



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

[info@rafoc.org](mailto:info@rafoc.org)

[www.rafoc.org](http://www.rafoc.org)

President:	David MacKinnon-Little	
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Geoff Quick, David Lake	
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison	<a href="mailto:bruce@jbharrison.co.za">bruce@jbharrison.co.za</a> Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams	<a href="mailto:bookings@rafoc.org">bookings@rafoc.org</a> Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd	Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle	Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough	Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740
	Karl Jensen	Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652
	Jean-Michel Girard	Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish	Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Web Master:	Hanke Fourie	Tel: Cell: 082 553 0210
Almoner:	Rob Tannahill	Cell: 082 806 6779
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch	Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 195 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

### GREETINGS:

Budget tries to squeeze an additional R15-billion revenue out of struggling consumers... Short finals to Election Day 29 May... Highway robbery in broad daylight on the M1 motorway in Johannesburg... cadre deployment: 'Biggest racketeering syndicate in democratic history'... John Hlophe impeached - 'No shred of integrity' - Border Management Authority (BMA) – targeted by scammers (already – what a surprise)... Water bottles fly as chaos erupts over (unauthorised) amaPanyaza before Gauteng SOPA... Panyaza announces “agreement that by 31 March 2024, we will start the formal process of switching off and delinking the e-toll system” (Promise?)... Lesufi's costly grand plans... 'Gwami City' (about to) begin work to repair Lilian Ngoyi Street after July 2023 blast (Gwami = Gwamanda)... Cell C kisses its own network goodbye... SANDF is so broke it has no money to host Armed Forces Day... SA troops in Congo at grave risk without helicopter support... major petrol price storm looms (yet again)... What's (or who) causing the big stink in Cape Town? Africa leads in illegal drug smuggling, piracy, fishing (at least lead in something)... Navalny stood against Putin's evil... Putin, riding high before Navalny's death... Hundreds of people detained in Russia for tributes to him; even laying flowers a banned political protest... more US strikes on Houthis terrorists... Ukraine drone attack leaves Russia oil depot in flames... Boeing 737 Max program chief ousted after cabin panel blowout... Sadiq Khan puts 'anti-UK propaganda' on a pedestal in Trafalgar Square... TV, terrorists and strawberries all year round: the story of London's BT Tower... internet culture has given child abuse a new place to hide... Tucker Carlson to Johnny Depp, a celebrity bromance is the must-have accessory for the modern dictator... (Bromance: a close but non-sexual relationship between two men)... The wine in Spain goes mainly down the drain - Intruder at Spanish winery pours away wine worth R51 million...

## WHAT PRICE FREEDOM?



Alexei Navalny has just 'died' in a Russian prison colony in the Arctic Circle. The fiercest opponent of Putin's regime has been poisoned, imprisoned and has now died. His family have not been able to get access to his body... One of the Social activist sites is circulating this letter, and inviting signatories:

*"Dear Alexei Navalny, they killed you.*

*Today, millions of us are weeping with your family and mourning your memory. Your courage is what dictators fear most, the courage that all dictators fear most, the courage that inspires people to rise up against tyranny. And for that, you paid a high price: first poisoning, then imprisonment and now death. Our world is holding its breath as wars rage in Ukraine and the Middle East. Facing these dark times, your legacy will give us strength. We will not look away while our democracies fade. Rest in power, People from all across the world.*

