

# The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine  
August 2009 Issue 15**



Photo; Dominic Howard

**Padre Tony Buckler dedicates the memorial to Geoff Stuffins with the Geoff's family in the background.**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**V. Lenton   J. F. Arnold   W. H. Claydon**

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

**WELCOME TO:**

**NEW MEMBERS**

**John Muston   David Taylor**

**NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**Trevor Arnold (Formerly 'Friend')   Joanne Real**  
**Roger Matthews (Come back)   Darryl Nugent   John Green**

**NEW FRIEND**

**Philip Cole**



**Photo; Dominic Howard**

**Irene Winter and daughter Jennie Winn at the memorial to F/L Jack Winter DFC**

## EDITORIAL

I started the Editorial in the May issue by apologising for the late publication. Whilst I don't wish to dwell on my own misfortune, I'm sure that you all have concerns of your own, I feel that I should explain that in mid May, just before the time to start proof reading, I suffered a detached retina. (Warning; If you see flashing lights or tiny black spots in your vision get to the Eye Infirmary without delay. I lost vision in 75 minutes!) Thus, I was unable to check the publication before releasing it to the printer which resulted in a number of errors being included. I regret this and although reading is still difficult, hope that this issue will be more up to the standard that you have a right to expect.

Just dwelling on the personal side for a moment longer, some of you will know that I am a keen steam buff and have been involved in the construction of an exhibition model railway layout which features Writhlington Colliery near Radstock, Somerset. Hornby Magazine got to hear of the project and are running a major feature on it in the September issue. So, if you want to see what I get up to when I am not engaged in 49 SA's business, fishing, gardening, DIY, decorating, walking, looking after our grand-daughter etc. (Not necessarily in that order of priority.) then take a look at September's Hornby Magazine which hits the shelves around August 14th. Whilst talking railways, and why not, Honorary Friend, world renowned aviation artist and great friend of mine, Nick Trudgian, has a large and magnificent garden railway which Hornby Magazine featured in a supplement to the July issue. It is well worth a look if you can get a copy. End of commercial!

Thank you to those who have made donations during the last three months. Although I have reported in my reunion State of the Union address that our finances are sound this would soon go into reverse if donations dry up.

Well, another reunion has come and gone and I am pleased and relieved to be able to say that it was a great success. Full reports with photographs appear in this issue. I was filled with trepidation on the Sunday as we travelled to Woodhall Spa in continuous torrential rain but much to our delight the Monday morning greeted us with warm sunshine which continued throughout our stay. The weather is the one factor over which we have no control but which has the most profound effect on the enjoyment of proceedings as last year's visit to Hemswell proved. Happily we got it right this year as you will read later. Unfortunately I had to cancel the coach trip to Newark very late in the day and this was replaced by the successful trip to RAF Scampton. The number of people booking for the coach trips has fallen during the last few years to the point where it is no longer viable to hire a coach and charge a reasonable fare. Therefore, in future any visit arranged for the third day will require those going to provide their own transport. This system was totally successful on the trip to

RAF Scampton. The coach from Petwood Hotel to Fiskerton will still run on the second day as usual. **The 2010 Reunion will again be held at Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, commencing Sunday 10th June.**

Whilst on the subject of this year's reunion I must thank Dominic Howard for providing over ninety photos from which the majority of those included in this issue were selected.

In this issue we conclude the stories of the wartime experiences of Bert Cole and Bettie Baird. Bettie's time in the Women's Land Army has jogged quite a few memories and it is nice to be able to include a feature that is of such interest to our lady readers. Not only that, a reader of a generation born a considerable time after the war said that he found it most interesting and had previously no idea of the deep effect that the war had on the womenfolk. Bettie having set the example, how about some of you ladies following suit and telling us about your printable wartime experiences?

I regret to have to report the passing of James Arnold who was wop/ag. in the crew of Sgt G.S. Cole which was shot down 14/15th June 1943 on a raid on Oberhausen. James together with the late John Bryan was taken prisoner. In the April 2008 issue of The 4T9er we showed a picture of the graves of the remaining six crew members in Oosterbeek Cemetery, Holland where James' ashes have now been scattered. Following the service whilst at tea at the Hilton Hotel, Maidstone, a Spitfire made two passes. Vic Lenton only joined the Association as a Friend in April and it came as a shock to hear of his sudden death. Bill Claydon was flight engineer in 'Robbie' Robson's crew and was mentioned in Jim Bridger's article 'A Dodgy Dodge' in the May issue. I am grateful to those who drew my attention to the passing of two eminent 49ers, neither of whom were members of the Association. Obituaries of Wing Commander Ernest Millington and Squadron Leader Denis 'Dusty' Miller appear in 'Reader's Letters'.

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new 4T9ers; New Member John Muston attended the reunion as John Conning's guest. They were both members of Tiff O'Connor's Vickers Valiant crew which dropped the final H Bomb in the 1957/58 series. John (Muston) was nav/radar/bomb aimer. New Member David Taylor flew his tour as flight engineer in the Jupp and Edy crews between 21st June '43 and 1st March '44.

Trevor Arnold has become an Associate Member on the death of his father James Arnold. Joanne Real, of Queensland, is related to F/Sgt D.J. Ryan RAAF who was wop/ag in the crew of F/O C. Lacy DFC which was lost on the Revigny raid, 18/19th July 1944. Roger Matthews is the son of Sgt W.D. Peirce, wop/ag, who was killed on 28/29th August 1942 when flying in the crew of F/O J. Lowrie on a raid on Nuremburg. Darryl Nugent is the

nephew of F/Sgt J.P. Nugent who was the navigator in P/O T. Anderson's former Dambuster crew lost on the 23/24th September attack on Mannheim. John Green is the son of navigator Sgt F.R. Green who flew his tour with F/O G.R. Burns DFC between July and November 1944.

New Friend, Philip Cole is the son of Member Bert Cole.

In June we visited the Cosford Air Show. Whilst our main desire was to see the BBMF, The Red Arrows and the Vulcan, Barbara and our eldest daughter Carol were also focused on the craft stalls. It was very noticeable that when the Reds and the Vulcan performed the whole place came to a standstill. Sadly this was not so noticeable with the Lancaster. Having visited RAF Scampton and met the Red Arrows it was agreed that to us they are now a group of people rather than nine red aircraft. The reintroduction of their approach from behind the crowd line certainly adds to the impact of their arrival. The weather was perfect and the smoke hung for a while adding to the impact considerably. As for the Vulcan, I had seen it during its second tentative test flight and expected this display to be a gentle affair. Not a bit of it, although, not surprisingly it was not thrown around as it was during RAF displays it never the less put on a rousing show complete with that unique Vulcan roar when the throttles are opened and a two spiral climb on departure. I am fortunate in having witnessed one of its last displays when under previous ownership when it climbed in spirals until out of sight. What memories! Ron Eeles subsequently told me that the Birmingham Post had reported that the Vulcan burned half a ton of fuel during its eight minute display. I had to say that I found this incredible but checking later with former Valiant pilot, Stuart Keay, he confirmed that for a display this is quite feasible. That's amazing!

