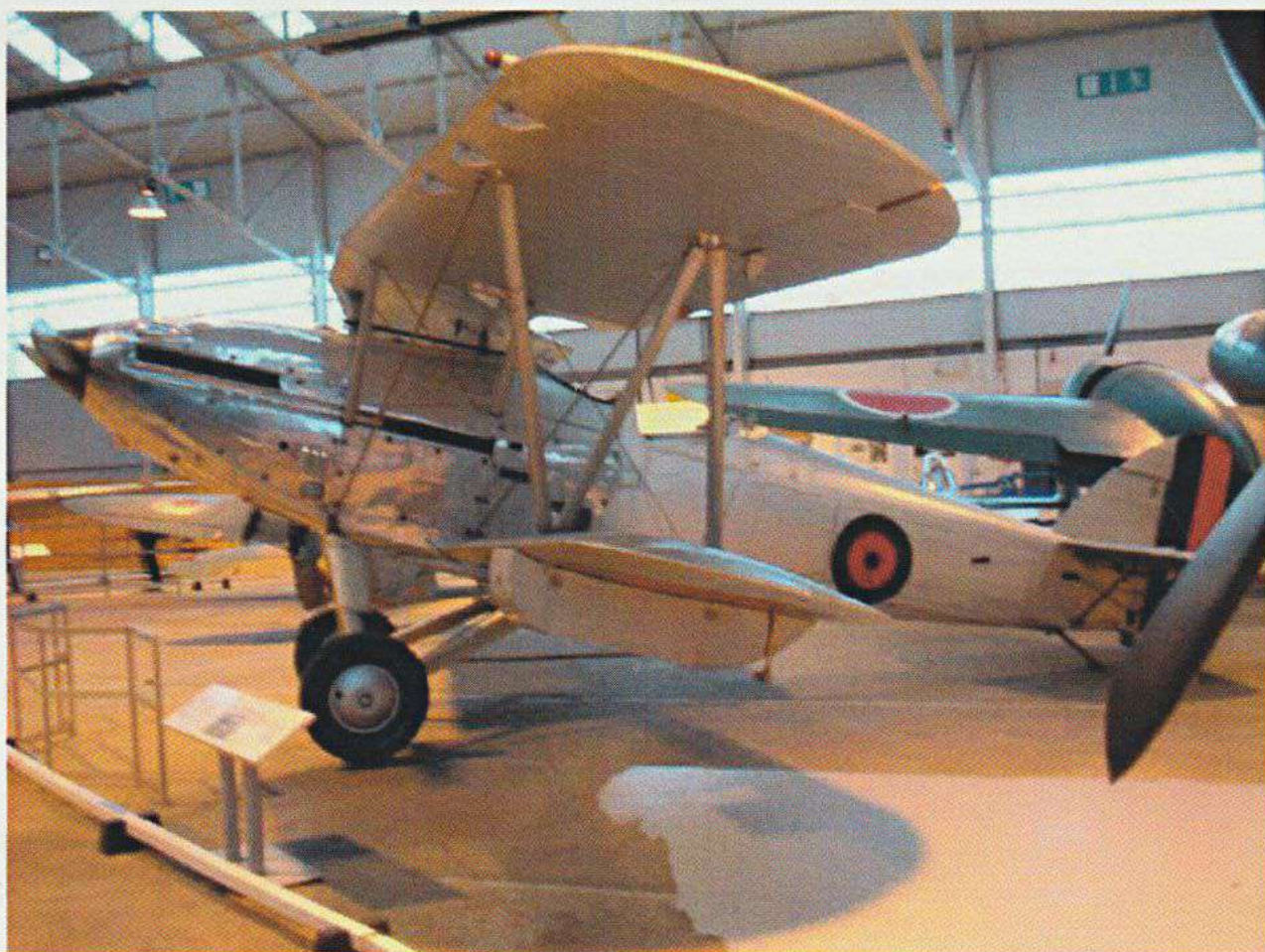


The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

The 49 Squadron Association Magazine
August 2007 Issue 7



**The Hawker Hind on display at The RAF Museum, Cosford.
Had Neville Chamberlain not won a further year of peace by appeasing Hitler in
1938 then 49 Squadron could have gone to war in such aircraft.**

IN MEMORIAM

Canon J. Pugh (2006) R. J. Andrew
T. H. J. Scarffe W. G. Carman E. Simms

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

WELCOME TO:

NEW MEMBERS

Fred Vening Bob Petty Archie Ross
Mac Winterburn Robert Hogg Bob Hayward
Derek Austin Neil Brown John Miles

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

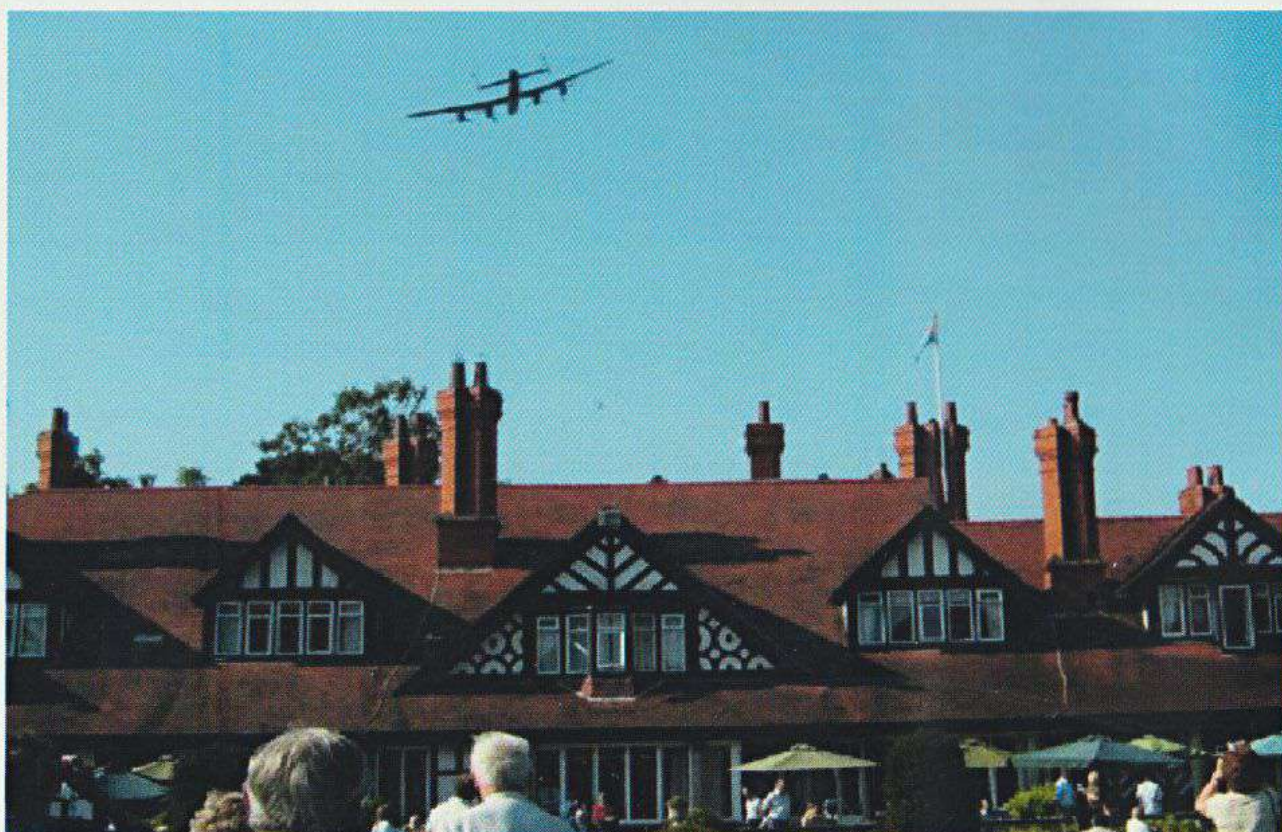
David Clarke Graeme Routledge John Arnold (Australia)
Helen Grindy Graham Bairnsfather (Australia)

NEW FRIENDS

Ralph Gray (USA) Cyril Hunter

NEW HONORARY FRIENDS

Eric Molenaar (Holland) Jan Uithol (Holland) Paul Strong



Photo; Barbara Parr

EDITORIAL

One disadvantage of producing a quarterly magazine is that some news has become history before it is published. However, I hope that you will accept that in order to record the events for posterity it is better to feature them late rather than not at all. Besides, if I only reported the most recent happenings The 4T9er would only comprise eight pages.

