

# The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine  
February 2008 Issue 9**



**THE ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL  
THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM  
ALREWAS, STAFFORDSHIRE**

# IN MEMORIAM

**WELCOME TO:**

**NEW MEMBER**

**Jim Lowry**

**NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**Madeleine Barnett Keith Tarrant**

**NEW FRIENDS**

**Georgina Crookes Maurice Clapham**

**Daryl Amanda Browning**



Janet Norman, wife of our Archivist Ed, bought the above sweat shirt as a Christmas present. As Janet has arranged for the artwork to be prepared these shirts are now available at a very competitive price. The example shown is in Navy blue but a range of colours and sizes is available. Quote Ref: MIL/49 SQN Assoc

Price; £15.95 plus VAT and postage

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## EDITORIAL

Barbara and I sincerely thank all of you who sent us Christmas and New Year greetings. You are a lovely lot. Much as we would wish to return your kindness individually we regret that it is just not practical. Our thanks also go to those of you who have sent the Association donations, books of stamps, letters or e-mails. We are also grateful for your memoirs which will be lodged in our archive as well as extracts being shown on the website and in The 4T9er.

It was with regret that I learned of the death of Associate Member Joy Stopani, the widow of Sgt Jock Stopani who was w/op in Tommy Taylor's crew.

Our numbers are still growing and we start by welcoming new Member Jim Lowry. Jim, an aircraft electrician, was posted to Fiskerton in mid 1943 and remained with the squadron through Fulbeck and Syerston. He was involved with the camp entertainment, possibly being best known for his monologues.

Welcome also to new Associate Members Madeleine Barnett and Keith Tarrant. Some of you know Madeleine as she has attended many reunions with her late husband Geoff. Keith is the cousin of Sgt. George Bicknell who was rear gunner in F/Sgt. D Stanton's crew, lost 23rd September 1943.

New Friend, Maurice Clapham, 'looks after' four WWII graves in his local churchyard. One of them, F/Sgt JW Petch of 49 Squadron, prompted him to contact us and after buying 'The Dog' he developed a keen interest in the squadron. Although only a boy at the time he knew F/Sgt. Petch. Georgina Crookes was 'Mine host' at the Carpenters Arms, Fiskerton, when the Association first started visiting there during reunions. Georgina says, "I feel a part of it with you all meeting at my pub.....also I met people from all over who came back to the village at other times." Mandy Browning is the daughter of Bernard Browning who navigated 26 ops up to 1st May 1945.

In October last year HM The Queen, accompanied by HRH Prince Philip and The Prince of Wales, dedicated the Armed Forces Memorial at The National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. This commemorates the 16,000 service personnel who have died since 1945. On a cold and overcast 27th November I paid a visit, with considerably less fuss, to take photographs for The 4T9er. These can be seen on the cover and on pages 16 and 17. The six 49ers were killed 19th February 1955 when their Lincoln clipped a building during a low pass. They are buried in The Military Section of The Nairobi City Cemetery.

I am preparing a feature on the Lincoln days, for the May issue of The 4T9er, and if anyone wishes to submit material it will be gratefully received.

Whilst at the Arboretum I made enquiries about any 49 Squadron memorials that might exist there. I was told that the only dedication to this squadron was arranged by a private individual. A sapling oak tree carries a small plaque with

the inscription, '49 Squadron, January to March 1945'. On enquiring further, the Administrator, Mr Graham Nolan, told me that the pathway through the Cloister from the Visitor Centre to the Chapel is to be relaid. In the process of doing this they are laying paviors, approximately 9 inches square engraved with dedications. At a cost of £80 I have commissioned a pavior with the words;

## **49 BOMBER SQUADRON RAF**

Thus the squadron, those who served, and in particular those who died, are commemorated in a high profile area of The National Memorial Arboretum.

I have written previously about Malcolm Brooke's *magnum opus*, the 49 Squadron Website. Last Autumn Malcolm flew to Berlin to photograph the Berlin War Cemetery and the headstones of the 49ers buried there. He has kindly taken time off from the website to write a piece on that visit. His evocative and moving account together with some beautiful photography appears on pages 7, 8 & 9. To illustrate the fruits of his labour to those who have not been able to visit the site we show a typical Roll of Honour entry on pages 10 & 11. As well as the Roll of Honour the site also covers memorials and cemeteries associated with the squadron together with picture galleries of WWI, II and post 1945, memories of former serving members plus a squadron history and details of our association.

David Beesley was a war baby who never knew his father. After many years of searching the pieces slowly came together. David tells his story on page 18.

I am grateful to former WAAF, Vi Winters, for drawing my attention to a plug for St. Dunstan's in the WAAF News. I subsequently contacted St Dunstan's regarding the eligibility of those ex-service personnel who, although not blinded on active service, are now suffering sight loss. Many people, not necessarily elderly, suffer from eye diseases such as macular degeneration and may therefore benefit from the services provided by St Dunstan's. See page 22 for an extract from their literature.

I am privileged to read many items connected with 49 Squadron but occasionally a piece comes along that is quite exceptional. One such is the last letter written by a gunner to his four year old daughter. A transcript appears on page 29 and all I can say is, if you are not moved by it then you have no heart.

Over the past few issues we have spent time in focusing on the recovery of Hampden P1206 from the field in Holland. There is another aspect of this operation that must not be forgotten. For as long as they can remember, Dick and Annet Schilder have lived with the aircraft and two of the crew buried in the field just behind their farmhouse. The only tangible reminder was a cross, inscribed with the details of the aircraft and two missing crewmen, that was

located at the edge of the field adjacent to the crash site. Thanks to their efforts all that now remains is that cross. I e-mailed them, on behalf of all 4T9ers, to thank them and to acknowledge their essential part in the recovery. We must not overlook the personal feelings of these kind people. Dick's reply appears on page 28.

