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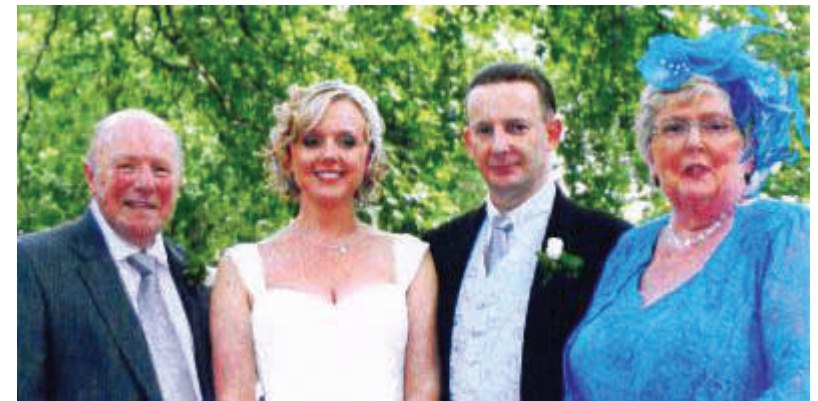
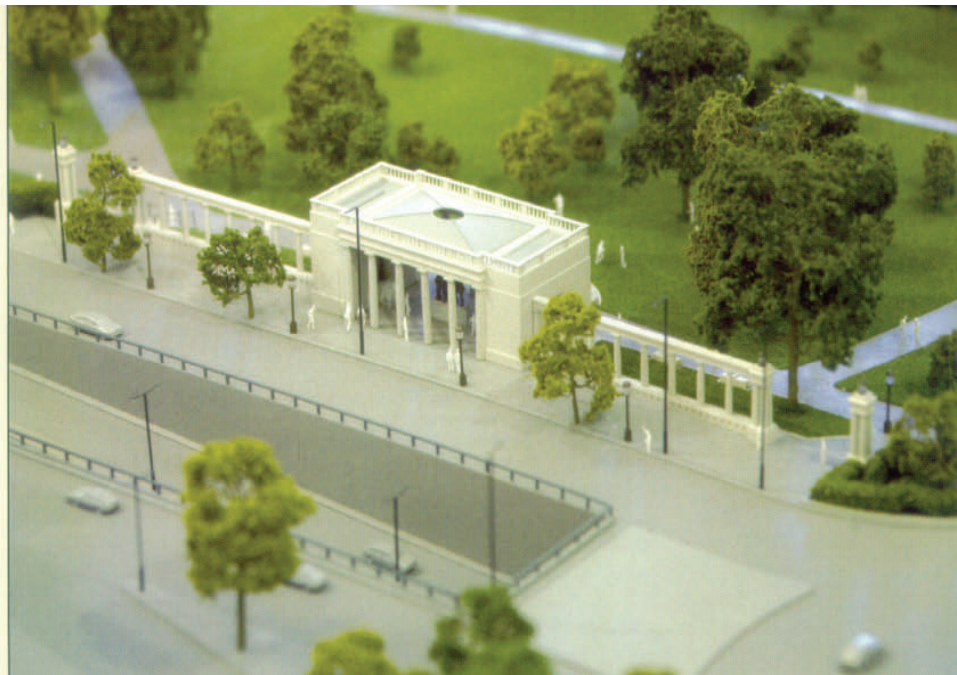
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The 49 Squadron Association Magazine February 2011 Issue 21



The RAFA Memorial at The National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire.



Photo; via Jack Shearing

49 Squadron Association congratulates Associate Member Mhairi Anderson (nee Galloway) and her husband on the occasion of their wedding and wishes them every happiness.



**In
2012
the
The
Bomber
Command
Memorial
should
become
reality.**

**WEAR
THE
49
SQUADRON
BADGE
WITH
PRIDE**



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Wed 27th April 11.00am & 1.30pm

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HEROES RETURN

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND INITIATIVE TO ASSIST VETERANS VISIT THE SITES OF THEIR CAMPAIGNS OR THE GRAVES OF THEIR FORMER COLLEAGUES, OR FOR WAR WIDOWS TO VISIT THEIR HUSBAND'S GRAVES, WAS DUE TO END ON DECEMBER 31st 2010. THIS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO DECEMBER 31st 2011.

IMPORTANT NOTE

THE GRANT HAS ALSO BEEN EXTENDED TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE COST OF ATTENDING THE REUNION. THIS IS £150 FOR A VETERAN OR WIDOW PLUS £75 FOR SPOUSE OR CARER OR £330 FOR VETERAN, SPOUSE AND CARER. For further details contact Ted Cachart. Details on the back cover.

IN MEMORIAM

N. Thomas E.J. Sullivan K.J. Read

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

WELCOME TO:

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Elsie Holwill Donna Jardine

EDITORIAL

I am absolutely sick and tired of hearing the words 'human rights' applied to criminals and wastrels. If only half the attention was paid to 'human responsibilities' what a happier place this would be. There, I have got that off my chest so;

Thank you to all who sent Christmas and New Year greetings to Barbara and myself. I hope that you all had an enjoyable time. As always I am grateful to all those who have sent donations in the form of cheques, cash and postage stamps. Your generosity is much appreciated and helps to ensure that 49 Squadron Association continues to go from strength to strength. The 'Old Dog' will remain in good nick as long as there are kind people like you who have a genuine desire to ensure that the squadron and those who died whilst serving with the squadron are remembered for as long as possible.

'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.'

Whilst on the subject of donations I should explain that I usually only personally acknowledge the larger values. This is by no means a sign of ingratitude but in these days of increasing postal charges there seems little point in giving part of the donation to the Royal Mail. For those on e-mail it is a different matter and I do try to acknowledge all donations but due to variations in work load, reunions, The 4T9er etc., occasionally one may slip through unacknowledged. I sincerely hope that you will understand.

I must express my appreciation to those who have sent in their experiences and matters of interest. Without them this would be a very thin publication indeed so please keep them coming.

I regret that I must record the passing of three Members. Noel 'Taffy' Thomas died on December 31st. An airframe fitter, who possessed a fine tenor voice, he was a prominent member of 'The Joes Show', an entertainment troupe that performed at Fiskerton and Fulbeck and which featured in The 4T9er, Issue 10.