Once again, thank you to those who have written to us or sent donations. Your donations help to ensure the future of the Association and your letters let us know that our efforts are not wasted. During my address to the reunion I said that it would be impossible to carry out all the functions that we do without the help of 'The Backroom Boys' whose names appear on the back cover. On average we receive an enquiry a week from people wanting information on relatives who served with 49 Squadron. In addition we are extending the Archive to include ground crew which calls for considerable research. A photographic archive is also taking shape and a further project will cover post war personnel. The website is progressing and should be on line in August.

Regrettably I have to record the passing of five 4T9ers. Canon John Pugh OM MBE died in January last year. Rowland Andrew died on the 19th May last. His daughter, new Associate Member Helen Grindy, told me that it was his wish to be laid to rest wearing his RAF tie and 49 Squadron badge.....Loyal to the end. T H J Scarff served on Valiants at Marham and his death was recorded in The Daily Telegraph on June 4th. Bill Carman died on June 15th. Bill wrote, in The 4T9er Issue 5, of his pilgrimage to Germany and of his hopes to attend the unveiling of a memorial to those of his crew who died. Sadly it was not to be. Bill completed eight ops with 49 Squadron before going on to Pathfinders to complete a further 25 before being shot down. Ted Sims, who did 27 ops in the mid upper turret, died in June.

On the plus side we have been joined by nine new members who served with 49 Squadron. Fred Vening was on Christmas Island for Operation Grapple in 1957 and Grapple X, having already been at Operation Buffalo, the atomic bomb test in Australia. Fred was an Air Radio Fitter and served with 49 Squadron from April '56 to Oct '61. He is a founder member of The 49 Megaton Club and has been Secretary for over 40 years. Bob Petty was the pilot of JB371 EA-J when he was shot down on December 2/3 1943, target Berlin. This was Bob's 17th op. Mac Winterburn served with the squadron at Wittering from February '58 to September '59. Robert Hogg was a Wop/Ag. during 1942/3 doing 35 ops. Bob Hayward (Nav. Radar) was in the pool at Waddington and did two flights with 49' before being posted to 61 Squadron. Derek Austin was a NCO Lancaster pilot with 49' during 1948/9 when the Squadron was based at Upwood. Neil Brown was an airframe mechanic,

1956/8, on the CO's Valiant XD818. (See Operation 'GRAPPLE', May issue.) John Miles was a navigator on Valiants at Marham between 1963 and 1965. Archie Ross is another ex Valiant man.

New Associate Member, Graeme Routledge is the great nephew of F/L Jim Milburn DFC who as a pilot joined 49 Squadron in September '44 and flew his last op to Pilsen on 16/17th April '45. John Arnold is the son of Victor Arnold who was a W/Op with 49 Squadron between April '42 and April '43. Helen Grindy is the daughter of late Member Rowland Andrew. Graham Bairnsfather is the nephew of Ralph Bairnsfather who was killed whilst flying with 49 Squadron on March 7th 1945. David Clarke is son of Member, Eric Clarke.

New 'Friend', Ralph Gray, an Australian currently living in the U.S.A., was named after his father's best friend, the aforementioned Ralph Bairnsfather. Cyril Hunter was an ATC Cadet during the war and spent a week at Fiskerton in 1943. The story of his visit will be featured in a future issue.

Eric Molenaar, Jan Uithol and Paul Strong are our new 'Honorary Friends'. Eric is a journalist who has created the wkdankbaar.nl website and who has written many articles featuring Hampden P1206. Jan is chairman of DARE, the Dutch research group who have been instrumental in the location and planned recovery of that Hampden. Paul is the Head Teacher of the William Farr School in Welton near Lincoln. The school is built on a part of Dunholme Lodge airfield from which 49 Squadron flew whilst the Fiskerton runway was under repair. Paul has dedicated a room to the squadrons that flew from there and is continually striving to instil in the pupils a knowledge, pride and respect for the men, and their deeds, performed there in WWII.

On Wednesday 11th July a number of 4T9ers attended a service at William Farr School at which a memorial was unveiled to the Australians who lost their lives flying from Dunholm Lodge. Amongst those named is F/Sgt. Edwin Parker of 49 Squadron. The memorial was unveiled by Australian, Mr Keith Payne VC and dedicated by the Bishop of Grimsby.

On the 28th and 29th April the BBMF Lancaster, fresh from general overhaul in Coventry, visited Holland in commemoration of 'Operation Manna'. On the Saturday, thanks to F/L Jack Hawkins, Operations Officer of the BBMF, the Lanc flew over the crash site of 49's Hampden P1206. (See photo page 22). An emotional account of the flyover is included in this issue. (Page 8). As part of our reunion, thanks also to Jack, the Lancaster made three low passes over Petwood Hotel on Sunday June 3rd and on Tuesday June 5th the Dakota made three passes over Lincoln Cathedral, just for us!

Whilst on the subject of P1206, digging is to commence on September 3rd this year. It will be under the control of Capt. Peterson of the Royal Netherlands Air Force. We will bring you further news on this exciting project in the next issue

of The 4T9er, due out in November.

Regular readers will have noticed that I frequently sing the praises of The Red Arrows and The BBMF. Many people regard these two organisations as major air show performers only. In fact both will, where possible, deviate slightly from place to place routes in order to fly over specific locations and on occasions, the Dakota over Lincoln being a case in point, make special flights. Witness the articles in this issue on the Lancaster over Holland, the reunion flyovers and the Red Arrows Missing Man Tribute at Scampton, all on behalf of 49 Squadron Association. But it is not only for RAF connected associations. I read in the paper that a woman in Wisbech requested a visit by a Red Arrows pilot to a charity event that she was organising to cheer her sick husband, an ex paramedic, firefighter and special constable. John May has confirmed that 'The Reds' are transiting from Norwich to Edinburgh on that day and will carry out a flyover enroute. See also Geoff Barnett's letter in Readers Letters for a further example of the wonderful contribution that these two organisations make to the lives of ordinary people, far from the glare of major event publicity.

It has been pointed out to me that our practice of using two letters to indicate most ranks is not correct. I really should have explained long ago that Ted and I made the decision to standardise thus; W/C. etc in order to save space. In A5 format we are restricted to increments of four pages, i.e. two sides of A4. We tend to limit ourselves to a 32 page edition as this weighs less than 50 grammes. On occasions we send out the latest two issues to new members and so the package weighs less than 100 grammes. Under the current UK postage charges this falls within the standard charge thus saving on cost. (See how prudent we are with your money!) It is a fine balancing act to work within the four page increment and in every issue so far we have been pruning the odd phrase here, adding the odd word there.

As I write it is June 15th and I have just received the reply from the Government rejecting the petition for a Bomber Command Campaign Medal. The same old story that decisions taken after the war cannot be overturned was the core of the response. Although this petition has been running on the web for several months there were only a disappointing 2,147 signatures. With such an apathetic response we don't stand a chance.

