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Coolhard Bull

The magazine of the FAA
Buccaneer Association



Air Power from the Sea
January 2010



THE FLEET AIR ARM MEMORIAL

Pictured above is the Fleet Air Arm memorial situated in the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas in Staffordshire. It was dedicated on 11th September 2009. Thank you to all the FAABA members who made a contribution to this all ranks memorial stone.

The Fleet Air Arm Buccaneer Association is a comrades association of old friends and colleagues who flew, worked on, or were involved in any supporting role with, the Buccaneer Aircraft either at Bedford, Brough, Boscombe Down, Changi, Lossiemouth or Honington.

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Association News from the Secretary

If you are reading this and have **NOT** received an Email from me during 2010 please contact me with your Email address as I either do not have it or have an incorrect/old one. To ensure you get any attachments correctly please put my Email in your safe senders list. **Thank you.**

Membership Review 2009: This year has seen a good influx of new members, many electing to stay as ordinary members but a gratifying number electing to become full fee-paying members. A good cross section of ordinary members is, in itself a useful foundation for the association but as always my plea to all of you is - do become a full member. £10 is not a vast sum in today's world but it does enable us to contact everyone at least once a year to promote the annual reunion and the latest news and events. This year's magazine will be the first time we are not posting copies to anyone other than full fee-paying members although ordinary members with broadband may elect to receive an electronic copy. Postage and printing rates are rising and the association does need a cash reserve to contact new people introduced to the association who do not have access to a computer. Current full membership stands at approx 150 with another 300 or so ordinary members and a further 100 or so which I have partial contact details and do not respond to requests for full contact details. We have in the past "lost" many names of people who would only give me an Email address and subsequently dropped off the list when they changed internet providers. A full postal address and telephone number allows me to contact people who do not respond to my Emails. To keep costs down the internet has to be the preferred medium of keeping in touch together with our web site which is updated regularly by Phil Glover. We do have a potential additional membership as a lot of the names I am holding for the future HMS Fulmar Association are entitled to join ours if they so wish. Many living north of the border elected to be placed on the Fulmar list rather than the FAABA but we will be inviting them all to the 10th Anniversary reunion in 2010.

The new FAA Memorial: At some point this year we will be asked to provide a plaque for the memorial at the National Arboretum at Alrewas. As a founder member of the FNF we will have a prominent place on the memorial. The Memorial steering committee will, in consultation with FNF approve a common design and we will purchase one and have it engraved. This will be a permanent marker of our association in the FAA and I will be launching an appeal for donations once the cost is known.



Events in 2010: Our most important date is the date of our first milestone 10th annual reunion. It seems to have flown by and I can remember the first very well, (or at least I think I can). 226 people attended the event held in the WO & SR Mess RNAS Yeovilton in October 2001. The evening was a resounding success and the mandate set to have future reunion

dinners on a yearly basis. We have moved and improved since that first year and this year's event will once again be held at the Royal Court Hotel, Keresley over the weekend of the 18-20th June 2010. The

cost will be £133 for a three-night stay and £100 for two nights with all breakfasts and evening dinners included. A one-night stay is £63 including the Gala Dinner. An entertainment supplement of £10 for non-members will be required, full members are exempt but are required to pay £5 per guest. All hotel facilities are available to members including the pool and gym complex. So as well as the bold and faithful lets see as many of you who attended the first dinner make it for the tenth.

Army v Navy Rugby Saturday 1st May 2010

An event which is gaining slow but steady progress to achieving "reunion" status. Why not make a date in the diary and come along. If coming from the SW region be sure to hit Fleet Services anytime between 09:30 and 11 am to start the day with a flavour of what the day is about - Colourful cross dressing, Up Spirits and alcohol fuelled riots of fun - tits, bums , piercings and all! At Twickenham a lot of us meet at the Barmy Arms situated on the bank of the Thames before the match and enjoy a pre-match drink and natter. The Army always wins the game so the onus is on the Navy to win the social side, a task we take very seriously indeed. So if you can make it - come on down.

