

The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

The 49 Squadron Association Magazine
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Photo; Gary Mennell

“...there's something about it for me that really captures the sacrifice and what that sacrifice won.” F/Lt. Gary Mennell. (See Reader's Letters.)



Above; At his 101st birthday party Eric Clarke demonstrates that his wartime headgear still fit.

Above photos; Dom Howard

Below; Fred Hill (92) with a Mosquito at the RAF Museum, Cosford.



TWO GENTLEMEN OF 49 SQUADRON'S HAMPDEN DAYS.

(Both have booked to attend this year's Gathering in June.)

See 'Editorial' and the E-Supplement for stories and further photographs.

IN MEMORIAM

**E.G. Flavell T.C. Murray F.H. Johnson
J. Sanderson G. Moses**

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

David McCracken Martin Baker

NEW HONORARY FRIENDS

Richard Woolderink Darren Priday Martin Gautier

EDITORIAL

As always I am grateful to those who have sent donations to the Association to allow us to continue our work in perpetuating the memory of those who gave their lives whilst serving with 49 Squadron. We also remember those who served and who have now joined their colleagues who went before. As many of our members will confirm, we also help those who wish to find out more about their relatives who served, and in many cases died, with the squadron. This reminds me that I must thank my colleagues, 'The Crew', the committee, call them what you will, who work tirelessly to the above end. They are the best in the business and I am proud to be in the team.

In this issue we end Roy Gould's long running story and in the August issue we will commence the account of the RAF career of S/Ldr. Tom Page DFM. Also in this issue will be found the first part of the wartime events in the life of John Jack and the post war, pre 49 Squadron, days of our Chairman Stuart Keay.

Since I published the first issue of The 4T9er in May 2006, yes it really is eight years, there has only been one occasion when there have been no names in the 'In Memoriam' section. Sadly this issue is not such a case. S/Ldr. Ted Flavell died on Tuesday 25th February. He captained Valiant WZ366 when they dropped Britain's first atomic weapon at Maralinga, Operation Buffalo, in October 1956. Ted's illustrious career is covered in more detail by Fred Vening in his e-mail in READER'S LETTERS. W/C Tom Murray died on March 1st. He flew a total of 75 ops with Bomber Command, including 35 as navigator then pilot on Hampdens with 49 Squadron in 1940, and went on to command

138 (Special Duties) Squadron supplying the S.O.E. in Denmark and Norway. See page 17 for details of Tom Murray's biography. Fred Johnson died on December 3rd. As a F/Sgt. Bomb Aimer he flew 24 ops. in the crew of F/Lt. K. A.Bromfield between October 6th 1944 and May 1st 1945. Former Bomb Aimer John Sanderson, who died on February 25th, flew 31 operations between August 1st 1944 and May 5th 1945 in the crew of S/Ldr R.B.Walker. George Moses died on February 5th, aged 89. George flew 18 operations as Wireless Operator, in the crew of F/O L.G.Hammond between 1st January and 1st May 1945.

We welcome new Associates David McCracken whose uncle was F/Sgt Albert Swann, mid upper gunner in the crew of F/Lt. Reg Babb, and Martin Baker whose mother's cousin was P/O John Dickinson, pilot, killed on 27th April '44.

We are pleased to welcome three new Honorary Friends. Journalist Richard Wooldernink who has provided, and continues to provide, valuable assistance in the research into 49 Squadron aircraft that crashed in Holland. Darren Friday is the Manager of The Michael Beetham Conservation Centre at the RAF Museum Cosford and as such he is responsible for the superb restoration and conservation work that is carried out there. Current projects include the ex Hendon Wellington, a Hampden Torpedo Bomber and the Dornier 17 recovered from the Goodwin Sands. Darren has kindly hosted visits by ex Hampden 49ers and I am delighted that he accepted my invitation to join us as an Honorary Friend. Martin Gauthier has remodelled our website to bring it in line with the latest technology and has agreed to liaise with Malcolm Brooke, our Webmaster, in the future. The website that Malcolm has created is recognized as one of the best in its field and Martin's work ensures its continued existence.

Congratulations to all concerned on raising the final sum required to pay for the creation of The Bomber Command Memorial. It should be remembered that funds are still required for the ongoing maintenance, however, I read that a businessman, Michael Oliver, has set up a trust fund to pay half the maintenance costs forever. He has also bought an 18" high replica of the memorial's sculpture which will be kept in the RAF Club. Thank you sir!

We congratulate our senior Member Eric Clarke who celebrated his 101st birthday on April 22nd. A party was held at Carcroft Club which was attended by 70 or so of Eric's friends including the Mayor of Doncaster. Four 4T9ers were in attendance. Eric requested, 'No presents', but asked that any donations be made to RAFA. The following day Eric, accompanied by 49er Bob Hayward, was the guest of the Station Commander at RAF Linton-on-Ouse. On May 3rd the Daily Express carried an obituary to Archie Johnstone saying that at 99 he was the oldest Bomber Command survivor. I sent an e-mail correcting this which was published on May 7th.

Arrangements are well in hand for our Gathering on June 1st. At the hotel on the Sunday a fly-over by the BBMF Lancaster will take place at 1435hrs. On the following day the Lanc. will fly over the Fiskerton Airfield Memorial at 1230hrs. This will be a very emotional moment for many. We are most grateful to Jack Hawkins and the BBMF for making it possible. Both events are subject to the usual provisos of course. We have not been able to visit RAF Scampton in recent years but thanks to 4T9er Dominic Howard and the staff of Scampton Museum, who have most kindly offered to open especially for us, we will be visiting on Tuesday 3rd. You should note that after this year the base is to close for two years whilst it is established as a huge heritage centre.

Having mentioned Fiskerton I apologise to all involved with the church for referring to it as St. Stephens in February's issue. I should know by now that it is St. Clements of Rome. Where St. Stephens came from I have no idea, obviously a senior moment to which I am eligible as a fully paid up member of the Old Duffers.

Bomber Command clasps have now started coming through to relatives. If however you haven't received yours please be patient, it is an enormous task.

In March I had the pleasure of visiting the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre at the RAF Museum, Cosford. The visit was arranged by Honorary Friend, John Lowe, courtesy of the Centre Manager Darren Priday. John has devoted a great deal of his time to researching 49 Squadron's Hampden X3054 which crashed on Dartmoor on March 21st 1941 with the loss of P/O Robert Wilson and his three companions. Some small items of wreckage have been found on site and John contacted Darren to see if they could be identified. Darren is very familiar with the Hampden as they are in the process of rebuilding P1344 to very exacting standards. The visit was made all the more evocative by the presence of Fred Hill (92) who flew a tour on Hampdens with 49 Squadron before going on to fly Mosquitoes...but more on that later.

