

# **RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL**

## **College Journal Extracts**



March 2010



# 2009 Royal Review (1)



## Painting of the 2009 Royal Review

by Military Artist Mr Anthony Cowland

The annual Royal Review at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell is always a special occasion and this year was particularly memorable as Her Majesty the Queen, in her role as Commandant-in-Chief of the College, visited for the first time since 1995. Consequently, a new painting was commissioned to mark this historic event. The painting depicts Her Majesty and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in front of the Royal Air Force College with the Commandant and the Chief of the Air Staff completing Her inspection of the graduating cadets. Art, especially military art, can evoke many thoughts and feelings and this painting by Anthony Cowland is no exception, serving as a tremendous source of inspiration to the cadets; it is a constant reminder of where their allegiance lies and also of the rewards and honour that lies ahead on Graduation Day if they successfully complete their training. It is no coincidence that the painting has been hung in the main corridor opposite the cadets' ante-room.

Anthony Cowland is a well known and respected artist, illustrator and designer and is a past Chairman of the Guild of Aviation Artists. Over the past 15 years he has been heavily involved with painting for the British Forces, undertaking visits to major exercises, peace-keeping zones and theatres of war, often 'roughing it' on location. A graduate of the Brighton School of Art, he spent over a decade in design and architecture, becoming a director in a large London and New York-based architectural and design practice overseeing projects world-wide. Having continuously moonlighted as a painter and illustrator during his design career, he finally turned to full-time illustration and painting in 1989.

*The painting in College Hall Officers' Mess with Air Commodore Stevenson, Commandant of the College and Wing Commander (Retired) Dowling, College Secretary.*



# 2009 Royal Review (2)





# 2009 Royal Review (3)

## Visit to RAF Cranwell by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Squadron Leader Hall, Officer Commanding C Squadron

On Thursday 28 May, 2009, Royal Air Force College Cranwell had the honour of receiving Her Majesty The Queen, the College's Commandant-in-Chief, accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. Their visit was on the occasion of the Royal Review at the graduation of 147 officers of Initial Officer Training (IOT) Course No 14, Specialist Entrant and Re-Entrant (SERE) Course No 10 and Reserve Officer Initial Training (ROIT) Course No 46. Graduates included cadets from Iraq, Jamaica and Nigeria.

Four to five graduation parades are held each year at Royal Air Force College Cranwell to mark the rite of passage from officer

*Chief of the Air Staff and Commandant arriving at the Graduation Parade.*



cadet to commissioned officer for each cadet graduating on an IOT, SERE or ROIT course. Each year one of the graduation parades is selected as the Royal Review in order to present The Queen's Medal for the best overall cadet from the last twelve months and other annual prizes. Of note the International Cadet Sword of Honour for the best international cadet during the year was awarded for the first time at the 2009 Royal Review. A number of honoured guests have acted as Reviewing Officer over the years, but the last time Her Majesty The Queen conducted a Royal Review was in 1995.

Before this prestigious event could take place, a significant amount of planning and preparation was required to ensure that the graduating cadets were up to parade standard, but also to prepare the Station and College Hall Officers' Mess (CHOM). In October 2008, before the Assistant Private Secretary to The Queen formally announced that Her Majesty had accepted the Commandant of the RAF College's invitation, a planning team was established. The aim was to ensure that Her Majesty and His Royal Highness had a memorable visit by delivering a Royal Review that would demonstrate the high standards and calibre of the next generation of Royal Air Force officers. The focus for the day was to be The Queen and the cadets.

A planning team was formed of personnel from the Station, the College and the Officer and Aircrew Cadet Training Unit (OACTU). Thus, under the watchful eye of the Project Officer, Group Captain Killen (OACTU), the Commandant's Staff Officer and ADC, Squadron Leader Phythian and Flight Lieutenant Akyildiz, the College's Senior Regiment Instructor, Squadron Leader Capel, and the Officer Commanding Base Support Squadron, Squadron Leader Manvell met each Wednesday. The planning team was extremely well supported by contractor, civilian and military personnel across the Cranwell campus, all working in concert to achieve the aim; that Her Majesty and His Royal Highness, and the cadets and their guests, have a superb day.