Yeovilton Air Day 10th July 2010

This year is the Air Stations 70th anniversary and the stops are out to make this the momentous occasion it deserves. The Heritage Trust is once again providing a Marquee for HT member's comfort, where drinks and food will once again be available. The usual mix of flying and static aircraft will again be augmented by the various departments, without which the station and squadrons could not meet their operational capability. Oh and a beer and burger van will be in attendance! Concessionary tickets are available from the FNHT and other organisations; if you need any help please contact any FAABA committee member.

Charity Dinner for all FAA Associations Saturday 23rd October 2010



To be held at The Limes Country lodge, an establishment owned by FAABA member Dave Morris, this promises to be a very entertaining evening. Full details are still being finalised but every FNF Association has been asked to fill at least one table of 10 at a cost of £49:95 per person. A five-course meal and a full evening's entertainment with all profits going to SAAFA. Our aim is to fill two tables so please let me know if you are interested in attending this prestigious black tie event. A Travel Lodge is situated very close to the Lodge which is set in rural Earlswood yet is located less than half a mile from junction 3 of the M42. The postcode is B94 5JZ for GPS addicts and Dave will be delighted to see any member pop in for a drink and chat. SAAFA is a charity very active in the welfare of wounded ex servicemen and of course Selly Oak is not far away from the Lodge so is an ideal charity to support at this event.

Don't mess with Chuck.....

Chuck Norris' tears cure cancer. Too bad he has never cried.

Filming on location for Walker: Texas Ranger, Chuck Norris brought a stillborn baby lamb back to life by giving it a prolonged beard rubs. Shortly after the farm animal sprang back to life and a crowd had gathered, Chuck Norris roundhouse kicked the animal, breaking its neck, to remind the crew once more that Chuck giveth, and the good Chuck, he taketh away.

Chuck Norris was the fourth Wiseman. He brought baby Jesus the gift of "beard". Jesus wore it proudly to his dying day. The other Wise men, jealous of Jesus' obvious gift favoritism, used their combined influence to have Chuck omitted from the Bible. Shortly after all three died of roundhouse kick related deaths.

If you can see Chuck Norris, he can see you. If you can't see Chuck Norris you may be only seconds away from death.

Rather than being birthed like a normal child, Chuck Norris instead decided to punch his way out of his mother's womb. Shortly thereafter he grew a beard.

Chuck Norris built a time machine and went back in time to stop the JFK assassination. As Oswald shot, Chuck met all three bullets with his beard, deflecting them. JFK's head exploded out of sheer amazement.

The Fly Navy Federation

The FAA Centenary of Naval Aviation has now ended and the future role of the federation was discussed at the meeting held at the FAA Museum on January 29. It was very gratifying to hear that the Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm Simon Charlier himself is keen that the Federation continues. He firmly believes we still have an important role to play in keeping the FAA at the forefront of public perception, and in helping to organise some of the non-service FAA annual events. His Executive Staff

Officer, currently Lt Cdr Adam Jones will be the Admirals representative at our future meetings and will give a brief on the latest service news and views and report back to RAFAA on Federation matters.



What exactly is the Fly Navy Federation? Many mentions of the Federation have been made over the last couple of years both in the FN100 newspapers and our own Cool Hard Bull newsletters. For those of you who are a bit hazy as to its exact position within the FAA community there follows extracts from the official FNF information leaflet.

The FNF is the umbrella organisation within which the various Fleet Air Arm Associations are able to maintain contact with each other and to assist each other when appropriate. The concept is also to tap

in to the wealth of knowledge and experience of former FAA members in order to help and support the current serving force to remain strong and independent in the face of some very radical changes over the next few years. **The FNF is thus a loose alliance of FAA related associations working towards the same common goal whilst maintaining the autonomy of each association.** In 2009 the Federation's main focus was to support and assist with the celebration of 100 years of Naval aviation, and also beyond that to continue to keep the FAA at the forefront of public awareness as we approach the introduction of the two new aircraft carriers in 2014 and 2016. In 2010 and beyond, the emphasis will shift to other ideas and projects, upkeep of the new FAA Memorial, the support of the Heritage Trust being at the forefront, alongside the Carrier Programme.

