

The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine
August 2014 Issue 34**



Photo: Peter Schreiber

This is the winning entry in our competition for the best photograph of the Lancaster flying over Fiskerton during our Wreath Laying Service at the Fiskerton Memorial on June 3rd. See page 22 for the judge's comments.

IN MEMORIAM

**E. DUMBELL H. J. LAWRIE D. SMITH (nee EVERETT)
S. H. OLORENSHAW J. JACK
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Jim Dalton Shirley Moxon Stan Smith

NEW FRIENDS

Iris Taylor Robert Keay

NEW HONORARY FRIENDS

Dominique Gaillardin Gerard Antoine

EDITORIAL

Once again I open by thanking all those who have recently made donations to the Association, we couldn't continue without you. I am also most grateful to those who have sent reports on their various overseas pilgrimages. I hope that more of you will be inspired by their accounts which appear in The 4T9er.

Sadly we have lost five members, all of whom served with 49 Squadron. Eric Dumbell died on December 5th, aged 90. He flew 19 ops in the mid upper turret between August 18th 1944 and 16th April 1945. His pilots were F/O D. A. Dickson and F/L R. Williams. Two weeks after his 92nd birthday Hugh Lawrie died. He was wireless operator in the crew of P/O Clive Roantree for his 28 ops between November 3rd 1943 and 20th April 1944. Dorothy Smith, perhaps better known to her contemporaries as Dot Everett, died on July 10th aged 90. Dot was the last of our 49 Squadron WAAFs. She was an M.T. driver tasked mainly with ferrying the crews to their aircraft and back, if they returned. She served at Fiskerton, Fulbeck and Syerston and together with her fellow driver, the late Vi Winters, was a popular guest at our reunions. John Jack died on August 3rd, aged 98. A Flying Officer bomb aimer, John flew 28 ops, including four to Berlin, in the crew of P/O J.A. Jones DFC between December 29th 1943 and 22nd May '44. Poignantly this issue carries the concluding part of his story.

We have three new Associate Members to welcome. Jim Dalton is the nephew of F/O James Freckleton DFM who was lost on the disastrous Wesseling Raid

on June 21st 1944. He was navigator in the crew of S/L L.E. Cox. This was the crew's second op with 49 Squadron, their first was to Beauvoir on the 16th. Shirley Moxon is the sister-in-law of Sgt. George Witty who was flight engineer in the crew of F/L Hill. He flew his first op on April 24th and was also killed on the Wesseling Raid which was his 18th. Wesseling resulted in the loss of six of the twenty Lancasters despatched by 49'. Included in the dead was W/C M. Crocker DFC and Bar, the Squadron Commander. Stan Smith has long been associated with the Association through his late wife Dorothy, nee Everett. Following her passing he has become an Associate Member in his own right.

I extend a welcome to our two new Friends. Iris Taylor has given her time in helping to provide the excellent buffets that we enjoy at Fiskerton Village Hall during our reunions. She has a keen interest in the Association and wished to become a part of it. Robert Keay is the son of our chairman and after attending the recent Gathering wishes also to achieve a closer connection with us.

Mme. Dominique Gaillardin worked tirelessly to have a memorial erected in Montiers-sur-Saulx to four Lancaster crews including that of 49's JB679. A report of the event appears in this issue. Having attended the ceremony and heard of Dominique's efforts our chairman proposed her as an Honorary Friend. Stuart also proposed the Mayor of Bure, M. Gerard Antoine, who is the driving force behind the beautiful condition and maintenance of the 49ers graves in Bure. In reply to the invitation to him he replied, "I am very honoured and I do accept, in the name of Bure Municipality, this symbolic title which is your way to thank all of us."

At the time of writing our membership comprises:

Members - 103

Associate Member - 155

Friends - 27

Honorary Members - 7

Honorary Friends - 38

That makes a total of 330 of all categories which is an all time high. However, it cannot be denied that the steady decrease in Members, those who served in 49 Squadron, is sad but inevitable considering that the squadron was finally disbanded, yes, 49 years ago!

A number of us attended Dot Smith's funeral in Lincoln and many of you will be pleased to hear that our former Padre, Revd. Tony Buckler and his wife Elaine were also present. I have to say that it was most pleasing to see them in reasonable health, all the usual caveats applying when making allowances for the advancing years. They send warm greetings to all 4T9ers.

I'm pleased to say that the Gathering at Bentley Hotel, Lincoln, was a success. A full report appears between pages 10 and 15 of this issue. I am most grateful to all involved for their invaluable input and look forward to next year's event at the same venue. There are three videos on YouTube which show this year's reunion. For those of you who are on the internet the YouTube links are:

Reunion.....<http://youtu.be/pfXIMDPIM0A>

Reunion Scampton visit.....<http://youtu.be/LZ7fvjPFfxY>

Lancaster over Fiskerton.....<http://youtu.be/ueKNnSbXDFM>

Note; Whilst the Lancaster footage appears on the main reunion video it is also presented as a single item for those who wish to watch or share it in isolation.

