



# LASER NEWS

Journal of the Air Cadet Headquarters London and South East Region



## LaSER Cadets meet Motherly Baroness Thatcher



*Cadets with Baroness Thatcher*

**Cadets from 120 (Hendon) Squadron were tasked to provide a Guard of Honour for the opening of the Chinook Exhibition at the Royal Air Force Museum last year.**

The exhibition is an interactive, walk through Chinook helicopter where visitors can sit in a full cockpit with controls, which includes interactive kiosks and

audio-visual presentations on wide-screen monitors which tells the story of this iconic transport helicopter.

Although the cadets are quite used to ceremonial duties, they did not know that the exhibition was to be opened by former Prime Minister, Lady Margaret Thatcher! The VIP reception was attended by many high-ranking dignitaries and as

soon as the formalities were completed, Lady Thatcher made her way straight for the cadets: "Why aren't you at school?" she joked. No one replied for a minute, but after their initial nerves settled, the cadets relaxed and enjoyed speaking with her:

"Actually", said Cadet McNamera, "She's a bit like my Mum. She's really nice when you speak to her."

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*SAC Rebecca Taylor receives her award*

## Passionate Rebecca aims for gold

**SAC Rebecca Taylor, a Flight Operations Assistant at RAF Northolt was presented with her Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award Certificate by Gp Capt Hakin OBE RAFR, Air Cadets' Regional Commandant, London & South East (LaSER).**

Present at the ceremony were Rebecca's Flight Commander Ft

Lt Rhod Cunningham, Sqn Ldr Phil Lamb, OC Ops Squadron, and Sqn Ldr Bob Hall RAFR, Assistant Regional Commandant LaSER.

Rebecca is an ex-air cadet from 1341 (Thundersley) Squadron in Essex who also served as a civilian committee member before deciding to join the RAF in 2006. Rebecca says that she is passionate about adventure training,

particularly overseas expeditions. She is looking forward to new opportunities with the RAF and to achieving her Gold certificate which she hopes to finish in the near future. Gp Capt Hakin in his presentation address said, "Rebecca is an example of how seamlessly Air Cadets, progress into the parent service, adding value, and continue to enjoy the many developmental opportunities".



## Commandant's Message

"We are now approaching the high point of our cadet activity cycle. I commend to all cadets and staff to take every opportunity to participate in adventurous events. We must be true to our motto 'Venture Adventure' as well as having fun as we develop our personal attributes. We need to fill places at our parent

Service Station on Annual Camps to give cadets experience of the Royal Air Force and give them the opportunity to make informed decisions about future careers.

We look forward to the arrival of Air Commodore Stewart as Commandant Air Cadets. He can be assured that the professionalism of the LaSER

staff, the enthusiasm and commitment of our cadets will ensure that LaSER will be at the leading edge of his ventures that improve and take forward the ACO.

We must all carry out our duties mindful of our ethos, core values and standards of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence which will enhance the reputation of the ACO and of our parent service - the Royal Air Force.

# LaSER gears-up for Regional Activity Centre



Group Captain Hakin puts the flight simulator through its paces

The LaSER Regional Commandant, Gp Capt Hakin, has assembled a multi-disciplinary task group to implement the Regional Activity Centre, (RAC), at RAF Halton. The Air Cadets Organisation, (ACO), is nationally rolling out RACs to compliment the many traditional activities such as gliding, shooting and sports.

"The centre will provide interesting, relevant and exciting development opportunities for LaSER Cadets" said Sqn Ldr Tony Kelly, Region Training Officer.

The multi-level high-tech training facility will include one of the new generation of digital image projected flight simulators, alive on-screen Air Traffic monitoring,

modern radio Communications Room and many other aviation and technology related computer based training activities to challenge and inspire the LaSER cadets. The Task Group is currently working with RAF Halton to commission the RAC. Sqn Ldr Frank Xavier, Project Leader said, "RAC Project is a complex undertaking, when

achieved it will deliver an outstanding value stream for both the ACO and the RAF. At the heart of it is the Cadet, whose increased aviation knowledge and competence through participation in RAC, will open up potential career opportunities in either the military or civilian aviation industry"

The LaSER Task Group members are;