There are approaching 20 associations and allied organisations "signed up" to the idea. Ourselves, the FAA Officers, Armourers, Field Gun Crew, Handlers, Aircrew, Safety Equipment, TAGS and the FAA Association itself are all founder members and others such as the SHAR, Channel Dash and Cloud Observers (Met) have since affiliated themselves. There are also several overseas associations - New Zealand and Canada among them, also involved. The FNHT has a representative and perhaps, most importantly, the serving fleet is also represented with the current RA FAA Staff Officer and Fleet WO. At its conception the RA FAA Sir Adrian Johns was the first chairman, and the man with the vision to bring it all together and create the Federation. He has since left the Service and taken up the post of Governor of Gibraltar. The current Chairman is Admiral Chris Clayton who is also a leading figure in the new carrier consortium. There is no committee as such, more of a Steering Group of representatives of all the associations and interested bodies of the groups mentioned above. There were 3 meetings on 2009, two held at the FAA Museum and the third at the Royal British Legion Club in Alrewas where we were given a special brief on the FAA Memorial and visited the site where it was to be placed.

2009 The Centenary of Naval Aviation



So what happened in 2009 the Centenary of Naval Aviation? Details of the various events as seen through the eyes of some of our members.

HMS Illustrious at Greenwich and St Paul's Thanksgiving Service and Reception

Held over two days on the 7th and 8th May Dennis Mathews remembers the weekend. Left Dorchester by train to arrive at Waterloo by 1200. Booked into UJC then met Tom Dawson from Harriers Assn. We made our way over to HMS President for the launch of Wadworth Swordfish Ale and the issue of stamps. The ale seemed to go down quite well! We made our way back to UJC to get changed and dolled up in our

best bib and tucker. Got a taxi back to HMS President to catch the boat for the trip up the Thames to Greenwich to board HMS Illustrious. The boat was very crowded, hence the bar very busy so we got all trebles in to save queuing again. Wise move!!! On reaching Illustrious we were led into the

hangar which was decorated with flags and bunting. After the wine reception we were asked to take our places at table. The meal was very nice, washed down with plenty of wine and port. The principle guest was HRH the Duke of York and principle speaker Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope KCB OBE C in C Fleet. We had four toasts, HM the Queen by Commodore Martin Westwood, Sovereigns and heads of State here represented and Distinguished Guests both by Rear Admiral Simon Charlier and Fleet Air Arm by Captain Ben Key captain of Illustrious. We were entertained with music from string quartet of Royal Marines. At 2200 we were ushered to the lift to get up to the flight deck for a spectacular firework display which was really impressive. The event ended with a mass beating by Corps of Drums of the Royals. On leaving the ship the boat took us back to Westminster pier so it wasn't too far to walk back to UJC for some shuteye. This really was an impressive occasion, well worth attending. The following day I attended the service at St. Paul's Cathedral. This really was a very moving service. At the end of the service I formed up with others to parade around the area led by band of Royal Marines and guard from Illustrious. I thought more people would have joined in the parade; the numbers were very low in my opinion. The receptions after were held in 3 locations, Guildhall, Merchant Taylors Hall and Skinners Hall. I went to the Guildhall, what a place, really super, lovely food and as much champers as you wanted, just up my street. Very good couple of days, well worth making the effort to go, really glad I did.

TAGs Memorial Service Lee on Solent Sunday 17th May.

Dave and Stacey attended as representatives of the Association at the service held on Lee front by the FAA wall. The TAGS Association held their 62nd Anniversary and this year was to be the last parade due to the age of the few remaining survivors. It is hoped the FNF will carry on the tradition in future years as a tribute to the TAGS. It was a very moving service as 42 of their members had crossed the bar during the year and it was with a sense of deep sadness the wreaths were laid on the memorial. Speeches were made by the RA FAA Simon Charlier and Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns and a dinner was held afterwards at HMS Collingwood. We didn't attend the Collingwood Dinner but instead spent an excellent couple of hours in the Bun Penny/Vic in the company of TC Wilkinson and Pete Westwood of the FGCA together with their wives. A nice trip down memory Lane!

