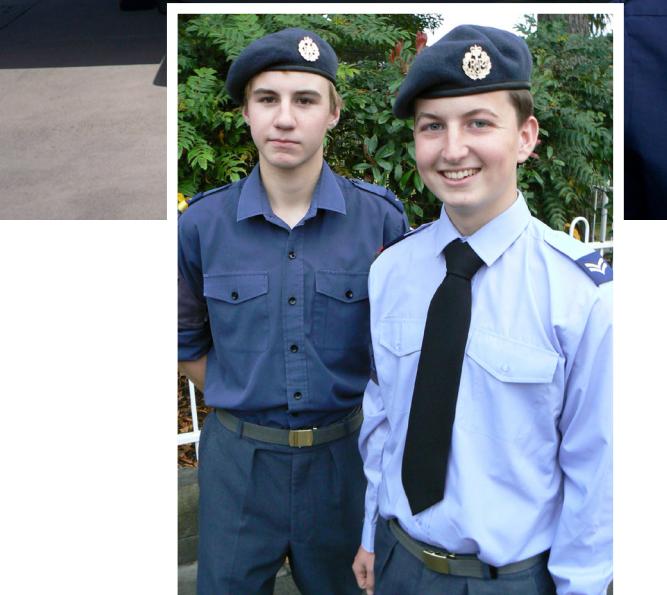


From the Officer Commanding the Royal Air Force Section, Flt Lt Shanon Garcia VR(T)

Flying at RAF Benson

We started the year with the Fourth Formers' first opportunity to fly at Benson where they experienced barrel rolls and loop-the-loops! Throughout last year the Section clocked up about 32 hours of flying between them with about 70 flying slots shared by all. This gave all years a chance to improve their skills with most senior cadets taking over the controls for nearly the entire sortie. The staff at 6AEF are always very welcoming and entertaining, and the pilots are always keen to make each flight a memorable experience. Often we are flown by Andy Brown, an ex-RGS student who enjoys the opportunity to meet current Reigate Grammar students.



Autumn Field Day

Go Ape and Bewl Water Outdoor Activities Centre

Lower and Upper Sixth Cadets enjoyed a day of High Ropes at Go Ape, Leeds Castle. This involved climbing 60 feet up a pine tree and navigating through a series of obstacles through the dense canopy. The most memorable moments being the numerous zip wires and Tarzan swing. At Bewl Water Fourth and Fifth Form enjoyed a day of interesting activities. In the morning the Fourth Formers carried out a series of leadership tasks such as the spider web and 'the shark-infested custard' in the woods. This helped them to get to know each other and also to build leadership skills. The Fifth Form went mountain biking around the Bewl lake which some found harder than others! In the afternoon the two year groups were grouped together to design and build model rafts with dowels and drink cans. This allowed them to perfect their designs before they were set loose on the full size barrels and rope. Inevitably, one raft fell apart and the cadets ended up in the freezing water. It is all down to the tying!

Gliding at RAF Kenley

Every year there is always the opportunity to glide at RAF Kenley. This offers a chance to try something different to flying. The cadets thoroughly enjoy the winch launcher, the silence of the flight and the breath-taking panoramic views of the beautiful Surrey countryside. The day is always more hands on than flying as the cadets get to connect the cable to the glider, scream out words such as 'All Out – All Out' and run with the wing tips until the glider is swept from their hands.



Germany Camp

Three of the Fourth Form cadets travelled to Germany to experience service life on a busy working base in Germany. They undertook work experience and met a variety of servicemen and women who have different roles within the RAF. The week also included competitions against cadets from other schools. The cadets found it a very rewarding week, despite missing home comforts.

Shooting- Range Days

The Section offers a selection of range days throughout the year, during which a handful have completed their marksmanship badge, several with top marks. This allows the cadets to utilize their weapons safety training which is carried out in the fourth year.