I am always on the lookout for interesting material to publish in The 4T9er. However, whilst I try to be discrete, this could lead to embarrassment at times if a correspondent does not want their words to be published.

IF YOU DO NOT WISH YOUR LETTERS OR COMMENTS TO BE PUBLISHED IN The 4T9er THEN PLEASE TELL ME AT THE TIME.

Have I got your e-mail address or that of someone close to you? If you have

never received an e-mail from me it is likely that I have not. Are you on broadband? If so you could, if you wish, receive The 4T9er by e-mail thus saving considerable cost to the Association. Occasionally photographs or items of interest are sent out by e-mail. You may be missing out!

I mentioned in the last issue of The 4T9er that a 49 Squadron Room is to be set up in the RAF Scampton Museum and that Gary Mennell would welcome donations. Gary has asked me to correct the word 'donations'. Due to the uncertain future of RAF establishments these days, any item presented for display would be considered to be on loan. If Scampton did succumb to the cost cutting axe then all items that have been loaned by Association members would be passed to the Association Secretary for return to the member in question. Come on, let's make this a success!

When Bert Cole visited the crash site of his Lancaster in Germany he was handed a collection of pieces of his aircraft that had been picked up by a local boy. Bert has passed these to me and they are to be displayed in the Scampton Museum. Gary has assured me that there are display cases available which will ensure the security of small items. The Association is presently working on a photographic display.

Mentioning F/L Gary Mennell reminds me that he is to serve on detachment in Afganistan from late September until 27th December. As you will be aware from this and previous issues, Gary has arranged a number of very special events for us and I am sure that all 4T9ers will join me in wishing him a safe and speedy return.

As Ted's guests, Barbara and I visited Duxford in May to see the BBMF Fiftieth Anniversary Airshow. Ted took his motorhome which became a useful coffee bar as it was visited by 4T9ers Evalina and Ian Lowe and Jo and Russ Cockburn. Besides being able to get up close to the aircraft we were treated to the unique formation of the Lancaster with two Hurricanes and five Spitfires. Nine Merlins and two Griffons, what a sound!

On May 11th the Indian Air Force flew its last Canberra sortie bringing to an end the worldwide service of this amazing aircraft.

I read in Flypast magazine that two squadron numbers, 76 and 39, are to be revived. This set me wondering if they might do likewise with 49'. By coincidence I was speaking with Fred Vening when he speculated that, in view of the large number of Typhoons entering service it will probably be necessary to revive further numbers. Perhaps 49' could become a fighter squadron!

During the Falklands Remembrance gathering in London there was an RAF flypast over Buckingham Palace. How many aircraft took part? 49 of course! There is another more poignant similarity between the Falklands War and 49 Squadron. During that war a total of 907 men died, exactly the same number as

49 Squadron lost during World War II.

We hold a very comprehensive database on every operational sortie, with aircraft and crew details, flown during the war years by 49'. However, there are gaps cross referring aircraft identification letters and serial numbers. Most aircrew entered either one or the other in their logbooks but are you an exception? If you can cross refer letter and serial number for a particular aircraft that is not already shown in 'The Dog' then please let us know as it may help us to improve still further our records.

Are you considering granting Power of Attorney to someone? At the moment you can do this free online by going into Google and entering 'Power of Attorney'. You can then print off the forms, get them witnessed, job done. The rules for granting Power of Attorney are due to be revised on October 1st this year. After this date a solicitor will be required, resulting in costs.

Knowing of my passion for steam engines, Alan Morgan has kindly given me two models. One, a stationary engine, was beautifully machined and built by Alan. Remarkable when you consider that Alan lost his fingers to frostbite. The second is a Mamod steam roller. Hopefully when this issue is complete I will have time for a 'steam up'!

We went to the 'Flying Legends' Airshow at Duxford on July 8th and, on visiting my old mate, Nick Trudgian, in the Vector Finearts marquee, to my surprise, sitting next to him at the signing table was the penultimate C.O. of 49 Squadron, Air Commodore John Langston. Nick later invited me 'round the back' for a chat with John which I enjoyed tremendously.

I have been asked by Colin Smith of Vector Finearts to arrange for a group of ex 49 Squadron WWII aircrew to attend the Air Display at Duxford on September 8th and 9th. They will be required to sign visitor's books and prints in the morning after which they will watch the airshow. **If anyone is interested in joining the party please let me know immediately as time is short.**

On the 14th July I attended the Large Model Aircraft Display at Cosford. As I had hoped there were four very big Lancasters which, when airborne, provided some amazing photo opportunities. Unfortunately I have run out of photographic space for this issue but may be able to squeeze some in next time. Besides the Lancasters there was a big Vulcan and a Heyford. In the static park there was a huge Lincoln. Hopefully this will fly next year. When I say big I am talking 17 feet wingspan!

When sending cheques please make them payable to; 49 SA PETWOOD

I know that a number of 4T9ers are unwell. I would like you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

'Till the next time!

As announced in the Editorial, digging is to commence on September 3rd to recover the bodies of Sgts. Kehoe and Mullinger and the wreck of Hampden P1206 which lie in a field in Berkhout, Holland. As also mentioned in the Editorial, the BBMF Lancaster flew over the crash site on April 28th. This is an extract from the e-mail that Ed Ijsbrandij sent to Sheila Hamilton and myself the following day describing the scene and the emotions.

ONE OF THE GREATEST DAYS OF MY LIFE

.....I looked in the distance, a small crowd of people was standing in the middle of the land of Dick and Loek Schilder, in front of them, two Dutch Flags, due to the hard wind, straight and proud in full size locating the crash site of Hampden P1206. The grass land and the unbelievable "Dutch" looking area around it, what a scene.....

More and more people came to the farm of the Schilders, people who we didn't know a few years ago, became close friends, Reporter Eric Molenaar, Dick's parents, brothers, neighbours, and the other boys of DARE with children and grandchild. After we all shook hands and the introduction of my family to Dick's family we walked towards the Cross in the field.

From what direction would the Lancaster come? We knew it was parked at Rotterdam, so the direction would probably not be from Texel, but from the South.....

Artur van der Starre and Herman de Ruiter from "Bytheway" film productions where asking for the right direction, they arrived early at Dick's place to get prepared for some shots of the Lancaster for their film "Memories in Mud", a professional film about Aircraft Recovery in Holland and the history of their crew, eye witnesses etc.

We where in doubt from what direction the Lanc would come.....we got a bit overstressed.....what if we missed the right heading..... it would come over so fast that it was all over before we had the time to shoot the pictures and wave to the crew.....stress.....

Dick Schilder had some binoculars with him, everybody so quiet, even the children didn't make a sound and the only noise was the wind.....yes.....we heard something in the distance.....LOOK!!!! We realised it was not the Lanc coming over, it was a big Boeing 747 up high in the sky heading for a long distance flight.....from what direction would the Lanc come.....it was 13:45.....

Then, Dick shouted: "There it comes!!!!!! Everybody looked in the distance of

the North / South, there, very far away through the haze I saw the typical shape of the big bomber.....the Lancaster, all the people got the cameras ready.....it was heading towards Ursem so there was only one opportunity to shoot the films.....the plane came closer.....the sound was getting harder and harder.....this was so special.....then it was there.....the Lancaster!, I started to run the digital cam.....what a sound (the best music indeed Alan!!) and what a view and.....this was a LOW Fly Past.....better than all Airshows I had ever seen in my life, everybody waved, everybody made a sound....ohhh, and ahhh, tears where running over cheeks.....chicken skin.....

When it flew over the Crash site it looked as if the crew of the Lanc became part of the crowd and made a steep left turn.....that was not the heading for Ursem....???? what was the Pilot doing????

It was flying so low, this was something, you can not describe in words.....it flew an 8 shape run low over the crowd, you could see the crew wave back!!!!