How about the Victor lifting off at Bruntingthorpe on May 3rd? A bit of a clanger that and potentially catastrophic but fortunately it got down in one piece after a hairy ten second flight. An enquiry is pending.

I'm sure that you are all familiar with that wonderful squadron history, 'Beware of the Dog at War' by our President and Chairman, John Ward and Ted Cachart respectively, well the revised edition is due for publication in October. A leaflet giving details is enclosed with this issue. They tell me that there is a great deal of new information and I await its publication with excitement.

On Sunday July 12th Barbara and I went to William Farr C of E School in Welton, near Scampton, for the unveiling of a Memorial Window to the four squadrons that flew from Dunholme Lodge during WWII. These being 44, 49, 170 & 619. 4T9er Stuart Keay, his wife Pat and grandson Ben were also present. Following a service in the school hall the large congregation made its way to the school entrance for the unveiling which was carried out by

F/L Douglas Hudson DFC AE RAFVR (Ret'd). Wreaths were laid by representatives of the four squadrons plus others by members of the RAAF, RCAF, RNZAF and the present day RAF. [See photographs on page 21.] Just after 4.00pm we gathered on the tennis court for three low passes by the BBMF Lancaster during which The Sleaford Concert Band played 'Evening Hymn' - most moving. I wish to record the appreciation of the Association to Head Teacher, Mr Paul Strong, his staff and pupils for their hospitality and continued dedication to the sacrifice of those who lost their lives whilst flying from RAF Dunholme Lodge.

**ATTENTION ALL AUSSIES;** It has been suggested that a get together, can't call it a reunion until after the first one, be organised in Canberra. If you like the idea then let me or Bob Barnes know.

It is now more than a year since we ran the advertisement for sweat shirts and polo shirts bearing the squadron badge. Quite a few new members have joined since then so we are giving details again on page 31 of this issue.

I have been asked to inform all Valiant boys, that is, anyone who served with 49 Squadron during the Valiant era in any capacity, that there is to be a reunion open to all those who served in any V Bomber squadron. This will be held at Newark Air Museum on Saturday/Sunday 24/25th April 2010. This will be similar to that held in 2004. For further details visit website; [www.vforcereunion.co.uk](http://www.vforcereunion.co.uk)

In the previous two issues we have asked if there is any interest in Association ties and scarves. Ed Norman has only received eighteen responses so regretfully this matter is now dead as it is not financially viable.

We have a limited stock of back-issues of The 4T9er which are available at £1-00 each plus postage. Enquiries to myself, the Secretary/Editor, please.

**'Til the next time.**

## **HEROES RETURN 2**

The Heroes Return scheme is to be repeated. Grants are to be made to those who served with or alongside British Forces during World War Two and are resident in U.K. and Republic of Ireland. A fixed sum will be made available for each veteran or war widow or widower plus carer or spouse towards travel and accommodation to areas where British Armed Forces saw active service. The visit must take place between April 1st 2009 and 31st December 2010. If a qualifying visit has already been made since April 1st this year a claim can still be made.

To find out more ring the Application Help Line on 0845 0000 121

Website address; [http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog/heroes\\_return.htm](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog/heroes_return.htm)

Further information can also be obtained from Ted Cachart.

## **The second and concluding part of:**

### **BERT COLE'S STORY**

On the night of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> August 1943 we took off from Fiskerton at about 10 p.m. in Lancaster bomber ED719 'K' King of Bomber Command '5' Group. This was to be our final operation. We were carrying about six tons of bombs: a 4,000 pound 'Cookie' large bomb, four 500 pounder bombs and incendiaries. We had a fair wind of 70 m.p.h. Over mid-France the port-outer engine overheated and had to be stopped with the grosvenor switch, and feathered to reduce the drag. At a crew conference we decided to carry on even though we would lose 140 m.p.h. ground speed and be on our own. We arrived at the target about an hour late, having jettisoned the incendiaries and four 500 pounder bombs over France. We dropped the 'Cookie' on target. Then all hell let loose, there was bags of flak, we were hit, the inner port engine failed, the starboard outer engine overheated, and we turned for home.

The skipper jettisoned the front hatch and told us to put our parachutes on. We were down to about 3,500 feet, descending fairly quickly. It was about 5 o'clock in the morning. Our pilot decided to wait a few minutes before bailing out in case our bomber crashed on a village below, Erfenbach. Then the order came for us to go and we all bailed out safely at 2,000 feet.

It was very peaceful, floating down in the darkness, but suddenly I fell into the top of a large tree. I was thinking what to do, whether to free-fall and possibly break my legs, when I heard guttural voices coming nearer. Still, I took a chance and fell the short distance to the ground, about two feet. Once out of my harness I jumped over a tall wall nearby, which turned out to be a cemetery at Morlautern, and hid behind a large gravestone. The voices gradually faded and I moved out, with my rations and map.

The plan we'd been given was to travel at night and hide during the day, with the object of contacting the French underground resistance movement. By the third day my water bottle was empty and at midday it was very hot. Because my thirst was acute I ran to a little stream to fill my bottle.

Around the corner of the wood came a crowd of children. We had been told in England about German schools closing at midday, and it was very remiss of me to forget. However the children gave the alarm and I scuttled back into the wood, where I concealed myself under a tree stump with brambles and ferns to hide me.

Soon came the sound of German voices and dogs barking. Then it became quiet. I poked my head out and a big, square head looked at me and said in perfect American-English, "The war for you is over!" Then I was transferred by Luftwaffe officers into a staff car for questioning in Kaiserslautern, I think, before being taken to Oberursel near Frankfurt am Main, and then twelve miles further on to the Dulag Luft Interrogation Centre, to extract from me what



information could be obtained.

I and others were put in solitary confinement in a small bare room. The electric heating was full on, even though the temperature outside was about 70-80 degrees, but there were no washing or toilet facilities.

The interrogators were trying to make us talk but we only supplied name, rank and number. A so-called Red Cross man brought a form to be filled in, with questions about our bomb load, but I just stuck to giving my name, rank and number. The officer retorted, "We have ways of making you talk!" and went out. The next thing I knew was that the room heaters were switched full on. I smashed them with my boots, but fortunately there were no repercussions. Escorted by two armed guards in the passageway, who should appear but my old friend Len Bradfield, who had been shot down the night after me, over Nuremberg.

