

## Here is a memory which might amuse entitled "Guy Fawkes Night at RAF Seletar (1960)

After a hard days work on the squadron, a meal, a shower and a pint (or three) of duty free it seemed quite sensible for us "hard working single airmen" to repair to the "Bonfire" which was situated on some waste ground at the far end of RAF Seletar. This we duly did and stared incredulously at a mighty mound of typical RAF junk piled high into the balmy Singaporean sky, it consisted of the normal broken packing cases, furniture etc., But what caught our eyes was the sheer quantity of large (very large) thick cardboard tubes, these had previously been used to transport aircraft safety equipment, and were so vast in number that the bonfire resembled an enormous Egyptian Pyramid. After a few "fireworks" (well they weren't proper fireworks, just aircraft distress flares and rockets,), the O.I/C announced on a loudspeaker "And now Ladies & Gentlemen, boys and girls, Flight Sergeant \*\*\*\*\* from the fire section will LIGHT THE BONFIRE!! An expectant hush fell over the crowd as gallons and gallons of "Scrap" aviation fuel, thinners and Lord knows what in the way of inflammable liquid was poured onto this mighty pyre...Then.... into view marched THE FLIGHT SERGEANT, a short corpulent figure of a man, clad in natty blue dungarees, a world war two white painted tin hat with a flap of material on the back "a la Beu Geste", swinging his arms shoulder high, proud as punch his gum booted feet tripping slightly on the tufted grass, he came to a crashing halt about twenty yards from the bonfire. Then withdrawing a Very Pistol from his belt, he elegantly broke it and popped in a cartridge.....We waited.....he fired.....the flare described an arc and hit the bonfire dead centre.....Well remember those cardboard tubes ???????? Some one had forgotten to knock out the ends; soaked in fuel they had become bombs !!!!! BOOOOOOOOOOOOM !!!!! The bonfire lifted twenty feet off the ground and deposited itself in about eight different positions, all still burning like a good un...That was it, everybody left leaving the Flight Sergeant standing there with his mouth open.... Well nobody was hurt thank Heavens but the scaleys brats (married personnel's children) didn't half howl !!!!! We (the single blokes) couldn't help chuckling as we left to get to the Malcolm Club for another pint or two and a toast tomato banjo.. I wonder what the Officer i/c RAF Seletar fire section said to his blokes? Come to that, what did the Camp Commandant say to the Officer i/c? .....,who cares ! Happy Days !!

Yours (in schadenfreude) [Martin Shelvey](#) (North Kent South South East London Branch

Martin,

Just read your article about the Seletar bonfire.

I was there that night, I remember it well, and I agree with you it was the biggest bonfire I have ever seen.

I was possibly on the other side of the bonfire to you, and they had stacked rolls of old PR film on that side.

I can remember well the smell of the thinners which they had poured on the bonfire, as it was a hot "heavy" evening.

When the bonfire exploded, all we saw were these rolls of flaming film coming at us like loose catherine wheels.

We ran like hell, laughing and joking.

Like you, we then retired to the Malcolm Club: but unlike you, mine was a Tiger Tops with a Chip Banjo.

Happy Days.

Peter Geary

Seletar '59-'62