Noel was posted in to 49' at Scampton. Ewart Sullivan was the wireless operator in the crew of F/O D.J. Whent which was shot down 16/17th March 1945 during a raid on Wurzburg. Ewart was hitherto our most senior member, in years, being 98. That status now returns to Eric Clarke who will be 98 in April. Ken Read was an enthusiastic regular at the 49SA Reunions. Sadly he died on Sunday 23rd January. He had been ill for some time but was always cheerful when we spoke. He was delighted to see 'Ken's Day' in November's The 4T9er. Ken was a bomb aimer in the crew of F/O D. Hytch and had completed 19 ops when the war ended. A keen philatelist and angler he and I had many discussions on the latter. Next time that I am on the river bank Ken will be there.

New Associate Elsie Holwill is the sister of F/Sgt Dennis Blumfield who was the navigator in the crew of F/O Bill Appleyard. The whole crew died when Lancaster ND684 was lost on the Revigny raid, July 18/19th 1944. Elsie's membership was arranged as a surprise Christmas present by her daughter Chris Beare. Donna Jardine is the daughter of the late Ewart Sullivan whose passing is recorded above.

On December 29th I was shocked to read in the press that VAT is to be levied on The Bomber Command Memorial. Apparently this is not due on the total project but the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has decided to make professional fees, including design, surveying, project management and fund raising ineligible for VAT exemption from early January 2011. I know that the country is in a mess but it would be in an even bigger mess had it not been for the deeds of Bomber Command. Together with the campaign medal this is just another indication of Westminster's lack of understanding and ingratitude.

On the other hand on December 17th Bomber Command was honoured at The Imperial War Museum during the televised 'A Night of Heroes' in the presence of Prince Charles and Camilla. Stephen Fry made an excellent introduction to several ex Bomber Command aircrew whilst Ann Widemcombe and today's forces sweetheart Katherine Jenkins escorted them on to the stage. Receiving the award, former rear gunner Harry Irons said, "This award is for 55,573 boys who should be standing on this stage with us. We thank you all so much, it belongs to you." David Cameron was also in the audience. It would be nice to think that it might have convinced him that the campaign medal is justified but I doubt it.

Tony Iveson, who flew in the Battle of Britain and then went on to fly all three of the Tirpitz raids with 617 Squadron, was the guest on Radio Four's 'Desert Island Discs' early in January. He spoke of the Bomber Command Memorial Appeal and also reminded us that 40,000 British civilians had been killed by German bombs by the end of 1941. He went on to say that Bomber Command was the only force that was capable of taking the war to the enemy at that time. I know that at least one veteran was moved to tears by Tony's words

Archivist Ed Norman received the following e-mail from non member Alexander Brzeski regarding the crash site of 49 Squadron Lancaster ND533.

"You are most welcome to the photographs and feel free to use them in any way you feel fit. I hope that they are of some use to the organisation.

"Being a man of 43 with Polish heritage I grew up hearing stories of life during the war in places such as Poland where my father grew up and London which is where I spent all my years until recently. I also believe that my grandfather was involved with the resistance here in France. Although it is sad to think of the millions who lost their lives for me it is fascinating to see things that remind us of both wars. It makes me realise just how lucky we are to live in relatively peaceful times.

"The forest surrounding the village in which I live in 'Lyons la Foret' is littered with memorial stones marking the spot where several other planes from 49 Squadron were shot down. Legend has it that there was a lady, Madame Hugette, who lived locally and she could tell whether a plane shot down was British or American simply by the time of day. If it was shot down during the day it was bound to be American and if shot down at night it was British. In order to find the surviving crew members to help them she would walk through the streets singing 'Yankie doodle dandy!' if she knew they were American and 'It's a long way to Tipperary' if she knew they were English. Not only are there memorial stones around the place, there are also bomb craters scattered about and what look like the remains of trenches. There are also rectangular ditches by the road side which I am told was where the Nazis hid their trucks loaded with ammunition.

"I have also recently learnt that not far from here there are V1 and V2 launch sites.

"Please feel free to contact me if you think I could be of any assistance. I will also carry on sending any photos of other memorials I come across with a connection to 49 Squadron."

CAN YOU HELP?

German researcher and air crash recovery expert Uwe Benkel is seeking help, financial or practical, in the recovery of 49 Squadron Lancaster ED427 and her crew at Laumersheim. Crucially he is seeking the loan of a JCB type backhoe digger. Details of the project were featured in November's issue of The 4T9er.

**WHEN SENDING CHEQUES TO THE ASSOCIATION
PLEASE ALWAYS MAKE THEM PAYABLE TO;
49SA PETWOOD.**

morgue and identified by Lieutenant Fran Mahan, I Company. The men were buried in the temporary American cemetery at Cambridge. S/Sgt Robert W. Shearer found his last resting place in the permanent American cemetery at Cambridge in plot/grave number E-3-43. The remains of PFC Mitchell and PVT. Spera were repatriated and buried in cemeteries in Ohio and California.

“Crew chief Roland Dahlberg was on board the "Bama Belle". He had to look after the plane, while the other crew members were having their lunch. They would relieve Roland as soon as possible. When the mines exploded Roland was standing in the door with his back turned to the outside of the plane. He was severely wounded. An ambulance rushed him to the 348th Station Hospital, where 165 pieces of shrapnel were taken from his body. It took a while to recover. Two paratroopers were also wounded in the blast.

“The truck and the "Bama Belle" were destroyed. The 42-100821 was also severely damaged. Neither of the planes ever flew again. The "Bama Belle" (construction number 19533) was delivered to the USAAF on 31st



January 1944 and was less than 9 months old. On 14th April 1944 the plane was transferred to the 9th Air Force. The slightly older 42-100821 (construction number 19284) had been delivered

on 16th December 1943. Two other C-47s were damaged, but were repairable.

Footnote;

“Patton's ground forces overran the drop zone and the mission was cancelled.”

The following e-mail was received from former Red Arrows Adjutant and Honorary Friend John May. Not surprisingly John is a big fan of noisy jets;

“I’ve just finished reading your latest excellent iteration of The 4T9er – much enjoyed as usual. I then Googled 49 Squadron to go to your Association website and one of the links the search threw up was one I had never seen before – http://www.valiants-r-us.co.uk/html/49_squadron.html – are you familiar with it? Lots of good photos of Valiants.”

and it breaks my heart to hear the brave men of Bomber Command having to justify their actions of so long ago in the face of criticism from post war self appointed judges who weren’t even born at the time of the courageous deeds that ensured those critics the freedom to express their distorted opinions. Can any sane person really think that 120,000 young flyers plus ground staff would involve themselves in killing civilians for the hell of it? I, and I hope the veterans, draw some solace from knowing that there are many, many others who like us 4T9ers know better. By the way, those who know the programme will be aware that the guest is allowed one book and one luxury item. The Bible (how long before it’s the Koran?) and The Complete Works of Shakespeare are already included. Tony’s choice of a book stretched the rules slightly as he asked for three volumes of Somerset Maugham’s Short Stories. He further stretched the rules by requesting as his luxury item two mature grape vines and a tin bath in which to tread the grapes.

