Bun, Cuppa and Chat NEWSLETTER

Veterans' Group

September 2026



We have had plenty of rain now, and the pond, if not the Beck, is filling up. The weeds are still flourishing, but the blackberries are shrivelling. Hips, haws, sloes and crab apples tumble out of the hedgerows. Hazel and beech nuts hang from the trees. There is a distinct chill in the air and jumpers are emerging from their summer shelves. September sunsets and sunrises smudge the sky pink. Autumn is here. September is also the month we commemorate the extraordinary achievement of the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain to frustrate the Nazi invasion of these shores. I include some photographs and articles to celebrate and commemorate this beautiful and special month.

My thanks to the brilliant Brian Bilston for his autumn poem (I didn't realise at first that the missing letters, other than the falling 'd', are all in the mush at the bottom of the tree!), Norman for the Chuckle Corner and my brother John for the photograph of the Spitfires and ME109 in the skies above Cambridgeshire. The lone Hurricane circled Starston on 31 August while I was walking the dogs! Happy Autumn (it's now 23° outside so perhaps that is a bit premature!).



Bun, Cuppa and Chat News

We were sorry to hear of the death of Bernie Stone of Dickleburgh on 3 August at the age of 90. Bernie was a longstanding member of the Dickleburgh Branch of the RBL, having served in Korea during his National Service, and was also part of our Bun, Cuppa and Chat family. Our thoughts and prayers are with Connie, his wife, and all their family and friends.

Our next Bun, Cuppa and Chat events will be on 22 October and 26 November, 2.30pm-4pm at the Mariner's Galley. Please fill up the tables, inside or outside as you wish, as you come in, so that the Galley staff are not serving several half-empty tables. This may give you the chance to make new friends!







Poppy Appeal

The Poppy Appeal runs from 1 October to 11 November this year, with collecting tins, poppies and merchandise available in pubs, cafes, businesses and schools. I plan to organise collections in the Long Stratton Co-op with volunteers and the Cadets between 22 October and 11 November, and at the Mariner's Galley too, so will be in touch with those who helped last year. If anyone else wants to be involved just let me know.

Remembrance Sunday will be commemorated on 8 November this year. As well as many of the morning services and parades in the area, the 3pm service Remembrance Sunday.at Rushall will take place as usual.

The Problem of Writing Poems in the Shape of Deciduous Trees

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Brian Bilston

Battle of Britain Sunday





On Sunday 13 October, the traditional Battle of Britain service was held at St Margaret's Church, led by Revd Norman and attended by a large contingent from the Harleston Branch of the RBL, with their Standard Bearer, Chris Lown. All three services (and the Royal Marines) were represented at the service and I don't think I have ever seen such a wide variety of regimental berets (even without Polly's WRNS cap!)





Group Captain Andrew Knowles, RAF, gave a fascinating talk not only about the Battle of Britain but about the role of the RAF today. He reminded us of the words of Winston Churchill on 18 June 1940, two days after the fall of France, 'I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions … If we can stand up to [Hitler], all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age.' The RAF did achieve victory in that glorious summer 86 years ago, but at a huge cost with nearly 1500 aircrew lost – 450 fighter pilots, as well as aircrew from Bomber and Coastal Commands - on top of the 435 fighter pilots that the RAF lost during the Battle of France. Many of these casualties were from Britain's Commonwealth allies, including 112 Canadians.



Despite the huge advances in technology since the Second World War, the role of today's Air Force is little changed from 1940: to defend the skies of our nation, and the airspace of allies or places we so choose and to support the Army in its land operations with air transport, support helicopters, air cover, surveillance, reconnaissance, ground attack or deep strike missions. The RAF's guiding principles are also little changed: to detect and track threats, then launch and direct or control fighter aircraft to intercept allocated targets. Today it is Typhoon fighters from RAF Lossiemouth or RAF Coningsby that respond, rather than the Hurricanes and Spitfires of 11 Group. The same mission is carried out in the Falklands and Cyprus and the UK supports NATO with fighters based in the Baltics and Poland, reinforcing NATO's eastern flank.

Since the Second World War, the RAF has continuously been deployed on operations somewhere in the world: Germany in the Cold War, Malaya to Suez, Borneo to Aden, the Falklands, the Gulf, the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. As Group Captain Knowles said, 'All this goes on 24/7, 365 days a year, year after year. It is what the Royal Air Force does!'



In his address at the Battle of Britain service, the Rev. Norman Steer offered a chilling account of what might have happened in Britain, had not the RAF successfully seen off the Luftwaffe in the summer of 1940, thus preventing a Nazi invasion. Richard Walther Darré joined the Nazi Party in 1925 and after they came to power in 1933 was appointed Minister of Food and Agriculture and head of the SS Race and Settlement Office, an highly antisemitic and racist organisation. As an SS Obergruppenführer, he developed extreme Nazi ideology, especially policies of territorial annexation and selective breeding (eugenics) intended to create the German master race, acting as adviser to Himmler. The latter policy led directly to the extermination of Jews, Roma and other minorities from across the world, both before and during the War. In 1940, Darré made this astonishing and chilling speech:

> "As soon as we beat England we shall make an end of you Englishmen once and for all. Able- bodied men and women between the ages of 16 and 45 will be exported as slaves to the Continent. The old and weak will be exterminated.
>
> All men remaining in Britain as slaves will be sterilised; a million or two of the young women of the Nordic type will be segregated in a number of stud farms where, with the assistance of picked German sires, during a period of 10 or 12 years, they will produce annually a series of Nordic infants to be brought up in every way as Germans.
>
> These infants will form the future population of Britain. They will be partially educated in Germany and only those who fully satisfy the Nazi's requirements will be allowed to return to Britain and take up permanent residence. The rest will be sterilised and sent to join slave gangs in Germany.
>
> Thus, in a generation or two, the British will disappear."