Project Leader – Sqn Ldr Frank Xavier

Assistant Regional Commandant – Sqn Ldr Bob Hall

Region Aerospace Officer – Wg Cdr Chris Morrell

Region Training Officer – Sqn Ldr Tony Kelly

Region Communications Officer – Flt Lt Malcolm Wood

Region IT Officer – Flt Lt Karina Roberts

Project Scheduler – Sqn Ldr Jeff Carpenter (Liaison to Region Council)

Region Media & Communication Officer (Designate) – Flt Lt Caroline Tracey



# LaSER Cadets set their sights high

**Air Cadets from across LaSER recently had the opportunity of a lifetime, spending a week setting their careers ambitions high above the clouds.**

The Air Cadet Organisation is developing an innovative aerospace careers training programme for its senior cadets. Led by the LaSER Region, 31 selected cadets participated in two residential camps during the half-term, held at Royal Air Forces bases at Wyton and Halton.

Supported by some the senior serving and experienced operational officers in the RAF, the Aerospace programme aims to give the cadets not only an insight into the strategic and operational aspects of the RAF but also an appreciation of Britain's wider aviation engineering, research and development, and support industries.

The busy and varied training programme included Directorate of Defense Studies lectures on 21st Century Air Power, Expeditionary Air Warfare, Joint Helicopter Command and a detailed briefing on the RAF's current deployment in operational theatres and future capabilities. Cadets visited defense establishments such as Boscombe Down, Astrium Satellites, Marshall Aerospace and the Joint Air Reconnaissance and Intelligence Centre. No 2513 (Romney Marsh) Squadron's Cadet Sgt Daniel Jarvis, who is currently going through the selection process to join the RAF as a helicopter pilot said, "The camp was an extremely good experience affording a lot of background information, to help me make the right career decision"



*Deep in thought during a section tour*

Engineering capabilities were also prominent in the camp programme, with hands-on visits to RAF Waddington to look at cutting edge technology and development projects such as Nimrod R1, and the ASTOR programme. Defense contractors from QinetiQ, treated the cadets to a tour, and briefings on Empire Test Pilots' School to highlight the many and varied career opportunities on offer for the future Aerospace leaders. Satellites technology development was also included in the training week, which looked at futuristic Mars Rover and the fast emerging Unmanned Air Vehicles project. Cdt Cpl Matthew Heal from 323 (Epsom & Ewell) Squadron in Surrey, is joining the Royal Navy as an Aircraft Technician, and said he really enjoyed camp "particularly

learning a lot about the aviation's cutting-edge technology."

In true RAF leadership style all the participating cadets had to reflect on their week of training and make professional

presentation to the senior officers including the Commandant of Air Cadets AC Moulds, and Group Capt Hakin, Commandant of London and South East Region Air Cadets.



*The camp outside Halton House, Officers' Mess*



# Air Cadets trek the Carnic Alps

Seventeen cadets from 228 (Bromley) Squadron Air Training Corps became the

first British youth group to complete an expedition in the Carnic Alps, Italy.



The Cadets at 2122m, on top of the Marinelli Peak

The cadets trekked over four days through the mountains to reach the peaks of Mount Freikofel (1757m) and Marinelli (2122m). The weather on the trip was a challenge in itself, as the cadets' braved ice and snow when walking and camped in night time temperatures as low as -15°C!

During WWI, a number of battles involving British soldiers, many no older than the eldest of the cadets, fought in these mountains and the trenches they built and lived can still be seen today, where tin cans and the soles of the soldiers' hobnail boots still litter the floor. During the trip the group was able to explore these trenches and learn about the history of the area.

At the end of the trek, the Colonel of the local village Timau, hosted a meal of local traditional food (and French fries!) for the group who presented him with a squadron crest and an England flag signed by every member of the team.

The Colonel told the cadets that he was very pleased that they had chosen his area for their expedition, as it is not a common destination for Brits He said he would proudly display the flag in the local museum for all to see.

The cadets all had a fantastic time, and are looking forward to more challenging expeditions of this kind.

# LaSER Band comes together

Over the weekend of the 26-28 Oct, 78 cadets from across the Region joined up for the second LaSER Band Weekend.

The weekend was separated into training for Drummers, Bell

Lyre's and Instrumentalists. Staff from bands across the region taught the cadets in sections and in a massed band.

Flt Lt Nick Sermon, Region Band Officer said, "The cadets worked extremely hard and produced a

fantastic final performance on the Sunday, they should be extremely proud of their achievements."