After seven days I was moved to Stalag Luft I in Barth, Pomerania, northern Germany. This was a camp with a lenient commander whose sister was interned back home in Manchester. While we were at Stalag Luft I we began tunnelling under the cookhouse to escape. However, before the tunnel was finished we were sent on to Stalag Luft VI camp at Heydekrug on the Lithuanian border in East Prussia, 40 kilometres north-west of Tilsit, a 'K' category Lager camp which held about a thousand prisoners. There were about forty of us in hut 'J'. The journey from Barth to Heydekrug took about seven days in a cattle-truck train which held four horses or forty men and we arrived in October 1943. The landscape was very bleak, with no trees or habitation anywhere for as far as the eye could see.

The commandant of Stalag Luft VI at Heydekrug was a Nazi Party man and very ruthless. Some yards in from the main wire was a warning wire and you could be shot if you jumped over it, even to recover a ball. At least two prisoners were shot retrieving balls. At Barth of course, with a more lenient commandant, this had been allowed.

On 15<sup>th</sup> July 1944 we were moved by cattle truck to Memel, which lies on the Baltic at the mouth of the river Niemen, and shoved into the filthy ship hold of SS Insterburg. We were packed like sardines, with no food or water, and it was hell. Water was lowered in a bucket and body fluids taken up in the same bucket, with the accompanying spills. We wondered whether we should overpower the guards and head for Sweden, but we were escorted by a heavily-armed E-boat for four days and three nights.

Eventually we landed at Swinemünde, now a seaside resort in Prussia. In the morning our boots were removed, we were handcuffed in two's and loaded on to railway wagons. Suddenly air-raid sirens wailed. The Americans were bombing a heavy German cruiser. The flak opened up, our trucks rocked and were filled with acrid smoke. Fire ceased, all was still but the cruiser had not been hit. The guards struggled back to the wagons with hate in their eyes.



At about midday the wagons moved off. Again we were handcuffed in pairs, in desperately hot conditions.

At dawn on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944 the train stopped at Kiel-Heide, Pomerania. It was midday before the doors were opened. We were pushed out, with rifle butts chasing the laggards. I myself was handcuffed to a Beaufighter pilot, Len Davey, who had worked at Lewis's in Birmingham before the war. In 1946 there was a Leonard Davy listed at 70 Jiggins Lane, Bartley Green, Quinton, Birmingham, but I do not know if this was Len. He suffered from frost-bitten feet having been shot down in the North Sea, and had spent several days in a dinghy and was not very mobile.

Continuing on a journey which would eventually lead us to Stalag Luft IV camp, Gross Tychow, in Pomerania (then in Germany, now in Poland), we were halted on a long stretch of wooded road. Up rolled a Kubelwagen. Out got Hauptmann Pickhard in his gleaming white uniform, resembling to us 'kriegers' (fliers) an ice-cream man! He hopped on to a tree stump and harangued the guards. "These are the 'terror airmen', murderers. Do what you like with them." He fired his revolver, making us run. On each side of the road, in the trees, were machine gun posts awaiting our attempt to escape the fixed bayonets of the guards and the savage dogs. We would then be shot.

Len Davey and I were handcuffed together, but had released ourselves with a milk tin key. In the melee we abandoned the handcuffs. Len ran so fast that he almost pulled me along. Clubbed with rifles, bayoneted and savaged by dogs, those in the rear suffered quite badly. Being in the front we got off quite lightly. We called it, "The Run up the Road." Then we were herded into a field by a gateway, where some prisoners were again stabbed by bayonets. About a hundred and thirteen had wounds.

This, then, was Stalag Luft IV camp, Gross Tychow, in Pomerania. The barracks weren't ready to start with, so we had to sleep in the open; later we were given tents. Oberleutnant Bombach was commandant, Lager Officer was Major Gruber, Captain of the Guard was Hauptmann Pickhard (known as The Butcher of Berlin), Head of Security was Oberfeldwebel Fahrner, and the real sadist was Feldwebel Schmidt, about six feet seven inches tall, and known as, "The Big Stoop."

We were marched out of Stalag Luft IV camp, Gross Tychow, on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1945, walking to Stalag Luft XIB camp at Fallingbomel in northern central Germany. It was very cold and there was deep snow all around. I was issued with a full Red Cross parcel and a third of a loaf of bread, the first that we had seen in months. We carried our pathetic bundles in towels with braces. Our two blankets were rolled up in a sling over our shoulders. Unbelievably, we were not to undress until the end of the war in May 1945!

By the 16<sup>th</sup> February we had marched two hundred kilometres, passing Swinemünde, then on sixty-five kilometres over two days, to Anklam. The

column rested between 24th February and 8<sup>th</sup> March on a large farm owned by an East Prussian. He announced that no food, firewood or coal was available for us 'Auslanders' (foreigners), and that anyone caught stealing would be shot. The guards were also denied food.

I and Eric Harrison, also from Birmingham, and who emigrated to New Zealand after the war, found a little tunnel into the barn, just big enough to scrape through and found coke bricks, potatoes and a pig sty with two pigs. On our second visit, the next day, we heard the main door rattle. Immediately we jumped into the pig sty and lay with the pigs! All was quiet until a dark female head looked down, saying, "Ich bin Französisch. Schnell! Out." We squeezed through a little tunnel, glad not to have been captured and shot. The Australians stole a sheep, slaughtered and cooked it. No trace of the remains was ever found. It was reported that the farmer ended up with a nervous breakdown.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February we were discovered by a Red Cross Transport and given parcels, and the march was resumed on 4<sup>th</sup> March. We walked another one hundred and fifty kilometres to Parchim and crossed the River Elbe on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Eighty kilometres on by 24<sup>th</sup> March we arrived at Dannenberg. During the next two days we were taken fifty kilometres. Arriving at Ebstorf, we were loaded, seventy or eighty at a time, into cattle trucks again. There was no room to sit, the air was foul and the doors were locked.

We finally reached Fallingbistel on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1945 and had to walk about two kilometres to Stalag Luft XIB camp. There were rumoured to be about forty thousand prisoners held there.

Monty crossed the Rhine on 24th March and on 7<sup>th</sup> April we were marched out at about 3 p.m. in columns of fifteen hundred P.O.W.'s. Fortunately the weather was good. We headed north-eastwards and crossed the Elbe at Lauenburg. Rest Day was 18<sup>th</sup> April and the next day we covered another twenty kilometres, adding fifteen more kilometres on the 20<sup>th</sup>. On the night of 21<sup>st</sup> April, at about one o'clock, one of the barns suddenly exploded, accompanied by rocket attacks, killing one airman and wounding sixteen. We heard the sound of aircraft engines and we assumed it was an R.A.F. Typhoon, mistaking our formation for Germans! Bert Cole was unhurt!

### THANK YOU LADY FRITWELL

The town of Dodow, the next day, was four kilometres on. Our guards were by now too petrified to move on further, and for several days the columns were stationed at Ratzeburger See, about thirty kilometres south-east of Lübeck. When we woke up on 2<sup>nd</sup> May all our guards had gone!