OK, I give in! Our annual event, usually in June, will henceforth be known as the Reunion once again. With the change of format and the diminishing number of ex49ers attending I had hoped to differentiate from the old days when there were significant numbers of 49 Squadron veterans. I have to agree however, that Gathering does not trip off the tongue and has less meaning. Even the welcome board in the hotel called it 'Reunion'. There, I hope you're happy!

It is an indication of the continuing, nay increasing, interest in remembering those who gave their lives whilst serving with 49 Squadron that the number of reports in this issue of ceremonies of remembrance and pilgrimages to mainland Europe have necessitated an increase in pages in this issue to unprecedented numbers. The initiative lies not only with 4T9ers but also with those on the other side of the North Sea and English Channel.

It was announced that '3 Lancs 2014' will take place at East Kirkby on September 2nd. Tickets were limited to 5,000 and sold out in 48 hours. In view of this a second event has been arranged for Sunday 7th September 2014 to allow as many people as possible to attend. I do not know if tickets will still be available when these words are read but I suggest that you contact the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre on 01790 763207. Our congratulations to all concerned at East Kirkby for staging these unique events.

Following concerns raised regarding the legibility of the names towards the top of the Spire of Names, the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial has been redesigned. The revised design is based on two wing fragments, tapering as they rise towards the sky to form an asymmetrical conical spine similar to a typical Lincolnshire church spire. The overall height of the memorial will be 102ft (31.09m), which is the wingspan of the Avro Lancaster, the width at the base will be 16ft (5m), which is the chord of a Lancaster wing. The names of the 25,611 airmen who died whilst flying from Lincolnshire will be carried on memorial walls surrounding the central spine.

We have been speculating that Eric Clarke is Bomber Command's oldest survivor. Honorary Friend Paul Strong advises that Bill Brown of 44 Squadron is one year older at 102. I e-mailed the secretary of 44 Squadron Association to corroborate this but have had no reply.

I was thrilled to read in the national press on July 20th, and again on the 27th, that President Francois Hollande of France has approved the decision to award the Legion d'Honneur, the country's highest award for "excellence in civil or military conduct", to every surviving British veteran who took part in the campaign to liberate France during WWII. The honour will not be limited just to soldiers who took part on D-Day but to any veteran who fought on French soil, or from its seas or skies. 'It is understood that veterans will be made knights of the order, which has five levels, equivalent to the MBE.' However, like the Bomber Command Clasp, it is sad that so few will be here to receive it.

The form can be obtained online at:

gov.uk/governmentnews/d-day-veterans-award-of-the-legion-dhonneur
or by writing to:

Personnel and Training - Defence Service Secretary - Commemorations,
Floor 6 Zone C, Ministry of Defence Main Building, London, SW1A 2HB.

At the end of July John Sargeant presented a television programme entitled, Lancaster: Britain's Flying Past. I wondered what could be said that we don't already know and true enough it followed the usual format however it did strongly feature the 1943 raid on Peenemunde, the V1 and V2 research facility, which holds strong interest for me as it was on this raid that my uncle was killed together with twenty-two other 49ers, four aircraft being lost. Included in the veterans interviewed was Harry Irons who appears to be an automatic choice now that Tony Iveson has died. John Sargeant, being a dedicated fan of Bomber Command, presented a most sympathetic and supportive programme.

I am grateful to former rear gunner Ron Eeles for giving me details of a new book by Pat Cunningham DFM entitled "Through Enemy Skies". It contains ten stories of Bomber Command aircrew including that of our late lamented chairman Ted Cachart. It was first published in 2014 by DB Publishing ref: ISBN 9781 780914121. Ron tells me that it is an excellent read.

'Till the next time.

**NEXT YEAR'S REUNION WILL BE HELD
AT BENTLEY HOTEL, LINCOLN
ON JUNE 21, 22 & 23.**

THE BOLSTERN MEMORIAL

The 4T9er Issue 29, carried an account of the visit to Bolstern, Germany, by Robert McEneaney, Louise Dexter and members of their families. This year, March 15th is the 70th anniversary of the loss of Lancaster ND474 and its crew so Robert and Louise set about tracing as many relatives of the crew as possible to join a pilgrimage to Bolstern, the site of the crash. The event was a resounding success and they arranged for a video entitled 'The Bolstern Memorial' to be produced. Copies are available from Robert McEneaney.