Cosford are very sensibly running a number of apprenticeships and it is interesting that the two whom we met are both young ladies.

After a half hour or so examining the pieces that John had brought he came to me, his face was a picture, they had identified a grease nipple from the undercarriage. Whilst this might seem small beer to many the significance to John after all his involvement was plain to see.

Meanwhile Fred had spotted the Wellington that has been brought to Cosford from Hendon for heavy conservation work. It is currently 'naked' as all the fabric has been removed thus giving a clear view of the interior. Fred instructed on Wellingtons during his screened tour and his immediate reaction was, "It's a lot bigger than I remember."

After a look at some of the pieces of Dornier 17 that have already been painstakingly conserved, care is taken not to remove any of the original paint, we went to the WWII hangar where there is a Mosquito. It was now turn for Fred's eyes to light up. Darren gave permission for him and John to cross the barrier and take a close look whilst he went off to get the key to open the access door. The delight on Fred's face when he stuck his head inside was heart warming in fact Darren said that it made his day to see Fred's reaction. Fred flew 55 ops, including 22 to Berlin, on Mossies with 692 Squadron between October '44 and March '45 .

After a look at some of the 'enemy' aircraft; FW190, Me163, Me410, Fiesler Storch etc. we made our way into the Experimental Aircraft hangar to see; TSR 2, Fairey Delta 2 and others before taking our leave.

However, before departing I invited Darren to become an Honorary Friend of 49 Squadron Association which, I am delighted to say, he graciously accepted.

One of the most exciting news items for years, for us Lancaster fans at least, broke last month when the BBMF announced that the Canadian Lancaster will be visiting the U.K. in August. The thought of two Lancasters flying together is truly mouth watering. There will surely be many moist eyes at the sight and the thought of eight Merlins...Oh! What music!

After the war the German motor industry started to get back into its stride by



970 GTE still showing evidence in the door of its visit into the ditch. Note the BMW badge on the door!

making bubble cars. The names Heinkel, Messerschmitt and BMW will be familiar to most of you through their aircraft connections but less so perhaps for their rather unorthodox small road vehicles. Whilst I was doing National Service in 1960 my parents bought me a BMW Isetta which had two wheels at the front and one at the back, some had two close together. I could write a book about the many adventures that Barbara and I had in this little vehicle before we sold it in 1964. Those of you who remember Isettats will recall the front opening door, complete with BMW badge, which allowed one to park nose to kerb. Whilst convenient in this respect it did

cause me some difficulty when returning to camp on an icy day. I skidded and went into a ditch nose first and was unable to open the front door. Fortunately, unlike the Heinkel, the Isetta had a sun roof through which I was able to clamber. On a couple of occasions I had a flat battery and, if alone, there was only one way to bump start it. With the door open, there was a small hydraulic cylinder to retain it thus, I pulled it towards me as I ran backwards, jumping in when sufficient velocity was achieved, slid into position, pulled the door shut, declutched and banged it in gear etc. Invariably I would bash my head on a solid tube that ran across the top of the door opening which may explain my occasional strange behaviour in later life. During all this one is progressing in an uncontrolled, steadily accelerating, forward direction although the serious headache tends to anesthetise one against the seriousness of the situation. Even worse though, although fortunately it never actually happened to me, if one tripped and fell backwards one would run oneself over. Being spreadeagled on one's back the resulting injury doesn't bear thinking about. Remember they are three wheelers and if the front wheels don't get you the rear one will certainly put a serious dent in your crown jewels! When looking at BMW products today it is hard to imagine that they once made these ingenious but crude little vehicles. However, in the paper recently I read that an Isetta had been found in an open barn where it had lay rotting for the last thirty years. It was bought at auction, as seen, for £5,500 and it is reckoned that after renovation it will be worth £30,000...we sold ours for ten quid!

I have just finished reading *'Lancaster Men: The Aussie heroes of Bomber Command'* by Peter Rees. This, as the title suggests, concentrates on the experiences, and posthumous stories, of the many Australians who flew, and died, with Bomber Command. As with most of these books, I find myself willing the individual to survive but all too often they do not, often on their last op of a first or second tour. Although I saw a television programme some years ago about the cool reception that the survivors received on their return to Australia I was still shocked by some of the stories. Labelled 'Jap Dodgers' and worse, they were ostracised because they went to the other side of the world and did not fight the enemy nearer to home. Any comments? No account was taken by their tormenters that they were RAAF volunteers and as such had no say as to where they saw action neither did they consider the shocking statistic that those who flew with Bomber Command formed 2% of Australia's armed forces yet bore 20% of its total losses. I recommend this excellent book, I read the Kindle version, particularly to our Australian colleagues.

To all of you who are suffering ill health, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

'Till the next time.

MY WAR

By John Jack

Part 1

I was a student and thus in a reserved occupation and anti war as I realised the futility of it having read a number of books on; 'The Great War', the Boer War, American Independence and the American Civil War, for example.

My attitude changed the night that Clydebank was bombed. I stood on a hill some 15 miles away as the bombers flew overhead, ducking the shrapnel from the adjacent anti-aircraft guns, and hearing the explosion from a bomb which was jettisoned half a mile away.

The next day I caught a train to Edinburgh and joined the RAF. I wanted to be a Spitfire pilot and help to prevent such happenings.

I was finally called up in September 1941 and went to St. Johns Wood. All the usual 'bull', polishing buttons and boots etc., the ex-policemen in our group excelled in this staying in at nights to perfect it. The more adventurous hit the city, the Windmill Theatre, the dance halls etc.

I was posted to 101TW at Scarborough, at the Crown Hotel, and got very fit marching up and down the hill to the Majestic Hotel for lectures.

After passing out I was posted to Blackpool to be kitted out for overseas, to South Africa, and finally sailed from Gourock on Friday 13th February 1942.

In the convoy there was an aircraft carrier, a battleship and the usual destroyers. They eventually left us to go to the Mediterranean.

We sailed straight out 500 miles and the Atlantic waves were over 60 feet. I was lucky as I was in sick bay for three days with tonsillitis and did not get sick being in a comfortable bed. When I got out I met a horrible sight. All the air crew were sitting about with three days growth, verdigris brass buttons, white as sheets, sitting or lying on the stairways. We were on the second bottom deck and the smell from there was horrible. If you can picture it, 22 people in a space the size of a normal living room, sleeping in hammocks, on the table, under the table etc. and having been sick there.