We thought it was over and the Lanc would head to the next Village, but, it turned back again!

I stopped filming, I was so thrilled that I had to stop and absorb this moment into my head, I made a salute and waved with both arms.....looked at the other people, everybody was completely blown away by this appearance.....would the Lancaster crew realize what this was doing to us???

Emotions, emotions, one last steep turn, the wings of the big bird where catching the sun and held it stuck to its skinthe propellers seem to stand still.....

I realized that at the other side off the Channel some very good friends were with us here, in thoughts, wishing they were here with us.....and they were with us.....

The Lanc was now heading for Ursem, we could see it flying over a crowd in the far distance, you could also see cars standing still to watch the Lanc coming over.....over.....it disappeared in the far distance.....

I looked at Dick, Jan, Hans and my family, everybody had that special expression in the face of being witness of something so beautiful...nobody expected the way the Crew made this Fly Past.....they must have had a special license to fly so low.....or did the Pilot knew this location was so special....that in about a few months something was going to happen so important for so many people, like for Margaret Walsh-Kehoe who's dear Brother lost his young life at this spot.....

A SPECIAL MEETING AT SCAMPTON

May 19th, FA Cup Final Day, was a very significant day for another reason as a very special meeting took place sixty-six years later than originally intended.

In 1941 an Irishman, Sgt. John Kehoe was a Wop/AG with 49 Squadron flying Hampdens out of Scampton. He had met and become engaged to an English girl, Mary Irving, and it was his intention to take her to Ireland to meet his folks. This meeting didn't take place as he was killed on November 8th. On May 19th 2007 John's sister Margaret and Mary, now in their eighties, finally met at Welton near Scampton. Also present were Jackie and Frankie, the twin daughters of the Hampden's pilot W/O Christopher Saunders DFM.

A Service of Remembrance for the crew of Hampden P1206 had been arranged by F/L Gary Mennell and W/O John May, both Honorary Friends of 49 Squadron Association. Besides relatives and next of kin the service was attended by Scampton veterans, Eric Clarke, Alan Drinkell, Bill Pyrah and Dot Smith. From Holland came Dick Schilder, Jan Uithol, Ed Isjbrandj and Eric Molenaar. There were also representatives of 49 Squadron Association.

After watching The Red Arrows take off for Wembley the party drove in convoy to a point on a disused runway at the far side of the airfield. It was here that Gary estimated that the Hampdens left the ground for the raid on Essen.

With the congregation facing east, in the direction of Essen and Berkhout, where the Hampden still lies buried, the RAF Scampton Padre's Assistant, Sandy Gall, conducted a short service during which Ed Isjbrandij read 'The Skies over Holland' and Sheila Hamilton read 'The Funeral Oration by Pericles'. A minute silence was broken by a bugler of The Band of The Royal Air Force, Cranwell, playing the Last Post. As the last note died away The Red Arrows flew directly over the congregation from behind in a shallow vee trailing white smoke. Over the middle of the airfield Red Two, who alone was trailing red smoke, pulled vertically upwards, climbing into the heavens, in a Missing Man Tribute. 'The Reds' then performed a stunning eight man display.

Once we had all regained our composure the party moved back to the hangars where coffee was served in the Scampton Museum. Whilst here Gary showed me the room in which it is intended to display the 49 Squadron Exhibition.

After studying the museum we visited the former 49 Squadron hangar. Here Eric Clarke pointed out the Locker Room and other interesting areas.

A walk outside took us to Guy Gibson's office in front of which is the grave of his black Labrador, Nigger. Here four crosses were placed in memory of the four Hampden crew members. Thus ended a moving and truly memorable day.

Our sincere thanks go to; The Station Commander of RAF Scampton , W/C Archie McCullum, to F/L Gary Mennell and to W/O John May.



The Red Arrows Missing Man Tribute to the crew of Hampden P1206



REUNION JUNE 3rd - 6th 2007

One of the most critical factors, but one over which we have zero control, is the weather. The weekend prior to the reunion saw thirty hours of continuous rain but we needn't have worried as the occasion was blessed with blue skies.

Whilst driving through Sleaford on our way to the event we received a call from the BBMF to say that the Lancaster would be 5 minutes late. That was a relief as it meant that the first of our major events was going to take place.

A crowd gathered on the lawns at the rear of Petwood Hotel and soon the 'music' was heard. In she came at about 500 feet (155 metres) over the trees at the far end of the gardens and banked left over the hotel. (See photo page 2). Two more passes followed, one in each direction parallel to the hotel. A wonderful sight and sound.

On Monday 4th we left Petwood at 0930 for the coach journey to Fiskerton. On pulling up outside the church there was a loud gasp for lined up beside the path to the church was a contingent of RAF personnel from Scampton. In command was F/L Gary Mennell who had worked the magic once again. This was not all however as on entering the church we saw the 49 Squadron Standard. The second of our major events was taking place! Sadly, due to its fragility, this is almost certainly the last time that the Standard will be paraded.

The 4T9ers entered through the gate at the Cherry Willingham end of the churchyard and through to the church past the Guard of Honour.

The Service of Remembrance commenced with the Rev Clive Todd receiving the Standard which was laid on the altar throughout the service.

During the service the 49 Squadron Association Wreath was laid at the Memorial by our Chairman Ted Cachart who was escorted by John Beck and Alan Morgan. John then read the first page of names from the 49 Squadron Roll of Honour. We intend to read a page at all future reunion services.

IN REMEMBERING TEN WE REMEMBER THE NINE-HUNDRED AND SEVEN.

At the completion of the church service we made our way up to the Airfield Memorial. As at the Remembrance Day service in November the RAF Ensign was flying proudly. Thanks to the Stuffins family the memorial was immaculate as always.

The RAF Guard of Honour was drawn up whilst Eric Jones, escorted by his Flight Engineer Ron Harris, and Desmond Harris, laid the wreath.