The Queens Garden Party: 9th July. A day out with Roger and Vicky Uncles

One day in May I returned home from work to find a very posh envelope amongst the bills and circulars that had been delivered that morning. It was very classy indeed, ivory white with a smooth velour texture and certainly of a much higher quality than I am generally used to receiving. Inside the envelope there was even more special stationery and an expensive invitation card from the Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm stating that he has been commanded by Commodore-in Chief Fleet Air Arm HRH The Duke of York himself to invite me and a guest to a Royal garden party at the Palace on the 9th July 2009 to celebrate the Centenary of Naval Aviation. Commanded no less. As well as the invitation there was also information on dress code, suits, day dresses and hats, uniforms, but no medals! No cameras or mobile phones and useful security information and tips on how best to enjoy the day.

The tradition of throwing open the royal residences dates back to the 1860s, when Queen Victoria held what were known as afternoon 'breakfasts'. It has carried on ever since and during the present Queen's reign, over a million people have attended garden parties at either Buckingham Palace or at

the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which is her official residence in Scotland. We travelled down to London by Berry's coach on the day and went straight to the hotel in Victoria where we changed and prepared for the big event. Attending a Royal tea party isn't cheap of course because this little outing cost me a new outfit for Vicky, but it was worth it and she looked fabulous in her new dress and hat. Dressed in our finest clothes and looking our best it didn't seem appropriate to travel to the Palace by underground so as it was a nice day we decided to walk (mistake). At the Palace the queue of people waiting to get past security and into the gardens got increasingly longer. Each guest had to produce a passport nearer and one other form of identity so this made it quite a slow process. The weather was fine and everyone was in good humour as we lined up and waited our turn to be admitted. Like most guests, I imagine, I am proud to boast that I've had tea with the royals but I should point out that there were another 5,999 other people there as well.

To get to the gardens we had to pass through the Palace itself and once through and inside the garden it was a wonderful experience and I imagine that tea with the queen today looked very much the same as it would have 150 years ago; men in tails and top hats, women in floral dresses and elaborate hats and it reminded me of a scene from a 19th-century painting of a sophisticated social event. So many military uniforms were in evidence that it was almost like being in an episode of Foyle's War! The six-thousand guests are all vetted, of course, before the event because the Queen does not want any undesirable republicans or out-spoken anti-monarchists wandering around her back garden spreading sedition so the place was full of people enjoying a once in a lifetime experience.



The magnificent gardens sit on forty-two acres in the heart of central London and walking outside behind the Palace the vast garden is a revelation because it is festive and filled with colour and the pond at its centre piece features weeping willow branches grazing the water and ducks flying free. What is most noticeable is that it is peaceful and serene, except for the chatter of six thousand people of course, because as if by magic the sounds of the city do not intrude and it is hard to believe this is in the centre of the busy city. The gardens are immaculate and goodness knows

what the head gardener makes of all these people stampeding over his manicured lawns and falling into his flowerbeds. I expect they give him the day off so that he doesn't get too upset. Actually I don't think the Queen puts the garden to best use because there is enough room there to have a nice nine-hole par three golf course!

The food tents were open for business now and this seemed an opportune moment to make an early dash for the guests' tea tent to be among the first to enjoy the hospitality. Actually there was no need to rush because there was plenty of food to go round and the tables looked immaculate. I especially liked the little chocolates decorated with the queen's crown and I was tempted to put a couple in my pocket as souvenirs but the sun was out now and they would have surely melted and made an awful mess. At a typical tea party, the kitchens prepare, and the guests consume, more than

twenty-seven thousand cups of Twinning's 'garden party' tea, as well as more than twenty-thousand carefully trimmed sandwiches and a similar number of delicious slices of cake, so there is plenty for everyone and enough left over to give the ducks a treat as well. The plates were a cunning design with a place for the teacup and just about enough room for a couple of sandwiches and a couple of cakes which prevented anyone taking too much food. Despite this however the Royal Household estimates that each guest eats on average fourteen portions of sandwiches and cake. This year was the first time alcohol was provided in the form of Champagne courtesy of Sir Donald Gosling Ex RN