We finally hit warmer climes and continued on our six weeks journey to Durban but the diet during that time was tripe and rice, which did not suit most people. However I quite like tripe although the rice was dubious, the black bits being weevils.

The approach to Durban was very inviting, dozens of people with tans waiting to meet us. We pictured 2/3 days of hospitality but no such luck, we were marched straight to the train for a two day journey to Pretoria-Standerton camp.

We were warned not to go to the Hollandia Club as the Afrikaners who

frequented it were anti-British, my friends and I went twice and barely avoided real trouble.

After completing the course I was posted to Randfontein near Jo'burg for Elementary Flying Training on Tiger Moths. While standing in line to solo, the pupil flying at the time spun in from 50 feet on his final approach. He must have put stick against rudder to cause the spin. I had trouble judging height on final landing. I would either level out too early or too late. The Chief Instructor decided to have my eyes tested and I was sent to an eye specialist at Roberts Heights. He decided to put me on a course which he called Kinetic Energy. I went twice a day and had one eye covered and had to read messages with the other. This went on for one month. It was the best skive I had all the time I was in the RAF. Finally I went back to Randfontein but as there was no improvement I was 'washed out'. What now? I agreed to go on the 'Observers' course as this was one way of getting back to the U.K.

On passing out we were trained to Cape Town and sailed from there. Living quarters were better than on the outward journey as we now had Sergeant's stripes. We had over 1,000 Italian prisoners on board and it was our job to guard them. There was quite a bit of panic among them when we had submarine warnings. After our six weeks journey we finally arrived in the U.K., Gourock of all places!

We were straight on the train to Harrogate, the Majestic Hotel. After 2 days I was given leave to get kitted out as my commission had come through and then back to the Queens Hotel. Harrogate was great as March in 1943 was a warm month with plenty sunshine.

I was then posted to Pwllhelli (Wales) where we map read from Ansons. We were interested in Wellingtons as we would be on them at O.T.U. One day as we were walking to "flights" a Wellington came in to land. He landed too far up the runway, attempted to take off and flew into a tree ½ miles away- 'conflagration'.

The following week we were night flying from the satellite at Caernarvon, a terrible night of weather. We were sheltering behind a building when we heard a plane landing, it crashed a few minutes later, an airman walked past with his clothes in tatters and the skin on his face all burned.

My next posting was to Cottesmore, Rutland, a nice peacetime station. On a beautiful afternoon I was watching a cricket match prior to night flying in an Anson. One flew over and I was appalled as he appeared to attempt a 'slow roll', immediately a wing fell off and that was that. No night flying that night. Apparently a new wing had just been fitted. I am afraid the fitters flopped it along with the pilot.

From Cottesmore I went to a conversion unit near Newark and after two flights

in a Manchester eventually got into a Lancaster and so to Fiskerton, 49 Squadron, on 11th November 1943.

Being keen on sport, particularly football, but not being technically very good I had been a goalkeeper at school and in amateur football, but I did not want to play goal in the RAF. My alternative position was outside right and on my first game for 10 I.T.W. I scored 3 goals. On finishing I thanked the inside right for the passes and asked where he played, it was for Queens Park Rangers.

When I was at Blackpool they were playing Huddersfield. We lived in boarding houses and at breakfast I asked the person opposite me if he was going to the match to see Stanley Mathews. He just shook his head. I went to the match and as the teams came out I noticed number 11 for Huddersfield was Vic Metcalfe whom I had asked in the morning.

He and I met up again and had many good games and learned to play squash. He was also 'washed out' but remained in South Africa and played for Marist Brothers. He returned to Huddersfield Town on demob and got one cap for England in the late forties.

The Sports Officer at Fiskerton was Bill McMenemy who was on Celtic's books while training as a P.E. teacher. His father played for Celtic and Scotland in the twenties and he had a brother playing for Newcastle and one playing for Motherwell. I managed to play a lot of football there as Bill arranged an inter-departmental league and cup.

We arrived at Fiskerton together with two other crews. My pilot did his 2nd dickie to Berlin on 18th November.

I had a bad case of flu and as a result we were grounded for a week.

The other new crews took part in a raid to Berlin on 23rd November and one of them, F/O Turner, crash landed on the beach near Skegness. On returning from Berlin on 27th November the other new crew crash landed and, as a result, of three new crews we were the only one left. They were both on their first op.

We eventually did our first op to Berlin on 2/3rd December. We did not land back at Fiskerton as we had mistakenly flown over Leipzig (the diversionary target) and ultimately spotted the Wanganui over Berlin. Our H2S was u/s and we had navigational problems on the way back.

There were numerous damaged planes attempting to land at Coltishall and as we had no damage or injuries we were the last to land. Flying control said they would inform 49' about us. Unfortunately they did not! And the WAAF driver who collected us on our return got quite a shock as she thought that we were missing. I will always remember the look on her face as I stepped out of the O block.

To be concluded.

SEARCHING FOR KEN

By John Rose

F/Sgt. Kenneth Anderson was reported missing in action on the night of 22/23 March 1944, on his 17th operation as Navigator of Lancaster bomber ND 536.

Ken Anderson was my first cousin, the only child of my uncle Jack, a police sergeant in Liverpool City Police, and his wife Evelyn. He had joined the R.A.F. shortly after leaving Grammar School, and had spent a short period of time as a fire-watcher at Walton Hospital, Liverpool.

Whilst we endured the May blitz on Liverpool in our Anderson shelter, Kenneth commenced air crew training in Canada at Mount Hope, Ontario, and returned to RAF Wigsley near Newark. In June 1943 he was posted to 49 Squadron, Bomber Command at RAF Fiskerton.

His first bombing raid was a true “Baptism of Fire”- an attack on Hamburg which caused the notorious firestorm. Like Liverpool, Hamburg had paid the price for being an easily identifiable target from the air. Ken completed further missions with F/Sgt. Ron Greig and his crew to many of the major targets in Germany and Italy. On the occasion of the raid on Augsburg on 25th February 1944 the crew of ND 536 were awarded the coveted Precision Bombing Certificate.

The last letter my family received from Ken was on the 19th March 1944 after raids on Frankfurt and Berlin. In it he wrote, “Tonight when we go, it will be Les’ (F/Sgt. L.J. Phillips) last trip, number 30 and my 17th. We went to Frankfurt last night and had quite a good time. It wasn’t too bad at all. Everybody returned safely.” Three days later they were all dead.