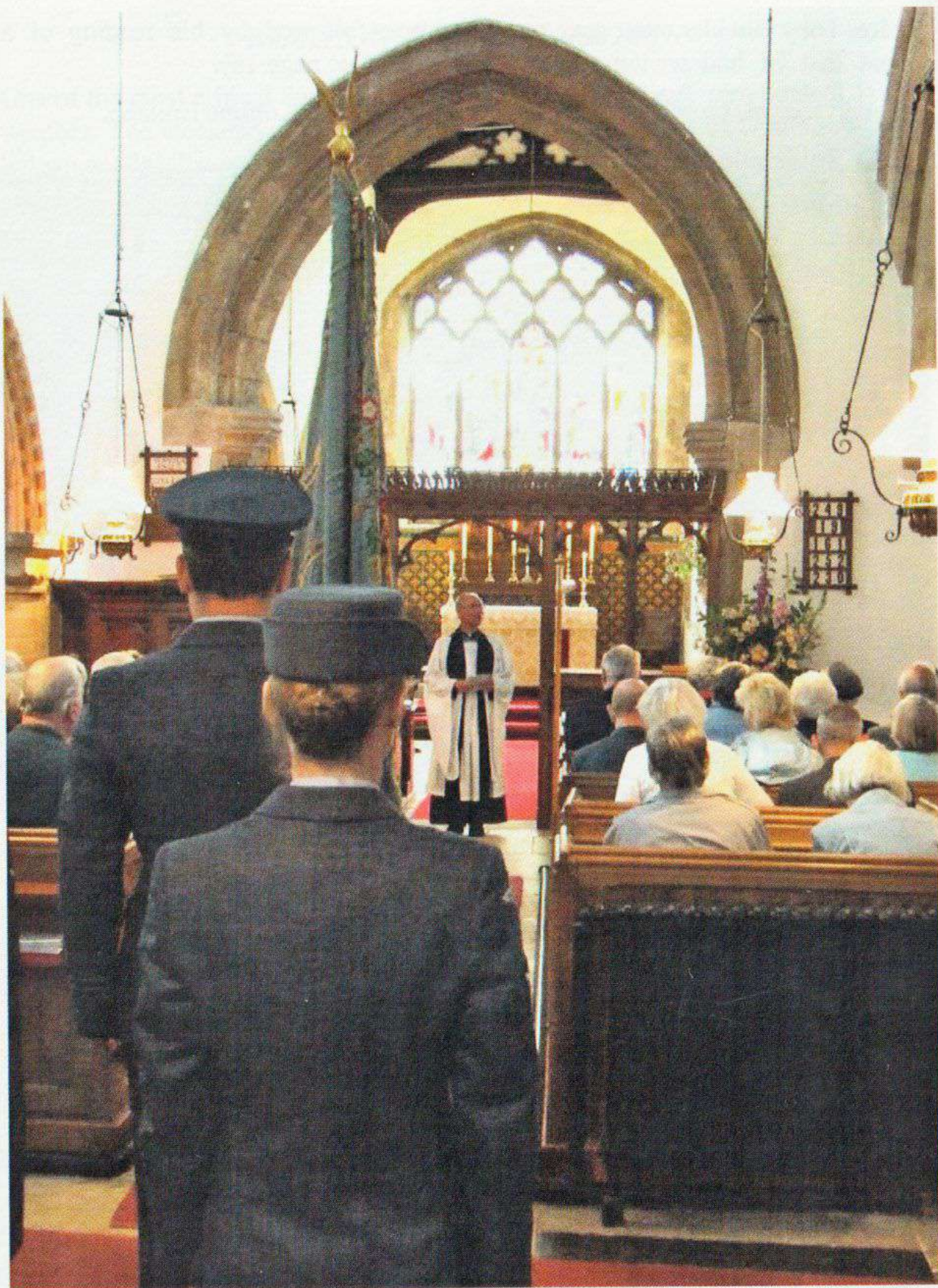
A one minute silence followed which was broken by Colin Cripps reciting "They shall grow not old...".

Padre, Tony Buckler, next gave a short address followed by his reading of a poem that he had written for the occasion. (See page 16).

The service was closed by your Secretary reciting the Kohima Epitaph.



Photo; SAC Trugunno



The 49 Squadron Standard, borne by F/L Gary Mennell, is about to be presented to Rev Clive Todd for laying on the altar during the Service.

Photo; SAC Tregunno

The party then retired to the Village Hall where our Fiskerton friends had laid on the most wonderful buffet. I had estimated that eighty would be present and the amount of food on offer was judged beautifully.

Following the meal we went outside for photographs to be taken after which the RAF party returned to their duties at Scampton.

We next gathered in 'The 49 Squadron Lounge' where Ted Cachart made a presentation to the Hall, on behalf of the Association, of John Ward's painting, Nancy Pants last Flight. We then returned to Petwood for a relaxing afternoon.

A splendid attendance, of eighty-two, sat down to enjoy a superb dinner. Following the Loyal Toast, Ted proposed 'Absent friends'. After dinner Ken Read proposed 'Guests and Ladies' to which Gary Mennell replied. John Beck then proposed '49 Squadron Association' to which I replied.

I was delighted to report that total membership stands at 260, an increase of 20 since the last reunion. Full Member numbers stand at a creditable 149. I was also able to report that the healthy financial position which Tom bequeathed us has been maintained.

On the Tuesday morning we gathered at the coach for the journey to Lincoln. The driver delivered us to the west entrance of the Cathedral which we entered for a viewing of the Bomber Command Memorial.

As previously reported, the stone is located just outside the entrance to the Airman's Chapel which made viewing less than satisfactory due to builder's screens being in place. This has caused a great deal of resentment amongst visitors in the months since it was installed.

At 1245 we all gathered at the west end of the Cathedral for a flyover by the BBMF Dakota. This consisted of three passes, especially for us! Major event number three complete!

A buffet lunch had been booked at The Tower Hotel after which there was free time to visit Lincoln. We returned to Petwood at 1600.

Some of us who stayed for the fourth night visited East Kirkby on the Wednesday. Here we witnessed two taxi runs by the Lancaster 'Just Jane' plus the resident Spitfire taking off to give some lucky person a pleasure flight.

On behalf of the Association I extend our thanks to all those people who made the reunion so enjoyable. There are too many to name here but I have expressed our thanks to them individually.



THE FISKERTON MEMORIAL

**Still we stand by this mellowed stone
Beside a metalled road;
Each lost in thought though not alone
With views we share and hold.**

**This square cut block is ancient rock
From far Ancaster's quarry,
And yet what stories it keeps locked
About exploits of many.**

**This silent sentry cannot speak
Of those who came to serve;
It has no eyes the sky to seek
For those 'Failed to Return'.**

**It has no arms to beckon us
And does not give us smiles;
And yet it always welcomes us
Though we have travelled miles.**

**With a base so deep it cannot move
But still it can move others;
It stands tall here to represent
A brave band of lost brothers.**

**Therefore we honour all those lost
With veterans who remain;
We think of them as a valiant host
Whose memory we acclaim.**

**Thus we pause on this hallowed ground,
Symbol of the price of peace;
We treasure faces no longer found
And pray that wars shall cease.**

Padre Tony Buckler



The Airfield Memorial Service. In the left foreground is Geoff Stuffins who donated the land on which the Memorial stands

Photo; SAC Tregunno



The BBMF Dakota flies over Lincoln Cathedral

New 'Friend' Ralph Gray, who is an Australian living in the USA, attended the reunion together with his two charming daughters. Ralph showed an extraordinary desire to meet the 4T9ers by flying out of San Francisco on the Saturday and attending the reunion events before flying back to Philadelphia early Wednesday morning.

Ralph e-mailed his impressions to New Associate Member Graham Bairnsfather and myself. As explained in the Editorial, Graham is the nephew of late 49er Ralph Bairnsfather after whom Ralph is named.

I thought that it would be interesting to include extracts of his e-mail which highlights much of what we 'Poms' take for granted.

REUNION 2007, A VISITOR'S IMPRESSIONS

"I got back yesterday from the Reunion. It was brilliant. There were 82 at the main Dinner and I think 18xWW2 veterans and 2x50's veterans. While there is a lot to tell, until we meet in person, I'll just mention a few highlights:

I got in on Saturday night. On Sunday I went with my two daughters to the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede, right above the bend in the river where they signed the Magna Carta. It was an absolutely perfect day with unbroken clear views from Windsor Castle, past Heathrow to the center of London.

This memorial is well worth a visit and is right off the ring road around London (M25). It holds the names of the 22,000 aircrew and personnel casualties from WW2 who have no known grave. We then headed north up the A1, getting off at Stamford for a run through the smaller roads to Woodhall Spa and the Petwood Hotel.

Lincolnshire – heart of Bomber Country. While East Anglia was the home of the 8th Air Force, Lincolnshire was the home of one of the 3 main Groups of Bomber Command (5, I think). There are about 40 airfields spread around the area. We had the most perfect weather, three cloudless days in June.

The country was in fine form, there were huge tracts of wheat, barley, sugar beet and rape all over the place. It was green, green, green. Gently rolling hills (the Wolds) gave way on the southern side to the perfectly flat Fens. Rising out of this is the hill upon which Lincoln was built. This is a delightful town and its Cathedral is spectacular, some were saying it's the equal of York

The Petwood Hotel – look it up, it's a classic. You can almost see the ghostly images of Guy Gibson and Leonard Cheshire having a quick snort out on the terrace. It is set in beautiful grounds and was the perfect location for the Reunion, Hollywood would have had trouble coming close.

