

A Riposte to the Hopeless Heavy Hooligans

As a very gentle & sensitive fairy, I'm completely affronted by the irony and sarcasm alluded to in the 'Fairy Dell' article. For a start, I didn't learn bridge in the crew-room, it was learning how to do the Daily Telegraph cryptic crossword at Thorney Island! Also, at Benson we fairies were always the ones who did most of the Argosy role-fits which often entailed setting up bulky guidance rails and roller platforms for para-drops - our weak & feeble bodies were sadly depleted of any strength and energy, to the extent that our considerable reasoning powers were often so drained that we were unable to enter 'NFF' in the F700. On "Dirty Thirty" Beverly squadron, it was usually difficult to find a clean, smart crew-room seat as a result of the oil & Elsan stains deposited by a host of blustering and ill-mannered louts who appeared only to know about emptying toilets or changing spark-plugs (I think they were known as 'heavies', possibly as a result of their corpulence).

I must confess that some of us have nevertheless been correctly associated with Fairy Magic. When I initially did a training course for simulators in 1969, the digital computer and its modest memory occupied the volume of two large wardrobes; they were used mainly in the upper echelons of finance and business, and in scientific research. Computers were far from the forefront of ordinary mortals' consciousness, and to talk of courses concerning 'central processors' and 'gates' contained on 'integrated circuit chips' caused a sharp intake of breath and eyes widening in awe and admiration - we truly had become magic geniuses! How grateful we were to be spared conducting conversations involving propellers or undercarriages that would be highly likely to cause sighs and the eyes to glaze over!