In this issue we conclude, for the moment, Dom Howard’s research in to the loss of his uncle P/O Cyril Anderson and crew. We have described a number of searches over the years and I hope that these and Dom’s story will give encouragement to those who wish to know more about the loss of their courageous forebears.

I expect that many, like me, have walked round a military cemetery and reading the names on the headstones have wondered who those who lay there really were and what sad events conspired to bring about their deaths. Well, as far as the Scampton churchyard is concerned one may need to wonder no more. Having now read Honorary Friend Gary Mennell’s book ‘Slightly beneath the Glide Path’ (details in The 4T9er Issue 19) I now know the story behind all those RAF personnel, and German aircrew, who lie in Scampton and have to say that reading of their fate was a most interesting and sobering experience.

On January 21st the feature on ‘Fido’, which we previewed in Issue 20 of The 4T9er, was broadcast on ‘The One Show’. Standing on Fiskerton runway Chairman Ted put in a sterling performance in recounting his memories of landing with the aid of FIDO. I leave it to John Ward, who is much more knowledgeable in these things than I, to elaborate; “...excellent views of the Fiskerton funnel, present day, followed by the 3rd November 1943 still of the the approach. The very quick shot of a night time approach showing FIDO glowing, is RAF Metherringham - if you watch the bottom left of the screen you can see where the FIDO box crosses the Metherringham/Walcot road. The aircraft passes over the track that leads down to Metherringham visitors centre. So once again, well done Ted....you did all 'Bomber Boys' proud.” We will be taking a copy to Petwood to show it at the reunion.

January was a very special month in 49 Squadron’s exposure on prime time TV.

Just over a week after Ted's appearance there was a repeat of Antiques Roadshow from Lincoln Cathedral. Jim Flint, a sprightly 97 was there with his medals which included the DFC and George Medal. Jim described how he went back into his sinking Hampden to rescue his wounded navigator. Sadly his efforts were in vain as Sgt 'Benny' Beningsfield died the following day. The 'expert' declined to value the medals as, "...you can't put a price on courage." To which Jim replied, "They're not for sale anyway."

Whilst not involving 49 Squadron there is a new book, 'Unbroken' by Laura Hillenbrand, that tells the story of extraordinary will to survive. Second Lieutenant Louis Zamperini was bombardier on a USAAF B24 Liberator in the Pacific. Having survived the ditching he and a companion were afloat for an incredible 47 days. A third member of the crew died and was buried at sea. Even after that terrible ordeal their suffering was not over as they were eventually captured by the Japanese and spent two years as PoWs.

Unfortunately there were only two members who expressed an interest in the 49 Squadron windscreen stickers so I'm afraid that these, like the ties, have bitten the dust.

Some readers may shake their heads in disbelief and label us as 'anoraks' at some of the in depth discussions that The Crew have. Perhaps a good example of this concerned the dropping by 49 Squadron of 'T16, T17, T32A, G17 and G32a. Archivist Ed Norman uncovered this minefield during some research he was carrying out and this gripping subject kept us going for days. Speculation ranged around 'Window,' sea mines and leaflets. In the end the latter won the day after our Researcher, Colin Cripps, contacted Mr Peter Elliot, Senior Keeper, Department of Research and Information Services, RAF Museum, Hendon. His reply to Colin's query read; "...the G numbers refer to propaganda leaflets in German-French leaflets beginning with F and so on. There is no T series but leaflets G16 and G17 were also dropped in that period-might there have been a problem in the typing pool? T is close to G on the keyboard." What joy! We could all sleep soundly once again.

I have sent out a number of e-mails to those members who have provided me with their addresses. If you haven't received any messages from me recently it means that I have not been informed of your current e-mail address and therefore you are missing out on short notice information. When changing your contact details would you please be sure to let me know as I spend a considerable amount of time searching for missing members.

As always our thoughts and prayers are with all those 4T9ers and their loved ones who are not enjoying the best of health.

'Til the next time.

"On the previous night's attack 1/2nd January 1944 (which Ted was also in attendance) 28 Lancs from 421 failed to return. Again the loss coincidentally to aircrew was 168. The Berliners casualties were 79, of whom 21 were killed in a panic rush to the shelters.

"Now I don't know how you have envisaged the area bombing attacks by the RAF, but I have always held the impression that the casualty rate on the ground nearly always vastly outweighed those in the air.

"Food for thought..."

Most 4T9ers are familiar with the tragedy at Fulbeck on April 22nd 1945 when Lancaster PB463 crashed into the MT shed. There was however, a tragedy six weeks prior to 49' moving in. John Ward sent this account;

"Tragedy at Fulbeck - 2nd September 1944

"After the Normandy invasion, the 440th moved to their new base at Fulbeck. Soon the ground crews followed. The base was known as USAAF Station 488. The planes flew daily to the mainland of Europe to deliver the urgently needed supplies. On the return trip wounded soldiers were taken back to England. New operations were planned and cancelled. One of these missions was dubbed operation Comet, planned to drop paratroopers near Lille-Roubaix. Paratroopers would be dropped in front of General George Patton's ground forces. The first paratroopers of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, began to arrive on the base. All the planes were refuelled and inspected. The paratroopers started to pack their heavy equipment and ammunition in the so-called parapacks.

"Several of the paratroopers were ordered to take the heavy parapacks to the airplanes. Trucks were used to transport the bundles. In one of the airplanes, nicknamed 'Toni', were Irving Brezack and Raymond Clark. In several other planes were also men, 'guarding' their planes. Brezack and Clark were sitting in the cockpit, when suddenly the plane was rocked by a heavy explosion. They climbed out of their plane, taking a small fire extinguisher with them. The "Bama Belle", parked next to their plane, was on fire. The fuselage looked as if someone had used a can opener. The left wing was almost severed from the fuselage. It was a mess. Debris started falling from the sky. Ambulances and fire trucks came speeding with their sirens on.

