

# RUNDLE CUP DAY – TIDWORTH POLO CLUB

Published in News on 16 Jul 2003

The Patron of The British Forces Foundation, HRH The Prince of Wales, along with Prince William and Prince Harry, played for the charity's polo team at the prestigious Rundle Cup Day. The royal trio, joined by BFF Director Mark Cann, ran out victors in front of thousands of spectators.

## RUNDLE CUP DAY – TIDWORTH POLO CLUB

HRH The Prince of Wales and his two sons, Prince William and Prince Harry, once again demonstrated their continued support for The British Forces Foundation when they turned out for the charity's polo team at the prestigious Rundle Cup Day.

Wearing their Highgrove colours the three princes took on the Combined Services Polo Association for the coveted Indian Cavalry Officers' Association trophy.

The trio, joined by BFF Director Mark Cann, steered the charity to a 6-2 victory in front of thousands of spectators. This was the second time in successive years that the princes had played for The British Forces Foundation.

The crowds were then treated to the annual clash between the Army and Royal Navy in the Rundle Cup which saw the Army win by the odd goal.

The event, staged at Tidworth Polo Club and sponsored by Akhter Computers and BAE Systems, proved to be a memorable and fun day for all.

## **Archives from 2004**

**King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament**

## **Published in News on 29 Sep 2004**

THE Army was invited for the second year to send a team to Thailand to compete in the annual King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament. Sponsored by British Airways the players soon got to grips with this new take on the sport and put up good performances against strong opposition.

THE Army was invited for the second year to send a team to Thailand to compete in the annual King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament.

A Regimental team from the Kings Royal Hussars competed in 2003 but due to operational commitments were unable to compete in 2004. Lt Col Felix Gedney threw open the invitation Army wide and formed a team from past and present members of the Rhine Army Polo Association based in Germany.

Elephant Polo is played at an amateur level in Nepal (the home of elephant polo), Sri Lanka and now Thailand. The original concept was dreamed up between two horse polo players while competing at the Cresta Run in St Moritz, Switzerland.

Sponsored by British Airways the Army team flew out in early September and based itself close to the Thai Military ground three hours south of Bangkok at the spa town of Hua Hin – favoured by Thai Royalty for its cool breezes and long stretches of golden coastline.

Five rigorous practice sessions followed to experiment with elephant selection, stick length and elephant driver (mahoot) instruction. The basic rules are the same as horse polo, but with the pitch being two thirds of the size and only three players on each team.

The start to the tournament on the Monday was preceded by a colourful and much feted opening ceremony involving all the players, elephants and drivers. The tournament hosted 14 teams from all over the world with varying degrees of skill level-from hugely experienced elephant trainers to high and low goal polo players to nil experience of either elephants or any form of polo. The army team fell somewhere in the latter category.

Drawn in a very tight league against the double world champions from Germany and a local Bangkok side, the Army of Lt Col Felix Gedney, Major George Deakin and Captain James Cretney played hard and fast polo, but were pipped at both posts by teams that fielded the most experienced elephant polo players in the world.

To the uninitiated the sport may seem rather cumbersome, but the elephants are surprisingly nimble and supple and seem to bend their bodies to enable the players to hit the ball. Played in 35 degrees of heat with a two metres of stick, with all the twisting, lurching, and encouragement of the mahoot, the sport is truly an experience not easy to forget.

Two further matches followed to qualify for the finals day and the highlight of the tour was beating a former All Black Rugby side in front of a packed spectator stand. Preceded by a traditional 'haka' and suitably English retort Major Tim Jalland and Major Andy Rule took to the field, gloriously slotting goals from the No1 position. The Army were voted most improved side during the tournament.

However, elephant polo in Thailand is not just about the sport. All the proceeds of the tournament go to the Thai Elephant Polo Association which promotes the welfare and care of elephants all over Thailand especially those that have suffered at the hands of illegal loggers on the borders of Burma and Cambodia. The associated tournament entertainment was spectacular to say the least with lavish dinners at the 'Generals Mansion' overlooking the sea and a Brazilian Gala Dinner, and cocktail parties and receptions on all other nights.

And so to the future, and the outlook for 2005 looks good. Sticks are being fashioned from imported bamboo, and practice sessions scheduled in Hamburg with cut down landrovers and jeeps under the tutelage of the German world champions. The lure of an exotic location, good sponsorship and excellent camaraderie and sport is alluring.

The rules and regulations of the game can be found at [www.thaielepolo.com](http://www.thaielepolo.com)

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## **CSPA Tour To Ecuspa**

**Published in News on 02 Sep 2004**

THE CSPA team travelled to the USA for an 11 day tour to the Eastern Circuit of the United States Polo Association. This fabulous visit, made memorable by the hospitality of the hosts, culminated in the Commonwealth Cup match which had spectators on the edge of their seats.

### **Tour Diary**

**Thursday 2nd September 2004** – There was a feeling of great excitement when the team met at Heathrow Airport. The journey began well when Katherine managed to ensure that we received an upgrade and moreover that we would be allowed to use the First Class Virgin lounge. Virgin looked after us well and it was not long until we were in Washington and in the safe hands of Tom Hulfish aka ‘The Big Fish’. Tom has been involved with the CSPA Tour since its inception and has assumed the role of being the chief organiser and all round tour legend. That evening the team went out with some old friends of the tour and our hosts. For Katherine and Nick it was there first taste of Poultners Bar, which is Tom’s second (or maybe even first) home.

**Friday 3rd September** – The team set off to Great Meadow Polo Club in Middleburg, where we were due to have an evening arena match. We had time to visit The National Sporting Library, where they have an extensive collection of literature and articles covering the history of horses in sport. Whilst we were there we met Juan Salinas- Bentley who is the Great Meadow Polo Club manager and professional. Juan has helped the team for many years, and this year he had once again organised the next two days polo for us. There were a few nerves before our first game, as it was for most of the team a fairly new experience playing in the arena. However any nerves were soon forgotten as the team immediately took control of the game, with Justin and Tim scoring freely. By the end of the first chukka the USA Team had pulled a couple of goals back and the score was 5-3. The second chukka then continued in the same vein, as Justin and Nick began working well together. So at half time the CSPA Team were leading 8-4. It was a dream start for the British and so far the Americans had failed to make an impact on the game. However, it is “a game of two halves” as they say, and this one certainly was. The Americans came out in the second half like men possessed, and on some serious horsepower. Sadly we simply could not live with them in the third and fourth chukkas. Their extra experience in the arena also told and we ended up losing 16-11. The evening was sponsored by Astin Martin, so having licked our wounds we had a great party.

**Saturday 4th September** – Juan had organised for us to play a friendly grass game on Saturday at a private club just down the road from Great Meadow called, Herringwood. It was an excellent chance for the team to play together. Once again the team began well. Justin and Tim both scored early on and Ian and Nick were solid at the back. It was also encouraging to see the team beginning to play well together. Juan, who was playing for the Americans, really stepped his game up in the last chukka, to bring the Americans into striking

distance of us, but he had not counted on Tim scoring a great lofted goal in the final few minutes. From then on we were able to hold out, and run out the winners 6- 51/2.

**Sunday 5th September** – The team met up with Juan and his patron Philip Staples (who also sponsors and organises the Commonwealth Cup) in The Stock Exchange, which is a classic American greasy spoon. The team then set off to Brandywine Polo Club in Pennsylvania. Brandywine is a traditional heartland of polo and riding, and we found out why when we arrived to see two pitches in immaculate condition, and 8 goal polo already underway. Once that game had finished we were on against a select Brandywine Team. It was now becoming a bit of a habit to begin well, and at Brandywine we did not disappoint. Nick opened the account with a huge 60 yard penalty which boded well for the rest of the tour. From then on we had some trouble turning our superiority in the game into goals. By the fourth chukka we were 4-3 up. They then scored early on in the fourth to bring the game level, and we simply could not find a winner. Nick had a chance in the dying seconds, but only managed to push the ball wide – which is some ways summed up our performance.

**Monday 6th September** – Dixon Stroud had invited us to play a morning game on his private farm, and so after breakfast we were straight down there to play. The pitch was like a bowling green and we were up against a formidable 6 goal team, so good polo was guaranteed. The CSPA played some truly excellent polo, both in attack and defence. Ian was solid at the back, putting in some huge ride offs, while Nick and Justin worked frantically in the midfield. By the start of the final chukka we were 5- 4 up, having added three goals to the two that we had received on handicap. Then we managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Stroud's Team scored once with one minute to go to draw the game level, and then with the first bell having gone, they managed to score again to win the match. It really was an excellent performance by the CSPA Team and while the result was disappointing there were lots of positives that we took from the game. Sadly we had to leave Brandywine to head back to Washington.

**Tuesday 7th September** – We were never sure that it was going to happen, so there was huge excitement as we headed down to the US Park Police Training Stables. There, two Park Police Instructors, Billy Good and Poncho Gonzales, were waiting to take us around Washington on horse back. This was truly a once in a lifetime experience. We spent four hours riding around the city and all of its monuments and sites. With the park police we had the run of the city, and it was simply fantastic.

**Wednesday 8th September** – Sadly the polo at Jack Whittemore's in Seneca, Maryland was cancelled due to the weather, and so the team had a rest day in Alexandria. We all did some shopping and then hosted a BBQ in the evening for all the people in Washington who had so far looked after us.

**Thursday 9th September** – After a slow morning we all heading into Washington to go to the Smithsonian Museum, and to have a closer look at the Vietnam War Memorial, which was very moving indeed. And then it was back to shower and change for a visit to the White House. The President's Chief of Protocol, Donald Esenat plays polo at Great Meadow and so he had extremely generously invited us on a tour of the White House. We met him, and Juan and his family at The Old Ebbitt Grill where we had a delicious meal before heading over to the White House. Donald Esenat took us in to the White House through the door which is used by Heads of State when they come on an official visits. The highlight of the tour was undoubtedly seeing the Oval Office. Finally we visited the Rose Garden. It was another once in a lifetime experience, and truly awe inspiring to see the inner chambers of the most powerful country on Earth.

**Friday 10th September** – It was once again time to move, and this time we set off to Richmond, Virginia. In the evening we went to a beautiful house, appropriately called Soldiers' Lodge, for a big charity auction which was organised by the same charity which we were playing polo for on Sunday. It consisted of a live and silent auction. Unknown to Tim the team outbid him in the silent auction for a polo painting, which much to his surprise we presented to him later in the evening. The Team then set off to the famous Bart Fry's Alpha Omega Farm. Bart has hosted the tour for years and he did not disappoint this year. After treating us to lunch at his golf club he then treated us to our best polo match of the tour. He has the most immaculate polo fields, and he produced some ponies to match. The team we played against were impossibly strong, with two Argentine 4 goal players in the middle, but they played open polo, and they really let us play our game as well. We lost by two goals but it was the most open and free flowing polo of the tour.

**Sunday 12th September: Commonwealth Cup Day** – When we arrived at the venue the crowds were already growing, and there was a real buzz in the marquees which surrounded the ground. Before the real game began they had a 'Big Hitting contest'. Justin did not have the best start when his stick broke on his warm up swing, but after that the CSPA fared better and Nick in the end won the contest fairly easily. With the fun and games over, it was time for the real show. They played both National Anthems, announced the teams and umpires, one of which was Julian Hipwood, and then play was under way. The Commonwealth Team was on paper a very strong team including Juan(3 goals), Gary Leonard (2 goals) and Philip staples (1 goals), so they gave us a 3 goal start on handicap. As soon as then game began Justin once again showed how dangerous he could be by scoring twice to give us a 5- 0 lead. Over the next two chukkas the Commonwealth Team fought hard to get within one goal of us at 6-5, before the CSPA once again extended their lead, so that by the start of the fifth chukka we were 9-6 in the lead, due both Nick and Justin scoring goals. Once again the Commonwealth Team came back and it was only due to a Cowley 60 yard penalty that we went into the final chukka 10- 9 to the good. The tension by now was huge, and the crowd were really enjoying the hard fought tussle. Nick scored early on in the sixth to put us two goals ahead, only for disaster to strike. The Commonwealth Team suddenly found their scoring touch, putting through two quick goals to bring the scores level at 11 all. But things were soon to get worse when Juan in the last three seconds of the game scored with a near side under the neck...and in one instant destroyed our hopes of winning the Commonwealth Cup after so many years in American hands. It was a fantastic game and all of the CSPA players played exceptionally well. Justin deservedly won most Valuable Player; his huge work rate, competitive spirit and goal scoring meant that he was worth far more than his handicap suggested. The horses that the CSPA used were provided by the University of Virginia, and they were all very good. The standard of horses from the university has improved dramatically over the years and the team of grooms who came with them really looked after us. Our reception from the crowd after the game was amazing if somewhat humbling. Through the course of the tour we had made many friends and loads of them had come to support which was fantastic. There was also a large contingent from the British Embassy.

**Monday 13th September** – After many good byes the team set off in Monica for one last journey back up to Washington where we meet Tom. Finally it all ended where it began with the Big Fish at Washington Airport.

Overall it was the most amazing tour and all of the team will have a huge number of special memories from their time out there. There are a massive amount of people who have made this tour possible on both sides of the Atlantic. Without them this tour would never go ahead and we are hugely grateful for everything that they do.

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## **Four-nations Tournament (nigeria) January 2005**

**Published in News on 18 Jul 2004**

THE CSPA has been invited to take part in a four-nations tournament in Nigeria from January 11 to 15 2005 along with the Pakistan, US and Nigerian military. Team selection will be in October and anyone who wishes to be considered, and is in the military with a polo plus handicap, should contact Mark Cann by email only ([markcann@ukafpa.org.uk](mailto:markcann@ukafpa.org.uk)).

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## **CSPA Hosts Pakistan Military Team**

**Published in News on 17 Jul 2004**

A TOURING Pakistan Military team arrived in England in July to compete against the CSPA in a three-match test series for the Chapple Cup. The exchange between the two countries has gone on for many years, although this was the first visit after a ten year gap, and this tour proved a great success.

A TOURING Pakistan Military team arrived in England in July to compete against the CSPA in a three-match test series for the Chapple Cup.

The exchange between the two countries has gone on for many years, although this was the first visit after a ten year gap.

The three-match Chapple Cup series began with the United Services Cup at Guards Polo Club. The visitors settled quickly into their stride but the CSPA team had the edge and went on to win the game by a single goal.

The second contest, held the following day, was for the Sudan Cup at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In driving rain the CSPA proved far too strong for the Pakistan side and romped to victory by seven and a half goals to one.

The team on this day were Gp Capt Tim Brown, Capt Richard Mason, Maj Andrew Fox-Pitt and Maj Nick Hunter. Not only were they presented with the Sudan Cup but they had secured the Chapple Cup trophy too.

The final match was played three days later at Tidworth Polo Club for the Aldershot Cup. Although a formality as far as the series was concerned, it was a good close game and Pakistan were on top for much of the match.

However, the turning point came when their best player took a nasty fall and was substituted in the final chukka. In the end, the CSPA completed a clean sweep of the series with a seven goals to six victory.

The Chapple Cup was first awarded in 1998 in recognition of Field Marshal Sir John Chapple's contribution to Services' Polo as the CSPA President.

In 2000 the CSPA beat Abu Dhabi and in 2001, and again in 2003, they were victorious over the ECUSPA (Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association). In fact the CSPA has now won the series for the past seven years.

The CSPA enjoyed a fabulous tour to Pakistan earlier this year and the hospitality extended to them by their hosts was second to none.

Likewise, the Pakistan Military team was made to feel most welcome during their stay in England.

Throughout their visit they enjoyed a varied itinerary in addition to the polo competition.

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## **Rundle Cup Day – Tidworth Polo Club**

**Published in News on 17 Jul 2004**

THERE was a major upset in this year's Rundle Cup to keep the minds of the spectators off the atrocious weather conditions and on some enthralling polo. HRH The Prince of Wales, along with Prince William and Prince Harry, also braved the monsoon-like rains in their charity match.

THERE was a shock victory for the Royal Navy over the Army in the historic Rundle Cup match at Tidworth Polo Club.

In a thrilling encounter, the Navy, who considered themselves lucky to come out on top, played well as a team. They defended strongly and took their chances.

The Army had strengthened their team from a two goal to a three goals side in the days leading up to the event. They played well and were very unfortunate not to convert more of their many chances.

At the end of this tense match there was just half a goal in it – the victorious Navy scoring four and a half goals.

Earlier in the day the CSPA team took to the polo field against The British Forces Foundation/Highgrove team. HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince William and Miss Zara Phillips were joined by the CSPA Director Mark Cann. He replaced Prince Harry who had to pull out of the line-up because of an injury.

Just two days earlier the princes had played in atrocious weather at the charity polo day in Sandhurst – but on Rundle Cup Day the conditions were even worse.

Despite the monsoon-like rain there was some impressive polo action. The royal side put up a great fight against a strong Combined Services Polo Association team who ran out winners by six goals to five.

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## **Charity Polo Tournament – Royal Military Academy Sandhurst**

**Published in News on 13 Jun 2004**

Torrential rain did little to dampen the spirits or sense of occasion at the Sandhurst Charity Polo Day in aid of The British Forces Foundation. With HRH The Prince of Wales, along with Prince William and Prince Harry, taking part the crowds were treated to some spectacular polo.

The delightful setting of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was barely visible during the downpours but all three matches went ahead as scheduled.

Music from The Band of the Hussars and Light Dragoons set the tone for the event and the champagne flowed.

The highlight of the afternoon's action, sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland, was the much anticipated game between HRH The Prince of Wales' team and The Commandant's team.

HRH Prince William and HRH Prince Harry lined up alongside their father and one of the world's greatest players, Gabriel Donoso.

Facing them were Gabriel's equally talented brother Jose, Tim Gannon, his son Chris and John Goodman.

It was end to end polo with some sublime play from both sides despite the atrocious conditions.

The princes thrilled the crowd and the quality of the Donoso brothers shone through. Young Chris Gannon proved he is a player who will go far in the game.

With goals in every chukka it was ultimately the royal side who triumphed with a seven goals to six scoreline to lift the coveted Sandhurst Cup.

Earlier in the day the Combined Services Polo Association took on the Pakistan Military touring team in what was the second game in the three-match Chapple Cup series.

Having won by a single goal at Guards, London, on the previous day the CSPA were looking to seal overall victory.

In driving rain they proved far too strong for the Pakistan side and thrashed them by seven and a half goals to one. They were presented with the Sudan Cup and had secured the Chapple Cup trophy. The CSPA team were Gp Capt Tim Brown, Capt Richard Mason, Maj Andrew Fox-Pitt and Maj Nick Hunter.

Director of the CSPA, Mark Cann, said: "It was yet another wonderful occasion which thankfully even the weather didn't manage to spoil.

"We are deeply grateful to all those involved in putting it on and supporting it – especially Tim Gannon, John Goodman and The Royal Bank of Scotland. It was a great day for the CSPA.

Maj Gen Andrew Ritchie CBE, Commandant of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, said: "It was a great pleasure to host the Pakistan Army Polo team this year and of course a huge privilege that HRH The Prince of Wales again agreed to play. With his talented sons and two of the finest players in the world also playing it was a brilliant exhibition.

"We should not forget the reason we gather here. This event has succeeded over the past few years in raising a wonderful amount of money for The British Forces Foundation of which HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron.

"We are deeply indebted to Mr Tim Gannon, Mr John Goodman and to the Royal Bank of Scotland for their most generous donations and support to the event."

Maj Gen Ritchie added: "Sandhurst provides many of the officer cadets with their first opportunity to become involved in this exciting sport.

"Through the support of both the Army and the Combined Services Polo Association these new players will have the chance to develop their skills and deepen their enthusiasm whilst at the Academy."

[Click to view photo album](#)

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## **Royal Navy Tour – Argentina**

**Published in News on 15 Feb 2004**

THE Royal Navy broke new ground in March, sending a five-man team on a tour to the home of polo – Argentina. It was the first time the Royal Navy polo team has toured there and it was the ideal opportunity to hone the skills of five riders most likely to represent the RN during the current season – Capt Richard Mason, Cdrs Adrian Aplin and Arnie Lustman, Lt Nick Cooke-Priest and SLt Geoff Braithwaite.

The squad was based at El Retiro Polo School just outside Buenos Aires, and the first three days were spent getting used to the local horses. The RN team also underwent intensive team training in tactics and all aspects of game play.

The training regime was overseen by Dr Marcos Llambias, whose critical eye was much appreciated by the RN quintet and helped bring out the best in their riding talents.

For their opening match, the RN, with a team handicap of just 2, took on a 5-goal team from the Argentine Navy. The match was hard fought but excellent team play (and excellent horse power) saw the intrepid British visitors record a 10–3 victory.

There was not much opportunity for the RN team to celebrate its red letter day – 24 hours later they had to compete against an awesome 11-goal team from the Argentine Army – in football terms it would be like a pub side taking on Manchester United!

The Navy team battled hard in 32C heat but the superior skills of the Argentine quartet led to them winning 16–8.

The next day the RN team and the Argentine Navy and Army teams combined for a friendly tournament.

The last week was spent with further training and team practices, followed by a final match against a local team, which the RN won 7–5 to successfully round off an excellent tour.

For information about playing polo within the Royal Navy, please contact the Cdr AM Lustman on 0207 2183079 or fax 0207 2184702.

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## **Chairman's Message**

**Published in News on 14 Feb 2004**

CAPTAIN Richard Mason took over the chairmanship of the CSPA from General Reddy Watt last autumn. He found the CSPA in good heart and shape, both at the 'top end' with the option to field a 10-goal team, and in the growing number of players in the -2 to 0 range

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I AM delighted to have taken over the Chairmanship of the CSPA from General Reddy Watt last autumn, and would like to thank him for his wise counsel and most effective stewardship of the organisation over the last three years.

I find the CSPA in good heart and shape, both at the 'top end' with the option to field a 10-goal team, and in the growing number of players in the -2 to 0 range, whose enthusiasm and commitment is improving the standard of Services polo all the time.

Brigadier John Wright and Tidworth Polo Club continue to provide excellent support and encouragement at the core of CSPA activity, despite the uncertainties for equestrian facilities raised by the forthcoming Private Finance Initiative contract for Tidworth Garrison.

Equally, the Sandhurst Polo Club maintains its amazing success story in introducing many officer cadets to the sport, and we are enormously grateful to Major General Ritchie and his staff for their backing.

A great vote of thanks is also due to our Director, Major Mark Cann, for his stirring efforts across all areas of CSPA activity, but particularly in his fundraising role which, among other things, enables us to maintain a very enjoyable and beneficial overseas tour programme.

A team visited Pakistan in March and we look forward to the reciprocal visit by the Pakistan Army this summer, with further outgoing tours to the US and South Africa in the autumn.

None of the above would have been possible without the continued support of our loyal sponsors.

A special thank you to them, and I hope you enjoy the Combined Services polo events this summer.

**Captain Richard Mason – CSPA Chairman**

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## **CSPA Tour – Pakistan**

**Published in News on 13 Feb 2004**

An historic tour to Pakistan proved to be so much more than just the competitive polo. It was the re-establishment of links between the people and militaries of the two countries. And such was the success of the visit the Pakistan Army were invited to the UK in July to compete in the Chapple Cup series.

THE Combined Services Polo Association's recent tour to Pakistan was of far greater importance than the competitive polo alone. It was an overt gesture of understanding between not only the peoples of the two countries but also the militaries of the two countries.

The CSPA have been very keen to re-establish links with the Pakistani military polo for a number of years. Indeed, due to international events, no fewer than three planned tours with Pakistan had been postponed over the last six years. It is clear for their part the Pakistanis shared the frustration of those postponements and have been equally as keen to re-establish relations.

The product of this was a fantastic two week tour by the CSPA to Pakistan during which the team received an extraordinarily generous level of hospitality – and most importantly it was great fun.

As ever in polo, and with polo people, it is the shared passion for the great game and its magnificent horses that transcends language, religion and national difference. To see the players of both teams chatting after a game in Lahore was no different to seeing players chatting informally after any game anywhere in the world.