We were liberated that day by the British Army's Royal Dragoons. At 2.45 p.m. We took off in a Lancaster and landed at R.A.F. Dunsfold in Sussex, where we had a lovely reception. We were deloused and all our clothes were burnt. What luxury to have a hot bath! The next day we flew on to RAF

Cosford and were given indefinite leave passes until October, as well as railway warrants. Then I went home to Ross-on-Wye. What a reception I had!

One sad moment at RAF Cosford was when my friend Len Bradfield was wheeled out of the Mess in a wheelchair. Both feet and toes had been amputated in Germany because of frost bite.

In October 1945 I was posted to RAF Valley on the Isle of Anglesey in north Wales, working in Flying Control. There I met my dear wife, LACW Joan Rowe. I was demobbed on 2<sup>d</sup> February 1947 and married ten days later, on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>, at Coleshill Parish Church, Warwickshire. It was the winter of Britain's Big Freeze and there was deep snow everywhere. The bride and bridesmaids were frozen!

Our honeymoon was spent at Llandudno. We were lucky enough to be offered a lovely cottage on my wife's uncle's farm, at 340 (later 354) Cooks Lane, Tile Cross, Birmingham (now demolished). The garden was big enough for us to be self-sufficient and the rent was ten shillings (fifty pence now) a week.

I started work at The Ministry of Pensions in Birmingham but the pay was too low and I went on to an engineering firm, Peacock Ltd, then based at The Parade, Birmingham, and progressed very well.

In 1957 I met a clever Irishman, Bill Butler and the two of us formed a very successful heating and ventilating company, Butler and Cole, still trading, and run by Bill Butler's son.

We have now, as of January 2009 been happily married almost sixty-two years, surrounded by our two precious sons and their families.

## THANK YOU LADY FRITWELL

Sixty years after these events I had a letter from Herr Gerd Morgenthaler, the headmaster of a secondary school at Kaiserslautern in the Rhineland-Palatinate of western Germany. His father had commanded the Flak Battery which had fatally wounded our plane in the early hours of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1943, returning from a bombing mission to Mannheim as I have described.

Gerd had always been curious about the remains of a British bomber on the wooded hillside near the village of Erfenbach where he has spent all his life, and had decided to do some detective work. Eventually he discovered the crew names and traced me to England.

He was very keen to meet me, so my son Philip and I made an unforgettable trip to the Rhineland for five nights, from Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September to Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

We received great kindness, friendship and hospitality from everyone, including a civic reception at the Town Hall. It was recognised that our pilot had made great efforts to avoid hitting the village of Erfenbach.

*We are still in touch.*

# 49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION 2009

All Reunion photos by Dominic Howard unless credited otherwise



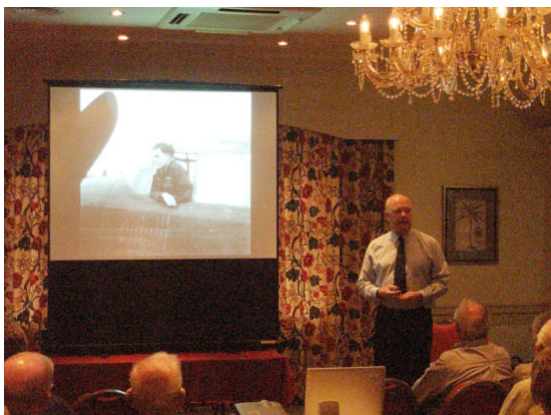
Some of those who served with 49 Squadron: L to R; John Dodkins (WWII a/c), Ken Read (WWII a/c), David Boughton (Lincoln a/c), John Fray (Valiant g/c), Eric Clarke (WWII a/c), Brian Taylor (Valiant a/c), Bob Weeks (Valiant a/c), Bert Cole (WWII a/c), Jack Joslin (WWII g/c), Ted Cachart (WWII a/c), Lou Crabbe (WWII a/c), Stuart Keay (Lincoln & Valiant a/c) and Dave Harrison (Valiant g/c).

## Sunday 7th June

Unfortunately this year's reunion started as last year with the disappointment that the BBMF Lancaster could not overfly Petwood because of the heavy rain. However, although we couldn't have the Lancaster we did have the former 'driver'.

F/L Mike Chatterton flew the Lancaster throughout the nineties and on a number of occasions brought her over our reunions. Although he no longer flies the BBMF Lanc he is still a serving officer, the day job involving the piloting of Nimrods from Waddington. He still retains his contact with a Lanc's 'office' however as he regularly taxis Just Jane at East Kirkby.

On the Sunday evening we gathered in Elm Suite to hear Mike give a fascinating presentation entitled; A Tale of Two Lancasters. Using stills and video he told us of his father, Bill, who was a Lancaster pilot with 44 Squadron



during the war. Both of them flying Lancasters must be a unique father and son achievement of which he is justifiably proud. Sadly Dad died a few years ago. With humour and a little pathos he told of his early career in the RAF and also that of his father. Eventually Mike joined the BBMF and his long association with the Lancaster began. One of the high spots was the

occasion when the Lancaster flew down The Mall and dropped a million poppies, the first time that it had been done. No one was sure what the ballistic properties of a poppy is but with some luck and a trusty A to Z of London as we all know the drop was an astounding success.

Mike told us that he had always admired the flying skills exhibited in the film The Dambusters and had an ambition to emulate them over The Derwent Dam. This was achieved on a couple of occasions and ground to air video amply illustrated his flying skill.

He followed his RAF exploits with a few stories of Just Jane including the thrill of the first engine runs followed by the first taxi run. As we all know he also lifted her tail at East Kirkby when the BBC were filming for a drama about a bomber crew. It was fascinating to hear the inside story.

An interesting observation was that the exhaust stains over the wings of a Lanc come from both exhausts on the inner engines whereas there is only one from the outer engines as, due to the dihedral, the outer exhaust gases pass under the wings. My model will never seem the same again!



## Monday 8th June

Those of us staying at Petwood Hotel joined the coach for the journey to Fiskerton where, after short 'potty break' at the Village Hall, we made our way to the church. Here we were joined by more 4T9ers and local residents, forming a congregation which filled the small church for our annual Remembrance Service which was conducted by Rev. Peter Collins.

The 49 Squadron Roll of Honour was borne to the altar by your Secretary where it was placed by the vicar and remained throughout the service. The lessons were read by John Dodkins and Malcolm Brooke and the Association's wreath was laid at the memorial by Ted Cachart escorted by Jack Joslin and Ken Read. Rev. Collins then read ten names from the 49 Squadron Roll of Honour thus in remembering ten we remembered all 49ers who gave their lives. A fine sermon was delivered by Rev. Collins much to the appreciation of the congregation.



Following the service in the church, we made our way to the Airfield Memorial where the wreath was again laid by our Chairman, this time escorted by Bert Cole and Eric Clarke.