On the 17th July 1944 the British Red Cross Society received information from the German authorities that the bodies of six RAF airmen had been recovered from an unidentified crash site. One of them, P/O Rogers, an air-gunner, had been positively identified. Bearing in mind that the Lancaster carried a crew of seven, the ‘missing’ seventh body led to the not unreasonable speculation that there was one missing survivor. By a strange coincidence the other 49 Squadron



Lancaster lost on this raid did have one survivor, Sgt. Peter Velasco. I contacted him at his home in Santiago, Chile in 2007. He informed me that his plane had been shot down by a night-fighter before reaching the target and he could not assist my enquiry.

The reluctance to accept the death of their only child led to a great deal of unhappiness for my uncle and aunt. Like many others they sought solace in spiritualists and mediums and I don't believe they ever really accepted the fact that he had been killed.

In the post-war years I spent more and more time with them as they lived close to where I lived. The house became a shrine to Kenneth. His room was untouched and his initials were still visible on the ceiling. After the death of my uncle my aunt hoped that I would always continue to remember Ken (How could I not!) and if possible visit the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery as they had, as guests of the Dutch Government in 1949. To that end my wife and I have visited the Reichswald Forest on two occasions.

Information regarding the initial interment site of the crew was provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who indicated that the bodies had been originally interred in Ronnenberg near Baumholder south of Frankfurt.

My intention was to try to find both the crash site and the interment site. This



proved difficult as both sites lay within a restricted military area viz. an army firing range currently being used by both the German Bundeswehr and the U.S. Army. I was aware of a group in Germany led by Herr Uwe Benkel who had interest and expertise in locating lost aircraft. I contacted him and as a result, on the 70th Anniversary of Kenneth's death my wife and I travelled to Baumholder to meet Uwe and his two colleagues, Rainer Kunz, Stabunteroffizier

**Photo; Via John Rose/Uwe Benkel
Roland Geiger, John Rose, Rainer Kunz, Uwe Benkel
Cath Rose**

(Retired) of the Kreigsgrupper Nahe-Hunsruck and genealogist Roland Geiger.

At the Army camp we were introduced to Sgt. Gant of the Bundeswehr, our escort and guide on to the vast firing range. He informed us that an area of many thousands of acres of woods and moorland which had originally contained many villages had been taken over by the government in the 1930's for tank and artillery training. Included in this area was the village of Ronnenberg which had consisted of 57 houses and a cemetery. When we arrived at the village there was little remaining but the cemetery had been left untouched as it was classified as consecrated ground. A large standing stone bearing a black Germanic cross marked the site. It was in this place that the badly burned bodies of the Lancaster crew had been interred. We placed some flowers at this site in their memory.

We then travelled on a short distance to the moorland summit of the Faulenberg (526 metres) passing herds of deer and a wild boar, until we reached the spot identified as the crash site by an eye-witness in 1944. This was a gentle slope topped by a small copse of trees with a central clearing. After 70

years there was no visible trace of any aircraft and due to the danger from unexploded ordnance we were advised not to stray from the track.

I must say that at that moment I did feel a presence and as a flurry of snow came on the wind and the sun shone I placed a large Remembrance day poppy on one of the trees and we left for home.

I would like to thank 49 Squadron Association Researcher Colin Cripps for his invaluable information from Luftwaffe Combat Reports regarding the precise location of the crash.



Photo via John Rose/Uwe Benkel



THE FINAL CHAPTER IN THE RECOVERY OF ED702.

By Dom Howard

Part 3

Peter has stated that even though he knew the crew of ED702 were lost, he hadn't completed the work himself as he had never been to see their final resting place. So on Thursday we all set off for Rheinberg to say our final goodbyes to the crew for this year. Peter and I placed a wreath at The Cross of Sacrifice on behalf of the Association.

This left us with just Friday, we had arranged to meet up with the Mayor Axel Wassyl once again, to hand over all we had found that had nothing to do with ED702, these items will be placed in a local museum.



**Christian with the Mayor and
one of the local farmers who
came to see what we had found.**



Katja, Marco, Steffi, & Peter at The Memorial to the crew of ED702.

farmer's fields with Peter Schreiber, I am extremely grateful to him for all the help and time he has given this research. My thanks must also go to Christian Schwein, Katja Bauer, Marco Heinrich, and Steffi Weber, for without their help I would not have completed this search.

As a small token gift of thanks to Peter, Ian Collis, who has worked on my 1:9 scale Lancaster, made a model of ED702 on the bottle of wine that Peter produced for last year's reunion, I presented this model to Peter and it now has pride of place in his office. I was so pleased when I asked Alan if Peter could join the association and he was made so welcome by everyone. Peter hopefully will be joining us at this year's Gathering along with his partner Steffi.

One thing that I did note on my travels this trip was the amount of times the number 49 cropped up...



A wine keg big enough for 6 people to sit inside in the Metzgers Garden # 49 , the only door that I spotted with a number on it in the Simerhof (Magnet Line Bunker).



All photos; Dom Howard

And the final time near Junction 49 of the A1 where I had my 2nd and final breakdown of the trip! I've only added a few of the many photographs I took here all the rest can be viewed in my photobucket.

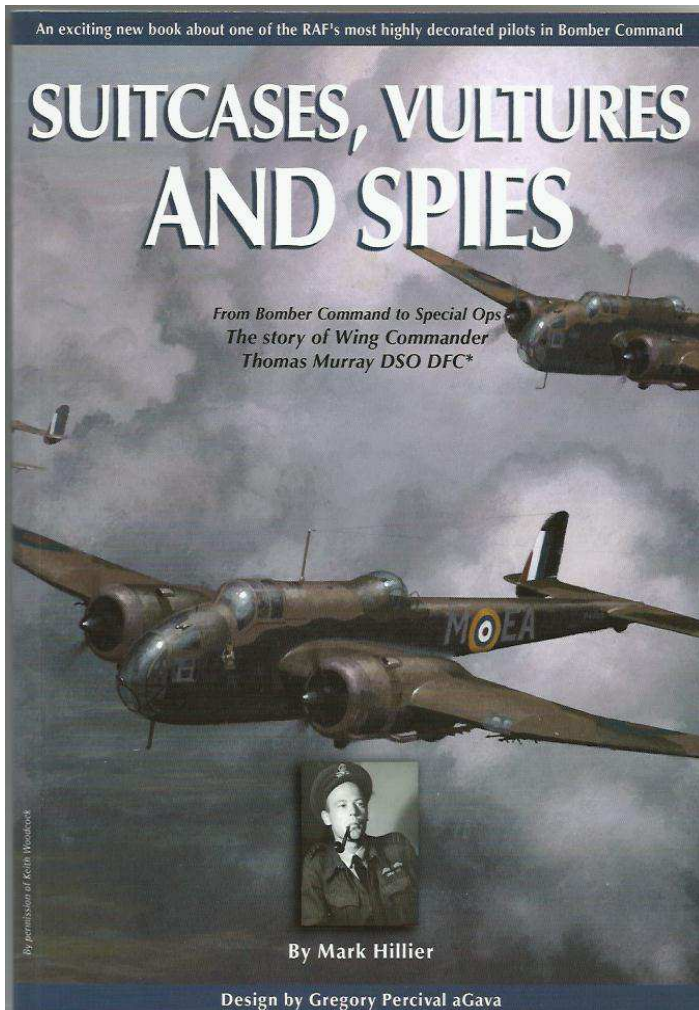
With many thanks to all who helped this year in the recovery of ED702,



