



The Bulletin



The community magazine for the ARRC and Innsworth Station

December 2012



Merry Christmas

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Editor's foreword



Welcome to the Christmas edition of the Bulletin magazine for Innsworth Station. In this Christmas edition we have changed the contents and layout to include more contributors and provide up to date information on what is going to happen rather than what has happened. The magazine is aimed at all those people with a connection to Innsworth station including the service personnel and civilians who work on the camp and of course the many families living in the

Gloucester area. This edition has a whole section dedicated to the station's Welfare and Families organisations and we hope to continue and expand this in the future. The information in the magazine compliments that found on our social media channels which I hope you will find time to look at too. If you have any suggestions for what you would find useful in this magazine, let us know on the Community Facebook site and we will see what we can do.

Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.
Ian Woodbridge

Foreword from the Welfare Office



Welcome to the new look Bulletin which is now far more Station and family focussed and hopefully more useful to everyone who reads it. I aim to bring you; the single soldier, married personnel and their families, from the UK and our Participating Nations, all the news, events, facilities and services that you need to know about during your time here in Innsworth no matter which unit you are attached to.

Joanne Robinson

Foreword from the Families Team



The Bulletin for the families of those stationed at the ARRC is a place to share our thoughts and experiences of life here. It is somewhere to find out more about each other, as well as the opportunities available to us while we live in Gloucestershire. If you have any thing you'd like to contribute, please do get in touch!

Tessa Bucknall

Also in this edition

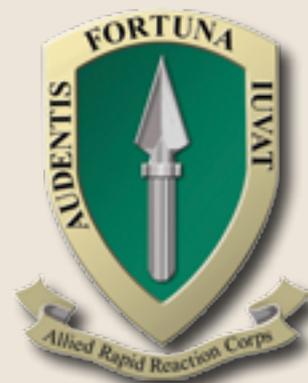
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Editor's notes

We would value your feed back on the bulletin. Do you find it useful? What is good? What is bad? What would you like to see? We would really appreciate any feedback you could give. The bulletin is your magazine, lets make it work for you. Please send any comments or feedback to pao.webmaster@arrc.nato.int

The publication of an advert, article or photo in The Bulletin does not necessarily reflect the views of the ARRC, Partner Nations or the (UK) MOD. The editor reserves the right to omit, amend or edit any advert, article or photo at the discretion of the HQ without liability. Should you wish to include an article, or photo in future editions of The Bulletin please contact the Public Affairs Office on 01452 718 110 or pao.webmaster@arrc.nato.int

The next edition of the Bulletin will be issued in time for Easter.





Commander Allied Rapid Reaction Corps

Lieutenant General James Bucknall

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

I would like to thank you all for your hard work this year and wish you and your families my sincere best wishes for the festive season. Since returning from Afghanistan, a huge amount has been achieved, including successful Combat Readiness Evaluation and Certification as the Land Component Command for the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2013. These have been no mean feats and I salute you all for the commitment and professionalism you have shown to achieve these milestones. I very much appreciate the long hours worked by people across the Garrison and the separation that brings from their families and friends. In particular, I recognise how keenly absence may be felt by those families from our Partner Nations, who do not enjoy the benefit of broader family support whilst they are living here. This year has been notable for the contribution you have all brought to a number of historic events; whether that has been the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics, or in preparation for the NATO Response Force standby period next year; all during the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps' 20th anniversary year.

Next year we face the challenge of maintaining and developing the standards we have achieved in 2012 whilst being prepared for any deployment which our commitment to the NRF may bring. I have absolute confidence that we are all prepared for this challenge. Christmas is a time to reflect on a job well done and to enjoy a well-earned period with our families. I take this opportunity to thank you, our families and friends as well as the Gloucestershire community for their patience and support and wish you all a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

2012 – The Year In Pictures



Imjin Barracks troops help clear local paths



Coming home – HQ ARRC starts its return from Afghanistan



The ARRC provides a Guard of Honour for the Olympic Torch as it passes through Gloucester



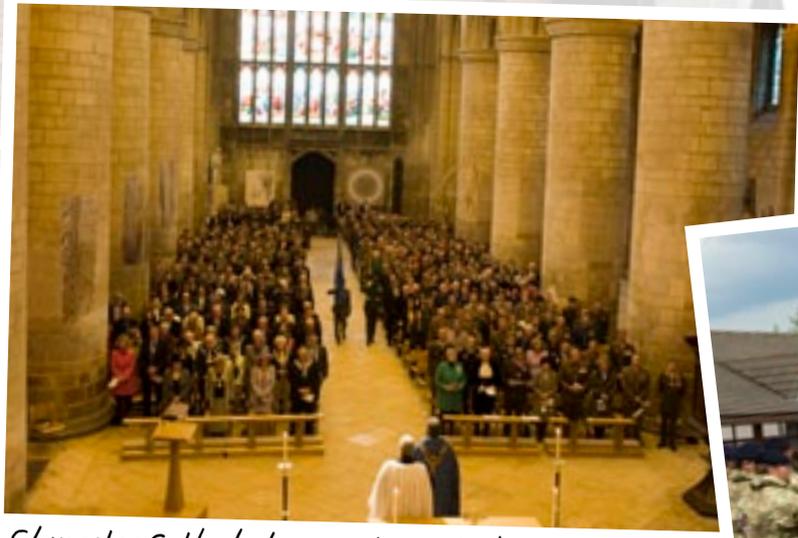
Belgium joins the ARRC making it sixteen contributing nations



The German Bivouac



The beginning of the build for Exercise NOBLE LEDGER



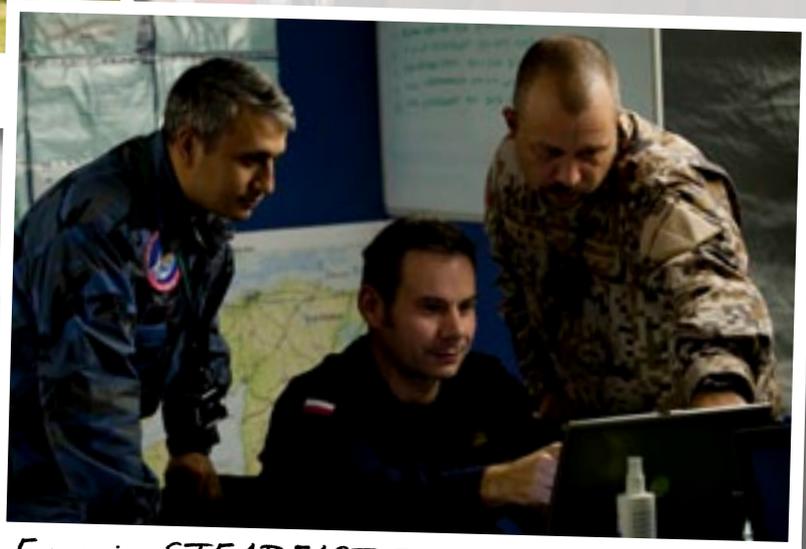
Gloucester Cathedral service to mark the return of the ARRC from Afghanistan



The ARRC Support Battalion's welcome home parade



Beating Retreat Ceremony



Exercise STEADFAST JUNCTURE



Civilian Military Integration during Exercise NOBLE LEDGER

Tents and Sandbags

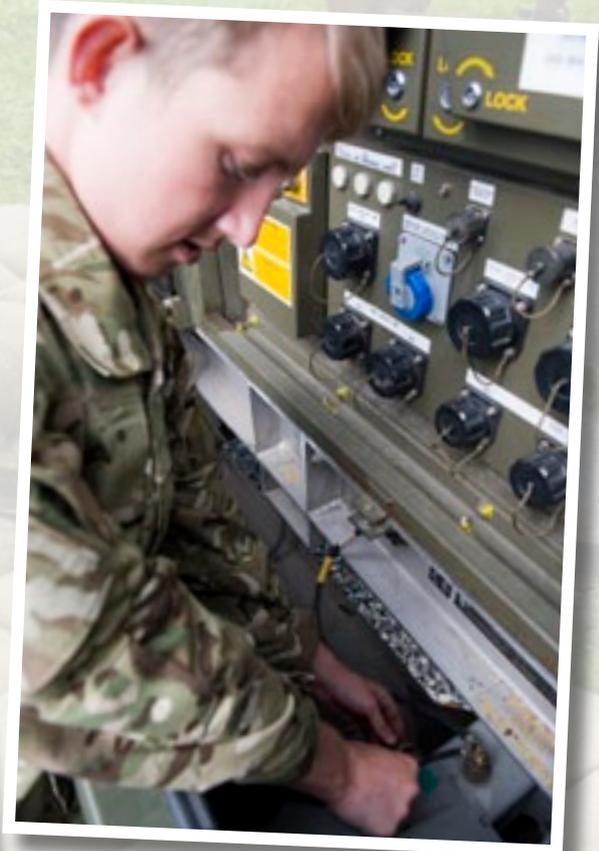
Support Battalion work in St Mawgan enabling the ARRC HQ to test their deployability

Lt Phoebe Todhunter, GBR Army

Since the last Bulletin the majority of Support Battalion have been deployed down in windy St Mawgan.



By the time exercising troops from HQ ARRC arrived at the end of September, Support Battalion had already spent several months setting up and preparing the exercise site. Preparations included erecting 120 tents, filling 5500 sandbags and laying 3km of barbed wire. Throughout Ex STEADFAST JUNCTURE and Ex NOBLE LEDGER teams of Support Battalion have worked tirelessly to ensure that HQ ARRC staff were dry, fed, warm and supplied with power throughout.



The Support Battalion provided both the exercise support, such as guards on the gate, and the real life support, such as transport and digging drainage ditches to cope with the heavy rainfall. Now that the exercises are both over, the soldiers of Support Battalion will be remaining in St Mawgan to deconstruct the site until the end of November.