Their task was not insignificant and, in addition to the normal preparations for the Graduation Parade, a number of changes would be required in order to choreograph the Royal Review,

host a significant number of high profile guests, and allow time for Her Majesty to meet Station personnel and their families. In order to achieve this, the team needed to maintain close liaison with Buckingham Palace and the civil authorities. CHOM required some refurbishment and additionally a detailed plan was required to allow Her Majesty the opportunity to meet and dine with the newly graduated officers, their families, the staff and guests; in excess of 500 attended the lunch.

Whilst the planning team forged ahead, a number of additional drill periods for cadets were packed into the working day. Warrant Officer Clelland, College Warrant Officer, and his team worked tirelessly to train and prepare the cadets. To their credit, the cadets rose admirably to the challenge. Whilst honour, pride and enthusiasm are always present during the lead up to graduation, the added privilege of graduating in front of our Sovereign raised the bar, and injected some magic into the cadet body. Rarely, have I witnessed cadets practising in the early hours of the morning and late at night on the Parade Square; often at the expense of developing more traditional social skills!

Inevitably a number of additional rehearsals were scheduled and it was inspiring to see the all Royal Air Force College Cranwell cadets and permanent staff working together to the same aim.

To be around the cadets on the morning of the 28 May 2009 was something special. The atmosphere was electric and, as a body, they were full of enthusiasm mixed with a nervous anticipation but ready for the challenge ahead. The cadets, beaming with pride and, dressed immaculately in their uniforms, set about preparing themselves for the Parade. Their flight sergeants, their trusted mentors during the Course, gave them a final inspection to ensure that every cadet was at the highest possible standard and then exchanged a few words of encouragement; all were conscious that College history was about to unfold.

Not only was every cadet walking six inches taller but we were blessed with excellent weather. A wonderful, warm and calm spring day brought the flowers out into full bloom and CHOM, as backdrop to the freshly mown 'Orange', looked magnificent in the sunlight.



# 2009 Royal Review (4)

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness arrived by helicopter and were moved to the front of the Dais in the Royal Bentley where they were received by the Commandant of the Royal Air Force College, Air Commodore Stevenson. The Parade Commander, Officer Cadet Jewers, had already brought the Parade to attention and proceeded to give the Royal Salute. Her Majesty was then invited to inspect the front row of the Parade whilst His Royal Highness inspected the second row, and Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Torpy, inspected the third row. At the conclusion of the inspection there was a spectacular fly past from the Red Arrows.

The cadets were immaculately turned out and, after they had been inspected, went on to give an excellent demonstration of drill; high standards, teamwork and esprit de corps paid off! Her Majesty then went on to present the Sword of Honour, the International Sword of Honour and The Queen's Medal to Officer Cadet Shone, Lieutenant Al-Henkawe, of the Iraqi Air Force, and Flying Officer Taudevin respectively.

Silence then fell across the College as Her Majesty addressed the Parade and gave the following speech:

*"As your Commandant-in-Chief, I am delighted to be here to today to witness the commissioning of officers into the Royal Air Force, and into the Forces of Iraq, Jamaica, and Nigeria. It is also a special occasion for your families and friends and for the permanent training staff who have prepared*

*Chief of the Air Staff inspects the Parade.*



*you for this moment. You have marked that moment in fine style, and I congratulate you on your turnout and ceremonial.*

*The Royal Air Force has an illustrious history. You, the graduating officers, are now part of that history and inherit the legacy of your forebears. Today, you are embarking on what will be new careers. You have joined a fighting Service and the years ahead will test your resolve in unpredictable situations around the world. However, through the training you have received, and the development of your leadership skills, you have experienced challenges and adversities designed to prepare you for the most demanding of circumstances. I am confident of your ability to meet that charge.*