The tour began after arrival on a hot day in Karachi and a transfer to Lahore. The four-goal CSPA team comprised Major Mark Cann (1), Captain Nick Harrison (0), Captain Mark Dollar (2) and Captain Rupert Lewis (1).

Wives were also invited and, as with everyone on the tour, were extremely well looked after. Mrs Dollar and Cann carried long-term reserves, as both were pregnant, the latter with twins! Mrs Harrison enjoyed doing all the things they couldn't! The level of the care and hospitality was evident in the fact a doctor accompanied the tourists wherever they went.

This was a very small CSPA squad and they were lucky to stay fit throughout especially due to the likelihood of tummy upsets and the fact Capt Dollar – the best rider on the tour – fell off no less than six times!

Over the two weeks it was hot during the day – with temperatures rising between 17 and 29C – and cold during the night, dropping to 5C.

Before the first exhibition match in Lahore the team paid visits to Mona Remount depot and the Anarkali tombs and were treated to dinner with Brigadier Pataudi of the Army Polo Committee.

The first sporting action was against the Lahore Garrison team – and the CSPA ran out victors 7-6 after a tight, hard game.

That evening the players enjoyed dinner with Lt Gen Rafi Alam and the following morning went sightseeing at Lahore Fort.

In the afternoon, an exhibition match against Lahore Polo Club saw the CSPA side suffer their first defeat with the score line 3-6.

It also marked the end of the team's stay in Lahore and the following day they departed to Peshawar by air for an exhibition match against Peshawar Polo Club. The home side narrowly won by 5-6. While in Peshawar the players visited the Khyber Pass and enjoyed dinner with IGFC Commander at the Bala Hissar Fort.

For the next stage of the tour they headed for Rawalpindi and en route visited the Armd Corps Centre Nowshera and Probyn's Horse. Here they competed in the Army Polo Championship with matches on the Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

The team played well to reach the final of the championship but were well beaten by a superior side three goal to six.

Before returning to London there was just time for a visit to Bhurban Hills for a game of golf and dinner, plus a trip to Taxila and dinner with Gen Syed Arif Hassan, President of the Army Polo Committee.

The tour was excellent fun and the team, who were popular and mixed well, were superbly looked after. The relationship between the two polo associations is now extremely healthy and must be continued.

In fact such was the success of the re-establishment of relations and new found friendship, the CSPA had no hesitation through Mark Cann to extend an invitation from Field Marshal Sir John Chapple to the Pakistan Army to tour the UK between July 4 and 12, and compete in the Chapple Cup series. They will be most welcome again.

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## **RAF Polo Takes Off**

**Published in News on 05 Jan 2004**

The RAF polo team has undergone a revolution, which has sparked an upturn in form. For many years the RAF team has suffered at the hands of the other services but now has struck a new winning formula – based on sheer hard work, dedication, training and excellent teamwork.

THE Royal Air Force Polo Association can trace its roots back to 1919, when many ex-cavalry officers joined the new service and came into contact with the vast areas of flat grass on the new aerodromes that were springing around Britain.

Between the wars, Sir Winston Churchill encouraged polo among the airmen, because he recognised that the skills of tactical awareness, co-ordination and rapid manoeuvre needed for polo, were similar to those needed for aerial combat.

Until recently, base membership had been in the doldrums. However, a change in approach and some energetic recruiting has seen an increase in the number of active players, and membership levels are on the increase.

The RAF polo team has undergone a revolution, which has sparked an upturn in form. For many years the RAF team has suffered at the hands of the other services but the new

winning

form has been brought about by a willingness of opposing teams to match the RAF on handicap – and by sheer hard work, dedication, training and excellent teamwork.

During the 2003 season the RAF team drew with a cavalry team, were runners-up in the Cornwell Affiliates tournament and defeated the Royal Navy in the prestigious Duke Of York Cup (last won by the RAF in 1996).

The success has been largely due to the A-team stalwarts Group Captain Tim Brown, Wing Commander Mark Smith and Squadron Leader Martin Adcock, and the arrival of several new faces.

The team mainly bases itself at Tidworth Polo Club, the home of the Combined Services Polo Association.

Located in the stunning grounds of Tedworth House, it is where the majority of the RAF players learned to play the sport.

There is also a newly-established and fast-growing polo club based at RAF Cranwell. There are also individual playing members all over the UK.

The future of RAF polo is looking up, with a growing membership. This year the RAFPA will field A and B teams and is also pushing through a series of initiatives to raise the general awareness of RAF polo.

For information about playing polo within the Royal Air Force, please contact the Chairman, Group Captain Tim Brown on 020 7217 0461, or email secretary Flight Lieutenant Kris Bebbington at [Kristian.bebbington@btopenworld.com](mailto:Kristian.bebbington@btopenworld.com).

## **Archives from 2006**

### **August Fixtures 2006**

#### **Published in Army Polo on 05 Aug 2006**

The Hackett Army Polo Team competed in the Major General's Cup at Guards Polo Club on August 11, 12 and 13.

They booked their place in the final, which was played in a thunderstorm, but lost in the fifth chukka to Bon Coeur by seven goals to six.

The Hackett Army Polo Team was made up of Lt Col Johnny Wheeler -1, Major Crispin Lockhart 0, Lt Jack Mann 2, and Ct Harry Wales 1.

A team mostly made up of Bovington players was invited to play at Watership Down but again the weather intervened which meant the match took place in the arena. Although they lost 6-5, Johnny Wheeler, Graeme Craig, Quentin Hicks and Harry Wales were well entertained and looked after.

The Senior Army Team played a MacMillan Cancer Exhibition Match at Orchard Polo Club in Dorset on Saturday August 26. In front of a crowd of some 800 people they faced up to professional polo players from Longdole Polo Club in Gloucestershire (the Cudmore/Hanbury families).

It was a close and exciting match that thrilled the crowd. The Army side were pipped to the post in the final chukka with the score at four and a half goals to four. The team were Capt Tim Verdon 2, Lt Jack Mann 2, Maj Nick Hunter 2 and Capt Mark Dollar 2.

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## **Thomas Crown Captains & Subalterns Tournament**

**Published in Army Polo on 23 Jul 2006**

EIGHT teams battled it out for honours over two exciting days of competition at Tidworth Polo Club.

The Thomas Crown Captains & Subalterns Polo Tournament was played at Tidworth Polo Club over the July 22 and 23 weekend.

Eight teams from throughout all three services played the two days with a mixed range of talent on display – mostly beginners. They included the RAF, Royal Navy, AGC, Royal Dragoon Guards, RMAS, RLC and two teams from Bovington.

The tournament had two seedings which culminated in the finals' day in front of some 700 spectators. Tidworth's excellent Fisher Ground, having absorbed the rain from the previous day's huge thunderstorm, played superbly well.

Sponsors Thomas Crown attracted a knowledgeable crowd from the west of England who enjoyed the spectacle in brilliant sunshine.

For the first time in many years the RAF beat a powerful Bovington team who were plagued by injury in the first chukka. The RAF team, who had come from all four corners of the British Isles, put on a fine display and were worthy winners at seven goals to four.

In the subsidiary final, the Bovington second team repeated their success of last year – despite the best intentions of a young and raw Sandhurst team. They ran out victors with the final score 8-2.

“The weekend attracted a large crowd for the APOLOA sponsored drinks party which, for the second year running, was in the rain at the Tidworth clubhouse,” said Lt Col Simon Ledger, Chairman of the Army Polo Association.

“Thanks are due to our sponsor Jeremy Gower and his company Thomas Crown, and all their guests, as well as to Brigadier John Wright and his team at Tidworth for the marvellous facilities provided.

“One team who deserve a special mention were the Royal Dragoon Guards who had come over all the way from Germany and were unlucky not to get in the money.”

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## **Berenberg Bank United Services Cup & Hackett Inter-regimental Final**

**Published in News on 16 Jul 2006**

TWO finals, one venue, made for an exciting climax to the Chapple Cup Series and the oldest tournament in polo.

The Berenberg Bank United Services Cup and the Hackett Inter-Regimental Final were held at Guards on July 16.

The US Cup was the third and final game in the Chapple Cup Series between the CSPA and a touring team from South Africa. Already two nil down in the Series the visitors were looking to grab some kind of consolation.

But as the form book suggested, it wasn't to be and the CSPA completed their white-wash of the touring side.

It was a close game, as reflected in the final seven to five score-line, but the better teamwork gave the experienced CSPA 'old' boys the edge.

Forty year-old Mark Cann was in fine form hitting three goals, including a 40-yard back-hander from an acute angle.

Campbell McNab was on top of his game for South Africa and his team played increasingly well as the series progressed.

Mark Cann, Director of the CSPA, said: "It was good to have the South Africans over as a reciprocal tour for our visit there two years ago. They had a ball, and I hope this is the beginning of a fruitful relationship."

The Hackett Inter-Regimental Final had the King's Royal Hussars up against the Household Cavalry, in what promised to be one of the closest matches for years.

Though there was a very good high standard of polo – deserving of the oldest cup in polo – it proved to be a walk-over for the Household Cavalry.

Lt Vestey was sublime in his last match for the Regiment, revelling in the space created by Ct Wales for him. The final score – nine goals to three.

The Jack Pringle Cup, awarded to the player who the best to his handicap, went to Lt Lorian McCullem who had a wonderful match for the Household Cavalry.

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## **Hackett Rundle Cup Day**

**Published in News on 15 Jul 2006**

A QUINTESENTIALLY British military day out is how best to describe the spectacular success of the Hackett Rundle Cup Day.

A quintessentially British military day out – and a spectacular success – is how best to describe the Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club on July 15.

An estimated 7,000 people basked in the glorious sunshine, with music from The Band of the Royal Marines, to witness two very exciting matches.

The ICOA Trophy, sponsored by BAE, was round two in the Chapple Cup series with the South Africa side looking to level the scores having lost the opening game at RMA Sandhurst two days earlier..

In fact, they did take an early lead and maintained that level of performance throughout. However, the CSPA, playing strongly as a team, had the scoreline all square at the start of the final chukka and then romped away with it for an eight goals to four and a half victory.

In the Hackett Rundle Cup itself the Army and Royal Navy battled it out for the honours – in a much better game than most pundits had predicted.

The Navy got off to a good start, faithful to their strategy of holding the Army as long as possible. But with the strength of Ct Wales and Maj Hunter in particular, the Army side just grew in confidence and gradually tightened their grip on the game. It was close up to the final chukka but the team in red scored more and more to finish the match seven goals to four and a half – another triumph for the Army.

Capt Hayman Joyce made an excellent contribution for the winners while the Navy's Capt Mason was, as ever, reliable at the back and a playmaker going forward.

The Best Playing Pony award went, as it did at Sandhurst two days earlier, to Ct Wales' horse. The award was sponsored and presented by ESS Support Services Worldwide.

And during the prize-giving, the PQ Saddle – awarded to a member of the Combined Services who has significantly contributed to the work of the CSPA – went to Capt Mark Dollar, retiring Secretary of the Army Polo Association.

Events at Tidworth had begun with the Jockeys versus Eventers clash in aid of the charity Inspire. The Eventers were led by Clayton Fredericks who co-ordinated the activities of Zara Phillips and Rodney Powell very well against the valiant efforts of the Jockeys led by Richard Johnson.

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## **Rma Sandhurst Charity Polo Day**

**Published in News on 13 Jul 2006**

OUTSTANDING polo crowned a wonderful day at RMAS which raised £80,000 for Service charities and military polo.

Blessed by the sun, and some exceptional polo, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Charity Polo Day on July 13 proved hugely successful.

Not only were events on the field a real crowd-pleaser but the organisation and sponsorship behind the day raised some £80,000 for Service charities and military polo.

The first match of the Sandhurst Charity Polo Day was the Sudan Cup – round one of the three-match Chapple Cup series fought between the CSPA and a touring team, who this year, were from South Africa.

The home side, with Lt Ben Vestey at the helm, proved just too strong for the visitors in their first match on strange horses.

The CSPA ran out comfortable winners by eight goals to three and a half, although it was a good flowing game with solid performances on both sides.

Next up was the Sandhurst Cup which saw the CSPA Invitational Team go head-to-head with the Commandant's Team. This was a terrific match – probably the best of its kind since its inception nine years ago, with the spectators treated to some outstanding polo.

American two-goaler Phil Heatley made a welcome return for the Invitational side and although he hasn't been playing as much as he used it wasn't difficult to see how this strong and talented player has won the US Open.

Both teams were evenly matched with the Chilean brothers Jose and Gabrielle Donoso – one on either side – controlling the play from the back. Their team-mates were inspired and each of them raised their game, playing above their handicap.

The Invitationals established an early lead in the first chukka which was whittled away over the course of the match.

Come the fifth, with 30 seconds left on the clock the Commandant's Team converted a penalty to take a 5-4 lead. But there was more drama to come as, in the dying seconds, the Invitational team were awarded a spot penalty which was struck home to secure a 5-5 draw.

There was an outstanding performance from Chris Gannon and eye-catching stuff too from Ct Wales and John Goodman. O/Cdt Wales had a tight start but relaxed into the game and scored a great goal.

The final action of the day saw Hursley Pony Club hand out a polo lesson to the gallant RMAS team in a nine goals to four and a half drubbing. George MacIntosh in particular was in excellent form and showed plenty of skill with his very long drives. However, two players from the home-side who deserve a special mention are Officer Cadets Matthew Blakiston and George Arbuthnott. They made a valiant attempt to overcome the fluency and teamwork of the Hursley play and showed real potential for the future.



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## **Teams For July Fixtures 2006**

**Published in Army Polo on 11 Jul 2006**

THE team line-ups for the CSPA's prestigious fixtures at Sandhurst, Tidworth and Guards have been released.

### **TEAMS FOR CSPA FIXTURES JULY 2006**

THE following have been selected by Chairman CSPA to play in the fixtures listed below. Players are reminded that this is a selection for the Combined Services and should be regarded as such when prioritising other commitments. Any player unable to fulfil his/her selection should notify Mark Cann on 07802 815 294.

**DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE GAMES AND THAT SOME OF THE GAMES ARE ON THE SAME DAY IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL MATCHES START ON TIME. ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME. NO ONE WILL BE THANKED FOR ALLOWING THE MATCH TO START WITH A PLAYER SHORT. INDEED THEY WILL BE FINED.**

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## **Tour To Chile – June 2006**

### **Published in Army Polo on 30 Jun 2006**

MAINTAINING a long standing relationship with the Escuela de Caballeria, Armoured Cavalry School at Quillota, two members of the APOLOA took on the Chilean Army Team for two friendly matches in June.

Although very late in the polo season for Chile, the School keep their horses in for most of the year and were able to equip Lt Col Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal) and Major Charlie Valdes-Scott (-2 goal) with some excellent ponies as well as supply a third team member for the two 3-aside matches.

The first of the two matches was played in the afternoon of arriving, with no time spent to evaluate the opposition off the pitch. It didn't take long to realise that this was more than just a friendly to the Chileans who had the professional Chilean civilian team coach playing, Sam Renato Rider, who they were keen to impress.

Captain Alfonso Anguita proved himself very talented scoring an impressive eight goals and emphasising the need for good marking, once loose he was able to shoot and score from the throw in. The first match ended in a sound victory to the Chileans of 14-6.

After a serious British team talk over some generous host nation hospitality in the splendid Officers' Casino (Mess), the British felt they were ready for some retribution the following day. In an effort to even out the score Captain Alejandro Martin (0 goal) was loaned to the British side for the second match.

Despite his reputation for a strong right arm and some defiant play from the Captain with some inspired runs, the team was still unable to dampen the frenzied attack by the opposition. The British, once again, had to concede to being able to only dent the armour of the Chilean Cavalry School losing some 11-5.

The Armoured Cavalry School is located in Quillota a one hour drive north of Santiago and has a fabulous Officers' Mess right at the heart of the school. The last tour made by a British team was in 1987 and, determined to put up a better fight for the future, this year's visit has been instrumental in hoping to establish a slot on their fixtures list in a return trip in 2007.

Match 1:

British Team:

1. Major Charles Valdes-Scott (-2 goal)
2. Teniente Gonzalo Gutierrez (0 goal)
3. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal)

Chilean Team:

1. Senor Sam Renato Rider (1 goal)

2. Captain Alfonso Anguita (3 goal)
3. Captain Miguel Kratsnoff (1 goal)

Match 2:

British Team:

1. Major Charles Valdes-Scott (-2 goal)
2. Captain Alejandro Martin (1 goal)
3. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal)

Chilean Team:

1. Senor Sam Renato Rider (1 goal)
2. Teniente Felipe Martinez (1 goal)
3. Captain Miguel Kratsnoff (1 goal)

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## **APOLOA & The Chilean Army**

**Published in News on 28 Jun 2006**

TWO members of the APOLOA took on the Chilean Army Team for two friendly matches in June.

MAINTAINING a long standing relationship with the Escuela de Caballeria, Armoured Cavalry School at Quillota, two members of the APOLOA took on the Chilean Army Team for two friendly matches in June.

Although very late in the polo season for Chile, the School keep their horses in for most of the year and were able to equip Lt Col Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal) and Major Charlie Valdes-Scott (-2 goal) with some excellent ponies as well as supply a third team member for the two 3-aside matches.

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Match 1:

British Team:

1. Major Charles Valdes-Scott (-2 goal)

2. Teniente Gonzalo Gutierrez (0 goal)
3. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal)

Chilean Team:

1. Senor Sam Renato Rider (1 goal)
2. Captain Alfonso Anguita (3 goal)
3. Captain Miguel Kratsnoff (1 goal)

Match 2:

British Team:

1. Major Charles Valdes-Scott (-2 goal)
2. Captain Alejandro Martin (1 goal)
3. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Wheeler (-1 goal)

Chilean Team:

1. Senor Sam Renato Rider (1 goal)
2. Teniente Felipe Martinez (1 goal)
3. Captain Miguel Kratsnoff (1 goal)

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## **Inter-regimental Draw 2006**

**Published in News on 01 Jun 2006**

THE draw for the 2006 Inter-regimental Tournament has taken place and the team line-ups unveiled.

NEWS FROM THE CSPA

INTER-REGIMENTAL POLO TOURNAMENT DRAW 2006

NEWS FROM THE CSPA

INTER-REGIMENTAL POLO TOURNAMENT DRAW 2006

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## **Agc Polo**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 May 2006**

Calling all AGC personnel interested in playing polo! Whether you can already ride or you are a non rider, there is now a fantastic opportunity for you to play polo and become part of the AGC polo team.

Polo is such an exhilarating team sport, the polo ponies are wonderful to ride and the cost of courses at Tidworth can be partially offset by funding available from the AGC Central Sports Fund.

AGC polo is now firmly up and running and there are a number of players of all abilities who are part of the AGC pool.

Each year they enter the Captains and Subalterns Cup (open to all ranks, and 90% of AGC players are non-commissioned) at the Combined Services Polo Club at Tidworth.

Please contact Captain Gill Shaw on Mil: 94651 2922, Civ: 01206 782922 or e-mail her at oscarlayton@yahoo.co.uk for a brief on what courses are available as well as AGC training days.

# Archives from 2007

## 2007 SEASON REPORT

Published in RAF on 30 Nov 2007

### INTRODUCTION

The 2007 season has reflected the growing interest in Polo within the RAF. The Association has never been stronger, both financially and on a playing level, despite results not being as good as in 2006. Of the 35 members within the Association, 15 represented the RAF this season, and Flt Lt Black, OIC Development, has encouraged 21 personnel to take part in polo taster sessions at Rutland Polo Club. The 'Behind the Bar' scheme introduced at Tidworth towards the middle of the season has also proved a success, encouraging developing players to play more chukkas and thus improving their game.

### RESULTS

The 2007 results were less impressive than the previous year, despite an encouraging start to the season: of twelve fixtures, one was cancelled, 4 won and 7 lost.

RAF v Eton: cancelled

RAF v Rutland: won (10-6)

RAF v Army Novice: won (6-3)

RAF Cranwell v Vale of York: lost (4-4\_)

RAF v Tidworth: won (3-3\_)

Crabs v Cavs: lost (2-5)

RAF v Cambridge: lost (0-5)

Cornwell Affiliates: lost

RAF v Defence Academy: won (2\_-2)

Captain and Subalterns: lost

RAF v AGC: won

Duke of York: lost

### TRAINING

The biggest improvement has been in this area. The Cranwell Weekend proved yet again to be a success and is to be expanded to a two day tournament preceded by a two-tier training day to cater for the beginners and more advanced players. The expansion is due to the ever-increasing

levels of interest as well as the opening of the Leadenham Polo Club in the next village, which is keen to forge close links with the RAFPA.

Flt Lt Black has kept a steady trickle of enthusiasts from Waddington and Cranwell taking part in chukkas or lessons at Rutland Polo Club, and as usual the training courses provided by Tidworth Polo Club continue to be well used by RAF personnel. Tidworth, which is the centre for all military polo within the UK, represents the gateway to Polo for many Service players and long may it continue to do so.

### **CSPA REPRESENTATION**

Both Sqn Ldr Adcock and Gp Capt Brown were picked to represent the CSPA this year, at Sandhurst and at the Rundle Cup respectively.

### **CONCLUSION**

2007 has been a successful season for the RAFPA despite the results, and should prove to be a good building block for 2008, in particular with respect to the development of young players. Our next target will be to increase the number of O goal and above players so that the RAF can compete at the next level.

## **BERENBERG BANK UNITED SERVICES CUP & HACKETT INTER-REGIMENTAL FINAL**

**Published in News on 15 Jul 2007**

TWO finals, one venue, made for the most thrilling climax to the Chapple Cup Series and the oldest tournament in polo.

GUARDS Polo Club bore witness to the most thrilling finale to the Chapple Cup Series in the history of the tournament as the CSPA and Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association clashed in the ultimate decider.

Having each drawn blood – first the CSPA at Sandhurst and then ECUSPA at the Hackett Rundle Cup Day – there was all to play for as the sides met in the United Services Cup match sponsored by Berenberg Bank.

The winner of the Cup would also be crowned champions of the three-match Chapple Cup Series – never before won by a touring team. In fact the ECUSPA have tried four times unsuccessfully to lift the coveted trophy and were determined to go for broke on their fifth attempt.

Leading their challenge was six-goaler Nacho Figueras who was joined by John Muse, John Goodman and Juan Salinas-Bentley. They were up against the CSPPA's Maj Cann, Lt Col Hunter, Lt Col Stanhope-White and Capt Vestey.

With all to play for it proved an incredible match, played at a huge pace, which kept the spectators on the edge of their seat until the final bell of the final chukka. With just seconds left on the clock it was the CSPA's win for the taking but a last gasp goal gave victory to the American side by eight goals to seven and a half.

The jubilant touring team were quick to celebrate what was an historic result and one they had been waiting for nine years or more. The consolation for the CSPA side was that two-goaler Lt Col Nick Hunter was named best player on the field – playing like a professional four or five goaler in the game of his life.

There was more action on the field with the Hackett Inter-Regimental Final between the Household Cavalry Regiment and the Royal Wessex Yeomanry. It was a walk in the park for RWxY who won the game by nine goals to three and a half.

O/Cdt Jamie Horton was in eye-catching form scoring at least four of the nine goals and he was justly awarded the Jack Pringle Trophy for the player best playing up to his handicap. Ironically, Horton is set to join the Household Cavalry Regiment shortly.

For the Berenberg Bank United Services Cup and the Hackett Inter-Regimental Final photo galleries [click here](#)

## HACKETT RUNDLE CUP DAY

**Published in News on 14 Jul 2007**

THE 2007 Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club proved yet another memorable event in the polo calendar.

Thousands of people soaked up the unique atmosphere, with music from The Portsmouth Royal Marine Band, to witness two very exciting matches.

The ICOA Trophy, sponsored by BAE, was round two in the Chapple Cup series with the Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association side looking to level the scores having lost the opening game at RMA Sandhurst two days earlier.

This time six-goaler Nacho Figueras was in the starting line-up alongside John Muse, John Goodman and Juan Salinas-Bentley – and they were looking for revenge.

It was, however, the CSPA team of Lt Col Hunter, Capt Verdon, Maj Hayward and Gp Capt Brown who settled the quickest to turn early pressure in goals. They led comfortably until the third chukka when the American side began their fight-back – thanks mainly to Figueras.

