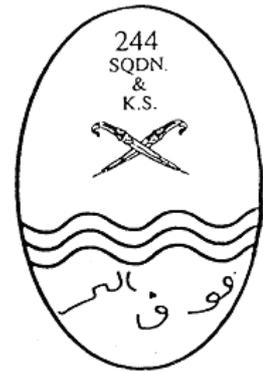




## 244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



### Newsletter No. 12

Jim Says A happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to you all. Many thanks for all the Xmas cards sent to Don and myself. We could not possibly answer them all. Now, to business! First of all, we now have reached a total of 197 members. Who would have thought that we could have reached this figure, after just four years? (and still they come in!).

We are now in the year of our third reunion. Details of prices and hotels are in Don's report below. It must be stressed that bookings have been very heavy, and the Scarisbrick is almost full. To make things more difficult, Rotary International are holding their annual conference in Southport during the same weekend as 244, and hotel accommodation could be at a premium. I would urge members to book as soon as possible (deposit of £10 per person). As usual, I am arranging for a copy of the 'Southport Tourist Guide 1995 to be sent to most members. This should be useful to those of you wishing to book your own accommodation.

NB. Our newer members may not be aware that our up to date Nominal Roll (197 names and addresses) is now available. Copies obtainable from Jim (£1.40 inc. postage).

Also, copy still required for future Newsletters.

Don's Report. Prices and details. Friday, & Saturday 6th & 7th October 1995.

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| (1) Reunion Weekend. No accommodation. required.                                      | £30.00 per person  |
| (2) Scarisbrick Hotel (No single rooms left) all rooms ensuite.                       |                    |
| Twin room, Friday & Saturday. B&B, Buffet, Banquet, Gratuities.                       | £108.00 per person |
| Double room " " " " " "   | £108.00 per person |
| If Thursday as additional night. B&B, Evening meal                                    | £40.00 per person  |
| If Sunday night take in addition to Friday & Saturday                                 |                    |
| Special Offer B&B and Carvery (taken Noon to 8 p.m.)                                  | £25.00 per person  |
| NB To help with accommodation, would it be possible for members to share a twin room? |                    |
| (3) Carlton House Hotel, 43 Bath Street.  |                    |
| Single Rooms (not ensuite) Friday & Saturday, B&B, Buffet, Banquet                    | £62.00 per person  |
| Twin room (ensuite) Friday & Saturday, B&B, Buffet, Banquet                           | £67.00 per person  |
| NB If members are on their own, it would help if they could double up.                |                    |

Subs are now due for 1995, and up to date 53 have paid. For which many thanks. Already we have received many deposits for the Reunion. It looks like being a very good one. Keep it up! See Jim's remarks above.

When paying subs, don't forget to enclose your membership card.

There are a number of you who do not require accommodation, or are booking their own. From these members we still need a deposit towards the buffet and banquet. Don't forget we need a minimum of 100 to obtain the Isherwood Suite, which adds so much to the success of our 'do'. Finally, Frances, myself, Audrey and Jim are looking forward to meeting you all once again, and making new friends.

## **Masirah Field Club (circa 1944)**

Away back in the time of wise King SOLOMON the fair isle of Masirah was well known in public affairs as a popular penal colony. As the years passed on the island faded out of the news until the days of Vasco da Gama and his search for a new route to India. During this period a party of Portuguese navigators landed and built a fort, the remains of which can still be seen off the Um Ras As road. Close behind these visitors came another, Captain Kidd, who is reputed to have buried his treasure somewhere on the island's shores. It is not until the beginning of the present century that the island returned once more to the limelight. This time it is a black mark on the name of Masirah; a number of shipwrecked survivors were massacred at Submarine Point by hostile natives. Years later, in the mid thirties, British Overseas Airways appeared on the scene and established a small outpost. So it was until the outbreak of war, and then the Airforce found it.

Most of the Gulf Pioneers who leave our island paradise for the rain drenched fields of Blighty have never ever gone any further than the ocean surf beach or the jetty. The island extends to a greater distance than that and may be larger than expected. So far the unexplored blue in the general direction of Um Ras As is still more or less a place of mystery. Available information is scanty and mentions the presence of gazette, jackal and very little else. Who knows, perhaps there is a local Tarzan or maybe a Dot. Lamour in sarong.

Well, opportunity knocked and yet another Club was born. If there is gold in them thar hills the Masirah Field Club is sure to find it. Captain Kidd's treasure should be found in due course but the present aims are, general exploration, gen on mineral wealth and wild life and a change of scenery with opportunities for camera enthusiasts. The Club has the valuable assistance of F/O Green, an experienced anthropologist and photographer.

Monday of this week saw the first trip into the wide open spaces, the fresh water wells and the native village as the objective. The sight of a few real palm trees and the Um Ras As halfway bush raised quite a bit of comment but the loudest appreciation was heard on arrival at the wells, there really were more than three trees on the island.