*While you must carry out the duties placed upon you by the Royal Air Force, it is equally important that you enjoy life. There will be chances to learn new skills, to travel and to broaden your experience. I hope that you will ensure that you, and those under your command, make the most of these opportunities.*

*You can be justly proud of your achievements, as – I am sure – are your families and friends who support you and who have gathered to celebrate this occasion with you. I wish you all every happiness and success in your chosen career. My prayers go with you and your families."*

The Act of Dedication followed and all three padres from the College said prayers before the Parade Commander roused the cadets and the Parade giving Her Majesty three cheers.

*Lieutenant Al-Henkawe, IqAF, receives the International Sword of Honour from Her Majesty.*





# 2009 Royal Review (5)



*'March off the Colour of the College of the Royal Air Force'.*

After the Queen's Colour of the Royal Air Force College had been marched off, the cadets formed two ranks and, with the incredibly moving music of 'auld lang syne' reverberating around the College, courtesy of the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment, the slow march commenced past the Flight Sergeants – now saluting the newly commissioned officers for the first time. As they marched up CHOM stairs, into the Rotunda, and onto the carpet for the first time, four typhoons, from XI Squadron, flew past which signified to the cadets that they had now joined the ranks of 'the few' as commissioned officers in the Royal Air Force. CHOM main doors were closed, the Parade Square fell silent and the audience were treated to a huge roar from within the Rotunda as the newly commissioned officers launched their hats into the air and cheered each other on their success.

After meeting the Parade Executives and joining staff and award winners for photographs, Her Majesty, His Royal Highness, the Chief of the Air Staff and the Commandant joined the newly commissioned officers and their friends and families for some well earned refreshments before going on to take lunch. The Mess staff "pulled all the stops out" and delivered a thoroughly enjoyable meal to over 500 guests.

At the conclusion of lunch Her Majesty and His Royal Highness signed the visitor's book and departed CHOM in company with the Commandant for Queen's Avenue where The Queen planted a lime tree, before meeting an enthusiastic crowd of Station personnel and their families.

In summary, six months of planning, a whole-hearted collegiate approach, and a superb team effort had come to fruition; it had, indeed, been a day to remember for the cadets, for the staff, for the guests and most importantly for Her Majesty The Queen. The newest commissioned officers in the Royal Air Force were left brimming with pride alongside families and friends – that evening the Graduation Ball continued long into the early hours! There is no doubt that all those involved in the planning and the execution of the Royal Review upheld the high standards that the Royal Air Force expects.

On a final note, it is an honour to hold the post of Squadron Commander on an IOT squadron with responsibility for the training and development of so many dynamic and focussed men and women. Their enthusiasm and desire to succeed is infectious. When you have attested them into the Royal Air Force in week one and then watched them grow in competence, confidence and credibility over a 32-week Course, it is a truly unique moment to see your Squadron of cadets slip 'the surly bonds' of Cranwell and march off the Parade Square as commissioned officers. To have had that experience, combined with the honour of meeting Her Majesty, in CHOM Founders' Gallery, and in front of the portrait of Winston Churchill, may, I suspect, be an unsurpassable experience.



# 2009 Royal Review (6)



7 - The Parade Commander's View

Her Majesty is escorted by Officer Cadet Jewers, Parade Commander.



# 2009 Royal Review (7)



*A Flight, the Graduating Squadron, on parade.*

Initially it was through rumour that C Squadron realised how special our graduation would be. Speculation over a Royal Graduation became common place, although to start with it was never expected that Her Majesty The Queen would be our Reviewing Officer. It had been almost 15 years since her last visit to RAF Cranwell and everyone at the College set out to make it a Parade to remember. Preparation for the Parade started as early as Term Two, as foot and sword drill were taught and practised to have us ready for graduation. Graduation practice would normally start towards the end of Term Three, but for C Squadron we started in Week 1.

