



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2017

OCTOBER LUNCH:

The Lunch was attended by 41 members and guests – a bit down on normal due to the “Sun ‘n Fun” in Rustenburg that was attended by some members. (This event proved to be a bit of a “rain dance” and Joburg enjoyed some very welcome rain...) The food was its normal high standard with grilled hake on a masala mash, which was very tasty. With Eskom and its shenanigans in the headlines yet again, **John Ledger** gave us a deep insight into the SA power industry and especially Eskom. He pulled no punches on why the electricity supplier is in a poor situation, which started in 1994 and got progressively worse as the years went by. Bad planning (or no planning) coupled with a lack of budget control has seen them fall into a state of chaos. Although Eskom have an over capacity at present it is mainly due to the adverse investment conditions in the country that has impacted on large companies, who need power, not investing in new ventures or upgrading.

NAPIER ENGINES: A PROUD HERITAGE:

When David Napier moved to London in 1808 the Battle of Trafalgar had taken place just three years earlier! In 1808 Richard Trevithick demonstrated his 'steam circus' just to the south of (the present day) Euston Square with his locomotive 'Catch-Me-Who-Can'. Initially Napier specialised in the manufacture of a variety of machines for the printing industry. In 1824 he developed a print perfecting machine encouraged and much praised by Mr Thomas Curzon Hansard of Hansard Press fame. This machine David cleverly named the 'Nay-Peer'. Early in World War 1, David's son and heir Montagu Napier was contracted to build aero engines from other companies' designs: initially a V12 Royal Aircraft Factory model and then Sunbeam Arabs. Both proved to be unreliable so, in 1916, Napier decided to self-finance his own instead, the 12-cylinder Napier Lion. The Lion went on to be used in the 1920s to win the World Land Speed Record in Malcolm Campbell's Bluebird and Henry Segrave's Golden Arrow. Napier designed the Napier Cub, the world's first 1,000 HP aero engine, to power bombers; however the Air Ministry declined to purchase it in favour of a new policy of having multi-engined aircraft. Napier employed the services of Frank Halford to create new designs including the 16-cylinder, Napier Rapier and 24-cylinder Dagger, both air-cooled H-block designs. The 'H' section 24-cylinder diesel was redesigned as a sleeve valved petrol design known as the Napier Sabre. The Sabre VII delivered 3,500 hp and was the most powerful piston engine used during the war powering the Hawker Typhoon and Tempest. The Company also marinised the Lion aero engine becoming the Sea Lion, which could deliver 500 HP and used in Air Sea Rescue Launches. The Company was taken over in 1942 by the English Electric Co. During the War Napier also had a base at Luton Airport used for Flight Development. This site grew and became involved in the development of rocket engines and de-icing systems. Derivatives of the Napier Spraymat de-icing system are used on all types of aircraft today including the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. In 1946 Napier won a contract to design and build a diesel engine for the Royal Navy. They designed the Napier Deltic that was effectively three Culverins arranged in an equilateral triangle. The development and production of Deltic engines continued with them being fitted in British Rail's Type V (Class 55) locomotives to huge effect. This engine is now the most long-lived engine produced by D Napier & Son Ltd. and only now being

replaced by a modern design fitted in the RN Hunt Class MCMV. Today, after a roller coaster of takeovers and name changes, Napier Turbochargers Ltd still exists as part of the American Wabtec organisation and still produces products using their Napier name.

Full story at: <http://www.npht.org/about-napier/4577703434>

KRUGER GOLD HEIST:

Questions are being asked within the heritage, museum and archaeological fraternity, about why the theft of the Thulamela gold collection from the Kruger National Park early in December last year remains shrouded in secrecy nearly a year later. Museum insiders say they are beginning to suspect that the theft has been swept under the carpet by authorities. They also allege that the reticence of the South African National Parks (SANParks) might be hampering the recovery of the items as it is standard practice to report heritage crimes to Interpol and the industry as soon as possible, as this has proven to aid in the recovery of objects quicker, while alerting other museums who may become future targets. It also appears that SAPS and the Hawks are still no closer to making arrests despite strong suspicions that the theft was an inside job or at least aided by someone internally – as the artefacts were found missing from a locked display case of tempered glass to which only employees of SANParks had keys. In mid-December last year, staff at the Stevenson-Hamilton Knowledge Resource Centre in Skukuza discovered the locked but partially empty glass display case. The case had contained gold coins and jewellery items from the royal graves of Thulamela – one of the so-called gold kingdoms. Other items from archaeological excavations at the site – including pottery as well as an important piece of blue Chinese porcelain – were left undisturbed.

<http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/great-kruger-national-park-gold-heist-no-one-talking-about>

REMEMBER MAJUBA! BACK TO THE FUTURE...