"A detail of paratroopers from I Company, 508th, stopped their truck close to the "Bama Belle" and started to unload six parapacks. The packs were heavy. One pack contained 28 land mines. This pack was dropped on the ground and exploded on impact. Later it turned out that one of the mines had a defective detonator. The explosion caused a chain of explosions and all 28 mines blew up. It caused a crater of 9 ft in diameter and 4.5 ft deep.

"Staff Sergeant Robert W. Shearer, Private First Class William R. Mitchell and Private Louis N. Spera were killed in the blast. Their remains were taken to the

READER'S LETTERS

During his research into the death of his father, Sgt Stan Bartlett, in the Lincoln crash in Kenya, Richard Bartlett-May queried an item in the crash report with contemporary pilot and 4T9er Stuart Keay. Part of Stuart's reply went as follows;

"In reply to your question about the green card, which in this case refers to [the pilot's] instrument rating, allowing him to fly in certain IFR conditions, while being the basic and master green the top, depending on experience and number of hours flown. A green endorsement, however, is a recognition of an extraordinary skill that doesn't warrant a medal (or a more important gong!). For example, a colleague flying an Anson was unable to lower his undercarriage. He feathered his port engine, prop horizontal, and on finals, feathered the starboard one and made a successful landing, possible because when retracted the wheels protrude clear of the underside of the aircraft. The only damage to the aircraft was to the pitot head!! For this he was awarded a Green Endorsement on his log book.

"I hope that this explains the difference..."

The photo below clearly shows the port wheel of the Anson protruding beneath the engine nacelle. My first reaction was 'Pull the other one!' but I was so intrigued by this story that I spoke to Stuart who confirmed that the propeller could be

inched round to the horizontal. He went on to say that one other aircraft, a Douglas Dakota, could theoretically do the same

thing although as it is fitted with three bladed propellers it would not be possible to save the blades. The extra weight on the retracted undercarriage might prove too much as the design is different to the Anson. Ed.



Chairman Ted Cachart became a guest of the Germans on January 2nd 1944, our Honorary President and Historian, John Ward, came up with the following;

"I have come across a couple of, for want of a better word, curious facts.

"On the night of the attack on Berlin 2/3rd January 1944 we lost 27 Lancasters from the 383 resulting in 168 aircrew deaths - Berlin had 82 dwellings destroyed and 36 Berliners lost their lives.

In issue 20 we regretfully recorded the passing of W/C Alan Newitt DFC who commanded 49 Squadron from 1st April 1953 to 1st May 1956. We now present a further story of his experiences whilst in Kenya.



See Log Book entry 26th December, 1954. How I flew under a Jersey man on Mount Kenya.

On this particular day I had been briefed to bomb a Mau Mau hide on Mount Kenya which had been designated a prohibited area for the duration of the emergency. It was an unusual assignment in so far as the terrorists were operating in and around Nairobi and the surrounding British farming community, although it was known that one or more Mau Mau gangs were hidden up in the forests covered slopes of Mount Kenya. Intelligence reported that several detachments of the Royal Iniskilling Fusiliers, one of which was

commanded by Major Terry Troy (subsequently Brigadier T.M. Troy C.B.E.), a native of Jersey, were on patrol in the area. As the exact positions of the detachments were not known, we were warned not to drop any bombs above an altitude of 13,000 ft. as the patrols would be above that height on surveillance missions.

The flight was a routine affair. We located the hide and dropped a string of bombs across the target where there were obvious signs of recent activity in the forest. Major Troy, from his vantage point, was able to observe the whole operations below him, little suspecting that the pilot of the aircraft was an old school pal and also a native of Jersey. The sequel to the bombing was to cause some discomfort to him and his soldiers, but that is best described by the Brigadier in his own words.

"In addition to the patrols mentioned above, a large number of ambushes had been laid astride game tracks, outside the bombing area, in the hope of catching terrorists fleeing from the bombing. In the event, the soldiers lying in wait were suddenly and frighteningly faced by very enraged wild animals charging down the game tracks as they fled from the bombing. Impressed as they were by the accuracy of the R.A.F. bombing, the soldiers' language, as they hurled themselves off the tracks and deep into the surrounding undergrowth, was highly expressive."

Sadly, it has to be admitted that there were many animal casualties from the bombing but the rumour is quite unfounded that our agile Brigadier was last seen shinning up a tree faster than the first rhino which came thundering up the track.

In the November issue we read of the late Frank Lowe's 'Illuminating Experience'. We now cover some more aspects of his war;



Photo; Via Barbara and Philip Lowe

Sgt. Frank Lowe, left, and crew.

FLAK-SHIP!

In May 1941 we set out from Scampton in a Hampden on our fourth raid on Hamburg docks. It was a moonlit night and we made the 400 mile sea-crossing without incident. We crossed the enemy coast a few miles North of the Western end of the Kiel canal, successfully avoiding a concentration of searchlights, then turned onto a South-Easterly heading until we were East of Hamburg. Then we turned to starboard and made our bombing run across the city to the target. The flak was

intense and the searchlights persistent but the docks showed up well in the moonlight and we were confident that our bombing, from about 9,000 ft. had been accurate. After leaving the target area we started a steady descent, intending to make the return trip at low level over the sea, thus reducing the risk of being spotted by night-fighters. Unfortunately the sea by this time was covered by a vast blanket of fog, brilliant white in the light of the moon. Our Hampden would show up clearly in silhouette to any enemy aircraft above us. I chose the obvious solution and gratefully let the aircraft sink into the welcome concealment of the fog until the altimeter read 400ft.. I dared not go any lower as I did not know the local barometric pressure. We had all relaxed and were already savouring the prospect of eggs and bacon for breakfast when all hell was let loose-we had flown straight over a flak-snip! We were surrounded by spirals of tracer-a mixture of machine gun and 20 mm. cannon fire, the latter almost certainly quadruple-mounted. I instinctively flew an evasive corkscrew. My under-gunner asked me whether he should open fire and I hastily told him not

into the paddy field but it was late monsoon and the paddy fields were full of water, I think that helped a bit in some way.

Four or five of us piled into the Jeep with an amazing array of tools, one hatchet, one hacksaw and a hammer in order to get the crew out if it was needed. Anyway, when we got there the R.A.F. boys were there as well from the airfield and we set to doing what we could. It turned out that one of the crew was dead. They also told us that there was a bomb or two still hung up but we thought if the crash hadn't set them off our bit of hammering and tearing wouldn't set them off either, but it was after dark before the last bomb was out.