When we began Parade practice, each flight was asked to nominate three or four cadets for the positions of Parade Commander, Adjutant and the four Flight Commanders. The first hurdle for us was to take a Flight around College Hall Officers' Mess (CHOM) Parade Square, carrying out the first part of the march past. This was a nervous moment for some, especially those who had never taken drill before, as it was completed in front of the Squadron as a whole. This process whittled numbers down to a final ten; we would then practise over the coming weeks for a final assessment by the Senior Regiment Instructor (SRI), Squadron Leader Capel. For the assessment we gathered on the tennis courts and, one at a time, positioned ourselves next to the SRI, commanding the other candidates who were three court-widths away. It was our voices that were being examined; those with the correct volume, clarity and pitch would take the top spots on the Parade. It was

tense; time to impress was short. One candidate impressed me – an ex-Serving Army Warrant Officer; however, he stood down before his turn. He felt the younger members of the Squadron deserved the opportunity. This was a noble thing to do, and I personally thanked him, as he was, in most people's eyes, the man for the job. Following the assessment, we walked out onto CHOM Parade Square, where the other members of the Squadron had been practising. Squadron Leader Capel cut straight to the chase and named those whom he felt would perform best for each position. After both jubilation and commiseration the Squadron was reformed into flights and we took our newly assigned posts. Everyone then knew who had the responsibility for each Flight and the Parade. Thankfully, we had learnt the commands required for all positions on Parade, though this didn't prevent initial nerves as we went straight into our first practice. There were mistakes, however, these would be ironed out.

The first event was the Group Captain's check of the Parade, by which point everyone knew it. Its success gave the Squadron a new found air of confidence and the idea of weekend drill practice disappeared. The next rehearsal was with cadets from another squadron playing key figures including Her Majesty, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh and the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS). This, for me, was when things went wrong; previously I had only practised my opening line inviting Her Majesty to inspect the Parade in front of an empty dais. With human beings in front of me I managed to get a frog in my throat and lost composure. Looking into someone's eyes made speaking more difficult than the whole Parade so far. Following this hiccup I composed myself and started again with no problems.

The Commandant's inspection was next, just a few days before the Graduation. I felt confident in the ability of every one of my fellow cadets on the Parade Square, though it is fair to say some found the drill easier than others. It was clear that the time we spent on the Parade Square and instruction we were given had paid off; both individuals and Flights performed well. However, this was not to be the case for this final check of our performance. Small errors began to creep in whilst the Commandant watched, and there was general feeling that we might have over-rehearsed

and peaked too soon. Yet when we completed another rehearsal everything went well, thankfully. We were back on track!

The day before Graduation was drill-free, allowing time for me to collect my sword which I had ordered especially for the Graduation. It was nice to relax and take time to reflect on the past few weeks; all thoughts were on Graduation and how quickly it had come upon us. That evening my parents had arrived and we went out for dinner in a nearby pub. Most of the Course had the same idea and we met several members of my Squadron.

Graduation Day arrived and I spent the morning relaxing – going over the parade orders just once more – before collecting my parents as they arrived. After leaving them with the other guests in the refreshments tent it was time for me to get ready for the Parade. Putting on my sword brought about the reality that this was no practice and, thankfully, there were no nerves. I was quietly confident that all would go well. The rest of C Squadron formed up on the wings of CHOM; the count down had begun! The Parade Executives, along with the College Parade Staff, gathered in the Rotunda, a few words of luck were said by Wing Commander Cadets, followed by a glass of port to settle any nerves and lubricate our throats. My throat was fine; however, upon returning to the West Wing for my entry onto the Parade Square I began to feel butterflies, it was now just a matter of waiting. The Support Squadron, D Squadron, marched on to the commands of the College Warrant Officer, followed by the Graduating Squadron. It was at this stage I began to feel as though I had the weight of everyone's expectations on my shoulders; the nerves began and before I knew it, it was time to march on.