As well as maintaining all work commitments Support Battalion teams competed in various competitions of football, rugby, cross-country and a two day female festival of sport with some good results. Additionally the soldiers of the Light Aide Detachment conducted a charity bike ride from Swansea to Cardiff in October. It took them two and half hours to cover the 40 miles whilst raising money for Help for Heroes along the route.

It has been a busy few months in the Support Battalion, rounding off an exceptionally busy year in which everyone has worked extremely hard. Looking ahead to next year the Support Battalion are preparing for NRF, getting every soldier through the mandatory training that will allow them to deploy should the need arise. ARRC Support Battalion continues to play a vital role in ARRC HQ's capability.



Looking to the future, the early part of 2013 will be extremely busy with the Commanding Officer Lt Col Simon Butt handing over to his replacement Lt Col Andrew Maskell in early January and the Battalion ski teams competing in the RLC Alpine and Nordic Ski championships in Rupholding, Austria.



Innsworth Station

Hello and a big welcome to everyone to the new look Bulletin! We have tried to make it more family orientated and informative to help maintain the ARRC family and include everyone who lives within our Service Family Accommodation (SFA) areas. In this edition we have lots of news and each quarter I am going to bring you articles from the many different groups who use the Innsworth Station Community Centre. In this edition you can read an introduction from our new Padre, Joseph Moesel, who we welcome to ARRC and on page 12 is an article from Marion Anslow, the Army Welfare Service (AWS) Senior Community Development Worker (CDW). Our own Housing Officers Robin and Larry pass on some top tips for looking after your SFA this winter and the MOD Police, Tony and Ray have also written an article for you on page 11 to help keep your SFA, car and belongings safe. The first article from the Community Centre groups is by The Beehive, who are the Station Parent and Toddler Group and they meet in the Station Community Centre twice a week. Read the article opposite about them and see a photo from their recent Halloween Party.



■ Back row from left to right; Jennie Spencer, Ann Peale, WO2 (BSM) Griffin, Major Jo Robinson, Nicky Torrie, Sue Miles. Front row left to right; Pte Matanavou, Cpl Sherwood, Pte Borman. Not present Pte Tutora our new driver.

Our news

Well, down in the Welfare Office we have had to say goodbye to Cpl Handsaker and Cpl Ridley our two Housing Corporals. We wish them all the very best and thank them for their dedicated help and support which began as far back as 2009 for the move from Germany. We will also have a change of drivers soon so I will take this opportunity to say thank you to Pte Borman and Pte 'Jim' who have been absolute stars in the Office. We wish them and their family all the very best for the future.

I would like to give a very warm welcome to Marion Anslow the AWS Senior CDW who has recently relocated offices to work on Imjin Barracks. Marion will provide the Station with a days worth of Community Support work once a week until our own vacant CDW post is filled. Welcome to the Station Marion!

You may have heard that one of the contact houses suffered water ingress which resulted in a ceiling collapsing but we are hoping it will be back up and running by the time you read this! Both houses will be fitted out with exactly the same furniture and made more homely. Also both houses will now sleep 6 as we have put bunk beds in no. 32 Middleton Lawn.



The Station Staff Officer has been able to bid for funding for us to replace the Innsworth Station Community Centre kitchen and replace the shutters so we can use the cooker again. If the bid is successful then hopefully this will make the Community Centre a more appealing public space to all of you and help us increase the use of the facility. I will keep you posted on developments.

More offers for you

I am very happy to announce that we have more Station offers to tell you about! The Welfare Office now has a four person ticket to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum and a special Station discount for the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham. The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum tells the remarkable story of those who have served in the regiments of Gloucestershire since 1694 and has fantastic displays of medals, uniforms and weapons. We have a family ticket on offer at a third of the price of regular day entry, just £5 instead of £15. The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham have been kind enough to offer a £2 reduction per ticket were a reduction is advertised in the brochure or on line.

Welfare Office

Look out for the 2013 Innsworth Station Service Community Guide

I am also working on a 2013 Service Community Official Guide for Innsworth Station. You will have seen these Guides in other Units and Garrisons but this one will be specific to us. They will be delivered to all SFAs and made available to all Messes and the Single Living Accommodation. In a bid to make it more useful please drop us a line to recommend any local business or services that you would like to see included or indeed if you would like to advertise in it yourself. We will pass your details onto the company who produce the Guides and they will contact you direct.



Remember!

Remember to sign up for the ARRC Community Facebook page as this really is the fast way to let you all know about special offers or last minute changes to events when they happen. If for whatever reason you decline then please please give us your email address and we will pass on the same information so you don't miss out on anything! If you do have any suggestions or comments then phone us on 01452 730309 or email welfarearrc@hotmail.co.uk

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL OF US IN THE WELFARE TEAM AND KEEP SAFE.

The Beehive Toddler Group

Let me tell you about The Beehive Toddler Group. We meet on a Monday and Thursday morning from 0930-1130 at the Innsworth Station Community Centre.

Although we cater for mostly parents/carers with young children, everyone is more than welcome to come along and have a coffee and chat. At each meeting we have a healthy snack, crafts and a variety of toys for children of all ages to play with.



Throughout the year we hold various parties for the children to have fun, make their own decorations and enjoy a bouncy castle and yummy party food. We recently had our Halloween Party and you can see from the photographs that a great time was had by all. The next party will be the Christmas party which is on Thursday 13 December (and we might even get a surprise visitor!). For any more information please either pop along to a meeting or contact beehivetoddlers@hotmail.com

ARRC Chaplaincy Update – Padre Joseph Moesel

Having arrived in post in mid-October this is my first opportunity as the new Chaplain to introduce myself to the entire ARRC community. I am delighted to be here. For me it is a bit like coming home. Prior to joining the Army in 1998 I worked for three years as a civilian clergyman in the Parishes of Twigworth, Down Hatherley, Norton, the Leigh and Sandhurst. So I know the local area well.



I have always enjoyed working and living in a multi-national environment. Originally from the United States, I am naturalised British citizen. I have lived in the UK for the last twenty-four years, have resided for four years in Germany and have extended family in France where I have spent a considerable amount of time. So living in a culturally mixed environment comes fairly naturally to me and something which I truly enjoy.

I know that by the time this goes to print Christmas will be fast upon us. It is a time of year when we will naturally be thinking of our homes, our families and our traditions. To me it is the holiday when we can see in our various ways of celebrating Christmas that every nation has something great and unique to share with others. It is an opportunity to demonstrate the Christmas message of "Peace on earth, good will towards men" by appreciating and celebrating our national and cultural diversity at the ARRC.

As the chaplain, it is my role to provide for everyone's spiritual and pastoral needs regardless of nationality or faith group. So if you have any issues or just want chat then please give me a call. I can be reached on telephone **01452 718551** or Mobile **07798577394**.

Kingsway Housing Update

Did you know... there is lots of work going on behind the scenes to improve the housing and environment in Kingsway.

Did you also know... there have been a number of developments in local building and in the ARRC's longer term housing plan.

Read on for more details...

- **Thumbs Up** – Although the ability of local authorities to improve existing housing projects is limited, given ever-diminishing budgets, developments continue to be seen across our housing areas including the KINGSWAY Estate, a summary of progress to date:
- Construction has now begun on the second primary school, due to open in Sep 13. Planning application for a 26-place pre school nursery on the same site has also been initiated.



- On the sports front, and south of Manor Farm, 1 junior and 2 adult football pitches, plus more tennis courts are going to be provided. Planning consent has also been given for a Sports Pavilion in the same area with construction anticipated to begin in Spring 2013. Construction of the new Community Centre is also anticipated to begin in Spring 2013. Although the end of the year sees weather conditions hindering some progress, landscaping of all public spaces continues.



- Plans for a possible ASDA development will be discussed by the Planning Committee in Dec this year.
- A new community bus transport link from KINGSWAY and QUEDGELEY to CAM and DURSLEY train station has been up and running for a couple of weeks. This service is to allow local residents to catch early morning and evening trains to and from YATE, FILTON and BRISTOL. The service is currently underused and the local authority recently letter dropped over 1,000 free tickets to local residents!
- The new Kingsway PCs, Faye Jones and Lucy Kay, and the new PCSO Rob Gee have resurrected the drop in service which sees them available to anyone in Kingsway every 3rd week in the Coco Coffee House, in the local centre, at 1100–1200. They also run a Police Information Point (PIP) at the Beacons Children Centre (nr the current school) every 1st Thurs in the month at 2.30–3.30pm.
- The Kingsway Residents Association selects their new committee on the next AGM on 14 Nov and the 2013 programme of events will be decided from there. Next public meeting is in Feb 13. New members are always wanted and welcome.
- **Thumbs Down** – The target dates for the WOODVALE and VALLEY GARDENS road adoption that we listed in Apr has not been met.
- Over 2000 houses have been built with 1300 still to go. Completion date depends on how the quickly they sell them given the current economic climate although the forecast of build goes out to 2017.

What about the future?

In the last four weeks, members of both HQ ARRC and Innsworth Station have had meetings with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who are ultimately responsible for Service Families Accommodation. The DIO now fully understands COMARRC's intent and the needs of our families.

By the end of Nov 12, the ARRC will have submitted a business plan to confirm the need to draw down from the KINGSWAY Estate. The housing solution, to replace the current layout, will include a number of options for new builds, four of which are centred in the area around Imjin Barracks.

The timeline for the changes reach out to 2020. Once the ARRC's business case is submitted, we will see a gradual draw down of those families in KINGSWAY from 2015.

DIO Housing Officers

Hello, we are your local Housing Officers, Larry Berry and Robin Horton and we manage all of the DIO Service Families Accommodation (SFA) within Innsworth Station. We would like to offer some top tips for ensuring properties are safe and warm during the winter months.

