



For immediate release

1206 (Mercian) RAF Air Cadets Lichfield Staffordshire 30th August 2013

Air Commodore John Gaffney and Mr Michael Fabricant MP join the cadets of 1206 (Mercian) Squadron on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary Dining-in night.

The evening of Friday 30th August marked the official celebration of 50 years in service to Lichfield City by 1206 (Mercian) Squadron RAF Air Cadets.

The Squadron dining-in and presentation evening at the Guildhall played host to a number of distinguished guests including Air Commodore John Gaffney, Mr Michael Fabricant MP, the Mayor of Lichfield Councillor B Awty, The Chairman of Lichfield District Council Councillor D Leytham, Wing Commanders E Sharrard-Williams and S Mills, Major Chris Maycock, acting CO DMS(W) and Commander S Brown. The formal dinner was run exactly as it would be in the RAF and gave the cadets a chance to experience some of the traditions and customs that form the foundation of these occasions.

After an excellent 3 course meal, 1206 (Mercian) Squadron Corps of Drums performed in front of the assembled audience of officers, staff, guests and parents of the cadets. The performance was to a very high standard and afterwards in his speech Mr Michael Fabricant commented that they were every bit as polished as the Royal Marines Band, albeit without the benefit of the White Pith Helmets.

Speeches by other guests of honour including Air Commodore John Gaffney and Staffordshire Wing Commander Elliot Sharrard-Williams praised the cadets for their commitment to providing services to the community and noted that the Squadron

motto 'Laboris Gloria Ludi' – Work hard, play hard, demonstrated how good discipline, a sense of responsibility and having a good time go hand in hand in the RAF Air Cadets and how the cadets of 1206 epitomised those set of values.

The speeches concluded with Flight Lieutenant Chris Kelly thanking the organisers and the caterers who had all been efficient, friendly and made a superb contribution to the evenings event. He finished by listing the achievements of the Squadron in the recent year that included 4th place at the Wing Field Day with a notable 1st in Media and 2nd place in drill. Only surpassed by a very recent win in the Lock Drill Competition last week.

All a very long way from a time 50 years ago when The Squadron was formed on 14th January 1963 by ex RAF Pilot Terry (Jonah) Jones when there was no twitter, facebook or internet but the values of honour and duty remain on. All the speakers were keen to stress that the RAF Air Cadets is not a recruitment movement for the RAF but whatever career they choose they can be assured of a head start in the skills of management and leadership. That said, quoted statistics on the night confirmed that 30% of officers and 50% of pilots were former RAF Air Cadets. With the sort of experiences and performances we saw at the Guildhall you can see where many of the future RAF aircrew will be coming from.

Presentation awards on the night were made to:

Academic Achievement - Cpl Alister Daire
Community Service Award - Cpl Alister Daire
Shooting - Cdt Kieren Horton
Sports - Cdt Rhianon Smith
Endeavour - Cpl Sam Wyss
Leadership Award - Cdt Tom Larkin
Kevin Main Aviation Cup - Sgt Graham Haley
Cadet's Cadet - Cdt Tom Larkin
Best Recruit - Cdt Lindsay Ingle
Best Cadet - Cdt Tom Larkin

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