

# SIX-NINETY NEWS

*The newsletter of Sedgford & District Branch – formed in 1926  
Royal British Legion: Branch 0690*

Issue 108 – December 2022



**Branch number 690 includes the villages of Brancaster, Brancaster Staithe, Choseley, Docking, Fring, Great Bircham, North and South Creake, Sedgford, Stanhoe, Thornham and Titchwell. *We also have many members from beyond these boundaries – keep coming!***

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*\*We wish all of our members a very happy  
Christmas  
and a happy and healthy new year \**

In the hope and expectation that we can continue to meet without a further onset of Covid, I propose that we continue with monthly lunches, and perhaps monthly newsletters, as suggested at our AGM – and continue to have our vaccinations whenever they are offered! - *Ed.*

**6th January lunch will be at – The Queen Victoria Snettisham**

Other venues on my 'potentials' list: The Anvil, Congham, The Rose & Crown, Harpley, The Chequers, Binham, The Carpenters Arms, Wighton, The Victory Services Club, Hunstanton, The Parlour, Binham, Back to the Garden, Letheringsett, The White Horse, Holme next the Sea, the King William IV, Sedgford, the Rose and Crown, Snettisham, and the Black Horse, Castle Rising. That takes us to December!! Any feedback on any of them would be welcome.



## **WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS**

I realised while working on AGM things that I had never officially welcomed John and Sally Ward from Sedgford as new members, when they joined earlier this year! By then I had also completed the October newsletter... My apologies for that: you are both no less welcome, and we enjoy your company! We also welcome Shirley House, who joined us for our lunch at the Victory Services Club last year and later became a Sedgford branch member.



## **2022 BRANCH AGM REPORT**

The AGM was well attended, progressed smoothly, and we enjoyed the lunch afterwards. George was formally appointed Vice Chairman, and Gary generously agreed to keep going for yet another year as Secretary. The accounts were approved, all reports were accepted, and it was completed in record time, and followed by the usual excellent lunch!



## **NISSEN HUTS**

We all remember the landscape being enhanced by Nissen huts, I'm sure – I wonder if there are any left now? A mention of them in another book I've been reading made me think a bit more about them! They were designed during the 1914-18 war by a Canadian-British engineer and inventor. Made from corrugated sheet metal, and lined either with corrugated iron or a material like hardboard, they could be insulated between the outer and inner walls, and floorboards then installed. Windows and doors could be added by attaching a frame to the corrugated iron to install the door or window. The huts came in three internal spans, 16, 24 or 30 feet, and the longitudinal bays in lengths of 6 ft, so the finished huts were also in multiples of 6' in length.

Production began in August 1916, waned, and was revived in 1939. The world record for the speed of erecting one was 1 hour 27 minutes. Needless to say, they were unpopular with occupiers – too hot, too cold, and impractical because furniture didn't fit well in the curved structure! *en.wikipedia.org*



## **BRAVO 22 COMPANY**

Funded by the Legion and delivered by The Drive Project, Bravo 22 Company is an award winning 'recovery through the arts' programme, created to support an individual's recovery and transition into civilian life. This year it was announced as one of the finalists for the Education, Training and Development "Soldiering On" Community Award, but the ultimate winner was 'Building Heroes'.

## **DUKWs**

The DUKW, known colloquially as the "Duck", was used as a landing craft during the Second World War, having been designed in the early 1940s. The name comes from D, indicating the year of the model (1942), U referring to the body style – utility, K for all-wheel drive, and W for dual rear axles. (Don't ask me!)



Unsurprisingly, it originated in the USA, being an amphibious modification of the 2.5 ton trucks used by the military, and it was used for the transportation of goods and troops over land and water, excelling at approaching and crossing beaches in amphibious warfare attacks. Designed by a yacht designer, a British deep-water sailor, and a representative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to solve resupply problems for units having completed an amphibious landing, it was initially rejected by the military. However, during its trials, a US Coast Guard patrol craft ran aground nearby, and in winds of up to 60 knots, rain and heavy surf which prevented rescue

by conventional craft, the seven crew members were rescued without trouble by the DUKW, and military opposition melted away.