DIO Housing Officers
39/41 Middleton Lawn
Innsworth
Office: 01452 739223
Mobile: 07786702185



General

Please take a look at the user instructions for your heating system and follow advice on frost protection. If your radiators are cold at the top and hot at the bottom, there is an air lock somewhere in the radiator. This can be quickly remedied by bleeding the radiator and releasing the trapped air with a radiator key or screwdriver and a cloth to capture any water. Remember to turn off the heating system when carrying out this task. The Housing Officers do keep copies of user instructions for the heating systems and can provide a copy or draft some points if required.

Leaving the property empty – short term

- We recommend that you leave your heating system set to constant and at a temperature of 12–14 degrees for the whole period that you are away.
- If the weather is below freezing, you should set it higher at 16–18 degrees.
- Make sure all the radiators are on to maintain the temperature in every room.
- Open the loft hatch and leave it propped open to allow warm air to circulate through the loft space.
- There should be isolation points in each bathroom/en-suite/downstairs WC. It is advisable to isolate the water in these areas by turning the joint a quarter turn with a screwdriver.
- Make sure the stop cock is turned off and the isolation point for external taps.

Leaving the property empty – long term

In general follow the same guidelines as for the short term but if you intend to leave the property empty for a number of weeks it is advisable to leave a key with a friend or neighbour. Then in the event of a major problem contractors can gain access to your property to prevent any further damage to both the property and your belongings.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

**Regards,
Robin Horton and Larry Berry**

A Winter And Christmas Message From The MDP

It's that time of year again, the clocks have gone back and the dark nights are drawing in a pace. Crime around all the married quarter areas continues to be low, however; it's always best not to give the opportunist criminal an easy option in the first place. When your cycle is not being used, lock it away. Ensure out-buildings are locked and cars left secure with no attractive items on display, especially equipment like satnavs.

Night Cycling

It's also time for cyclists to ensure that they have lights fitted front and rear. It is an offence not to have lights during dark hours; there is a penalty of £20 if lights are not used on the public highway. It's also a good idea to wear reflective jackets or belts. It's your life. Be Safe! Be Seen!

Going Away?

If you are planning on going away over the Christmas Holiday Remember:



- Cancel milk and papers
- Put your alarm on if fitted
- Use timer switches, upstairs and downstairs
- Let the MDP know
- Leave a contact number with a neighbour or guardroom
- Let the MDP know if you are leaving a key with a neighbour

Christmas tips

- Don't leave Christmas presents on show for passers by to see.
- Collapse boxes and put them in your blue bin.

A few ideas for those last minute stocking fillers:

Cycle lights
Cycle locks/chains
Car Alarms
Personal Attack alarms
Property marking kit
Fluorescent Cycle Clothing
Cycle helmets

Have a safe and hopefully crime free Christmas and New Year.

DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE. If you are going to Christmas and New Year parties leave the car at home, take a taxi or ask a non-drinker to do the driving.

MDP contact numbers:

Office 01452 730804
Mobile 07771 626346

Gloucester Police numbers:

Emergency 999
Non Emergency 101



Your HIVE Information Centre



I am Jennie Spencer your HIVE Information Support Officer here at Innsworth. As it says in the job title I am here to provide you with the information that you want and offer you support throughout your time here. Also, just before you leave Innsworth I can contact the HIVE at your next location to gather information before you start your next posting.

If you have not called into the HIVE office in the Innsworth Station Community Centre please do or call **01452 712612 ex 7936** **innsworthhive@armymail.mod.uk**

I work Monday – Friday 0830–1430 and hope to see you soon.

Here are some articles that may be of interest to some of you.

MOD launches a new Defence Discount Service

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the MOD has launched a new Defence Discount Service. This is open to members of the Armed Forces community including: Serving and Reserve personnel and their spouse/partners. Armed Forces Veterans and bereaved spouses/partners. It is open to MOD civil servants, members of the cadet forces and NATO personnel serving in UK-based posts.

There are many high profile companies are engaged with the Defence Discount Service. They are offering discounts on items from cars to laptops, to supermarket shopping and holidays. The list of companies committed to helping make life a little easier for our Armed Forces is growing.

A wide range of discounts and privileges can be accessed online immediately at **www.defencediscountservices.co.uk**

Or **http://www.facebook.com/defencediscountservice** and via the DDS Twitter feed **http://twitter.com/discount_mod**

A privilege card is also a key part of the new Defence Discount Service and will be available soon to members at a small cost, making it easier for people to access discounts in store and online.

Universal Jobmatch – Changes for Jobseekers

The Department for Work and Pensions is introducing Universal Jobmatch, an online job posting and matching service which will replace all the current Jobcentre Plus vacancy services used by employers to advertise jobs. This was introduced on 19 Nov 12.

Anyone looking for work can set up an account and create or upload a CV. Companies will post a job and then receive a list of suitable jobseekers ranked by best match. Then they select the jobseekers they want to apply and invite them to apply online.

Universal Jobmatch will be accessed via GOV.UK which is replacing Directgov for jobseekers, and Businesslink, Business Gateway (Scotland) and Business Wales for employers. Also, remember to have a look at **www.recruitforspouses.co.uk**

For those people who are not ready to return to work and want to do some training, Bridge Training Limited has been given money from the Government to provide a range of free training for people of all ages to gain meaningful qualifications. They offer a choice of courses from Business skills, ICT, Beauty and Hair and dance to name a few. They are in the centre of Gloucester and can be reached on **01452 411 112** or **www.bridgetrainingltd.co.uk**



Army Welfare Service update

Hello everyone. I am Marion Anslow and I am a Senior Community Development Worker for the Army Welfare Service. I cover a number of areas including Innsworth Station and hope to soon provide a new Community Development Worker for Imjin Barracks. I have recently re-located from Corsham and my new office is within the Support Battalion and Station Headquarters but you may also find me in the Community Centre. Please remember that my role takes me out across the Brigade area and further afield so I will not always be found at Imjin, but when I am here, I would love to meet you.

If you are interested in sharing your skills and ideas for future play, youth and community provision, please contact me by email, **marion.anslow662@mod.uk**



NATO Response Force

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ON STANDBY

This article is the second in the series on the NRF, it is intended to give readers a clearer idea of what it means to be on standby for the NRF and the impact it will have on family and friends. Members of the ARRC community will then be better prepared and can think ahead over the next year.

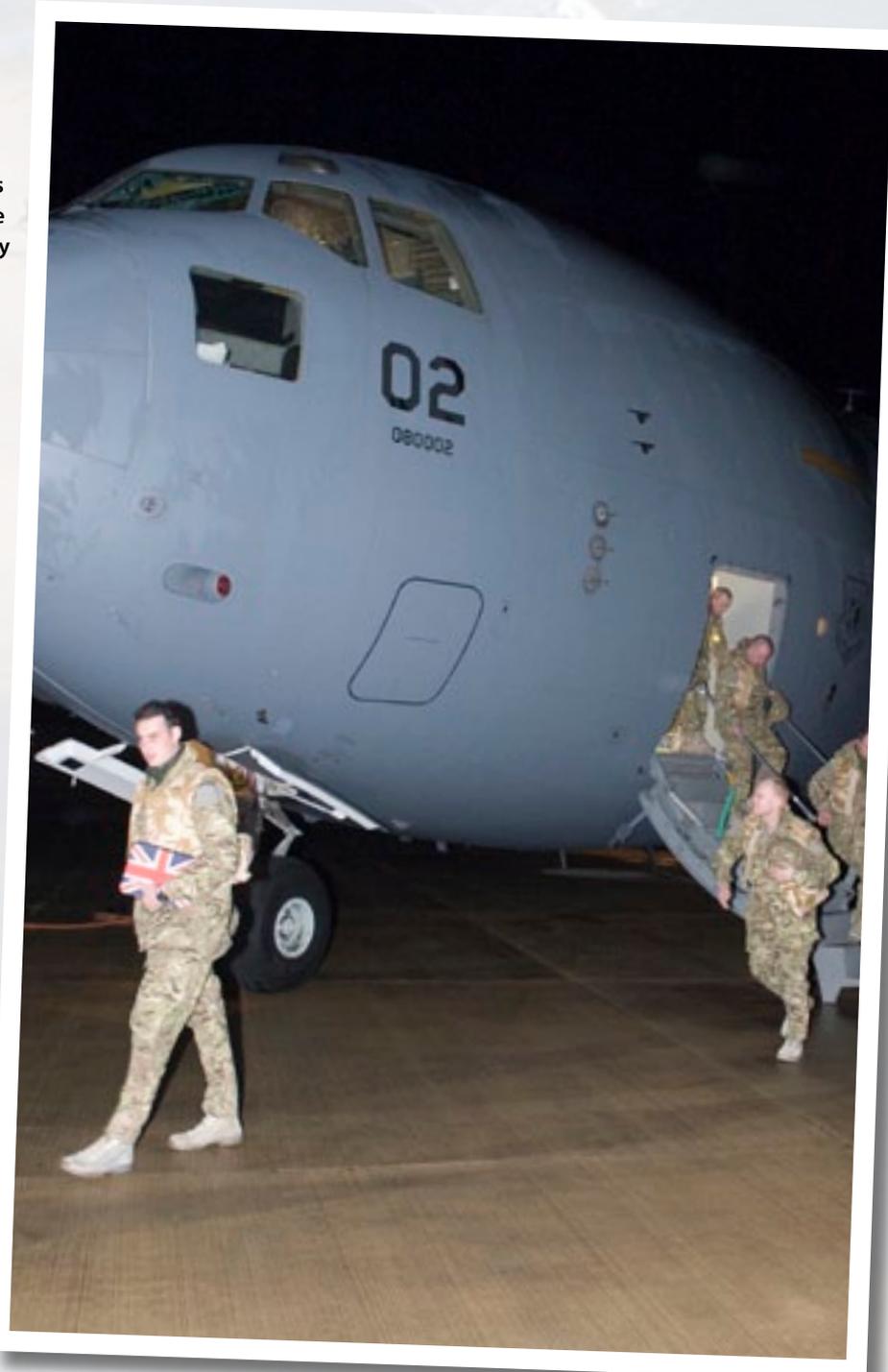
As a reminder, the purpose of the NRF is to provide a military crisis management tool for the Alliance, which means we will have to be able to deploy quickly during an emerging crisis.

