

Issue 01

September 2025

# Airside

The Kimbotlon CCF RAF Newsletter



inside: National and Summer camps / cadet activities and  
successes over the holiday / RAF photo gallery



# KIMBOLT





IRON CCF



issue 01

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September 2025



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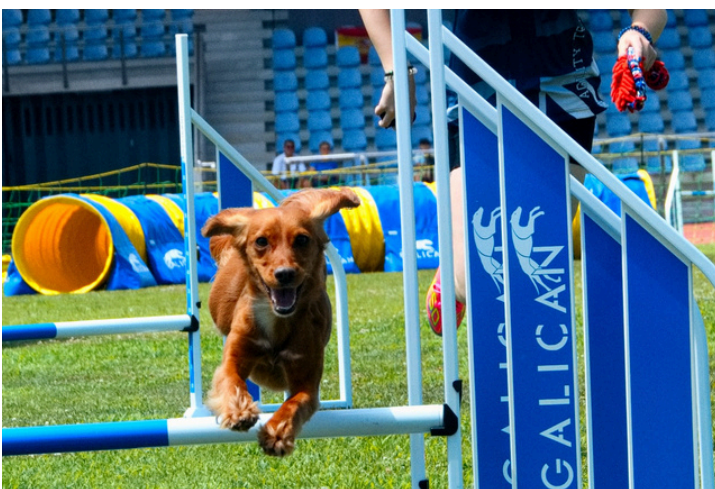


# Agility Adventures with Team GB

WORDS BY TAYLOR L

This summer I travelled to Abrantes, Portugal to compete for Junior Agility Team GB in the Junior Open Agility World Championships with my working cocker spaniel Asher. This was my 5th time on the team and Asher's 2nd. We had an amazing time, travelling for 3 days through France, Spain and Portugal to make it a family holiday too.

At the competition, our 4 dog team won bronze in the Team Jumping round, and Asher and I placed 16th in the world in our Individual Jumping. Overall, Team GB came home with 5 overall medals and around 10 class placings. We are a very close-knit team, who all work hard, encourage each other and support one another through the highs and lows of our sport. It is the best fun!



# Leading Innovation

WORDS BY CPL. M GUDGE

## ***My Work Experience at BAE Systems***

This summer, I had the opportunity to take part in a week long work experience placement with BAE Systems at their Galscoed site in Wales. The placement offered a unique insight into the cutting-edge technologies and engineering processes behind one of the UK's leading defence organisations.

Throughout the week, we were introduced to a wide range of topics, such as engineering processes and manufacturing methods like Resonant Acoustic Mixing (RAM) – a technique that uses resonant frequencies to mix viscous materials in motor lines. A highlight of the week was a visit from Boston Dynamics' Spot the dog. We also managed to get a tour of the site's heritage centre, and an expert explained us through the development of high explosives (HEs).

The centre project of the week was using the planning methods we learnt including choosing stakeholders and function mean analysis to design a remote mine detection device. I led a team of 5, using my knowledge of flight, to design a thermal imaging quadcopter – whilst all the other teams went for ground approaches. Upon a vote from the board, my team won the 'contract'.

Overall, the week at BAE Systems gave me good experience of working in a high technology environment. It strengthened my teamwork and leadership skills whilst deepening my knowledge and motivation to pursue a career in aerospace and defence engineering.



# FROM HANGER TO HORIZON:

## A WEEK AT THE LITTLE STAUGHTON AIRFIELD WITH IACE LTD

My prior knowledge of aircraft from various aspects of raf cadets ,such as during AST or when learning the content for the first class and leading cadet proficiency awards , helped me to have an even better time during my week with IAE as I already had a slight understanding of how things worked and felt I could be more of use so for this I thank the cadets .I was unsure that I would be able to find any work experience local and relative to what I'd like to do in my future however I was lucky enough to manage to gain this work experience practically on my door step by an email and a visit to the airfield. As they weren't advertising work experience on their website I didn't think it would be a possibility but I am so grateful I tried anyway as my week was unforgettable!