Although I have no details at the time of writing, there are plans to erect a permanent memorial near the crash site utilising the propeller from the Hampden. I also understand that the installation of a memorial to the crew of P1206, in Scampton Church, is at an advanced stage. At the time of closing for press, details are still awaited of the return to Scampton of the majority of the recovered aircraft. We are also awaiting the release of the funeral details.

Bill Pyrah has written an account of his days as a rigger on Hampdens at Scampton. His most interesting tale commences on page 12.

Former Lancaster pilot, Eric Jones, phoned to tell me that he had made a flight to Berlin in December last year. He has since submitted an account of this fascinating trip which can be seen on pages 20 and 21.

Our work on the website, photographing all the headstones relating to 49ers that we can, has focused my thoughts on the sad state of some graves in churchyards. Whilst this does not apply to all, some are kept in immaculate condition, a great many are overgrown and neglected. It is easy to understand that bereaved parents and relatives would have wanted their boy, or girl, to be buried in their local churchyard, nevertheless it has resulted in some of their graves virtually disappearing. This is made all the more apparent when one considers the immaculate condition of virtually all military cemeteries. Most of us who have visited churchyards to take photographs for the website have experienced the disappointment of not being able to locate the grave in question, particularly if it has a civil headstone. Is there a military grave in disrepair in your local churchyard? Whether a 49er or not why not adopt it? It holds someone's lost son or daughter and it takes very little time and effort.

Whilst on the subject of the website photographs I acknowledge the assistance given to us by many cemetery workers and officials. In particular I must mention Mr Sean Holloway, Operations Manager of Islington and Camden Cemeteries, who, on being told by Malcolm what we are doing, went out and photographed two cemeteries for us.

In December's FlyPast magazine I read an article about a Lancaster sortie to Pilzen which said that the Flight Engineer noted a slight change in the noise of the engines which told him that they had crossed the coast and they were now over the sea. He maintained that this happened with Merlin engines but not Bristol radials. Come on, pull the other one! One worthy of the Line Book I suggest....unless you know different!

Also in FlyPast was some good and bad news regarding the Shackleton. The bad news is that the airworthy example in the USA has made its last flight. The good news is that the South African 'Shack' is about to return to the air after a major overhaul. Sadly this is now the only airworthy example in the world.

At Christmas we try to focus on the good in our fellow man (I am typing this on Boxing Day), then I opened FlyPast and read that some low life scum has stolen the Mosquito propeller from the International Mosquito Air and Ground Crew Memorial in London Colney. Not, perhaps, a Christian description of my fellow man but that is how I feel. Having just typed Sgt. John Ellenor's last letter (page 29) where he talks of fighting and dying for a world that is clean and decent, it makes one want to weep!

Our Chairman has recently appeared on TV-again! Following the publication of his autobiography, 'Ted the Lad', he was invited to give an interview which went out on Central TV-East on Thursday 3rd January. He tells me that it was also broadcast the following night in the Yorkshire Calendar programme. On Monday 14th January he was interviewed live on Radio Derby.

How about ordering a copy of the book from your local library? As our Association details are given prominent mention it would expose us to a wider audience and hopefully, bring in new members. Details are; 'Ted the Lad' by Ted Cachart. Published by Jote Publications ISBN-978-0-9532252-3-1

Would you please note that the scheduled publication months of The 4T9er are: February, May, August and November. Due to the vagaries of the British postal service your copy may go astray. If you have not received The 4T9er by the end of the aforementioned months then please contact me.

Well I did say book without delay. In spite of me booking two more rooms than last year the Petwood' accommodation for the reunion was booked up within eight days! However, there are still a few seats available at the banquet. The continued popularity of our reunion is well illustrated by the following statistic: Taking one person per night as 1 UNIT, last year we had 143 UNITS. For 2008 we have bookings for 193 UNITS.

Enclosed with this magazine is a census form. It applies only to Full Members and Associates. There are a number people who may not be living at the address held by us or sadly, may not be living at all. It is essential that you respond by returning the form if you wish to continue your membership.

As always my sincere thanks are due to Barbara for her ever present and essential support and to my colleagues 'The Back Page Boys' for their amazing achievements. Their dedication to their various responsibilities cannot be overstated and they still find time to write articles for The 4T9er.

**'Til the next time.**

# RETURN TO BERLIN

by Malcolm Brooke

On the fortunately rare occasions when a case of “man flu” required me to take to my bed I would try to make the hours pass by more quickly by listening to recordings of radio programs my father had taped years ago.

My favourite was “Return to Berlin” by Winfred Vaughan Thomas. In this story he compares a current day commercial flight to Berlin with his experiences as a BBC correspondent on board Lancaster “F for Freddie” from 207 Squadron based at RAF Langer in Nottinghamshire. He had been chosen by the BBC to record a commentary of a raid to the “Großstadt” on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1943.

During the flight the calm voices of the crew are interrupted by the sound of machine guns as they are attacked and subsequently fight off a German night-fighter. The whole recording is one of the most evocative pieces of reporting I have ever heard and it never fails to impress me.

Winfred’s enthusiastic descriptions were running through my mind as the modern Jet2 Boeing 737 from Manchester descended into thick cloud as we approached Berlin. With modern navigational technology and the demise of the Allied air corridors to Berlin this was an utterly routine flight.

It was my own “Return to Berlin”. I had lived there for one momentous year between 1993 & 1994 when I worked for Service Children’s Education at Charlottenburg Primary School. I filled that year in Berlin, before the Allied Forces finally left, wandering the streets armed with my copy of Tony le Tissier’s wonderful book “Berlin Then and Now”. I stood in the square where the “non-German” books were burnt in May 1933, I found the location of the Sportpalast where Goebbels delivered his “total war” speech in 1943, I stood on the summit of the remains of one of Berlin’s massive flak towers in Humboldthain Park and tried to play back in my mind how it all must have been “at the time.”