The challenge will be to be held at a higher readiness state on a reduced Notice to Move (NTM), whilst being allowed to also carry on with our normal family lives and carry out routine training, with minimal or no impact.

The vast majority of the HQ staff should be unaffected, however a few critical staff required to plan and prepare for rapid deployment will be held on a reduced NTM. The aim will always be to give everyone the maximum warning of a deployment. With warning, we will employ a system of selective graduated reduction in the NTM to ensure that we keep the disruption to families and staff to a minimum and avoid unnecessary impact on your family.

At its simplest this means we would be wise to keep our kit packed. It also means that we should keep on top of our personal and family administration. Being ready will also require being medically fit, keeping up with the injections, inoculations and keeping all the boxes ticked on the compulsory training requirements. There may also be additional specialist training and educational requirements, briefings and situational awareness required. We should take the opportunity to get better qualified and add to the CV.

People must also be mentally prepared for the times of uncertainty as a crisis develops, there may be some false starts. Reductions in notice to move may happen, for no apparent reason increase again, this uncertainty is natural and to be expected.



Events Diary

Date	Event
December 2012	
Nov – Jan	Pantomime A very British affair! A family theatre trip ideal for those aged 4–99 with lots of audience participation. Following traditional fairy stories, performances will have you laughing, shouting, singing and dancing.
30 Nov – 13 Jan 2013	Dick Whittington The Everyman Theatre Regent Street, Cheltenham GL50 1HQ Tickets from £11 10.00am, 2.00pm & 7.00pm
1 Dec – 5 Jan 2013	Tewkesbury: Aladdin Roses Theatre, Sun Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5NX Tel: 01684 295074 01684 295074. www.rosestheatre.org Morning, matinee and evening performances Tickets from £11.50
30 Nov – 23 Dec	Enchanted Christmas at Westonbirt The National Arboretum, Westonbirt, Nr. Tetbury, Glos GL8 8QS Tel: 01666 880220 5.00pm–8.30pm (last entry 7.15pm) Adults £9, concessions £8, child £5
Fri and Sat until 23 Dec	Winter Owl Evening The International Centre for Birds of Prey, Bouldson House, Newent, Glos GL18 1JJ Tel: 01531 820286 Time 7.00pm–9.00pm Prices £25 for adults and £12 for children (4–11yrs)
1–23 Dec (weekends)	Breakfast with Father Christmas at WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre, Slimbridge, Glos GL2 7BT. Tel: 0453 891223 From 09.00am £18 for children (includes entrance, breakfast with Santa, toy and birdfeed) and £13 for adults
3–24 Dec	The Enormous Turnip The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1HQ. Tel: 01242 572573 Various performances daily £7.50 family ticket £20
7 Dec – 12 Jan	Tony Meeuwissen Christmas Show at the Corinium Museum Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester GL7 2BX Tel: 01285 655611 – FREE
9, 15–24 Dec	Christmas Wonderland at Prinknash Bird & Deer Park. Prinknash Bird and Deer Park, Cranham, Nr Gloucester, GL4 8EX Tel: 01452 812727 4.00pm–6.00pm. Tickets £8.50 under 1's free

Date	Event
13 Dec	A Celebration of Medieval Art Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 2BX Tel: 01285 655611 From 2–4pm £5.65 or £5.00 to season ticket holders
14 Dec – 15 Dec	The International at Cheltenham Racecourse Cheltenham Racecourse, Prestbury Park, Cheltenham GL50 4SH Tel: 0844 579 3003 Gates open 10am, first race at 12pm & last race at 3.35pm Friday 3.40pm Tickets from £9
14 Dec – 2 Jan 2013	Whitemead's Winter Woodland Whitemead Forest Park, Parkend, Nr. Lydney, GL15 4LA. Tel: 01594 560400 Santa's Grotto 11.00am–7.00pm Ice Rink 10.00am–8.00pm Reindeer 21–23/12 at 12.00pm–6.00pm and 14–20/12 at 5.00pm–8.00pm £5 per child to meet Santa (includes gift), ice skating £7.50 per person
15 & 22 Dec	Beechwood Shopping Centre Christmas activities 2012 Beechwood Shopping Centre, 123 High Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1DQ Tel: 01242 261122. Contact centre for times. FREE
15, 16, 21–24 Dec	Santa Specials on the GWR Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Cheltenham Racecourse, Cheltenham, GL50 4SH Tel: 01242 621405 From 10.00am £14 booking required
15, 16, 20–24 Dec	The 12 Days of Christmas at Puzzlewood Puzzlewood, Nr. Coleford, Royal Forest of Dean, Glos GL16 8QB. Tel: 01594 833187 10.00am–4.30pm with last entry at 3.30pm £6.50 children (4–16) which includes a gift from Santa. Children 0–3 are free and they receive a small gift from Santa. Adults are the normal price, £6
15, 16, 22–24 Dec	Farmer Christmas at Over Farm Over Farm Market, Over, Nr. Gloucester Tel: 01452 521014 Rides take place between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Trip lasts about 30 mins £6.50 per child (includes present) £1 per adult, trailer rides £2 per person, combination tickets £7.50 per child, family £20 (2+2)
15–28 Dec	Christmas Holiday Activities at Nature in Art Nature in Art, Wallsworth Hall, A38, Twigworth, Gloucester, GL2 9PA. Tel: 01452 731422 10.30am – 12.30pm & 2.30pm – 4.30pm all activities are £5.00 (except on 15/12/12 £6)

Date	Event
24 Dec	Christmas at Gloucester Cathedral Family Crib Service with lighting of the Christmas Trees 2 St Mary's Street, Gloucester, GL1 2QR 3.00pm FREE
31 Dec	New Year's Eve in the Cotswolds 2012 Masquerade Ball Ingleside House, 5 Beeches Road, Cirencester GL7 1BN Tel: 01285 648230 7pm till late £50 per person
31 Dec	New Year's Eve at Mercure Gloucester Bowden Hall – Black White and Diamonds Party Bondend Lane, Upton St Leonards, Gloucester, GL4 8ED 0844 815 9077 7pm till late £67.50 inc dinner, disco and casino
January 2013	
1 Jan	New Year's Day Racing A family day out with seven exciting horse races starting at 12.30pm. Gates open at 10.30am with under 18s free of charge. Tickets from £12 depending on where you wish to be in the stadium. For more information, visit www.cheltenham.co.uk
5 Jan	1ST XV FIXTURES: COMPREHENSIVE Gloucester Rugby v London Irish Gloucester Rugby Ltd Kingsholm Stadium, Kingsholm Road, Gloucester GL1 3AX Ticket Hotline: 0871 871 8781 (option 2) 3.00pm
17–20 Jan	Gloucester Rugby v Mont de Marson Kingsholm, Times to be confirmed
22 Jan	International Lunch: Pot Luck See Pages 20–21 for details

Date	Event
February 2013	
1–3 Feb	Gloucester Rugby v Bath Kingsholm Times TBC
8–10 Feb	Cheltenham Folk Festival Cheltenham In its 17th year, the festival includes concerts, sessions, ceilidh, children's events, workshops, indoor market, good food and a real ale bar! For a programme, tickets, news or more information, visit www.cheltenhamfolkfestival.co.uk Time 3.00pm
19 Feb	International Lunch: The Netherlands See Pages 20–21 for details
23 Feb	Gloucester Rugby v Worcester Warriors Kingsholm 3.00pm
March 2013	
12–15 March	Cheltenham National Hunt Festival 2013 Cheltenham Racecourse, Cheltenham, GL50 4SH Tel: 0844 5793003. Gates open at 10.30am Tickets from £22
19 March	International Lunch: Norway See Pages 20–21 for details
23 March	Gloucester Rugby v London Welsh Kingsholm Time 3.00pm
30 March	Gloucester Rugby v Harlequins Kingsholm Time 3.00pm

The Severn Bore

Jan–March

The Severn Bore is one of the **biggest natural spectacles in the world** and it's on our doorstep! This large surge wave travels UP (yes, UP) the River Severn, creates a challenge for surfers and is definitely worth a look. The Spring Tides are when the Severn Bore is at its best, but this spring you can view a 3-star Bore on the following dates (times are approximate, depending on your location)

Sun 13 Jan: between 7.50am and 9.25am

Mon 14 Jan: between 8.34am and 10.09am

Mon 11 Feb: between 7.35am and 9.10am

Tue 12 Feb: between 8.17am and 9.52am

Tue 12 Mar: between 7.16am and 8.51am

Wed 13 Mar: between 7.55am and 9.30am

Stonebench and Minsterworth are the best locations to view it, but Newnham, the Severn Bore Inn and Overbridge are also possible. Detailed information can be found at www.severn-bore.co.uk



Message From Tessa Bucknall

Welcome to the new Families section of the Bulletin, a place where we can all share our thoughts and experiences of life at the ARRC and in our international community. It also provides somewhere to find out more about our different cultures – in this festive edition, we can learn how Christmas traditions vary from country to country.

I cannot believe that we are nearly in December, hurtling towards Christmas. I am still in denial. We have just had the Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning. As ever, Mr Wood and the Officers' Mess team did a wonderful job getting the tables and providing the gluhwein; many thanks. A big thank you must also go to the stall holders, who put on a great display, and to all those who donated such delicious cakes and biscuits. The local church brought a dressing up box full of Nativity clothes which was a huge success with the children who were able to have their photographs taken.