## DRAGONFIRE:



UK DEFENCE scientists have carried out the first high power laser strike against an aerial target during groundbreaking weapons tests. The land based DragonFire laser was used to attack a drone target during the test firing on the MoD's weapons range in the Hebrides. Still under development, the system is designed to cut through its target causing structural failure and destroying explosive weapons. DragonFire can strike any targets within visible range at the speed of light and can hit an object the size of a pound coin one kilometer away, a spokesman said. The laser weapon is the result of a £100 million joint investment by the MoD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and industry partners MBDA, Leonardo and QinetiQ. Firing it for 10 seconds is the cost equivalent of using a regular heater for just an hour, giving it the potential to become a low-cost alternative to conventional weapons. Operating the laser is typically less than £10 per shot, the MoD says. It is hoped the cutting-edge weapon can reduce reliance on traditional ammunition. Defence Secretary, Grant Shapps said: "This type of cutting-edge weaponry has the potential to revolutionise the battlespace by reducing the reliance on expensive ammunition, while also lowering the risk of collateral damage. "Investments with industry partners in advanced technologies like DragonFire are crucial in a highly-contested world, helping us maintain the battle-winning edge and keep the nation safe." The latest milestone builds on a series of highly successful trials, including the first static high-power laser firing of a sovereign UK capability and demonstration of the DragonFire system's ability to track moving air and sea targets with very high accuracy at range (*RAF News*)

## ACE IN THE PACK:



AIR FORCE crews honing their combat skills in the latest peer-on-peer Red Flag war games in the US tested their Agile Combat Employment (ACE) ability on the big stage in Nevada and California. Flying simulated strike missions against USAF aggressor squadrons in the vast desert training range, Typhoon and Voyager tanker crews launched raids on 'enemy' targets from dispersed locations. It's the first major test of the ACE concept in realistic combat conditions against high volume fourth and fifth-generation fighters, as air chiefs step up the drive to increase combat capability. This year's Red Flag drill was extended by a week and beyond the Nellis training area to neighbouring California. In a high-tech game of hide and seek, fighter crews under the direction of senior commanders operate from remote locations to avoid detection from their adversaries. "If we only operate from a single base, it won't take long for an adversary to deny that capability to

us” RAF Air and Space Commander Air Marshal Harv Smyth said: “Effectively we become a moving target, which is presenting problems to any adversary. Taking off from one base and landing somewhere else to refuel, replan, complete another mission and land at a different base with agility and fluidity presents the enemy with difficult dilemmas. “We are on an ACE journey but there is still a long way to go. The key to making it work is putting the focus on enablers. “Operating from an austere base, we need to work out how to survive with the right life-support, weapons and data.” The origins of the ACE concept date back to the Cold War as Swedish and Finnish military chiefs planned how to combat the ever-present threat of invasion by vastly superior Soviet forces. By constantly moving fighter jets supported by small teams of engineers they would be able to effectively strike back without being easily detected and destroyed by enemy missile attacks. In the age of fifth-generation high speed data transfer the logistics of operating a hit-and-run strategy is more complex. AM Smyth added: “People might think this is just like it was in the Cold War. I joined at the end of that era, and we didn’t have iPhones and aircraft didn’t work with data – it was all map and stopwatch. “The real challenge now is how to be agile and spread the force across a broad area but still feed it so it’s viable to fight. “Our mantra is to fly and fight but we need to feed our people the fuel, weapons and data they need. “This exercise pushes us to the limit of our capabilities. We are here with Typhoon equipped with Meteor, the best air-to-air missile, and being able to work on how to integrate that with the US F-35s shows us that our overall capability is greater than the sum of the parts. “Getting airborne and dispersing all over Nevada and California as we continue to fight the mission gives our people experience of the fog and friction of war with dislocated Command and Control.” The Red Flag test follows smaller-scale exercises across the UK and Europe and with NATO partners in Europe. Typhoons joined French Air Force Rafale and US F-35s last year in a simulated air base attack. In another first for the RAF, Coningsby-based 41 Sqn jets launched training sorties from a public road in the remote Tervo region in Finland during Exercise Baana. Specialist teams from two RAF units have also been developing the capability of the Atlas transport aircraft to refuel fast jets. Fuel is transferred into a tactical refuelling facility to provide support to aircraft forward deployed to remote locations. AM Smyth added: “We are going to see more exercises taking on this concept. I have been clear as we build the exercise programme that each one must have an ACE element. *(RAF News)*