From our first visit to Bolstern twelve months earlier it was agreed that the memorial would pay tribute to both the aircrew, who died there, and the part played by the people in Bolstern who buried them and tended their graves until they were finally laid to rest at Durnbach. We therefore had two plaques placed on the stone, one in English and the other in German recording the events that had taken place back in 1944. The Memorial service was attended by over thirty relatives of the airmen and we feel, through a series of family photographs and video footage captured by Elizabeth, she has put together for us an account of the events that took place during the Memorial weekend that we will treasure forever.

On arrival at St Gallus Church in Bolstern for the Memorial Service the relatives were overwhelmed to see that the villagers were already in the church for some time and holding a prayer service in honour of the seven airmen. We were told that the villagers have continued to include the aircrew in their prayers since 1944. During the church service the Mayor of Bad Saulgau and the Mayor of Bolstern spoke to the congregation and a copy of their speech is included within the video cover.

...We are all too aware that we live in an age when the waters are closing over the history of the Second World War, when we are about to lose the last of those remaining witnesses, some we were privileged to meet in Bolstern, and all that is left are accounts retold so many times that they have lost their original veracity. It is therefore a source of great pride that we were accompanied on our trip to Germany by so many of the younger generation, all relatives of the crew. One day we will rely on them to tell the next generation of the events that took place in the village of Bolstern in 1944, of an aircrew who gave their lives for peace, the people of that little village who buried them and tended their graves and of the Memorial that was erected in their honour seventy years on. It is our wish that they will also recall their part in the Remembrance Service that took place to honour both the aircrew and the people of that village who we are now proud to call our friends.

It is our hope that through this record of our Memorial Weekend in Germany

future generations will wish to visit both Bolstern and Durnbach and remember with pride that their relatives gave their lives for the peace we enjoy today.

Although we were blessed to have five families of the seven airmen now in contact we will continue our search as it is our wish that one day we will find the relatives of Sgt. Douglas Birbeck and Flt Officer John Knowles and let them know that their boys will continue to be remembered by us and the people of Bolstern where they lost their lives seventy years ago this year.

In the sleeve there are printed copies of two speeches, I can think of no finer way to illustrate the spirit of mutual admiration, affection, respect and reconciliation than to bring those two speeches to you:

Speech in English and German by Patrick Appeltauter and Anton Stork, Mayor of Bostern:

Dear guests from England, Ireland, Spain and Singapore, Dear Mayoress, Dear Father Shinto, Dear Priest John, Distinguished guests,

I welcome you to our St. Gallus church here in Bolstern. I hope that our guests had a pleasant journey.

We are here today to commemorate the crash of a British Lancaster bomber in Bolstern on March 15th 1944, in which all seven crew members died. The young men were between 19 and 23 years old, which painfully reminds us that millions of young men were sacrificed on the battlefields of WWII.

One year ago, the families Dexter and McEneaney already visited us to learn more about the circumstances of the plane crash and the death of their relatives.

I would also like to welcome Mr Uwe Benkel and his wife, who made the visit possible by creating the contacts between the different people involved. In his free time, Mr Benkel searches for missing planes, pilots and crew members and publishes the result of his work. This is how the Dexter and McEneaney families became aware of him and were able to establish a contact.

During their visit last year, we could provide the families with the documents that informed about past events. Especially, the stories of contemporary witnesses who portrayed the events of March 15th 1944 from their perspective were very touching.

After a joint visit of the crash spot, which was very emotional for the family members, we were asked if it was possible to erect a memorial stone for the victims on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the plane crash. We came to the agreement that the municipality would set up a stone and the relatives would install the plaque for the memorial.

At this point I would like to sincerely thank our Mayoress, Mrs. Doris Schroter, for the support and installation of the memorial stone. Also my special thanks to the Scherer family who supported us in organizing the event.

We have been in contact with Louise Dexter and Robert McEneaney to

organize the commemoration for one year now. And over time, we've developed true friendship.

I hope that today's ceremony and the inauguration of the memorial, we could help you bid farewell to your loved family members with the dignity they deserve. We are happy that you now have a memorial which allows you to commemorate your family members at any time and we hope that this won't be your last visit to our village.

Thank you.

John Dexter, brother in law of Flight Engineer Ronald Hoole, delivered the following speech, in German, to the people of Bolstern in their Village Hall following the unveiling ceremony:

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the 14th of March last year, five people who are here today, came from England to Bolstern in the hope that they could locate the place where, during the Second World War, a British aircraft crashed with the loss of the seven young men on board.

These visitors were relatives of two members of the crew. They were not sure if they were going to be able to see the place where the seven airmen lost their lives, and they did not know how they would be greeted by the villagers of Bostern. They knew that their journey from England might well be in vain.