I recently completed a week-long work experience placement at a local airfield with IAE Ltd, a well-established aircraft maintenance company that specialises primarily in the servicing and upkeep of skydiving aircraft. This unique focus gave me exposure to a particularly demanding area of aviation engineering, as skydiving planes must perform under intense operating conditions, with frequent take-offs, steep climbs, rapid descents, and short turnaround times.

The experience was immersive, hands-on, and incredibly rewarding—deepening my technical knowledge while also allowing me the once-in-a-lifetime chance to help fly a plane under the guidance of the company's owner.

From the outset, I was welcomed into the team and immediately included in the day-to-day activities of the hangar. The engineers took the time to walk me through the aircraft they service—primarily single- and twin-engine aircraft modified for parachuting operations, such as the Cessna Caravan. I quickly learned how the high-frequency usage of skydiving aircraft places a premium on reliability, rapid maintenance, and strict safety compliance.

One of the most memorable parts of the week was the opportunity to assist with changing spark plugs in aircraft engines. Under the careful supervision of the engineers, I was able to remove the cowlings, disconnect and remove old spark plugs, examine them for fouling or carbon build-up, and install new plugs with the correct gapping and torque. It was fascinating to understand how something so small can have such a big impact on the ignition process and overall engine performance—especially in aircraft that are constantly pushed to their limits in the skydiving environment.

Beyond the spark plugs, I was actively involved in other aspects of aircraft maintenance, including helping with pre-flight inspections, checking fluid levels, inspecting brakes and tyres, and learning how the team logs and tracks every maintenance task to comply with aviation regulations.

I was also introduced to the inner workings of aircraft engines and systems, learning how piston engines operate, how magnetos generate spark independently of the aircraft's battery, and how fuel-air mixtures affect combustion.

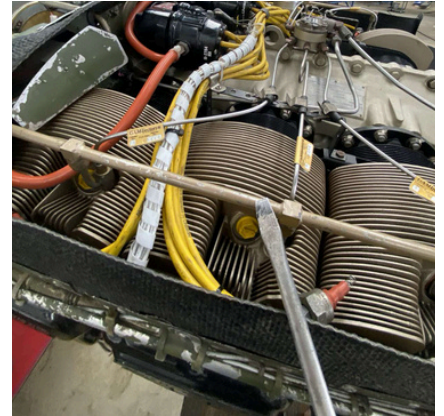
The engineers made time to teach me about flight control systems, including how ailerons, rudders, elevators, and flaps contribute to aircraft manoeuvrability. I even got to observe minor airframe repairs and learned the importance of maintaining airworthiness in aircraft that complete dozens of short, intense flights each day.

The absolute highlight of the week came when I was invited to fly the Bellanca Super Viking for an hour, with the guidance and assistance of the owner of IAE Ltd. Being in the pilot's seat, handling the yoke, and maintaining straight and level flight gave me a thrilling glimpse into the world of aviation from the cockpit. Although I had support the entire time, I was able to carry out basic manoeuvres and truly felt what it was like to be in control of an aircraft. That hour cemented my desire to pursue a career in aviation, whether in engineering, piloting, or both.

What made this experience even more special were the people I met. The team at IAE Ltd made me feel like part of the crew from day one. I formed close friendships with several of the engineers and fellow aviation enthusiasts working on-site. We bonded over our shared passion for aircraft, and we've kept in touch well beyond the placement, regularly exchanging messages, advice, and updates on our personal journeys in aviation.

This placement was far more than a school requirement—it was a transformational experience. It gave me the confidence to handle real-world engineering tasks, a deeper understanding of aviation systems, and a front-row seat to the specialised world of skydiving aircraft maintenance.

I saw the importance of teamwork, precision, and dedication in keeping aircraft safely in the sky, especially those used in demanding, high-cycle operations. I left the placement inspired, motivated, and more certain than ever that my future lies in aviation. Whether I pursue engineering, piloting, or aircraft design, I will always look back on my week at IAE Ltd as a defining moment that set my ambitions soaring.