He began to dominate this exciting whistle-free match with some brilliant play, and in the final chukka it was the ECUSPA side who stole the honours by just half a goal. The result set the stage for a momentous Chapple Cup decider at Guards Polo Club the following day.

In the Hackett Rundle Cup itself the Army and Royal Navy battled it out in a clash which produced a spectacle even better than the previous year. HRH Prince William lined up alongside Capt Hayman-Joyce, Capt Eyre-Brooks and Lt Col Stanhope-White for the Army against the Royal Navy's Cdre Mason, Lt Cdr Wilson, Cdr Lustman and Lt Cdr Cooke-Priest.

The Royal Navy did very well in the initial stages and in fact took an early lead which they doggedly held on to for as long as they could. But it was the Army pony power which won through in the end and the team in red ran out victors by five goals to three.

During the prize-giving, the PQ Saddle – awarded to a member of the Combined Services who has significantly contributed to the work of the CSPA – went to Gp Capt Tim Brown, chairman of RAF Polo.

Events at Tidworth had begun with the Jockeys versus Eventers clash in aid of the charity Inspire, and the crowds were also treated to a freefall parachute display.

For the Hackett Rundle Cup Day photo galleries [click here](#)

## CAPTAINS AND SUBALTERNS TOURNAMENT

**Published in Army Polo on 06 Jul 2007**

The Captains and Subalterns Polo Tournament will be played at Tidworth Polo Club over the weekend July 21– 22 2007. The aim is to get as many military players together for a really fun weekend of polo and some good competition.

The Tournament will be played along the same rules as last year in that:

- a. Each team may field one player of the rank of Major (in the case of the RAF Wing Commander) to enable that team to compete. This must not, under any circumstances, be to the detriment of any player from that unit who is of the correct rank. There may be exceptions to this rule and will be decided on by the APOLOA committee.*
- b. All players must be serving in the Regular Forces or the TA.*
- c. All Army players must be members of APoloA. It is the responsibility of the team captain to ensure his team members have paid their subscriptions. If not they are to pay before the first match.*

Entries are to be made directly to Tidworth Polo Club (TPC). The entry fee is £200 per team, payable to TPC. Early entry is encouraged to allow time for TPC to collate ponies for hiring. Entries must be in by Friday 6 July 2007. Late entries may be accepted by the Manager TPC.

APOLOA in conjunction with TPC will be hosting a drinks party on the Saturday evening at Tidworth. The idea is for a low key affair, open to all players/ members and friends. Price is tbc, however it will be very reasonable.

This year's tournament will be sponsored by Mabway Ltd.

APOLOA will subsidise pony hire for all players throughout the tournament. The exact amount is still to be confirmed depending on the number of players, but will be confirmed prior to the tournament.

Any queries with regard to team or player eligibility should be directed to the Secretary of APOLOA on the numbers listed above. If there are any individuals who would like to play, but do not have a team, please let me know and I will try and put something together.

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**Published in Army Polo on 30 May 2007**

The full team line-ups for Army polo matches in June, July and August have now been confirmed.

[Click here](#)

## RMA SANDHURST POLO DAY

**Published in News on 08 May 2007**

AGAINST all the odds the sun shone at the RMA Sandhurst Polo Day which raised substantial sums for Service charities and military polo.

In the middle of the wettest start to a British summer on record, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Charity Polo Day began under the threat of more storm clouds. But as the play got underway the threat of rain lifted and so too did the spirits of spectators and players alike.

And in true tradition the event proved to be a most memorable and pleasurable sporting occasion.

The first match of the Sandhurst Polo Day was the Sudan Cup – round one of the three-match Chapple Cup series between the CSPA and the touring team from Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association. In four previous visits since 1999, the ECUSPA side have come off second best to the home team, but this year – with six-goaler Nacho Figueras among their number – they meant business.

Nacho was rested for the Sudan Cup as he was to turn out for the Commandant's team in the Sandhurst Cup. Instead the ECUSPA side consisted of Juan Salinas-Bentley, Doug Barnes, Martin Brown and

Geoffrey Schlesinger. They faced Lt Col Hunter, Maj Hayward, Capt Vestey and Sqn Ldr Adcock for the CSPA.

The home side proved far too strong and although ECUSPA scored a number of consolation goals, the final score was nine goals to four and a half.

Next up was the Sandhurst Cup. For the CSPA Invitational Team were John Muse, BFF Director Mark Cann, Nacho Figueras and Howard Hipwood. They squared up to the Commandant's Team – John Goodman, HRH Prince William, John Paul and Nina Clarkin.

The husband and wife combination were an incredibly powerful force and helped the Commandant's team to a two and a half goal victory – the final score five goals to two and a half.

The final action of the day on the pitch saw the RMAS against Hagis Farm and the Cadets were soundly beaten nine goals to two and a half.

## HACKETT ARMY NOVICE TEAM VS RAF CRANWELL

**Published in Army Polo on 07 May 2007**

ON a sunny afternoon, seeming much more like midsummer than early May, a team of Army Novice Polo players rode out to do battle with the RAF.

Forgetting that the Army may have longer history of polo than our light-blue cousins, the odds were much in the RAF's favour. They were on home turf, had played on their horses the previous day and most hadn't had to drive for three hours and more to get there.

The game itself was one of two halves; the stronger RAF team wiped out the half-goal advantage that the Army had started with to lead by a goal to half going into the second. The Army fought back hard and were ahead by half a goal at the half time break and they left the field with renewed optimism.

However, from then on it was all downhill as the RAF's superior skill and fresher mounts told. As the Army tired they let goal after goal slip by. The final score was a flattering 9 – 21/2 in the RAF's favour.

Nonetheless it was an exciting run out for the Army side which had only met for the first time the day before. The event was very well-organised by Squadron Leader Dave Black and there was an enjoyable dinner afterwards along with other matches to entertain and bring a decent crowd.

Such a tournament early in the season also enthused the Army novices and guaranteed that polo would be foremost in their minds as they plan their hectic social lives. The Army will surely be back next year; the RAF will doubtless be ready with a few tricks up their sleeves!

## THE HACKETT INTER-REGIMENTAL POLO TOURNAMENT 2007

**Published in Army Polo on 07 May 2007**

The Inter-Regimental Tournament 2007 will be played over the period 7th May – 15th July 2007. The Tournament will be organised by The Army Polo Association (APOLOA) on behalf of the Combined Services Polo Association (CSPA), the governing authority for the tournament. The Inter-Regimental will be played under [HPA rules](#).

The Inter-Regimental will be played on a similar basis to 2006. All rounds must have been played by 2nd July 2007. A breakdown of “played by” dates will be forwarded to team captains once the total number of rounds has been determined. The final will be played on 15th July 2007 at the Guards Polo Club.

There will be exceptions, but players should, in the first instance, play for regimental teams; composite teams consisting of more than one regiment will be accepted only once it is clear that a single regimental team is not possible. Teams from regiments posted outside the UK are eligible to enter and the committee will make every effort to accommodate them. The Inter-Regimental should serve as a means of demonstrating Services polo at the highest possible level and it is hoped that all teams that enter do so to maintain the spirit of the tournament.

The following dates apply and are to be adhered to by team captains:

- a. Deadline for entry forms and entry fees Friday 4th May 07
- b. Draw Tuesday 8th May 07
- c. Announcement of draw Wednesday 10th May 07
- d. First round (depending on entries) by Sunday 27th May 07
- e. Final Sunday 15th July 07

Team captains will be informed of the order of play following the draw on 8th May 2007. The Chairman of the CSPA will conduct the draw.

The 2007 Tournament will be overseen by Secretary APOLOA. He is responsible for the collation of entry forms and collection of entry fees and is to ensure the “play by” dates are adhered to. He is also the authority for decisions over any discrepancies encountered. All queries should be directed through the contact details above.

## APOLOA COACHING DAY

**Published in Army Polo on 02 May 2007**

The first APOLOA Coaching day will take place at 1400 on Friday 4 May at Tidworth Polo Club. Martin Ffrench-Blake will be the coach. There are places available for approximately eight players of all levels, but -1 to +1 preferred. The only cost to individuals will be pony hire from TPC. If interested please contact the APoloA Secretary no later than Wednesday May 2.

## CSPA POLO TOUR CHILE

**Published in News on 13 Mar 2007**

A TEAM from the CSPA enjoyed a very successful week-long tour in Chile in March.

ON Tuesday 13 March, Lieutenant Commander Al Wilson and Major Charlie Valdes-Scott departed the UK for a week-long polo tour to Chile, accompanied by wife and fiancée respectively. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Wheeler, the tour organiser, most unfortunately snapped his Achilles tendon the preceding week and could not embark on the trip. The final member of the team, Major Cameron Humphries, was fortunate enough to

travel to Chile a week ahead of the main party and spend five days honing his polo skills in preparation for the tour.

Arriving in Santiago on the morning of 14 March, the first observation was the difference in temperature (2 degrees on leaving London, 35 degrees on arriving in Chile!). Our hosts in Chile were members of the Chilean Armoured Cavalry School notably 2nd Lt Sam Rider, a 64-year old 1-goal reservist and stalwart of Chilean Cavalry polo. We jumped in our minibus to drive to the Cavalry School at Escablind, two hours north of Santiago. After a brief opportunity to “refresh” it was off to meet the school’s Director (Colonel Arancibia), tour the camp in a horse-drawn carriage, before joining the Colonel and his officers for lunch.

The first match of the tour, against the Cavalry School took place that afternoon. The fourth player in the CSPA team was Captain Alfonso Anguita (a 3-goaler provided by the Cavalry) giving us a handicap of -1. With the Cavalry rolling-out a 3-goal team, we were given a measly 2 \_ goal advantage. The match itself was preceded by the teams lining-up in front of the esplanade, whilst the Cav School band played respective National Anthems, and parading for the substantial crowd.

The game got off to an incredibly fast-paced start, and within moments Capt Anguita had placed a beautifully-lofted shot between the posts, thus starting our scoring extravaganza. Each goal was heralded by the band striking up in celebration! The final score was 10 \_ – 5 to the CSPA, and, apart from a 30-yard penalty by Valdes-Scott, all goals were scored by Capt Anguita, After a celebratory pisco-sour or 2 (the national drink of Chile) the first day was rounded-off with a quiet meal in the magnificent Officers’ Mess.

Day 2 started with a late-morning drive to Sam Rider’s ranch, 45 minutes from the Cavalry School, where we were to play against a “Rider Select” team of Cavalry officers. With a more evenly-matched opposition, the CSPA team employed a 1-goal cavalry officer (Capt Alexandro Martin) as our fourth player. With no goal advantage to start, it was obvious that this would be hard-fought match, with revenge on the minds of the Chileans. The score was evenly matched throughout, with all four CSPA players finding the posts on at least one occasion. The goal of the match, however, was an incredible 50-yard lofted punt by Valdes-Scott whilst being ridden-off by his 1-goal opponent.

The final chukka saw the teams matched at 5-5 before Humphries dribbled the ball past two players to finish off with an under-the-neck winning goal.

The rest of the day was taken up with a barbecue and reception at the Rider ranch, where speeches and presentations rounded-off what was a magnificent afternoon of enjoyable polo and fantastic hospitality.

Flushed with the success of the previous 2 days, an early-evening match was scheduled in Santiago against the Grenadier Guards (the Presidential Guard Cavalry Regiment). The CSPA team again benefited from having the 1-goal Capt Alexandro Martin as the 4th player and the game started with a 3 \_ goal advantage to the visitors. The Grenadiers rolled-out a 3-goal team, with their No. 4 a very hard-hitting and talented 2-goal player. From the outset it was a physical match, with the Grenadiers determined to break our unbeaten run. Again, the match was neck and neck throughout, with the Grenadiers giving away some basic penalties. Capitalising on this, the CSPA team was leading 6 \_ – 6 right up until the last 30 seconds of the last chukka when some very good stick skills by the Grenadier No. 4 eluded all four CSPA players and culminated in him finding the posts from 30 yards to score the winning goal. After a brief champagne reception the team rushed back to the Cavalry School to enjoy a late dinner hosted by Colonel and Mrs Arancibia.

The next day, Saturday 17 March, marked the departure of the CSPA team from Escablind, but not before a tour of the facilities, including both the equestrian and armoured schools. The team then travelled to Santiago for a match at the famous “San Cristobal” club (the “Palermo” of Chile) against a 6-goal “chairman’s” select, including Matias Vial, the 5-goal professional who played in the Chilean World Cup, and the 1-goal son of the club chairman. Sam Rider had organised a TV crew to both interview the CSPA team and film the match, coverage of which we expect to receive in due course. Additionally, the British Defence Attaché, Colonel Richard Carrow, was kindly present with his family to join the players’ partners in the small supporting element!

A tactical decision was made to play the 3-goal Capt Anguianta, 1-goal 2nd Lt Rider and the -2 Valdes-Scott for all 4 chukkas, with Wilson and Humphries sharing 2 chukkas each. This team-plan gave the CSPA a 2-goal start, which, through 2 goals by Wilson in the first 2 chukkas, increased to 4, with the San Cristobal team clawing back 2 goals in the second chukka. One further goal by Humphries after the half-time changeover saw the score rising to 5-4, however, by some magnificent (and not unexpected!) play by Matias Vial, the home team increased the score to 7-5 by the final whistle.

Although a respectable showing by the CSPA, player and horse power won-over and gave the San Cristobal team a most deserved victory. Disappointment was dampened by a glorious late-lunch at San Cristobal, followed by some retail therapy at the resident stick shop and an evening out on the town enjoying the bright lights of Santiago.

The final match of the tour was held at Mahuida Country club, owned by the former 8-goal Chilean National Team Captain Tono Ihurate. The Mahuida team comprised a 3-goaler and three 1-goalers, giving the CSPA potentially the toughest match of the tour. Sam Rider played as the CSPA's 4th member and a 2 goal advantage was awarded to the visitors. Under the intense afternoon sun and 38 degree heat, the CSPA increased the lead in the first chukka to 3-0 through a spot hit by Rider. However, the Mahuida team was not going to give up easily and answered with 3 goals in succession. Nonetheless, the CSPA teamwork that had progressed over the last week was in evidence and 2 further goals by Wilson and one each by Humphries and Rider. A last-ditch attempt by Mahuida in the last chukka was rewarded by a further goal, but close marking and tight defending by the CSPA ensured a 7-4 win in what was the most exciting and rewarding match of the tour. The Mahuida team gracefully hosted the visitors for a post-match barbecue before the CSPA team returned to Santiago for one last evening of pisco-sours and monster steaks! After a morning of sightseeing, an exhausted CSPA team arrived at Santiago Airport for the 18 hour journey back to the UK.

The team were looked after tremendously throughout the tour and we forged many enduring friendships. Five matches in 7 days (including the return flight to South America from the UK) was a busy programme but extremely rewarding. It has been 20 years since the last CSPA polo tour to the UK – we hope not to have to wait a further 20 years to be asked back.

We look forward to hosting them for their reciprocal tour in August where we will have a hard act to follow.

## **Archives from 2008**

### **End Of Season Meeting 2008**

**Published in RAF on 30 Nov 2008**

#### **INTRODUCTONI**

The Chairman welcomed the members to the End of Season meeting and thanked them for attending. The pertinent points drawn out from the 08 season were as follows:

- A promising number of people had come into the sport, predominantly thanks to the efforts of OIC Development, who organized a 3-day introductory course as well as regular chukkas for beginners in the Cranwell area.
- The Chairman congratulated Wg Cdr Bambridge on going up a handicap at the end of the season, from -1 to 0, despite her injuries from the previous year.
- With regards to new members, he suggested contacting Clarence House to gauge whether William Wales would be interested in playing for the RAF.
- Finally the introduction of subsidies for beginners playing up in the Cranwell area as well as for representative pony owners has proven a success and will be kept in place until further notice.

## **FINANCES**

1. The Chairman started by expressing his gratitude on behalf of the whole association to the Treasurer for the clarity of the RAFPA Accounts.
2. The treasurer gave his end of season report. He stated that funding for the association increased from £8300 in 07 to £11850 in 08 but cautioned that whilst this went some way to meeting the running costs of the association, a personal contribution of £3600 along with £2000 from our sponsorship fund had been used over the past year. Whilst sustainable for a further year, any successive years would require either an increase in funding from the RAFSB/Sponsorship or a reduction in fixtures.
3. It was reported that there were still some outstanding account actions for the year including a Brett Horsepower payment still awaiting invoice and payments from both the Sports Development Fund and Equipment Fund which would be cleared within the next fortnight.
4. Expenditure for 08 was £17400 up from £8100 in 07 but the EGM were reminded that this was solely due to the revised accountancy procedures introduced for 2008, to ensure that all Op Costs incurred by the association are reflected in the accounts (ie pony hire costs that are largely bourn by the individual).
5. Having used £2000 from the sponsorship fund to cover the Op Costs overspend the treasurer informed the EGM that £3400 will be carried forward to next season reflecting a £840 loss over the season.
6. The treasurer reported that bidding for 09 Equipment/5yr plan was agreed and that Sports Development Fund was due. Further it was stated that the RAFSB had decided not to hold a formal bidding process for Op Costs 09 and that this could potentially disadvantage the association.
7. The treasurer closed by seeking approval of the accounts, which was unanimously agreed.
8. Decision. The Equipment Fund for 09 would stand at £1700. Ideas on how to make the best value out of it to be brought forward at the AGM. Suggested help new players with initial equipment.
9. Decision. The Chairman and Treasurer will lobby the RAF Sports Board at Halton especially with respect to the 09 Op Costs grant.
10. Decision. The £1000 remaining in the Development Fund was to be transferred to the Tidworth 'behind the bar' scheme, towards subsidising both practice and instructional chukkas for developing players.
11. Decision. It was agreed the subsidy rate at Tidworth was to be increased back up from £10 to £20 per chukka to come in line with the Navy.

## **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

1. New players. This season, 5 new players had shown considerable enthusiasm, commitment and promise for the future. Three were introduced to polo at Cranwell through OIC Development, and the other 2 had approached the association mid season from Benson. This was a positive influx and the Committee was keen to ensure a steady support system was in

place to get these developing players on the pitch and improving as quickly as possible.

2. Courses available. OIC Development had arranged for a 3-day introductory course to take place at Leadenham Polo Club, near Cranwell for £300 pp. A further course would be organised at the same location in 09 following the positive uptake the previous year.

Beginner and advanced courses were still available at Tidworth, and the PR Rep added that military discounts were also available at Inglesham Polo Club.

3. Subsidies. The Treasurer stated that the subsidy rate could be increased back up to £20 per chukka per person both at Leadenham and Tidworth, thus bringing the RAF back in line with the Navy. This would be reassessed mid season according to uptake. At this point this subsidy does not apply to match chukkas, the latter to be revisited at the AGM.

4. Scholarship. The Committee was keen to encourage committed and talented young players, and to this end a scholarship was discussed. The Treasurer advised that although individuals could not be granted money, their local club could invoice the Association.

5. Decision. A scholarship of £400 would be awarded to SAC Turner-Wright as the most promising young player. The scholarship would be paid to Offchurch Polo Club to subsidise chukkas and lessons during the season.

4. Article. The Chairman congratulated the PR Rep on the Active article she wrote. It was decided a further article would be useful, giving step by step details on what to do if you want to learn to play polo, and how the Association can help.

5. Membership Fee. It was decided that a membership fee would be applied from the 09 season onwards. £10 for Other Ranks, £20 for Officers. A list of members would be put behind the bar at both Tidworth and Leadenham, and only those on it will qualify for the chukka subsidy.

6. End of Season Development Fixture. OIC Development suggested putting on an RAF v RAF exhibition match at the Cranwell Equestrian Day in Sep 09. Fixture to be confirmed at the AGM after further investigation.

### **FIXTURE LIST**

1. The Treasurer stated that the Op Cost Fund was set up to cover 14 fixtures per season. He suggested revisiting the fixture list to tailor the training and added that two teams had cancelled shortly before their match in 08.

2. Decision. The fixture list was to be divided in two, allowing 7 fixtures for each team. This would provide a good run up to their respective main fixtures of the season, namely the Duke of York and the Captain and Subalterns. The Milfield match was to be cancelled since they had been unable to provide a team for two consecutive seasons. The President's Cup proved a useful team run-out before the Capt and Subs, and it was also decided to enter an RAF team into the Inter-Regimental Cup for the first time.

3. The fixture list to be as follows:

- Senior Team: Cranwell(2), Inter-Regimental(2), Crabs v Cavs, Cornwell Affiliates, Duke of York.
- Junior Team: Eton, Cranwell(2), President's Cup(2), Capt and Subs(2)

4. Dates to be confirmed with Tidworth at their pre-season meeting in Feb.

### **SOTOGRADE TOUR 09**

1. OIC Development proposed organizing a tour for 6 people to Sotograde Polo Club, near Gibraltar, 16-23 Mar 09. The tour would consist of 7 days training, stick and balling each morning and playing chukkas in the afternoon, leading to a match on the final day. Members would stay at Gibraltar Officers' Mess, situated within a 20min drive from the Polo Club.

Transport would be provided by hiring two cars or a minibus, and Easyjet fly into Gibraltar.

The tour would also include a battlefield tour of Op Phoenix.

2. After initial research and negotiation, the costs came to approx £1,750 per person, with the main burden being the training, pony and ground hire and coaching costs, which amount to £1,550 per person.
3. Personal contribution would ideally amount to no more than £1,000 per person, and OIC Development would apply to the Sports Board, CSPA, Sponsorship fund and each station to contribute to the costs of the tour and staff ride.
4. Decision. It was agreed that OIC Development should go ahead and arrange the tour as per the details above. The tour was to be open to all members, and a £100 deposit would be requested to allow flights and hire cars to be booked early. The Committee thanked Flt Lt Black for taking the time to organise the 09 Tour.

### **CRANWELL WEEKEND**

**1. OIC Development was keen to confirm the format and teams for the Cranwell Weekend in 09. The dates were confirmed for 1-3 May 09.**

**2. Decision. The weekend had proved a success each year, and the format would remain the same as the previous year with some minor improvements as well as a greater emphasis on military polo.**

- **Fri 1 May. Introduction to Polo for new members in the afternoon, as well as team selection and training. Coach to be confirmed. AGM at 6pm in CHOM, followed by a meet and greet in CHOM bar.**
- **Sat 2 May.**  
-2 to 0 RAF v Rutland  
-6 to -4 RAF v Army, RAF v Navy  
Players Dinner, CHOM
- **Sun 3 May.**  
Final RAF v Rutland  
Final RAF v Army, RAF v Navy

### **3. Tasks.**

- **OIC Development: investigate possibility of bringing in professional Umpires, invite the teams.**
- **Sec: invite Sqn Ldr (Ret) Robert Burke to commentate and if possible coach the training session on Fri afternoon. Send the list of those members who qualify for the award of RAF Colours to the RAFSB.**
- **Tour Coordinator: ensure the Trophy was delivered to OIC Development.**
- **PR Rep: advertise the Fri taster day as well as the weekend tournament, design the programmes and provide the prizes.**
- **Chairman: liaise with the Stn Cdr at Cranwell to investigate the possibility of using the practice ground behind the sports track for the Fri training. Present RAF Colours at the Players' Dinner. Present the Scholarship to the most promising developing player of the 08 Season.**

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Sponsorship. The Treasurer had approached the President during the Season on the subject of sponsorship suggesting that a sponsorship of ~£2000 per year would be needed if no additional RAF Sports Board funding was forthcoming. The Chairman agreed to check with the President on progress.**

**2. Meetings. The Treasurer thought that the Committee should meet more than twice a season to evaluate progress. A mid season committee meeting was suggested, and would be arranged if required.**

**3. Training Days. In order to capture the most number of people, it was suggested that training should not just be centred around Tidworth and Cranwell, but at different locations across the country. It was thus decided that a pre-season, pre-tour training day would be arranged at Druids Lodge Polo Club, and further training days at Maywood and Inglesham.**

The next meeting is the AGM, to be held at 18:00 on Friday 1st May 2009 at the Officers' Mess, RAF Cranwell.