Talking amongst ourselves afterwards we said, "Well the survivors will all die in bed," because otherwise they'd have died on that day. It was an amazing thing to see and of course it gave me great confidence in flying later on.

I feel now that I must record why I am making this tape. It happened that some weeks ago I read in the Yorkshire Post an article by a chap called David Kendal who was looking for six Spitfires that were buried near the airport at Mingaldon in 1945.

Well I happened to remember that I had seen several Japanese ammunition dumps which were underground studded around Mingaldon airport and I thought I had better drop him a line and tell him this because if he went in with a JCB he may find more than he bargained for. I sent it off to the Yorkshire Post office in Hull and a day later David Kendal rang me and thanked me for the contribution and said did I know anything about the Spitfires and I said, "Well 28 Squadron was our P.R. Squadron and they took their Spitfires which they only got when they got to Rangoon after the European war was finished. Before that they were on clapped out Hurricanes and they took them down to Penang. I actually flew down to Penang in a Dakota taking the spares and that was the last I heard of them and I came back to Rangoon and then being in the Indian Army at that time, which again was just fortuitous I suppose, we went back to India to reform as mediums. [*Medium Anti-Aircraft. Ed.*]

However that's all part of that but a few weeks later David Kendal rang me again and said that he had traced the pilot of the Liberator, Peter Miles, and would I mind if he gave him my name and telephone number, I said, "Not at all," which he did and then Peter and I met and we had a good old chin wag, a long time ago now. Anyway a few days ago I got another telephone call, Titch Cooke, who turned out to be the front gunner and the one who got rid of some of the bombs by unshackling them off a little narrow walkway in the bomb bay with the bomb doors open of course with nothing but the sea underneath, not a nice thing to do.

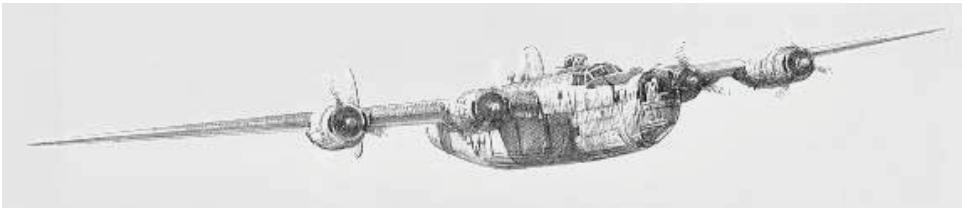
So I am making this tape to send to Titch with all my blessings for good luck and long life. Best of luck Titch. Cheers.

SEQUEL

More than sixty years after the events described by Bill he received a phone call from a Robert Ditchfield who afterwards sent him an audio cassette. A transcript of that cassette follows;

Through volunteering, which was a stupid thing to do, I was serving with the heavy ack-ack during the 39/45 war and again through volunteering finished up in Burma and on June 15th 1945, after ambling down Burma, was on the ack-ack defence at Mingaladon Airport at Rangoon.

In the late afternoon we saw a plane approaching from the south east. The south east wasn't friendly territory so we stuck to the guns. Having looked at the thing we couldn't identify it, it didn't conform really to any shape in detail that we knew. However, we didn't fire at it we let it keep coming. It was fairly low and then we assumed it was a Liberator bomber but its one tail fin and rudder was missing and that made it look rather lopsided.



A pencil drawing of a Liberator by 'Honorary Friend' Nicolas Trudgian

As it approached it started to do an anti-clockwise circuit of the airstrip and when it was sort of quarter of the way round we switched the R.T. set on. It was a number 22, over to the same frequency, it had the right crystals in fortunately to the control tower and there was this voice coming out saying "Liberator, Liberator. This is not a bomber strip you cannot land here this is fighters only, can you hear me?" To which there was silence, no reply from the Liberator. He continued anti-clockwise and the voice in the control tower continued, "This is a fighter strip, you cannot land here". Well he must have been a wingless wonder because it was really obvious now he'd got lower still that besides the fin and rudder missing there appeared to be holes through the fuselage and I am certain I saw daylight through the end of one wing, it looked as though something had gone through like a lump of shrapnel.

As he started on his second circuit coming lower we thought, "By golly if he can get lined up he'll make it on this trip". It was obvious that all he wanted was a flat bit of terra firma to put the thing down on and walk away because it was a flying wreck. How he kept that thing flying I do not know, in fact put him behind the wheel of a double decker bus and he'd fly that. But there we are, anyway half way round on the second circuit the engines cut and down he went

to, as it would have given away our position. After what could not have been more than half a minute, but seemed much longer, we were out of range and unscathed, feeling as much indignant as frightened! We really enjoyed our breakfast safely back at Scampton!

FLARE-UP!

We were briefed for a bombing trip to Bremen, despite a poor weather forecast. It was a dark, wet February evening when we got airborne in our Hampden, penetrated the low cloud-base set course for the target and slowly climbed to 6,000 ft. still in cloud. As we neared our ETA I started a slow descent and we eventually saw the glow of searchlights, hopefully indicating the target area. We finally broke through the cloud-base at about 4,000 ft. The visibility was poor, with misty drizzle, so I told my WOP/AG to drop a flare in the hope of identifying the aiming point-the docks. By this time we were down to about 3,500 ft. and I suddenly became aware of a brilliant light below us, lots of smoke in the cockpit and a strong smell of fireworks! My WOP/AG called me to report that the flare had stuck in the flare-chute and ignited. I told him to try and knock it out with the fire-axe. Needless to say the German gunners and searchlight crews had by this time chosen us as a prime target. We had some very near misses from light and heavy flak and were coned by searchlights. I took the usual evasive action, opened the bomb-doors, told the navigator to drop the bombs, opened the throttles and climbed back into cloud cover. My WOP/AG had managed to dislodge the flare and we thankfully set course for home.

A SOUPCON OF DISCOMFORT!

It was the summer of 1941. I was 21 years of age, a sergeant-pilot in the R.A.F., captain of a Hampden bomber with 49 Squadron at Scampton in Lincolnshire. We had been told that we would be "on ops" that night, and had air-tested our aircraft that morning. In the afternoon we had attended the briefing. We had an early dinner in the Sergeants Mess-soup, main course and sweet-then an hour or so of rest before walking to the "flights" to don our flying gear before being trucked out to the aircraft in dispersal. It was standard practice for the whole crew of four to gather round the tail of the aircraft to spend a last penny (pee now or for ever hold your pees!) before climbing aboard. On this occasion the under-gunner found it necessary to move a bit further away so that he could dispose of something more substantial than a penny! We should have been alerted by this non-standard behaviour. However we finally took our places in the aircraft, blissfully ignorant of the unpleasant ordeal we were soon to endure as an extra to the hostile actions of the enemy. We did our initial checks, started the engines, went through the after start-up routine, taxied out towards

the take-off point, carried out the pre-take-off checks got our green light and took off.