# Wings over Shropshire

WORDS BY CPL. M GUDGE

I was fortunate enough to be awarded a gliding scholarship by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, which gave me the opportunity to do an all inclusive week of gliding at Midland Gliding Club.

The club is located on the Long Mynd in Shropshire, one of the largest single rock formations in the world and is home to some of the best soaring conditions in the UK. It is also one of the few sites that have a retrieval winch for the launch cable, which I had the chance to operate – an experience unique to this location.

Across five days of flying, I completed multiple hour long soaring flights amongst the rolling hills, gaining valuable experience in reading the instruments, learning the controls and maintaining a good flight attitude. This was followed by three day focused on circuit training, during which I carried out over 20 launches. Under instruction, I learned how to manage the entire sequence of flight: from the safety checks, ground run and take off, full circuit pattern, final approach, flare and landing.

The scholarship gave me not only the thrill of flight but also a deeper understanding of aerodynamics, lift and precision in aviation. It was an inspiring experience and should time allow it I wish to continue my journey to a solo glide at a nearby location.



## A Cadet's Week at the World's Greatest Airshow

# RIAT 2025

RIAT was more than just an airshow – it was a chance to grow. I gained confidence, made friends, and developed skills I'd never get from a classroom. As Flying Officer Briggs said:

“Cadets gave me the skills, experiences, and friendships that shaped my RAF career.”

Huge thanks to everyone who made it possible – from the staff who got us there, to those who supported us all week. And to any cadet who gets the chance to go to RIAT: Do it.

It's been an absolute honour to represent Kimbolton CCF, and RIAT has helped me realise the career I want to pursue after school.

WORDS BY CPL T. BAKER

RIAT – the world's biggest military airshow, held at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire – transforms a fully operational RAF base into an aviation paradise for one weekend a year. With 224 aircraft and 27 countries represented, RIAT is an international showcase of airpower. But behind the scenes, it's powered by something just as impressive: cadets.

Over 850 cadets and staff help run RIAT, from building up the showground to supporting high-profile events. This year, I was lucky enough to be one of them, representing Kimbolton CCF.

We arrived at Fairford midday Wednesday, watching aircraft from around the world land as we found our accommodation for the week. That evening, we were sorted into flights and assigned roles for the next day. Whether it was helping set up VIP areas or supporting operations on camp, no two days were the same.

I was part of the Media Team, tasked with capturing daily cadet life – from the early starts to the laughs in the rain – and showing just how much we were enjoying the experience.

Friday kicked off the show, and the atmosphere was electric. My first-ever RIAT began with none other than Air Vice-Marshal Ian Townsend (AOC 22 Group) visiting camp. He spoke with cadets about our experience... before accepting a challenge to play UNO (despite the Chief of the Air Staff waiting for him!).

Over the weekend, I met some incredible people – from Finnish F-18 pilots to the RAF's first female fast jet pilot. We even had a visit from Air Commodore Allen Lewis, who talked about exciting developments in the Air Cadets.

After our shifts, we were free to explore the show ground: trading patches, touring aircraft, and watching jaw-dropping displays. Personal highlights? The iconic U-2 Dragon Lady, the P-8 Poseidon, and the thunderous Danish F-16. But nothing beat the debut flypast of the E-7 Wedgetail, flying in formation with the Red Arrows – or the emotional return of the Avro Lancaster, soaring alongside two Spitfires after an earlier cancellation. Pure magic.

Sunday brought the rain, but not even that could dampen our spirits.

We made our way to the Green Zone, where we checked off the B-1 Bomber and the enormous C-5 Super Galaxy from our bucket lists. Later, we met the Spanish Typhoon display pilot, who personally thanked us cadets for our efforts across the weekend.