They need not have been concerned, because they were welcomed as friends by the Mayoress of Bad Saulgau, and the Mayor and villagers of Bolstern, and they were taken to the place that they had come to see.

As they stood looking across the field where the tragedy had occurred, the visitors were told, the people of Bostern would place a Memorial Stone on that sacred place, and it was agreed that they would return next year which would be the 70th anniversary of that fateful day in 1944.



All photos: Paul McEneaney

Today they are here and with them, thirty seven relatives of the seven Airmen. They have come from England, Ireland, Spain and Singapore in the Far East.

Today, God blessed the Monument which stands not only in memory and gratitude for the seven young men who lost their lives but also for the People of Bolstern who took them to their hearts, prayed for

them and offered them up to heaven so many years ago.

In years to come, when we have all departed this world, the Memorial Stone will remain, and in the future, people will come and stand before it, as we stood before it today. They will read what is inscribed upon it and they will see just how futile war is because in the end God will always bring people together in peace, the world over.

Those that come may bow their heads in prayer and when they go home, to wherever that may be, they will tell those who may listen, of a Memorial Stone that stands in a green field in the village of Bostern, Germany, and of the godly people who placed it there.

Thank you.

On the Saturday evening following the memorial service and unveiling ceremony the relatives invited the villagers and local representatives to a Friendship Dinner at their hotel. The group of over fifty people, who now sat together, although deeply conscious of the significance of the formal proceedings that had taken place earlier that day, now enjoyed each other's company in an atmosphere of warmth and friendship. The relatives brought a most enjoyable evening to a close by presenting the villagers with tokens of appreciation.

From the outset the aim of our visit was not to glorify war but to honour the airmen's sacrifice and rightly record the actions of the good people of Bolstern. We feel the Friendship Dinner may therefore be considered as a gesture of reconciliation - "The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic of human actions".



One of the major triumphs of the Bolstern Memorial Project was the number of young people representing both the aircrew and the villagers. Since our trip we are aware that although the older generation favour the written word or the telephone as a means of keeping in touch, these younger members have made full use of social media links. We hope that friendships forged on this trip may continue to flourish and grow.

On the Sunday morning Robert McEneaney, stood at the Stone of Remembrance at Durnbach War

Cemetery, the same spot where 30 years earlier his father had stood on his first visit to his brother's grave. Addressing the relatives Robert reminded everyone that although they were there to honour the fallen they may also wish to remember loved ones who had made this journey before them but sadly were no longer with us. In particular he asked that the group remember his cousin John, a tremendous supporter of the Bolstern Memorial project, who had recently lost his battle with cancer.

A wreath was laid at the Cross of Sacrifice in honour of all those who had served with the 49 Squadron. Then the relatives laid seven wreaths, one at each of the graves of "Our Boys" the crew of ND474. Prayers and hymns were offered in memory of the seven airmen and in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the occasion the younger members of the group bravely recited the poem "The Visitor".

At the request of their families we also laid wreaths and left personal messages at the graves of Chris Patton and Jack Goldstein.

Back in 2013 at the early stages of the design of the memorial plaques we inserted the inscription:

"THEY PASSED FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT INTO THE AWAITING ARMS OF GOD."

Those words were to take on a poignant tone as we gathered more and more information about the crash of ND474. We now know that on the night of the 15th March 1944 the good people of Bolstern having found a rosary beads in the pocket of one of the airmen went on to place a rosary beads on each of the seven as they gave them a Christian burial.



"Our Boys" had indeed passed from the darkness of the night and due to those good godly people of Bolstern completed their journey into the awaiting arms of God.

We Will Remember Them

49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION GATHERING 2014

By Alan Parr

This year's event took place on June 1st, 2nd and 3rd at Bentley Hotel, just to the south of Lincoln. Being a modern hotel this venue contrasted with the more antique setting of our home over the last dozen or so years, Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa.

On the Sunday afternoon we were due to have the privilege of a flyover by the BBMF Lancaster but a call from Coningsby advised us that this was not possible but one of the pilots was prepared to "Jump in a Spitfire and fly over". We were delighted to accept this kind gesture which resulted in three exciting passes which were very much appreciated.



Photo: A still from a video by the author.

Most of us partook of the excellent cuisine in the hotel dining room for dinner. For those who only wanted a snack, these were available in the bar or in the large garden centre nearby. The evening was then spent catching up with old friends and indeed making new ones as there were some who were attending for the first time.



All photos by Dominic Howard except where noted otherwise.