On the Sunday morning, Wing Commander Sylvia Silver, OC London Wing visited to observe the band and meets the cadets.

She complimented the band on the effort put into the fine performance and said she hoped to see them again next year.



Under tuition



The Region Band



# LaSER Cadets celebrate on the streets of London

Nearly 500 Air Cadets from across LaSER marked the 67th Anniversary of the Air Training Corps by forming a massed parade through the streets of London.

The annual parade, considered one of the largest in London, was led by the band of 114 (Ruislip & Northwood) Squadron. The main cadet contingent was formed on the banner of the LaSER region, carried by the cadets of 2427 (Biggin Hill) Squadron. Each of the 6 Wings that make up the LaSER region – London, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex and Essex then followed, led by their own banner.

The parade marches from Holborn to the Strand after which, honoured guests and cadets attend a service of Thanksgiving & Dedication in the church of Royal Air Force at St Clement Danes.

During the service, two of the leading cadets from the Region - Cadet Warrant Officers Kristina Pisano and Paul Fothergill (now Civilian Instructors), both of 241 (Wanstead & Woodford) Squadron were called upon to give two readings during the service which was led by the Region Chaplain, Reverend Christopher Miles.



Group Captain Hakin meets the Banner Bearers



The parade approaching St Clement Danes

# A real “Spit” off the old block

Cadet Flight Sergeant John Maflin (18) of 444 (Shoreditch) Squadron Air Cadets is on cloud nine after scooping a flying bursary from the Spitfire Society.

Group Captain David Green, a former Spitfire pilot, formed the Society in 1984. Its original purpose was to link people through the world whose lives had in some way been connected to this famous WWII fighter aircraft. It now encourages aviation enthusiasts of all ages.

The Pat Butler Award is an annual bursary presented to two Air Cadets, one from the London & South East Region and one from the Central & East Region. Pat Butler was the first Chairman

of the Society and a former WWII airman. This year, Cadet Flight Sergeant John Maflin was chosen to receive the generous bursary.

John is already a high-flyer, having recently completed his Royal Air Force Flying Scholarship of twelve hours. He is also a staff cadet at 614 Wethersfield Volunteer Gliding School, working towards his grade I glider pilots wings.

On receiving his award, John exclaimed “I am very proud to be the recipient of this award today and I am looking forward to putting this bursary towards furthering my flying career. I am working towards my private pilots’ license and then hope to

join the Royal Air Force to fly the Typhoon fast jet.” Flight Sergeant Maflin was presented his

certificate and a cheque for £400 from former WWII spitfire pilot, Dennis Nichols.



Flight Sergeant Maflin with former spitfire pilots Dennis Nichols and David W. Williams



# Chelmsford Air Cadets in 192 mile fundraiser



The cadets during their coast to coast walk

Two Air Cadets from Chelmsford Squadron, Lianne Craven and Jacqui Neighbour walked the 'Coast

to Coast' track from the Irish Sea to the North Sea (St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay) for charity.

They organised everything themselves and agreed the sponsorship monies would be divided equally between the Royal Air Forces Association Wings Appeal and Chelmsford Air Cadets.

They walked over 192 miles (309km) in 12 days. Although in reality they walked much further due to trouble navigating in the mist. Lianne enjoyed walking in the Lake District, "I loved the challenge walking in the hills and there was a great sense of achievement at the end of each steep climb or descent. The lake district is truly breathtaking"

"It was hard work and I thoroughly enjoyed it" – agreed Jacqui.

They spent the majority of the 12 days camping, but in the middle of the trip they decided to treat themselves to a much needed night in a youth hostel after suffering solid rain for 2 hours.

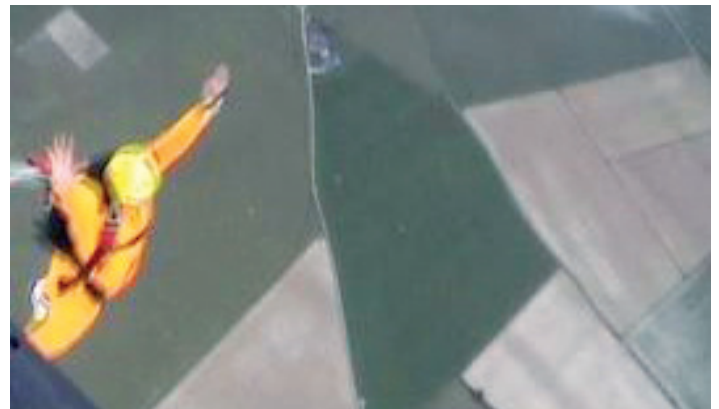
Afterwards they collected the final part of the sponsorship monies, and are very proud to have raised £514.50 to be split equally between two very deserving charities.