Monday was our final full day, and we were up bright and early for the FOD Plod (foreign object debris walk) down the taxiway. We helped clear the airfield before watching aircraft take off one by one from the grandstands at Runway 27 – including low fly-bys from Polish F-16s and a wave from the Portuguese Merlin.

And then... it was time for the some fun. Camp staff led a full camp dance session featuring the Macarena and Cotton-Eyed Joe, followed by ice cream, a huge group photo, awards, and the RIAT cadet disco. Singing, dancing, and saying goodbye to the friends we'd made in just a few unforgettable days.

Tuesday was departure day. Slowly, regions packed up and flights disbanded. It was hard to say goodbye – to new friends, new memories, and an experience that genuinely changed us.





# Where Futures Take Off: An Air Cadet's Look at RIAT 2025

WORDS BY SGT L. BRIGHTMAN

After my incredible week working at Riat last year, I knew I had to apply again this year. Luckily enough I managed to get on it for the second year running, however I got so lucky with my tasking's last year, such as managing the pilots lounge, I didn't think this year would be able to come close to the excitement of last year. Although one thing I've learned about any RAFAC event is that they will never disappoint.

And Riat 2025 proved this point further, from the people I met to the unbelievably unique opportunities we got to experience and all the planes we saw up close and personal. On the first day we arrived we organized all of our luggage and socialized with a few people from our area who were also on our bus before meeting our flight.

I happened to be put in Lancaster flight (one of my favourite aircraft) so I was very happy, my flight of 9 introduced themselves to each other and we found out that funnily enough a lot of us had already met quite recently on our CCF bronze and silver leaderships. A funny coincidence but definitely one showing the increase in CCF cadets mixing in with ATC cadets as last year I was one of a few! This is something incredible to watch and to be part of as it allows the CCF cadets to gain a much better understanding of what is done in the ATC (out of school air cadets) and vice versa.

On the second day - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> - my flight was allocated campsite management where we got a taste of what the extended camp or 'build team' got up to in the days leading up to our arrival. It's safe to say after that day we very much sympathized with the extended camp as we were exhausted, and certainly very glad to have our lovely cooked lunch in the griffin diner.

The Friday after marked the beginning of the royal international air tattoo when floods of people came to visit the biggest military airshow in the world! My flight were lucky enough to welcome everyone through red gate that morning and hand out show ground maps which quickly turned into a competition of who could hand out the most maps, keeping it exciting.

We did this from 7am to 12pm, after we went to the show side cadet rest area to eat our packed lunches before setting off and exploring the incredible static displays in groups (while also enjoying all the cool freebies from the tech zone).

I was incredible to visit many aviation companies such as the air league. We were able to ask many questions and find out varied new information. The following day we were in our dark blues and tasked FRIAT, the friends of RIAT organisation which allows invited members of the public to get a premium Riat experience, including a group of cadets sorting the storage of their bags for them while looking smart in blues (and getting a great view of the airshow) especially while acting as a scary deterrent to anyone looking to jump barriers into FRIAT!

Our flight loved this despite getting drenched by the pouring rain on the way there. Luckily the rain stopped by the time we were done with FRIAT so we could look round the airshow with nice(ish) weather. My flight managed to get a private tour around all the RAF's current training aircraft and helicopters, we also competed against other flights in a cockpit competition to see which group could get in the most cockpits at the show as well as a patch collecting competition, of which we lost both unfortunately.

This day I also bumped into three friends, one which I had met earlier this year at a different RAF camp, it was beyond lovely to see all three. Later we walked back from the show and luckily made it back in time for dinner and then our flight briefing followed shortly after where we found out our task for the next day, this was flight line. We then spoke to our new friends before going to bed and speaking to our tent buddies in our 15 person tents.

The Sunday my flight was put in charge of keeping a fire lane clear while getting the best seats in the house, we sat on the airfield in front of the crowd line an incredible opportunity (for your ears to burst).

This was an incredible day and something that I am unlikely to experience again as I got to see all aircraft displays from so close with no crowds around me! We ensured no one crossed the boundaries into the fire lane and answered many questions from curious members of the public, some which thought we were actually in the RAF.