21,147 were eventually made before production ceased in 1945. It was built around the design of a six-wheel-drive military truck with the addition of a watertight hull and a propeller. At 31 feet in length, 8' 3" wide and 7' 2" high (with the folding canvas top down), it was capable of 50 mph on the road and 5.5 kts on water. Plated with sheet steel, it was not an armoured vehicle, but if the hull had been breached by a hole up to 2" in diameter, a high capacity bilge-pump system would keep it afloat. The tyre pressure could be varied from inside the cab by the driver, so they could be fully inflated for hard surfaces, and partially deflated for softer surfaces like beach sand. This feature is now, apparently, widely used on many military vehicles.

The DUKW was supplied to the UK under the Lend/Lease agreement, and 2,000 were sent here; they were also supplied to Australia and to the Soviet Union, which later built its own version. Reduced numbers were maintained here after the D-Day landings; the Americans reactivated and deployed several hundred at the outbreak of the Korean War, and others were deployed by the British during the 1948-60 Malayan emergency. The DUKW was finally removed from UK service only in 2012, having been used meanwhile for safety training drills. [www.britannica.com/wikipedia.org](http://www.britannica.com/wikipedia.org)



### **THE THINGS WE SEE AT OUR LUNCHES!**

On the wall in the bar of the Three Horseshoes in Warham, which we visited in September for a very enjoyable lunch, I saw the sign pictured here. We need more of this kind of thing!!



### **BOOK REVIEW – WILD SWANS by Jung Chang**

Nothing to do with the military, this masterpiece is the tale of three generations of women, their upbringing and lives in China between 1924 and 1978 when the author left China for Britain, following the death in 1976 of Chairman Mao. A lot of the detail is horrifying, particularly in terms of the treatment of women (including by their husbands), peasants and labourers.

Jinzhou, population near 100,000, was occupied by the Japanese in early January 1932, after heavy fighting. It was a highly strategic location, becoming the focus of a major diplomatic dispute between the USA and Japan, and its seizure a key episode in the long chain of events leading to Pearl Harbour in 1942. In September 1931, the Japanese forced the capital of Manchuria to be abandoned, when a young commander decamped to Jinzhou with some 200,000 troops. In one of the first ever of such attacks, the Japanese bombed the city from the air. When the Japanese entered the city they went on the rampage. As the winter of 1944 descended on Jinzhou, flights of US B-29s appeared and the Japanese became considerably more edgy.

Some children acquired a book by a banned Chinese author, and looking for somewhere quiet to read it, one entered a cavern thinking it was an air raid shelter. Groping in the dark, she touched a 'light switch', and a piercing noise erupted: it was an alarm, she was in an arms depot, and although she tried to run, she was caught and dragged away by a Japanese soldier. Two days later the entire school was marched to a location to "witness the punishment of an evil person who disobeys Great Japan". She was in chains, had been tortured, was almost unrecognisable and could hardly walk. She was shot. A young teacher was trying to suppress sobs, and the headmaster attacked her, slapping and kicking her ferociously until she also died.

Covered later are the effects of the transition from the ruling Kuomintang to the Communists, and the early years under Mao Zedong who ruled by fear, hate and ignorance, which included even more inhuman imprisonment and torture of Chinese citizens until his death in 1976.

The book isn't entirely about torture and death, but it isn't one for the faint-hearted. However, I am reading it for the second time – it covers nearly 700 pages, and there is so much information and detail that I can't begin to absorb it all – but it is very interesting, and I guarantee that you will see the world in a different perspective after reading it. *This book is unfortunately not available for Kindle*



## **RESERVE OFFICER INITIAL TRAINING (ROIT) – OR “RIOT” AS IT WAS UNOFFICIALLY KNOWN**

Shortly after my first and only visit to the Far East – to Hong Kong in March 1994, and nothing to do with the RAF – I had the joy in May of spending two weeks at RAF Cranwell, doing my initial training for the RAF Reserves. My diary entries illustrated the experience as follows. - *Ed*

Saturday – arrived, passed exam, reconnaissance of station; busy.