In October, ARRC Officers' Wives Association (AOWA) had the Spanish lunch, hosted by Carmen and our Spanish ladies. It provided a wonderful window into Spanish food, so much richer than we often see here in England. We had a good turn out but there is always room for more people. I encourage everyone to attend these events – they are constantly full of surprises, and different ideas and approaches, and I find them a great opportunity to meet new people. So please do come along, if you can. You are all very welcome. This last point leads me on to the fact that AOWA is changing to become the ARRC International



Club (AIC), open to all spouses and partners, of all ranks. I hope this new title captures more completely the breadth and depth of the ARRC community whom we wish to feel very much part of this organisation and very much able to participate in all our events. Again, you are all very welcome, and that includes all the British spouses within our community as much, of course, as our Partner Nations, who add so much colour and diversity to our lives.

Finally, I hope you all have a good break with your families and friends over the holiday period, and safe journeys for all those who will be travelling. It has been a busy and successful year for the ARRC and as the Headquarters moves into its NATO Response Force role, I have no doubt that 2013 will be equally as challenging but also rewarding. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Tessa



All Change For AOWA!

It has been a busy year with so many of our respective halves having returned from Afghanistan and then deploying on exercise over the last few months. Meanwhile, we have had the worst summer in the UK on record and are obviously hurtling headlong for a cold winter. Be positive – next year MUST be better!

AOWA has been busy handing out charity donations following on from our fundraising Taste of NATO event in the summer and hope to continue to help our local community as a show of respect for their continued support and welcome to the ARRC. This year we have given £500 to the Butterfly Gardens, £2,500 to Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre in Cheltenham and £2,500 to Alabaré Gloucester Home for Veterans.



■ Tessa Bucknall hands over the £2,500 cheque to Jane Fide, Centre Head at Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre, Cheltenham.



■ Claire Segrave, Eileen Mol, Carmen Elvira and Major Duncan Wilson hand over the £2,500 cheque to Dame Janet Trotter DBE, Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and an Ambassador for Alabaré Gloucester Home for Veterans, Geoffery Willis (Alabaré Campaign Director) and Colonel Ian Harris.

We often hear that people aren't aware of what's going on and can't get to our events, so don't forget to 'friend' us on Facebook and receive notices of events and our wonderful international lunches to which you are most welcome. If you don't have access to Facebook, please send me your email address so we can be sure to keep you in the know.

On 1st January we are changing! We will no longer be the ARRC Officers' Wives Association but are evolving into a friendlier organisation to which all ranks are welcome. Our new name will be the **ARRC International Club**. We will endeavour to ensure that everyone knows that we are welcoming and friendly so that we can all share in each other's experiences and knowledge. More importantly, that we are there for one another, whoever we are, wherever we are from and whatever our spouses and partners do at work. We hope everyone will embrace this and help spread the word!

Our first event to kick start our new initiative will be a Pot Luck Lunch for all wives and partners held in the Officers' Mess on Tuesday, 22nd January at 1230 (please be aware this is just a venue and we are keen that everyone comes to join us). Dress is smart casual (no jeans or trainers please!) and we would like everyone to bring a small dish for the buffet table. If you can't cook, bring a bottle of wine or a salad! The cost will be £5 payable on the door. A reminder closer to the event will be sent out via Facebook and email.

Kate Bateman has recently started a monthly walking group, to which everyone is invited. We will post details for each walk on Facebook in plenty of time. Join in with dogs, children, friends etc!

We will continue to hold coffee mornings; some with themes and speakers and some with stalls. Again, watch out for notifications and come and make new friends.

If you would like to organise something, please let us know and we will do what we can to get the ball rolling for you. If you would like to help the Committee in any way, please don't hesitate to get in touch, we are always looking for volunteers!

The Committee at AOWA would like to thank everyone who has helped us over the last year, the Welfare Office, Hive and most importantly Mr Wood and the Officers' Mess staff who work tirelessly for us to ensure we always have a good time.

We hope everyone has a wonderful, happy and peaceful Christmas!

Claire Segrave
AOWA secretary
aowasecretary@gmail.com

Restaurant Review – Vanilla, Cheltenham



You probably wouldn't spot Vanilla just walking around Cheltenham but it's a real gem of a restaurant.

Tucked away in Cambray Place (just off the High Street, near Tailor's pub and the Oxfam bookshop) it combines a stylish yet relaxed atmosphere with a varied choice of delicious dishes, from Mediterranean-inspired fish to English favourites like steak and ale pie and slow braised lamb and vegetarian pasta.

Soft golden lighting and candles make this an ideal place for a romantic dinner but with its unfussy pre-theatre and lunch menus, including Costwold beef burger, Gloucester Old Spot sausages and mash, fish cakes with wilted spinach, soups, pitta and dips, it's a good choice for other occasions too.

On Monday evening my girlfriend chose scallops with parsnip puree and pancetta bacon followed by grilled salmon with chive veloute. The fish she declared delectable, the vegetables perfectly al-dente and she said the hand-cut chips she asked for instead of Colcannon potatoes were crisp and delicious.



I started with crab arawcini risotto balls with sweet and sour dip followed by chicken yakitori, sesame potato fritters in a teriyaki sauce. The starter was fantastic, the flavour of the crab complimented by the dip. The main had to be one of the best chicken dishes I have had, the meat was tender and the taste of the marinade prevalent and exciting.

All this was served swiftly and efficiently by Jordan Cialini who achieved the tricky combination of attentiveness and friendliness without being intrusive.

The bill for all that and two glasses of well-chilled Sauvignon Blanc came to £56 which we agreed was really good value for such a quality meal. We were tempted by the mouth-watering puddings, including apple and raspberry compote tart, chocolate nemesis with praline ice cream and sticky toffee pudding with caramel sauce and Baileys ice cream, but couldn't quite make room. Definitely an excuse to return to Vanilla very soon. We highly recommend it to you too and now they are offering a ten per cent discount to ARRC personnel and their families it's a good time to give it a try.

Stu McKenzie & Annabel Brittain

Vanilla
9-10 Cambray Place
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 1JS

Tel: 01242 228228

Email: info@Vanillainc.co.uk



We want to make this a regular feature so if you want to review a local restaurant please send your review and photographs into me and we'll use them in the next edition – Ed

Pass The Pen

A place where spouses can share their experiences about life in the UK and at home.

By Ségolène Lajouanie (France)

My country is not far away, but after crossing the Channel life is totally different. I don't want to write about the way to drive, to speak or to cook...

I have realised how much English people like their countryside and how easy it is to discover this landscape. Public footpaths are everywhere and it's very convenient to go for a walk. In France it's almost impossible to go through a private property, we are often welcomed with an hospitable sign "*propriété privée*". And it's better to change direction and to go somewhere else. In the UK, we can enjoy the countryside – see manors, go through a flock of sheep, stroke horses. However, at the moment we prefer to have a cream tea in a pub. You can buy *30 Walks in the Cotswolds*, you will have 30 cards, each featuring a map with a route description AND a pub on the way to relax, to have a drink, a lunch or a cream tea. Very attractive to teenagers, trust me!



And if you miss it, why not buy those delicious muffins, scones, clotted cream, lemon curd and sandwiches? You would have your English tea at home. That is what we tend to do when it is pouring, when we are too lazy to go out or when we are too greedy for a normal meal. It's a good compromise for dinner during the cold days...

Recruit for Spouses – help them to help you



Forces spouses face many obstacles when looking for work – from a chequered employment history to unspoken prejudices from employers who don't want to 'waste' time training a new employee when they will be leaving in a couple of years. Four years ago, this inspired Heledd Kendrick, wife of a serving officer currently stationed at ARRC, to set up Recruit for Spouses. A not-for-profit recruitment agency, Recruit for Spouses aims to strengthen the employment opportunities for Forces spouses by working with both spouses and businesses across the country.

"From my own perspective," says Mrs Kendrick, "I was used to earning a salary and only when I married my husband did getting a job become a problem for me – I went to countless job interviews and questions related to my husband's work were everywhere."

Since their official launch in January 2012, over 2,000 spouses have registered with Recruit for Spouses, but there is still a long way to go. "We need to engage with more local businesses. It's free to register, and the more people we have on our books, the better. Even if you aren't looking for work at the moment, by supporting us we can approach businesses in your area and champion Forces spouses. We can also help with CV writing and interview mentoring and offer advice for all levels of spouses looking for employment. We deal with a wide variety of jobs across the country, from office-based positions to house-keeping and 'mother's help' jobs. There are also opportunities that enable the spouse to work from home, often ideal in our nomadic lifestyles!"

On 7th November the team at Recruit for Spouses visited 10 Downing Street to hand in the New Employment Charter for Armed Forces spouses. "This was launched in conjunction with an organisation called Heropreneurs and outlines the need for change. It is about creating awareness about the lack of support in business, the lack of understanding and the lack of respect that so many military spouses face when looking for work. We are not saying they should be advantaged in any way, but that they should receive equal treatment and be judged on their merits, qualifications and strengths. More importantly, it calls for recognition of the skills and values that Forces spouses can bring to a business. Help us to help you and register now at www.recruitforspouses.co.uk."



International Lunches

Would you welcome the chance to experience the food, drink and hospitality of each of the NATO nations?

Well, every month each nation takes a turn at hosting an International Lunch. The menus and recipes from the last two months are shown below. As you can see, the lunch usually consists of a welcome drink followed by a two or three-course meal or buffet, with coffee, all for £15. There is a raffle with prizes from the host nation and you always come away having learned a little bit about that nation, as well as each other. Lunches are normally held in the Officers' Mess, although they are open to every spouse and partner of every rank (they are organised by the ARRC International Club). They run from 12pm until 2pm and are supported by a babysitting service for the pre-school children.

UK Lunch Recipes

Menu:

Pimms

Sparkling Elderflower Cordial

Poached Salmon & Watercress Mayonnaise

Broad Beans with Lemon & Mint Dressing

Baby Tomatoes on the Vine

New Potatoes

Individual Summer Puddings

Coffee & Mints

Poached Salmon and Watercress Mayonnaise

Serves 6 people

Takes 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp each lemon juice and white wine vinegar
- 100ml olive oil
- 200ml groundnut or vegetable oil
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ small crushed garlic clove
- 75g bag watercress, leaves and stalks
- 6 salmon steaks

Method:

Mix together 1 tbsp each lemon juice and white wine vinegar. In a measuring jug, mix 100ml olive oil and 200ml groundnut or vegetable oil.