Adjacent to the flag pole, a memorial had been erected which was draped in the R.A.F. ensign. The family of the late Geoff Stuffins stood behind the memorial as Geoff's widow Mary performed the unveiling ceremony assisted by sons, Carl and Vernon. The bronze plaque has been funded by 4T9ers following the appeal in the February issue and the stone on which it is mounted was kindly donated by Vernon

Stuffins. The memorial was created in appreciation of Geoff's generosity in donating the land on which the Airfield Memorial stands. Our Padre,

Rev. Tony Buckler, read one of his inimitable poems and the memorial was blessed by Rev. Collins.

It was now time to make our way to the Village Hall where once again a splendid buffet lunch had been prepared by our good friends of Fiskerton. Padre Tony had mentioned to me that he had painted a 49 Squadron Hawker Hind and did I think that it might be appropriate for hanging in The 49 Squadron Lounge. Following lunch he surprised us all with his painting talent when he presented it. Another period in the squadron's history has now been covered. It was now time to unveil another memorial, this time at the entrance to the local scout headquarters next door to the Village Hall.

At the reunion two years ago I was handed a very generous donation by Irene Winter, widow of former 49' pilot Jack Winter. I had decided that this was too generous to be totally absorbed into association funds and wondered if something named in memory of Jack would be acceptable to the scouts. I put the question to Ann Chesman and she came back with the news that they had a need for a flagpole at the entrance to the scout H.Q.. This seemed a splendid idea and it was agreed that a flag with relevance to the squadron would be flown whenever we are 'in town'. This idea was further developed in as much that there should be a common flag with the Association and the Scouts that is flown at anytime when appropriate. I really liked this idea as it further cemented the excellent relationship that exists between Fiskerton and the Association. When I mentioned this to Irene she was delighted as she and Jack had been closely involved with the scout movement.

It happened that the Stuffins brothers had a spare flag pole that they gave to the scouts, whilst we paid £160 for the various fittings in order to make it serviceable. We also paid for the bronze plaque which the scouts installed in the concrete base.

The scouts themselves had been asked to come up with some suggestions for a suitable design for the flag and some very interesting ideas were forth coming but the final design is still to be settled.

Thus, with the formalities at Fiskerton completed we took leave of our friends and boarded the coach to return to Petwood.

## **The Banquet**

At 7-30pm eighty-three Members, Associates and their Guests were invited to take their seats for dinner in The Woodland Suite.

With your Secretary performing the duties of M.C., Padre Tony said Grace and we commenced an excellent meal. After the Loyal Toast our Chairman, Ted Cachart, helped us remember the ever growing band of Absent Friends. This was particularly poignant this year as a few reunion stalwarts have passed on and still more have decided that the journey is no longer within their capabilities. I will be referring to this later.





Following dinner Eric Clarke belied his 96 years when he proposed the toast to Guests and Ladies. Freda Styles replied most ably, referring to her involvement in the nineteen-nineties when the memorial in the church was installed. Former Lincoln and Valiant pilot, Stuart Keay, then proposed The 49 Squadron Association to which I replied. I started by thanking Barbara for her support, I know which side my bread's buttered, I then thanked my 'crew', the 'backpage boys' who do so much for the Association. I was also at pains to express our appreciation to all those who, in various ways, had contributed to the success of our reunion.



I mentioned earlier the increasing number of Absent Friends and told the gathering that for the first time, as far as I am aware, the number of

I mentioned earlier the increasing number of Absent Friends and told the gathering that for the first time, as far as I am aware, the number of



WWII Members attending the Banquet had fallen to single figures. This sad fact was partially compensated for by the five post war Members who attended for the first time thus creating yet another first, that Post War bods present outnumbered those of WWII vintage. I once again touched on the matter of our composition but thankfully Full Members still out-number the remaining categories put together, the ratio being 150:130 at the time of writing, but the difference is rapidly diminishing. I have to stress that this is mainly due to an increase in the latter rather than a reduction in the former, for the moment.

I was again able to announce that the Association's finances have remained healthy and stable during the last year. However, there is always a 'however', the cost of producing and distributing our quarterly magazine, The 4T9er, is costing in excess of £1,200 per annum. With a drag on our resources of that magnitude it is essential that the generosity of our members continues otherwise drastic production cost reductions will inevitably follow. I again raised the question of people, where possible, receiving their copies by e-mail. I'm pleased to say that a further six advised me that they are willing to switch from printed copy to e-mail but there are still far too many taking their copies through the post even though I know that they have the where-with-all to do otherwise.

I summed up by saying that the Association has the ability to remain strong in the foreseeable future which is pretty good for a squadron that ceased to exist forty-three years ago.

The speeches over it was time for the raffle. This has always been a difficult process due to the protracted nature of events. We seem to have cracked it this year as a request went out that only bottles be donated as prizes. Thanks to the generosity of those attending we were able to make up around ten prizes, each comprising four bottles. Raffle tickets were sold at each individual table during the evening and all the stubs were mixed in an ice bucket. A straight draw then ensued and the whole event took no more than twenty minutes much to everyone's relief, not the least mine.

So ended, according to the feedback that I have received, another most enjoyable evening.

## **Tuesday June 9th**

It was originally planned to visit Newark and Newark Aviation Museum but, in view of the low numbers who had booked and the poor weather forecast, remembering last year's visit to Hemswell in pouring rain, I decided to cancel. Thanks to the cooperation of Mervyn Hallam and Roger Crisp, who together look after RAF Scampton Museum, we arranged to visit there instead. Members arranged their own transport and Ed Norman supervised the visit. As it turned out the weather was fine. Was it a success? Read on!



# SCAMPTON VISIT

By Ed Norman

Assembling in Scampton's visitors car park at 11a.m - under the watchful eye of the station's armed gate guard, our party of twenty-five met with our guide, the knowledgeable ex- NCO Roger Crisp.

During our leisurely stroll toward No.2 Hanger, once the home of 49 Squadron and now housing the museum, Roger told us that we were 'in luck'. The Red Arrows were shortly to finish their briefing before flying over to Blackpool where they would be temporarily based for two displays. Sure enough, the pilots appeared carrying their gear towards their BAC Hawk aircraft lined up at dispersal and kindly paused to chat with our group.



A photoshoot quickly developed – Betty Grundy saying 'Hello' to Red 8, S/L Graham Duff, who went to school with her granddaughter, while others chatted with various pilots including Associate 4T9er, Red 7, F/L Mike Ling, who offered his apologies for being unable to attend our banquet the previous evening. We watched as they clambered into their aircraft, some carrying their groundcrew - of whom a surprising number are female flight mechanics - and we waved them off as they taxied in majestic formation out to the main runway. A distant roar reached us as they took off towards Fiskerton before banking round and disappearing into the clouds.