Sunday – even more busy – pace hotting up; all Flights met their Flight Commanders. Ran 2 miles – too slow!; went to the bar!

Monday – wearing ‘greens’ now; drill; interview with Flight Commander – given additional duty – a brief. Things sounding less fearsome.

Tuesday – fast jog, 2 miles; pressure building again; leadership exercise - not good; presentation – good.

Wednesday – desktop navigation, then practical navigation on north airfield; demonstration lead, building ‘Roman baluster’ to launch ‘missile’! Revision, revision, revision: shattered.... To the bar.

Thursday – “Confidence course” (meaning that you don’t have to be good at it, just have the confidence to try): leaping over a wide concrete ditch; struggling over an obstacle; leaping over a 9’ wall; swinging from a rope; leaping over a 6’ wall; walking across high planks, negotiating a gap in the planking, and leaving via another rope swing; climbing up a cargo net over a high obstacle, and down the other side; swinging along a row of ‘monkey bars’ (see below); crossing a rope bridge, and a swing bridge, and a pond with stepping stones; and climbing pole steps. That was followed by elementary leadership exercises, one session each, negotiating booby traps, mock radioactive waste, a bridge, and ‘crocodiles’ – when I was the ‘casualty’ – the acting accolade is mine for “suffering a broken leg” on exercise! Finished day with a Chinese meal.

Friday – Classroom work; 1 mile charity jog at lunchtime for MacMillan nurses – running in durable waterproof and windproof Goretex kit, stiflingly hot! Defence studies, then ‘happy hour’ in the Directing Staff (Di Staff) bar; followed by studying, studying, studying...

Saturday – Drill cancelled – inclement weather! Class work, exam (pass – 97%!), early finish, the bar!

Sunday – mostly classroom work (dining-in procedures!), nuclear, biological & chemical drills, revision.

Monday – depart for Camp Proteus, into billets, sauntered round navigation exercise in Sherwood Forest then more leadership exercises in the afternoon; mad round of camp orders, briefings, counter briefings, and bivouac demonstration, with midges; fire briefing, introduction to ration packs, then I was on fire picquet duty midnight to 2am.

Tuesday – full large packs and off in 4-ton trucks to ‘camp’; off for yet more leadership exercises (compliments on my lead!); later set up our bivvies (bivouacs) in ‘Mosquito Wood’ – good fun, great rations, the three of us girls crawled into sleeping bags after cold drinks in freezing north wind!

Wednesday – Reveille 0600, decamped; some repeat lead exercises – shambolic but proved the point; afternoon solo navigation exercises under pressure – an 8km race into the unknown, 2 hrs 40 min, I came in running, almost last, score 100 out of 140. Dining-in with high ranking guests – Deputy Commander Reserve Forces, and Padre; great night with games, photos, tug of war... retired at 3am.

Thursday – woke at 6am feeling ragged, but as we all did so well yesterday, no dirty tricks or exercises, so packed and decamped, into 4-tonner and back to Cranwell, unpacked, reassembled, all equipment and transport cleaned; packed lunch, and returned ‘combat greens’ to supply dept. Then The Solemn Announcement: “I am directed to advise you (at which point I was convinced that I hadn’t made it) that I have recommended your Commission be confirmed.” I MADE IT!! CHAMPAGNE!! (There were a couple of blokes who didn’t pass.)

Friday – exit interviews (uninspiring), followed by critique and then presentation of whisky to Di Staff. "Prepared but undistinguished" rehearsal (!), then Grand Ceremonial of graduation and lunch; we all broke up in anticlimax and indecently hasty withdrawal with few farewells. Home via uniform stores!



Ready for the gas chamber



Di staff to the rescue!



Next to leap onto the monkey bars

I can still imagine the Di Staff thinking, when they saw me "What? A 46 year old woman doing this?!"

### **THOSE WERE THE DAYS.... "1600 HRS, AND HERE IS YOUR P-51. GO GET 'EM!"**

The dead chicken was starting to smell. After carrying it for several days, 20 year old Bruce Carr still hadn't decided how to cook it without the Germans catching him, but as hungry as he was, he couldn't bring himself to eat it. In his mind, no meat was better than raw chicken meat, so he threw it away.