After a short wait the band struck up "God Save the Queen" and Royal Party, dressed immaculately, made their way past the Tudor Red Beefeaters separately into the gardens and along the double lines of guests. As the tea plates were quite small this meant we had to make two visits to the tea tent and had to go through the whole lining up process again which got longer as people discovered free booze was on the agenda. Back at the top of the steps and outside the Palace back door the band once more played the National Anthem and the Royals were gone. I hadn't really known what to expect from an invitation to a Royal tea party and although I had met the Queen before when I came back from Iraq. We really rather enjoyed it in a snobbish sort of way. Eventually we joined the crowds making for the exits and once outside travelled back to the hotel to change for an evening at Covent Garden and something to eat. After a nights rest and a fine breakfast we spent the morning sightseeing in London. This comprised of the inside of Marks and Spencer in Marble Arch! Later that afternoon we made our way back to Hammersmith for the bus home at the end of an excellent 2 days.

FAA Memorial Dedication 11th September.

This event was attended by Dave and Stacey Clark, Dennis Mathews, Carl Jordon and another of our members John Hallam who was representing the Armourers Association as part of the Security detail. We stayed overnight at the Innkeepers at Sutton Coalfield together with members of the FGC,



Armourers and the FAA Associations, and traveled the short journey up to the NMA on Friday morning. The service was held by the Chaplain of the Fleet who gave thanks to the men and women of the FAA who have died in service and blessed the new memorial. He also praised the memorial saying it would be a permanent reminder of the selfless commitment of many to the FAA of the future. It was a lovely autumn day and the fly-past of three GR9 Harriers flying fast and low was a fitting tribute to the opening ceremony. The memorial

was unveiled to the sound of the Last Post and the guard inspected by RA FAA Simon Charlier before we all adjourned to the lunchtime reception. Guest of Honour was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Benjamin Bathurst and was well supported by many representatives of all the Fleet Air Arm Associations of the FNF. The memorial is a wonderful sculpture and a fitting legacy of the FNF to the FAA of the future and thanks must be recorded to the FAA Officers Association who led the drive and met most of the funding for this All Ranks Memorial.

Liverpool Visit of HMS Illustrious 22-27th October.

Thursday 21st saw our intrepid Chair and Secretary together with Memsahib's, Joy and Stacey winging our way up the M5, sightseeing on the M6, and eventually arriving at our hotel in Warrington to be met by Richard (Vance) Vansarrit and Dave and Helen Niven. Meet, greet and dinner out of the way we planned our first assault on the Liverpool public and the mighty Lusty. Brian, Vance and I had invites to the Royal reception in the hangar so we left early, caught the train to Lime Street and promptly ran into Bud Abbott and Bob Gellert of the Sea Harrier Association also going to the reception.

Having negotiated the Security, renewed my acquaintance with gangplanks, saluted the OOD - oops sorry, aft gangplank rules - been saluted at by the OOD, we found ourselves in the hangar being organised into groups for the grand tour. Our Tour Guide was a young - to us, Chief in charge of the midships goalkeeper, a fearsome gun firing some 2800 rounds of 30 mm ammo per minute. And the sight mechanism is so clear you could see a woman undressing in a hotel room some 2 miles away - if you wanted.

The tour over we returned to the hangar and some liquid refreshments. The cynic in some of us might say that there is a war on and money for the services is very much under budget, but funding clearly wasn't an issue with the purchase of wine and champagne, so we got stuck into the networking and quaffing side of the day. A speech from Prince Andrew and the RAFAA, a most enjoyable curry and a couple of glasses of Chateau Clattau later we were all led to the lift for the ascent up to the Flight Deck for the flying display of which you can read a full account in the FN100 newspaper.

A most enjoyable day throughout, this did give a good insight into the problems facing today's FAA and the shortages they have to live with daily. Whilst the standard of living and the fighting capability of the ship are much advanced from my day, it is apparent that today's FAA spends far more time away from home and under far more stress and pressure. It is a tribute to all I met that not one was talking of giving it all up and settling for a safer job nearer home, and not one thought they were doing anything other than that which was needed to get the job done. The FAA of today may be smaller than of previous years but thankfully the capability is as sound as ever was.