This was the day my brother and dad visited RIAT and got stuck in 2 hour queues which I of course had to tell them how lovely my five minute journey to the show was, they were not best pleased however we were all very happy to see each other. We later went around the airshow for the last time, this was the last day and my flight member Billy felt brave and so asked a f15 pilot for the remove before flight tag off the aircraft and luckily enough managed to get it as the engineer was very kind.

He padlocked this to himself for the remaining few days of RIAT as all of the 800 people on the camp knew about this and wanted to take it, no chance! Another civilian instructor managed to get part of one of the red arrows with the engineers signatures.

Almost in a flash it was time to leave and the quickest week of my life had just unfortunately ended, we said goodbye to everybody we had met before getting on a very sleepy coach back to Baldock after the trip of a lifetime with friends and memories we will never ever forget





# Little Rissington

## RAF Summer Camp

WORDS BY LCPL. A PECK

After returning home from a sunny beach holiday and stepping out of the airport into a grim, grey skyed, slightly rainy British afternoon, the prospect of going off to an RAF camp in two days time did not sound like such a great idea. Two days after and we were all piled onto the school minibus and were off for a week in the middle of nowhere debating as to whether there would be Wi-Fi at the camp. Two hours later and we had reached our destination, stepping off the minibus onto the flat, grassy plain of the airfield, with nothing but a small huddle of buildings where we would be staying. At the time I had no idea what to expect, but I was going to try and was once again impressed by the quality of the camp and the memories I made.

After a rude 6:30 awakening on the Monday morning, I groggily got ready and was back on the bus to go off to climbing. After Sergeant Sanderson took us the 'scenic route' to the centre, we arrived and stared up at the structure before us. Ziplines, climbing walls, tight ropes and more were sprawled across the sky, and in the normal response me and my friends looked up at it and said "It isn't that bad", "Yeah I think I've been on taller before" etc. evidently forgetting that once I was up on the fifth level it felt much taller than it was, especially with the wind buffeting us around. The favourite part of the afternoon however was the leap of faith, stepping off into freefall before the rope caught you and lowered you to the ground. As one should I landed in classic superhero style on one knee and hence got the approval of the instructor. Rounding off the evening with a slightly rule-bending match of rounders, we were back to bed ready for Tuesday.

As we pulled up to the gates of RAF Brize Norton everyone was excited for the moment many had come to the camp in the first place. Shooting. I eagerly was one of the first to go on the range and thought I didn't do to badly with my 47mm grouping. I was then quickly humbled when the next person after me shot 15mm on their first time shooting, but thankfully all managed to obtain their sharpshooter badges by the end of the day.

Wednesday was the water sports day, with raft building, kayaking and paddleboarding out on the lake. Thankfully the weather was not too arctic, but was hardly the bright sunny day we had hoped for, however, I'm proud to say that our raft won the race around the central island and back to the shore, thanks to the efforts of our team. The paddleboarding was also a highlight, especially when trying to knock everyone else into the water. Overall, by the end of the day we returned slightly soggy but happy to the minibuses and returned to the camp. My friend and I then proceeded to spend the rest of the evening on the flight simulators trying to figure out how to land the plane without it resulting in an explosion. The Ministry of Defence college was our next destination, and we spent a great day being toured around the 'museum' they have of various different tanks and aircraft from across the globe, even getting a chance to go inside and see what it's like. I obviously checked that the tea making device was installed. I particularly liked the tornado at one end and the s-tank (Stridsvagn) or "Cheese wedge" as it is also called.

We were also lucky enough to do some light weapons handling of all manner of firearms up close. As we got back from the day however, we were informed of what was to come tomorrow. The talent show.

However, we still had a day of outdoor activities before the talent show was to happen.