Resigning himself to what appeared to be his unavoidable fate, he turned in the direction of the nearest German airfield. Even POWs get to eat sometimes, and they aren't constantly dodging from tree to tree, ditch to culvert. He was exhausted, and tired of trying to find cover where there was none: he had not realised that Czechoslovakian forests had no underbrush until, at the edge of a farm field, he struggled out of his parachute and dragged it into the woods.

During the times he had been screaming along at treetop level in his P-51 "Angels' Playmate" the forests and fields had been nothing more than a green blur behind the Messerschmitts, Focke-Wulfs, trains and trucks he had in his sights. He never expected to find himself a pedestrian far behind enemy lines. The instant anti-aircraft shrapnel ripped into the engine, he knew he was in trouble: serious trouble. Clouds of coolant steam hissing through jagged holes in the cowling told Carr he was about to ride the silk elevator down to a long walk back to his squadron. A very long walk.

This had not been part of the mission plan. Several years before when he was 18, and enlisted in the Army, he could not have imagined himself taking a walking tour of rural Czechoslovakia with Germans everywhere around him: all he could think about was flying fighters. By the time he had joined the military, he already knew how to fly; he had been flying as a private pilot since 1939, solo-ing in a Piper Cub which his father had bought from a disgusted pilot who had left it lodged securely in the top of a tree. In 1942, when Carr enlisted, he met his military flying instructor – the man who had been his civilian instructor!

"We took a Stearman to an outlying field, doing aerobatics all the way, then he got out and I flew solo": the instructor had only just graduated himself! After a few hours' training, Carr was sent to Georgia, and instructor knelt on the aircraft's wing, pointed out all the levers, ensured that Carr understood how everything worked, and said "If you can start it, go flying." He was aged 19, and didn't know enough to be scared. Then they were sent overseas, painfully short of experience, on the basis that if they learned fast enough to survive, they were ready to move on to the next step. On arrival in England, he had less than 160 hours' flying time experience.

He was one of the first pilots to take the Mustang into combat, and clearly remembered his introduction to the plane, thinking that it would be no big deal. He was wrong, and was seriously impressed by it! On his first long-range mission, he just kept climbing: he had never been above 10,000 feet before, and here he was at 30,000 – he knew that's where the angels were, so named his plane 'Angels Playmate'. "Then a bunch of Germans roared down through us, and my leader immediately dropped tanks and turned for home, but I'm not that smart: I'm 19 and this guy shoots at me, and I'm not going

to let him get away with it. We went round and round; I'm really mad because he shot at me – childish emotions, in retrospect – he couldn't shake me, but I couldn't get on his tail to get any hits either." "Before long we're right down in the trees, I'm shooting but I'm not hitting – I am, however, scaring the hell out of him, and I'm at least as excited as he is. Then I tell myself to calm down."

"We're roaring around within a few feet of the ground, and he pulls up to go over some trees, so I just pull the trigger and keep it down. The gun barrels burned out and one bullet, a tracer, came out and made a huge arc, hitting him on the left wing about where the aileron is: he pulled up, off came the canopy, and he jumped out, but too low for the 'chute to open. The aircraft crashed. I didn't shoot him down, I scared him to death: it wasn't a kill, it was more of a suicide." The rest of his 14 victories were more conclusive, but being a red-hot fighter pilot was no use as he lay shivering in a Czechoslovakian forest, and he knew that he would die if he didn't get some food and shelter soon.