# Air Cadets take the plunge!

Earlier this year, 2158 (Sevenoaks) Squadron organised a parachuting first jump course for cadets from Kent Wing. A total of 10 cadets and staff attended and completed their training but unfortunately bad weather prevented them from completing their jump.

However, the weather wasn't enough to dampen their spirits

for too long and the group returned a month later to complete their refresher training and parachute descent from 4000ft. There were a lot of smiling faces when they got down to the ground! Some of the participants chose to complete some extra jumps during the weekend with the intention of continuing their training to become skydivers.



Don't look down!

# LaSER Goes Live!

Thanks to the generous support of Pinstripe Creative, the LaSER Region has a new website!

It can be accessed at [www.laseratc.org](http://www.laseratc.org)



# LaSER Competes

Air Cadets from across LaSER have been competing on the sports field in hockey, rugby and netball. Results were as follows:

## Senior Hockey

- 1st – Sussex
- 2nd – Kent
- 3rd London

## Senior Rugby

- 1st – Middlesex
- 2nd – Kent
- 3rd – London

## Junior Rugby

- 1st – Kent
- 2nd – Essex
- 3rd – London

## Junior Netball

- 1st – Essex
- 2nd – Surrey
- 3rd – London



Going for a try

**Well done  
to all who took part!**



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# LaSER staff and cadets recognised for their hard work and commitment

**Staff and cadets from the Region have received awards from Lord Lieutenants of London and Sussex.**



Mr David Owen and WO Michael Collins

Warrant Officer Michael Collins and Civilian Instructor David Owen from 344 (Fulham) Squadron were recognised for their service to the cadet forces by the Lord Lieutenant of London. Flt Lt Tony Piedade, OC of 344 (Fulham) Squadron said, "I am pleased that their hard work has been recognised in such a high profile manner. Both deserved this award on account of their unwavering commitment to the Squadron and the wider organisation."

Cadet Flight Sergeant John Maflin (of 444 Shoreditch Squadron) was the recipient of the Lord Lieutenants Cadet Award for Greater London.

The awards were presented at a ceremony held by Vice Lord Lieutenant for Greater London Sir Michael Craig-Cooper CBE TD DL.

Staff and cadets from Sussex Wing were also celebrated at a ceremony hosted by the 3rd Battalion The Princes of Wales Royal Regiment.

Flt Lt Neil Banks, Wing Adventure Training Officer, CWO Battersby 461 (Chichester) Squadron, IC Sgt Louise Dell 225 (Brighton No1) Squadron, and CI Laurence Acaster of 45F (Worthing) Squadron all received an award from Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenants' of East and West Sussex, Mrs P K Stewart -Roberts OBE and MR HR Wyatt.

Flt Lt Banks and CI Acaster both received Meritorious Service Certificates and CWO Battersby and Sgt Dell both received the Lord Lieutenants' Certificates for Cadet of the Year, for Sussex Wing.



The Sussex award winners

## First Flight... Sergeant



Flt Sgt Tina Calvert

**After four years serving as a Sergeant with 249 (Hailsham) Squadron, Tina Calvert has been promoted to Flight Sergeant.**

This makes Tina the first Flight Sergeant in Sussex Wing. FS Calvert has been an adult volunteer for seven years and as well as working on the squadron she is a member Sussex Wings Adventure Training and Radio Teams.

Over the years she has helped at various camps as well as assisting

with cadet JNCO training and drill. One of her other interests is canal boating which she has shared with the cadets of 2529 (Burgess Hill) Squadron. She describes herself as one of life's perpetual volunteers.

"Tina is a well respected member of Sussex Wing. This promotion is well deserved and I am sure it will spur Tina on to many other areas within the Corps" said Flt Lt Richard Munns, Tina's Commanding Officer.



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