In a food processor, whizz 2 egg yolks with 1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard and a generous pinch of salt until fully mixed. With the processor still running, add a few drops of the oil mix, incorporating each drop before adding the next. Now very slowly drizzle the oil in – the mayo should begin to thicken and then stiffen. If the mixture looks too thick, add 1 tsp of your lemon/vinegar mix. Keep adding the oil in the same way, alternating with 1 tsp at a time of the lemon/vinegar mix, until all the oil is incorporated and the mayo is the required consistency. Now whizz in ½ small crushed garlic clove.

Whizz a 75g bag watercress, leaves and stalks, with the mayo and season. Add a little warm water, lemon juice or vinegar to loosen, if needed. Chill and use within 1 day – great with poached salmon.

The forthcoming lunches are:

22 Jan – Pot luck: Cost £5 on the door, just bring along a little something to share.

19 Feb – The Netherlands

19 Mar – Norway

All we ask is that you sign up in advance at the Welfare Office or via Facebook.

We hope you will think about coming along. It is very informal and there is no seating plan. Just a tasty lunch with spouses just like you – wanting to have a lovely time and learn a little about each other.



Individual Summer Puddings

Serves 8 people

Takes 30 minutes plus overnight chilling

Ingredients:

- 300g strawberries
- 250g blackberries
- 100g redcurrants
- 500g raspberries or 1.25kg mixed berries and currants of your choice
- 175g golden caster sugar
- 7 slices day-old white bread, from a square, medium-cut loaf

Method:

Bring out the juices: Wash fruit and gently dry on kitchen paper – keep strawberries separate. Put sugar and 3 tbsp water into a large pan. Gently heat until sugar dissolves – stir a few times. Bring to a boil for 1 min, then tip in the fruit (not strawberries). Cook for 3 mins over a low heat, stirring 2–3 times. The fruit will be softened, mostly intact and surrounded by dark red juice. Put a sieve over a bowl and tip in the fruit and juice.

Prepare the bread: Line the basin with cling film as this will help you to turn out the pudding. Overlap two pieces in the middle of the bowl as it's easier than trying to get one sheet to stick to all of the curves. Let the edges overhang by about 15cm. Cut the crusts off the bread. Cut 4 pieces of bread in half, a little on an angle, to give 2 lopsided rectangles per piece. Cut 2 slices into 4 triangles each and leave the final piece whole.

Build the pudding: Dip the whole piece of bread into the juice for a few seconds just to coat. Push this into the bottom of the basin. Now dip the wonky rectangular pieces one at a time and press around the basin's sides so that they fit together neatly, alternately placing wide and narrow ends up. If you can't quite fit the last piece of bread in it doesn't matter, just trim into a triangle, dip in juice and slot in. Now spoon in the softened fruit, adding the strawberries here and there as you go.

Let flavours mingle then serve: Dip the bread triangles in juice and place on top – trim off overhang with scissors. Keep leftover juice for later. Bring cling film up and loosely seal. Put a side plate on top and weight down with cans. Chill for 6 hrs or overnight. To serve, open out cling film then put a serving plate upside-down on top and flip over. Serve with leftover juice, any extra berries and cream.

Spanish Lunch Recipes



Menu:

Mosto
Red Wine
Chicken Soup with Noodles and Picadillo
(Sopa De Pollo Con Picadillo)
Grilled Cod Fillet with Pisto and Baby Potatoes
(Filete De Bacalo Gratinado Con Pisto Y Patatitas)
Cheese Pudding (Flan De Cuajada)
Coffee

Chicken Soup with Noodles and Picadillo (Sopa De Pollo Con Picadillo)



Serves 6 people

Ingredients:

- 3 chicken legs
- Serrano ham bone
- 1 carrot
- 1 leek
- Some beef or veal bones
- 100g Serrano ham, cut into small pieces
- salt
- Thin noodles or Fideos

Method:

Put all the ingredients in a pan and cover completely with water (approx. 1.5 litres). Add some salt to taste and boil for one and a half hours (the chicken must be really tender).

After this, strain off and boil the broth with the noodles. Add some of the chicken cut into small pieces and the Serrano ham too. Sprinkle with fresh parsley.

Serve hot.

Grilled Cod Fillet with Pisto and Baby Potatoes (Filete De Bacalo Gratinado Con Pisto Y Patatitas)



Serves 6 people

Ingredients:

- 1 red pepper
- olive oil
- 2 onions
- 500g courgettes
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 500g creamed tomatoes
- Salt to taste
- 2 tsp sugar
- 6 fresh cod fillets
- plain flour
- 300g mayonnaise
- 4 seafood sticks

Method:

Put the red peppers in the oven with a little olive oil. Bake for about 20 minutes at gas mark 5 (190°C). Leave them to cool, then peel them and remove the seeds too.

Chop the onions and courgettes into small pieces as well as the garlic. Fry them in a little olive oil and add the creamed tomatoes, sugar and salt to taste. Let it simmer, covered, for 20 minutes and stir occasionally. When this is ready add the red peppers to the mixture and cook for a further 5 minutes.

Salt the cod fillets and sprinkle with some flour. Fry them for 1 minute each side in a teaspoon of olive oil using a non stick frying pan. Lay the vegetable mixture on a plate and place the fish on top of it.

Put the mayonnaise in a bowl and add the seafood sticks cut into small pieces. Cover the fish with this mixture. Grill in the oven until golden. Serve with boiled new potatoes.

Cheese Pudding (Flan De Cuajada)



Serves 10 people

Ingredients:

- 400g Philadelphia cheese
- 500ml milk
- 2 sachets of Cuajada (you can buy this from 2 web pages in the UK – www.thetapaslunchcompany.co.uk or www.saborear.co.uk)
- 2 eggs
- 180g sugar
- Caramelised sugar to cover your mould or individual mould
- Sliced strawberries to decorate

Method:

Put all the ingredients into a pan and mix with a blender. Cook at medium heat stirring all the time to avoid mixture sticking to the bottom of the pan. When the mixture starts boiling pour it into the moulds and let it cool for at least 6 hours.

Decorate with strawberries if you wish.

Christmas Across NATO!

Christmas traditions from some of the partner nations

Vrolijk Kerstfeest from Belgium!



In Belgium, the lucky children receive presents twice – they put out a shoe for St Nicholas on 6th December (although only children that have behaved well get something) and then the whole family exchanges gifts on Christmas Eve. These presents are put under the tree. Often people draw a name for a family member for whom they then have to buy something, so we all buy one present for somebody else. And then everyone opens all the presents together around the tree.

There is no real traditional Christmas meal in Belgium, but the most important meal is that eaten on Christmas Eve, the night of 24th December.

God Jul from Norway!



December is the month for preparations and expectations. The 4 weeks before *Jul* (Christmas) are called Advent. We light one candle every Sunday and sing an Advent-song, waiting for *Jul*. Four purple candles in one candelabra shine in most houses. In Norway the children often have a 24-day *Julekalender* (calendar) with small symbolic gifts. *Julenissen* (Father Christmas, who is in the same family as small Santa-like elves (*nissene*) that date from pre-Christian times) brings the presents on *Julaften* (Christmas Eve), but if you are lucky, one small present might show up earlier. If you are even more lucky, *Julenissen* shows up during the evening with the Christmas presents – *Julegavene!* We have always had *nisser* in Norway – they normally live in barns and in the woods and you should always remember them, be kind to them and place some rice pudding and a drink to them before *Julaften*.

Julestrømpe (Christmas stockings) are normally hung on the children's beds on *Julemorgen* (Christmas Day morning) and sometimes even on *Julaften*. Then the children enjoy sweets and Christmas cartoons. We open the presents after *Julaften* dinner – this meal has long traditions in Scandinavia and in Norway, and what you eat depends on where you are from. Along the coast, a cod meal with Christmas beer (*oel*) or red wine is common, or salted and smoked lamb (*pinnekjøtt*) with beer and aquavit. Inland, tradition is to eat *ribbe* (pork ribs) along with Christmas sausage and meatballs with *oel* and aquavit. Red wine is common too. For dessert we normally have rice pudding, caramel pudding or *multer* (cloudberries) with whipped cream or ice.

Veselé Vánoce from the Czech Republic!



In the Czech Republic, the Christ-child (*Ježíšek*) brings our presents on 24th December in the evening after dinner, and leaves them lying down under the Christmas tree. We then open the presents the same evening.

Our main Christmas Meal is traditionally the Christmas Eve dinner on 24th December in the evening. The first course is always a soup (cabbage soup, potato soup, lentil soup, garlic soup...). The second course depends on the family. Many families eat fried breaded carp with potato salad, although salmon or any other fish can be substituted for the carp. My family usually eats white mushroom and potato soup and then schnitzel with potato salad. My husband's parents eat roasted duck with potato salad as their second course. Each family has their own recipe for potato salad. We usually drink wine or beer. The Christmas Eve dinner is finished with many different kinds of special small Christmas pastries and fruits.

Χρόνια Πολλά Καλά Χριστούγεννα Και Ευτυχισμένος ο Καινούργιος Χρόνος (Kala hristuyenna k eutihistemos o kenourgios hronos) from Greece!



Christmas is an important religious event in Greece. The celebration lasts for thirteen days, from Christmas Eve until Epiphany, 6th January, the day the Magi arrived in Bethlehem, bringing gifts to the Christ Child – this is also when Greek kids receive presents.