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## **APOLOA AGM 2008**

**Published in Army Polo on 29 Nov 2008**

The APOLOA Annual General Meeting was held at the KRH Officers' Mess in Aliwal Barracks, Tidworth, on Friday 29 February 2008.

[Click here to view Minutes](#)

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## **Adjutant General's Corps Polo Cup July 2008**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Jul 2008**

2008 has been a fantastic year for AGC Polo. Not only did the AGC hold its own polo tournament at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, but the AGC polo team that entered the Captains' and Subalterns' Cup at Tidworth Polo Club won their division, beating the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment in the final.

These are remarkable achievements when looking back just five years ago, AGC Polo consisted of five Army lawyers, led by Major David Phillips and Major Victoria Phillips. Five years on, both officers own their own polo ponies and are still at the forefront of AGC Polo (juggling family life with the birth of their son Edward, two years ago).

Major Gillian Shaw (SPS) joined them four years ago, becoming the AGC Polo Secretary and team Captain. With the Phillips' help, and a number of other committed individuals, Gillian has nurtured and developed AGC Polo. It now boasts over 20 players of all ranks across all branches of the AGC.

“Without the help of the Combined Services and also the Army Polo Association, the AGC wouldn't have been able to achieve so much,” said Gillian. “We have always been made to feel very welcome within the CSPA and APOLOA, and Brigadier John Wright at the Combined Services Polo Club at Tidworth. We have had excellent tuition and support from Mr Sean Dayus and we are very much helped and encouraged by the AGC Sports Board and Regimental Headquarters.”

Held in support of 'Phil's Million' Help for Heroes (<http://www.justgiving.com/philsmillion>) the [AGC Polo Cup](#) was held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 13 July. The first match was between the AGC Red Team and 47 Regiment Royal Artillery, the AGC Reds running away with victory 7 – 0. The second match saw the AGC White Team being beaten by London University Officer Cadet Team, led by Major Tom Petersen 9 – 0. Elbows and boots were spread liberally as the RMAS Cadets took on the RMAS Members in the final match of the day. A low scoring game in the end, but highly energetic and charged with pride as the two teams battled it out in the first of three chukkas. The score finished 3\_ – 2 to the RMAS Members.

The AGC Polo Cup was presented to the team who scored the most goals, therefore London UOTC had pipped the AGC Red Team to the post. Major James Gaselee, the RMAS Polo Officer and OCdt Richard Holtum provided excellent commentary throughout the day, and Miss Barbara Zingg the RMAS Polo Manager helped Major Gillian Shaw round the clock to organise the event. Sponsors included La Chamiza Wines, Blacklocks Bookshop, La Martina, Roxtons, Style Exchange and Seamless Events.

The icing on the cake for AGC Polo was winning their division at the Captains' and Subalterns Cup at Tidworth Polo Club on July 19/20 . The team consisting of Maj Gillian Shaw, Capt Aishling Lyford, Lt Janet Johnson and Cpl Kolin Ralph beat 47 Regiment Royal Artillery, 6 – 1 on the first day of the tournament. The second day of the tournament and a win against the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment was a dream come true for the all girls team. Cpl Kolin Ralph came off his horse on day one and so battered and bruised, Maj Victoria Phillips stepped in and came to the rescue. Winning 5 – 3 they were absolutely thrilled.

The year has also seen Maj Gillian Shaw and Lt Janet Johnston play for the Army Team at RAF Cranwell, Janet scoring a number of goals to ensure the Army Team beat their RAF opponents.

The [Ladies' Army Polo Team](#) also made its debut at the Ladies' Heritage Cup at RMAS during the summer months, coming runners-up in a much higher level of polo than used to. The team comprised Maj Victoria Phillips, Maj Rachael De Renzy Chenner, Capt Aishling Lyford, Capt Lucy Anderson and Lt Janet Johnson.

Major Gillian Shaw can be contacted at [agcpolo@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:agcpolo@hotmail.co.uk)





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## **Mabway Captains & Subalterns Tournament**

### **Published in Army Polo on 19 Jul 2008**

A RECORD-BREAKING 14 teams took part in this year's hugely successful MabWay Captains & Subalterns Polo Tournament.

The event was played at Tidworth Polo Club over the July 19 and 20 weekend, with the entrants coming from throughout all three services.

And the polo played over the two days was of a far better standard than the tournament has seen in recent years, emphasising how the Captains & Subalterns has grown with MabWay on board.

The tournament had three seedings which culminated in the finals' day on Tidworth's excellent Fisher Ground.

In Division One the teams included The Royal Wessex Yeomanry, RAF, Coldstream Guards, Royal Navy, Light Dragoons and Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The Royal Wessex Yeomanry were up against the RAF for the coveted trophy and it was RWxY who ran out winners by the slim margin of five goals to three.

In Division Two, the Adjutant Generals Corp beat the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment by five goals to two, and in Division Three it was the Grenadier Guards who were victorious over the Royal Dragoon Guards with the score 1-1\_

Chairman of the Army Polo Association, Lt Col Simon Ledger, was delighted with the success of the tournament and paid tribute to MabWay for their support.





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## **Berenberg Bank United Services Cup & Hackett Inter-regimental Final**

**Published in Army Polo on 15 Jul 2008**

TWO finals, one venue, made for a thrilling climax to the Chapple Cup Series and the oldest tournament in polo.

FOR the second year running – and for only the second time in its history – the Chapple Cup went to the visiting team, leaving the CSPA empty-handed.

This year it was The British Forces Foundation polo team – the sport's equivalent of cricket's Lord Taverners – who took the honours.

Having thrashed the CSPA side at the Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth, they then repeated the feat, albeit in a much closer game, at the Berenberg Bank Finals Day at Guards Polo Club, 24 hours later.

The BFF polo team evolved from Mark Cann's 'Leopards' team playing very badly at the turn of the century. The players get together in aid of the Charity and have included the likes of Hollywood legend Tommy Lee Jones, rock stars Mike Rutherford from Genesis and Kenny Jones (The Who and Small Faces), HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince William, Prince Harry, George Milford Haven and polo greats like the Englishmen Howard and Julian Hipwood, Adam Snow, plus Gabrielle Donoso, and the amazing Argentine Nachos Figueras.

The team come together for a few matches a year, raising money for the Foundation in both America and the UK. The BFF Polo Trophy is competed for every year at different and wonderfully varying venues such as Houston, Richmond Virginia, Palm Beach and Tidworth and has been won by some illustrious teams like Isla Carrol and Gololphin.

The team who squared up against the CSPA the day before at Tidworth for the ICOA Trophy consisted of Pedro Lopez-Valido 1, The Hon Tristan Phillimore 1, Ben Vestey 3 and Mark Cann 0. They dominated from the start and relentlessly increased their stranglehold on the game, snuffing out any hopes that the CSPA may have had of making a comeback. The final score 9 goals to 4\_.

But at Guards, with the United Services Cup up for grabs and the overall Chapple Cup Series, the CSPA fielded a stronger side determined to share the honours. However, in an excellent spectacle, they were ultimately out-gunned and it was the unchanged Charity team who ran out victors by 10 goals to 7.

There was more action on the field with the Hackett Inter-Regimental Final between the King's Royal Hussars and the Royal Wessex Yeomanry. The RWxY defended their crown winning the final by 6 goals to 4.

Berenberg Bank Finals Day: [Click for photos](#)

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## **Hackett Rundle Cup Day**

### **Published in Army Polo on 14 Jul 2008**

THE 2008 Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club proved yet another memorable event in the polo calendar.

THE Royal Navy pulled off one of the biggest shocks in recent Hackett Rundle Cup Day history giving the Army a bloody nose to lift the coveted title.

The two and a half goal handicap suggested that the team in blue would be overwhelmed as soon as the match got underway – but far from it.

It was the Navy who took the game by the scruff of the neck. Captain Richard Mason was imperious at the back but also opened the scoring. Goals also followed from Aplin (two) and Lustman with the only riposte before half-time coming from the Army's main man Lt Col Michael O'Dwyer.

They started the third chukka with the scores at 6\_ goals to 1 and, in torrential rain, there was just one more addition to the scoreboard courtesy of the Army's Capt Phillip Kaye. Mason nullified all other threats and with just one chukka remaining the result looked a foregone conclusion.

However, the Navy had spent all their firepower and the Army sensed the chance of a dramatic comeback. Kaye spearheaded the attack slotting three more goals to set up a thrilling climax.

But although they had the momentum behind them, time wasn't on their side and the Navy held firm in the dying seconds to run out memorable winners by 6\_ goals to 5.

Earlier in the afternoon the crowds were treated to another exciting – if slightly one-sided – game in the ICOA Trophy fixture, sponsored by DRS Technologies, between The British Forces Foundation and the CSPA.

The British Forces Foundation polo team – the equivalent of cricket's Lord Taverners – were triumphant. Pedro Lopez-Valido 1, The Hon Tristan Phillimore 1, Ben Vestey 3 and Mark Cann 0 dominated from the start and relentlessly increased their stranglehold on the game, snuffing out any hopes that the CSPA may have had of making a comeback.

The 2008 Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club was yet another triumph for polo, spectators and organisers alike.

Thousands of people soaked up the unique atmosphere. Events had begun with the Jockeys versus Eventers clash in aid of the charity Inspire, and the crowds were also treated to a freefall parachute display.

During the prize-giving, the PQ Saddle – awarded to a member of the Combined Services who has significantly contributed to the work of the CSPA – went to Cdr Adrian Aplin MBE.

### **Hackett Rundle Cup**

ARMY (3 goals): 1 – Lt Matthew Blakiston (Light Dragoons) 0; 2 – Capt Phillip Kaye (Kings Royal Hussars) 1; 3 – Capt Quentin Hicks (Kings Royal Hussars) 1; Back – Lt Col Michael O'Dwyer (Irish Guards) 1.

ROYAL NAVY (-1 goal): 1 – Lt Cdr Allan Wilson -1; 2 – Cdr Arnie Lustman 0; 3 – Cdre Richard Mason 0; Back – Cdr Adrian Aplin 0.

Indian Cavalry Officers Trophy

CSPA: Squadron Leader Martin Adcock 0, Major Rupert Lewis 1, Major Tom Moon 2, Colonel Justin Stanhope-White 1

The British Forces Foundation: Pedro Lopez–Valido 1, The Hon Tristan Phillimore 1, Ben Vestey 3, Mark Cann 0

For the Hackett Rundle Cup Day photo galleries [click here](#)

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## **Cranwell Polo Weekend**

**Published in RAF on 01 May 2008**

This year's polo extravaganza is set for May 1st to 3rd. Training and team trials will be on Friday afternoon from 13:00, followed by a tri-service tournament (-4 to -6 goal) on the Saturday and Sunday. Everyone welcome, including beginners. Please contact Flt Lt Dave Black on 95751 Ext 6332.

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## **Tidworth Polo Club**

**Published in News on 15 Feb 2008**

TIDWORTH Polo Club has unveiled its list of courses for the 2008 season aimed at individuals or corporate clients looking to learn to play polo. [Download](#)

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## **CSPA AGM**

**Published in News on 14 Feb 2008**

THE CSPA Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday February 14 2008 at the Cavalry & Guards Club, London.

[Download the Minutes.](#)

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## **Hackett Inter-regimental Tournament 2008**

**Published in Army Polo on 13 Feb 2008**

The Hackett Inter-Regimental Tournament 2008 will be played over the period 5th May – 12th July 2009. The Tournament will be organised by The Army Polo Association (APOLOA) on behalf of the Combined Services Polo Association (CSPA), the governing authority for the tournament. The Inter-Regimental will be played under [HPA rules](#).

All rounds must have been played by 28th June 2009. A breakdown of “played by” dates will be forwarded to team captains once the total number of rounds has been determined. The final will be played on 12th July 2009 on the Duke's Ground at the Guards Polo Club.

There will be exceptions, but players should, in the first instance, play for regimental teams; composite teams consisting of more than one regiment will be accepted only once it is clear that a single regimental team is not possible. Teams from regiments posted outside the UK are eligible to enter and the committee will make every effort to accommodate them. The Inter-Regimental should serve as a means of demonstrating Services polo at the highest

possible level and it is hoped that all teams that enter do so to maintain the spirit of the tournament.

The following dates apply and are to be adhered to by team captains:

- a. Deadline for entry forms and entry fees Tuesday 5th May 2009
- b. Draw Thursday 7th May 09
- c. Announcement of draw Friday 8th May 09
- d. First round (depending on entries) by Sunday 31st May 09
- e. Final Sunday 12th July 09

Team captains will be informed of the order of play following the draw on 8th May 2009. The Chairman of the CSPA will conduct the draw.

The Tournament will be overseen by Chairman/Secretary APOLOA. He is responsible for the collation of entry forms and collection of entry fees and is to ensure the “play by” dates are adhered to. He is also the authority for decisions over any discrepancies encountered. All queries should be directed through the contact details above.

## Archives from 2009

### THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S CORP POLO CUP

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Nov 2009**

Despite the dismal weather at the start of the day, the sun shone in the afternoon and a great day was had by all.

There were eight teams entered, split in two divisions. Division One consisted of teams from the RAF, RN, RMAS and the Infantry. Division Two consisted of AGC White, AGC Red, LUOTC and the RA.

After two hard fought games LUOTC eventually triumphed over AGC Red 3 – 1 to win division two. The winner of division one was the Royal Navy who beat the Infantry 3 1/2 to 0 in the final.

[Polo Times coverage](#)

### COMMONWEALTH CUP

**Published in News on 13 Sep 2009**

THE British team achieved an outstanding victory to lift the Commonwealth Cup for only the fifth time in the past 25 years. Their

strength and aggression rocked the home-side and they had the edge at crucial moments in the game.

## MAJOR GENERAL'S CUP

**Published in Army Polo on 04 Sep 2009**

The Hackett Army team for the Major Generals Cup on September 4th, 5th and 6th at Guards Polo Club has been announced.

The team will be: Capt Matthew Blakiston (0), Capt Hugh Arbuthnott (0), Capt Matthew Eeyre-Brook (1) and Col Justin Stanhope-White (1).

## RMAS HERITAGE POLO DAY

**Published in Army Polo on 02 Aug 2009**

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst's Heritage Polo Day, organised by James Gaselee, proved a very busy and successful weekend.

Several international teams – from Argentina, the USA, Malaysia, Pakistan, British Army Officers and Helvetica – fought it out for the Heritage Cup.

A number of five and six goal players bolstered the teams to produce some high standard polo matches. From Argentina there were the Riglos brothers, Pepe and Martin, Charlie Maldoon from the USA along with Richard Blake-Thomas.

The teams played in an American style tournament and the winners were the Royal Pehang team of Malaysia, captained by O/C His Highness Prince Amir who commissioned from Sandhurst in early August.

Prizes were presented by the Commandant of Sandhurst, Major General David Rutherford Jones.

## THE SASSOON CUP

**Published in Army Polo on 01 Aug 2009**

This inaugural first formal fixture between the Army and the RAF took place at Tidworth Polo Club on August 1st and it will be a permanent fixture for both Associations.

Playing in driving wind and rain on the Fisher Ground, the Army lost Paddy Boulter within the first ten seconds of the first chukka. He was replaced by a minus two goal player and from that point on the Army struggled to match the co-ordinated and well-skilled RAF team who deservedly ran out the winners 9-1.

The Sassoon Cup, named after the 1938 War Minister who inaugurated what was to be the Houlton Cup for the RAF, will prove to be a popular fixture and will hopefully attract sponsorship for next year.

The Army team were: Lt Gen Barney White-Spencer, Maj Victoria Phillips, Capt Ben Marshall, Lt Patrick Boulter and Maj Cameron Humphries. The RAF team were: Sqn Ldr Piers Hammond, F/O Vicky Woodhead, Flt Lt Dave Black and Gp Capt Tim Brown.

The second match played on the day was for the Reserve Forces Trophy 'Petersen Challenge'. The TA lost to the Royal Navy Reserves 8-2.

The TA team were: O/Cdt Alex Keighley, Pte Emma Steed, James Spring and Maj Tom Petersen. The RN Reserves were: Gnr Nicky Hewer, Lt Nick Phillips, Lt Cdr Al Wilson and Surg Cdr Mike Bowen.

## **MABWAY CAPTAINS & SUBALTERN'S TOURNAMENT**

**Published in News on 19 Jul 2009**

The MabWay Captains & Subalterns 2009 Polo Tournament produced a record-breaking entry of 16 teams, who were split into three divisions.

This was the highest standard of essentially novice polo seen in this competition and is proof that polo at this level is not only very popular but improving.

The Royal Wessex Yeomanry retained their crown in Division One but only narrowly. They were hard-pressed by the 9/12th Lancers over from Germany who really rattled them until the final chukka.

Third in Division One were KRH, with HAC fourth, RAF fifth and RSDG, also over from Germany, in sixth place.

Division Two was won by the Royal Navy who rather overwhelmed the Grenadier Guards who, through no fault of their own, had to replace a player at the very last moment.

In joint third place in Division Two were AGC and HCMR, while RDG finished fifth and an RA team finished sixth.

In Division Three, London University OTC triumphed over the Irish Guards, while an AGC side were successful against another RA team.

Chairman of the Army Polo Association, Lt Col Simon Ledger, said: “It was a cracking tournament and the continued sponsorship by Mabway meant that all teams returned home with something to show for their endeavours.”

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## CONNAUGHT SEARCH UNITED SERVICES CUP & HACKETT INTER-REGIMENTAL FINAL

**Published in Army Polo on 17 Jul 2009**

TWO finals, one venue, made for an exciting climax to the Chapple Cup Series and the oldest tournament in polo.

THE CSPA has got its hands back on the Chapple Cup after two years, with an emphatic win over the Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association.

Already two nil up in the competition, the home side completed the whitewash in the Connaught Search United Services Cup game at Guards Polo Club.

It was an overwhelming victory for the CSPA with Martin French-Blake (4) playing an excellent match at number three. He was ably supported by Nick Hunter and, in particular, Mark Cann who successfully snuffed out any US attack playing at number four.

The match finished 8-2 with the CSPA lifting both the United Services Cup and the Chapple Cup.

This was the first time this fixture had been sponsored by Connaught Search but not a new experience for the company's owner, Charles Whittaker, who played at Guards in the 1989 Inter-Regimental Final. His 13/18th Lancers side narrowly lost that day to the Royal Navy.

In this year's Hackett Inter-Regimental Final, the Household Cavalry Regiment pulled off a bit of an upset with a victory over defending champions, The Royal Wessex Yeomanry.

It was a very close match between two well balanced teams, and the play flowed both ways.

HCR's Captain Jack Mann won the Pringle Cup for the player who played best to his handicap. He anchored his team, kept his head and executed some fine plays – scoring two goals from the 60 yard line.

RWxY, stubbornly defending their title, were just unable to overcome Mann's accuracy and the score finished 5\_ goals to 5 to crown HCR as the new champions.

## HACKETT RUNDLE CUP DAY

**Published in News on 10 Jul 2009**

THE 2009 Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club proved yet another memorable event in the polo calendar.

REVENGE is sweet – and so it proved for an Army side determined to make the Royal Navy pay for their shock victory in last year's Hackett Rundle Cup.

The Hackett Army team was captained by Colonel Michael O'Dwyer (Irish guards) who led his team with steely resolve. He created some fine play that resulted in both Philip Kaye and Quentin Hicks scoring freely.

They were ably assisted by Hugh Arbuthnott who played well above his nought goal handicap to find the flags on three occasions.

This match was played in difficult conditions with driving wind and rain. There was an unfortunate accident to Arnie Lustman, the Royal Navy Polo Secretary, when his horse slipped in the goalmouth and came down on his knee. He had to be replaced by Adrian Aplin's wife Susie who valiantly tried to stem the flow of an Army team who had been well drilled and prepared by the Army coach Gaston Deverient, a plus five Argentinian player from Guards.

By the end of the final chukka the Army team had romped to victory by 8 to 2\_ and avenged the previous year's defeat.

Earlier in the afternoon the crowds watched the CSPA battle it out with the Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association for the ICOA Trophy – the second match in the three-game Chapple Cup series. Having lost heavily two days earlier at Sandhurst in the opening first game, the touring side were hoping to level the honours.

But it wasn't to be, and again the CSPA were too strong and simply over-ran the Americans for another crushing victory.

## ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST POLO DAY

**Published in News on 09 Jul 2009**

THE CSPA took on a touring team from America at Sandhurst in the first of three clashes to decide the Chapple Cup Series.

THE CSPA soundly thrashed the touring American team in the first match of the 2009 Chapple Cup Series.

Playing for the Sudan Cup at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst's Polo Day, the home side scored a comfortable 8-4 victory over the Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association.

The CSPA were quickest out of the blocks in the first chukka and first blood was drawn by the late substitute and veteran Mark Cann who shot through the posts after picking up a ball knocked on by Ben Vestey.

Goal maker almost became goal scorer moments later when Vestey broke clear up the field, only to miss a sitter with the defence trailing in his wake. However, his time was to come.

Seconds before the end of the first chukka Cann too missed an open goal but Vestey was there on the follow up to slot the ball home. But the effort didn't count as the umpire ruled that the ball hadn't crossed the line before the second bell had sounded to signify the end of the first period of play.

Tim Brown (having got through the traffic) replaced Cann at the start of the second chukka. Early in the second chukka, the Americans levelled the scoreline – thanks to a husband and wife effort. Alan Nash picked up the loose ball in the middle of the pitch and got his pass away to Deborah French Nash who, from a wide position, angled the ball between the posts.

Honours even were short lived. Vestey, taking the ball from his own goal line, rode the length of the pitch to put the CSPA into the lead 2-1. And it took him just 30 seconds later to increase that lead with an almost impossible shot from under his pony to make it 3-1.

In the third chukka, ECUSPA closed the gap to just one goal again – this time through a beautifully struck penalty by Jonas Larguia. But thoughts of a comeback were quickly snuffed out as Vestey, once again, pounced on a mistake in the American defence to make it 4-2.

It proved the killer chukka as goals five, six and seven followed thanks to some great play between Tim Verdon and Nick Hunter – Verdon's shot for goal seven just having the legs to cross the line while Hunter rode off Nash to prevent any chance of a goal line clearance.

In the fourth and final chukka Larguia pulled one back for ECUSPA and then had the chance to make it 7-4. The American team were awarded a 60 yard penalty and Larguia's high and powerful drive looked certain to help the visitors close the gap. But goal scorer turned defender Vestey, on the goal line waving his stick in the air, somehow managed to get a touch on the ball which deflected it wide of the post.

By the end of the chukka and the match, Verdon had scored another to make it eight for the CSPA, while Luis Echeverri bagged a consolation fourth for ECUSPA.

The prizes for both teams were presented by Geoff Smith of ESS.

## **Archives from 2010**

### **End Of Season Report 2010**

#### **Published in RAF on 30 Nov 2010**

The Royal Air Force enjoyed another excellent season with the highest number of players ever, polo being introduced to Cranwell IOT cadets, the Cranwell Tournament extending to eight participating teams, more players becoming horse owners and even some success on the field of play!

There were 33 paid up members of the RAF Polo Association in 2010 of which 15 represented the RAF at some level and four had their handicaps raised at the end of the season. Seven players are pony owners with an eighth actively seeking to start his own string.

Whilst the centre of gravity in terms of handicap remains below zero the base membership is constantly expanding and significant emphasis is and will continue to be on player development. The elusive plus goal players will come sometime!

Tidworth Polo Club remains the home club of RAF polo but an excellent relationship has been built with Leadenham Polo Club, not far from RAF Cranwell, which has proved very beneficial not least in introducing IOT Cadets to the game. 2010 was the first season to see high levels of interest from IOT cadets; 13 cadets took up the sport attending regular lessons at Leadenham Polo Club and culminating in a Senior v Junior Course matchette. This will continue in 2011.

The Cranwell Weekend tournament was extended this year to include a three-day training camp on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday before. This was based at Leadenham polo club and was extremely well attended. The Tournament itself was again structured to emphasize player development and attracted a record eight entries, a mixture of Service and civilian teams. This year's Tournament and training camp will take place along the same lines except that the handicap level of the Tournament will be adjusted to allow a maximum of two 0 goal players (no plus handicaps) and at least one -2 player per team. The social activity will revert to being based at College Hall Officers Mess.