As far as I can recall, the North Sea crossing was uneventful, although always potentially dangerous. Unless there was plenty of cloud cover we always felt very vulnerable there, knowing that we presented a silhouette against the light of the Northern sky to any enemy night-fighter approaching from the dark of the South. This feeling of vulnerability probably produced an occasional spasm of the anal sphincter but on this trip all four of us were experiencing the symptoms of incipient diarrhoea by the time we reached the enemy coast. We had to exercise extreme muscle control to avoid personal disaster! To make matters worse we found that the cloud base over Emden, our target, was only about 4,000 ft.

We did our bombing run at 3,000 ft., nearly got coned by searchlights and survived some very near misses by light and heavy flak.

On the way back home, we seriously considered the possibility of landing in a field in Holland, so that we could relieve ourselves! This was not on of course but we did keep our speed up to 150mph instead of the usual 130mph for a lightly loaded Hampden. We eventually landed at Scampton, taxied as fast as possible to the hangar, stopped, switched off, and we were all out and running for the latrines, discarding flying gear as we went! I nearly made it but had to waddle awkwardly the last few yards. I heard my under-gunner scramble into the next cubicle - he was actually dropping his trousers when the worst happened. The other two members of my crew also lost the race! We heard later that another of our pilots, upon suffering the symptoms on the outward trip, had made a brave and imaginative effort to deal with the problem. He engaged the autopilot and told his under-gunner to come up behind the pilot's seat with the paper bag which had contained the "rations" - chocolate etc. The Hampden was a very narrow aeroplane - no room to sit side by side - and the back of the pilot's seat was hinged so that, in an emergency, it was possible to change pilots in flight, albeit with some difficulty. This chap undid his Sutton harness, dropped the seat back, took off his parachute, eased his body out of his Sidcot flying suit, pushed down his trousers and pants and got his gunner to hold the ration-bag where the toilet bowl should have been. Having relieved himself, he went through the rigmarole of pulling up his clothes, re-donning his flying suit, putting on his parachute pulling up the seat back and re-securing the safety-harness. Unfortunately his efforts were in vain because he had an uncontrollable spasm about ten minutes later! The gunner took the ration-bag with its repulsive contents back to his cupola and later dropped it over the target area.

There was, of course, quite a stink about this episode, in more ways than one. We were issued with new clothing. An investigation by the M.O. put the blame on the soup served in the Sergeant's Mess. None of the Officers was affected.

crew undercover while we made our run. This meant we were an easy target for the escort and they were very accurate!! I can only remember our aircraft being thrown all over the sky and I expected we would go into the sea but somehow the pilots got control and we seemed to get straight and level and were OK. My intercom, in the front turret, had been put out of action so I decided I was no use there anymore and moved out. I wasn't prepared for what I saw; the bomb aimer and the navigator, thinking we had no chance, had bailed out and for a few seconds I thought the plane was flying itself.

As I looked to the rear of the plane I could see that both pilots were still there so that was a relief. I called on another intercom and reported what had happened to the two that had left and then went back to see if I could do anything. We had not been able to get our bombs off, in fact one of them was hanging in a badly twisted way so with the other gunner I began to try and jettison them. Some went OK but on the one hanging loose we had to unbolt the whole carrier before we could force it off. This took some time. When it was done F/Sgt Humble then and only then took me to the mid gun point and showed me we had lost the starboard tailfin and rudder.

From then on it was just a long hard slog to try and get back. At last we saw the river leading to Rangoon and by good luck found the airstrip at Mingaladon. It was hard luck that having come this far, on the last approach to the landing it finally went wrong and we crashed into a paddy field.

I was first out (of course) and thought everyone else was OK but it took some time for the rescue people to get us out and some of us were taken to a hospital. I'm not sure but I think there were only three of us in that ambulance. I can remember I had waded through the paddy field and was covered in stinking mud so I had to strip off and never saw my clothes again. I was given a tablet to take after I got into bed and then I went out like a light till some time next day.

The wireless operator was brought in then and he told me that Jack Parkin was dead, a great shock.

We spent a few days in another sick quarters while we had new uniforms and then flew back to Calcutta and on to the squadron. Later, since we were not a crew any longer, we were sent to a transit camp in Calcutta and then split up and posted to other units. The war ended shortly after so we were just waiting for demob. None of the survivors flew on operations again.



Bill 'Titch' Cooke at Fiskerton Memorial June 2010.

F/Sgt Bill 'Titch' Cooke flew a tour of operations in the mid upper turret of F/O Jack Parkin's 49 Squadron Lancaster between 26th July and 17th December 1944. After completing their tour F/O Parkin DFC was posted to India for a second tour. 'Titch' with Sgts Durnall, Kean and Humble volunteered to go with him. This is his account of what happened;

JUST ANOTHER DAY OP.

On the 15th June 1945 Liberator bomber 'J' of 99 Squadron took off from Dhubalia airfield some miles north of Calcutta in Bengal. It carried a crew of eight and a bomb load of 500lb bombs and was detailed to form part of an attack on the last large tanker the Japanese had in that area. If this tanker could be destroyed with its load of precious fuel for aircraft and vehicles it would be a great help towards ending the Japanese resistance in Burma.

The crew were as follows; Captain and first pilot F/O Jack Parkin DFC; second pilot Peter Miles (on his very first operation); the first engineer was a F/O but I don't know his name; navigator F/O Tommy Adair DFC; bomb aimer F/Sgt Edward (Dicky) Durnall; wireless operator Sgt John Kean; rear gunner F/Sgt Stanley (Butch) Humble and myself F/Sgt Bill (Titch) Cooke as front gunner.



F/Sgt W Cooke



F/O J Parkin DFC



F/Sgt S Humble

Take off was at 05:35 and long range tanks were fitted so we knew we were in for a long day. The weather was bad, thunder clouds and strong winds, so by the time we arrived at the target area somewhere around Siam it was mid afternoon and the two squadrons who should have made a joint attack, 99 Squadron on the tanker and the other squadron on the destroyer escort, were completely dispersed. As our aircraft approached the area we started our attack at low level.