For Greeks, food plays a major part in the holiday in the form of gifts, feasts and symbols. The celebration begins on Christmas Eve with children singing carols and with the breaking of *Christopsomo*, Christ's bread, a fixture in Greek Orthodox homes. Great care is taken when making the bread – in some villages the women pray and make wishes during kneading!

On Christmas Day, a special meal is usually served with traditional menus. The feast is centred around turkey, goose or sometimes pork stuffed with a mixture of rice, pine nuts, chestnuts and spices. The meal is usually a large one with more than two main dishes. *Melomakarona* are also eaten – these are delicious cookies made with honey, spices, cinnamon, cloves and orange – a traditional combination of tastes identified with the holiday season.

Prettige Kerstdagen from the Netherlands!



In the Netherlands *Sinterklaas* (St Nicholas) arrives in the middle of November. From this day till 5th December, children put their shoes next to the chimney in the evening and will sometimes find a small present in the morning. Then on 5th December, *Sinterklaas* will bring presents to celebrate his birthday. Traditionally this was the most important day of Christmas and families with young children still stick to this day. In the evening of 5th December we sing *Sinterklaas* songs, then 'somebody' knocks on the front door and leaves a big bag of gifts (although *Sinterklaas* supposedly only gives presents to children who have been good all year!). However, nowadays families with older children often have presents on Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, Father Christmas leaves these presents under the Christmas tree and in the morning we'll find and open them.

We have our main Christmas meal on 25th December, but there are no specific foods or drinks that we eat. We actually celebrate two days of Christmas – the 25th and the 26th December.

Feliz Navidad from Spain!



In Spain, the Three Wise Men bring all the presents on the night of 5th January, then everybody opens their presents on the morning of 6th January, Epiphany Day. We also get a small present on Christmas Day, but this is a recent tradition that has evolved in the last ten years.

A traditional Christmas meal in Spain includes shellfish and roasted lamb, or any other kind of meat, and *turrón*, which is a typical Spanish sweet, washed down with Spanish wine, cider and cava or champagne. On Christmas Eve we have dinner with our families and then another meal on Christmas Day.

Buon Natale from Italy!



In Italy, gifts are opened on Christmas Day by both adults and children, however some wait until 6th January (Epiphany, *l'epifania*), when celebrations continue and Italians mark the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. There are also gift giving traditions on this day – it is not just Santa Claus (*Babbo Natale*) who brings the gifts but also a kind witch called *La Befana*. The gifts for children include a colourful Christmas stocking called *la calza* full of sweets (*i dolciumi*) if they've been good, but they're filled with coal (*il carbone*), made of black sugar, if they've been bad! *La Befana* wears an old coat mended with colourful patches and old shoes. She flies around on a broomstick and carries with her a big black bag filled with sweets and presents for children. She enters the houses through the chimneys and leaves the gifts and presents inside the old socks that are hung the night before.

Festive food varies from region to region, although there are some common dishes. On Christmas Eve, *Vigilia di Natale*, a traditional Italian dinner consists of fish and seafood with the 'feast of the seven fishes' as meat is not eaten then. A typical Christmas lunch or dinner in Italy would typically have dishes of *crostini* with liver pâté, lamb (*l'agnello*) with vegetables or tortellini. Homemade fettuccine and ravioli are often served, and desserts include *il panforte*, a gingerbread with hazelnuts, honey and almonds. *Torrone* is also a favourite and is a nougat desert made of honey, sugar and egg white, topped with toasted almonds.

26th December, St. Stephen's Day, is also a public holiday and the festivities continue then too.

Frohe Weihnachten from Germany!



In Germany, Father Christmas brings the presents, which we then open on the evening of 24th December. St Nicholas also visits in most regions, especially south Germany, where he makes an appearance at home and delivers presents for the children. But before the children get their presents they have to perform a poem or song. At the end of the ceremony the 'Nikolaus' then talks about the behaviour of the children in the past year. He usually comes on 5th December.

We have our main Christmas meal on the 25th December – some families like to eat sausages and potato salad (particularly in Bavaria), carp or fondues.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the USA!



In America, Santa Claus rides in a sleigh with reindeer, lands on your roof, and comes down your chimney on Christmas Eve to place presents under your tree. People also hang stockings on the fireplace or staircase railing. These are usually filled with small gifts and sometimes a small sum of money.

Different families have different traditions for opening presents. The majority open them on Christmas morning. Some families open one present on Christmas Eve, but save the rest of the presents for the next morning.

Jewish families in America do not celebrate Christmas. They celebrate Hanukkah and open presents during that time.

Most families have their Christmas meal on Christmas Day. Some large families will celebrate Christmas twice, once as one big extended family with all the children and grandchildren, and once as individual families. Usually the two meals are done during the holiday season. What we eat depends on the family. Some have turkey, some ham, some a beef tenderloin. Most families have a big meal, much like Thanksgiving.

Happy Christmas from Canada!



Canadian Christmas traditions are very similar to our American neighbours. The one major difference is that although a good majority celebrate Christmas on the day, many celebrate the night before. Our French Canadian families celebrate after going to Christmas Mass and have a meal that includes a tourtière pie.

Our children send notes to Santa Claus in the North Pole (postal code HoH OHO) asking for a special present and letting him know that they have been very good boys and girls. They hang stockings and put out a snack for Santa and Rudolph ... You have to believe no matter how old you get! We check the NORAD website to follow Santa Claus's journey.

During the season many folks go door to door singing carols or "mumming" as a group. Lots of warm toddies and egg nog are consumed!

Christmas is the best when it is a white one with lots of wonderful snow!

Joyeux Noël from France!



In France, Father Christmas brings the presents on the night of 24th December, after Christmas Mass, and leaves them in shoes put out in front of the fireplace before Mass. The presents are either opened when we get back from Mass or in the morning of Christmas Day, depending on whether there are young children or not.

Food is a very important part of Christmas in France. The main meal is during the night after Mass or lunch on 25th December and traditionally includes foods such as guinea fowl, quail, capon, turkey or duck, followed by chocolate (the dessert king of Christmas!) in the form of truffles, fudge, pie, macarons, log... A typical meal could include a capon stuffed with figs in white pudding or dried fruit, hot oysters au gratin, smoked salmon, and a delicious, beautiful chocolate log or vanilla pears. We enjoy champagne and good wine!

A particular Provençal tradition is that of the thirteen desserts, eaten on Christmas Eve, that symbolise Jesus and his apostles at the Last Supper. The choice of desserts is fairly open but there must be exactly thirteen. They could include *fougasse*, black or white nougat, dried fruit (called 'beggars'), fresh or candied fruit, truffles and chocolates. They are presented together at the end of the 'big supper', accompanied by mulled wine and each guest should try them all.

Happy Christmas from the UK!



In the UK, Father Christmas (also known as Santa Claus) brings the presents to children (and adults!) on Christmas Eve, after everyone has gone to bed. He puts them into stockings that have been left hanging on the fireplace alongside a carrot for the reindeer and a mince pie and a glass of whisky for Father Christmas! The stockings are usually then opened first thing on Christmas morning. Sometimes more presents are opened later on Christmas Day.

The main meal is lunch on Christmas Day. Most families eat roast turkey, although traditionally goose was eaten and many people are now returning to this as a tasty alternative. This is followed by Christmas pudding, a steamed pudding containing lots of dried fruit and soaked in brandy. The pudding is usually decorated with a sprig of holly and the brandy set on fire as the dish is carried to the table. A silver coin (in the past a six penny piece) is hidden in the pudding that is said to bring good fortune to the finder.

With thanks to Ilse Verstraelen, Carmen Elvira, Martina Krumniklova, Elena Vasiliadi, Sylvie Maurin, Babs Free, Eileen Mol, Jen Owens, Karin Kuhn, Tonje Marhaug, Carla Cappai and Kathleen Smallwood.

The Healthy Side

Hello and welcome to The Healthy Side, where you get tips and tricks on how to become healthier.

By Unni Alise Vindheim (Norway)

Following on from the column I wrote for the 2by2 magazine, I'm excited to carry on with my tips and tricks to become healthier in the Bulletin. Just a few words about me: My name is Unni, I'm Norwegian, and I'm married to Petter, who works in the ARRC. My background is in nursing – I'm an Operation Theatre Nurse and I also work for a leading nutrition company as a Health and Wellness Coach. I admit I have a greater than average interest in health and nutrition, one of the reasons being that I have seen what lack of exercise and bad food choices can do to a body – more specifically my own.

In 2006, I spent 6 months in Northern Afghanistan as head nurse for a Norwegian Surgical Army Hospital. When I came back I was overweight and tired and my husband was less than impressed – I knew I had to do something.

I changed my eating habits by making better food choices, stopped snacking and made sure I got the vitamins and minerals I needed. Long story short – I shed the pounds, got my energy back so I could start exercising again and most importantly, I've managed to control my weight since then.

Being able to help people lose weight and improve their health has become my profession as well as my mission, and I'm happy to say I have helped hundreds of people on the way to a happier and healthier life.

So, what is the problem with being a bit overweight? Obviously finding clothes that fit is hard, but that is not why we should be worried. What should make us really worried is that being overweight makes us more likely to get diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. So, when does the problem of being overweight start? It starts every day, in the morning! What you eat in the morning decides what you eat the rest of the day! Nutrition specialists will agree that 'fast' carbohydrates (carbs) are bad for you and will make you put on weight. 'Fast' carbs are everything white: white sugar, white rice, white flour, pasta and potatoes. A meal consisting of a large portion of fast carbs will raise your blood sugar level dramatically and since high blood sugar is potentially life threatening, the hormone Insulin is released to lower the blood sugar level. The excess amount of carbs will be deposited as fat. Then after about an hour or so, you will get tired or hungry again. The Insulin has effectively reduced the sugar content in your blood below normal. So now you need a quick fix and what do you do? You treat yourself to a chocolate or a latte or a bun or something else with sugar added. And there you go again! Your blood sugar will go up and the rest you already know. Over time, this is what makes us fat!