A tour of their hanger showed us photos of previous Red Arrow teams adorning the hanger walls and tucked away in a corner under polythene wrapping was an original Red Arrows display aircraft- the Folland Gnat, restored to pristine condition and surprisingly small in size.

Then on to the museum and a cup of coffee before viewing the exhibits. The remains of Hampden P1206 are now on permanent display in the corner of the hanger where we unpacked them when she finally arrived home last year.



[See The 4T9er, issue 12] The main area of the museum occupies some rooms off the hanger and a new coloured window dedicated to Bomber Command is the latest addition to a fine display of memorabilia.

The visit was quite tiring, involving a lot of walking but as Pat Keay remarked when we all assembled back at the Main Gate;

“I wouldn’t have missed that for the world !”

*[This concluded the formal events for the 2009 Reunion. Ed.]*



## The RAF Scampton Memorial Window



Photo; Graham Inns



The Dunholme Lodge Memorial Window at William Farr C of E School, Welton, Lincs.



The second and concluding part of:

## A LANDGIRL'S TALE

By Bettie Baird



### Heifer dentist

On our way to work on rat-catching we would often stop at a farmer's who had asked Mr Singleton (My boss) to call in and take out some heifer's teeth which were giving the young cow some trouble. My job was to stick my fingers in its nose and grip very hard. This stopped the animal from moving and Mr Singleton was able to feel his way along the mouth and take out the offending baby teeth which should normally have dropped out. Unfortunately the animal always got diarrhoea. One day after I had left the Land Army and was engaged to be married to Bill, who was a dentist, I took him to meet Bill Singleton. We all went to a farm so that he could watch Mr Singleton and me take out some teeth. This was something different for a real dentist to see! Bill stood behind the heifer and I'm afraid he caught the blast from the animal's rear portion – I forgot to tell him that it made the heifer nervous!

### We were called by the R.A.F. to get rid of the rats.

We felt we might not collect enough rats to impress the R.A.F. boys, so we put some dead ones in a sack and took them along with us. Needless to say, we hadn't been too successful so we carried a couple each by the tails. We picked some very large ones from the last farm we had been to. I had the feeling that they would still have been troubled by rats! Another time we had to go to a leather factory at Millom. The rats were crawling down near some water where there were a lot of old bones. The smell was dreadful and we had scarves round our noses. It was the only time that I felt sick but we did our job and hoped that we got rid of the rats.



## **George.**

At the hostel in Gosforth we had a ghost which we called George. He was always very elegant and always wore a top hat and a blue silk dressing gown. Bolton Hall was an old mansion house and belonged to the Westons. Some rooms were locked and there was one room which had a small window near the ceiling, facing the landing. One evening we decided to see if the window opened. The tallest girl, Betty Crampton, let me stand on her shoulders. I pushed the window inwards and saw an old fashioned leather hat box, the kind that gentlemen kept their hats in in the last century. We brought the box down but it was empty. Of course, we were more convinced that George did visit us and wore the top hat which should have been in the box. In a way it was rather strange that we should find the hat box after most of us had seen George long before we knew that it existed.



**Bettie, centre, with her friend, Phyllis Jordan, and ‘The old mole catcher’.**

I shared a bed room with four girls including my best friend Phyllis. One of the girls used to feed a mouse. She called it her pet mouse and often I felt little feet running over my head. Being a rat-catcher along with my friend Phyllis we were tempted to hit it with a shoe! We did eventually get rid of it because they breed every seven weeks and we would have been over-run with mice. All the lights were turned off at the mains at 10pm every night and to have had dozens of little feet running all over us would have been too much to endure.

Kathleen McLean, the forewoman, and in charge of all the girls also shared our room. She always shouted at me in the morning to get me up. Needless to say I didn’t take much notice. I was always the last down to breakfast.

## Entertainment

Bolton Hall was in the middle of nowhere, one and a half miles from Gosforth, with Holmrook about two miles away, less if we crossed over the fields and took a short cut. At Holmrook there was a factory hostel and once a week they had a film show which Land Girls were allowed to go to. Opposite this hostel based in Holmrook Hall was a rest place for bomb and mine disposal officers, which included divers from the Royal Navy and Marines. These were of different nationalities: South African and American but mainly British. They also were allowed to go to the cinema. The officers' base was mined, and we were told there were booby traps in the grounds, so we never saw the Hall as it was also surrounded by trees.

One Christmas time the matron of Bolton Hall decided that we should have a party. She was called Mrs. Blanchford, her son was a Lt. Commander in the Royal Navy and she had a soft spot for the Navy as you can imagine. She sent an invitation to the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. Holmrook and invited the officers to the Land Army Party. He accepted, and about twelve officers arrived. We had great fun planning the party. It was decided that we would play a game where each officer would dress up in garments belonging to the Land Girls. We had a large case which contained a pair of pants donated by Mrs Blanchford, also some large woolly pants donated by me. I had been given them by my Domestic Science teacher from school to keep me warm. Miss Craig had had them as a girl to skate in. I wore them under my breeches in winter to keep my knees warm as I occasionally I got rheumatism. The game



Left to right; Pauline Messinger, Alice Donlan, Mary.....,  
'The old mole catcher', Bettie, Phyllis Jordan.

started and we had a mat on the floor. When the music stopped whichever officer was on the mat had to take an article of clothing out of the case and put it on. It was hilarious. There were all these handsome tough young men in all sorts of ladies underwear, from bras to roll-ons. Tommy Thompson, a Lieutenant in the R.N., wore my woolly bloomers. He was portly and rather small, and we had a job to get them on him. Nobody knew the bloomers belonged to me, as they were rather large, but not large enough for Tommy. I think he won the prize for being the funniest. We all had a super time, and the party had done a lot to relieve the tension that these young men had to suffer as bomb and mine disposal officers. The divers in particular always looked very pale when they arrived at Holmrook. Some came back two or three times. Some of course never came back again to enjoy the peace and tranquillity which you could still find in the beautiful countryside.

One day, one of the officers called Len Bergman visited the hostel. He was a South African, and Ingrid Bergman's cousin. I said he could borrow my bike to go back to Holmrook. About ten minutes after he had left we heard a terrific explosion. The windows shook and we didn't know what had happened. In fact it wasn't until the next day that we were told that an ammunition train had blown up. The young officer was blown off my bike, or more likely he dived into the hedge on hearing the explosion. Both man and bike were none the worse for this episode. It would have been a minor thing to a young man who had been diving in enemy waters.