The Friday consisted of everything from paintball to basha building along with the dreaded cam and concealment, where the cam cream refuses to come off completely for several days. As always there was a command task, but I think my favourite part was laser tag, having to try and hide in a grass field from the rest of your flight whilst trying not to think of how many tics might be in the grass with you. By the evening everyone was exhausted, but the ending ceremony of the week was still to go before we could go to bed.

As mentioned, the talent show came first, where everyone grabbed some pizzas and spent the evening singing songs and doing acts much to our and the teachers amusement. I myself did some card tricks which left the audience questioning if I had magic powers, and I distinctly remember one group doing the "Tell me why!" skit from Brooklyn 99. The 'paper plate' awards followed, something our school had little idea about, but was where everyone received their own award for something over the course of the week written on a paper plate, whether that be something more serious like most improved cadet or something more funny. There was quite the array, but I think my favourites were my friends', with one getting 'captain capsized' for falling in over 15 times whilst on the lake and another getting 'rather be flying' for continuously asking to go on the flight simulators. I myself received 'Weapons specialist' after I scared our flight sergeant by knowing a few to many different firearms during the light weapons handling. By far however the best award of the evening was 'Biggest rage baiter' given to someone who when the award was announced, was asleep in the audience. After a final thank you and goodbye, we all went to bed for the last time of the week.

As I looked across the airfield on our way off RAF Little Rissington I had a short reflection of my time there, and despite being tired at times I felt that it had been a truly worthwhile week for me and certainly helped to create new memories and friends through it. If anyone is questioning whether or not the week is for them, I would highly recommend going, even if it is just for the sharpshooting badge so you can show off to everyone else.





# RAST

## Royal Air Squadron Trophy

Over the past two years, I have had the privilege of being part of the Air Squadron Trophy (AST) team. This experience has significantly developed my confidence and broadened my knowledge across a range of areas, including first aid, aircraft recognition, leadership and followership, cyber intelligence, RAF knowledge, and drill.

Most importantly, it has taught me the value of teamwork and how to contribute effectively within a group. Being part of the AST team has also led to strong friendships and unforgettable memories. Some of my favourite moments include the long coach journeys after competitions—particularly after nationals this year, when the team bonded over McDonald's chilli cheese bites, sharing laughter and stories late into the evening. Humorous conversations, such as Mr Bradshaw's remarks about a Young Farmers event the night before the competition, added to the enjoyment and camaraderie of the experience.

Beyond the friendships and fun, AST has offered valuable preparation for my aspiration to join the RAF—an ambition I've held for many years. The knowledge I've gained, especially regarding RAF structure and operations, will prove especially useful in interviews and future training.

Participation in the team has also enhanced my contributions during CCF sessions. I've been able to confidently instruct others in advanced drill and first aid, skills I've refined through both training and competition. In particular, my role on the first aid team has prepared me to handle real-life medical emergencies with calm and confidence, having experienced realistic, high-pressure scenarios during competitions.

My involvement in the drill team also enabled me to demonstrate my careful precision, culminating in being awarded the Drill Prize during Fifth Form on AGI Day. These opportunities to perform under pressure, especially during competition, have helped me build resilience, manage nerves, and develop transferable life skills.

AST competitions offer unique networking opportunities with RAFAC staff and serving or former RAF personnel.

These interactions have given me valuable insight into life in the RAF and helped build connections with cadets from other schools, many of whom I've since encountered at national camps and leadership courses at RAF Wittering. I'm particularly looking forward to seeing familiar faces at regionals and nationals this year.

Finally, AST has significantly improved my performance at camps and on external courses, especially those run for the Air Training Corps. Given their typically higher level of training

compared to the CCF, the knowledge and experience I've gained through AST has allowed me to match their standards and excel in these settings. If you are interested in joining the AST team, I strongly encourage you to speak with Mr Bradshaw, a member of the HQ team, or myself. Alternatively, you are welcome to attend our training sessions on Tuesdays after school in FR2 to see what it's all about. I hope to see some new people there

WORDS BY SGT. L BRIGHTMAN





**AST TEAM 2025**