This point of view was reinforced on the Saturday we all of the FAABA contingent were invited back onboard as guests of the WO & SR mess. This more informal occasion gave Dave Niven, himself an ex Pres of the Mess, a chance to relive his time spent onboard leaving Helen to play catch-up with the vodka while he roamed the passageways dreaming of a life gone by. Some of us left in the evening leaving Vance, Dennis, and the Johnsons, Frank and Karen who arrived up with us on the Saturday behind. They managed to sneak into the RM concert in the evening and carry on drinking for the honour of the Association. Great effort guys!

All in all a most enjoyable excursion, Liverpool is a most sociable city at the best of times but almost everyone I met were bowled over by the fact the ship has chosen Liverpool as the venue for the Northern FN100 celebrations and the record crowds for the weekends open days reflected that.

The FN100 Fixed Wing Dinner 31st October at HMS Heron.

This was a great success organised primarily by the Sea Harrier Association with over 180 attending. Our Association was very well represented with over 80 members and guests present most of who I managed to have at least a few words with - mainly in the tot queue! Over £1000 was raised for the nominated charities including £305 raffle takings for a bottle of 25-year-old Centenary Malt and over £250 from the sale of a painting donated by one of the guests (auction winner Paul Davies of FAAFGC and FAABA fame). The guest speaker was Commander Ade Orchard who was the first Sea Harrier Squadron CO in the Afghan conflict, who gave an eloquent and emotive speech of the necessity of maintaining a strong Fleet Air Arm presence within the UK Military structure. The overwhelming consensus was that everyone enjoyed and approved of the format of the evening and would like a similar event held this year.

The teacher at a local Infants School asked her Class to write something about "The Sea"

This is a picture of an octopus. It has eight testicles. (Kelly aged 6)

If you are surrounded by sea you're an Island. If you don't have sea all round you, you are incontinent. (Wayne aged 7)

Sharks are ugly and mean, and have big teeth, just like Mary Hinge. She's not my friend no more. (Kylie aged 6)

My uncle goes out in his boat with pots, and comes back with crabs. (Millie aged 6)

When ships had sails, they used the trade winds to cross the ocean. Sometimes, when the wind didn't blow and the sailors would whistle to make the wind come. My brother said they would be better off eating beans. (William aged 7)

I like mermaids. They are beautiful, and I like their shiny tails, but how do mermaids get pregnant when they haven't a tinkle place? (Helen aged 6)

My Dad was in the Navy and he's always saying that the other sailors wiped their noses on him because he was the ship's anchor chief. He thinks it's funny. [David aged 7]

I'm not going to write about the sea because my baby brother is always screaming and being sick, my Dad keeps shouting at my Mum, and my big sister has just got pregnant, so I can't think of what to write. (Amy aged 8)

When you go swimming in the sea, it is very cold, and it makes my willy very small and wrinkled. (Kevin aged 6)

On holiday my Mum went water skiing. She fell off when she was going very fast. She says she won't do it again because the water shot up her fanny. (Julie aged 6).

Remembrance Sunday



For the first time this year the FAABA were invited to send a contingent to the Cenotaph to march with the Fly Navy Federation column. I am ashamed to say we were very poorly represented with only three people willing to march plus a couple of other members who elected to march with other associations to which they belong. I would ask you all to consider coming along in November for what will be a yearly event in our calendar. I was recently leafing through the Armourers' 4x2 magazine of 2007 and read that 51 members had marched in the

2006 parade. Why so many? Not merely because they feel they need to pay respect to the people who died in the many wars and skirmishes of the 20C, but also because the whole experience is a social day out with an hour of respect and a whole day of laughter and catching up with old friends. As for my day..... I stayed in Wimbledon on the Saturday with a few of the SHAR members and went out for a few beers and a meal before returning to the hotel for a Single Malt nightcap. Sunday morning saw us all up and out by 8.30 and onto the tube, where we sat and shared a few laughs with a wreath-carrying lady who "adopted" us and directed us to the correct stop. (was she the Queen of double entendre or what)? I met up with Brian the Chair and Dave (Morgan of the backyard), made our way to Horse Guards Parade where we were soon swamped by Bombheads, Gunnies, Dopes on Ropes and Chockheads etc all waiting for the off.