## LAST BLACKBURN BEVERLEY RESCUE:





- *Iconic RAF transport aircraft at risk, need urgent funds for saving from scrapping - Solway Aviation Museum stepping in to help.*
- *Blackburn Beverley C1 XB259, the last surviving Beverley aircraft, faces dismantling unless funds are raised for transfer to a museum.*
- *Solway Aviation Museum launched a £60,000 fundraiser to rescue iconic RAF aircraft, already raised £21,000 - aviation community urged to help.*

The preservation of iconic air transport aircraft, whether civilian, military, or heavy bomber, is an often-overlooked component of aviation heritage. Those very vessels, and the skilled pilots, engineers, and manufacturers who designed and operated them, create a legacy and blueprint for modern-day air transport, which is why institutions such as the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC or the Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, United Kingdom exist today to preserve them for our enjoyment. For these reasons, the Solway Aviation Museum, located at Carlisle Lake District Airport in Cumbria, Crosby on Eden, United Kingdom, has launched a fundraising campaign to help rescue one of the last surviving Royal Air Force (RAF) transportation aircraft of its kind in order to avoid it being scrapped for parts, which is the Blackburn Beverley C1 XB259. What is noteworthy about this aircraft is that only one single Beverley aircraft has survived, with the registration XB259, which also happened to be the first production aircraft. It was one of only 49 built in Brough, East Yorkshire, and was in use between 1955 and 1967, according to BBC. Until September 2020, it was stationed at Fort Paull, a popular military aviation museum in East Yorkshire, United Kingdom, which sadly closed its doors that year due to unforeseen circumstances. *(SimpleFlying)*

## 80TH ANNIVERSARY GREAT ESCAPE – MARCH 1944:



*Sqn Ldr Roger Bushell RAF 30 August 1910 – 29 March 1944*

Right in the heart of Hermanus, a town famous for its stunning coast and mysterious tales, there's a story of incredible bravery that's stood the test of time. We've already given a shout-out to the Galpin Squad for keeping some of Hermanus' best secrets under wraps, but now it's time to shine a spotlight on a local legend whose courage is woven into the very fabric of our town. Roger Bushell, whose name is synonymous with the spirit of freedom, orchestrated one of World War II's most audacious escapes. The 1963 war drama "The Great Escape," with Steve McQueen in a starring role, brought this astounding story to life, cementing Bushell's legacy as a mastermind of resistance.

As a captured Spitfire pilot during the conflict, Bushell spearheaded the legendary 'Great Escape' from the Stalag Luft III, a German POW camp, in the spring of 1943. His declaration that "Everyone here in this room is living on borrowed time... The only reason that God allowed us this extra ration of life is so we can make life hell for the enemy," ignited the plan to dig three tunnels – Tom, Dick, and Harry. Digging them all at once was a clever move, keeping the Germans guessing even if they found one. The movie, with all its Hollywood flair, might have strayed from the facts, but it still

captured Bushell's heroic spirit. And here's a fun fact: although the film shows him as a quintessential British officer, Bushell was actually a proud South African, making his story even more special to Hermanus. Bushell's story comes full circle in Hermanus, where there's a plaque on the local Cenotaph in his honour. This memorial, along with his grave in Poland, stands as a solemn tribute to his and his comrades' ultimate sacrifice. And get this: the Cenotaph has two cannons pointing inland, not towards the sea, as a sign of peace in times of calm. Bushell's legacy lives on at the local High School, where an annual trophy in his name is awarded to the top-performing student, symbolizing the pursuit of excellence and bravery. His parents, Ben & Dorothy, were also part of our village, adding to the Bushell family's lasting impact on Hermanus. As we weave tales of mystery and the vibrant energy emanating from the enigmatic Pilates studio above the Gateway Spar, let's also remember the deep-rooted courage that runs through Hermanus. By honouring heroes like Bushell, we celebrate the bravery and sacrifices that make up our town's history. Hermanus remains a beacon of inspiration, where past and present meet to motivate future generations, all against a backdrop of sea spray, mountain mist and spirited valour. *(Hermanus History Group - Sent in by Rob Tannahill)*

## YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU – CGS:

UK ARMY chief Sir Patrick Sanders says if NATO goes to war with Russia, British citizens could be given military training and kit and be ready for mobilisation. Calling for a shift in the public mindset, the Chief of the General Staff said in the event of war the UK population would be needed to defend the country against enemy forces. His comments, at a military conference, come as more than 20,000 British personnel are deployed across Europe and the High North to take part in NATO's biggest military drill since the height of the Cold War. Sir Patrick said: "We must be able to credibly fight and win wars on land. "We need an Army designed to expand rapidly to enable the first echelon, resource the second echelon and train and equip the citizen army that must follow. "Our friends in eastern and northern Europe, who feel the proximity of the Russian threat more acutely, are already acting prudently, laying the foundations for national mobilisation. "Taking preparatory steps to enable placing our societies on a war footing when needed are now not merely desirable but essential. "We will not be immune and as the pre-war generation we must similarly prepare – and that is a whole-of-nation undertaking. Ukraine brutally illustrates that regular armies start wars. Citizen armies win them." The MoD says it has no plans for a return to national service.

## RIP PROCCIE!



Former South African all-rounder, cricket icon and former Proteas coach Mike Procter has died at the age of 77.

The announcement was made by his family on Saturday after he had spent a number of days in hospital with a “serious illness.” Procter was South Africa’s first head coach when the country came out of sporting isolation and returned to international cricket in 1991. The following year, he led the team to the semi-finals of the Cricket World Cup. “He suffered a complication during surgery and while in ICU went into cardiac arrest. He became unconscious and unfortunately never woke up,” his wife Maryna said according to news reports. After leaving his position as the team’s head coach, he served as South Africa’s convener of selectors, and was later an ICC match referee. Due to Apartheid, which robbed a number of top cricketers an opportunity of performing on the international stage, Procter only played seven Tests for South Africa, scoring 226 runs at an average of 25.11, and picked up 41 wickets. In a first class career that spanned 24 years, Procter scored 21 936 runs and picked up 1 417 wickets. He turned out for Natal, Orange Free State, Western Province and Rhodesia. He also went on to represent English county side Gloucestershire for a number of years. Jonty Rhodes wrote: Devastated to hear about the passing of Mike Procter. He was my first provincial and international coach, and I obviously knew something about his playing career. Yet, it was only when I played for Gloster cricket that I appreciated the extent of his all-rounder abilities #RIP Proccie (IOL)

## WHERE IS THIS?



One of Eskom’s post WW2 power stations. Can anyone ID it?

## CHEERS FOR NOW:

Well, the Budget speech brought naught for our comfort. Spare a thought for the RAF Regiment team rowing the Atlantic. Bad weather setbacks now mean the ‘Rock Apes’ are likely to hit the Caribbean port in mid-March, organisers say.

Our next lunch, on 1st March, will be followed by the AGM of which notice has been duly given. Friday 1 March 2024 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. Come and support RAFOC. Please diarise to be at the AGM as this is your Club and you have the say in how the Club is run. No guests, please, as we report back and discuss Club affairs... Send your notice of intent to attend by replying to



[bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org) Lunch Cost is now R300pp and payment to our bank account would be appreciated. See you at the AGM!

## TAILPIECE:

"I have glimpsed the terrifying future of lazy, defenceless, near-bankrupt Britain", writes Allister Heath in the Telegraph.



Independence in Africa on average took place nearly 60 years ago.

60 years later there is not one single country with a thriving economy, social stability & freedom, well educated citizens, innovation & entrepreneurship. How much longer do they need?

After 60 years it can no longer be the fault of the colonialists there is something fundamentally wrong with this continent. South Africa is now no exception.