When you travel over later this year, a 2-3 day trip up this way will be very worthwhile....set aside a night in the Petwood and one in either Lincoln or Stamford. It may be a bit duller when you are here in November though.

Lancaster Flyover – on the Sunday afternoon at 5.15pm they had the BBMF (Battle of Britain Memorial Flight) Lancaster fly over in a figure of 8 centered on the hotel. What a sight....best was the sound though...you could hear it lurking just out of sight for two or three minutes then swing over the hotel....very, very moving for us that hadn't seen it before.



Eric Jones DFC lays the 49 Squadron Association Wreath

Photo; SAC Trugunno

Monday morning we went to a service at Fiskerton. The church here is small, but very nice. The local RAF station had sent a crew of about 20 over. When we pulled up in the coach they were lined up in ranks outside the church, very still, very straight. Somehow it was so moving and drew a gasp from us all on the coach. I think you could feel the continuity of experience that linked the old guys of 90 to those lined up who at 18 or so can only have been the same age as many of the "old and the bold" when they were here so many years before.

The church has a special section just for 49 Squadron. Here we had the chance to look at the book which lists all the 49' casualties. I have a picture of the 49 SA Chairman, Ted Cachart, holding the book open at the page with Ralph's name. This was very special.

I asked why everything seemed to be centered on Fiskerton and not on Fulbeck. The squadron moved from Fiskerton to Fulbeck at the end of September 1944. They thought that Ralph's crew were one of the first if not the first new crew to be added to 49' after the move. I was told that there is nothing left of Fulbeck now, so over the years Fiskerton has become the "home" of 49' activities and certainly the village has done them proud.

So after church we went out to the site of the Fiskerton station. About 200 yards of the old runway remains, right off the road. The farmer who owns the land, Geoff Stuffins, has set aside a small area for a memorial which, though small, is very powerful. We had about 100 people at the memorial for a wreath laying and a few words from the local minister. Then a wonderful minutes silence. This was a magical moment, dead quiet, when a skylark started up and went absolutely crazy singing its beautiful heart out. With the red poppies growing wild all around us, the breeze blowing warm from the west, the blue, blue sky above and brilliant green fields of wheat stretching out in all directions, for me it was the absolute highlight of a memorable time.

I had the chance to meet quite a number of very special people while at the Reunion, some I cover here relating to Ralph.....

I have mentioned Alan Parr...what a champ.

Ted Cachart, the Chairman, was tireless. In particular he gave us a great background commentary to the painting which I have for you. His story is amazing and he tells it well....my girls were entranced. He had a good feeling and sympathy about all the guys that didn't come back and you could talk from any angle about Ralph and the times. Everyone loves Ted.

John Ward, the Historian and Hon President, was a very thoughtful guy. I

really liked John. At our very first meeting he was genuinely interested about Ralph and asked several good questions. Next day he handed me several pages of closely typed notes. What he had done in the meantime was go to the 49 SA records and pull their copy of the Operational Record Book. This is the collection of formal debriefing notes taken after every raid.

He had looked thru and found all 13 pages where Stark's plane (with the crew's names) are listed. I have this for you. Though brief, 2-3 line entries, they seem to bring the whole thing alive. Their notes from the famous Dresden raid on 13th/14th February 1945...."Bombed from 13000 ft at 2222. Red glow seen through cloud" They left at 1813 and arrived back at 0408. The 13th page makes your heart give a lurch where the only comments are:

"1745 – MISSING WITHOUT TRACE".

Ken Read and John Aldridge – these two guys were bomb aimers at the same time as Ralph. John remembers his name, but didn't recognize from the photo. One of them remembered the plane and Starkie. These guys were right on the ball and were very happy to talk about any aspect of the times. I would love to visit with them in Norfolk and have an afternoon with them chatting over old times – they live not far apart. I would try and arrange that if I were you. They were most solicitous and really tried to look after me...what great blokes.

My brother sent across a book I am sure you have called "Chased by the Sun" by Hank Nelson, Allen & Unwin – the Australians in Bomber Command in WWII. I read this on the plane across to England and while there. It was a big help as it put a lot of the information in context. If you haven't already, get this. Interestingly, in there was a comment that, when parachuting out of a plane, it was the responsibility for crew forward to go back and make sure the rear gunner was free to jump as so often the turret got jammed...I am sure this was what led to Ralph going down with the plane because as you pointed out, on a Lanc he was closest to the forward exit.

Anyway, having started a correspondence with you which has told me quite a lot more, the depth of knowledge I was able bring and my enjoyment of the Reunion was multiplied many times over, so many thanks for helping me Graham. I am very glad Mum was proactive and contacted you, that really was a key moment in all of it. To think that 6 weeks ago I was nowhere, until today when I have so much...what a surprise life has in store eh?

After attending the Reunion I can say that Ralph and his crew were in great company and are not forgotten....but you do wonder if their likes will pass this way again."

As told by Ed Ijsbrandij on pages 8 and 9, the BBMF Lancaster flew over the crash site of Hampden P1206, marked by the National Flag of The Netherlands. This superb photograph was taken by Dick Schilder who, together with his brother, farms the area in which the crash site lies.

Photo; Dick Schilder



Below; The Memorial to Australians killed whilst flying from Dunholm Lodge. See page 4.

Photo; Courtesy William Farr School



HAMILTON, TORONTO, MAY 19th, 2007

By Jo Cockburn

You may recall that last year, Russ bought me my flight of a lifetime in the Lancaster, and that unfortunately the weather prevented it happening. However I am extremely proud to announce that I have now followed in the 49 Squadron footsteps, finally taken off, and achieved my ultimate dream!

We arrived at the Canadian Warplane Museum at 10am on an exceptionally bright sunny day, and given last August's weather, our hopes were high. The Lanc was out on display and the pilots were being put through their paces, they had to complete 3 successful take offs/landings to receive and update their accreditation to take passengers on board, and as this was the first members flight day, today was that day for them too.

We waited for what seemed like hours, getting more impatient, but watched some spectacular low level flypasts, and at last we were told to head for our briefing. We were to fly over Toronto, and as it was the first flight, we were to make some special fly pasts at local areas in the process.

Within minutes of being airborne, we were invited to leave our seats and join the pilots in the cockpit, which proved interesting. I hadn't anticipated a smooth flight, but I don't know that I was prepared to have to steady myself with every available fixed piece of fuselage, those four Merlins really made it rattle and vibrate. The only advantage I had was that I was the smallest passenger on board, and therefore able to climb over the main spar and move about with more ease than the other passengers. Before I knew it I was up the front and standing behind the two pilots. Standing up in the cockpit is a most exhilarating feeling, to feel the pure raw power of this incredible warplane, view its reflection in the water as we passed over Lake Ontario, and take in its great wing expanse is just breath taking. Watching at an airshow is fantastic, sitting inside it is a privilege, but to be part of a flight is a true honour.

We flew from Hamilton to Toronto, over Lake Ontario. In one direction you could vaguely see the mist from Niagara Falls. We flew around the CN tower which stands 1800ft high, and had two low level flypasts, approximately 100ft up, one over the small aerodrome on Stanley Island, based on Lake Ontario, that threw up some wake!!, and the other over Toronto airport. It seemed too surreal to be flying in a WW2 aircraft, and watching 747's land on nearby ground!. We waved to the control tower as we left and headed back towards Hamilton for one final low level fly past the main hangar so that our relatives could wave at us, and then we landed.

Whilst my flight was for pleasure, it did get exceptionally hot inside, and the noise was truly deafening, we were all reluctant to take advantage of wearing the ear defenders, but eventually we all succumbed. I now have a true picture of the cramped conditions that our service crews endured. I can imagine Uncle Will taking his pilot's seat, and Uncle Ted {Cachart} as W/OP, and my Uncle George taking his seat in that formidable gun turret, I really don't know how you did it for hours on end, but the stories you have told me now seem very real. (Not that I ever doubted them).