The Associations all formed up in alphabetical order and did a very passable impression of a company of John Cleese impersonators, marching through the gate into Whitehall where we all parked up and enjoyed the ensuing chaos. Our thanks go to the RAF Snowdrops who provided the bulk of the entertainment by trying to pretend it was a serious occasion, and to the backward walking Busby who thought he was in charge of the marching order. The Ghurkhas got the biggest cheer of the morning with the Limbless Association in their specially adapted chairs not far behind, although the practice of naming them all after F1 drivers was a bit iffy. (We did get a wave from Jenson Button though). After the service we stepped out in true military style, handing over the FAABA wreath before marching back to Horse Guards where Prince Andrew took the salute. We all finished the March back on Horse Guard Parade and finished off the hip flasks of those who remembered to take them.

The FNF Column then marched off the Parade and to the FAA memorial on the Embankment for a quick service, an even quicker speech from RA Scott Lidbetter and finishing with a rousing version of Bread of Heaven (Mini mini loo) from the Men in Green. The Associations then all dispersed into

various groups to spend the rest of the day socialising. I ended up with a group of Gunnies and Bombheads in Old Scotland Yard before moving to the UJC. It was agreed however that we all try to get our collective acts together for a group get together next year.

Talking to others who have done it all before I realized that this is a day to be enjoyed and remembered. It is not a chore, rather an excellent day out in good company and in rather impressive surroundings. Almost everyone agreed that the FNF column format was a good idea and in Scott Lidbeter's speech he made a point of saying how pleasing it was so many attended. So I end this piece with an appeal to you all. Please do come along next year. We had 24 tickets to march and everyone is welcome at the FAA Memorial for the secondary service so no one will be left out. And as for those (and I include myself here) who think along the lines of "I spent all my Naval career getting out of Divisions, I'm NOT volunteering for them now I'm out" let me assure you now - if Divisions were that much fun you'd march for England!

A Great Day out and I thank the FNF for organising it for me to march and meet so many new Federation members. This is now a standing annual event in my calendar.

Question asked on TV - Is there anything wrong with getting into the habit of kissing a lot of people?

Charley Weaver: It got me out of the Navy.

The FAA Officers Association Falklands and Taranto Night Wednesday 11th November

Held at the magnificent Great Hall, Lincolns Inn, London I was fortunate to receive a personal invite to the dinner as a guest of the FAAOA. I had a "heart in mouth" moment on entering the building as I could not see my name on the seating plan. Eventually I found it, and with no small amount of pride I took my place with Brian Bingham and TC Wilkinson, of the FAAA and FAAFGC respectively on the Top Table alongside the other guests which included Sir George Martin, Admiral Sir Jonathon Band GCB, Dr Julian Lewis MP, Conservative Shadow Defence Minister, and former President of the Association, Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo KCB (another old Buccaneer Veteran).

Speaking at the dinner, our own FAABA President, who is also Chairman of the Officers Association, Rear Admiral Scott Lidbetter spoke of the work of the Associations in promoting the Fleet Air Arm, supporting Naval Aviation Heritage and encouraging young people to join the RN through the Sea Cadets. He also highlighted the lasting legacy of the two Fleet Air Arm memorials, one on the Embankment in London and the other at the National Memorial Arboretum. He said "The Fleet Air Arm had a splendid turn out at the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph this year. Over 300 Fleet Air Arm veterans also laid wreaths around the Fleet Air Arm memorial on the Embankment."

Like ourselves the FAAOA is very keen to promote the "All Ranks" ethos of the Federation. After the TAGs it is the oldest and largest association and already has various programmes and projects in place which could easily be adopted and supported by the other member associations. Indeed the FAA Memorial at the NMA was largely driven by their wish (and funding) for a new and better design than the existing one at the time, but were quick to bring us all on board for the project and allow the Federation to take some credit for its eventual completion.