Following long established tradition we travelled to St. Clement of Rome in Fiskerton for our annual Service of Remembrance. A good congregation was in attendance for the service which, as in recent years, was conducted by the Revd. Penny Green in her very friendly style. During the first hymn the Squadron Roll of Honour was placed on the altar for the duration of the

service. Later, the Association's wreath was laid at the Church Memorial by our



Stuart Keay



Robert McEneaney



Air Commodore 'Spike' Milligan

Chairman Stuart Keay. The lessons were read by Robert McEneaney and Air Commodore 'Spike' Milligan.



Peter Schreiber has been greatly involved in the recovery of a 49 Squadron Lancaster, ED427, and brought with him from Germany two small relics of the aircraft which he had mounted and also a piston head which he presented to the church. Leaving the church, blessed with warm sunshine, we made our way to the Airfield Memorial, where Penny again conducted a short service. The Association's wreath was laid by former F/Sgt. Armourer Tom Reed escorted by Wop/ag Eric Clarke and Pilot Fred Hill DFC.



Then there was an expectant wait as we had been informed that the Lancaster's trouble had been resolved and it would be making an appearance. Just before the Lanc was due there was a cry of 'Vulcan' and there to the west was the V Bomber on finals for Waddington. Immediately after, all eyes turned south as the much loved sound of four Merlin engines was heard. In she came over the airfield, our spiritual home, at about 800feet, banking right over the Memorial and coming in for a second pass then round behind the RAF Ensign fluttering on its pole for a final circuit before departing over the village. There was a hush, more than a few tears were wiped away, many of us had waited more than ten, maybe sixty, years to witness what had just taken place - a Lancaster once more over RAF Fiskerton. Thanks to those wonderful people at the BBMF we had 'Remembered Them' in the best way possible, all the better for being in the company of dear friends and kindred spirits.

I knew then that whatever happened during the rest of the Gathering it was a success.

I had let our friends at the Village Hall know that the Lanc was coming and I was delighted to see them sharing the moment with us. We therefore dragged our heels in leaving for the Hall in order to give them a little time to complete preparations for our arrival for a buffet lunch. Needless to say the spread was wonderful as always.

Eric Clarke, having moved into a residential home, wished to present one of his prints to the Hall for hanging in the 49 Squadron Lounge. Following the buffet he presented a Lancaster print by Gerald Coulson to Ann Chesman and Alan Gibson who received it on behalf of the Hall.

Of course we normally pay for the buffet but in 2013 Alan had said that this year's buffet would be courtesy of the Hall.

Not having been in the best of health at the time I had forgotten this so was delighted as I had budgeted for a slight overall deficit on this year's accounts. Even so I did send a small donation from the Association.

We left the Hall around 1400hrs and made our way back to Bentley Hotel where the afternoon was free time. Some went into Lincoln, some to the garden centre, some chatted in the bar and some, Barbara and me included, 'dossed on our pits'.



At 7-30pm fifty-eight members and their guests gathered in the large dinning room for our annual dinner. For the first time this was a more informal affair than had previously been the case. I have noticed that quite a few men these days, particularly the younger ones, no longer own suits as a matter of course. I therefore decided to relax



the dress code to smart casual in the hope that it might encourage our younger members to attend however, the majority still preferred to wear a suit and tie. At least the choice is there and it didn't appear to have a detrimental effect on the evening.

In order to give more 'chat time' I also dispensed with speeches and toasts although we did of course make the Loyal Toast and Absent Friends.

A bottle raffle raised £275 for Association funds and Colin Cripps acted, very ably, as auctioneer to sell a unique bottle of 'Eric Clarke Centenary' wine which was bought for £60 by our Chairman's son, daughter and their partners.

On the subject of wine I must thank our German guests, vintners Peter Schreiber and Steffi Webber, for their very generous donation of sufficient bottles of red and white wine to augment the excellent dinner plus the Eric Clarke special.



Quite a number of us visited RAF Scampton on the Tuesday morning. They don't normally open on a Tuesday but when they heard that it was 49 Squadron a number of the staff kindly agreed to open up for us. This was particularly rewarding as we had two old Scamptonians in our party, Eric Clarke and Fred Hill, both of whom had flown Hampdens out of there early in the war.

When we arrived, a Hawker Hunter was doing circuits and bumps which I found particularly enjoyable as the Hunter is my favourite jet aircraft. A further treat was in store as the Red Arrows then took off, in threes, enroute I understand for RAF Valley.



The museum has changed considerably since my last visit. It has been completely relocated and tidied up but unfortunately the wreckage of our Hampden P1206 is not at present on display. There was still much to see however. Guy Gibson's office has been renovated and period artifacts installed, including a dummy

black Labrador. It was a strange feeling to look out of the windows across the airfield. That reminds me, as we were walking to the hangar Fred Hill said, "Oh! The control tower has gone, it was just there", to which one of the stewards replied, "Dead right. It was relocated during the Vulcan era." Amazing!