Marching out in silence, with only the sound of the wind and a few people talking in the crowd, I saw my parents sat on the top tier not far off centre. I took over the Parade from the Parade Adjutant, and it was time to start the drill sequence. I gave the command for the Queen's Colour to be marched on and the Band burst into life. After what seemed an age VIP guests began to arrive and CAS made his way onto the Dais. Before long I saw The Royal Car enter through the main gates of CHOM and drive around the Orange. I brought the Parade to attention and my mind then focussed on the drill commands to come. It was like watching television



# 2009 Royal Review (8)



*HRH Prince Philip inspecting the Graduating Squadron.*

– Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh stopped in front of me only a few yards away, and once they were positioned on the Dais I gave the Royal Salute. I approached the Dais and invited Her Majesty to inspect the cadets.

We had planned for Her Majesty to inspect the front rank, while The Duke of Edinburgh inspected the middle rank and CAS inspected the rear rank. Her Majesty was brisk yet thorough in inspecting each individual on the front rank, asking what branches cadets would be entering, whilst also commenting on both the number of individuals with medals who had served previously, and the standard of dress. Inspection complete, the Red Arrows flew over and the march past began first in slow time, and then quick time. From my position I could see each row of each Flight and I was impressed to see how accurate and well drilled they were. The march past finished, the Parade advanced in review order, following which head dress was removed and three cheers were given for Her Majesty The Queen. It was an amazing moment hearing the whole Parade cheer in unison. Thereafter, I requested permission from Her Majesty to march off the Queen's Colour and the Parade; the Squadron marched off the Parade Square and into the rotunda of CHOM to Auld Lang Syne, an emotional moment for all.

Once the whole Graduating Squadron was in the Rotunda and had halted, I ordered one final cheer and everyone threw their hats into the air in celebration. It was time to remove our cadet accoutrements and, for the majority, to meet their families. The Parade Executives stayed behind and lined up in Founders' Gallery to be presented to Her Majesty. I was first to be introduced, following which I introduced the other Parade Executives. We then slipped away quietly to see our families before lunch. I was fortunate enough to sit next to The Duke of Edinburgh; he was quick witted and spoke fondly of his time learning to fly. The Royal Party left shortly after lunch leaving us to continue celebrations at the Graduation Ball that evening. It was a fitting end to a very proud and exhilarating day!

*'March off the Graduating Officers'.*





# 2009 Royal Review (9)

## The Sword Winner's Perspective - The Queen's Review

Officer Cadet Shone, Winner of the Sword of Honour, Initial Officer Training Course No 14

Graduation Dinner, 22 May 2009, after all the festivities of the evening it was time to announce the prizes. When I heard my name called out as the Sword of Honour winner for IOTC 14 I was ecstatic. The celebrations went on until the early morning celebrating the last 29 weeks of IOT with fellow cadets. It wasn't until the next day I realised that having won the Sword of Honour I would be receiving it from none other than Her Majesty The Queen.

Rumour of Her Majesty being our Reviewing Officer stemmed back to the early weeks of IOT. It was the first time Her Majesty was to be the Reviewing Officer for 14 years so it was inevitable that drill practice would feature highly on the timetable. I was one of a lucky three who would receive their prize from Her Majesty. This meant countless extra practice to ensure we performed to our best when receiving our prizes.

Graduation Day arrived and there was a definite buzz about the College. Families began to arrive through the increased security presence and were met by the latest Graduating Officers. Tea and coffee were first on the agenda, with the obligatory photo outside of College Hall with the family. Shortly after this, it was time for our guests to move to the stands and await the arrival of the Parade and, of course, Her Majesty.

*The Royal Party leave the Dais to inspect the Parade.*



At either side of College Hall, the four flights assembled minus their Flight Commanders. As Number Two Flight Commander, I was assembled with the other Parade Executives in the Rotunda for the traditional pre-parade glass of port. This was certainly a good way to calm the nerves before performing in front of Her Majesty.