**Back L to R - Helmut Metzger, Manuela Metzger, Adelhide Metzger,
Harald Metzger, Margit Weber, Berthold Walther.
Front L to R - Dom Howard, Marco Heinrich, Steffi Weber, Peter Schreiber,
Christian Schwein : Not on the photo Katja Bauer.**

For those who may be interested in the stats of this trip The Camper did 2,452miles (3,946.1 Km) with fuel of 478.08 litres! doing about 23 mpg. With Peter's transport I'm awaiting the Km but I would think in the region of another 1,200 - 1,500 km (745 - 932 miles) all in all a very good trip where most of the goals were completed.

Now this one is complete it's where to go now, which aircraft do we try to find next? For that answer all I can say is watch this space. But, if any of you have suggestions do let us know.



Author Mark Hillier has created a biography that guides us through the early years of WW11 from the perspective of 49 Squadron, but particularly so through the eyes and experiences of Hampden pilot F/O T.C. Murray. 'Thos' Murray later became W/Cdr T.C Murray D.S.O., D.F.C, O.C 138 Squadron, tasked with dropping S.O.E. agents into occupied Europe. Our Association is often called on to supply information to authors and Mark has included veteran pilot Fred Hill; historian John Ward; Ed Norman and the Association among his credits.

Ed went along to Tangmere with his wife Janet, where Mark had chosen to launch his book on 22nd February. The biography also includes some memories from Fred who also flew the 'Suitcase.'

The book is available from Mark Hillier priced at £20 for a signed copy or £15 for an unsigned copy (priced at launch and may change to include p&p.) and a donation to the RAF Benevolent Fund is part of the overall price.

Mark.hillier@jmpartnership.uk.com

A good read – recommended.

Reviewer-Ed Norman

As previously announced Tom died on March 1st, just a week after the launch.

LIFE BEFORE 49 SQUADRON

By

Stuart Keay, Chairman 49 Squadron Association

My introduction to flying was at the age of 5 years when, as a family, we visited RAF Leuchars for Empire Air Day. My Mother paid five shillings for a 'See Your Home From The Air' flight. I think that was in a DeHaviland Rapide named Silver Ghost (which incidentally crashed at another air display the following month). I cannot remember much of that flight as my Mother kept my face in a sick bag - just in case.

Living near to Leuchars I was able to cast my eyes skywards at all the aircraft from that base, from Hawker Demons through Blenheims, Hampdens, Ansons etc.

During the war I attended school in St. Andrews. The school bus drove through the camp but was not allowed to stop within the boundaries. It was exciting for a schoolboy to see all the aircraft types there as it was the main airfield for the East of Scotland. Its role changed with the war and Coastal Command had an increasing part to play with Lockheed Hudsons and Liberators being familiar sights, to be superseded by Lancasters later in the war.

As soon as I was old enough I joined the ATC [Air Training Corps] and gained access to our local marine craft section. We went out on exercise with the ASR [Air Sea Rescue] launches (104 was the main HSL [High Speed Launch] in our harbour). There was also a unit tasked with supply and maintenance for a Norwegian Squadron of Catalinas moored in the River Tay, all of which added to the excitement. I did manage to scrounge an air experience flight in a 120 Squadron Lancaster - ten hours thirty minutes - and a visit to the rear turret cured me of a desire to be a gunner!

From school I started an apprenticeship as a heavy armature winder, completed just as I received my call-up papers. Off I went to the RAF Recruiting Office for tests and interview. It was suggested that I apply for aircrew and arrangements were made for me to attend the Aircrew Selection Centre at Hornchurch, arriving on my twenty-first birthday. After numerous tests and medical examinations I was offered pilot, signaller or gunner - the choice was obvious. After the paperwork was completed I was sent home to wait my joining instructions.

April 1st saw me set off for Cardington to change my civvies for a uniform and to sign on the dotted line. Overnight, kitted out and finding new friends we set off for Jurby, Isle of Man. An exciting journey for this country bumpkin. A night stop at Dishforth, change of trains in Sheffield, another night stop in

Liverpool before embarking on the ferry for Douglas I.O.M.. As a motor cyclist the I.O.M. added to my pleasure.

We were soon allocated billets etc., and were given our instructions for the course. Our Flight Commander was F/Lt. Terry Kearns, a New Zealander with a chest full of campaign medals. Our course Commander was S/Ldr. Ivor Gordon Broome who was destined for much higher things. The first part of our training was mostly classroom work about all aspects of the theory of flying - met, engines, controls, airmanship and behaviour.

As our course had its halfway point at the beginning of June we were offered the chance of assisting in the running of the TT Races. It was a pleasure to meet some of the great names of motor cycling of this era. My job was to Marshall at the 33rd milestone, exciting days.

At the end of the course we were fortunate to be sent for flying training to Southern Rhodesia, the Navigators were to go to Canada. After a short home leave we gathered at Bovington, near Hemel Hempstead, to board a Viking, one of two, to set off for the 'Dark Continent'.

Our first stop was Nice to refuel then to Malta overnight. Next morning we set off for El Adem. It was to be a day or two of short hops until we had to make an unscheduled stop at Tabora in Tanganyika. There was a problem with one of the engines, it was using too much fuel. This stop allowed the other aircraft to leap-frog us and arrive at Bulawayo a day before us. They then took our place in Gwelo (Thornhill), which meant that we had the plum of Heany (Bulawayo).