As always, Nigger's grave attracted considerable interest. It has also been spruced up and has flowers and crosses on it. I forget who it was who said that the only memorial at Scampton is a dog's grave? Perhaps one day this will be rectified.

That just about wound up the organized part of the Gathering. The afternoon being free time Barbara and I went to Bransby Home for Horses to visit the Memorial to 49's Hampden AT129 and also Nero, the donkey that Barbara has adopted.

I must admit that choosing a new venue made the organization of this event a little more traumatic than usual although I needn't have worried unduly as the hotel responded excellently. There were one or two negative comments that I can't dispute such as the lack of grounds for a stroll and the atmosphere of the Petwood was missing although I maintain that when a group of 4T9ers gets together they create their own positive atmosphere. However, there were some positives such as air conditioning, a choice of menu at our dinner, Draught Bass available, reasonable bar prices and the close proximity of Lincoln.

That the three days were a success is due to many people and groups: Jack Hawkins, BBMF, Bentley Hotel, Fiskerton Parish Council, Revd. Penny Green and all at Fiskerton Church, the Stuffins family, Alan Gibson, Ann Chesman and the ladies at Fiskerton Village Hall, all those at RAF Scampton, Peter Schreiber and Steffi, the Crew and their Ladies and certainly not least the 4T9ers and their guests. If I have missed anyone out please accept my sincere thanks and apologies.

VISIT TO HANNOVER, THE CWG CEMETERY AT AHLEM.

By Ed Norman

The weather forecast for the continent was promising for the first week in July and my wife, Janet had a short holiday booked from work, so I took the opportunity to fulfil a long-held promise to visit the graves of my father's skipper and rear gunner. They rest side-by-side looking out over open fields surrounding the immaculately kept lawns of the cemetery in the Ahlem district of Hannover. It was back in October 1943, JB413 had been attacked by two night fighters while returning from the raid on Kassel that caused a firestorm. The first pass killed rear gunner, Aussie Earle Parker, and with the mid-upper's ammunition beginning to explode around the inside of the now burning Lancaster, skipper Phil Taverner ordered "Abandon aircraft !"

Bill Kemp the flight engineer ensured Phil had clipped on his 'chute then joined the rest of the crew out through the bomb aimers hatch. Dad must have been the last to see Phil struggling to keep the stricken aircraft straight and level for them to escape. Stunned by his parachute cover striking him in the face as it opened, Dad came round just in time to see a flaming P-Peter plunge to the ground near Wunsdorf.



Photo: Ed Norman

Just an hour away from Stanstead with train links into Hanover every ten minutes, I chose a convenient but quiet hotel close to the Hauptbahnhof (main railway station). The tram to Ahlem also ran punctually every ten minutes from the station with typical German efficiency. The weather stayed fine and warm. Janet had her own reason to visit, as an uncle is also buried in the cemetery – a rear gunner in Lancasters with No.10 Squadron. We took poppy sprays purchased from the British Legion; an insignificant show of gratitude to Earle Parker and to Phil Taverner, who saved my father's life:

And gave me mine.

The Association were invited to a commemorative event in France by the organiser M. Dominique Gaillardin. Pat and Stuart Keay decided to take a short holiday in France and attend on our behalf.

MONTIERS-SUR-SAULX

By Pat Keay

We arrived at Dammarie-sur-Saulx after a six and a half hour tiring journey and, having rented a gite for five days, were happy to arrive and relax.

Madame Dominique Gaillardin had asked to be notified of our arrival and came over immediately to welcome us and explain about the Commemoration. We, along with the Mitchell family, were invited to her home for supper on the Friday night to a true welcome. This was held in her garden with a total of around sixteen guests.

On Saturday 21st June we had to be at Montier-sur-Saulx as a coach was to take us to visit the crash sites and graves of the aircrews from three squadrons who had lost their lives. Firstly we visited the site of 103 Squadron Lancaster ND993. On the coach was Mr Hubert Jeanmarie who was an eye witness to the crash in which all on board died. Their graves are in a small village cemetery at Montiers-sur-Saulx. The site of the crash of Lancaster NE136, also 103 Squadron, was at Biencourt-sur-Orge. Again, all the crew died and are buried in the village cemetery. We next visited the crash site of 166 Squadron Lancaster LL896 where three airmen died. They too are buried at Montiers-sur-Saulx.

At Bure we visited the crash site of 49 Squadron Lancaster JB679 where two of the crew, Sgt. Richard Mitchell (mid upper gunner) and John Baker (rear-gunner), managed to parachute from the plane, the other airmen perished. According to witnesses the Lancaster flew over the village twice before crashing thereby saving the lives of the villagers.