*After the war Bettie, nee McDonald, married Bill Baird, a Hampden pilot with 49 Squadron who was shot down on February 4th 1941 whilst on his 10th op. Sadly Bill died in 2008. Now aged 83, Bettie is a talented artist, working mainly in oils but also in pastel and earlier this year was a steward at the 'Border Art Exhibition' where she had five paintings on display. She has also given talks on her Land Army days and appeared on local television.*



## THE OLD TANNERY

DIAMOND HOUSE FARM

FERRY ROAD

FISKERTON

LINCOLNSHIRE

**Bed and Breakfast, Caravan Site and Camping**

**Proprietors; Les & Barbara Johnson**

**Tel; 01522 595956**

**Highly recommended by the Editor**

## READER'S LETTERS

***In the previous issue of The 4T9er we showed a picture of Graham Bairnsfather and his daughter Jane on Anzac day. This brought forth the following e-mail from their friend Ralph Gray;***

"A great photo, you must be pretty chuffed at her representing the family like this. Hasn't Anzac Day changed! The young people being involved etc...quite different from when I was young. When I was at school, we were in Vietnam and we were dead against it, so Anzac Day got tarred with the "militaristic" brush and we actively rejected it, though we were still very proud of what our fathers had done in the war and respected what Anzac Day meant to them. I guess we were against the way the Establishment co-opted the day and its feelings to support their own ends. Now I realize you can never control what other people do, our job is to remember them above all the hurly-burly of life, that remembrance being the real Anzac Day.

"Graham, you are no doubt aware of the criminal fiasco in GB with the Bomber Command medal and how nothing was ever given to the boys and girls who participated. What are the medals Jane is wearing of Ralph's, and did any of them represent an acknowledgement by the Australian Government of the specific contribution in England?

"I would love to come up one year and watch her march by. What a treat. It was interesting to see you wearing rosemary. I was in New Zealand just before the 25<sup>th</sup>. Over there they have the poppy made/distributed by their RSA organization. They have never heard of wearing rosemary....but I remember it well and loved it with the 49'er badge."

***Graham replied to Ralph and me;***

"As our troops are getting older, the youth of today are taking a keen interest in Anzac Day and are keeping the tradition and the rightful respect to all servicemen & women from past conflicts. Jane is proud to represent Ralph.

"The medal in the extreme right is The Australian Service Medal 1939-1945. I don't know if you do it in England, Alan, but the wearing of rosemary here is very significant. Rosemary is associated with remembrance & commemoration and it grows wildly on the Gallipoli Peninsula, something that the troops were in contact with daily."

*Whilst it is not common UK practice I have seen it done on rare occasions. Ed.*

***A former prisoner jogged Bert Cole's memory and he told me the following;***

"The Nazi type Commandant at Stalag VI, Hydekrug said, 'I have a secret weapon.' This turned out to be a heavy tractor which he had driven round the compound to collapse any tunnel that might be dug. Some Canadian prisoners obtained permission to construct an ice rink which they duly dug but with a large void in the middle. Eventually the Commandant decided to run the tractor over the rink and it disappeared down the hole. As far as I know it is there yet!"

***Eric Clarke e-mailed to tell of his 'Armed Forces Day' in Doncaster;***

“Though it had lacked general publicity, the Parade was a huge success, obviously the various organisations had been well programmed. I called the Civic Office for details and was subjected, nicely, to a quiz which included a query, which happened to be as to my interest, which of course was that I was a very lucky survivor of Bomber Command, and incidentally of 35 years in Local Government in Deputy Chief capacity.

“What happened? I attended the Mansion House steps (only 3 Mansion Houses in the UK, London, Doncaster and York) along with several Veterans who could not join the major Parade expected shortly, when I was approached by the Civic Mayor's Secretary who took me by the hand up the steps to the Mayor who greeted me with ‘I have heard a lot about you, come and stand by me.’ So there I was for the excellent Parade and March Past, What an honour! What an experience! Army vehicles, Army Cadets, ATC Cadets and Navy Cadets, and of course Veterans and others. Having a commitment I excused myself from the following Service at the Minster and activities.”

Yesterday morning [3rd July] I received a phone call from the Civic Office saying the Civic Mayor would like to see me Friday next at 2 pm. at the Mansion House.

*Eric phoned to tell me that he was personally entertained and interviewed by the Mayor in his Parlour. Ed.*

***I am grateful to Geoff Easterling who sent me a copy of W/C Ernest Millington's obituary which appeared in The Daily Telegraph on May 11th this year. However it concentrated predominately on his political career, he was the last surviving wartime MP, but Geoff's notes were more pertinent to this journal. This is an edited version;***

“He arrived at 49 Squadron and was a very active Flight Commander and I flew with him on a number of ‘odd bod’ flights. He was a press on type.

“Actually he was posted to 44 Squadron at the same time as my proper crew, F/O Geoff Poole, on about 4th September 1944 after my crew and I had done 24 ops. I had a few spare ones with other crews. 44 Rhodesia Squadron was Bomber Harris's original squadron when he was a boy. As they had suffered very heavy losses and needed some new blood we and Ernest Millington's crew were posted to Dunholme Lodge. Ernest became Squadron Commander (I was a F/Sgt. then.) He was quite an inspiration, he flew hard and low at times. My skipper packed up a bit earlier than us so Millington finished us off. I was his mid upper gunner at Dunholme on what should have been a night op but because of bad visibility finished up a daylight raid. Wilhelmshaven, 8/10 cloud should have been 18,000 feet, bomb load 4x500lb and 11x1,000lbs, 4hr 55min operation— we had to get in low and came back catching fish on the trailing aerial (that low) 0 feet. We saw the new Me262 German jet fighters, the first time that it had been seen I believe. They did not attack and in any case we

went down to ground level. Some flak but we bombed first on H2S. On getting back he announced that I was a Pilot Officer from that day, 'See you in the mess lunchtime for a pint.' That was the 35 ops of my first tour. I gather that soon after Ernest became a Wing Commander.

"Like him I did not agree with trying to fly in a pattern on daylight ops. He was tops at doing the 5 Group corkscrew when I gave him the order– Never fight it out with the big boys. .303s could never out shoot cannons.

"I kept in contact with Ernest for some years– last year 2008 I did not get a Christmas card although we wrote now and again. He had been teaching and removed to France. Whilst he was only 89 years older than myself he was quite like a dad. We looked up to him and he gave us great confidence, as I said, a press on type, a good pilot. He was a sort of mentor to me and rather like a big brother."

***Don Henderson wrote to advise of the death of S/L Denis 'Dusty' Miller;***

"Denis completed his first tour on Hampdens with 50 Squadron at Skellingthorpe, with the rank of F/Lt and the DFC in June 1942.

"He arrived at Fiskerton in October 1943 as Squadron Leader, B Flight Commander. He met and formed his 'regular' 49 Squadron crew at 1661 HCU, Winthorpe. The crew were originally posted to 44 Squadron, Dunholme Lodge, but after three ops they were transferred to Fiskerton. They were the only 49 Squadron crew to have been both residents and 'lodgers' at Dunholme. (See 'The Dunholme Lodgers' by John Ward.)