**It's confirmed!**  
**South Africans National**  
**IQ test will be written on**  
**29 May**

#ImStaying



MATT

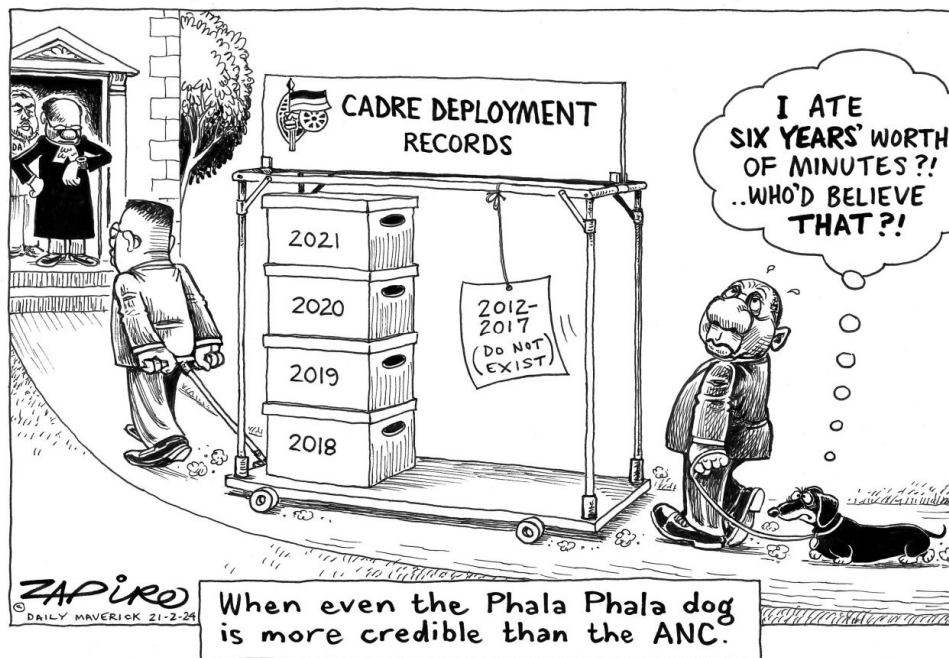


*'President Biden is getting too old. He keeps forgetting to poison his opponents'*

MATT



*"23mph in a 20 zone?  
If I shout 'jihad' will  
you let me off?"*



NHI: NAUGHT FOR YOUR COMFORT

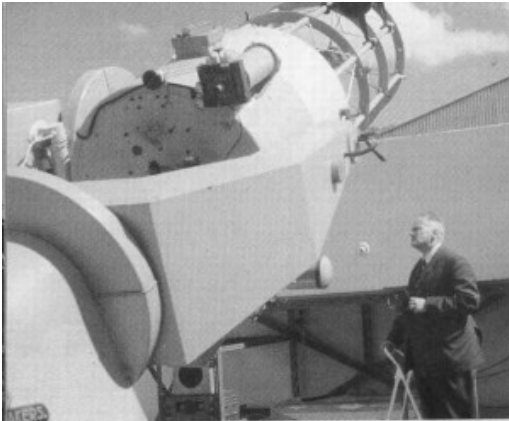
Research into the affordability of the NHI shows that every formally employed South African would need to fork over R1,500 a month through a payroll tax to meet the Department of Health's funding estimations – failing which, a massive 22% VAT or 30%-plus income tax hike would have to cover it. As South Africans wait for President Cyril Ramaphosa to sign the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law, finance experts have reiterated the warning that the scheme – in its current form – is not economically viable and requires huge sources of funding to make it a reality.

Heading into budget week, finance experts at FTI Consulting have highlighted findings from their 2023\_NHI Funding – Macro Implications report, which explores the various funding mechanisms required to get the universal healthcare plan off the ground. “While everybody agrees that the country's healthcare system requires reform and that this should provide access to universal health coverage, the NHI Bill, in its current form, is not economically viable for South Africa,” the group said.