Now I was returning to photograph the 49 Squadron headstones, for the association’s website, at the British Military Cemetery on the Heerstraße.

With pinpoint accuracy, the Jet2 plane cleared the cloud and landed smoothly at Schönefeld (the old airfield of the DDR). The connections into the city centre must be some of the best (and cheapest) in the world. I chose a Deutsche Bahn express and elected to dismount at the Friedrichstraße Bahnhof.

Berlin and its history have always excited me and here I was at one of the most significant railway stations in what was East Berlin. The empty building with the sloping roof next to the station was the clearing house for a select number of elderly East Germans who were to be allowed to visit the west.

I walked to my hotel and it seemed that every building, every street corner reeked of historical significance. Here was Goering's Air Ministry building, the street to the right was the location of the Reich's Chancellery and the next turn led to the former Prinz Albrechtstraße where the Gestapo had its HQ. It was a walk through history right up to the point of reaching the hotel at the edge of Potsdamer Platz with a view of the ruined façade of the Anhalter Bahnhof.

The next morning dawned and it was a beautiful day. After an early breakfast I headed for the cemetery arriving there a little after 9am. The sun shone through the trees which were painted with the most fabulous autumn colours and the air was still with a kind of silence that you can only experience in the middle of a big city!



Photos with this article; Courtesy Malcolm Brooke

I had prepared myself well with all the grave references taken from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's website and it was technically easy to locate and photograph the required headstones. However, there was something about the setting and the texts written on many of the headstones that made it difficult to remain sanguine about the task.

“Had you known this boy of ours, you would have loved him too.”

“Softy ye winds o’er his dear young head.”

“It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.”





I knew I had one more headstone to photograph and I left this until the end. Tragically, when I lived in Berlin, our newly born daughter was killed in an accident and is buried in the civilian area of the Military Cemetery. It was little consolation at the time but I always remember my father saying that she was in good company. Today, many years later, I felt almost proud that she lay within this beautiful cemetery.....and she is in good company.

At that point a gentle breeze moved through the cemetery and the air filled with hundreds of golden brown leaves which spiralled down from on high. I had the photographs I required and it was time to return home.

Like Winfred Vaughan Thomas, I too had returned to Berlin.



## Roll of Honour



Name	SMITH
First names	Edward P
Rank	F/O
Service	RNZAF
Service number	428798
Crew position	Pilot
Age	27
Date of death	21/02/45
Cemetery	Reichswald Forest cemetery Kleve Germany





21/22 February, 1945; GRAVENHORST (MITTELLAND CANAL):  
 A force of 165 Lancasters led by 12 Mosquitoes (all 5 Group) sallied forth once again in an attempt to breach the Mittelland Canal. This time in clear visibility the attack was successful. The second aircraft reported missing contained F/O Ed Smith RNZAF (NG327) and crew. Tragically none of them survived this, their fourth operation. Four members are buried along with their 27 year-old skipper in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, whilst the bomb aimer, F/O Edwin Hook is at rest in the Durnbach War Cemetery.

Lancaster NG327 (EA-K)  
 F/O E.P. Smith RNZAF Pilot (Killed)  
 Sgt J. Corbett F/E (P.o.W.)  
 F/S J. Newby NAV (Killed)  
 P/O E.J.F. McCarthy W/AG (Killed)  
 Sgt C.F.P. Burridge A/G (Killed)  
 F/O E.F. Hook B/A (P.o.W. died in captivity)  
 P/O R.J. Simpson RCAF A/G (Killed)  
 Crew on their 4th operation

This page from our website, taken at random, illustrates a completed page from the Roll of Honour. It is our aim to include, as a minimum, similar information for every entry. For those who have no known grave we will show a picture of The Runnymede Memorial. This is a mammoth task, there are 907 entries, but we are making good progress. If you can help with photographs it will be greatly appreciated.

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

## **ELEVEN CRAMMED MONTHS AT SCAMPTON 1940/41.**

**By Bill Pyrah**

Norman Moody (from Skegness) and I were posted to 49 Squadron from St. Athan in June 1940. He was ACI Flight Mechanic, and I was ACI Flight Rigger. We reported to the Engineer Officer, W/O 'Tug' Wilson, noted for his exceptional ability to keep his balance on his 3 speed bike whilst in bottom gear and pedals revolving at about 3 or 4 rpm. We were ordered to report to Chief of Maintenance Flight whose first words were, "Straight from school, eh? Well forget everything you've learned, you start all over again here!" Our first job was to overhaul a refuelling bowser. Lids off top and bottom, draining off any fuel, and leaving the tank open to disperse fumes. Norman did the engine at one end and I did the valves at the other end. Then inside to clean and repaint. We were glad that was over.

Then we were assigned to different crews to do major inspections and repairs. The first really big job was to remove all fuel tanks from all Hampdens and replace with self-sealing tanks. Those removed were placed in Stores. Some time later we were expecting a Royal visitor to present gongs to aircrew of 5 Group. No.1 hangar (49 Maintenance Flight) was the chosen venue. The hangar had to be emptied of everything, and it was. A petrol bowser was brought in to spray the floor with petrol, and we had to scrub the floor with those yard wide sweepers, then squeegee the muck out. The bowser was brought back for a repeat performance, and the floor was then covered with dry cement and swept once more. Then some of the redundant fuel tanks were fetched from Stores and arranged in two lines down the centre of the hangar floor, and we were told to get hammer and chisel, or an axe from an aircraft, and make several holes in each tank. Each tank was adorned with a printed card with, "Port outer tank removed from aircraft so-and-so after raid on so-and-so." You can imagine we were absolutely flabbergasted!! Where I was when the visit occurred I can't recall, but I was not on Camp.