"I knew where the German airfield was because I'd flown over it, so I headed in that direction to surrender: I intended to walk in the main gate, but it was late afternoon and for some reason I decided to wait in the woods until morning. While I was lying there, I saw a crew working on a F-W 190 right at the edge of the woods, so when they had finished I assumed that the thing was all finished: the cowling's on, the engine has been run, the fuel truck has been there, it's ready to go. Maybe a dumb assumption for a young fellow, but I assumed so, so I got in the plane, and spent the night in the cockpit. When it started to get light, I started to study the cockpit, but as I couldn't read German, I couldn't decipher dials and I couldn't find the normal switches, but I kept looking and on the right was a smooth panel, and underneath something that looked like circuit breakers. I began to think that like the Americans, the Germans would turn off all the switches when they'd finished, so I reversed every one of them, without any idea of what they did, and the gauges showed that there was electricity on the plane. I'd seen a metal 'T' handle on the right of the cockpit, with a word that looked like 'starter', but when I pulled it, nothing happened. But if pulling doesn't work, you push, and when I did, an inertia starter started winding up, so I let it go for a while, pulled the handle – and the engine started!"

The sun had yet to make it over the far trees and the base was just waking up, ready to go to war. The FW190 was one of many dispersed throughout the woods, and the engine must have been heard by many Germans, but if so there was no reason for alarm – the last thing they expected was one of their fighters taxiing out with a weary Mustang pilot at the controls, but Carr wanted to take no chances. "The taxiway came out of the woods and turned right to where I knew the airfield was, because I'd watched them take off and land while I was in the trees. On the left of the taxiway was a shallow ditch, and space where there had been two hangers but they had gone, and the land cleared of debris and as I didn't want to go to the airfield, I ploughed through the ditch and up the other side, shoved the throttle forward, and took off right between where the hangers had been." At that point, he had no time to look around and see what effect the aircraft erupting from the trees had, but although presumably confused, they were not obviously alarmed – it was probably just one of their maverick pilots doing something against the rules. They didn't know it was one of OUR maverick pilots doing something against the rules!

Carr had problems more immediate than a bunch of confused Germans, having just pulled off the perfect plane-jacking, but he knew nothing about the plane, couldn't read any information, and had 200 miles of enemy territory to cross; at home, there would be hundreds of his friends and fellow warriors, all preparing their guns to shoot at aircraft marked with swastikas and crosses, identical to the one which he was flying. But first he had to get there, and that meant learning how to fly the aircraft. "There were two buttons behind the throttle and three more behind those: I wasn't sure what to push, so I pushed one and nothing happened; I pushed the other and the landing gear started to come up – as soon as I felt it coming up and cleared the fence at the edge of the field, I took the plane a little lower and headed for home. All I wanted to do was clear the ground by about six inches, and there was only one throttle position for me... full forward!"

"As I headed for home, I pushed one of the other three buttons, and the flaps came part down; I pushed the one next to it, and they came up again, so I knew how to do that, but that was all I knew. I can't make heads or tails of any of the instruments; I can't even figure out how to change the prop pitch, but the props are full forward when you shut down anyway, and it was running fine." He streaked across fields and through trees, only a few feet off the ground – at something over 350 mph below tree-top level, he was trying to be a difficult target as he crossed the lines, but it wasn't difficult enough. "There was no doubt when I crossed the lines because everyone who had a .50 calibre machine gun

shot at me. It was all over the place, and I had no idea which way to go. I didn't do much dodging because I was just as likely to fly into bullets as around them."

When he hopped over the last row of trees and found himself crossing his own airfield, he pulled up hard to set up for landing, his mind on flying the aircraft. "I pitched up, pulled the throttle back and punched the buttons I knew would put the gear and flaps down. I felt the flaps come down but the landing gear wasn't doing anything, so I came round again still punching the button, but nothing was happening and I was really frustrated." He had been so intent on the aircraft problems that he forgot he was putting on a very tempting show for the ground crew! "As I started for the last time, I saw our air defence guys ripping the tarpaulins off the guns that ringed the field: I hadn't noticed the machine guns before, but I was sure noticing them then! I roared around in as tight a pattern as I could fly and chopped the throttle, and slid to a halt on the runway in a good belly landing, though I say so myself."

