

Fairy Dell



A 'Fairy Dell' is a haven for wildlife with a serene and tranquil setting. However, there are other less well known Fairy Dells in existence. I will tell you the magical story about an RAF Fairy Dell. These are inhabited by RAF aircraft electricians and instrument tradesmen who rarely venture out in to the busy, cold, hangar environment; preferring to stay in the heated and warm confines of what is supposed to be the Electrical and Instrument (E&I) Section. There is wildlife in the Fairy Dell but they are a rare species of airmen who, generally, only emerge at lunchtimes and tea times. Always well preened and smart the inhabitants of the Fairy Dell keep a low profile in order not to draw attention to their presence. They are very shy and sensitive creatures. Like all Fairy Dells it is an extremely tranquil place to be in. Clean and tidy as if no work had ever taken place in the area.

When hangar doors need to be opened or aircraft require moving from the hangar to the Flight Line the Fairy Dell would suddenly be evacuated with visits to Station Headquarters (SHQ), Education Section or the Sports Store. Sick Quarters was another favourite location for Fairies. The morning routine in a Fairy Dell demands the kettle to be put on for the first drink of tea and coffee so that the effort of getting to the 'Dell' could be overcome. They sit on their (toad) stools and discuss important issues of the day like who wants cheese and tomato rolls when the NAFFI wagon turns up. A radio plays soft relaxing music all day to ensure a calm and peaceful environment for all 'Fairies' who come to the 'Dell' that particular day. Newspapers are read before the mid morning break when the kettle would be put on again for tea and coffee.



Unlike 'Heavies' such as the Airframe and Engine trades the 'Fairies' had no particular allegiance to an aircraft servicing team or specific aircraft. They are a remote group who only venture out of the 'Dell' when requested to do so. They are never around to undertake the myriad of jobs necessary in a hangar such as sweeping up, moving heavy equipment and so on. When called upon to carry out a particular task they appear in an agitated state, remove the defective item from the aircraft and hurry back quickly with it to the 'Dell'. My experience tells me that most 'Fairy' defects are cleared by the 'magic' phrase 'no fault found'. Magic is, of course, an important ingredient in the life and times of a Fairy.

Fairies were very intelligent creatures. They are always far superior to any other trade in the hangar when it comes to playing Bridge. This may have had something to do with the extensive training regime for Bridge that exists in most Fairy Dells! Every day this skill is practiced and the term Bridge School arose from the Fairy Dell persistence with this ongoing training programme.

The Fairy Dell description is accurate and true, born of many years experience, and written by a Rigger!