We settled into our tin huts ready for our next training - first, basic rules and conditions, then information about the aircraft - Tiger Moths. Our introduction included getting the aircraft from the hangar to the line, details on swinging the prop and starting the engine. All this before our first flight.

Exhilaration! From the first CONTACT, to the SWITCH OFF after flight it was wonderful. What a first flight, to be able to take control, albeit with the steadying hand of the instructor, was such a good feeling. Then the instruction began in earnest. Taxing, take off, climb, turn and bank, now for a stall, recover, next a spin (full opposite rudder, increase air speed etc.), and then eventually first solo! Very nerve wracking.

Mid course we waved goodbye to the Tiger and converted to Harvards after a couple of weeks leave which allowed us to visit some of the places only seen in guide books before.

The Harvard was a huge step upwards; brakes, flaps, radio and much heavier to fly. We still had to carry out the basics of stalls etc., with longer x-country exercises and now we had to experience night flying and flying on instruments only. The time passed very quickly and after instrument rating and final

handling it was a proud day to be presented with our wings. The parade was very quiet with only a muffled drum beat as we were still in mourning from the death of King George VI.

No time to lose as we were soon to embark on a York to return us to the UK and fresh flying.

After UK familiarisation the course was split into various career paths. Mine was to convert to multi engined aircraft, so on to Swinderby and the Varsity. Altogether a gentleman's aircraft. My next step on completion of this course was to take me 'up the hill' to Waddington to a much larger aircraft - the Avro Lincoln. Initially I was disappointed at this but that was until I flew it when my mind changed and I loved it. After my conversion was completed, my new crew and I were very lucky to be posted to 49 Squadron.

READER'S LETTERS

Following John Ward's observations in February's issue I received this response from Associate Member, Matthew Marshall;

"Thank you for the latest 4T9er. I had to laugh at the 'Don't tell him Pike' article on page 19 and I can reveal that the true identity is my Great Uncle, Albert (Bert) Greenwood (LAC groundcrew). It was certainly an interesting choice of moustache style for the time!

Honorary Friend, Jorgen Jorgensen e-mailed from Denmark;

"...I remember we afterwards went to the cemetery with the German war graves. [The German Military Cemetery, Cannock Chase. ED.] I attach a picture from a funeral the 2nd May 1942 at Aabenraa. Until the last part of 1944 this was normal German procedure. Killed airmen found later at crash sites were buried without any ceremony.

"The Mayor and the Police Constable together with the German 'Ortskommander' always attended the ceremony.

"Ceremonies like this stopped in Denmark long before [those] in Aabenraa. A crew KIA near Svendborg on the island Funen was taken to Aabenraa because the local German 'Ortskommander' at Svendborg wanted a civilised funeral for the crew.

"The 'Ortskommander' in Aabenraa Major Utmann was a very well liked man, A-level teacher before the war. Sunday mornings he went to the baker in slippers and civil clothes standing in queue together with other customers.

"For a long time I have wanted to ask you if there was a similar procedure in the UK for killed German airmen?..."

French correspondent Olek Brzeski e-mailed our Archivist Ed Norman;

"...I seem to remember you saying to me that when I have my guided tour with

monsieur Guerrou, the assistant mayor you said to me that if I told the whereabouts of a V1 launch site you may be able to help with photos. As it turns out we visited several sites where different things happened.

“The V1 launch site was near a hamlet called Les Duttots which is close to a village called La Feuillie. From the sounds of it this whole area was of a substantial importance to the Germans due to the forest. According to the assistant mayor up until recently you could still see the water butts that were there for the soldiers to wash themselves.

“Just north of us hidden in the forest there was a huge ammunition depot which was dotted all over the place. The names of the areas to look out for if there are any recon photos are Lyons La Foret, Le Tronquay and La Haye. I am also reliably informed by monsieur Guerrou that just outside Lyons la Foret, next to a hamlet called Les Maison Blanche, there was a large fuel depot which was to be destroyed by the RAF. However, due to the proximity of the dump being so close to houses of Les Maison Blanches the bombs were dropped just before they arrived at the dump, the idea being that they hoped to minimise the risk of killing innocent people. According to monsieur Guerrou the site was large enough to wipe out the hamlet completely if hit with a direct hit!!

“Another area that may be of interest as well is near a hamlet called Les Mazis which is not far from La Feuillie and not far from us in Lyons La Foret. I showed monsieur Guerrou something that I was told was possibly a concrete base for an anti aircraft gun position. There are also next to it two ruins of what could have been two concrete shelters for the soldiers stationed there. When I showed monsieur Guerrou the site he said he knew nothing of it but believed it dated from the time of the German occupation. Being a retired Forest worker he knows exactly who to talk to find out what was there during the period 39-45.

“Apparently the importance of the forest was due not only to its sheer size in order to hide all the weaponry etc but also because it was not far from Croissy Sur Andelle, a village which had an all important railway station which was used by the Germans to ferry all sorts of armoury including the V1!

“Anyway, hope this is not only of interest to you but can also be helpful in locating photos.”

From Fred Vening – Secretary of the Megaton Club

“It is with regret that we have to inform you of the death of Ted Flavell.

“Ted was born Edwin James George Flavell on the 25th of April 1922 and was always known as “Ted”.

“He joined the RAF as an Apprentice, volunteering for aircrew at the outbreak of the war and completed his training in Canada.

“He flew a variety of aircraft including the Whitley, Lancaster, Halifax and Albermarle. He took part in a glider-towing role in the Normandy invasion and

also at Arnhem.

“Converting to the Vickers Valiant, he joined 49 Squadron in 1955 whilst it was still 1321 Flight at Wittering and captained Valiant WZ366 on the 11th of October 1956 at Maralinga, Australia, dropping Britain’s first atomic bomb. He was awarded the AFC for this achievement. The Flight became 49 Squadron on the return of the personnel from Australia in November 1956.

“He was an active member of the Megaton Club. His funeral was held at Chickerell, Dorset on the 17th of March where three members of the Club, including his co-pilot John Ledger, were present.
He will be sadly missed at our future reunions.

In January F/Lt Gary Mennell took up an appointment in Italy with NATO and sent the following e-mail with our cover picture of his 2 year old daughter Elodie in Argenta Gap Cemetery which is in the Province of Ferrara;

“Just a short note to let you know we're all settled in Italy. This weekend we visited the War cemeteries at Argenta and Ravenna, there was one row of graves, that looked like a bomber crew and one grave had a photo attached. I decided to look it up when I got home and it was a 57 Squadron Lanc. from Scampton, it's funny how these things always seem to find you.