In addition to the training camp at Cranwell a number of team training sessions were run which proved to be of great use. Similar systems of subsidised instructional chukkas, club chukkas and match chukkas with bigger discounts targeted at encouraging match play are operated both at Tidworth and Leadenham Polo Clubs. This will continue in 2011. A training tour to New Zealand took place over the winter of 2010/11.

A full fixture list was again played with wins at the Cranwell Tournament, Crabs v Cav, the Captains and Subalterns Tournament (Div 2) and against the Army in the now established Sassoon Cup. In addition a very good performance saw the RAF as runners up in the Cornwell Affiliates.

Polo is alive and well in the RAF. Despite Operational commitments we continue to attract more and more Service players into the game and develop the ones that we have. This will remain the basic strategy. The RAF PA acknowledges the support given to it by the RAF Sports Board, the CSPA and Tidworth Polo Club. We are very grateful and look forward to the 2011 season in good heart and anticipating yet another summer of this wonderful game amongst Service and civilian friends alike.

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## **The Adjutant General's Corp Polo Cup**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Aug 2010**

The third annual AGC Polo Cup was held in the beautiful grounds of Tidworth Polo Club on August Bank holiday Monday in aid of SSAFA.

In Division II, AGC White, the Royal Logistics Corps and 2 Royal Artillery teams fought closely to see AGC White beating the RLC in the final 5 goals to half. It was fantastic to see the RLC team back into the fold of Army polo, particularly with so many new players.

In Division I, the Royal Navy, Infantry, AGC Black and the Honorable Artillery Company played hard to see the final scores of AGC Black 1 and a half goals to 1 against the HAC, and the RN beating the Infantry team in the final to 2 goals to half. Major General Andrew Cumming CBE kindly presented the RN with the AGC Polo Cup for the second year running.

A huge thanks to Brigadier John Wright CBE and his team at Tidworth Polo Club for their brilliant organisation and efforts, and to Lt Col Simon Ledger LD for his great tournament commentary on the day and for his strong support and encouragement over the years. Finally, also to the Regimental Colonel of the AGC, Colonel Jon Ward ADC for his and the Regimental Headquarters equally supportive efforts for AGC Polo.

For 125 years, SSAFA Forces Help has made an unflinching commitment to the men and women of Britain's Armed Forces, continually adapting to meet the changing needs of those who serve, those who used to serve and the families of both. The charity's support is as significant today as it has ever been. From their very first day of military service, SSAFA Forces Help is here for our servicemen and women and the people they love.

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## **Army Team Line Ups**

**Published in Army Polo on 24 Jul 2010**

**SAT 24 July – St Albans Polo Club – Exhibition Match in aid of H4H**

1. Maj Ben Marshall RGR -1
  2. Capt Mathew Blakiston LD 0
  3. Capt Mathew Eyre-Brook 9/12 L +1
  4. Capt Robert Gourlay RWXY +1
- +1

**SAT 31 July – TPC – SASSOON Cup – RAF v HACKETT Army Development Team**

1. Sgt Horn RA and BdrWoodhouse RA \* -2
  2. Maj Will Williams REME and Maj Ben Marshall RGR\* -1
  3. Maj Cameron Humphries SCOTS 0
  4. Brig Piers Hankinson (late RTR) 0
- 3

**SAT 21 Aug – Cirencester PC – Yeomanry v HACKETT Army Senior Team in aid of BFF**

1. Capt Mathew Eyre-Brook 9/12L +1
2. Maj Nick Cowley QRH +(1)
3. Capt Jack Mann RHG/D +2

4. Lt Col Nick Hunter KRH +2  
+6

**Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th, Sunday 5th September – CPC – MGs Tournament – HACKETT Army Team**

1. Lt Col Crispin Lockhart RHG/D -1
2. Capt Mathew Blakiston LD 0
3. Maj Rupert Lewis RHG/D +1
4. Capt Mathew Eyre-Brook 9/12L +1  
+1

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**Marcos Llambias**

**Published in News on 19 Jul 2010**

REPORTS of Marcos Llambias's death in this year's CSPA Magazine have proved – very fortunately – to be rather premature!

In fact Marcos is very much alive and kicking in El Retiro and is looking forward to welcoming more CSPA members to Argentina

“The walls of my club house are covered by pictures of the army, the navy and the air force visits, plus all the coats of arms I had received as presents after each visit,” said Marcos.

“So, anyone who would like to come to play some polo and groom for themselves, I'm ready to provide them with full board accommodation, airport pick up and local transports, plus stick and ball and daily chukkas, for u\$s 1.000.- per week.

“Laundry is included, but on departure, they will have to take a taxi, as we cannot cancel the polo school activities for traveling to the airport. Booking in advance is very important, in order to start with the horses' training in time.”

Needless to say the CSPA is delighted that it still has such a good friend in Argentina. In his letter of apology, Mark Cann, CSPA Director, wrote: “I am very sorry to have written you off so readily and reported your demise – at least you now know the affection and gratitude we at the CSPA have for you!”

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**Mabway Captains & Subalterns Tournament**

**Published in News on 17 Jul 2010**

Two exciting days of competition but which of the teams covered themselves in glory.

THE MabWay Captains & Subalterns 2010 Polo Tournament produced a record-breaking entry of 17 teams, from all three Services.

Four teams competed in Division One, the same number again in Division Two, six in Division Three and two in Division Four (one of the initial entries had to withdraw at the last minute).

The standard of polo over the weekend was much higher than in previous years – which indicates the success of coaching both by individual Service arrangements and by the standard of courses run at Tidworth polo Club.

Competition was tight in Division One. The Royal Navy took on the Infantry in the first of the matches and came out on top in a tough contest to set up a final with the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, who'd secured a win over 9/12 Lancers. This was a repeat of this year's thrilling Inter-Regimental Final when the Royal Navy took the honours, but on this occasion RWxY were determined to hold on to their Captains & Subalterns crown and succeeded in doing so.

In Division Two ADC black were easily overcome by the RAF, while RMAS has a close fought tussle with HAC. In the close scoring final between Sandhurst and the RAF, the newly presented Mabway Fox Trophy went to the RAF.

In Division Three, the series of chukka matches meant that KRH overcame HCMR blue team – eventually with some ease – to win the Lancer Cup..

Division Four winners were the Army Novice team who beat RLC by six goals to two to lift the Grenadier Cup.

The Most Valuable Player prize went to Captain Mathew Eyre-Brook of 9/12 Lancers.

Chairman of the Army Polo Association, Lt Col Simon Ledger, said: "Our thanks to Mabway once again for their support of this tournament which was, agreed by many, to be the best yet."

Div 1 : Main Trophy: RWxY

Div 2: The 'Mabway Fox' Trophy: RAF

Div 3: The Lancer Trophy: KRH

Div 4: The Grenadier Cup: Royal Artillery 'Red'

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## **Connaught Search United Services Cup & Hackett Inter-regimental Final**

**Published in News on 16 Jul 2010**

TWO finals, one venue, made for an exciting climax to the Chapple Cup Series and the oldest tournament in polo.

THE Republic of South Africa completed a whitewash the 2010 Chapple Cup Series with another emphatic win in the third and final match of the contest.

Already two nil up, the the visitors completed a hat-trick of victories with the Connaught Search United Services Cup game at Guards Polo Club.

The CSPA knew they were up against it from the start having lost by four and five goals respectively in the first two encounters at Sandhurst Polo Day and the Hackett Rundle Cup Day.

They began the game with a one and a half goals advantage but this was quickly wiped out in the first chukka. There were superb rubs by Lionel Foster and some hard riding by Tikkie van Eeden.

The CSPA showed signs of a recovery in the second chukka, scoring a goal to give them the lead by 2\_ goals to 2. However, that was the last time they had their noses in front.

By half-time the score was 4 goals to 2\_ and in the third chukka the South Africans had stretched that scoreline to 6 goals to 3\_.

The CSPA's Ben Vestey added another two, with some wonderful play, but after that the goals for the hosts simply dried up. In contrast the visitors continued to score and by the end

of the final chukka it was 8 to 5\_. The deserved winners were presented with the Connaught Search United Services Cup and the coveted Chapple Cup.

In this year's Hackett Inter-Regimental Final, the Household Cavalry Regiment, holders of the trophy, took on the Royal Navy buoyed by their triumph over the Army in the Hackett Rundle Cup the previous day.

The handicaps meant that the Royal Navy, who had played well as a team all season, started the match with a half goal advantage. Mason and Suzuki in particular were in fine form.

Despite some excellent play by the HCR's Lewis it was the Royal Navy who just had their noses ahead by half-time by 2- goals to 2.

In the third chukka the HCR came back hard with a quick goal following another good run by Wales – and it looked as though the tide had turned.

Goals for both teams followed leaving the HCR with one hand on the trophy with only seconds remaining. However, from the line-up, Suzuki launched a do or die attack. He picked up the ball and charged down the field unleashing a shot. The final bell sounded a split second after the ball crossed the goal line to give the Royal Navy a memorable 5 to 4\_ goals victory.

The Navy's Hero Suzuki was presented with the Pringle Cup for the player who played best to his handicap on the day.

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## **Hackett Rundle Cup Day**

**Published in News on 15 Jul 2010**

THE 2010 Hackett Rundle Cup Day at Tidworth Polo Club proved yet another memorable event in the polo calendar.

The Royal Navy sank a strong Army side in this year's Hackett Rundle Cup. With a half goal advantage and a quiet confidence about their own form they set about the task straight from the first chukka.

There was excellent team work, and in particular some fine play by Lt Cdr Wilson, which meant by the end of the first chukka the Army found themselves 1\_ goals down. Despite their well-ordered play and three good chances in front of goal they failed to convert their chances.

The second chukka, however, did bring the Army reward with Capt Eeyre-Brook getting his name on the score sheet twice in quick succession, reversing the teams' fortunes by the half-time mark.

In the vital third chukka the Army pressed to extend their lead but a stubborn Royal Navy defence held firm. A wily counter-attack by Cdre Mason then put them back in the driving seat at 2\_ to 2.

And that lead was extended through Sub Lt Suzuki – the Royal Navy's new secret weapon – with a wonderful 60 yard run and score.

The Army had high hopes of clawing back the deficit in the fourth and final chukka but like their barren third, once again they failed to find the flags.

Instead it was the Royal Navy who added to their tally, again through Wilson, to secure a 4\_ to 2 victory..

Earlier in the afternoon the crowds watched the CSPA battle it out with the Republic of South Africa Zulus team for the ICOA Troph, sponsored by DRS Technologies. This was the

second match in the three-game Chapple Cup series with the tourists having a comfortable victory in the first round tie at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst two days earlier.

Having already found their stride the Zulus began the match as they intended it to go on, scoring two quick goals – although Capt Mann did make a reply for the CSPA.

In the second chukka, despite the close attention of Capt ffrench-Blake, the South Africans went on to score two more goals to leave the CSPA trailing 4-1 at half-time.

The Zulus upped a gear once more for the third chukka with some great play by van Eeden and Foster combining at 1 and 2 who found the flags twice more – and again the CSPA could only muster a solitary reply.

Any thoughts of a CSPA comeback in the fourth and final chukka were quickly extinguished. Although the CSPA added to their total so too did the Zulus to finish the match 9-3.

The victory ensured, even with one game still to play, that it would be the Republic of South Africa on the Chapple Cup for 2010.

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## **Team News For Chapple Cup Series 2010**

**Published in News on 12 Jul 2010**

### **TEAMS TO TAKE ON THE TOURISTS**

The Republic of South Africa – Zulus team is challenging the CSPA for the Chapple Cup Series 2010. Team news is as follows:

#### **Sudan Cup at 3pm at RMAS Thursday 8th July 2010**

CSPA	RSA
Captain Eyre-Brooke 1	Tikkie Van Eeden 1
Major Cowley 1	Don McHardy 3
Trooper Wakeford 2	Lionel Foster 2
O/Cdt Purbrick 0	Angus Williamson 2

#### **ICOA Trophy at 2.30pm at Tidworth Saturday 10th July 2010**

CSPA	RSA
Sqn Ldr Adcock 0	Tikkie Van Eeden 1
Major Hunter 2	Don McHardy 3
Captain Mann 2	Lionel Foster 2
Capt ffrench-Blake 4	Angus Williamson 2

#### **United Services Cup at 3pm at Guards Sunday 11th July 2010**

CSPA	RSA
Major Cann 0	Tikkie Van Eeden 1
Major Hunter or Captain Mann 2	Don McHardy 3
Captain Vestey 3	Lionel Foster 2
Trooper Wakeford 2	Angus Williamson 2

## Team News For Chapple Cup Series 2010

### Published in News on 08 Jul 2010

THE CSPA team sheets have been confirmed for the visit of the Republic of South Africa – Zulus in the Chapple Cup Series 2010.

## Cornwall Affiliates Cup

### Published in Army Polo on 03 Jul 2010

The Hackett Army Team taking part in the Cornwall Affiliates Cup at Ascot Park Polo Club on Saturday July 3rd is:

1. Captain Mathew Blakiston, Light Dragoons 0
2. Trooper Wakeford RHG/D +1
3. Captain Mathew Eyre – Brook 9/12 L + 1
4. Major Cameron Humphries SCOTS 0

# Archives from 2011

## Cranwell Polo Weekend

### Published in RAF on 30 Nov 2011

The 2011 RAF Cranwell Polo weekend started again this year with a three-day training camp at Leadenham with nine both established players and beginners in attendance. The emphasis of the course led by the Leadenham 2 goal professional Mateus Jolley was on riding for polo; the mornings were spent in the sand school mastering the horsemanship required on the pitch; the afternoons were spent finessing rules and positioning then finishing with stick and ball and usually a frantic Gold Cup paced chukka.

The team selection gave the RAF two -4 goal teams for the weekend tournament which were matched by most of the attending sides. The draw saw the RAF teams pitted against all civilian teams from Leadenham and Ranksborough.

Whilst the RAF Spitfire team led by Wg Cdr Martin Adcock eventually dominated the Leadenham team into a convincing defeat, the RAF Hurricane team led by Gp Capt Affi Ashraf suffered at the hands of a well disciplined and hugely under handicapped Ranksborough. The final match in the draw was between the Army development team made up of the AGC and HAC and Rutland polo team made up largely of extremely talented and

well horsed young protégés flown in especially for the high profile event. Rutland took full advantage of all of this to dominate a well led but outclassed Army team.

After a well attended polo dinner kindly allowed by the Station Commander to be held in College Hall, the next day of competition was going to be a struggle. The loser's final was played off against Leadenham and the RAF Hurricane side with the RAF finishing second. However it was a great opportunity for the RAF team; for Flt Lt Ross Thomson and SAC Ross Barriball to represent the RAF and play a faster pace of polo and for Flt Lt Hoogewerf to demonstrate all that she had learned in New Zealand with big ride offs and hits alike!

The subsidiary final was played between the well matched RAF Spitfire team and Army Development team. The two players of note in these teams were Wg Cdr Martin Adcock who lead from the back continually coaching his team and scoring the majority of the goals and LCpl Ben Dirvas whose huge shot and excellent horsemanship later earned him the MVP (Most Valuable Player) of the tournament. The outcome was 'just' in favour of the RAF with a flourish of goals in the 2 final chukkas, a thoroughly enjoyable and hard fought match was had by all with lots of points to work on.

The final saw all civilian teams against each other for the first time in years. The horse-power and carefully selected team from Rutland took the advantage over Ranksborough to win the RAF Cranwell weekend for the first time ever. Players of note were the 12 year old Edward Banner-Eve who played like a veteran and the slightly older Nick Winterton who controlled the game placing shot after shot in front of goal.

The RAF Cranwell tournament is always an excellent start to the season for players and ponies alike. This year may not have seen the right result on the score sheet for the RAF but in terms of player development and finding the first team players of the future it was a huge success and the perfect start to a busy polo calendar.

Leadenham Polo Club hold weekly lessons for local RAF personnel and offer military rates. For more information please contact Flt Lt Dave Black on 95721 7575 or go to the RAF Polo Association website [www.raf.mod.uk/rafpolo](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafpolo)

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## **Hackett Army Novice Polo Team Vs Project Ultra Rmas**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Nov 2011**

Adorned with Audi sponsorship hoardings and bright sunshine, the Round Ground in front of New College at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) provided the most beautiful setting for an exhibition polo match between the Hackett Army Novice Team and the Project Ultra RMAS side.

For the Army, Maj Ben Marshall RGR lined up at back, Capt Matthew Blakiston LD at 3, Capt Alex Eade RE at 2 and 2Lt Nick Price and Gnr Lawrence Jackson both RA shared the number 1 jersey. RMAS fielded OCdts Henry Edwards at 4, Cameron Bacon at 3, James Willcox at 2 and James Garton and James Foster shared the number 1 spot.

Ponies for the Hackett Army side were kindly provided by J J Spark of Greenpoint Polo and fresh from the EFG Private Bank Army Polo Training Day the red shirts rode onto the pitch in confident mood. Gleaming sports cars adorning the touchline, a large crowd drawn from the RMAS Heritage Day and the mercurial commentary of Lt Col (ret'd) Simon Ledger all produced a fantastic atmosphere.

Through a series of rehearsed moves and accurate team play, the Army forged an early lead. Marshall, Blakiston and Eade all landed opening blows. Some great hitting from the back and

purposeful mid field scrapping suggested a one sided affair but the never-say-die attitude one might expect from the Army's fresh blood was clear for all to see. The ever-present Bacon went close to evening up proceedings on a number of occasions.

As the game marched on the Army were able to change formation as attention from the RMAS players increased which allowed Marshall to add 2 more to his tally with a series of surging runs. Blakiston and Eade picked up another couple in addition as well as putting several efforts wide and the stage was set for newcomer to the Army team: Gnr Lawrence Jackson. Late in the third chukka he capped a stirring all round performance with a fantastic angled strike bisecting the uprights.

Bacon was eventually able to trouble the scorers and the 4th chukka was largely about controlling the ball from the Army side's perspective. The final score was 8 – 1\_ in favourite of the Hackett Army Novice Team but the roar from the crowd and appreciation shown at the prize giving suggested it had been a much more closely fought affair.

OCdt Bacon's pony Pogolina won the Best Playing Pony award, indicative of the effort he had put in, and Gnr Jackson became the first known player to be legally allowed to keep his Hackett Army polo shirt by the Chairman of Army Polo.



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## **Efg Private Bank Army Polo Scholarship – South Africa**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Nov 2011**

Winston Churchill famously made the observation that a polo handicap is a passport to the world. And many people who have been involved with the sport would be inclined to agree with him. But they would also observe that, whilst a passport is necessary, you still need money to buy the ticket! So, with the generous support of an EFG Private Bank Army Polo Scholarship, Major Ben Marshall travelled to Jurassic Park Polo Club, South Africa, to spend 10 days taking advantage of a headstart to the English season. Here's his report:

A key element of deciding where to go for pre-season training is finding good weather in April. Traditionally the UK is wet – 'April showers' are so-called for a reason, they happen in April – so people look overseas. Thus, I left England basking in 20-plus degrees of glorious spring sunshine and arrived in Durban to rain, thick fog and temperatures struggling to make it into double figures; clearly passports do not guarantee good weather!

Fortunately, the sun had followed me out there and, for the duration of my trip, glorious sunshine and clear blue skies were the order of the day.

The change in the weather enabled us to get straight on with the task – playing polo. The quick-draining grounds at the adjacent Swartberg Polo Club meant that we were able to play chukkas from the off, whilst waiting for the home pitch at Jurassic to dry out. The depth of talent in South Africa is such that their ‘farm chukkas’ normally start at the 4-goal level and, at Jurassic, are facilitated by having some of South Africa’s best home-grown talent on call in the area.

Selby Williamson (5 goals), playing captain and team selector of the national side, was a great influence and one quickly realised you were in the wrong place for a pass when it went sailing past you into space – where one should have been! Jean du Plessis (4 goals), who plays for Urs Schwarzenbach’s ‘Black Bears’, is also local and he welcomed the chance to cruise around on his youngsters, educating me as to how much closer I would have to be if I stood any chance of hooking him. I would like to say that I did manage to steal the ball off him once, but I think it was more the exception proving the rule!

Sessions on the wooden (more metal actually) horse with Selby served to highlight the full range of shots and angles that could be achieved, proving how comfortable I had become with the classic four shots with only marginal variation in angle.

This was all the more apparent when Selby would pull off the most outrageous nearside tailed-backhand whilst galloping towards the backline, sending the ball travelling parallel along the backline towards the goal – I still maintain there was witchcraft involved.

But, with practice and perseverance, and no small amount of colourful language, the angles started to come and with them an enhanced appreciation of an opponent’s options. This was all then put together during chukkas which increased in style, speed and quality as the days ticked by.

By the end of the 10 days, I was playing with a higher level of consistency and accomplishment than I had achieved by the end of last summer, setting me up well for my return to England and the start of our season.

None of this would have been possible without the very generous financial support, nor would it have been as rewarding and productive without Selby’s patience and tutelage – a big thank you to all involved.



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**Efg Private Bank Army Polo Scholarship – New Zealand**

**Published in Army Polo on 30 Nov 2011**

Under the EFG Private Bank Army Polo Scholarship Captain Alex Eade set out for Witchwood Polo Farm, Waipukurau, Hawkes Bay, North Island, New Zealand. Here is his report:

I hit out for the sixth chukka with only a picture perfect moon for light. Playing two on two in the dark on a full pitch at 9pm was not something I had expected when landing in New Zealand only two hours ago. Thoughts of jet lag were banished and the phrase 'go hard or go home' offered as comfort.

Polo in New Zealand is organised slightly differently from the UK: most teams don't have patrons and are selected by your club on merit at each handicap level. My aim was to play for Wanstead Polo Club in the historic and prestigious Savile Cup at the end of the season.

Consequently I found myself playing in a team with the Club President and Club Secretary the day after flying across the world for a month of intensive polo coaching. The tournament was the Denbeigh Cup and

pitted Wanstead at home against their arch rivals Rangitikei. No pressure then! Somehow the other three members of my team managed to gel and eventually win our division but I spent the first chukka some way off the pace, on several occasions even behind the umpires.

The polo was fast, very fast with barely a shot missed. The players are all talented and extremely skilful riders and utterly committed. At one point I was turned inside out by a man at least 75 years in age.

The celebration of our famous victory lasted longer than the games themselves with Export Gold becoming a familiar friend. A day off on Monday was very welcome.

Buoyed by the weekend I strode up to the yard early on Tuesday morning to meet my host and coach for the next month, Mr Brett Hamer, a great 2 goal player and superb coach, having spent 18 seasons in the UK teaching mostly at the Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club.

He is a typical Kiwi, calm on the outside with a belly of fire on the pitch. He also does not mince his words. The programme he laid out doesn't do justice to the phrase 'back to basics' but it was exactly what I needed to improve my horsemanship and all-round game. Eight ponies were suddenly 'mine' with instructions on exactly what I should work on.

So began my immersion into New Zealand polo and Witchwood Farm life. I exercised or schooled my string every day; we rode them on the beach, we herded cattle and sheep on horseback, we stick and balled, played chukkas on the farm and at the Club; all under the ever watchful eye of Brett. Slowly but surely my riding improved, my hitting became more consistent and some matches didn't seem quite so fast.

As we supped our electrolyte replacement fluids after Club Chukkas one evening, I was surprised but incredibly proud to hear my name called as part of the 0 goal team to compete in the black and white stripes at the Savile Cup. The Savile Cup is the national club championship and one of the oldest sporting trophies in New Zealand first presented by Capt Savile (ADC to the Governor General) in 1889. Always uttered in the hushed tone reserved for legend it takes place in early March each year and is a fantastic and fiercely competitive event.

In a series of close-fought and tough battles we managed to win our opening games and progress through to the semi-finals. Here we encountered the eventual winners and despite

our best efforts succumbed to a well organised and skilful team from Kihikihi, the club hosting the tournament. These amazing memories will live with me forever.

My riding and polo have undoubtedly improved immeasurably and there is a possibility I might catch the handicap committee's eye during the coming season in the UK. But I have gained much more than that. I have been privileged to experience New Zealand Polo and the way of life it brings at its very finest.