A brighter note in the Eskom saga is that the problem of coal trucks tearing up Mpumalanga's roads is to come to an end following Eskom's realisation of the R5.2 billion Majuba railway line. Mpumalanga residents have been outraged for years over the number of coal trucks destroying town roads. The mining town of Ermelo has been the most heavily affected with three national roads, the N11, N2, and N17 passing through the town. The N11 carries approximately 1,000 trucks a day. Mpumalanga premier David Mabuza assured residents that the new railway would alleviate this problem. Mabuza said numerous social and economic benefits would be associated with the project. The Majuba railway has been designed to transport 14 million tonnes of coal annually from the Goedgevonden, Vlakvarkfontein, Exxaro, Middelkraal, Kuyasa, and Shanduka mines. The construction of this dedicated railway comes as result of Eskom's initiative to change the transportation method of coal delivered to a number of power stations, especially Majuba Power Station, from road trucks to rail, resulting in positive economic, environmental and social benefits. The 68km corridor is the first large "Greenfield" freight-rail infrastructure project to be carried out in South Africa since 1986 and will be operated by Transnet Freight Rail (TFR). The project is expected to be completed by December 2017.

CHURCHILL'S VOICE:

PROOF THAT some of Winston Churchill's most famous radio speeches of the war were delivered by a stand-in has emerged with the discovery of a 78rpm record. The revelation ends years of controversy over claims - repeatedly denied - that an actor had been officially asked to impersonate the Prime Minister on air. The record makes it clear for the first time that Norman Shelley's voice was used to broadcast some of the most important words in modern British history - including 'We shall fight them on the beaches'. It is marked 'BBC, Churchill: Speech. Artist Norman Shelley' and stamped 'September 7, 1942'. The recording will also help to sort out the confusion about the authenticity of many of the Churchill tapes in circulation. Shelley, a well-known radio actor who was Colonel Danby on *The Archers* before his death in 1980, first claimed in the late Seventies that the British Council had confidentially asked him to stand in for Churchill. His allegation outraged many commentators. Biographers and historians have argued ever since about whether some of the key morale-boosting speeches of the era - including the 'We shall fight them on the beaches' Dunkirk speech of 4 June 1940 and the 'Their finest hour' speech of 18 June in the same year - could have been made by an actor. Both speeches were originally delivered by Churchill in the House of Commons which, at that time, was not wired for sound recording. In October 2000 the late actor's son, Anthony Shelley, found the crucial record among his father's possessions in his home near Chepstow, South Wales. He had always believed his father's story, he told *The Observer*, but is pleased to see him vindicated with some hard evidence. 'I knew my father was not the sort to have been pulling people's legs about something like this,' he said.

FLYING OFFICER ALFRED KEITH "SKEETS" OGILVIE DFC RAF:

While every Canadian airman and airwoman who participated in the Second World War can be proud of his or her service and their extraordinary contributions to the effort, there are very few who could say they were actively engaged in the war and its sufferings from the day it was declared to the day hostilities ceased in the European Theatre of Operations. Ottawa-born Alfred Keith "Skeets" Ogilvie was one of those who could. After being rejected by the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1939 because he lacked a university degree (that requirement would soon change), Ogilvie walked across the street to the RAF recruitment office, was accepted, passed his medical and was on a boat within a week! Ogilvie was just at the beginning of his flight training when war broke out in September of 1939. He fought through the bloodiest months of the Battle of Britain with 609 West Riding Squadron, took the war to the enemy the following year and was shot down, severely wounded and captured. Following many months of hospitalization, he was sent to Stalag Luft III, where he took part in the planning and preparations for the Great Escape. Skeets was the last man to make it out of the tunnel known as "Harry" before it was discovered. Ogilvie was captured two days later and was lucky to be one of only a third of the escapees who were not murdered by the SS. Skeets survived four years imprisonment and the terrors and appalling conditions of the infamous "Long March" west and away from the advancing Red Army. Postwar, Ogilvie transferred to the RCAF, returned to Canada and served at RCAF stations at Centralia, Rockliffe and Downsview. He retired in April 1962 and was a popular member of the RCAF Prisoner of War Association, which called themselves the "Kriegies" an abbreviation of the German word for prisoners of war. Ogilvie passed away in Ottawa on May 28, 1998.