The arrival caused panic as the female population made a strategic withdrawal indoors. Indoors consisted of a crude shelter built on a foundation of Bisley fuselage. The village men-folk were soon in evidence, one eye on the covered faces having a cautious shufti from behind the shelters, the other eye open for business and baksheesh. Salaams all round and the visitors dispersed, some to lie in the cool shade of the tall palms, drink their orange squash and dream of real Hollywood desert islands, the others looked around. The inevitable petrol tins were soon spotted, decorating the local allotments. One enterprising old gent seized the opportunity to offer the carpet from his front door at bargain rates but the sahibs lacked interest, being used to better quality at base. The photographers were in their element, subject matter ranging from house cum stable to desert oasis. Satisfied, the expedition departed showering peanuts in their wake. A welcome chai at Um Ras As and home in moonlight. Come and get properly browned off, expeditions laid on for each Monday.

Sam Harrison (176)

"Perhaps Colin Richardson, when he gives his talk on Masirah at the Reunion, will bring this tour of the Island up to date".

## Masirah Reminiscences. August to November 1944

Who remembers the latrines? Eight seats in a row. Compulsory attendance after breakfast in the mess! Most of the days work or play was discussed seated in this row! And who remembers the morning when the bearer who was clearing out the dross and had removed the tray, looked in only to see a bare bottom in the process of depositing! A hand inserted, finger in the upright position, an upward prod accompanied with the words, "No sahib, No!" Who was the unfortunate F/O whose shout was heard on the other side of the island and who ascended rapidly about 3 feet into the air direct from a sitting position.

Who remembers the nightly battles in with the "desert lilly's" after a horrible bash the night before in the mess? And the huge debts accrued by the losers at poker until W/Cdr Hankin put his foot down and said no more poker. Then who remembers the debts which built up during the bridge games until the status quo was regained!

The meals which were CURRY CURRY CURRY except when someone had caught a barracuda. The sweetest most succulent fish to come out of the ocean. The only fresh meat we had was when a couple of goats were brought down by dhow from the Gulf. Never has there been a stringier, tougher meat in an RAF mess! And what wouldn't one have given for a bottle of Newcastle ale.

The new Arab incumbent from the mainland who after cleaning oil and grease from aircraft parts with petrol, decided to clean off himself with such wonderful cleansing fluid. All very fine but then he felt very cold as would be natural after using petrol to wash down. So he warmed himself beside the open fire and went up in flames.

Remember the one pint bottle of fresh water daily for teeth, shaving, washing etc. And how a crafty bearer could sometimes double this if it was made worth his while. The brine water showers where you came out stickier than when you went in. The superb beach and bathing either with or without trunks and the dozen or two bottoms gazing upwards when the yanks brought the six ENSA girls down to our beach while we were sun bathing! The constant drip, drip, drip of perspiration when you *were* trying to write a letter!

And finally the night when, after an extended convoy and sub. search of about 10 1/2. hours I was routed to land downwind. A sharp right turn just before the red light at the end of the runway, the oleos groaning in agony and the knowledge that Wimpey K for King could skid as well as any stock car when required!

Happy Days!!! F. S. Stothard (152)

Footnote (Sunday Telegraph 22/5/94). "Mr A.H. Burden, formerly of 244 Squadron based in the Persian Gulf (Sharjah). The toilet facilities there were "thunderboxes" over unpleasant depths, disinfected daily by one of the local walids (boys). "Early one morning" Mr Burden, tells me, "I was close at hand when an airman disappeared inside. After a moments peaceful silence, a figure erupted at a rate of knots after the unmistakable but unnerving sound of a petrol explosion. Aircraft fuel, not water, had cleansed the toilets! "IT DID OCCUR" Mr Burden concludes.

## Shufti the following!

The snippets of local language used by the R.A.F. in the desert regions during the war *were* never very pure, and were a mixture of several dialects. Iraqi Arabic was probably the closest to the parent tongues from which were derived dialects in Syria, Palestine, Lower Egypt and Oman. Other dialects in Upper Egypt and North Africa were closer to the desert Arabic. The R.A.F. used a mixture of the lot, and here are some of the more popular (and more printable) words and expressions: (All that come to mind after fifty years!)

Spelling varies with regions.

Ackers	Money	Malesh (RAF pron. 'Marlish')	Never mind
Aiwa	yes	Messpot	'Dear John' letter
Alekum Salam	And on you, peace	Moya mayya	Water
Ana	I	Pawni	Water
Ashaney?	Why?	Peechi	Soon
Backsheesh	Free, charity	Piard	Wild dog
Badin	Soon	Pukka	Proper
Bass 'RAF' pron. 'Buss'	Only, that's all	Sa'a Bish?	What the time?
Bilag!	Hurry	Saiida	Greetings
Bund	Chateau	Salam Alekum	Peace on you
Charpoy	String bed	Shay (RAF 'Chai')	Tea
Chota	Small	Shinu?	Why, What?
Conna	Food	Shufti	See, show, look
Dhobi	Laundry	Shwiya	A little
Fetus	Money	Sigara, Jigara	Cigarette
Gib	Give	Subchees	All, the lot
Gufah	Boat	Ta! ala Hena	Come here
Imshi !	Go!	Tiffin	Lunch
Inta. Ente	You	Wahid	One
Klalis (RAF, Pron. 'Kollos)	Finished	Yalla!	Go quickly!
La	No	Yimkin	Perhaps
Ma'kum Felus (RAF Pron. 'Marco Felus')	No money	Zen	Good
Moskeen	Poor	Mo-zen. (mobzen)	No good

## See You At Southport 1995

Secretary:- Jim Heslop

Treasurer:- Don James