“The Department of Health, in its 2017 White Paper on the NHI and the NHI Bill, has flagged sources such as VAT, personal income tax and payroll taxes for raising additional funding – and in a presentation it made in December 2022, said that it would need to raise an additional R200 billion per year to fund the NHI.” While the R200 billion is an older estimation – and a conservative one, depending on who you ask – FTI pointed out that any funding would have to be sourced from taxes. The government itself has already confirmed that taxpayers would be footing the bill for the scheme  
*(Daily Friend)*

## THE HERITAGE SITES AT TOPPIESHOEK:

### Blue Plaque Unveiling event on 9 March 2024.



*Dall-Kirkham Cassegrain 36 inch Reflector, and the building housing the telescope*

Two priceless heritage sites occur on Toppieshoek, a Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) property on the banks of Hartbeespoort Dam within the UNESCO designated Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve. One of them is the Broederstroom Early Iron Age archaeological site, the earliest known Black village in this region, occupied in about AD 350. The other is the former Leiden University Observatory Southern Station which includes two historic telescopes built in the early 1900s and operational at Toppieshoek for 25 years until 1978. These are national heritage treasures that offer unparalleled opportunities for experiential learning and teaching.

For the past year, a collaborative venture between the Magaliesberg Association for Culture and Heritage (MACH) and TUT has been assessing ways of restoring the sites. Vincent Carruthers and Professor Jane Carruthers have worked with astronomers and archaeologists in preparing realistic proposals for TUT on how the sites might be restored, responsibly curated and put to practical use



for the benefit of students and the public. A comprehensive report with detailed proposals has been prepared, an extensive bibliography has been compiled, a book describing the sites and their history has been published, and six outdoor information boards have been erected.

To mark the successful conclusion of this project, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of TUT, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke will unveil a Blue Plaque at Toppieshoek on 9 March 2024. The celebration will include an exhibition of archaeological artefacts, the launch of the book 'The Heritage Treasures of Toppieshoek', and a talk on the history of the telescopes and the ancient African village.

## AUSTIN-HEALEY NOSTALGIA:



Austin-Healey was a British sports car maker established in 1952 through a joint venture between the Austin division of the British Motor Corporation (BMC) and the Donald Healey Motor Company (Healey), a renowned automotive engineering and design firm. Leonard Lord represented BMC and Donald Healey his firm. BMC merged with Jaguar Cars in 1966 to form British Motor Holdings (BMH). Donald Healey left BMH in 1968 when it merged into British Leyland. Healey then joined Jensen Motors, which had been making bodies for the "big Healey's" since their inception in 1952, and became their chairman in 1972. Austin-Healey cars were produced until 1972 when the 20-year agreement between Healey and Austin came to an end. A BN1 tested by The Motor magazine in 1953 had a top speed of 106 mph (171 km/h) and could accelerate from 0–60 mph (97 km/h) in 11.2 seconds. A fuel consumption of 22.5 miles per imperial gallon (12.6 L/100 km; 18.7 mpg-US) was recorded. The test car cost £1063 including taxes. The "Le Mans" modifications first originated with the four BN-1 "special test cars" that were prepared by Donald Healey and Roger Menadue for racing in the 1953 Mille Miglia and the 24 hour Le Mans of France. These were the very first Austin-Healey 100 race cars prepared for international road racing. The Austin Healey would survive for 15 years in three distinct incarnations, along the way gaining a six-cylinder engine and a formidable competition record. Extensively raced by the Donald Healey Motor Company in Europe at Le Mans and at Sebring in the U.S., in classic rallies by the BMC competitions department, and was recognised from the very beginning by the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA). Healey models raced in club racing in D, E, F, G, an H production classes, winning



National Championships in all five classes.[2] The last Big Healey to win an SCCA National Championship was the class E Production Austin-Healey 100-6 driven by Alan Barker at the Daytona ARRC in 1965. In 1953, a special streamlined Austin-Healey set several land speed records at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, USA.