My job as front gunner was to fire at the tanker as we ran in hoping to keep the

The cook responsible was quietly posted to another unsuspecting station!

INTRUDER!

I can't remember the exact date but I believe it happened in March 1941. We were returning from another raid on Hamburg, crossing the North Sea and slowly losing height. The half moon was low in the sky and there was scattered cloud. About halfway across we were beginning to relax when a burst of tracer zipped past us, too close for comfort. I took violent evasive action altered course and knocked off some more height. No longer relaxing we resumed our course for home. About half an hour later we were attacked again in an almost identical episode! Once again we managed to shake off the enemy aircraft.

I told my wireless Operator to send a message to our base at Scampton to warn them that enemy intruders were approaching the coast on our heading.

In due course we crossed the English coast and turned onto our final course for Scampton. With the city of Lincoln in sight I suddenly spotted a JU88 some 400yds. ahead of us. I warned the crew and opened the throttles in an attempt to close up on him and give my gunners a chance at him but he was travelling too fast. We joined the circuit at Scampton, flashed our identification letters got an answering green from the Aldis and landed. We were taxiing to our dispersal when a shower of incendiaries fell across the field. We saw them bouncing into the air as they ignited upon hitting the ground. Then we saw a burst of tracer in the sky as a JU88 shot down a Hampden in the circuit.

The pilot and wireless operator of this Hampden managed to bail out but the other two crew members were killed. The pilot had a lucky escape - he saw tracer passing between his legs! This experience finished his flying career - he took to the bottle !

Frank Lowe's eulogy appeared in The 4T9er Issue 17

49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION 2011

THIS WILL TAKE PLACE AT PETWOOD HOTEL, WOODHALL SPA,
FROM SUNDAY JUNE 19TH TO WEDNESDAY JUNE 22ND.
PRELIMINARY BOOKING FORMS ARE INCLUDED WITH THIS ISSUE
AND SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE SECRETARY AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE AS RESERVATIONS WILL BE STRICTLY ON A FIRST
COME FIRST SERVED BASIS.

The cost will be calculated when numbers are known and will be advised at the earliest opportunity. Therefore the submission of the preliminary form will not bear any compulsion to attend, it is merely to establish numbers.

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM ALREWAS, STAFFORDSHIRE

In 1997 tree planting commenced at Alrewas and today there are 150 memorials on a site of 160 acres. Perhaps the best known of the memorials is the Armed Forces Memorial which sadly has featured widely in the news as more and more names are added mainly from the Afghan conflict.

In conversations with members of the Association it has become apparent that many of our readers would like to visit but are unable to do so for various reasons. It seemed appropriate therefore to bring some scenes of the Arboretum to you so on the following five pages are photographs of a few of the memorials, both military and civil, which stand in the Arboretum. All but 6, 15 & 16 were taken in October 2010.

1. The Royal Air Force Regiment.
2. The Millenium Chapel.
3. The Royal Air Force Boy Entrants Association.
4. Royal Air Force Cranwell Apprentices.
5. Phantom Memorial (French Resistance) left foreground. The Armed Forces Memorial in the background. A photographic feature of the latter was published in The 4T9er, issue 9.
6. Shot at Dawn, This memorial is in memory of 306 British and Commonwealth soldiers who, during some of the most shameful acts in British military history, were executed for alleged cowardice or desertion during WWI. The central figure is modelled on Pte. Herbert Burden who, having lied about his age was later shot aged 17. An arc of stakes, each bearing the name of an executed soldier, stands behind.
7. The Beat. An avenue commemorating police officers who have died in the line of duty, deceased officers and police forces.
8. Halton Grove. Commemorates ex Halton Apprentices killed in action.
9. Sumatra Railway.
10. Home Front.
11. Malaya and Borneo Veterans.
12. The Fleet Air Arm.
13. Ex Prisoners of War.
14. Royal Auxiliary Air Force
15. Women's Auxiliary Air Force 1939-45. The WAAF.
16. Royal Observer Corps
17. British Legion Poppy Field.
18. Suez Veterans.
19. RAFA.
20. British Korean Veterans.
21. National Service Veterans.
22. Stillborn and Neonatal Death Society Garden. Arguably the most moving memorial of all, the entrance path is bordered by shrubs and is fringed with large pebbles, each bearing the name of child. The inset shows the centre piece of the garden.
23. Shackleton Units of the Royal Air Force and South African Air Force.
24. Gallipoli.

500 meters; the view from the top on a clear day is exceptional.

We were fortunate to be able to see from Mannheim all the way round to where ED702 had crashed at Insheim. While there Christian overheard a gentleman talking to his grandchildren explaining what he had done during the war, Herr Freund it turns out was one of the flak operators in the valley during 1944-45. Aged just 16 he was told he was now in the army and had to leave school. He and his family joined us for a coffee where we chatted about the area, Cyril and the crew and what Herr Freund did during his time there. We exchanged emails with his son as his father has kept diaries from the time, they wish to exchange information with us. It was a pleasure meeting him and his family.

It was a very busy week with everyone in Germany. We have made many new friends and I will certainly be returning. It is a beautiful area for touring and sampling some of the wonderful wines!!

From all the information gained it is now possible to work out what happened in the final moments. After dropping their bomb load on Mannheim heading back on the homeward leg somewhere near Offenbach they were met by the night fighter flown by Lt Heinz Grimm. He attacked possibly using Schräge Musik**. Hitting the fuel tanks, they caught fire, Lancaster ED702 exploded over Insheim, and crashed into the field.

I must also thank Uwe Benkel and his team of whom we had the pleasure of meeting a further three members, Uwe's wife Marina, Christian Schwein and Peter Schreiber, for all the assistance and help they gave us in this research. Also for all the help in Germany, we would never have completed a quarter of what we were able to do without their help. I have included only a few of the pictures I took during our visit the rest I have placed in my Photobucket for those with internet access they can be seen at <http://photobucket.com/Germany-2010> once there you will see on the left some headings, Crash site near Offenbach, Offenbach, Rheinberg Cemetery and Rietburg. Clicking on these will take you to further pictures. In time further headings will be added taking you to other photographs that we took in Germany.

I will finally add that I first started researching my Great Uncle back in 1987 with a few years rest in-between! With most of the information being collected in the last 2 years, I now wonder how long I would have taken if we didn't have the internet!!