Flying Scholarship

Last year we continued our annual tradition of a cadet being awarded a flying scholarship, which is an impressive record. Nick Cain was lucky enough to be awarded this honour and enjoyed a two week residential course at Tayside, in Dundee, during which he studied both the practical and theoretical sides of flying. He completed the course and his report showed that the officers were very impressed with his knowledge, skills and attitude.

Gliding Scholarships

During the course of last year Ollie Foord, Aedan Torzodo, Takis Panayotis, Ben Walker and Jonathan Withers all completed their Gliding Scholarship with the majority achieving their silvers wings.

Biennial Review

The RAF section had the duty of performing the Guard of Honour at the 2011 Biennial Review. This was the culmination of several months' hard work with 2Lt Fairclough. To his surprise, on the day we were as 'smart as carrots' and performed our routine seamlessly, in front of a large crowd. The Gun Run was the highlight of the Review. The RAF team had been working hard on their gun which showed on the day and the cadets worked well as a team. There was also the opportunity for cadets to either participate in sailing races or leisurely enjoy a kayak round Mercers' Lake. A large rock-climbing wall was erected for those who weren't competing. Many conquered their fear and reached the top of the wall.

Summer Camp

Seven cadets spent a week at RAF High Wycombe. Here they enjoyed a range of activities such as shooting, go karting, high ropes and flying. On camp the cadets get a taste of what life is like on an RAF base and this includes many hours spent perfecting drill routines. One of the highlights was the night exercise where the cadets were asked to create a culinary masterpiece out of a 24 hour ration pack. Ollie Foord's group created an amazing atmosphere in the woods and served a three course meal to the judging officers. It is amazing what a small bottle of tabasco can do! The cadet loved their experience and made a lot of new friends from other schools.

By Cdt Sgt Becky Gough and Cdt Sgt Alicia Newman



Gliding Scholarship Review 19th to 29th August 2011

On the 19th August I set off to DCAE Cosford and 633 VGS Squadron which is based on the operational airfield where technicians and marshals practice their skills on Jet Provost and Jaguar aircraft. The first evening was a mixture of getting unpacked and settled into our accommodation, meeting other cadets on the course, and having a read through our trainee guide, which we would eventually find would melt into our brains over the ten day course.

The course would follow a pretty set routine over the next ten days. Reveille would be at 0630, for a breakfast in the junior ranks' mess. After that we would take a minibus to the airfield, which was a short journey across a railway, to the other site. Once there, we would don our flying suits, and sit down for the met and ops briefing for the day.

One of the qualities that you need for a flying scholarship is the willingness to help out, I cannot recall the number of times I was asked to get a bucket and sponge to wipe off the dead flies which accumulate on the leading edge of the wing. In fact by the time the course was nearly over we had devised a way to clean them in the best possible way, by a combination of teamwork and elbow grease.

The flying would come when the customary morning fog or low cloud had cleared out of the area. On most days we would be allowed about two sorties of around 45 minutes each, depending on the number of instructors present at the squadron. The flying would follow the set out routine of the manual with the basic controls coming before the more advanced skills such as the landing and taking off.

My solo flight came around after seven days on the course, and I felt fully prepared to take to the skies by myself but first I needed to pass a pre-solo test, which involved three circuits with an instructor on board, but flying myself the whole time. The test was challenging because any mistake, however small, would be scrutinised. I passed this with no problems, enabling me to line up on the runway, without an instructor for the first time. The adrenaline was pumping and weirdly this made me feel calmer, although I did double check my pre-take off checks, before opening up the throttle and heading off down the runway. This was it, I was by myself about to take off, before I had even passed my driving test. Being in charge of an aircraft was the best feeling. Although I thought I would have a complete blank when I was up there, I didn't, and everything my instructor had told me came flooding back. The solo flight went by very quickly, and the course was great fun. It will stick in my mind and I will be sure to recommend it to other cadets. I would love to be a pilot in the RAF, and I hope this will be a stepping stone towards achieving my ambition.

By Cdt Cpl Foord