She landed as gracefully as she took off, not one bounce, and my grin spoke volumes when I climbed out. This was a truly amazing flight, I have found it extremely hard to tell as there is an emotional attachment, it was exciting yet humbling. I have more admiration now for those who served, and a far greater understanding than ever before. It is a story that I cannot wait to tell our baby when old enough to understand what a Lancaster is, and realize that he/she was onboard with me at the time.

Jo and Russ are expecting their first baby in November. We extend our best wishes to the three of them. Ed.

READER'S LETTERS

Bob Weekes e-mailed to say;

"The picture of the Squadron colours brings back the memories of when Princess Marina presented the colours at R.A.F. Marham. I'm not sure whether I had to collect them in the first place or whether I was responsible for looking after them after the ceremony-I do remember I had to get a new uniform for the occasion as mine was a trifle green and my cap badge had the king's crown.

P.O. Paul Deakin was the colours bearer and must have been one of the most junior aircrew."

Alasdair Campbell e-mailed;

"Your picture of the Cosford Cold War Museum reminded me that Hastings T5 TG511 also is in my logbook! I flew sorties in that aircraft on 9, 28, & 29th Aug 1963, whilst training as a Navigator (Radar) at the Bomber Command Bombing School (BCBS) at RAF Lindholme (Nr Doncaster). I flew in Valiant XD818 17, 19, 20 & 21st Aug 1964 and on 21st Sept 1964 when 49 Sqn. was based at RAF Marham

I really should pay the Museum a visit!

Were you able to find out why Valiant XD 818 displayed a Kings Crown when Queen Elizabeth was on the throne?"

That last point has been puzzling us for sometime. As well as XD818 carrying the King's Crown as currently displayed at Cosford, contemporary photographs show it displayed at the time of Operation Grapple. Strange! Ed.

Sadly, a number of reunion stalwarts were unable to attend this year due to ill health. Two such were Geoff and Madeleine Barnett. However, Geoff's family had arranged a surprise for him. He wrote;

".....Especially was the wonderful thought to arrange for the B.O.B. Spitfire to make seven complete and low level circuits of Duffield on Monday evening – just for us!"

That Monday was the evening of the Reunion Banquet. Ed.

Eric Jones wrote regarding the painting of his Lancaster JB421 K-King which he commissioned and which can now be seen at Elvington Museum;

".....Before I re-established contact with Ron [Ron Harris, Eric's F/E.], some years after the war, he was in the museum and saw the print on sale. He bought one but it completely baffled him as to how his aircraft got into the museum. There were of course six K-Kings on the squadron but I was able assure him, when we eventually met, that it was indeed our K-King."

Murray Duff, owner of The Clittaford Club in Plymouth (See membership List for full address), included in his letter;

".....I am still pulling pints down here in Plymouth and would welcome any 4T9ers of course."

From Dave Harrison I received the following;

".....As a point of interest I wonder if anyone can remember the motorbike, a James Captain two-stroke, that the C.O. used to leave outside the Flight Office when the squadron went on an 'OP'. On these occasions there was no shortage of willing fitters taking the bike for a 'flight test' along the peri track while the owner was out of the way. Bringing this useful machine out from the UK was no problem in the huge bomb bays of the Lincolns.

A point I would like to make is that D.A.Colquitt [issue 5 page 25] is quite correct in that Lincoln SX984 did 'go in' early in 1955 and certainly not June as printed. In fact by June '55 the ground crew were ready to return to the UK in the Hastings of Transport Command.

Also during the end of 49's last tour in East Africa the squadron did drop millions of leaflets together with the 1000lb and 500lb bombs and strafed the areas with Browning 0.5" machine guns!

The disappearance of an East African Airways DC3 Dakota was headline news especially because amongst its passengers was the wife of the company's M.D. Because we were 'stood down' at the time we were volunteered to search a vector of the flight path in another Dakota over Kilimanjaro mountain in a lot of turbulence. No joy but felt sick and upset the trim and the pilot by using the bog in the tail.

After a week the wreckage was found in a ravine by a Gloster Meteor and his G24 camera on Kilimanjaro on the flightpath from Dar-es-Salaam, no survivors."

The ongoing matter of The Bomber Command Memorial caused Padre Tony Buckler to write;

“The Bomber Command Memorial Stone has become the subject of heated discussion. We went to see it last October and were surprised to find it half hidden by church furniture. My quiet word with the steward who escorted us to the site has obviously made no difference. Two more Squadron Associations were here last weekend and their spokesmen have taken the Dean to task for the seeming disrespect. He, of course apologised, said none was interested, said that there was nowhere else to put the furniture during restoration (!!) and anyone can see it on request. Both Radio Lincolnshire and Look North (our local television programme) have taken it up. We do hope that something is done such as raising the stone on a plinth or putting it on a wall. The present situation is unacceptable to all red blooded ex service people!”

Dot Smith tells me that , due to the number of complaints received, access has now been made much easier. Ed.

New Member, Fred Vening, Secretary of The 49 Megaton Club, sent me the following which is a letter that he gave to The RAF Museum, Cosford;

“We all know why V Bombers are white - I hope, but the eight aircraft specially modified for Grapple were whitened even more. Coverings were applied to all the usual black portions and even joining seals were white, Vickers being particularly specific about maintaining the .003” thickness of paint and stipulating regular and systematic cleaning overall.

Some of our aircraft were whiter than white and the ground crew were responsible on a Trade basis for the cleanliness of particular areas. I think the Armourers were excluded probably because, untidy creatures that they are, they caused most of the grime anyway. So, armed with mops and pails, the heroic ground crews regularly slaved away to maintain each aircraft’s pristine condition. But there was a secret ingredient, and Ken Hubbard warned us, it must remain a secret; presumably supplies coming direct from the manufacturer in unmarked vans at the dead of night.

But now that each V bomber is seen here in close proximity, we feel that 818, surely the most significant machine of the three, and as the flagship of the great white fleet the fairest of them all, must be maintained in the condition to which it was accustomed during its time at Wittering during the Cold War period so dramatically represented in this fine display at Cosford. To assist you in this task, now so much has been revealed of that period fifty years ago, may I pass on to you the long held secret of our success.....DAZ .”

Fred then presented the museum with a packet. He later told me that XD818 was glossy white for the nuclear trials, quite understandably as it was reflective not absorbent, whereas, unlike at Hendon, it is displayed at Cosford in matt white. Ed.

Whilst not a 'Reader's' letter I thought that this is the best place to include the following. On hearing of Bill Carman's death I e-mailed former Luftwaffe night fighter pilot, Peter Spoden whom Bill had befriended during his visit to Germany (See The 4T9er issue 5). Peter e-mailed this reply;

"I just received your message and I am deeply sorry and shocked by Bill's sudden death. When we met in Heusenstamm he was in good spirits and we both understood ourselves right away.

In Germany we say: " Soldaten sterben nicht, sie gehen ein in die Ewigkeit", like " soldiers never die , they fade away in eternity".

May Bill rest in peace! My deep regrets to the family.

Peter Spoden, former nightfighter NJG 6."

I recommend Peter's book, 'Enemy In The Dark' in The Fortunes of War series. ISBN 1 84145 032 4, which gives a fascinating account of life 'on the other side'.Ed.

Pete Williams e-mailed;

"Nice to see the Grapple piece in the May mag (the armourers hoisted the bomb in from the top by the way and in the case of the Blue Danube bombs there was only a fraction of an inch to spare once inside). A lot of our members were unhappy about the condition of XD818, certainly not as good as it was at Hendon, and there were some reservations about the concept of the Cold War Exhibition. As someone said it's not quite good enough to travel miles to see a Canberra (say) only to find it's strung up in the roof! Personally I thought there was too much in the place and the exhibits were overshadowed by the cleverness of it all. Still it's a great visitor attraction and perhaps that's what it's all about. Hope you had a good get-together at Petwood."