** Peter Spoden, Luftwaffe night fighter ace, describes and demonstrates the Schrage Musik method of attacking a bomber. Note the close range that is recreated in an A-26 attacking the Canadian Lancaster on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gi6UOoKtY>

All photo's Dominic Howard



September and the other two aircrew men on Tuesday the 28th of September. The following nights there were some more disturbing. But in October everything was quiet...."

We do now have the possibility that two of the crew

Peter, Christian & Uwe trying to locate parts of ED702

tried to bail out, but there is also the possibility that they were thrown from the aircraft when it exploded.

We then went on to the Churchyard at Offenbach, where we also met another witness to the crash, We placed two crosses here, one in remembrance of the crew and the other for all 49'ers lost during the war.

No other burial has been placed here since the crew were moved to Rheinberg in 1948 by MRES as this part of the cemetery is for military burials.

Thursday we drove to Rheinberg Cemetery, We found it after a little re-direction. The sat-nav took us slightly in the wrong direction in trying to take us down a cycle way, though we were in the right area and after a few minutes found the correct turning. Rheinberg is such a beautiful cemetery so peaceful even with a main road only a few hundred yards away. We also took some flowers from 49 Squadron Association for all the 49'ers who are buried there.

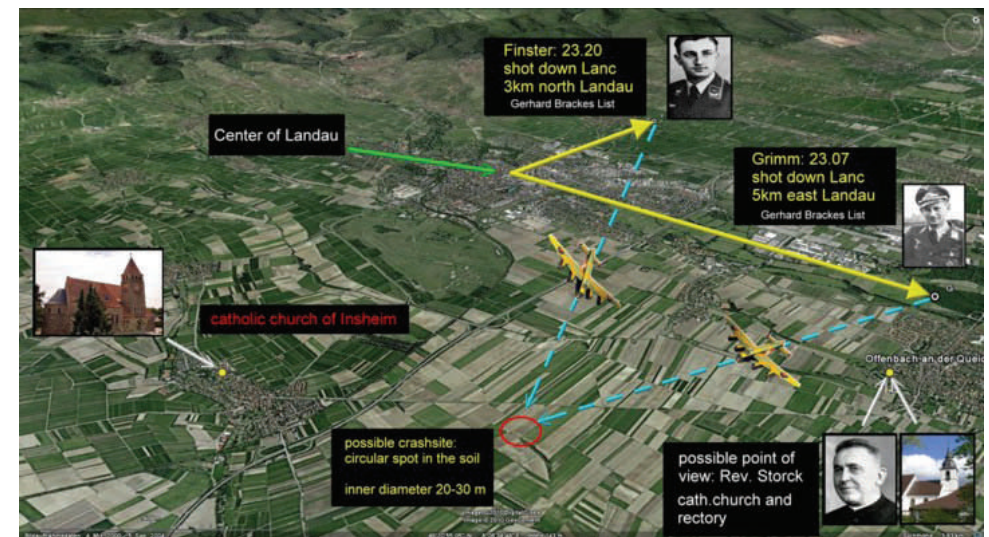
We spent about an hour and a half placing flowers on each of the graves of the crew and also some others that friends had requested me to do. The Association Padre Tony Buckler kindly sent my mother a prayer to say over the graves.

On Monday Christian took us out for the day so see one of the castles, Rietburg Castle on the outskirts of the Palatinate Forest above the village of Rhodt in the Südliche Weinstrasse district in Rhineland-Palatinate. Access to the castle is by a chair lift rising



Rosemary Howard at Rheinberg Cemetery





Peter's research into the loss of ED702

aircraft. Unfortunately with the crop still growing not a great deal could be done without causing damage. It was decided that they will return in the autumn when the crop has been harvested, the land owner has said he will phone Uwe when this happens. They did manage to find a piece of horseshoe with nail present, a part off a tractor and a piece of unknown metal.

Since our visit Peter has been looking at the maps and all the papers I have collected with this research. He now believes ED702 may have come down a little way over from where we were on our visit in May. Peter and Christian are planning on visiting two sites they have marked as possible locations at some point later in the year but they have to wait for the crops to be harvested.

The church at Offenbach can be seen from the field and the Catholic Priest Revd Jakob Storck who officiated at the burial of the crew wrote an account of what happened, this I have had translated. It is his report that states:-

"In the night from 23/24 September at about 23.30 o'clock a horrific bombing raid started over Ludwigshafen and Frankenthal. Flying back from the strike, over 30 allied bombers were shot down. One of them also crashed here. It came down over our church not very high crashing next to the church of Insheim. I will never forget the view of its fire-tail...All of those men in that plane died. Two of them bailed out, but also died. Those who stayed inside were found hacked to death and terribly burned. They were registered by the Wehrmacht, and because there were so many of them found in that night, also in Herxheim, Flemlingen...etc, the mayor asked me to bury them.- 'There should be a priest with them', the mayor said. So I did it. Five of them on Sunday the 26th of

Associate Members Dominic and his mother Rosemary Howard continue their search for P/O Cyril Anderson's Lancaster crash site.

49 SQUADRON LANCASTER ED702, EA-D

By Dominic Howard

Part 2

We decided to make the trip to Germany to visit where Cyril had crashed and the church where he and the crew were first buried. With the help of Toni Stritzinger and Christian Schwein, accommodation was found in Walshiem. Arriving late afternoon on Tuesday we were met by Christian at the railway station in Landau and taken to the accommodation where we were made most welcome by the Metzger family who just happen to produce some very nice wine (we did bring a few bottles back! But that's a story for another time.)

We met Toni Stritzinger who was 7 years old at the time he remembered the Lancaster crashing and watching it with his grandmother. The following day he went to look at what had crashed. We spent the evening talking with Toni and Christian also finalizing the next few days' activities.

On Wednesday we went into Offenbach to meet with Mayor of Offenbach, Axel Wassyl, with some more residents who remembered a Lancaster coming down. They all recounted their memories of that evening with one gentleman a little saddened by the fact he remembered taking the first aid kit from the aircraft but was unable to locate it as he wished to give it back to us. He has told me he will find it and promised to post it to me,

The Mayor presented Mother and me with a book on Offenbach, Mother asked if all present would be kind enough to sign one of the copies for us which they did.

We were all also presented with a special bottle of wine produced by a member of Uwe's team, Peter Schreiber, one of which was presented to 49 Squadron Association at last years reunion. *[This will be part of an auction at this year's event. Ed.]*

We all then went to the field where it was believed ED702 had come down. Uwe, Christian & Peter proceeded to see if they could locate any remains of the

Left; The label depicts Lancaster ED702 over Offenbach 23/24 September 1943