Without exception I was welcomed by friendly and engaging people; all passionate about their sport and keen to promote it at every level. My thoughts are already turning to how I can engineer a return trip next year.

Witchwood Polo Farm and Wanstead Polo Club provide the perfect setting for anyone looking for a polo holiday. It is a joint venture between Brett Hamer (2) and Martin ffrench Blake (4) who both offer lessons along with another resident professional player.

It was run at cost last year with excellent rates from around £500 per week and a range of options for grooming and accommodation. Discounts are available for groups, which they are particularly good at hosting and bringing on collectively as teams. The whole experience is highly recommended by all who have been lucky enough to visit so far.

For further details contact [witchwoodpolo@xtra.co.nz](mailto:witchwoodpolo@xtra.co.nz) or [martin\\_ffrench\\_blake@hotmail.com](mailto:martin_ffrench_blake@hotmail.com)



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## Malaysia & Singapore

### Published in Army Polo on 18 Nov 2011

The Hackett Army team enjoyed a tour of Malaysia finished off with a match in Singapore.

An Army team of Col Michael O'Dwyer, Late IG, Major Rupert Lewis, Blues and Royals, Gaston Devrient, Army Coach and Tim Johnson HAC toured Malaysia as the guests of the Sultan of Johor.

The visit took place between 14 – 18 November before going onto Singapore for a match against the Singapore Polo Club.

The hosts were most generous and the team had the opportunity to make use of some of the best ponies in the Far East. The result was a victory for the Army Team by 4 to 2 1/2.





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## **RAF In Argentina**

**Published in News on 31 Oct 2011**

Flt Lt Rich Williams reports on his stay at San Sebastian Polo Club in Argentina.

As October started I was boarding my one stop flight to Argentina. I'd escaped the UK and all of its October based misery for the sunshine and polo delights of Argentina. Or so I thought... writes Flt Lt Rich Williams of 33 Squadron, RAF Benson.

Like most RAF arrivals I was late! This mattered not in the relaxed land of Argentina where nothing gets going in a hurry and the night is just getting started at 2am. So arrival drinks went on, late into the first night.

The next day arrived too soon and it was time to meet the grooms, my string and the rest of San Sebastian Polo Club members. And in what better way than six chukkas played at around 7 goal standard in the midday heat. This was my first introduction to polo in Argentina. The pace was hard, fast and aggressive and the ponies gave so much more than your average pony for hire, but demand so much more in return. This was going to be my first lesson of many taken from my visit.

My host for the month was Argentine 2 goaler and San Sebastians resident polo coach, Matias Jolly Araya. His hair is as big as his personality, with a flamboyant flair on and off the polo field, I was rarely left unaware of what I had done wrong and spent most of my time on the receiving end of his a huge offside shot!

We spent the first week riding, schooling doing stick and ball and playing chukkas at the farm along side his brother Federico also 2 goals and other club members who ranged between 1 and 3 goals. So already I had seen; the way that polo is played is faster, the ponies are a step up, the standard I was being exposed to was much higher and I always seemed to be at least a step behind the game! A lot to learn and all perfect conditions for me to up my game!

The end of the first week was supposed to mark the first tournament. A 10 goal affair to be played at the local Jockey Club in Rosario. However, torrential rain hit the region, the first of many down pours in my time in Argentina, flooding pitches and corrals, leaving conditions unplayable for days at a time.

During these wet weather days, we decided to travel to avoid the weather. This was where staying with a well-connected local was the only way to travel. On the first occasion, I was taken to La Pampas to stay on a vast cattle farm. We rode the local Criollo horses, learnt the art of the Asado and spent a few long cold nights on the hunt for the illusive wild boar. Our second wet weather trip took us to the North of Argentina again to cattle country but this time to hunt amongst the islands and waterways. The two day trip saw us bag two big crocs, two

Carpincio and three wild boar, one of which was a boar piglet caught by hand...only in Argentina!

Back to the polo, the water eventually subsided and the pitches dried out. We took this opportunity to make hay...a 6 goal tournament was scheduled at San Sebastian over two days, the RAF team lost their first game but learnt by their mistakes and convincingly won their second to take third place in the tournament. The rain and lack of polo to start with meant that the club now offered daily chukkas with everyone as desperate as myself to play. This all culminated in the last tournament, a three day 12 goal tournament played at a local private polo ground.

This 12 goal tournament marked my last few days in Argentina, up until this point we had played whenever the weather would allow but this still left weeks of frustration waiting for the rain to cease or the ground to dry. Conditions were perfect, the pitch and surroundings immaculate and the competition fierce.

The first few matches for the RAF team didn't go our way, the team was beaten by a single goal in the seventh chukka of both games to the eventual first and second place teams. The last match was all to play for and as tight as the first two. Lessons from the first match were learnt and applied leading the RAF team to run away with it in the last few chukkas in a fast and frantic flurry of goals.

Now what I haven't told you is that my 12 goal career so far lasted for roughly 20 seconds of the first chukka of the first match. I dismounted at the gallop, knocked myself unconscious where I stayed for the next 5-10 minutes and spent the next few days trying to remember my glorious performance!

Argentina is a truly beautiful country, the people are relaxed, the pace of life slow and the polo fast. My experience of it was only tarnished by the weather, with weeks of rainfall putting a full stop to any hopes of the polo everyday that I had hoped for. Despite this the chance to play any polo anywhere is always a welcome one and in Argentina more so than most! As with anything, you pay your money and take your chance. And while I may not have played as much polo as I would have liked, the lessons learnt are invaluable. Now just the small matter of putting them into practice for the RAF this coming season.



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## **Major Generals Cup**

### **Published in Army Polo on 02 Sep 2011**

The HACKETT Army team won the Subsidiary Cup at the 2011 Major Generals tournament held at Guards Polo Club at the beginning of September.

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## **Major Generals Tournament**

### **Published in Army Polo on 01 Sep 2011**

The HACKETT Army team won the Subsidiary Cup at the 2011 Major Generals tournament held at Guards Polo Club at the beginning of September.

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## **Winter Polo Training**

### **Published in News on 18 Jul 2011**

Special deals are available to CSPA members for winter polo training through Martin French-Blake, either in Argentina or New Zealand.

At La Esperanza, Coronel Suarez, about four hours south of Buenos Aires, the price per week is £1000 cash.

Dates available are between 8th January to 12th February and again from 23rd February to 10th March. There is now a direct flight with BA around £900 if booked early.

New Zealand offers a different polo playing opportunity. The cost is £500 per week with food on top (self catering). Dates anytime at the moment on a first come basis. You will need the best part three weeks leave to make the most of New Zealand.

If interested, please register through your individual Service polo association. CSPA will offer £250 subsidy per individual undertaking this training. Individual Service Polo Associations may be able to offer more.

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## **The Hogspear Captains & Subalterns Tournament**

### **Published in News on 17 Jul 2011**

SOME 17 teams competed in the Hogspear Captains & Subalterns 2011 Polo Tournament.

Two exciting days of competition but which of the 17 teams from all three Services covered themselves in glory.

Four teams competed in Division One, the same number again in Division Two, three in Division Three, another four in Division Four plus two more teams in Division Five.

The standard of polo over the weekend was high – indicating the success of coaching both by individual Service arrangements and by the standard of courses run at Tidworth Polo Club.

Competition was tight in Division One but the honours eventually went to QRH, with Infantry BG runners-up, the Royal Navy third and the RAF in fourth.

In Division Two it was the 9th/12th Lancers who were victorious over KRH in second, RY third and AGC(R) in fourth.

The three teams going head to head in Division Three were RA(B), LD and RLC with the Royal Artillery coming out on top.

There was more success for the RA – this time the their red team – in Division Four. They triumphed over AMS, 1RHA and AGC(B).

Division Four winners were the Army Novice team who beat RLC by six goals to two to lift the Grenadier Cup.

In Division Five, Edinburgh UOTC beat Bristol UOTC.

## Archives from 2012

### INTER-REGIMENTAL FINAL

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

THE Inter-Regimental competition is one of the oldest polo tournaments in the world. It was cavalry regiments, based at the cavalry school at Netheravon (six miles west of Tidworth in Wiltshire), who played polo when it was first introduced to this country in 1871. In those days the grounds were rough and uneven, unlike the beautiful lawns Tidworth has today. In 1922 a concerted effort was made to provide proper playing fields within the grounds of the Tedworth House Estate in Tidworth. The Brigade Commander of the day, Brigadier Bertie Fisher, with the help of the 12th Royal Lancers, 14th/20th King's Hussars, 15th/19th King's Royal Hussars and the 17th/21st Lancers built the main polo ground.

[Click for past winners.](#)

### RUNDLE CUP

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

THE annual Navy and Army Cup was first played in Malta in 1909. It was instigated by Sir Leslie Rundle, Governor of Malta, and supported by the then Prince George of Wales, later to become King George VI. The Royal Navy won the first cup and the Army won the last time the match was played in Malta back in 1966. The Navy won the first recorded match in the UK in 1976; the team then included Lt HRH The Prince of Wales.

Outstanding scores include a hat-trick by the Navy in 1994–96 but the honours are now about even with RN having won 43 times to Army 39 and one tie up to 2019.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## CHAPPLE CUP

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

EVERY year the CSPA competes in a three-match test series for the Chapple Cup usually against a touring overseas team, including the USA, Pakistan and Abu Dhabi. The first game is for the **Sudan Cup** at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the second for the **Indian Cavalry Officers' Association Trophy** at Tidworth Polo Club and the final match for the **United Services Cup** at Guards Polo Club. Two points are awarded for a win and one point for a draw. In the event of a tie, the last match will decide the result. The Chapple Cup was first awarded in 1998 in recognition of Field Marshal Sir John Chapple's contribution to Services' Polo as the CSPA President.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## UNITED SERVICES CUP

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

THIS cup has been around since 1906 although nobody is quite sure what it was originally presented for. In recent years it was given to the winner of the final played between Inter-Regimental Germany and Inter-Regimental UK. When this ceased to exist – after the Inter-Regimental Germany died out – the United Services Cup was re-designated as the first trophy of the Chapple Cup Series (played between the CSPA and the annual visiting touring team). As a matter of interest this is the CSPA's most valuable cup and, if you look carefully, this most beautiful rosebowl is almost identical to the cup given to the winner of the men's Australian Tennis Open.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## INDIAN CAVALRY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION TROPHY

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

IN 1988, at their annual dinner at the Cavalry and Guards Club, a silver statuette of a mounted Indian Cavalryman was presented by the Indian Cavalry Officers' Association to guest of honour Lieutenant Colonel S. Jameson, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, chairman of Tidworth Polo Club. It was agreed that this trophy would be contested each year on Rundle Cup at Tidworth by a visiting international team against a Combined Services Polo Association team.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## CAPTAINS AND SUBALTERN'S CUP

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

[Click for past winners.](#)

## ALDERSHOT CUP

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

The Aldershot Cup is at Tidworth Polo Club on loan from CSPA and is used for internal Club Tournaments.

## PQ SADDLE

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

THE much-coveted PQ Saddle award. It is presented to a member of the Combined Services who has significantly contributed to the work of the CSPA.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## PRINGLE TROPHY

**Published in Cups on 28 Nov 2012**

THE Pringle Trophy is awarded to the player from either team in the Inter-Regimental Final who plays best to his handicap. It is named after Major Jack Pringle 8th KRIH and IH in recognition of his great contribution to Army polo, in particular for encouraging young players into the sport.

[Click for past winners.](#)

## CAPTAINS & SUBALTERNNS TOURNAMENT 2012

**Published in News on 29 Jul 2012**

The Captains Subalterns Cup is the second oldest polo cup in the world having first been instituted by The 9/12th Lancers playing at Hounslow in 1896. (Incidentally, the oldest polo cup is the Inter Regimental, instituted in 1878 and won by QRL in 2012 on the 22 July). The 17/21st Lancers dominated the Captains/Subalterns from 1924 to 1930 and then not again until 1992. The 9th Lancers and the Household Cavalry featured predominantly on the cup in between these dates with teams such as the Gunners and Light Dragoons occasionally claiming the Cup.

On the 27th of July this year the first QRL fully-serving Captains / Subalterns team met at Tidworth Polo club for the first time since 1992 for a crash course in polo techniques and tactics. The team was Lt Ed Faulkner, playing a -2 handicap in position 3, Lt Arthur Purbrick (Team Capt.), playing a -1 handicap in position 4, 2Lt Jimmy Wilcox, playing a -2 handicap in position 1, 2Lt Charles Gray, playing a -2 handicap in position 2 and Lt Harry Hurrell playing a -2 handicap in position 2.

The first match took place on the 28th of July – the first day of the London Olympics (polo was last an olympic sport in the 1936 Berlin Games) – at Tidworth Polo Club versus the HAC team.

The match was well played and had some fast and furious chukkas. The score alternated between the two teams to the fourth chukka which saw the score at 6 to 4 and 1/2 to HAC. A final and well deserved goal scored by the HAC saw the score at 6 to 5 and 1/2 a mere 2 minutes before the final bell! QRL took the defensive and the hotly contested match concluded in QRL's favour. Sunday the 29th saw QRL in the Divisional Finals playing the Royal Artillery Team Red.

Despite second day nerves, the pressure of the crowd and a little 'hydration' from the prolific Pimms, QRL swept up the day with a score of 9 goals to 2 making QRL the Divisional Champions of the Captains / Subalterns match 2012.

For some of the players, it was their first match ever and others, their first time in new positions, first time in years etc. For a team that went to Tidworth to 'participate', the play was of an extraordinarily high standard and more importantly, of a typically Lancer attitude with no appealing, no vulgarity and no foul play. All players played politely and with panache.

Well done especially to Harry and Charlie, their first matches ever; Jimmy for scoring far more goals than his -2 handicap belied; Ed for his commitment as a left handed player taking extra lessons and especially to him and Col Robin Faulkner and Zillah for hosting the team over the weekend.

*Arthur Purbrick*

## Archives from 2013

### APOLOA AGM

**Published in Army Polo on 12 Dec 2013**

The 2014 APoloA AGM that will be held at the 32 Regt RA Officers' Mess, Larkhill (same as last year). The meeting will start at 14:00hrs. Tea and Coffee will be available. [ApoloA AGM Agenda 2014](#)

### CSPA AGM

**Published in News on 17 Sep 2013**

The CSPA AGM will be at The Cavalry & Guards Club London on Thursday 13th February at 1500 hrs.

Click for agenda [AGMAG 14](#)

# GUARDS FINALS DAY 2013

**Published in News on 15 Jul 2013**

Guards Polo Club was the setting for the 2013 Hackett Inter-regimental Final and the last match in this year's Chapple Cup Series.

With the series already gone to the US team – with wins at Sandhurst and Tidworth – this match was whether they could complete a whitewash.

The CSPA team though came out of the blocks in fine style with Eyre-Brook turning particularly well on the strong backhands of O'Dwyer ably assisted by Lewis who made some excellent runs and scored a wonder goal with the finest of angles with a tail backhand.

The pattern was set with the CSPA scoring freely and some great play by O'Dwyer in front of the crowd to take the ball from wide to score in fine style.

The US team kept at it though but the goal difference was too great for the US to close the gap. With two more goals to the CSPA by Lewis and Eyre-Brook they ran out the winners of the United Services Cup, sponsored by Connaught Search Solutions, by 8 to 2. They had of course already lost the Chapple series.

The return of the Hackett Inter-Regimental Final at Guards after a year away at Coworth Park saw the Kings Royal Hussars return to see whether they could win this trophy for the first time since 1986 and overcome the disappointment of losing to the Queens Royal Lancers last year. In their way stood the team from the Royal Navy.

With Hunter having played on 2 out of the last three days and having two new hips there was a question mark over his fitness. He proved beyond doubt that he was more than fit and playing better than ever as he launched long balls for Freeman-Kerr and Kaye to get onto.

With Walker under instruction to clear the way the goals started to come quickly with Kaye, Hunter and Freeman-Kerr having their share. At half time the RN had yet to score and the KRH had put 5 past them with some fine team play.

The third period saw some exemplary play and with Walker finding the flags for the first time and a 60 yard penalty by Hunter making the score 8 to 1 1/2 it looked all done.

However the RN are never ones to lie down and they had the last hurrah by scoring two quick and excellent goals by Suzuki. The affair ended with a deserved victory for the KRH by 9 to 4 1/2 and history was rewritten.

The excellence of Hunter's play earned him the Most Valuable Player Pringle Cup and he went home a very contented man.

## HACKETT RUNDLE CUP DAY 2013

**Published in News on 14 Jul 2013**

The 2013 Hackett Rundle Cup Day took place on a gloriously sunny day with soaring temperatures – the first for four years!

First up was the second match of the 2013 Chapple series – for the Steria Indian Cavalry Officers' Association Trophy.

Newcomers Barsh Kazi and Albany Mulholland settled well and very soon the superior play of Barnes and Salinas-Bentley began to tell. After a fine run or two by Barnes they were three up by the end of the first chukka.

Giles Ormerod settled the team and got two back in the second but the US team continued to attack and by half time they were five up against the handicap advantage of 1 1/2.

Martin Adcock, just back after a bad accident, began to find his range and after a good run he passed the ball to Mulholland who scored to revive faint hope that the CSPA could come back.

It was not to be and Barnes and Gorman combined well to put the result beyond doubt in the fourth chukka to no reply by the CSPA.

So the ICOA Trophy went to the US team by 6 to 2 1/2 and with it the Chapple Cup series.

The big match of the day – the Hackett Rundle Cup – was next up. In the gloom of 2012 the Royal Navy put a superior Army team to the sword in fine style under the excellent watch of their coach Jason Dixon.

This year the RN fielded Steve Spillar to replace the long serving Richard Mason. The match got off to its usual frantic start with the Army striving to overcome the handicap difference of 2. This did not take long and by the beginning of the second both teams were level.

Eyre-Brook was combining well with O'Dwyer and with Hunter providing excellent work at the back the match took shape with two fine goals. By the end of the third the Army were leading 5 goals to 3.

The RN though never lie down and they came right back into the match with two quick goals by Suzuki. However, with a reply by Hankinson the goal difference was restored.

In the fourth chukka both teams pushed hard but it was the Army who scored to settle this excellent encounter by 7 goals to 5. The difference was the powerful striking by Hunter who richly deserved the Most Valuable Player award.

## SANDHURST POLO DAY

**Published in News on 12 Jul 2013**

Sandhurst Polo Day marked the first match of the 2013 Chapple Cup Series between CSPA and the touring team from Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association (ECUSPA).

It was a hot day on the flat and hard round ground. The CSPA scored first from a fine 60 yd shot from Giles Ormerod and the play ebbed and flowed up to half time with the US team scoring to edge ahead by 1/2 goal.

The CSPA came back strongly with some fine runs by Robin Ormerod who scored to put the CSPA ahead by 4 1/2 to 4 at the end of the third chukka.

MZ Kazi had a nasty fall but with Barnes and Salinas-Bentley combining well in the fourth they surged ahead to six goals with the CSPA only replying with Vicky Woodhead finding the flags.

So the final score of 5 1/2 to 6 saw the US team lift the Sudan Cup and draw first blood in the Chapple Cup series.

The second match on Sandhurst Polo Day was the Hackett Inter-Regimental semi-final match between Kings Royal Hussars and Household Cavalry Regiment. The winners of this match would be meeting the Royal Navy in the final.

It started off a very tightly marked game with Jack Mann threatening from the beginning for the HCR, well backed up by Rupert Lewis. They were unlucky not to score but with increasingly effective marking by KRH and a well executed 60 yard penalty the KRH then went on to score 2 field goals to lead at half time by 3 goals to no reply.

The HCR rallied hard in the third chukka and got within a goal but with Hunter on form putting some long balls up, and some excellent marking by Walker, Freeman- Kerr scored twice to make it 5 – 3 1/2 at the start of the 4th.

A goal by both teams kept matters interesting but KRH held out to reach the Final for the second time in two years by 6 to 4 1/2.

## TEAMS & TIMINGS FOR JULY FIXTURES

**Published in News on 03 Jul 2013**

The teams and timings have been released for the CSPA fixtures taking place next week (July 11 – 14).

The RMAS Polo Day on Thursday July 11 will begin at 15:45 between ECUSPA and CSPA – both teams of 4 handicap – competing for the Sudan Cup. The CSPA team will consist of Cann 1, G Ormerod 2, R Ormerod 0 and Woodhead 0. The second match of the day, starting at 17:00, will be the semi-final of the Hackett Inter-Regimental Trophy between The Kings Royal Hussars 3 and the Household Cavalry 1. Both games will be umpired by Martin Fewster and Giles Ormerod will also do the second; ponies from Greenpoint polo; referee JJ Spark.

Next up is the Hackett Rundle Cup and ICOA Trophy at Tidworth Polo Club on Saturday July 13. The CSPA team taking on ECUSPA at 14:30 will this time consist of Mulholland 0, Adcock 0, S-W 1, and Humphries 0. Match two will be the Hackett Rundle Cup at 16:30 between the Army and the Royal Navy.

The third and final fixture is the United Services Cup at 15:15 on Sunday July 14 at Guards Polo Club – pending the Inter-Regimental semi-final results. Lining up for CSPA will be Cann 1, Eyre-Brook 1, O'Dwyer 1, and Hunter 1/Lewis 2 (TBC). The Inter-Regimental Final will follow at 16:30.

Any queries contact the CSPA Director Mark Cann on 01672 564911.

## HACKETT INTER-REGIMENTAL TOURNAMENT 2013

**Published in News on 15 Apr 2013**

[Click here](#) for the 2013 Inter-regimental Tournament entry form. [Click here](#) for the Inter-regimental Tournament rules

## 2013 RAF CRANWELL

**Published in News on 11 Mar 2013**

The RAF will be hosting the annual Cranwell Tournament, where teams will be playing for the coveted Martyn Bebbington Memorial Trophy over the weekend 4/5 May 2013. Please contact the secretary if you are interested in entering a team.

## NEW ZEALAND TOUR 2013

**Published in RAF on 11 Mar 2013**

Having had a successful tour to Kihikihi Polo Club New Zealand in 2012; Flight Lieutenant Vicky Woodhead decided to return for a couple of intensive weeks training to start the 2013 season. Here is her report:

I was able to base at the Kihikihi Polo Club again, kindly hosted by Club president and New Zealand national team member, 3 goaler Hamish Ormond.

Due to flight costings and to reduce time away from work I flew out after Christmas and headed straight down to Outlook Farms, where Hamish and his family are based. We wasted no time in getting down to business and I found myself the next morning out on the farm on a familiarisation ride with Hamish, the “points for improvement” were flowing thick fast and the benefit of riding constantly with a corrector on one’s shoulder were evident. Due to the New Years break, we had 2 intensive days of training before a 2 day break to let the muscles recover. The New Year started with chukkas and I had to jump into the deep end in blazing sunshine in fast club chukkas. The national club tournament was being held earlier this year, so the club practises were more intense and aimed at team development. As I was unable to stay for the tournament I was either allocated as opposition or had the opportunity to develop solo hitting skills. As ever the faster paced game was an eye opener but the benefit of playing in faster polo is huge and it makes you a sharper, more aware player.

The gap between chukka sessions was spent on working on riding techniques and ensuring my position is correct to enable a stable hitting platform. On match days I had concentrated stick and ball sessions, trying to implement all the corrections and improvements, while still hitting the ball.

This year one of my goals was to increase my knowledge and experience in the training of polo ponies, something I had worked on several years ago with Hamish. Several days were spent working with the young ponies, repeating turns and movements to increase flexibility and responsiveness. We then progressed to an often harder task of correcting bad habits in the older ponies. To make the exercises more fun for the ponies, and to get some farm work done, we would go and round cattle up, using stopping and turning techniques as you would in a polo match. The polo pony can make or break a game so it is vital to be able to school and train them correctly.

Overall this year I focussed much more on my riding technique and getting the most out of my ponies, starting from training at home to schooling before a match. The re-learning of techniques and correction of bad habits

takes time and practise and I found New Zealand to be a perfect opportunity to do both. I have learnt many skills to take home to train my own ponies and to pass on to other club members. As ever the unique nature of NZ polo ensured I was immersed with knowledgeable and experienced polo players who were very willing to advise and educate me. I look forward to trying out my new skills and techniques on my ponies and in RAF matches.