Richard Darré was captured in 1945 and at the Nuremberg Trials was sentenced to just five years imprisonment, avoiding charges of crimes against humanity and genocide, perhaps because he was seen as a back-office policy maker, and was not directly involved in mass shootings or the concentration camps. He died in Munich in 1953, aged 58, from liver cancer, exacerbated by alcoholism. Thank God for Winston Churchill and the RAF.

Road to Heaven



A woman arrived at the Pearly Gates hoping for admission. St Peter quickly checked his list and saw that she had lived a good and blameless life, despite being married to a selfish, womanising and drunken man for many years. 'Welcome to Heaven, Ellen,' he said, 'Just one simple question and you are in. Please spell the word 'Love'. 'No problem', said Ellen, 'L-O-V-E.' 'That's fine', said St Peter, 'would you kindly mind the Gates for me for a short time, I need to supervise the Cherubs' halo-polishing duties.'

Ellen agreed and took over from St Peter at the Pearly Gates. After checking his list and notes and giving a spelling test, she allowed in a nun, a youth worker and a doctor. A man then appeared demanding to be let in. Ellen was surprised to see her husband standing there. 'How come you are here?' she said. 'The last time I saw you was the night I died when you were heading off to meet your lady friend.' 'Ah well, it was after your wake at the pub. I was racing off to the football to meet my mates, when I crashed the car. So let me in, you stupid woman!' Ellen thought for a while, checking St Peter's notes, and said, 'That's fine, but first you have to answer a spelling question.' 'OK, just get on with it', he said. 'Please spell the name, Mahershalalhashbaz', she said, adding helpfully, 'he was the son of Isaiah.'

The man stormed off, never to return.

Norman's Chuckle Corner

- A mule was docile and quiet until it was moved into the stable, when it bucked and kicked and hee-hawed because it was spooked when its ears brushed the top of the doorway The farmer decided to raise the height of the doorway to make room for its ears. After nearly three hours hacking away at the door with a saw with the help of his farm hand, a neighbour went past and remarked that they could save time and effort by simply using a spade and digging a shallow pit on the floor at the entrance to the stable. It would take less than half an hour. 'Thank you for your suggestion', said the farmer, and turning to his assistant when the neighbour had gone, he said, 'Stupid man! Anyone can see it's not the mule's feet that are too long, it's his ears!'
- I saw a sign which said 'Watch for Children'; I thought that would be a fair trade.
- Ever since I told my secretary that I am a stickler for punctuation, she has not been late for work once.
- Mother was not pleased with her daughter's boyfriend, whom she brought home for tea. And after he left, she said, 'Darling, he does not seem to be a very nice person; his hair was greasy. He wore nose rings, lots of tattoos, and his language was appalling.' 'But Mum, if he was not a nice person, why was he doing two hundred hours of community service?'
- Man goes into the doctor's, 'Hey doc, I have a cricket ball lodged up my bum.' Doctor. 'How's that?' Man, 'Don't you start.'
- A chicken runs into a library and says 'Book Boc Boc Book'. The librarian hands the chicken a book, the chicken tucks it under his arm and rushes out of the shop. A little while later the chicken returns, gives the book and says 'Book Boc Boc Book'. The librarian gives the chicken another book and the chicken tucks the book under its wings and rushes out of the library and down the street again. A few minutes later the chicken comes back throws the book onto the counter and says 'Book Boc Boc Book'. For a third time the librarian finds a new book and gives it to the chicken who tucks it under his wings and rushes out of the shop. This time the librarian follows the chicken out of the library. The chicken runs down the street through the park and was seen giving the book to a frog who loudly says, 'Read it, Read it, Read it.'

Musings from Nacho, Sugie and Lola



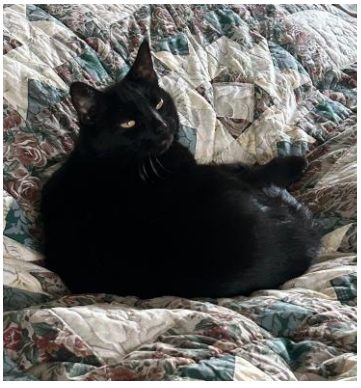
Sugie here. I've been a helpful and photogenic cat this month – supervising the arrival of the Missus's Poppy Appeal boxes (and playing with the dried flower decoration), rolling in the catnip in the garden while she was weeding around it, and spending most nights on her bed. [and much of the day! Ed]



Lola here. I have had it with AI! The Missus's phone provides captions for her photos. Nacho and I are used to being identified as Golden Retrievers or even Brittany Spaniels, or when AI is being particularly lazy, a Dog, but this week, I have been variously captioned as a Chow Chow and … a cat! Really! Nacho and I are proud Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers (Tollers to our friends.). I've also been 'helping' in the garden, finding sticks in the wheelbarrow!



Nacho here. I've have been in the garden with the Missus too, but as the senior animal, I prefer to supervise quietly from the lawn, looking handsome and gorgeous. Thank you for the Missus for our daily fun times! We do have a ball each, but we keep losing them!





The Bun, Cuppa and Chat Group is part of the Benefice of Dickleburgh and the Pulhams,

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