Shortly after that I was transferred to A Flight, and assigned as Second Rigger on EA-B, which was sited on the tarmac behind the rifle butts. I can only remember two of the ground crew. The First Rigger was Jock Campbell, and one of the Engine bods was Ginger Bradley (from Scunthorpe). Now Jock had a girl friend in Lincoln, and also a 598cc Green Panther motorbike and had modified the engine to run on aviation fuel. Hampdens used 100 Plus octane, and that bike could certainly shift. Jock taught me to ride the bike, and if he was on Dunholme Guard (those days kites not on Ops were split between dispersal and Dunholme) and I was free, Jock would go in the gharry to Dunholme and I would ride the bike over and pick him up. He would then take me to Nettleham (my home) and carry on to see his girl. Later he would pick me up and head for Dunholme, letting me return to camp on the bike.

Then Jock was posted, and I became First Rigger on EA-B. I can remember the pilot's name. He was Sgt. Morphett, a tall beanpole of a bloke with a real Oxbridge accent. The first time I saw him, I thought, "I wouldn't trust him with a baby in a pram in Lincoln High Street, let alone a Hampden!!" But he could certainly handle a Hampden!!! [*He completed his tour with 49' but was KIA 9.4.42 with 83 Squadron. Ed.*] I often flew on airtest in the afternoon if the kite was on ops that night. I always sat in the nose, strapped to the Navigator's seat. His favorite route was to the east of Lincoln, down on to the Witham at river bank height for a few miles, then switch to the railway lines, straight through Bardney railway station, bank to port and head for the tall chimney at the fruit canning factory, climbing up and over at the last minute. Then after a bit of hedge hopping, back to base. A real thrill believe me!!!!

At about this time accommodation on the camp was getting very tight, and billeting out was brought in. 49 Maintenance Flight ground crews were billeted in Welton village and 83's were at Nettleham. Handy for me!! If I was free at night I used to jump on 83's bus (I knew one or two of their blokes), spend time with my girl friend, and sleep at home, then walk down to the village green at about 7am to get the bus back to camp. It was grrrrreat!!

Bomber Command issued a directive that Night Bombers were to have undersides resprayed a new colour - Midnight Blue. It became known that I could use a spray gun and I was detailed to respray all A Flight's kites. Each plane was taken into No.2 hangar in turn and I resprayed the underside accordingly. One morning, I was under the port wing of a Hampden spraying away happily when suddenly there was a deep rumbling, a helluva big bang, and muck and stuff came tumbling from the roof of the hangar. Before I could realise what was going on the air raid siren went and we all made for the shelters. After a few minutes the All Clear sounded and we returned to duty to find that windows had been shattered, doors had been blown off, and things were a bit untidy. We were told later that the Padre had been to the bomb dump to see a Corporal Armourer Fitter on a personal matter. The fitter had been sitting astride a mine doing something to the fuses, and that's all that was known. At lunch time, as we went to the cookhouse, we scanned DRO's as usual, and there was an order "This morning's occurrence will NOT, repeat NOT, repeat NOT be discussed with anyone outside the camp". That evening, I boarded 83's bus for Nettleham as usual and got off at The Green, just as Charlie Trott's bus from Lincoln arrived. I saw my dad get off the bus and we walked home together. On the way he said, "What's all this about the bomb dump at Scampton going up?" Of course, I replied, "How the hell did you know about that?" Apparently, some Sgt. aircrew who had previously worked at Robey's, had paid a visit to see some of his mates, and told all about it. So much for DRO's.

One morning, after I'd spent the night at home, while Dad and I were having breakfast we were listening to the radio about raids that the RAF had carried out during the night. It was reported that an aircraft returning from a raid had spotted German soldiers on early morning parade and had decided to shoot them up. I thought, "mad b- - - r", and forgot about it. I arrived back at camp and went to B Bertie to do the usual DI, and, on climbing up into the pilot's seat, found empty .303 shells and belt links all over the place. Now the pilot had a fixed Browning .303 gun on top of the nose section and under it were two boxes, one for the ammo belt and the other for empty shells and belt links. Closer inspection revealed that the belt box was empty and the empties box was overflowing. It took me almost two hours to ensure that I'd picked up all the shells and links. The aircrew wireless operator appeared. He wanted to check something to do with the radio set. I asked him, "What the hell was Morph doing last night?" He asked why, and I told him what a job I'd had. He laughed, and said, "You know what a mad sod he is", and repeated the story I'd heard on the radio.

We had to do a mod on the Hampdens which involved the bottom gunner's position. The 'windows' had to be removed and replaced with a retractable cupola to give more room for maneuvering the twin K guns. I must admit, that was a bit tricky.

Christmas 1940 was memorable. We'd had a show put on by Ralph Reader and his Gang Show and afterwards Ralph Reader joined other officers dishing up the grub to us. And we got a present too. Apparently, every squadron using Handley Page aircraft were supplied with a packet of 24 Kensitas cigarettes for everyone on the strength.

The winter of 40/41 was a very bad one. We awoke one morning to find that it had snowed like hell during the night and we found that the narrow roads at the back of the camp had been blocked by four or five feet of snow. Now some of the aircrew of the camp were billeted at Carlton Manor and were stuck there because of the snow so the powers that be had about a couple of hundred of us erks out with shovels digging a way through to Carlton. While we were shoveling away, B Flight Commander, S/L 'Tubby' Lowe, decided to take a Hampden up. We were not surprised because he was another of the MAD brigade. We understood he was the only pilot to have done two consecutive loops in a Hampden!! After the snow had gone the all grass airfield was too soggy for fully loaded Hampdens to take off. Some bod with scrambled egg on his hat decided that it would be a good idea to use the kites as interceptor nightfighters, so we had to cut a nine inch square port in each side of the fuselage, about halfway between the w/op and the pilot, and fit a single K gun mount. I can't remember a Hampden being used in that capacity.