Many thanks to Kihikihi Polo Club and Hamish Ormond for having me and the RAF Sports Board for assistance in funding the trip.

## RAF POLO SEASON REPORT 2012

**Published in RAF on 11 Mar 2013**

Amongst the highlights of the 2012 season was the ever flourishing Cranwell tournament; a successful rematch in the now well established Ham Challenge as well as an increase in members, in particular amongst the lower ranks. Air Cdre Tim Brown, after over 10 years as Chairman of the RAF Polo Association, handed the reins across to Wg Cdr Martin Adcock in July.

**Membership.** The RAFPA membership went up from 20 to 23 in 2012, particularly pleasing is the increase in ORs, largely thanks to the increased support from the RAF Sports Lottery as well as better publicity. The RAF now counts 3 SACs, 2 Cpls and 2 NCOs amongst its members, one of whom played in the winning team against the Army in the Novice section of the Sassoon Cup. The RAFPA has 7 pony owners. No handicap changes this season. Two members were selected to play for the CSPA.

**Fixtures and Results.** Of the 20 matches played in 2012, the RAF had 7 wins, 2 draws and 11 losses, the highs being at Cranwell, Ham and in the Novice section of the Sassoon Cup whilst the lows losses against both the Navy and the Army in the Duke of York and Sassoon Cup respectively. New fixtures include the notable event put on by the HAC at Ham in September and two training matches at Druids. The Cranwell Tournament saw a full 9 teams enter in early May with some of the only polo played in the rain swept Country. This tournament was a great start to the season for all involved and goes from strength to strength each year. We hope to see the Navy take part in 2013..

**Training.** All potential members are encouraged to attend a beginners' course either at Tidworth or Leadenham, all of which are now partly supported by the RAF Sports Lottery. On top of this, the RAF organised a 3 day refresher course at Cranwell prior to the tournament which was opened to the Army opposition and proved a great success for all, adding to the excellent comraderie between the Services over the tournament. Individual developing players benefitted from subsidised chukkas at Tidworth and Leadenham. In order to improve the A team, the RAF entered tournaments at Druids under the tuition of Giles Ormerod, whilst the B team got together to attend several team training sessions at Greenpoint Polo. These developments should stand the RAF in good stead for the 2013 Season.

**Overseas Tour.** Following the success of the previous year's tour to New Zealand, 5 members returned to Wanstead and Kihiki Polo Clubs for part of their winter. The players' game improved visibly from their time in the saddle there, although operational requirements kept them away for a large proportion of the UK Season. Again, there should be better player availability for 2013.

**Sponsorship and Support.** The RAF secured a sponsor for the Cranwell Tournament, former CSPA player Kris Bebbington and his family. This will continue into the 2013 season. The RAFPA would not function without the outstanding support from the RAF Sports Board, the CSPA, the Sports Lottery and Tidworth Polo Club, as well as the many clubs that support our individual players. Our thanks to you all. 2012 should prove to be a good building block for the 2013 season.

## Archives from 2014

### BEWARE ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

Published in News on 27 Nov 2014

Horse owners have been urged to identify trees near where their horses are turned out as there have been increased warnings regarding Atypical Myopathy – a seasonal disease that is fatal in 70-80% of horses.

There has been a surge this year in the number of reported cases of the disease which is caused by a toxin in sycamore seeds. The British Equine Veterinary Association says that the weather is to blame due to high winds and heavy rain resulting in seeds falling from trees and are urging owners

not to graze horses near sycamore trees from the autumn through until late spring and to check their horses at least twice a day.

For more information check out the [Polo Times](#).

## COMMONWEALTH CUP

**Published in News on 29 Sep 2014**

The USA proved to be stronger than the British Combined Services team, to lift the Nespresso Commonwealth Cup for another year running at Banbury Cross near Middleburg, Virginia.

The British military team comprising of Capt George Walker, Lt Rishi Ahluwalia, Maurice Ormerod and Maj Mark Cann took the British weather with them and although seen as an advantage, the home team still secured a 6-5 victory in the 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Cup tournament.

The Nespresso tournament, also supported by La Martina, Masserati and Salamander Resort and Spa, saw a number of people braving the rain to watch the two teams battle it out.

With an early lead of 3 goals against the USA in the first chukka, it finally looked like the visitors could improve on their defeat last year.

The USA then clawed back the score with two field goals and a couple of penalties to bring the score even at 4-4 going into the fourth chukka. However with the rain having stopped, the USA delivered two more goals to the Brits 1, leaving a final score of 6-5.

The tournament was part of a series of matches and sociable events aptly named the British Invasion Weekend based around Middleburg, Virginia. It saw the Combined Services team playing in a handful of matches at Banbury Cross, Great Meadows polo club and at a number of private fields.

A Nod to Mod party was thrown in the Salamander Resort with the team displaying a strong Brits abroad fashion sense. Towards the end of the tour the team travelled to Pennsylvania facing an American team at Brandywine Polo Club, winning in a nail-biting match 7-6.

# TEAM ARMY CAPTAINS & SUBALTERNS

**Published in News on 06 Aug 2014**

The Household Cavalry finished top of the pile in the 2014 Team Army Captains & Subalterns Tournament.

This Cup is the second oldest polo cup in the world having first been instituted by The 9/12th Lancers playing at Hounslow in 1896.

Some 20 teams from all three Services descended on Tidworth Polo Club to do battle. W. Play was outstanding at times, especially in the Division 1 and Division 2 Finals. Results are as follows:

## **Div 1:**

### **Winners: The Household Cavalry**

Runners Up: The Royal Navy

3rd: Army Reserves – A

4th: The RAF

5th: The Royal Artillery

6th: Army Reserves – B

## **Div 2:**

### **Winners: Sandhurst A**

Runners Up: The HAC

3rd: The KRH

4th: The AGC

## **Div 3:**

### **Winners: The Royal Artillery**

Runners Up: The RAF

3rd: The AGC

4th: The RLC

## **Div 4:**

## **Winners: Sandhurst B**

Runners Up: Sandhurst C

3rd: The Welsh Guards

4th: The RDG

The Div 1 Final was an intense battle and both teams played amazingly well. Congratulations to the Household Cavalry – a well deserved victory! It was a wonderfully enjoyable day and it was good to see how the sport brought together players and players' families who all came out to support.

Courtesy of Bose, Team Army was proud to present the winning team with Bose headphones.

Winners of Div 2 were awarded Camelback water bottles and all 68 players received smaller prizes.

## **CASA SILVA AND THE CSPA**

**Published in News on 23 Jul 2014**

The CSPA is delighted to announce a new partnership with Casa Silva – a family owned winery based in Chile's awe-inspiring Colchagua Valley.

Since its humble beginnings in 1892, the estate is now run by the eldest son of the family's fifth generation, Mario Pablo. His aim is to reflect the beauty and elegance of this remarkable region in his wines.

Through hard work and determination Casa Silva can now officially claim to be the most awarded winery in Chile. The team have implemented a number of sustainability practises over the years to ensure their wines can continue to be produced for generations to come.

Alongside wine, the family's love of polo is legendary. The winery even boasts its own polo field where friends are invited to play and regular matches are held.

This love has translated into success with the Casa Silva polo team now one of the best teams in the whole of Chile! They even have a wine named in honour of the legendary polo horse 'Pintao' whose offspring are now ridden by the sixth generation at Casa Silva!

# APPEAL FOR USE OF SAFE HELMETS

**Published in News on 23 Jul 2014**

Following recent accidents, Aurora Eastwood has written an open letter to the HPA regarding the use of safe helmets.

It is with a heavy heart that I climb on my soapbox. Having been an advocate of using safe helmets for several years, recent accidents have only compounded that view. Seeing a strong, good man, a friend to so many, lying in a hospital bed, stricken with a critical brain injury following an accident on the pitch, has removed the final vestiges of ambivalence towards the issue.

Polo is the last governed equine sport in the UK to not insist upon helmets that meet a European safety standard. Showjumping, Eventing and more recently, Dressage, all insist on hats that are kitemarked and certified to at least PAS015. A critical factor is the presence of a three point harness. As for racing; it has been decades (since 1978) that jockeys have had to wear proper helmets.

Polo is played at high speed and is inherently dangerous, with 10 horses on the pitch at any one time, going at a gallop in different directions; collisions, stumbles and falls are common.

The only comparable sport really is racing, which also involves speed and the possibility of collisions bringing horses down - with jump racing carrying even more risk. And yet British racing has not seen a fatality due to a head injury for well over 20 years, even though falls are far more frequent than in polo, the number of participants far higher, and jockeys are often trampled/rolled over by a horse.

By highlighting the most common "excuses" given by opponents to a blanket rule, I have tried to dismantle each one.

## **Personal Choice**

There is of course the argument that the usage of safety equipment should be left to the individual. That it is a matter of personal choice. Nonsense! The HPA have a moral and ethical and increasingly legal responsibility to keep its members safe. They owe it to player's families, friends and to the reputation of the sport.

People left to their own devices often make poor choices and take foolish risks, it is up to the governing bodies to take matters into their own hands and insist upon safe headgear.

## **Cost**

This is simply a non issue. Charles Owen sell polo helmets starting from just over GBP100. That is little more than the cost of a set of shoes for one pony.

## **Confusion over safety standards**

Charles Owen make a helmet to PAS015 and this came out top in a test conducted on behalf of the HPA. Casablanca produces helmets that meet the standards of the USA (NOCSAE). La Martina's helmet has been endorsed by the Mark Davies Injured Jockey's fund.

More information here: <http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/test-show-most-polo-helmets-offer-little-protection/>

## **Helmets wont save everyone**

Of course they won't. Motorcyclists are still killed even with helmets. Event riders still die from crush injuries. Car drivers still perish in crashes despite seatbelts. The point is that the numbers who die or suffer serious injury is vastly reduced.

## **Difficulty in enforcing the rule**

The other sports seem to manage! Aside from anything, it's pretty easy to spot a three point harness, even from a distance. Apart from that, it is a simple matter of cascading responsibility down. The HPA inform the clubs. The clubs inform the players and umpires. The umpires make sure that every player on the pitch is wearing a proper helmet before he/she rolls the ball in. This is no more taxing than a quick look around - once more, the three point harness is very easy to spot.

Another option is to employ a tagging system, like BE do once hats have been checked, is very simple. Before any player sets foot on the ground for the first time that season, their hat must be checked for standards by a club official. They get a tag. The tag stays in place for the rest of the season.

## **Vanity and Tradition**

Yes, low profile "traditional" helmets look cool. However safe helmets are no longer the "mushrooms" of yesteryear and once a blanket rule is adopted everyone will look the same anyway. Vanity is a pretty ridiculous reason to take a risk and is one that many players will sheepishly admit to.

## **There simply isn't any reasonable argument against an enforced rule**

Who remembers the furore regarding the seatbelt rules? There was uproar when it became law, but who now would challenge the fact that seatbelts save lives? Wearing one is second nature now. Of course there are still un-survivable crashes, as there are un-survivable falls from horses, but by

using proper equipment we reduce the odds of death and permanent brain injury by a hugely significant amount.

**Let us not forget insurance.** It will only be a matter of time before insurers state that unless clubs demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure player safety, they will not provide cover. Or they will raise premiums to unaffordable levels to reflect the risk. Ditto personal accident providers.

We all need to take responsibility for the lives and well being of both ourselves and our fellow players. To allow a cultural change will simply take too long. This has to be pushed through, and now.

## GUARDS FINALS DAY

**Published in News on 16 Jul 2014**

The King's Royal Hussars retained the Hackett Inter Regimental Trophy, proving stronger in a battle against the Royal Navy.

They put on a great display of polo to win the match 8-5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> and lift the oldest polo trophy still competed for in the world.

The KRH's Capt Robert Freeman Kerr, who had a great game at 3 for the Army team, was rewarded with the Pringle Trophy for the Most Valuable Player.

The players were all awarded prints by Jeremy Houghton, who has been hosting an exhibition in the Clubhouse over the past month in commemoration of the centenary of the First World War

This was not the only action on the day as the first match, for the Connaught Search United Services Cup, saw the Combined Services Polo Association (CSPA) defeat a visiting South African side, from Cape Town Polo Club, 8-3. However this was a match for the Chapple Cup series and South Africa won overall, receiving the impressive Chapple Cup from its namesake Field Marshall Sir John Chapple.

Following the main presentations, Guards Polo Club was presented with a memento of the day from the South African team in recognition of the Club's hospitality.

# ARMY DEFEAT ROYAL NAVY IN RUNDLE CUP

**Published in News on 15 Jul 2014**

Royal Navy polo players put up a tough fight against an Army side containing Prince Harry for the 2014 Rundle Cup but ultimately they were out-gunned.

It was a beautiful summer's afternoon for the highly anticipated fixture, the highlight of the Services' Polo season, played at Tidworth, home to the Combined Services Polo Association.

This year the 1 goal senior RN team of Commodore Adrian Aplin, Commander Al Wilson, Lieutenant Commander Steve Spiller and Lieutenant Hiro Suzuki faced a 3 goal Army side of Major Rupert Lewis, Captain Harry Wales, Second Lieutenant Rishi Ahluwalia and Officer Cadet Paddy Self.

After a combined services team, which included Lance Corporal Max Kamper of the Royal Marines, was defeated by a visiting South Africa squad for the Indian Cavalry Officers Association Trophy the main event of the afternoon got underway in front of a crowd of 6,000 spectators.

The Army, odds on favourite with Prince Harry on their side, faced a disciplined and well-structured Royal Navy team for what was undoubtedly going to be a hotly-contested match with the Royal Navy extremely keen to avenge the previous year's defeat.

From the outset the crowd was treated to a fabulous display of polo with individual flair and outstanding teamwork featuring strongly from both sides. In what was a past-paced and incredibly exciting game the score was neck and neck right up until the last chukka when the Royal Navy gave away a penalty and the Army capitalised on fast horses to increase the lead by two goals.

The Royal Navy could just not regain the initiative from this and the Army came out the victors winning 7 – 4 1/2. The prestigious trophy was awarded to the Army captain by Vice Admiral Sir Phillip Jones CB, president of Royal Navy polo, and Jeremy Hackett, sponsor of the Hackett Rundle Cup

Day. Best playing pony was presented by Tristan Young of Gore, sponsor of the Royal Navy Polo Team.

## BRITISH FORCES DEFEAT US ARMY

**Published in News on 14 May 2014**

A British Forces team whopped the US Army to win the Armed Forces Cup at Grand Champions Polo Club, Florida, on a beautiful May day.

Both teams consisted of either Active-duty or Veteran members of Armed forces, from both Great Britain and the United States of America. The BFF team wasted no time getting the game started, they had a blinder of a first chukka, leading by 4 at the end of it. A goal from Rupert Lewis and two from Mark Cann, put BFF where they wanted to be at the beginning of the game. The US Army Polo Team had many chances but were unable to finish off any of the plays.

While the second chukker lacked any goals scored, it did not lack any excitement for it. The US Army Polo Team had two penalties early in the chukka that they were unable to convert. As half-time began the Brits led the way with 4 to the US Army Polo Teams 0.

The third chukker started off with a bang, Joe Meyer walked up to the 30 yard stripe and knocked the ball through the posts to put the US Army Polo Team on the scoreboard. Later in the chukker Mark Cann made an impressive run easily three quarters of the field to maintain the BFF lead.

The fourth chukka went the way of the Brits early on with a goal from Matthew Blakiston. Rupert Lewis converted a penalty four to put the BFF team ahead by 6. The game ended with a great goal from Matthew Blakiston, who made a quick move while the US Army polo Team was bringing the ball in for a knock-in. Blakiston met the ball as the 30 second horn blew, he made one tap and scored the BFF's eighth goal.

Phillip Kaye told Grand Champions Polo: "It was a really enjoyable game, the grounds were fantastic, the horses were amazing. The first chukka started really strong for us, which made us relax and gave us some confidence to open up and pass the ball between each other."

Pictured is Susan Meyer awarded the trophy to Mark Cann, Rupert Lewis, Phillip Kaye and Matthew Blakiston.(ph Alex Pacheco)

# BRITISH ARMY POLO WEBSITE

Published in Army Polo on 09 Apr 2014

For all British Army Polo news please visit [www.britisharmypolo.org](http://www.britisharmypolo.org)

## CARLOS GRACIDA DIES IN POLO ACCIDENT

Published in News on 26 Feb 2014

Polo great Carlos Gracida – a long-time friend of the Combined Services Polo Association – died late Tuesday night in the intensive care unit of Delray Medical Center, Palm Beach, after being involved in a polo accident earlier in the day. He was 53.

The former 10-goal rated player, was playing for Santa Clara in the International Polo Club's Freebooters Classic 14-goal Tournament at Everglades Polo Club.

Gracida is said to have suffered bleeding and swelling on the brain following a fall and never regained consciousness. He was surrounded by family members at the hospital including his sons, professional polo players Carlos Jr. and Mariano, and his brother, Memo, also a Hall of Famer.

Gracida was a nine-time U.S. Open winner, five-time Argentine Open winner and five-time Player of the Year. He was one of the most respected players in polo and a product of the Gracida polo dynasty. Gracida, born in Mexico City, earned the highest ranking in polo in 1985 and for 15 years maintained his 10-goal ranking.

## Archives from 2015

### NEWS FROM HPA

Published in News on 17 Dec 2015

Following the recent Council Meeting and in the lead up to Christmas the HPA thought that members might like to have an update on certain issues

## **Helmets**

Andrew Barlow has set up an Advisory Panel on Safety, which consists of Victor Chua, Aurora Eastwood, Antony Fanshawe and George Meyrick. The first topic is helmets and it is hoped that this report and recommendation will go to the Chairman's Committee on 21st January 2016.

## **Direct Membership**

A lot of clubs have come back supporting the idea of direct membership. There will now be a meeting on Friday 22nd January at Sunningdale for all Club Managers and any other interested parties where the developers of the management system will present the basic structure of the model and the benefits to clubs and members. This will be then followed by an open forum.

## **Passports**

DEFRA have recently imposed more demanding and costly requirements on the production of passports. This includes specified paper, binding, laminating and serial coding for each passport and it is therefore very likely that we will be outsourcing the actual production of passports from 1st January. THE HPA will continue to process the information and maintain the database. The same company will take on full responsibility for ensuring that DEFRA requirements are met.

## **Victor Ludorum**

The Victor Ludorum programme for 2016 is up on the website. We will not be running the Autumn Victor Ludorum this year.

## **Development**

George Deverall, Monty Swain-Grainger, Ben Barnes and Freddie Jodrell have all been to Buster Mackenzie's in South Africa for a pre-Christmas HPA training course.

## **International Matches**

George Meyrick, David Ashby, Max Charlton and Max Kirchhoff will play as Team UK against South Africa in Plettenburgh Bay on 29th December.

## **England Players**

Many congratulations to Matt Perry and El Remanso who have won the Copa Camara de Diputados in Argentina, the second highest handicap level tournament in the world. England squad members Luke and Mark Tomlinson and Ollie Cudmore, playing for La Quinta, reached the semi-finals but lost in an extra chukka.

# HACKETT RUNDLE CUP DAY 2015

Published in News on 20 Jul 2015

Another year, another crowd-thrilling Rundle Cup that saw more than 5,000 people enjoying the polo, picnics, trade stands and children's entertainment.

The morning warmed up with the Jockey vs Eventers game, followed by a horse race and the Inspire Foundation wheelchair race. The stars of polo future then showed what they are capable of with the Pony Club Jorrocks exhibition match.

In the heat of the day the CSPA battled it out with a great display of skill in a tight knit game against a Hackett Challenge Team for the ICOA Trophy. Nick Hunter was still pulling out the big shots despite not being able to walk off his horse after an accident on the pitch at Taunton Polo club the week before!

However after tight marking and great display the ball couldn't be put through the posts leaving the final score CSPA 3 Hackett Challenge Team 2. The Most Valuable Player award was sponsored by *Polo Times* and won by Col Nick Hunter; the Best Playing Pony was sponsored by Moore Blatch Solicitors and was won by Kate played by Albany Mulholland.

The main attraction of course was the Hackett Rundle Cup. The annual Navy and Army match was first played in Malta in 1909 when it was instigated by Sir Leslie Rundle, Governor of Malta, and supported by the then Prince George of Wales, later to become King George VI. The Royal Navy won the first cup and the Army won the last time the match was played in Malta back in 1966 after which it moved to the UK. The Navy won the first recorded match in the UK in 1976; the team then included Lt HRH The Prince of Wales. Outstanding scores include a hat-trick by the Navy in 1994–96, but the honours are now about even.

This year saw the Navy team starting with a 1 ½ goal lead on handicap but at the end of the first chukka they were ½ a goal behind. After a few years of defeat the Navy pulled out the dream team of Aplin, Spiller, Kamper and Suzuki but was it going to be enough? As usual commentator Lt Col (ret'd) Simon Ledger entertained the crowds with his very energetic off the pitch banter as well as keeping everyone informed on this very close game.

The second chukka saw Officer Cadet Jamie Drummond-Moray taking the pace up a gear or two as he showed some incredible skill and speed. Suzuki also showed his great tactical play and strategy as he pulled back some stunning goals taking the Navy ahead at the end of the second chukka to 5 ½ to the Army's 4.

Start of the third chukka saw both sides heading off at lightning pace and within seconds Jamie Drummond-Moray was nailing a 40 yard penalty taking the Army to ½ point behind. It was all coming down to the wire with crowds on the edge of their seats. After some careless mistakes the Navy gave away yet another penalty leaving Drummond-Moray in a sweet position to pop it through the posts – however, the young 1 goaler couldn't convert the penalty leaving the Navy able to breathe again!

But that wasn't the only problem – Simon Ledger in the commentary box had run out of champagne and complained that the prosecco was not good enough!

Heading into the fourth and final chukka the Navy were leading by 5 ½ goals to the Army's 5. Both teams marked hard, rode fast and played great open polo. Aplin marked the Army's star player Drummond-Moray hard but that left the door wide open for last year's star of the show 2/Lt Paddy Selfe to slip the ball through the posts; however he missed the goal.

But then with 4 ½ minutes to go the Navy under pressure conceded a foul. Paddy Selfe smashed the ball through the posts to take the Army side now into the lead. The Navy side kept attacking but with time running out it just wasn't meant to be. The game was the most intense witnessed by the huge crowds in years and finished with the Army emerging victorious.

The Most Valuable Player, sponsored by Forensic Risk Alliance, went Officer Cadet Jamie Drummond-Moray who is about to embark on his career at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Best Playing Pony, sponsored by W L Gore & Associates Lt, was Petrona owned by Lord Jonathan Rothermere from the Ferne Park Polo Team.

With another successful Rundle Cup completed attention turns to the 2016 event which is planned to be even bigger and better.

# BEST OF BRITISH POLO

**Published in News on 17 Mar 2015**

The Royal Navy take on the RAF in the Best of British Polo event at Tidworth Polo Club – the home of the CSPA – on Sunday 31st May 2015.

Gates open at 10am and the match gets underway at midday. The polo action continues at 14:00 with The Heroes' Cup, played for by injured servicemen and women alongside members of the Army team.

The third match of the day is at 15:00 and is the Best of British Under 25s.

There will be trade stands, food stalls and bands to keep the crowds fed, watered and entertained throughout the day.

For tickets and more information visit [www.bestofbritishpolo.co.uk](http://www.bestofbritishpolo.co.uk)

## CSPA AGM 2015

**Published in News on 21 Jan 2015**

The CSPA agm will take place on February 12th at the Cavalry & Guards Club at 3pm.

# Archives from 2016

## UKAFPA IN THE USA

**Published in News on 11 Oct 2016**

A UKAFPA side made the annual pilgrimage State-side in Autumn to compete for the coveted Commonwealth Cup.

With little information except bring polo kit, swimming trunks and a blazer the team met with great excitement at Heathrow Airport. The pecking order was immediately enforced as the team captain Major (Gold Card) Cann turned left onto the British Airways flight and the rest of the team, comprising of Peter Smith, Maurice Ormerod and Hector Fair, headed right.