“I've attached a picture we took of Ellie in the cemetery, there's something about it for me that really captures the sacrifice and what that sacrifice won.”

I am grateful to Gary and Nicky for giving me permission to feature Ellie's photograph.

Dominic Howard e-mailed;

“As some of you know I will be in Germany in August and one of my points of call will be the Durnbach British War Cemetery where I will be laying Poppies on behalf of the families of the crew of the aircraft I am researching at the moment and on behalf of the Association.

“I would like to offer the same to any member who may have family or friends resting in Durnbach so if you would like me to lay a Poppy cross , Poppy Posy or Wreath on your behalf my suggestion would be for you to order from: The Royal British Legion, Poppy Appeal, Telephone; 01622 717172, and you can have it delivered to me.

“INFORMATION REQUIRED:- On the reverse of the card the Airman's name and where he is i.e. - Section ? , Row ? , Grave ?

My address is:

Dom Howard, Solway House, Port Carlisle, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 5BU”

Thank you Dom.

MEMORIES OF MY LIFE IN THE RAF

By Roy Gould

Part 10



Chapter 10

I must not forget the Ground Crews

Before I go on to tell you of 'pastures new', I must sing the praises of all the Ground Crews who maintained our aircraft so conscientiously in all weathers. They really were the 'unsung heroes' of the Air Force!

You must realise that the aircraft were left outside on their hard standings in the far-flung corners of the aerodrome, where there were large circles of concrete just off the periphery taxiing strip. Each day all the aircraft had to be serviced and maintained. The cowlings had to be taken off all the engines to expose all the works inside. This had to be done off high tubular portable scaffolding trestles. The oil was checked as was the anti-freeze coolant – everything was checked.

This was the job of the mechanics and it had to be done. There was no question about it. If it was raining hard or blowing a gale, whether there was a heavy frost or snow was over everything, it still had to be done ready for the operations that same night. I shudder to think what the sergeant in charge of all this work would have said, or done, if someone had complained that it was raining and he would get wet, or if he said his fingers would be too cold because the temperature was below 18° Celsius, as they do so often these days !

The riggers who maintained the wings and fuselage had the same climatic problems. They had to check all the moving parts on the wings and tail

assembly and see that they were working properly. They had to repair any holes made by shrapnel on the previous trip and check that no damage had been inflicted internally that could cause troubles.

The electricians who looked after all the wiring and the airmen who maintained the wireless did not have such wet or cold tasks for their jobs were mostly inside the aircraft. I don't know whose task it was to empty the Elsan chemical closet, but someone had to do it. I shudder to think what their vocabulary was like after a trip when I had to throw the aircraft about, as I described earlier, for the contents would have spilt all over the back of the plane!

The crew who looked after my Lancaster 'Q-Queen' were very conscientious and I had very little trouble. My thanks are due to them and their work.

Then there were the teams that went round the aircraft as soon as they had landed with a petrol bowser, a large tanker, from which they refuelled the planes each with hundreds of gallons.

Lastly, I think, there were the armourers. Some had the duty to inspect all the Browning machine guns in each turret in the aircraft and replenish any used ammunition. Others had the task of 'bombing up' the plane. This was quite a big job that had to be done carefully! They had very low-wheeled trolleys upon which they lowered one, two or four bombs, according to their size. They loaded up three or four trolleys, hooked them together and towed them all, like a train, right round to the aircraft. Canisters containing dozens of incendiary bombs were transported in the same way. Having got them all to the various aircraft, another team winched the appropriate bombs and incendiaries up into the bomb bays under the aircraft according to the prescribed load.

To emphasise how important the work by the mechanics was, and how just one small error could be disastrous, I will recount an incident that took place some time earlier, even if it is somewhat out of sequence.

A Vickers Wellington, a large twin-engine bomber that I flew when instructing, had received a major engine overhaul to the port engine, an operation that had to be done every so many hours of use. It had all been done and I was asked to do a test flight with it.

There was no point in my taking anybody else with me for a quick run around the sky, so I went alone with half a load of fuel on board. It was a lovely day and I was quite pleased. At the end of the runway, I did the usual checks and off I went. I had only just got airborne and was starting to climb away when that repaired engine exploded! It was on the port side so there was a violent swing to port, due to the engine on the starboard going full power.

Quick action was required. The joystick had to be put hard over to the right with a little bit of right rudder to compensate for the great swing. Then the undercarriage and flaps had to come up so as to let the Wimpy climb a bit better.

I think I struggled up to 1,000ft and then we were fine. Now, if you lose an engine on a twin-engine aircraft, you should never turn towards the dead engine. This is because, if you should turn too fast, you may not be able to get out of the turn. So I had to turn right – to starboard. All aircraft do left hand circuits when waiting over an aerodrome, but I needed to do a right hand circuit against all the usual flow. I called up my base on the radio and told them of the difficulty. They cleared the circuit of other aircraft and told me to land straight away. I had to do a wide circuit against the good engine's thrust and landed quite easily.

By the time I had got to the hard standing for this aircraft, there was a reception committee waiting for me, comprising the officer in charge of engine maintenance, the sergeant in charge and also the poor little mechanic who did the overhaul to the engine! I had done my bit, so I left them all to find out what had happened.

Later I was told that one small washer had been omitted from its proper location! What it should have done and where it went, I do not know. I only knew the result of that small omission and the knowledge that if the Wimpy had been heavily loaded, or if it had happened just before I had taken off, my situation would have been "Very Tricky"!

Chapter 11

The Long Wait for Demob

We had a very irksome time waiting to know our fate. I became an Assistant Adjutant at R.A.F. Syerston with very little if anything to do and time hung very heavily. To while away some of the time I made a fire screen for my sister Marie in the joinery shop on the base at Syerston, in some hardwood they had there. Then I cut some plywood into the shape of a shield about 12 inches across, stuck some good white paper on it and painted in water colours our mother's Zumbach family crest. When it was varnished and mounted on the stained fire screen, I was quite proud of it and she received it for a birthday present.

With that done, I remember making a toy for Paula. I bought a nice firm standing stuffed dog, turned four wheels from pieces of wood, made a metal frame so that the wheels would be next to the four feet of the dog and secured them in position. With a collar and lead, it was just right for pulling along. It was a great success when there was a great shortage of toys.

Another thing I did to while away that surplus of time at that period was to make a small display model of a Lancaster from a thick piece of aluminium. This I shaped with the aid of a hacksaw and several files. Then it was smoothed with finer files and emery cloth, and finally it was burnished with lots of 'elbow grease' and metal polish to a high state of finish and mounted on a small hard-

wood stand. It has now graced the windowsill in our lounge for many years.