His antics over the runway had drawn quite a crowd, and the aircraft had barely stopped before there were Military Police up on the wings, trying to drag him out by his arms, not realising that he was still strapped in! "I started throwing some good Anglo Saxon swear words at them, and they let go while I tried to get the seat belt undone, but my hands wouldn't work and I couldn't do it, then they started pulling on me again because they weren't convinced that I was an American. I was yelling and hollering, then, suddenly, they let go and a face dropped down into the cockpit in front of me – my Group Commander saying "Carr, where the hell have you been, and what have you been doing now?"."

Bruce Carr entered the record books as the only pilot known to have left on a mission flying a Mustang and return flying a Focke-Wulf! For several days after his ordeal he had trouble eating and sleeping but when things settled, he took some of the other pilots out to show them the aircraft and how it worked. One of them pointed out a small handle under the glare shield, which he hadn't noticed before, and when he pulled it, the landing gear unlocked and fell out, but at least he had worked out the important things.

Carr stayed in the service, eventually flying 51 missions in Korea flying F-86 aircraft, and 286 missions in Vietnam flying F-100s, along with many others in different aircraft types during the Vietnam war, he ended the war with 14 aerial victories on 172 missions, including baling out three times due to ground fire. It is said that there is a profile into which almost every pilot fits, and it is the character within that profile that makes a pilot a fighter pilot, not the other way round. Col Carr was definitely a fighter pilot.

*Received from Peter Tervit, formerly in the Royal Observer Corps, No 3 Group, Oxford*



### **AMUSEMENT IN BERLIN**

We were chatting a while ago with Graham, my brother-in-law, and his wife, who visited us. A mention was made of Berlin, and I said that it was somewhere that I had always wanted to visit, whereupon Graham told us that he was there soon after the city began to 'open up' – he was on a bus with a number of other passengers, travelling from the former west Berlin to the eastern side. As he was in RAF uniform, he was not required to show ID, but all the others were told to present theirs against the bus windows – and on no account to open the windows, even slightly. As the bus crossed into east Berlin, the duty guard kept on signalling one woman to open her window, which she refused to do.

On the return trip later the same day, the same guard was again gesturing for the same lady to open her window. Eventually she was persuaded to open it, just a crack, and the guard greeted her with "Happy Birthday!" They aren't all bad!



### **THE AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE**

Following the sad death of Her Majesty, we heard repeated again that she had served in the ATS during the Second World War. In September 1940, five high explosive bombs were dropped on Buckingham

Palace, but the King and Queen insisted on remaining there, and Princess Elizabeth who had just had her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, is reported to have said "I am glad we have been bombed. Now we can look the East End in the eye." When she turned 18 in 1944, she insisted on joining the ATS, the women's branch of the British Army; King George ensured that she was not given a special rank, so she joined as a second subaltern; she was later promoted to Junior Commander – equivalent to a Captain.

She undertook a month long driving and vehicle maintenance course at Aldershot – close enough to Windsor for her to return home each evening to sleep. By June 1945 there were around 200,000 members of the ATS from across the British Empire serving in many theatres of war; 335 were killed and many more injured during the war.

### **BALE OUT, OR BAIL OUT?**

My understanding was always that 'bail' was throwing water out of a boat, while 'bale' was leaving an aircraft in a hurry, but seeing the predominant use of 'bail' made me wonder, so... off to the internet again!

'Bailing, or bailing out' derives from 'baile' – an early name for a bucket or pail – and the usage has been known since the 17<sup>th</sup> century: Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrimage*, in 1613: "They bailed and pumped two thousand tuns and yet were ten foot deepe" (*that sounds challenging!* – Ed). Of course, liberating from prison, often on the payment of a surety, is also 'bailing out', deriving from the French 'baillier' – to deliver on trust.

However, the emergency exiting of aeroplanes is more widely disputed, and apparently depends on whether the aircrew are being bundled out like a bale of hay, or tipped out as in the bailing of a boat! It is generally agreed that in the USA, 'bail out' is used almost exclusively, however in other parts of the English-speaking world, a heroic jump from an aircraft should be described as 'bale out': the first record of this from a non-US source was in a flying school diary of 1939. 'Bale' is claimed to be used as in reference to a bale of hay "Because that is exactly the appearance of the pilot's body as it exits an aircraft." So now you know! *phrases.org.uk*



### **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NORWICH COUNTY CENTENARY REDEDICATION SERVICE**

On 9<sup>th</sup> October, Terry and I attended the above service at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich. The service was led by Fr Alan Hodgson, Dean of the cathedral, and the Rev'd Canon Sally Theakston, our County Chaplain. Participating were a bugler for the Last Post and Reveille, a piper who played 'Highland Cathedral' with the organist, and a large number of standard bearers from around the county, some of whom are pictured here.