At 1030 the Support Squadron marched on followed by the Graduating Squadron. I remember the shiver of pride as we marched on to the famous Parade Square in front of the many friends and family. The Flight Sergeants had their moment, calling us into line and the Queen's Colour was marched on. We waited patiently (without fainting and cracking my head open this time as I did in an earlier practice...) for the arrival of the Chief of the Air Staff, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh and Her Majesty The Queen.

It wasn't long before the Royal Car pulled up in front of the Dais and we stood, watching in awe as Her Majesty and His Royal Highness stepped out. I don't think there are many things that beat what followed: a Royal Salute to The Queen whilst God Save the Queen was played by the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment.

*Her Majesty inspecting the Parade.*





# 2009 Royal Review (10)





# 2009 Royal Review (11)



*The Red Arrows.*

The inspection was soon over, climaxing with a fly past by the Red Arrows. With permission to continue with the Review, we were soon on our way around the Parade Square. Now was the time to perform our best circuit yet with voices ablaze, the 'eyes right' and the 'two from now' commands were the best the Flight Commander's have shouted. The Flights performed brilliantly with perfect straight lines.

Following the Review, the Parade was advanced in Review Order ready for the Prize Giving and the Queen's speech. Now it was my turn to perform in front of my fellow cadets, all our friends and families, a large number of dignitaries, high ranking officers and – of course – the Royal Party. I stowed my parade sword ready to receive the Sword of Honour.

My name was called out by Flight Lieutenant Fisher, my Flight Commander throughout IOT, and I marched towards Her Majesty. When Her Majesty handed the Sword to me I was surprised by how heavy it was in comparison to the parade sword I'd been carrying. After her congratulating me and wishing me all the best, a few obligatory photographs were taken before remembering to take a step back to conduct a sword salute without damaging our Sovereign; not a good career move.

The rest of the Review was spent in awe of what I had just received. Despite this I still had a job to do: three cheers for Her Majesty The Queen, forming two ranks and moving into position for the final march into College Hall. Having received our first salutes from the Flight Sergeants lining the entrance we

were all assembled in the Rotunda, then the emotion of the day finally hit me. I was very proud of everything that we had achieved together over the last 32 weeks and it was topped off perfectly by a Royal Review.

Before moving through to the marquees to meet our families, the Parade Executives were fortunate enough to personally meet Her Majesty, His Royal Highness and the Chief of the Air Staff in the Rotunda. As it was the second time I had spoken to Her Majesty I could now refer to her as Ma'am and she commented on how I now had two swords to handle. Moving to the marquee for a few moments to briefly be congratulated by my family I had to rush off for the formal photograph in front of College Hall. Here all the prize winners gathered for a once in a lifetime photo opportunity with The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

It was now approaching midday and the trumpet was sounded, signalling the move through to the Dining Room. During rehearsals it was planned that, as the winner of the Sword of Honour, I would sit between The Duke of Edinburgh and Air Commodore Stevenson, one place left of the centre spot. However, on moving to the top table I noticed that Air Commodore Stevenson had been swapped with The Queen and I was now sitting next to Her Majesty and Mrs Stevenson.

A story to tell the grandkids that's for sure; or everyone I see (as my fellow junior officers keeping telling me).

Sadly, the day went by far too quickly and the gavel was soon banged by the President of the Mess Committee, indicating time for the Royal Party to leave the top table. The rest of the day was then spent with our families exploring College Hall before moving over to Whittle Hall for the End of Course Review. The day was not yet over however, as of course it was now time for the Graduation Ball; an outstanding night, enjoyed by all who attended.

To summarise, this was a day that I and my fellow Graduating Officers will never forget; etched into our memories for a long time to come. It is difficult to describe in words just how good a day it was. I can certainly say it was the best day of my life, to date.



*The Royal Party on the Dais.*