The key to solving this problem is a balanced blood sugar. By choosing food that contains good protein, healthy fat and 'slow' carbs, you will balance your blood sugar better. Here are my seven top tips on how you can do so:

1. Start your day with a healthy breakfast like a bowl of oatmeal porridge (not the fast version), an egg white omelette or a protein shake.
2. Stay away from 'fast' carbs like cornflakes, cereals with sugar, fizzy drinks and juices with added sugar.
3. Choose whole grain bread rather than croissants and buns made with white flour.
4. Choose brown rice and whole grain pasta rather than white rice, white pasta and potatoes.
5. Get enough and the right kind of protein: choose chicken and fish, eggs, beans and pulses and protein shakes.
6. Avoid diet sodas – they will make your blood sugar drop and increase your sugar cravings.
7. Be prepared – carry a box of non-salted nuts or a protein bar with you in case you get hungry.

Need some motivation to make a change? Join our FREE Fit Club exercise sessions at the HIVE every Friday morning from 09:00 to 10:00am. Call 07411 630362 to sign up.



Winter – Nature's Therapy

By Samantha Sirgun Lindsay-German (UK)

Winter gets a lot of bad press. It is cold, wet, dreary, the trees are bare, the flowers have faded and even the weeds give up! But winter is a hugely special and important time. A time when we can withdraw. Stop for a moment and look at a tree today. Watch what it has done. It has stripped itself back to its skin, it is standing naked, still and quiet, vulnerable to all the elements. Nature uses these months to let go of the past year. To shed the leaves, the burdens of the last year, and allow a healing, renewal process to occur.

We have this opportunity too. Instead of worrying about our immune systems being attacked by bugs and colds, we can use this time to nurture our bodies. Eat nourishing, healing, warming foods. We can wrap up our bodies and hide away in the layers. We can find an excuse to be at home, away from the pressures and strains we can face in the outside world. We can go within....

This is the perfect time of year to write the story of your last year. Sit quietly, with some paper and a pen. Find a still place, light a candle and breathe.

Breathe slowly. In through the nose and out through the nose. Try to breathe in for four counts and out for four counts. Let go of your day, be present, feel your body and connect with it.

Now write. Release any hurt you have felt in the last twelve months, release any negativity you have for yourself, release any regrets you have. Let it go with as much emotion as you can. No one else will see it. And breathe...

Turn the paper over and write down all your achievements over the last year. Anything you have felt proud of, felt joy over, experienced love with. And breathe...

Take the piece of paper and fold it up (or screw it up if that suits you!).

Now take a fresh piece of paper and write your aspirations for the coming 12 months. NOT your resolutions, write down your dreams. They can be as big as building your own home to as small as breathing consciously each day. Once you have finished, again, breathe...

And now, like the trees stand bare. Experience the moment. Let the past be in the past, the future in the future and stand as tall as you can in the present. As you do, let your story leave you.



Whatever your story is it will only have a bearing on your future if you allow it to, so now you can choose. Burn the first piece of paper, or rip it up. Take the second and place it somewhere safe, perhaps in your new journal for the coming year. Let it sit and be nurtured.

Being mindful, being present is the easiest route to happiness there is. We just have to learn to exist in this place. To stay healthy we must stay stress free and let go of any negative thoughts within our body. But this is very hard in our busy, over-stimulated lives.

Yogi Bhanan, who brought kundalini yoga to the west says, "Take it slow and steady. The only solution is that our daily schedule must include exercise, breathing, massage and healthy foods, including herbal remedies and teas." If you need a New Year's resolution make it this.

There are no quick fixes in life: no one can do it for you. Find the tools that work for you and use them. But remember to do so with a smile on your face.

I wish you a very blissful, bountiful and beautiful Christmas and New Year. Be at peace, be at one.

Sat Nam,

Sirgun x

Sirgun (Samantha Lindsay-German) is a mother of 4 gorgeous children, an Army wife and a yoga teacher. Having always dabbled in yoga classes, during her husband's tour in Afghanistan she discovered Kundalini yoga and realised she wanted to become a teacher and completed her training on the Gold Coast and in Byron Bay. Sirgun has been the in-house yoga teacher for O'Reillys Luxury Rainforest Spa in the Gold Coast Hinterland. She is trained in Vinyasa yoga, Pilates and Kundalini yoga as well as being a holistic masseuse and Reiki practitioner. Sirgun holds classes in Innsworth Hive on Monday lunchtimes and Wednesday mornings, and offers 1:1 private classes and massage or Reiki treatments by appointment. Contact Sirgun on 07964 190613.

Kid's Corner

Christmas Jokes

How do you scare a snowman?
You get a hairdryer!

What nationality is Santa Claus?
North Polish!

What do elves learn in school?
The elf-abet

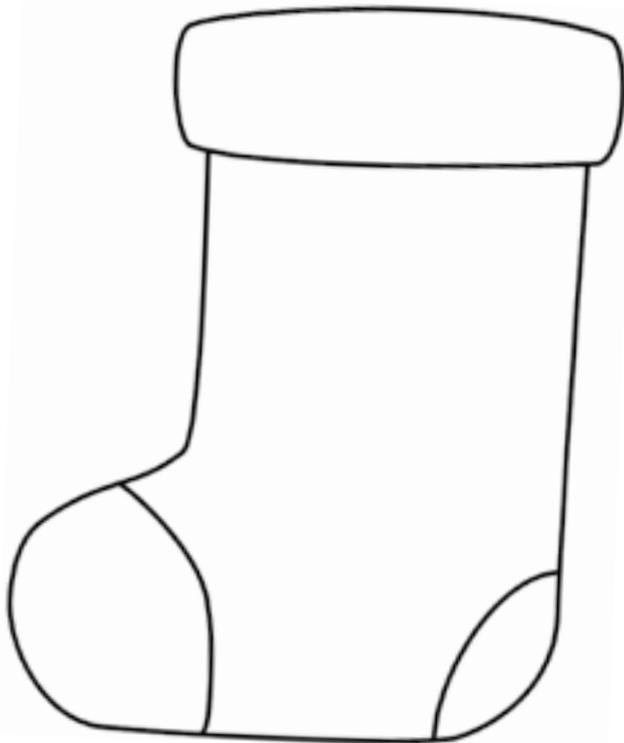
What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?
A pineapple!

Where do snowmen go to dance?
Snowballs!

What do ducks do before Christmas dinner?
Pull their Christmas quackers!



Colouring Competition for the under-10s!



Design your own Christmas stocking for a chance to win a £10 gift voucher from Waterstones bookshop.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Parent's contact number: _____

Drop off your entry to Jenny in the Hive by 31st January 2013.

Christmas Reads

***The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs**

The Snowman has been a classic Christmas book ever since it was first published. It tells the story of a lonely little boy whose snowman comes to life in the night and takes him on lots of adventures, finishing in a meeting with Father Christmas. A special edition DVD is on sale this year to mark 30 years since the Oscar-nominated animation of the book was first released.

***The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg**

Late on Christmas Eve, while everyone is sleeping, a boy boards a mysterious train that waits for him: the Polar Express, bound for the North Pole. When he arrives there, Santa offers him any gift he desires. The boy modestly asks for one bell from the reindeer's harness. It turns out to be a very special gift, for only believers in Santa can hear it ring. This was also released as a beautiful film starring Tom Hanks.

***Babar and Father Christmas* by Jean De Brunhoff**

In this lovely story of the famous French elephant, Babar hears that his children have written to Father Christmas, but have had no reply. Babar decides to ask Father Christmas to come to the land of the elephants, but first, he has to find him. After a long, cold journey, Babar meets Father Christmas and invites him for a holiday. When Christmas comes, Father Christmas has a special surprise for Babar.

***How The Grinch Stole Christmas* by Dr Seuss**

The Grinch, a grouchy green monster who lives high up on a mountain overlooking the town of Whoville, hates happiness, hates merriment, and most of all, hates Christmas. So one year, he draws up plans to steal all the decorations and all the presents from the poor, unsuspecting citizens. Jim Carrey stars as the Grinch in the 2004 film of the book.



Useful Telephone Numbers

INNSWORTH STATION

Welfare Office	01452 730 309
Imjin Barracks Guardroom (24hrs)	01452 712612 ext 7089
Imjin Barracks Medical Centre	01452 712 612 ext 5999
Imjin Barracks Dental	01452 712 612 ext 5920
HQ ARRC Public Affairs Office	01452 718 007
Station Staff Officer	01452 712 612 ext 7848
Innsworth Hive	01452 712 612 ext 7936
Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre	01452 519 951
Out of hours Emergencies: ARRC Staff Duty Officer Duty Officer	HQ ARRC Sp Bn 07788 418577 07733 014295

EMERGENCY SERVICES

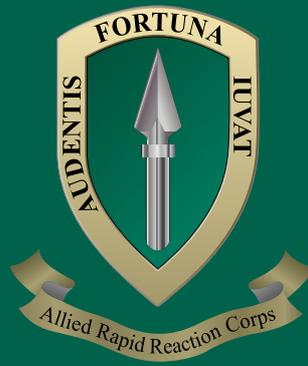
Emergency Services – Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade	999
Police Non Emergency	101
MOD Police (Office Hours)	01452 730 804

HOUSING

Touchstone	0800 9882 433
Modern Housing Solutions	0800 707 6000
HCR Maintenance Team	01256 313 764
Housing Allocation Service Centre (HASC)	0800 169 6322 opt 1, opt 7
Accommodation Stores (ASU)	01452 712 612 ext 7387

LOCAL AREA

Innsworth Barber Shop	01452 712 612 ext 6033
Gloucester Tourist Information Centre	01452 396 572
Cheltenham Tourist Information Centre	01242 522 878
Gloucester City Council	01452 522 232
Tewkesbury Borough Council	01684 295 010
Wheatpieces Tewkesbury	01684 294713
The Beacon Children's Centre – Kingsway	01452 883953



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