so because of proposed major internal changes planned to take place there. At the time of the 2016 reunion the proposed works apparently hadn't even started and because there was a question mark over the Falcon for next year members voted that the 2017 reunion be held at Ullesthorpe Court Hotel 21/22/23 May.

From the AGM, the annual subscription for 2017 remains at £12 and £15 for members outside the UK who receive printed copies. Also the Association's accounting year has been changed to cover the period 1st January to 31st December (annually). The committee remains the same but with Colin Bates being voted in as understudy to Richard Harcourt (Secretary) and Bob Margolis to work alongside George Gault (present Webmaster) as George has expressed a wish to resign from the post in a year's time.

At the reunion, the RABPA archive benefitted from donations of memorabilia from John Rutland and Bill Wardle (both 487 SU) who jointly passed over various items for the newsletter. Brian Symondson (also 487 SU) donated items relating to 487 SU and programmes of activities held over the period 1957-58. Brian also donated his photograph album of pictures taken of the RABTC presentation of the *Spider's Web*.

Roy Jesson (110 Squadron) donated a number of squadron related photographs of excellent quality, and John Crooks (Aero Fireman) passed over an album of official RAF photographs (page 28), once belonging to Group Captain R E Baxter DFC MA, and donated by Mrs Joan Thomas, widow of Derek Thomas, a RAF friend of John, who had been running the 106 Squadron Association until his death. The album contains photographs of high ranking officials visiting Butterworth over the period 1955 to 1957. To all, thank you on behalf of the RAFBPA.

The 20th Anniversary Reunion Dinner

The following pages show a selection of pictures taken by Bob Margolis.















110 Squadron (Helicopters)

In June 1959 No's 155 and 194 Squadrons were disbanded and reformed as 110 Squadron with Bristol Sycamore helicopters at Kuala Lumpur. During August 1959 110 Squadron moved to RAAF Butterworth where troop lifting and casevac operations were carried out along the Thai border. The pictures shown below are from **Roy Jesson** who served with the squadron 1960-61.



Roy adds: 'The Sycamore that became a casualty was due to one pilot trying to take off with too many chutes on board. He managed to take off with some ground effect but lost this due to altitude leaving the chopper with no lift.



'We had a period of time when the Sycamores were grounded due to a failure in the tail section. The Navy were in Singapore, so they were drafted in. They were very competent pilots, including a guy I was at school with.'



The Sycamores of 110 Squadron were finally retired in October 1964.



The contents of the album of photographs donated to the Association, relating to official visits and inspections at RAF Butterworth 1955 to 1957 (page 19), are listed below.

1 Visit by Mr Allan Lennox-Boyd MP, Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, and Lady Patricia Lennox-Boyd. Friday 26 August 1955.

2 Annual Inspection by AOC Malaya, AVM W. H. Kyle CB CBE DSO DFC ADC Thursday 22 September 1955.

3 Visit of C in C FEAF, Air Marshal Sir Frances Fressanges, and AOC in C Bomber Command Air Marshal Sir George Mills, and AOC Malaya AVM W. H. Kyle. Friday 30 September 1955.

4 Inspection by the High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya, Sir Donald MacGillivray. Friday 7 October 1955.

5 Visit Rear Admiral H. M. S. Choudri, C in C Royal Pakistan Navy. Friday 21 October 1955.

6 Visit by Mr Richard Casey, Australian Minister for External Affairs, Lady Casey and Sir Allan Watt, Australian High Commissioner for Singapore and Malaya/ Wednesday 26 October 1955.

7 Visit by the Chief Minister of the Federation of Malaya, Tengku Abdul Rahman and AOC Malaya, AVM W. H. Kyle for the presentation of wings to Pilot officer Abdul Aziz at MAAF HQ, Penang. 19 November 1955.