On arrival in Washington and having established that BA had lost Hector's luggage we were met by Juan Salinas-Bentley, a long-standing friend of the tour, who took us off to our first destination, Banbury Cross Polo Club. An evening at Greenhill Winery provided a great opportunity to meet many of those who we would be playing against in the forthcoming matches.

Overnight rain meant our first game was moved to the arena at Great Meadow Polo Club, where we played two hard fought and close warm up matches. The forty degree temperatures proved a challenge for both horse and unaccustomed British players but thankfully we could cool by the pool of opposing player, Debbie Nash afterwards. In preparation for the Commonwealth Cup the following day, that evening the Salamander Resort threw a drinks party in honour of 'The British Invasion.'

The Commonwealth Cup was played at Banbury Cross against a team headed up by Philip Staples, a long-standing rival of the UKAFPA, and Nelson Gunnel, who we were kindly staying with. The first two chukkas were incredibly tight, and the tourists went into half time losing 3 – 2½. A positive team talk from our captain made us believe that this might be the year we reclaimed the trophy but alas the opposition came out flying and scored three quick goals at the beginning of the third chukka. This gave the US team the grasp on the game they were after and another goal at the end of the third and another at the beginning of the fourth cemented the result for the US team.

The weekend's next big event was in aid of The National Sporting Library and we were playing a different USA team in the first match. As part of the event, Mrs Mars and Nacho Figueras were hosting a drinks party and we were invited. The party did not disappoint and having eaten a delicious supper and plenty of chocolate we headed back to Banbury Cross for the evening's party.

Saturday provided the first bit of rest and after a leisurely start, we headed off to our home for the next few days with Peggy Arundel. Having settled into her magnificent house, it was off to The National Sporting Library for a spot of culture before our next drinks party with Bill Ballhaus at Beverly Equestrian. The packed itinerary allowed for no drinking as we were playing again later that evening at the twilight polo event at Great Meadow.

Twilight Polo at Great Meadow is an incredible spectacle, with more than 2,000 spectators and plenty of activities, music and drinks to keep people entertained. The UKAFPA team played the USA, captained by the great John Gobin. Thankfully on our part Maurice Ormerod had plenty of arena

experience and almost single headedly kept the us in the match. It was incredibly close throughout but sadly the team lost 11-10.

The Sunday match at Great Meadow in aid of The National Sporting Library proved to be a highlight of the tour. We were led onto an immaculate pitch by a marching band, flanked by the 'The Old Guard' of the 3rd United States Infantry. Following the national anthems, a red Ferrari appeared in the centre of the pitch for the charity ball toss to start proceedings.

The UKAFPA were playing an experienced team of Juan Salinas-Bentley, Doug Barnes, Whitney Ross and David Tafuri, a CNN presenter. The match was incredibly tight throughout with the USA either drawing or leading by one goal. Mark Cann displayed his experience by keeping the team in the match with excellent penalties – and as a result we went into the last chukka 5-4 down. Despite some chances we were unable to score in the final chukka and lost by a single goal. Although we had lost it had been an incredible experience to play at such a fantastic event in such a hard-fought game.

The next few days gave us our first chance to truly relax and we headed down to Virginia Beach to stay with Bart Fry. The journey was made even more relaxing by Philip Staples, who kindly flew us in his jet. A couple of relaxing days on the beach, broken up by some stick and balling at Virginia Beach Polo Club, provided us all with the rest and recuperation required after four polo matches and six parties in five days.

We flew back up to Virginia to play a final game at Banbury Cross against a rest of the world team. Off the back of a quiet couple of days and having finally acclimatised, the team played well together and won comfortably by a couple of goals. This was all the more rewarding as it was the final game for Mark, who flew back to England later that evening.

The final leg of the tour was up to Brandywine Polo Club, Pennsylvania where we were generously hosted by Nicholas Place for the weekend. Friday night gave us a chance to try our ponies in club chukkas alongside our new team mate Nicholas, an ex-Royal Marine. A rare day off on Saturday gave us the chance to meet Adam Snow, a former US polo captain with a 10 goal handicap, before a trip around Philip Dutton's event yard and seeing his horse back from the Rio Olympics complete with a bronze medal.

We went into Sunday's game quietly confident that we could finish the trip with a win, however with Juan Martinez-Baez, a former 5 goal player as their captain, we knew it would not be easy. At half time the game was very much in the balance and the scores were level at 3-3.

After strong words of encouragement from Nicholas, we went back out and the fast flowing combination of Maurice and Hector effectively put the game to bed in the third chukka. Two late goals in the final chukka from Juan were not enough and we won 10-7. It was a great result to finish the trip with and it seemed a popular victory in front of a surprising number of British supporters.

Throughout the entire tour we were fantastically hosted, accommodated and mounted and enormous thanks must go to everyone who looked after us. A special mention must go to Juan Salinas-Bentley who organised it all from the US end and Mark Cann, who without their efforts, the tour would not have happened.

## CORONATION CUP DEAL

**Published in News on 14 Jul 2016**

There's still time for UK Armed Forces personnel, past and present, to take advantage of a special deal for this year's Royal Salute Coronation Cup.

The England v Commonwealth international is taking place at Guards Polo Club at Windsor Great Park on Saturday 23rd July.

The £70 Club and South Grandstand seats, including car pass, are available to the military and ex-military for just £40.

To purchase tickets call the ticket office on 01784 437797. Offer closes 20th July.

## BRIG (RETD) JOHN WRIGHT OBE

**Published in News on 04 May 2016**

The UKAFPA (CSPA) is very sad to learn of the death of Brig (Retd) John Wright OBE. John, so long at the helm of Tidworth Polo Club and then Chairman of HPA, died in the early hours of this morning (Wednesday 4th May).

## CSPA AGM

**Published in News on 04 Jan 2016**

The CSPA agm will be held on Thursday 11th February 2016 at the Cavalry & Guards Club, 127 Piccadilly, London.

All are welcome but those attending should rsvp by email to [markcann@ukafpa.org.uk](mailto:markcann@ukafpa.org.uk)

Copies of the agm agenda are also available on request from the same email address.

# Archives from 2017

## UKAFPA TOUR TO THE STATES

**Published in News on 21 Sep 2017**

The UKAFPA tour to the US was a shorter but equally as chukka filled, in comparison to tours in previous years.

Heading to Middleburg, Virginia the team, consisting of Major Mark Cann, Capt George Walker, Lt Paddy Selfe and OCdt Hector Fair, had one night to recover from the jet lag before being thrust into the arena.

Although the hurricanes had steered clear of this area, heavy rain over the weeks before had not, so the team spent a couple of days getting their eye in and trying ponies in the arena instead of on the grass.

This set them up well for the Twilight Series Arena polo event played at Great Meadow Polo Club on the Saturday. The evening event attracted at least 800 spectators watching from their tailgates or boxes.

With some fast, experienced plays to begin with, the US team got a couple of early goals in. However, Selfe dug out his back hand that found the stick of Fair and Walker, who took the ball up field with conviction. Cann then swapped in on the next chukkas and we saw the slightly unconventional but effective offside under the neck backhand, that he was so keen to teach us earlier, demonstrated with aplomb and finding the goal. He was so chuffed with himself and exuded so much confidence that he barely stayed mounted for the rest of the chukka and missed a short penalty.

The well-practised and strong US team, with some strong ride offs and well-executed plays, managed to claw a couple of goals back and the final score finished with the US winning 6 goals to 3.

Unperturbed and after a relaxing evening the team headed back to Great Meadows for the main match of the tour; the National Sporting Library and Museum 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Polo Classic.

Facing Dubai in the competition the UKAFPA team did not know quite what to expect. However, having managed to get some practice chukkas on the grass the day before, the team felt well-rehearsed and keen to improve on the result of last year.

Determined to make a strong start, the team fought hard from the first line out and Walker took the ball from the front. With Fair following up the team took it into the opposition's half and began to apply some early pressure. This resulted in a 60 yard penalty which Selfe drove high above the opposition's goal, securing an early lead.

More positive plays, marking the opposition hard and causing them to make some early mistakes unsettled the opposition. The US team defended well preventing a couple of close goals until Cann was just too much for them and slotted a goal in.

In the second and third chukka it seemed the Brits were going to pull ahead but somehow the Dubai team managed to stop the ball before goal, allowing only one more to be scored by Selfe in another 60 yard penalty.

In the final chukka Fair had a fast run up field to convert. When the final whistle blew the score was 4 goals to 1, with a convincing victory to the UKAFPA side.”

A week of parties and polo with some significant fundraising. It was not difficult to enjoy.

## BMW UK FORCES SALES DEAL

Published in News on 15 Aug 2017

[Click here for deal](#)

## CAPTAINS & SUBALTERNs TOURNAMENT

Published in News on 07 Aug 2017

Some 20 teams competed in the 2017 Captains & Subalterns Tournament at Tidworth Polo Club, home of the UKAFPA.

There was fantastic support for the event, sponsored by Team Army, with more than 600 spectators during the course of the weekend.

The teams – from all three Services – competed across five divisions. The winners of Division One, awarded the Captains & Subalterns Trophy, were the Queens Royal Hussars.

Top of Division Two were the Royal Artillery while the AGC were winners of Division Three. The Royal Dragoon Guards and RMA Sandhurst won Divisions Four and Five respectively.

Captain Scarlett Geering of the Royal Horse Artillery was awarded Most Valuable Player.

## UKAFPA WIN CHAPPLE CUP SERIES

Published in News on 17 Jul 2017

The final of the Chapple Cup Series – contested this year between the UKAFPA and South Africa – was settled at Guards on the same day as the Inter-Regimental final.

The contest was delicately poised before the decider. South Africa had won the Sudan Cup in the opening match at RMA Sandhurst by seven and a half goals to three. However, UKAFPA levelled the Series two days later at the Hackett Rundle Cup Day when they won the ICOA Trophy.

So it was all to play for at Guards with both the US Cup (the match sponsored by Roseville) and, more importantly, the Chapple Cup up for grabs.

It was UKAFPA who came up trumps by five goals to three and a half with some fine plays by Albany Mulholland and George Walker.

## FOOT GUARDS LIFT HACKETT INTER-REGIMENTAL TROPHY

**Published in News on 14 Jul 2017**

Foot Guards were victorious in the 2017 Hackett Inter-Regimental Tournament. They faced the Royal Navy at Guards Polo Club who were desperate to defend their grip on the trophy.

The Ft Gds were straight into the attack in the first period with two quick goals by Aprahamian – a plan executed with style with Drummond-Moray putting long passes forward.

The RN though, with Lucas and Suzuki combining well, came back. A fine run by Suzuki saw him score from way out with a 70 yard shot under his pony's neck, the gap was closed still further when he put away a 60 yard penalty.

By the second chukka it was clear what both team's strategy was to be; namely for the lower handicap players to mark hard and clear the path to goal for the better players. This worked better for the Ft Gds with Windsor-Clive shadowing and marking hard assisted by Mossy Hamilton allowing for the combination of Aprahamian and Drummond-Moray to break away up the middle.

A fine couple of runs by Drummond-Moray meant the score at half-time was four and a half goals to two in favour of the Ft Gds.

However, the RN were not done and they came out hard in the third, with Bassett and Santrian now returning the compliment to the Ft Gds. By the end of the third, and after some fine runs by Suzuki the RN had cut the deficit to just half a goal.

Now it was down to calm heads and the Ft Gds kept theirs whilst the RN were under pressure. A foul by the RN led to the shot of the day from Drummond-Moray who scored a poised 60 yard penalty that was still climbing as it went over the goal.

A substitution due to injury forced a delay as Harry O'Rourke took over from Bob Santrian and on the restart the Ft Gds found their range and scored to settle the affair. It was a good match played with spirit and manners and the Ft Gds won by six and a half goals to five – the first time since 1997.

Jamie Drummond-Moray won the Pringle Trophy for the MVP performance and Mr Jeremy Hackett of Hackett London presented the prizes.

#### RN

1. Lt Bob Santrian RN -1 (subbed by Surg Cdr Harry O'Rourke -1 due to injury).
2. Capt Dean Bassett RN -1
3. Lt Hiro Suzuki RN 2
4. James Lucas 2

#### Foot Guards

1. Lt Tom Windsor-Clive CG -2
2. Capt Mossy Hamilton IG 0
3. Lt Billy Aprahamian IG 2
4. 2Lt Jamie Drummond-Moray SG 1

## NAVY WIN RUNDLE CUP

Published in News on 14 Jul 2017

The Royal Navy beat the Army by just half a goal in in a tense 2017 Rundle Cup.

Hiro Suzuki bagged no fewer than five goals – playing well above his handicap – to secure the honours for the Senior Service.

For the Army Albany Mulholland's performance stood out to earn him Most Valuable Player while Johnny Sleeman eventually found his range to notch up some goals.

“Thanks to a controversial decision over whether the ball went over the goal posts with Umpires deciding wrongly that it did not the RN won by just half a goal,” said match commentator Lt Col Simon Ledger.

The final score was seven and a half goals to seven giving the Navy their second successive Rundle Cup victory.

Earlier in the day, the crowds at Tidworth Polo Club watched the UKAFPA take on South Africa for the ICOA Trophy – the second match of the three-match Chapple Cup Series.

Having lost the opener at RMA Sandhurst two days earlier UKAFPA beat the tourists by six goals to four and a half. UKAFPA Chairman Piers Hankinson scored two of those goals and Hector Fair scored two more.

## UKAFPA TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA

**Published in News on 11 Apr 2017**

The UK Armed Forces Polo Association tour to South Africa got off to a most authentically African start – within two hours of leaving Johannesburg airport the team ‘party bus’ had received a glancing blow from a spatially-unaware driver, and had been stopped by traffic cops with dubious intentions.

Undeterred, and well-stocked with biltong, the team; consisting of Major Mark Cann (RL), Major Will Todd (LD), Major Will Mawby (RY), Captain George Walker (KRH), and Second-Lieutenant Rishi Ahluwalia (LD) continued on to their first destination – Polo Africa.

The polo club double-hats as a remarkable charity, using polo as a means of creating opportunities and education for local children. The hospitality of Catherine and her Polo Africa scholars was unrivalled, and the pitch was a pleasure to play on – perfectly flat and set against an imposing backdrop of one of the Free State’s signature flat-topped mountains.

After getting straight down to business with practice chukkas that same afternoon, we then played two games against neighbouring teams over the weekend, with Will and George also taking turns to mentor young teams of Polo Africa scholars.

Before leaving Polo Africa for our next destination – the intriguingly-named Sparta ranch – we got our first fix of military history, touring two incredible, painstakingly built and maintained private collections of militaria from throughout South Africa’s martial history; from Zulu War war assegais to modern Caspir vehicles whose design inspires our own Foxhounds and Ridgebacks.

These first 72 hours were a whirlwind of chukkas, braais (barbecue to you and I) and generous hospitality – a theme which proved to characterise our entire tour.

This was certainly the case in Sparta, hosted by Lou Van Reenen and his family, where we had our first exposure to a six-chukka match; an absolute treat which meant we certainly earned our braai that night!

The UKAFPA team split up for the match, playing in local teams headed up by 2 or 3-goal players, which proved highly educational. Pre-dinner entertainment that night consisted of Lou kindly letting us play with his small arsenal of hunting rifles and pump-action shotguns, the highlight of which was the opportunity to fire (with varying levels of success) the iconic elephant gun. The sheep grazing closest to the target were probably the safest.

The third and final stop on our Free State odyssey was the small town of Harrismith. The pace and generosity of the hosting certainly did not relent, with Andries Young whisking us from sundowner to game-drive to braai and even into enclosures with teenage lions – one of whom couldn’t resist the lure of prime British meat and helped himself to a small titbit of George’s left leg.

Tours of old Boer War sites and braais with the local veterans network gave us our fix of military history, made especially poignant by the involvement of many of our own antecedent regiments.

In amongst all that, we played a generous amount of polo, trying out horses and stick and balling on the Friday, playing chukkas on the Saturday, and playing a UKAFPA vs Harrismith game on Sunday. The locals certainly showed us how to rack up a big scoreline, but the experience was extremely good for us in the opening weeks of our season, and post-match analyses with the 3-goal umpires were both constructive and encouraging.

The tour provided an amazing opportunity for each of us to get some intensive riding, stick and balling, and playing time before we start our UK season. The generosity of the South Africans with their homes, horses, and all-round hospitality was unsurpassed, and as a team we are indebted to Mark's hard work in planning and running the tour, giving us the opportunity to shake off the winter cobwebs in such an incredible part of the world.

We look forward to seeing our hosts this summer for the reciprocal visit.

## MILITARY CHALLENGE CUP

**Published in News on 11 Mar 2017**

Three UK Armed Forces polo players converged on Phoenix Airport, Arizona, in January to take part in the 2017 International Military Challenge Cup, an arena polo match played against a US Military polo team.

The event was held at Westworld of Scottsdale, a 386-acre purpose-built site featuring an indoor Equidrome, with a sunken arena and seating for 4,000 people. Slightly different from a typical UK arena polo game in January in the lashing rain; the irony of travelling across the world to a desert to then play indoors was not lost on the Brits!

As an added benefit, the military tournament was aligned with a number of other high profile polo matches. The USA took on England for the 2017 Townsend Cup in a High Goal International match and an English University team played a US Collegiate All Stars Team.

The UK Armed Forces Polo Association (UKAFPA) team was headed up by Maj Mark Cann RL, Director UKAFPA, with Sqn Ldr Ed Whitechurch RAF and Lt Gearoid O'Connor HAC completing the line-up.

The polo was played over a weekend, running concurrently with the start of the Barrett-Jackson Collector's Car Auction, a huge event where thousands of cars are sold over the course of the week with prices ranging from a few thousand dollars to several million for the rarest of cars. The amount of chrome on display was certainly an assault on the visual senses but it was a bucket list experience that was a bonus extra for the visiting polo teams. Despite our best efforts to bring home a classic Jaguar or Aston Martin, our incessant hints about what prizes should be on offer should we win unfortunately fell on deaf ears.

Following a relaxed start to the Friday morning to try and shake off any jet lag, we had the chance to try out our horses at the Azteca Polo Club, the local club that hosted us and arranged ponies.

Once we had established that the grooms advice to 'ride them like a cowboy' didn't require us to whoop and holler throughout the chukka while wearing a Stetson, but actually referred to riding with long reins and a deep seat, we took the chance to scope out our opposition in a couple of short chukkas.

The US Military Team was made up of a mix of currently serving and retired players from both the Regulars and Reservists; the US Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force were all represented, coached by a retired US Army Officer.

The military match was scheduled as the first polo event on Saturday. Following the tournament opening ceremony, with an Honour Guard from Luke Air Force Base and live versions of both National Anthems, the game commenced with the UKAFPA team having a 1-0 score on the board due to the one goal difference in team handicaps in the Brits favour.

The UKAFPA team took an early lead in the first chukka through a combination of field goals and penalties; apart from a tense few moments during the game when the score was even, the UK team remained ahead of the US team on the scoreboard for the opening two chukkas.

By half-time all three Brits had scored goals, with Mark Cann the leading scorer and ultimately the Official's pick as Most Valuable Player. The UKAFPA team built on their strong start as they came back into the Arena after half-time. Although the US team stayed strong in attack for the

remaining two chukkas, they gave away a lot of penalties which, thanks to Cann's consistent shooting, kept the UK in control of the game.

The UKAFPA team entered the final chukka with a two goal advantage and although the US team closed to within a goal, they never managed to nudge into the lead. After a highly enjoyable match, the final score was UKAFPA 11 – USA 8. As an extra bonus for military polo, the UKAFPA team were the only British team to win over the weekend, with both the England International team and the University team losing their matches by the closest of margins.

Our thanks must go to Maj (US Army Retd) Mark Gillespie for pulling the whole weekend together and to all the local players who kindly donated their ponies to mount us.

We were looked after fantastically from the moment we arrived and were all struck by the welcoming hospitality on offer from everyone we came into contact with. It was a privilege to participate in a great showcase of Arena Polo in such fantastic surroundings.

## Archives from 2019

### ROSEVILLE PROJECTS LONDON INTER-REGIMENTAL FINAL

**Published in News on 30 Aug 2019**

The Footguards won the Inter-Regimental Final for the third year in a row convincingly bawating the Navy who were the surprise Semi Final victors over the QRH.

### CHAPPLE CUP SERIES 2019

**Published in News on 30 Aug 2019**

A Polo150 invitational team took on the UKAFPA for the Chapple Cup. The strong team consisted of Dawn Jones (1), Juan Salinas-Bentley (2), Chris Gannon (1) and Mark Cann (1). The action started at RMAS on Thursday 11th July with a narrow win for the Polo150 team.

Play moved to Tidworth Polo Club on the Saturday where the 2 teams played for The Indian Cavalry Officers Association Trophy. Both sides showed great team play but the Polo150 side were sharp at finding the goal with four of the goals scored by Dawn. An action-packed fourth chukka ended a win to Polo150 6 – 2.5 . UKAFPA team: Sqn Ldr Vicky Woodhead (o), Lt Col. Nick Cowley (o), Lt. Giles Bromley Martin (1) & Maj. Will Mawby (1).

Sunday saw the teams line up again at Guards with UKAFPA trying to score their first win of the series. Sadly the Polo150 was yet again far too strong and well mounted with Chris Gannon having got his eye in after a 5 year lay off and Polo150 winning the Chapple Cup series and another convincing win.

## HACKETT RUNDLE CUP 2019

**Published in News on 30 Aug 2019**

Thousands of people enjoyed the Hackett Rundle Cup at Tidworth Polo Club in the sunshine on Saturday 13th July. The Navy started with 2 goals on handicap but the Army team started well and by the end of chukka one had drawn level. Going into the fourth chukka the Army had powered ahead 7 goals to 3 and despite the Navy's best efforts the Army won 9-4.

Hackett Army (2): Maj. Dan Von Barloewen (o), Capt. Jess Wood (o), 2Lt. Freddie Benyon (o) & Capt. Paddy Selfe (2)

Royal Navy (-1): Surg Cdr Harry Rourke (o), Lt Max Cosby (-1), Lt Cdr Steve Spiller (o) & Capt. Al Wilson (o)

## UKAFPA V POLOAFRICA JUNE 2019

**Published in News on 30 Aug 2019**

The team from PoloAfrica Development Trust in South Africa arrived on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June after a torrid journey via Addis Ababa. After a much needed good night's sleep at the home of Mark and Emma Cann, who were hosting them for the week, they set off for their first match on the Tuesday at Tidworth Polo Club. Despite never having played in the rain and on

hired ponies they gave the Spillers Polo150 team a real run for their money and only lost by one goal.

Wednesday and Thursday saw the team go-karting, cinema trip and a whistle stop tour of London, which included travel on a train, tube, bus and river cruise on the Thames and a cultural stop into the National Gallery. On Friday they took in the historical Salisbury Cathedral before their match at Druids Lodge Polo Club. This time Poloafrika scored a 6-3 win much to their delight.

Cirencester Polo Club warmly welcomed everyone on Saturday to be part of their Cotswold International Day. Sarah Dawson from Mars horsecare UK Ltd was there to witness a very close and exciting match with Johanne from Poloafrika scoring the winning goal in the dying seconds.

The final match of the tour was played at Guards Polo Club on the Sunday as part of their Outsourcing Royal Windsor Cup Final day with the Spillers Polo150 team needing to win to level the tour.

Poloafrika Development Trust, run by Catherine Cairns, gives these children a safe haven in which to learn and develop social and life skills, improve on their English and maths and learn to ride. Polo is used as an incentive to maintain attendance at school and reward good behaviour. The team were a credit to the program that Catherine runs, they behaved impeccably on and off the field and were a pleasure to host.

**Published in Navy Polo on 14 Mar 2019**

For the latest RNPA news please visit Facebook [www.facebook.com/rnpolo](http://www.facebook.com/rnpolo), Twitter [www.twitter.com/royalnavypolo](http://www.twitter.com/royalnavypolo) and Instagram [www.instagram.com/royalnavypolo](http://www.instagram.com/royalnavypolo).