Towards the end of my stay at Scampton, a twin engined enemy bomber was in

difficulty and tried to make an emergency landing on the airfield. In those days we had Ground Gunners (later to form the RAF Regiment) for airfield defence, and as the enemy plane made his approach they opened up with their ancient machine guns and blew the cockpit area to smithereens. On the day that I left Scampton for overseas there were four coffins draped in swastika flags drawn up outside the guardroom ready for the funeral later that day. They were buried in Scampton village churchyard. Some time after I'd arrived in Canada my parents sent me a copy of the Lincs. Echo, reporting on riots in Scampton. The Vicarage was stoned and windows broken by the villagers who objected to Germans being buried in their churchyard.

Another incident has just come to mind. We were housed in old wooden huts opposite what was then the Sergeants Mess. I must admit that our hut was an absolute tip. On the floor there was about a square yard of brown lino left; the window panes were 'pebble' glass painted black on the outside as a permanent blackout; panes which had been broken were replaced with plywood; the slow combustion stove in the middle was as rusty as hell and the concrete base on which it stood was covered by a heap of ash. One Sunday morning we were off duty for some reason, about 9.30 we were slowly rising out of our beds when the rear door of the hut burst open to a cry of, "Attention! Orderly Officer". We couldn't believe it no-one like that ever entered the huts! There stood the Station Warrant Officer and a red faced young Pilot Officer wearing the red sash. The SWO's face was a dark purple. I thought it was going to burst. "Clean this, polish that, get rid of this, tidy up that, and so on". "What unit are you?" said the P.O. Someone murmured, "49 A Flight sir". The reply came from both at the same time-"Sorry!" smartly about turned and walked out.

I've been trying to recall names of mates of those days and have managed to come up with a few. The first three were, I believe, on B Flight and they were posted to Canada with me. There was Ron (Tubby) Breeds, a regular FM from Portsmouth, Benny Curtis from Bradford and Chic Craig from Dundee. Blokes I remember from our hut were; Ken Hall (Art Master at Truro Cathedral School), Bill Cockcroft (Ex Grimsby Town goalkeeper and also keeper for the Squadron team), Charlie Fussie noted for his unique piano playing and a chap called Leigh, who had worked in an aircraft factory and who used to annoy us early morning with the slap slap slap slap when honing his new fangled Rolls razor. Those are the only ones that come to mind. I remember seeing on the web the name of a FIIA who seemed to be at Scampton at the time I was there. It said he worked on Hampden EA-A which would be A Flight. His name David Pugh? I guess he would probably know some of the names and events that I've mentioned.

Sorry! There is another name I should have mentioned of course, F/Lt. "Babe" Learoyd VC, pilot of EA-M.









**THE ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL  
THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM  
ALREWAS, STAFFORDSHIRE**

Six 49ers are among the 16,000 names of those who have given their lives since 1945. The six are the crew of Lincoln SX984 which crashed in Kenya, 19th February 1955.

Chillingly, the curved wall, bottom left, bears no names - yet!  
We pray that it may never do so.

# LOOKING FOR JACK

By David Beesley

I was born in May 1945 and was adopted when I was a baby. I found my birth mother after my adopted father handed over my adoption papers in 2003. I knew that I was adopted but had little or no information about my birth parents. All I knew was that my birth mother had lived in or near Lincoln.

Finding my mother was easy - using 'People Finder' I found someone with exactly the same names at an address in Lincoln. I wrote a simple letter enclosing photos and a few days later I got a phone call saying, "I think I'm your sister", followed by another sister's call an hour later. I met them in Nottingham and they took me to meet my mother. It was a wonderful reunion - something I will treasure for the rest of my life - and through her I found out about Jack.

My father was Sgt. A.L. Kermode, known to everyone as Jack, a bomb aimer with 49 Squadron, based at Fiskerton in 1944.

Armed with this information I set out to find out as much as I could about him. I started at the National Archive in Kew where I was able to put together a list of all the trips he flew on his tour.

I found 49 Squadron Association via David Boughton's website. David put me in touch with Ed Norman who passed me on to Alan Parr. Alan kindly invited me to join the squadron association as an Associate Member and John Ward's excellent *Beware of the Dog at War* was also a mine of useful information.

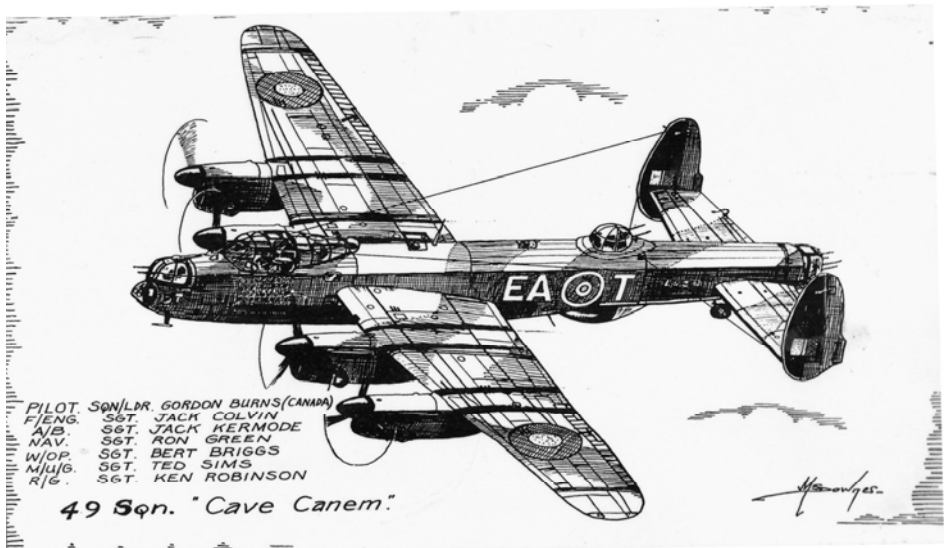


*The poor quality of this photograph is due to the degree of enlargement.*

My mother's younger sister gave me two photos of Jack, one of which showed him with his crew in front of a Liberator bomber. Obviously, this was taken post 49 Squadron and further research showed that he finished the war as a F/Lt. flying in Liberators with 99 Squadron from the Cocos Islands. Martin, the 99 Squadron archivist, sent me a photo of Jack with his crew.