Unfortunately the overall attendance could have been better, but we met and chatted to a number of people over teas and coffees, including branch member and county Membership Support Officer, Gary Cocks, General the Lord Dannatt, and several other interesting members – most of whom approached us because they were intrigued by our fairly unusual medals!



### **AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MoD**

Norfolk County Council has been recognised for its outstanding support of the armed forces community in the county, following an announcement by the Ministry of Defence. The council has been given the



Gold Award – the highest honour available through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The award is made to organisations which employ and support those who serve in the armed forces, service leavers, veterans and their families – with the Gold Award also acknowledging the council's partnership working through the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board. *Town and Around newsletter June 2022*

### **MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SCAM WARNINGS**

I have added many supplements to my newsletters, as you will know, warning about specific scams, but on Tuesday 15th November, attendees at our weekly Stanhoe coffee morning were treated to a presentation by a local couple, Alex and Nick, representing "Operation Bodyguard" - an initiative of Norfolk Constabulary aimed at reducing the number of people tricked out of money, and more, by scammers, whether online or by telephone.

21 people attended the one hour presentation, which began with one example of a scam which is apparently becoming more common: a house owner was away, and received a phone call from a neighbour, asking "What's going on?", as there was work being carried out on his house. It transpired that in his absence, and without his knowledge, the house had been sold, and the new owner already had renovation in progress!

There are various scam alert services which were recommended: Action Fraud UK, who can be contacted by phone (0300 123 2040) or email, and will give the 'victim' a reference number, which must be retained; Norfolk Victim Support (0300 303 3706 or out of hours 0808 168 9111) is a very proactive service, and although some are reluctant to ask them for help, are highly recommended; the Land Registry's Property Alert Service is also recommended, as was using Google to search for 'which scam alert service'. You can also refer to the Financial Conduct Authority website for scam advice.

We were reminded that a telephone scammer can remain on the line for five minutes or more after the call recipient has ended the call - so if you were to have a quick think about, say, an 'offer' and then decide to ring back about it, you may be talking again to the same person without realising. The advice was "TAKE 5" - take at least five minutes to think through the call you received, before taking in haste any action which you may later regret. NOTE: NO bank or reputable organisation will ever give a time limit within which you must decide on anything to do with finance.

As most of us are probably aware, social media can also be used to 'link' users to criminal organisations: be very careful about what is included in photographs which are posted, and your location, birth date, or any other personal details which you or others may be tempted to post, or which may incidentally be included and go unnoticed. Always use different, and unique passwords for accounts on line - make them illogical, mix upper and lower case letters, numbers, and punctuation marks at random - and keep a record somewhere in your house away from your device of those that you are using, and for which account!

If you do have to report to the police a fraud or scam which has meant that you have lost financially, for example, NEVER be apologetic, or imply that you were in any way at fault, otherwise you could be held responsible or liable for some or all of the loss! Scams are, we were told, now prevalent in Norfolk... and

**\*REMEMBER, THESE PEOPLE ARE PROFESSIONAL, TECHNOLOGICAL FINANCIAL CRIMINALS\*"**

If you think that this presentation would be useful, perhaps after one of our lunches early in the new year, please let me know, and if enough people are interested I will set something up. - Ed



### **BRANCH POPPY APPEAL 2022**

The interim total at the time of going to press is £3,900; more updates will follow in due course. Well done, and thank you, to everyone who contributed in any way to this year's Appeal. The very well

attended coffee morning in South Creake, arranged at least in part by branch members Alison and Rodney Wakeman, raised £273 on the raffle and tombola, plus substantial sales of food and drink.