"Denis was a popular figure with airfield personnel and an opportunity to show his pilot's instincts arose when soon after his arrival at Fiskerton an aircraft (not his!) overshot a runway and ended up stranded in a neighbouring field. Whilst people stood around scratching their heads and with talk amongst the ground crew of partial dismantling, 'Dusty' decided, having paced around the field, that with ramps covering the ditches he would be able to do a U-turn, open the throttles and 'lift' the aircraft back to the airfield. This was successful.

"As a Squadron Leader Denis flew less frequently on ops and his second tour wasn't completed until April 1944. His favourite Lancaster was 'Q' Queenie, JB314 which was eventually lost a month or so before he left Fiskerton to become a pilot instructor at Finningley.

"Denis occasionally acted as 'Master Bomber' for 49 Squadron /5 Group, circling the target after his own bomb run giving instructions to those following.

"He was awarded the DSO in April 1944, one of less than a dozen awarded within 49 Squadron. His citation refers to 'a high degree of skill, courage and resolution, qualities which have earned him much success.' As well as mentioning his multiple Berlin/Hanover ops his citation also singles out a precision minelaying op when he made several runs to draw enemy fire from ships and shore batteries.

“Post war Denis was a pilot with BOAC/British Airways retiring in 1973.  
 “Denis Millar was a classmate of Sir Edmund Hillary at school in Auckland and in their different ways they ‘reached for the skies’ and had their considerable achievements recognised and appreciated.”

*Don, Assoc. 4T9er, is the son of Denis Miller’s MuG, Sgt D. Henderson. Ed.*



## **LINCOLNSHIRE AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE**

**THE AIRFIELD, EAST KIRKBY, SPILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE23 4DE**

### **Lancaster Taxi Runs with NX611 ‘Just Jane’**

<b>Wed 12th Aug</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Tues 18th Aug</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Thur 20th Aug</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 26th Aug</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Sat 29th Aug</b>	<b>1.00pm &amp; 3.00pm</b>
<b>Wed 31st Aug</b>	<b>1.30pm &amp; 4.00pm</b>

<b>Wed 2nd Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 9th Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Sat 12th Sept</b>	<b>Spitfire &amp; Me109 Dogfight</b>
<b>Lancaster taxi run</b>	<b>1.30pm &amp; 4.00pm</b>
<b>Wed 16th Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Tues 22nd Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Thur 24th Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 30th Sept</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>

<b>Wed 7th Oct</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 14th Oct</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 21st Oct</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Wed 28th Oct</b>	<b>11.00am &amp; 1.30pm</b>
<b>Sat 31st Oct</b>	<b>Halloween themed evening with 3pm + 6pm Lanc night run &amp; fireworks display</b>

Lancaster Taxi Ride places available,  
 Please ring Louise on 01790 763207

**Refreshments all day.**  
**Open 9.00am**  
**[Www.lincsaviation.co.uk](http://www.lincsaviation.co.uk)**



*The introduction of 'New Honorary Friend', Oliver Clutton-Brock, author of 'Massacre over the Marne' in issue 14 prompted Geoff Easterling to write;*

I was with 49 Squadron on the raid, 18/19th July, it was my 5th op. It's all in the book. My crew were the first bomber to be intercepted just after crossing the French coast. 5hr 25 min. op., traumatic bombing at 9,000ft, 4 x 500lbs, 10 x 1,000lbs bombs. Lots of fighter flares. Apart from the first encounter which we evaded we had two combats with Ju88s and FW190s. Jackie Clulow said it was the worst day of his life (And he didn't see it all.) Terrible losses.

"I hardly ever went home as I had no one to go home to, all my mates away and my father away as he was a wartime driver. (Too old for service having been in WWI.) Staying on camp I did a few stand in ops. It was when flying as a rear gunner (My usual spot was mid-upper) only the Right Honourable Tony Wynyard, Gunnery Leader of 49', co-opted me to fly one night, I think the skipper was F/O Perkins. That was the night I got shot in the right leg. Not too much said about that as it was 'Friendly Fire', a couple of .303 bullets that went through the turret.

"I don't know what happened to Tony Wynyard- he was a theatrical type from London. His sister was Diana Wynyard, singer and actress of the time.

"As a Pilot Officer in 44 and 463 Squadrons I was with Wing Commander pilots and was in contact with most of the top bomber boys at any social meetings at Lincoln. (Sometimes 617 Squadron, Woodhall Spa.) I was on speaking terms with AVM 'Bomber' Harris. The last conversation that he had with me was in The Saracen's Head (Shame about that [being demolished]) when Bomber Harris said to me, 'Lad, go and get my cap and tell my driver to bring my car around the front.' (I moved in the best circles in those days.)

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

**In past issues we have debated the purpose of the yellow circle on the back of the Lancaster pilot's armour plate. It was generally agreed that this was for gas detection, it turned green, although it would appear that no-one thought to tell the crews. Well, coincidentally I was talking to a railway modeller who has built a large exhibition layout of a south coast port just prior to D Day. In passing he told me that it had brought a great deal of comment from veterans, one of whom had said, 'You haven't painted the tops of the post boxes yellow, it was for gas detection.' Does anyone remember the yellow tops, I don't but I was only five years old?**

**Are there any pilots or flight engineers out there? In the last issue I asked how you knew when it was your turn to leave the dispersal and join the 'peri-track' queue. An interesting and straight forward question I thought but not a single reply! Come on chaps, surely you can remember the last thing you did before leaving the dispersal.**

## ‘The Blue Blazers’ Incontinental Display Team



Photo; Dominic Howard

49 SA's reply to The Red Arrows, perform a demonstration of the 'Highest Up The Wall Cascade'. The current altitude record is three and a half bricks when fuelled with two coffees and half a shandy. Note the tricky 'No-hands' displayed by Blue 1, Jack Joslin, much to the admiration of Bert Cole (in cap). Do NOT try this at home unless you are particularly gifted. Blue 2, Ted Cachart, holds the 'Stand Back' position whilst 'synchro pair' Blue 3 and Blue 4, Lou Crabbe and Stuart Keyay respectively, concentrate hard whilst performing the dangerous 'Splashed Shoes Pass'. It is important to note the precisely splayed toes. Dave Harrison (right) commentates whilst Eric Clarke is totally bemused by the whole business and prepares to evacuate by the forward escape hatch.

\*\*\*\*\*

*A few people have asked how they might obtain the sweat and polo shirts bearing the squadron badge. It is more than a year since these were advertised in The 4T9er so here are the details again. The example shown is in navy blue but a range of colours and sizes is available.*

*Quote Ref: MIL/49 SQN Assoc*

*Various types from £15.95 plus  
VAT and postage*

*DO NOT order them from the  
Association. Order direct from;*

*Terrane Ltd.,  
Terrane House,  
Whisby Way Industrial Estate,  
Lincoln,  
LN6 3LQ  
Tel; 01522 697000*