The time passed slowly. My father found a flat for us in Holland House in Clacton and I moved Betty, Paula and Christine down into it. I was still away, but fortunately shortly afterwards Betty's sister Peggy came to live with them. We had begged and borrowed old curtains and carpets from friends and relations, bought some utility beds and furniture and set up our first home. It was then that our wedding presents from long before came out of store and into use.

I remember clearly being on leave and getting all this started and one day when I was on my knees laying some linoleum round the square of carpet in the lounge (wall to wall carpets were not available then) I found I could just hear the one o'clock news from the flat below. By putting my ear on the floor it came through quite clearly. "The Japanese had surrendered". What joy! So then I knew my fate. I would not be required to go to that theatre of war, as had always been the possibility.

With the War completely over, it was not possible for the Forces to release everybody all at once so I had to wait some long time before being 'de-mobbed'. I think they tried to do 'first in, first out' but still it was not until the Spring of 1946 that my time came. I had to collect my de-mob suit somewhere and get my release papers.

My old £60 car brought me down from Lincolnshire for the last time with what belongings I had accumulated and it served me well for several more years.

My life in the R.A.F. was over and I had to settle down to civilian life with my family as an architect in private practice.

For those of you who like statistics, I can tell you as follows. Altogether I did 1,755 hours in the air and 108.5 hours in the Link trainer. I flew 15 different types of aircraft and landed on 53 different airfields including Gatow in Berlin.

Postscript

When I started these 'memories' I wondered if I would finish them for, to those who have taken the trouble to read them, it must be painfully obvious that putting pen to paper is not my strongest forte. However, my sincere thanks are due to Heather Baines whose enthusiasm and prowess on her computer has produced such a worthy record of my memories.

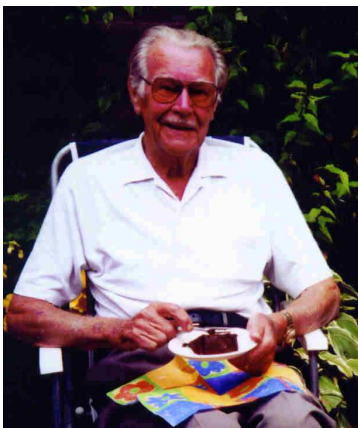
I have found it amazing how some events and incidents stand out in my memory after 60 odd years as clear as a bell, even what I or other people said, whilst others have gone. Some came back after studying my two flying log books and I would have been lost without those for putting events into

I hope I have not bored you with too much detail in places but those were my memories. I suppose, at the time, I was proud of being a pilot in the Air Force, trying to do my very small part to help this country in its hours of need. I deeply regret, however, all the horror, injuries and deaths inflicted on the common people of Germany, who had no desire to conquer the world for the Nazi regime but who, nevertheless, had to suffer by my actions. As a twist of fate, I now have two Granddaughters in law, both lovely girls and very pro-British; one is German and the other Italian!

I do not think my life in the Air Force did me any harm because I was very lucky all the time. I went in as a very unworldly young man at the lowest level and came out at last as a time worn Flight Lieutenant, quite unscathed. Was it all because of my lucky stocking?

However, those five years of uncertainty and worrying did not do Betty any good at all. Who was it said, "They also serve who only stand and wait"? That is true. Not very long after we set up home in our first floor flat in Clacton, Peggy, Betty's sister, started getting very ill with what they then called disseminated sclerosis, and then her father died due primarily to helping Peggy to walk about. It all got too much and Betty went down with a very severe nervous breakdown, from which she never really fully recovered. Betty died peacefully on the 18th June 2005.

So, for whatever they may be worth, I have finished my memories and for those who may take the trouble to read them, they are dedicated to those less fortunate than I have been, to all the young men and friends I knew so long ago who left empty chairs in the mess in the mornings, to the pals I lost in accidents when we were instructing, and to my dear Betty, whom I now miss so terribly.



Roy and Betty were reunited when he died on August 17th 2011, a few days before his 95th birthday.

The Editor is grateful to Roy's son-in-law Harry Reglar for his co-operation in the publication of this story.



THE END.



The 4T9er

E-Supplement

May
2014



Photos on this and page 2; Dom Howard

THOUGHT TO BE BOMBER COMMAND'S OLDEST SURVIVING VETERAN, ERIC CLARK CELEBRATES HIS 101st BIRTHDAY.

The 4T9er E-Supplement is compiled and edited by Alan Parr and published with The 4T9er magazine by 49 Squadron Association.

All photographs are by Alan Parr unless credited otherwise.

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Above: Eric with the Mayor of Doncaster and son David.

Below: 4T9ers ALL

Sheila Patchett, Eric and David.



Dom Howard, David, Eric and Alan Parr.





Photos; Ron Blenkinsop

**The day following his birthday, Eric was a guest of RAF Linton on Ouse. Here he is signing the visitors book with John Allison MBE Stn. (Civil) RAFA Liaison Officer and the Station Commander, Gp. Capt. David Cooper MA looking on.
During a visit to the Control Tower, Eric was honoured by a three aircraft Tucano flypast.**





FRED HILL'S VISIT TO THE MICHAEL BEETHAM CONSERVATION CENTRE, COSFORD.

Fred's visit, accompanied by John Lowe, is described in the current issue of The 4T9er. Here the group are attempting to identify the pieces of Hampden X3054 that John has brought from Dartmoor.

In the background can be seen the forward fuselage of Hampden P1344 which is undergoing painstaking rebuilding. In the left foreground is the tail boom which interestingly originated on a Hereford.

Fred recounts some of his experiences to Conservation Centre Manager, Darren Priday, whilst John looks on. Behind them is a Mosquito similar to that flown by Fred on 55 ops with 692 Squadron, including 22 to Berlin.





Fred reacquaints himself with the Mosquito's 'office'.

The Mosquito carries the markings AZ-E, the aircraft in which Guy Gibson and ex 49er Jim Warwick lost their lives.





In the May 2013 issue of The 4T9er and E-Supplement we featured some superb photographs taken by Phil Waterfield at a re-enactment at East Kirkby. Above can be seen a further evocative shot from Phil's collection.

Video photographer, Mark Ratcliffe sent us a DVD of the same event and we asked if some stills could be produced. Mark kindly submitted the three shown here and on page 7. Footnote: The editor was so impressed by the quality of these stills from a video that he bought a similar Panasonic camera and is now 'hooked' on video photography!