JB679 was shot down by Helmut Bergmann in his Messerschmitt 110-G4 flying from St. Dizier. It was his 19th operation and he too was shot down soon after.

The Lancaster had flown from Fiskerton to Schweinfurt (Bavaria) to bomb the ball bearing factories and was shot down at 00.57 on April 27th. The cemetery at Bure is quite small and our airmen are buried behind the church in a lovely spot. The graves were immaculate, the gravel white and grey sparkled in the sunshine. There is a grassy spot behind the graves then a low wall beyond which is rolling farmland. If I had to pick a spot to rest for all eternity I could not pick better. Stuart and Alan Mitchell laid a wreath. Alan laid Union flags on the graves and Mr Gerard Antoine, the Mayor, asked if he could have the flags and



Photos: Stuart Keay

keep them in the Marie. I cannot believe the respect that the local people give to these graves.

At each site there was a guard of honour and the Last Post was played. As Stuart has said, “The French look after our dead better than we look after our living.”

In the evening Dominique had laid on a Recital in the local church, a quartet, a brass ensemble and the organ. It was great to see the ‘Brits’ waving our Union flags and singing Land of Hope and Glory. This was an excellent two hour event.

On Sunday 22nd June we arrived at Montiers-sur-Saulx for 10am. The square in front of the Mairie was alive with colour with flags of GB, France and Canada. There was a monument and to the side was the Stele waiting to be unveiled later. Seats had been arranged for us ladies. There was a guard of honour and representatives including Pierre Guimond, Canadian Consular Minister, Johnny Latimer (RAF) Commandant at Lyon, Colonel Marc Lienhardt from St. Dizier, Colonel Alain Paulin who was in charge of the Guard of Honour, Daniel Ruhland, Mayor of Montiers-sur-Saulx, Mme. Jocelyne Verouil, the local M.P., Michel Loisy, President of the Communes of the Haute Saulx and last but certainly not least Gerard Antoine, Mayor of Bure. Behind stood Stuart representing 49 Squadron and Keith Macrae representing 103 and 166 Squadrons – all standing to attention in the hot sunshine

Mme. Gaillardin gave a speech which was interpreted into English by M. Freddie Gaillardin (her brother-in-law and the retired French Ambassador to

Canada). It was a moving speech in which she thanked the British for all they had done during this difficult time. There were to be no other speeches although Stuart would have liked to thank them for what they did in saving and aiding the airmen who lived. Had the French been caught aiding and abetting the aircrew they would have been shot but they still took chances and took it in turns to get food to the hidden men.

The French army presented arms and the standards of the Cantons were unfurled, it was very moving but, in the hot sunshine, a riot of colour. The Stele was unveiled then the wreaths and flowers laid. The band played the National Anthems of Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and France. The choir sang Ode to Joy. The local villagers lined the pavements and joined in.

Many people turned up to see the exhibition and had many questions to ask regarding the three squadrons. All were answered to the best of Stuart, Keith and Alan Mitchell's ability. It was strange speaking to people who had been there at the time – so many people thanked us for our help – it did not seem to matter that we ourselves were only children at the time.

At around 3pm we went to the marquee for lunch, canapes then plate after plate of delicious food. Stuart gave a vote of thanks, mainly in French, to Mme Gaillardin for the incredible amount of work she had done to bring the whole event together which was greeted by a standing ovation.

We arrived as strangers and left as almost family.



MY WAR

By John Jack

Part 2

Altogether we did nine of the twelve Berlins that constituted the Battle of Berlin and after the first one they became routine except on one occasion we saw a German fighter which appeared to be going at twice our speed. We reported this as it may have been a jet which the Germans were testing.

We were very fortunate during our tour never having been attacked by night fighters or been coned by searchlights.

I personally put this down to the use of “window” as I always spread it from crossing the coast to the target area and then back to the coast again. *[Window was the code name for aluminium strips which were dropped in bundles to confuse the enemy radar. ED.]*

There are only two other raids worth reporting in detail. 26/27th March, Essen was our only visit to the Ruhr and it was the only one in which we received damage. My habit after bombing was to lean over the bombsight and watch the bombs fall and then look into the bomb bay for hang ups. On this occasion I was asked to watch the camera lights as it was suspected to be faulty. As I moved back to do this a piece of shrapnel came through the Perspex and severed the bombsite bracket. The hole was the size of a football. I had a very cold journey home but continued to “window” feverishly.

The other one is Mailly-le-Camp 3rd/4th May 1944. The raid was at 7,000 ft. and instructions were to circle a yellow marker 15 miles from the target and await bombing instructions. As we approached there was a Lancaster in flames coming towards us. Then by the light of the flare it became obvious that fighters were orbiting the flare with the bombers.