<http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/595/Gunfight-over-Westminster-The-Spitfire-Luck-of-Skeets-Ogilvie.aspx>

OBITUARIES

SQUADRON LEADER NIGEL ROSE RAF, who has died aged 99, flew Spitfires during the height of the Battle of Britain. In 1939, he joined the RAFVR and, after his training as a fighter pilot and receiving his commission, he was posted to No. 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron, then based near Tangmere, Sussex in June 1940. It was the busiest of summers and he had his share of the action. In September, he was injured when his Spitfire was badly damaged over the Chanel, and only with great difficulty was he able to return to base where he landed without flaps or wheel brakes. He described the encounter as "a near thing" and returned to flying a month later. In 1941, he joined No. 54 Squadron and flew sweeps over France before a series of appointments as a fighter and gunnery instructor in Britain and the Middle East. He left the RAF in 1946 and later received the Air Efficiency Award. He was an active member of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association and made regular appearances at the annual service in Westminster Abbey. He was also a strong supporter of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust and attended the annual remembrance days at the Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne, near Dover.

WING COMMANDER PETER STUART ISAACSON, AM DFC AFC DFM RAAF, who has died aged 96, was a highly decorated Royal Australian Air Force Pathfinder pilot who later had a distinguished career in publishing in Australia. He joined the RAAF in 1940. Isaacson had completed one tour of operations as a bomber pilot when he joined No 156 Squadron in late November 1942. The squadron was re-equipping with the Lancaster and had just been selected as one of the first five squadrons to form the nucleus of the new Pathfinder Force. Using new navigation aids and dropping flares and target indicators, Isaacson and his fellow crews marked the target for the main bomber force following behind. Born in London to an Australian father and Austrian mother, the family emigrated to Australia when he was 6 years old. He grew up in Melbourne and started working for a newspaper when he was sixteen. Following his stint in Bomber Command, he became well known in Australia for his tours in the Avro Lancaster Q-for-Queenie to promote the sale of war loans and, in particular, for flying the aircraft under the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1943 – the largest aircraft ever to have done so. He said: "I was threatened with a court martial. Two authorities wanted to court martial me: Eastern Area in which the crime was committed and Southern Command to which I was attached at the time. I was told later there was a great fight among the bureaucrats of each of these commands as to which would court martial me. Apparently they could not agree on which should be the prosecutor and the idea either lapsed – or maybe is still being pursued by the successors to each of these commands!" He transferred to the RAAF Reserve after the war, retiring as a Wing Commander in 1969. From 1956 he served as a Trustee, Chairman, and finally Life Governor of the Victorian Shrine of Remembrance. In 1991 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his publishing and community work.

DAVID SHEPHERD CBE, who has died on 19 September aged 86, took to painting meticulous pictures of railway engines, aircraft and – the real breakthrough – wildlife, especially his trademark African elephant bull, facing the viewer head-on with ears spread wide. A picture of this beast, alone or with its fellows, might be called The Men of Etosha, or Dusty Evening, or Elephant Heaven, or even, as in his bestseller, Wise Old Elephant. It didn't much matter. The reproductions sold hugely. Shepherd was, some said, Britain's Tretchikoff, with Wise Old Elephant his Chinese Girl, and this was intended as a compliment. Certainly, he became immensely rich and helped to raise more than £8m for his other great passion – wildlife conservation – initially through donating painting sales proceeds to charities such as the World Wildlife Fund, and latterly through the efforts of the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, set up in 1984. The charity campaigns to protect endangered species, and combat poaching and its trade. Other causes also benefited from his artistic talent. He raised money for the RAF Benevolent Fund and for the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, London. Yet conservation was his life's cause and it was for that he was made OBE in 1980 and CBE in 2008. In 2011 he launched a social media campaign to save the tiger in the wild, "TigerTime". "Man is the most stupid, arrogant and dangerous animal on Earth," he said. "Every hour we destroy a species to extinction, and unless we start doing something about that very quickly, we are going to self-destruct."

NEXT FUNCTION:

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE!! (SECOND FRIDAY)

The lunch will commemorate "Poppy Day" and we lay wreaths at the wall of remembrance at the Wanderers. This will take place sharp at 13h00 so please be there in good time.

The Next Ordinary Lunch will be on Friday 10 November 2017, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. Our Speaker will be "Pilots' Post" founder, Juri Keyter, on CAP - Civilian Air Patrol

REMEMBER: Lunch Fees still R180 pp. If you pay by EFT please use your name as "reference" NEDBANK Melrose Arch, Branch 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

We have been holding the price at R180 for as long as we can for Members Lunches - a 2 Course meal - and our Treasurer is still balancing the books with some of our retained earnings. We already have had to increase prices for Ladies Lunches, which are three courses, plus additional wines, and Members Lunches will be R200 from January 2018 for members lunches but the Ladies lunch in December will be R200. Make the most of your last reduced price lunch.

All bookings please to bookings@rafoc.org or if you do not have access to e-mail:

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Jon Adams	Tel: 011 678 7702	Cell: 082 450 0616	vice-chairman@rafoc.org

Look forward to seeing you there!

Cheers,

Bruce.