8 Visit by the Secretary of State for Air, The Right Hon. Lord De L'Isle and Dudley VC. 25 November 1955.

9 Visit by the Resident Commissioner for Penang, The Hon. Mr P. P. Bingham. 9 December 1955.

10 Visit by C in C Far East Station, Vice Admiral Sir Allan Scott-Mancriff. 10 January 1956.

11 Visit of new Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Dermot Boyle. 21/22 January 1956.

12 Farewell visit to RAF Butterworth of the Director of Operations, Lt Gen. Sir Geoffrey Bourne. 1 May 1956.

13 Officers Mess Luncheon Party Sunday 6 May 1956. The Hon. R. P. Bingham and Mrs Bingham.

14 Station Sports Day 16 May 1956. AOC Malaya AVM W. H. Kyle and Mrs Kyle.

15 Visit of new Director of Operations Malaya, Lt Gen R. H. Bower CB CBE. 12 June 1956.

16 Visit of Rear Admiral G. K. Burgin USN (USS Columbus). 16 June 1956.

17 Visit of Air Chief Marshal Sir Francis J. Fogarty KCB KBE DFC AFC ADC, the Air Member for Personnel. 6 August 1958.

18 Annual Inspection by AOC, AVM Kyle. Thursday 4 October 1956.

19 Visit of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. 31 October 1956.

20 Visit of AVM F. R. W. Scherger CB CBE DSO AFC, CAS Designate RAAF. 20 February 1957.

21 Visit of Penang and Province Wellesley Settlement Councillors. 12 March 1957.

22 Farewell visit of AOC Malaya, AVM W. H. Kyle. 6 June 1957

23 The Queen's Birthday Parade. Penang. 13 June 1957.

24 Farewell visit of C in C Air Marshal Sir Frances J. Fressanges. 24 June 1957.

25 Visit of new Commander in Chief FEAF, AM Lord Bandon KBE CB CBE DSO.
Friday 19 July 1957.

26 Presentation of the Marine Craft Efficiency Cup by AOC Malaya, AVM V. E. Hancock CB CBE
to No. 1125 MCU Glugor. *No date given.*

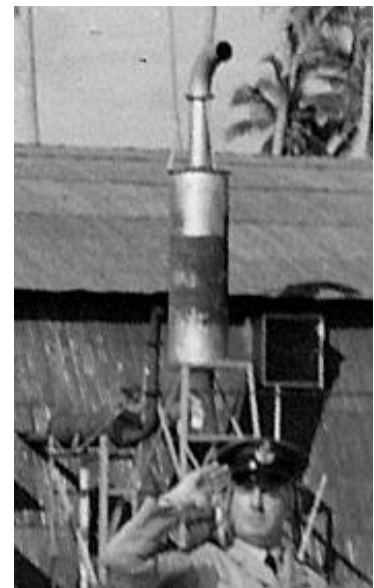
27 41st Anniversary of the formation of No. 45 Squadron RAF. 1957.

28 Miscellaneous photographs - *no information given.*

29 Annual Inspection by AOC Malaya (AVM V. E. Hancock) of Butterworth and Island Units.
18th and 19th October 1957.

30 Visit of the Inspector General, Air Marshal Sir Walter Dawson KBE CBE DSO.
Friday 25 October 1957.

Interestingly, when looking through the photographs of the Annual Inspection by AOC Malaya (29), they helped solve a long standing puzzle, first put to members in Issue 25 Christmas 2009 from a photograph in the Norman Harvey collection, of a 'Beaufighter apparently undergoing some sort of test judging by the *stovepipe* arrangement above the oil cooler (below).' Members from that time will probably remember that I (DC) asked if anyone could shed some light on the 'arrangement'. No one could and I was even accused of rigging the picture (below)....as if I would!.



The answer is shown (above right) as being part of the building and nothing to do with the testing of the Beaufighter oil cooler. I owe thanks to the unknown official photographer, Group Captain Baxter, Mrs Joan Thomas and John Crooks for their unwitting part in helping solve the mystery.