In the year 2008 the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in England and said: 'Once again, the earth has become wicked and over-populated, and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans.' He gave Noah the CAD drawings, saying: 'You have 6 months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights.'

Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard, but no Ark. 'Noah!' He roared, 'I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?'

'Forgive me, Lord,' begged Noah, 'but things have changed. I needed Building Regulations Approval and I've been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission for building the Ark in my garden because it is development of the site, even though in my view it is a temporary structure. We had to then go to appeal to the Secretary of State for a decision. Then the Department of Transport demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it. Getting the wood was another problem. All the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific interest set up in order to protect the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls - but no go!

When I started gathering the animals, the RSPCA sued me. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued the accommodation was too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space. Then the County Council, the Environment Agency and the Rivers Authority ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood. I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission on how many disabled carpenters I'm supposed to hire for my building team. The trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only accredited workers with Ark-building experience. To make matters worse, Customs and Excise seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least 10 years for me to finish this Ark.'

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky.

Noah looked up in wonder and asked, 'You mean you're not going to destroy the world?'

'No,' said the Lord. '.....the British Government beat me to it.'

The FAA Centenary of Naval Aviation Malt Whisky

We have done reasonably well with the sales of the 25 year old but only sold just over 20 of 50 of the 50 year old. This project will be closing down at the end of March so if you want a bottle this is your last opportunity. A 25 year old costs £60 and £179 for the 50 year old. Please contact the Secretary Dave Clark if you want to reserve a bottle. Strictly Limited

Edition bottles such as these are usually a good investment as well as owning a piece of history so get your chequebooks out! Remember all proceeds to Naval Charities and the upkeep of the FAA Memorial at the NMA.

Don't mess with Chuck

There are no disabled people. Only people who have met Chuck Norris.

Chuck Norris can make a woman climax by simply pointing at her and saying "booya".

Chuck Norris died ten years ago, but the Grim Reaper can't get up the courage to tell him.

After much debate, President Truman decided to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima rather than the alternative of sending Chuck Norris. His reasoning? It was more "humane".

It was once believed that Chuck Norris actually lost a fight to a pirate, but that is a lie, created by Chuck Norris himself to lure more pirates to him. Pirates never were very smart.

One time in an airport a guy accidentally called Chuck Norris "Chick Norris". He explained it was an honest mistake and apologised profusely. Chuck accepted his apology and politely signed an autograph. Nine months later, the guy's wife gave birth to a bearded baby. The guy knew exactly what had happened, and blames nobody but himself.

Chairman's Year

What a wonderful year 2009 was with the 100th anniversary celebrations and visits and a great reunion in Coventry. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Committee for all their support and efforts throughout 2009.

Members of the Association were involved throughout the year in support of the Fly Navy Federation, Fly Navy 100 and the Fly Navy Heritage Trust raising funds to support the exhibit at the National Arboretum and chosen Charities. Well done to all of you.

The membership and interest in the association is still growing. The web site is receiving a lot of visits and Phil is doing a sterling job keeping it updated and is always looking for photographs and articles to publish.

Here's wishing you all a very happy and healthy 2010. BZ!

Brian

Chairman and Trainee Rum Bosun

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And finally as the Reunion season gets into gear, here is a sobering thought, though maybe sobering is a poor choice of word.

A group of 40 year old buddies discuss and discuss where they should meet for dinner. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Plymouth Post House restaurant because the waitresses there have low cut blouses and nice breasts.

10 years later, at 50 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Plymouth Post House because the food there is very good and the wine selection is good also.

10 years later at 60 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Plymouth Post House because they can eat there in peace and quiet and the restaurant is smoke free.

10 years later, at 70 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Plymouth Post House because the restaurant is wheel chair accessible and they even have an elevator.

10 years later, at 80 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Plymouth Post House because that would be a great idea as they had never been there before.

The Veterans Badge:

This badge is now available to all ex serving members. Full details can be found on the website at www.britishveterans.co.uk or ringing 0845 3003892