In addition to his thoughts on the reunion published earlier in this issue Ralph Gray remarked;

".....The only other comment I'd like to make is that I was really impressed by how we were treated by the veterans. I know its their Association, the 49SA, but really they are the special ones...instead, they treated us as the special guests, and tried to make sure we were happy and had all the information we were after....what a bunch of guys and gals eh, so thoughtful and warm towards others still, after all they have already given."

During a telephone conversation Stewart Keay told me;

"I was the first NCO to fly as Co-pilot in Valiants. I was at Gaydon when senior officers, who did not have a complete crew, arrived to train on the Valiant. I therefore flew with them."

Stewart previously flew Lincolns. Ed

CAN YOU HELP?

Regarding the items salvaged from Andrew MacDonald's Great Uncle's Lancaster, (See May issue of The 4T9er), Stewart Keay phoned to say that he has a piece from a Lincoln very similar to the piece on the bottom row of the photograph immediately above the 'Chuckles' heading. He says that it could be from the astrodome "Where the navigator hung the 'Sun Gun'.

That's sextant to us landlubbers. Whilst at the reunion I was talking with John Aldridge and Harry Cowan. When I mentioned the sextant Harry, ex navigator, was most emphatic, "You never used one of those things if you could possibly avoid it!" Ed.

From the Editor;

We are currently assisting The Fiskerton Village Hall in decorating the walls of The 49 Squadron Lounge with pictures. These are generally prints of 49 Squadron aircraft or 'types'. Has anyone run out of wall space and would be willing to provide a picture on indefinite loan? I will provide the necessary transport over any reasonable distance.

New Associate Member, Graham Bairnsfather e-mailed from Australia;

"On page 489 in 'The Dog' there is a photo of a Lanc. and part of the notation states '.....displaying the yellow gas disc'. Would you know what this signifies as quite a few of Bruce's photos have this marking on the nose of aircraft?"

Bruce Bairnsfather was in 460 Squadron. Our Researcher, Colin Cripps, suggests that the disc might signify that the tyres are inflated with helium which, being lighter than air allowed 70 kgs of extra bomb load. Can anyone confirm this? Ed.

Our Archivist was studying a logbook and found the following entries in the 'Duty' column. Can anyone elaborate?;

Air to sea	100	-
FRBT	200	20%
FRUT	200	16%
FRQT	200	6%
FRBQST	-	-

We suspect that the first two and the last letters stand for ;
Fired Rounds.....Target, but do you know different?

New Member Robert Hogg e-mailed to ask;

Does anyone know the whereabouts of his pilot Tony Eyre? Robert and Tony flew with 49 Squadron between March 1942 and April 1943.

From the Editor;

IS THERE ANYONE OUT THERE? In the last issue our chairman asked about the yellow disc, level with the pilot's head, at the rear of the Lancaster armour plate. So far there has been a deafening silence. Someone must know!

From the Editor;

During a conversation with Fred Vening, he told me that it has been the practice to sing the 49 Squadron song, "Lloyd George knows my Father" at all Megaton Club reunions. Although I know the song well it is the first time that I have heard of a connection with 49'. Can anyone cast any light on this and how it originated?

Graham Bairnsfather asks if anyone knows the significance of markings which resemble sacks which are included alongside the ops score on his uncle's Lancaster. (This was not a 49 Squadron aircraft). Could they indicate trips during Operation Manna?

Ken Read called to say that he has been given an example of the Canadian stamp depicting a Lancaster thus reducing his 'want list' to three. You may remember our centre page spread of his Lancaster postage stamps in the May issue of The 4T9er.



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It is the evening of June 26th and I have just had a chat with a very excited Geoff Stuffins whose family bought him a flight in the East Kirkby Spitfire. This aircraft is a two seat TR 9 and is flown by former BBMF pilot and C.O. Paul Day whom I believe has more hours on Spits than any other current pilot. Geoff asked Paul Day to write in his gliding logbook, 'Needs more practice'. Subtle as a brick Geoff, but hope that you get it!

A DAY THAT I SHALL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

By Geoff Stuffins

"I put on my parachute and helmet then climbed into the Spitfire and was strapped in. We were then towed out by a tractor to the take-off point.

Paul started the Merlin which slowly started to rotate then kicked back. He tried it again and the Merlin burst into life. The Spitfire shuddered like a jelly then settled down. It purred like a tigercat then Paul opened the throttle and like some ferocious beast the Merlin roared pulling the aircraft down the runway. Like a great magnet pulling at my back I was pushed to the back of the seat. The Spitfire rumbled down the runway for a short time then we were airborne. We climbed to 3000 feet, I could see Coningsby airfield just in front and then we turned left.

Then, as Paul had said at the briefing, the stick wobbled from side to side and Paul came over the intercom, 'You have control'. This was one of the greatest moments of my life, I was flying a Spitfire!

I did some tight turns and saw the short wings pointing at Spilsby. It was like we were stationary and Spilsby was rotating beneath us. I did more climbs and dives, pulling 'g'. I could see Lincoln Cathedral and then Boston Stump. Paul had told us at the briefing how to roll a Spitfire but I chickened out.. Paul then took over and did some tight turns, several rolls and quite a few aerobatics.

We went north of Mablethorpe and flew down the beach at about 150 feet at high speed. It seemed nearly as fast as you could say them; Mablethorpe, Sutton on Sea, Chapel St. Leonards, Ingoldmells and Skegness. I could see people taking photos, some looking through binoculars and some waving. I waved back, this is ME in that Spitfire. At Skegness Paul climbed then pointed the Spit at Tesco's. The guns triggers were on the stick. I clicked the safety catch off and hit the button, the guns were 'jammed'.

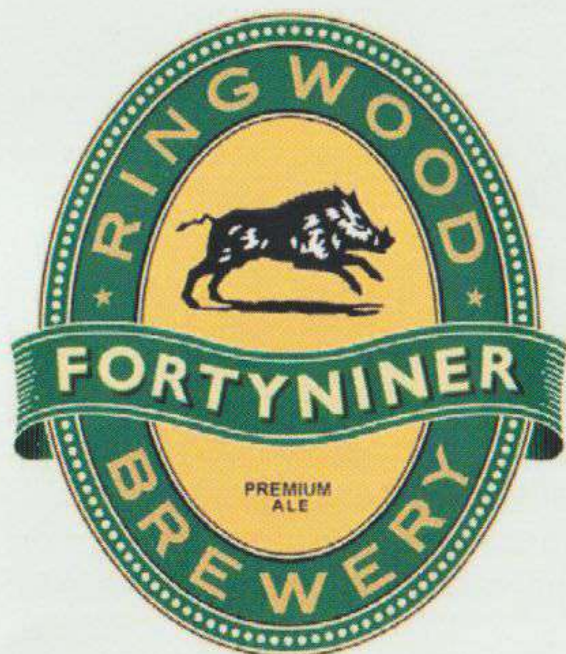
We did some low flying on the Wolds and in and around the trees. We then returned to the airfield and beat it up. We climbed steeply and finished in a roll whilst climbing. We did this twice.

Paul signed my gliding logbook; 'Must do it again and again'. What a souvenir, what a great day, one that I will remember for the rest of my life!"



Geoff Stuffins flies in the back seat of East Kirkby based Spitfire TR 9.

Photo courtesy of Geoff Stuffins



**Ringwood Brewery
kindly donated eight
packs of**

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**Premium Ale to our
Reunion raffle**

**It is a beer worthy of
the name**



Edited by Alan Parr

Produced by Ted Cachart

Photographs by Alan Parr unless stated otherwise

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