Further to this, Alan Parr gave me the phone number of Ted Sims, who was my dad's mid-upper gunner. [*Ted responded to our appeal in 'Can you Help? The 4T9er Issue 3. Ed.'*]

I met Ted early in 2007 and he shared memories of Jack with me. He also gave me a drawing of Lancaster EA-T in which they flew the majority of their ops.



The other crew members were Pilot: F/Lt. Gordon Burns DFC from Canada, Navigator: Sgt. Ron Green, W/Op: Bert Briggs, F/Eng: Jack Colvin, M/U/G: Ted Sims and R/G: Ken Robinson. Sadly, Ted's passing was recorded in The 4T9er, August 2007.

I have also visited what remains of the base at Fiskerton, along with RAF Fulbeck where the Squadron transferred in October 1944.

Further research led me to a cousin living in Australia. We met when she came to England and she gave me Jack's log book, which is a great treasure to me, along with some of his letters and photos. She also told me a lot about him. That's the story in a nutshell.

I am immensely proud of my father – unfortunately he passed away in 1994. Sadly, I was his only child and we never met. The only way I can get to know him better is through the people who knew him. The story my mother and Aunt told me about their relationship and my adoption is also very moving and sad – but one which I share with them and my family. My wife Carol, said, "You've been looking for Jack all your life." When I think about it she was quite right.

I would like to thank Alan for his help and interest in my story. If there is anyone out there who has any more information about my father or his crew, I would love to hear from them.

My postal address: 3 Woodhill Avenue, Morecambe, LA4 4PF

e-mail: beesleydv@talktalk.net

Phone: 01524 424540

# **BACK TO THE BIG CITY**

**(A brush with the past)**

**By Eric Jones DFC**

(K-King's lucky mascot, Lupino Lane, was not required on this trip!)

Vasa Babic is one of a band of private pilots who, under the direction of an organiser called Denis Ray, drop everything for one day each year to devote their efforts to ferrying veteran aircrew to a specific rendezvous. Here the veterans are able to enjoy some of the nostalgia of bygone days. Vasa flies a pressurised twin engined Cessna 421 aircraft.



A few weeks before Christmas he telephoned me and asked if I would like to join him on a flight to Tempelhof, Berlin. His aircraft would be capable of flying at exactly the same speed and height as a Lancaster bomber. The idea was to simulate, as near as possible, a World War II bomber raid (minus the flak, fighters and searchlights).

Having taken part in twelve major raids on Berlin in 1943/ 4 this sounded like a very good idea and one I promptly accepted. Incredibly, to hear the word 'Berlin' mentioned in this context caused my heart to skip a beat and then race away for a very considerable time. Just as it did 64 years ago.

We were airborne from Hurn Airport at 12.10 hrs on 17.12.07 and we set out for Berlin with a 40 kt. headwind right on our nose. The pre-planned route took us North East initially to avoid the air traffic of Gatwick and Heathrow before eventually crossing the coast in the vicinity of Chelmsford.

The Cessna, fully equipped with all the latest avionics, was to be shepherded across Holland and then into German air space through a system of waypoints. Vasa needed to be continually on the alert to detect our change of course instructions from the crowded airways chatter.

Clear skies over Holland became 10/10ths of cloud cover over Germany. From directions to other aircraft in the vicinity we learnt that the cloud topped out at 3,000 ft and had a base of 2,000 ft.

We were flying at 19,000 ft and the temperature outside was -24 C. Our ground speed reduced to 160 kts. That headwind was really slowing us down.

Eventually we entered Tempelhof airspace and Vasa requested an assisted landing. It was now quite dark and we entered cloud with only a glimmer of light from the panel before us. Then suddenly, we broke cloud to a blaze of Berlin street lighting. It was an amazing sight and straight ahead was Tempelhof's main runway set right in the middle of Berlin's suburbs.

We touched down with a perfect landing at 1600 hrs., 3 hrs. 50 mins. after take off and 620 nms. from Hurn.

We found Tempelhof almost deserted. The aerodrome is no longer in use by commercial airlines but still caters for corporate and private aircraft. What a change from the Berlin Airlift when Tempelhof was experiencing queues of aircraft bringing in supplies of food and fuel to the hard pressed Berliners.

Our flight plan enabled us to stay only a short time. Vasa spoke with officials, a few photographs were taken, and we snatched a couple of coffees.

Permission to take off granted, we were airborne on our return journey at 17.40 hrs. We left Tempelhof, one of Hitler's showpieces, with rumours that it may close down in the near future.

That 40 kt. wind was still there when we climbed back to 19,000 ft. but this time on our tail and to our advantage. With a ground speed of 240 kts. we sped back to Hurn in 2hrs. 40 mins landing at 20.20 hrs.

On wishing Hurn Flying Control good night and explaining the purpose of our flight they replied, "And this time they switched on all the lights for you!"

A couple of coincidences are worth noting. Lancaster 'K' King, in which I flew 18 of my operations, was JB 421 and we flew in a Cessna 421. Flying to Berlin in 1943 the fastest time that I registered was 6.25 hrs. Just five minutes faster than the Cessna. My longest time to Berlin was 8.25 hrs. (must have been the time we were routed in over the south western tip of Sweden).

Although our flight may only have been a brush with the past what really highlighted it for me was Vasa's willingness to listen to my constant chatter recalling the past as we flew over or near cities which held special memories for me.



Eric, far left, with his crew and ground crew. The Lancaster is LM306 EA-F

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For further information contact;

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Above; Two 4T9er Flight Lieutenants, Eric Clarke (94) and Gary Mennell (A bit younger), attended the Remembrance Day Service at Scampton Church on November 11th 2007. Whilst Gary is currently serving at RAF Scampton, Eric 'got some in' there in 1942. We believe that Eric, in years, is our most senior member.

Photo; Sheila Hamilton

Opposite top; On 27th April 2002, the late Barbara Beard (nee Ellenor) tenderly touched her father's headstone in the churchyard at Ugny - sur - Meuse on the 58th anniversary of his death. See pages 28, 29

Opposite bottom; On the same day French villagers pay their respects.

Photos; Terry Atkinson





## READER'S LETTERS

*After reading November's issue of The 4T9er former mid upper gunner and PoW, Ron Eeles wrote;*

"I remember P/O Dickinson very well. He was always full of fun and often held an audience enthralled with his tales of evasion action etc. He had a number of encounters during his operations. If anyone knew he was taking off he could rely on some spectators as his take offs were worth seeing. I do not recall his mid upper.

"I have written to Webmaster, Malcolm Brooke, enclosing several items in which he may be interested, including individual photographs of crew graves. He knows that he is at liberty to photocopy anything so I hope that he can make use of some of the material.

"RAF Bridgnorth in May 1943 I remember well. We were posted there on the Monday for a six week EAGS. On Tuesday morning the whole course was told the course was cancelled and we were going out to AGS. I had the opportunity of expressing a preference for .....IOM as I had never been there. This was at the time that the Battle of Berlin was getting underway and I passed out as a Sgt. Air Gunner within four months of joining up. Our walk to Bridgnorth Station was downhill fortunately. [See Editorial, November, Issue 8. Ed.]

"With all the references to the H.P. Hampden one never sees any mention of the Mark 2 which had two Napier Dagger inline engines. There were probably only a few built, but I did see one in a hangar at RAF Hednesford during an ATC visit sometime in early 1942. This station did not possess an airfield."

*On receiving the information from Ron, which included an account of his bailing out as well as his stay in Stalag Luft 3, Sagan, Malcolm introduced a new section in our website entitled 'Documents', thus we now have a section for individual's stories. Regarding the reference to a Mk 2 Hampden, or HP53 as it was officially known before the name Hereford was adopted, two of these aircraft were originally ordered by Sweden but were cancelled in favour of a single Hampden. A total of 150 Herefords were built but none were used operationally, the Napier Dagger proved very troublesome. Apparently they quickly overheated on the ground and overcooled in the air. Most were used for training, mainly at 14 OTU, Cottesmore, 16 OTU, Upper Heyford and 5 BGS. Twenty-three were re-engined with Pegasus power plants and thus became Hampden 1s but only a couple of these saw operational service. Thirty Herefords were written off in accidents and the remaining ninety-seven were eventually struck off charge. The Napier Dagger engine is said to have had an extremely high pitched exhaust noise which left pilots partially deafened after each flight. If any of our readers flew in the Hereford I would love to hear from them. Whilst researching this editorial comment I discovered that the last Hampden was not struck off charge until March 1945. Quite remarkable! Ed.*

*In acknowledging the assistance of Derek Vanstone, John Ward, Barbara and myself in the publication of his book, 'Ted the Lad' ,our chairman e-mailed the following which I publish here as it is a tribute to all who served in the Second World War:*

".....I received this message from John Anderson who is an author of his own book and sponsor of the one written by Jerry Jarrold, both of which were launched on Derek's stand at Duxford.....Ted "

"Dear Ted,

I have just finished your book. I have been greatly impressed with the content, storyline and presentation. I was also very absorbed in your whole story, from the start to the finish, and I must admire you for all the effort you put into it - especially during your recent visit to Germany and the poignant and sad salute to your fellow flyers at Retzow. That you felt it important to seek out and visit the resting place of your comrades was indeed a noble and honest gesture of honouring them.

"I am sure that you will be the first to admit that you have been fortunate in being able to recount your story of the war. However, it truly provides an excellent journal for those who had no part in that terrible conflict. We of younger years are forever indebted to all who fought for freedom, and your book is a reminder that war is not a game, but a deadly and terrifying occurrence that must never happen again.

"Your story is an inspiration, and I thank you for telling it....."

***An e-mail from Eric Clarke postulated;***

"The P1206 report included the observation that it was impossible to separate the remains of Paddy and Mullinger! [*The 4T9er November, Issue 8 Ed.*]

My observation; Hampden, four crew including two Wop/ag`s. The one in the lower (Tin) gun position had to squeeze in with the W/op in the upper position for take off and landing!!!! Maybe, knowing that a crash was inevitable the `Tin` man scrambled up to the W/op position????.

"I did just that on February 16th 1942, `gardening` with Sgt Slingo off Heligoland.- I was in the Tin - the Pilot asked on the intercom, "Can anyone see anything?" I was peering down and thought I could see `white horses`, I yelled out, "We are too low", and he pulled up sharply but I scrambled up with the W/op and did not return until we set course for home.

Sgt Slingo was lost on a minelaying op on April 16th."

***New Member, Jim Lawry sent the following e-mail;***

"Many thanks for the August and November magazines and the membership list. I am amazed how many members there are and how active the group is. I am also amazed that I hadn't a clue that the organisation existed, until a chance remark made by Colin Cripps to my wife that he had been to a 49 Squadron reunion! I have visited the RAF website from time to time, but have to

congratulate you all concerned on the excellent quality of the 49 Squadron website. I will look forward to further issues of The 4T9er (what a great title) and hopefully we will meet up next year.”

***After the excavation of Hampden P1206 was complete I e-mailed Dick and Annet Schilder, the land owners, to thank them on behalf of the Association for what they had done during the Hampden's stay on their land and also for their part in securing the recovery of the aircraft and it's crew. Dick e-mailed his reply;***

“Thank you for your message. Indeed it will be strange when everything is gone after a period of 2.5 years of preparing this operation.

“We’ve met a lot off different persons and we are proud that we have met the Irish family and all the people in England. We could never imagine that it ended this way when we first met Ed Ijsbrandij with the request to help us to find relatives to send them a picture of the little cross on the field grave. I think that about 600-700 people visited the excavation site.

“After all it is ended a big part of our lives at this moment. But it was worth it and after all, the biggest sacrifice was from these airmen.

“We must never forget that.”



***In Issue 7 we recorded the passing of Barbara Beard, nee Ellenor. Her cousin, Associate Member Terry Atkinson, e-mailed the following, the most moving piece that I have received since taking over as Secretary:***

“I am sending you this text for it was the last letter Jack Ellenor wrote to his daughter Barbara Ellenor, received the day after he died along with his crew. I believe it is a powerful letter and one which we came across by accident whilst clearing her mother's home out in 2002. Her mother had this letter all those years but never told her daughter of its existence. I will be receiving a copy of the original letter, written on 49 Squadron paper, in the New Year. If you should think it would be something for other people to see then I will make sure you have a copy of the original.”

***John Ellenor's last letter reads:***

“Dear Barbara

If you ever read this letter, you will by then be old enough to realise and understand what it all means. At the time of my writing this, you are four years of age, and even at this tender age, you have experienced some of the horrors of war, even though you were mercifully oblivious to it all. You will also know that your Daddy was taken from you while fighting to help free the world from the evil influence which forced this war upon an otherwise peace-loving world. I want you to know, dear, that your Daddy fought and died for what he considered to be right, that you and others like you can grow up in a world which is clean and decent. That everyone may think as they please, and speak what they think, that they may live cleanly and decently, that is what we are fighting for. I want you to try and live up to these ideals, my dear, be upright, honest and straightforward and be sure always that your actions are such that you can always look the world in the face. In this, I can offer you no better example than the sweetest little woman in the world, my wife, your Mother. If you grow up to be like your Mother, then I can ask no more. We had planned to do a lot of things for you Barbara, but God decreed that your Mother should undertake this responsibility without my help, so I want you to do all you can to help her. I expect the time will come when you will marry and then your Mother will be alone, and if that time comes I know you will not forget her. Well, Barbara, I think I have covered all I want to say, so I will now say Goodbye my darling.

May God bless you and yours.

Your loving Daddy”

***Terry concluded;***

“Alan, the one thing I can say is that Barbara lived up to all her father's ideals. He would have been proud of her.”

*Sgt. John (Jack) Ellenor, age 33, was the mid upper gunner in P/O John Dickinson's crew. They were lost on 26 / 27 April 1944 during a raid on Schweinfurt. It was their 25th op. and they are buried in the churchyard at Ugny – sur – Meuse, France. See page 25. Ed.*



## CAN YOU HELP?

### ***Non Member Dr Peter Stokes e-mailed;***

"I am writing to you because I have discovered your website. I was researching my wife's uncle - Sergeant Myer Goldberg (1086976) who was shot down and killed with his crew in May 1944. We have always had a fond interest in honouring him and his memory. Please would you be able to tell us if there is anything else we can find out about him and his life in the RAF with 49 Squadron through any other source? The entry attached to the photograph of his grave stone has been very helpful but it would be good to learn more if available. Many thanks and congratulations on the excellent and respectfully accomplished website."

*Sgt Norman Myer Goldberg was w/op in P/O PR Graves-Hook's A Flight crew which was lost on the night of 22/23rd May 44 whilst attacking Brunswick. Ed Norman sent Peter details of Sgt Goldberg's five operations as noted in the Operations Record Book. Ed.*

### ***Non member Geoff Clayton e-mailed Malcolm Brooke:***

"Congratulations on your website; it is very useful and informative. F/O Richard Bailes (Navigator) was my grandmother's cousin. I knew that he had been killed in April 1944, having seen his grave in Methley, but I knew nothing about the experimental flight and crash of ND553 until I saw the account on your site. One of the combat reports recently released online by the National Archives covers the 19th Feb 1944 collision of JB679 which resulted in the loss of part of its wing. However, I could find no report of the subsequent ND553 crash, presumably because it didn't result from combat. From the uniform and badges, I guessed that F/O Bailes was probably third from left in the photograph below. However, I am not an RAF expert, so I would be very

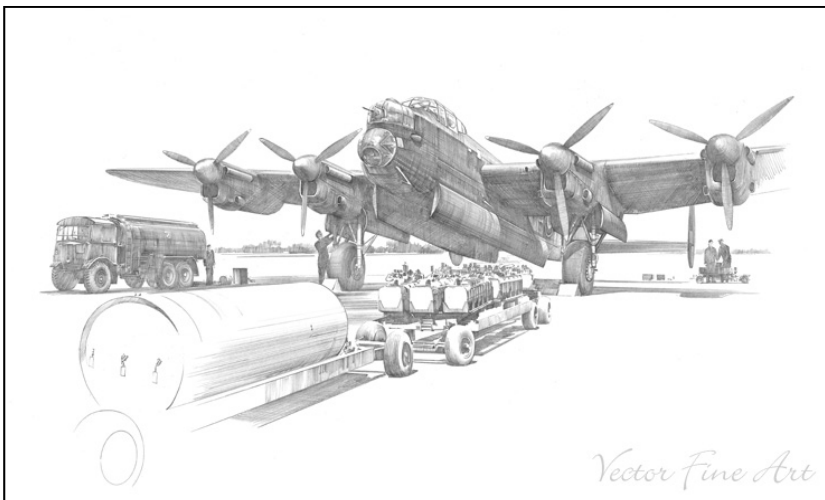
grateful for your opinion. Also, I wonder if you have any further information on, or photographs of Richard Bailes."



*We have sent Geoff a resume of F/O Bailes' career. There appears to be some very heavy damage beneath the rear fuselage which must have worried the mid upper gunner! Ed.*

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