We decided not to join them but set a reciprocal course and circled these, not a very clever move as this made us a sitting duck. I “windowed” like mad. There was no ack ack fire as this would; a) give away the position of the Panzer Division and b) put their own planes in danger.

Eventually W/C Cheshire dropped a red flare and immediately called Don’t bomb, don’t bomb wrong marker”.

We continued to circle but there was terrible wireless interference and eventually planes started to run in and bomb. We finally decided that we would get no further instructions and followed suit.

On returning to base Johnny Lloyd the intelligence officer asked why we were so late back. I said that it was an abortion of a raid, whoever thought of it should

be court-martialled. He said, "The Wing Commander was back $\frac{3}{4}$ hr. ago, reported it a piece of cake perhaps five losses." My reply was, "Was he there? I personally counted 34 shot down." In fact the final number was 42 out of 136.

My screened tour was at Lossiemouth from June 1944 to December 1944 and although I played hockey there football was the main sport. There were two good professionals there at that time Ernie Ewen who got every Saturday off to play for Dundee and Bill Moir who got off to play for Bolton every week. He got one cap for England about 1949.

My final posting was to Moreton-in-Marsh, Frank Muir of ultimate T.V. fame was the entertainments officer. I was awaiting demob as Sports Officer and my Staff Sergeant Bill Leighton was Captain of Reading. Bill postponed his demob for six weeks to captain the RAF team touring Sweden.

One day I overheard him on the telephone arguing with someone about who to have in the team. On asking who it was, he said, "The team manager Squadron Leader Winterbottom who knew nothing about football." Please note, he became the first England Manager after the war!

Over the years I have been asked about my experience in the RAF. It is only in the last few weeks with the number of T.V. reports on Bomber Command that I decided to commit my memories to print.

Previously my reply has been, "Do you want to know about my having tea and playing tennis with Winston Churchill's cousin Capt. Spencer Churchill, or the twice I might have been court marshalled?"

The tea and tennis was at his estate near Moreton-in-Marsh when he invited my friend and I along.

The first potential court martial was when on the squadron. We were doing a simulation bombing of a cruiser in the Firth of Forth. The five English members of the crew had never been to Scotland and we decided to put the wireless U/S and land at Prestwick. On route I map read to my house which was on a hill beside a church and we proceeded to beat it up. We then went to Airdrie and flew up and down Airdrie at 100ft. The navigator lived in Kilmarnock, his house being near a large Aitkins Brewery sign, so we beat it up and then landed at Prestwick.

We bussed back to Kilmarnock where his mother made us a pot of stew and then we went to his local pub with his father. A lot of drink was taken, gifts from the locals in the pub. We flew back to Fiskerton the next afternoon.

The irony of the whole thing was that it cost the RAF as it was foggy and they had to put on FIDO.

The second offence was also from Fiskerton with 50 Squadron. In June 1945 we were doing 'Dodge' trips, that is bringing back army officers who were due for release. As I was going towards the plane I was called by a ground

crew member whom I knew at Lossiemouth. He asked me to give his friend a lift home. This I considered nonsense but he assured me that the A.T.A. [*Air Transport Auxiliary. ED.*] did this regularly. After much persuasion we agreed and changed his leave pass from ROME to CROMER. We stuck him below the navigation table and when getting to Fiskerton I grabbed two bikes at flight and dashed to the bus stop. Fortunately a bus was about to leave and I gave him a good swearing at and said, "We never want to see you again." A fortnight later we were in quite a panic as a rumour went around the area that an airman was going to various stations to find the crew to take him back to Italy. He never found us and the story goes that he was eventually given a home posting.

Sadly John's death is recorded in the In Memoriam section of this issue.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Our Hon. President, John Ward, has adjudged that the winning photograph of the Lancaster reunion flypast at Fiskerton, which appears on the cover of this issue, is that entered by Peter Shreiber.

He writes, "The reasons for my selection;

- * All seven crew positions visible in one shot.
- * Nice colours - the upper camouflage and wing roundel give a rich lustre.
- * The angle disguises the extended trim tabs of the 'Avro Lincoln' tail fins.
- * There appears to be a 'halo' around the aircraft.
- * It brings back with a shiver, the memory of those glorious few minutes when the mighty Lanc roared her presence once again over RAF Fiskerton announcing in no uncertain terms 'This is my domain...and always will be'."

We thank all who entered the 28 photographs submitted.

In the May issue we concluded Dom Howard's story of the recovery of ED702. This Lancaster was shot down by Heinz Grimm on 23 September 1943. This is the sequel:

With the research into the loss of ED702 almost completed, with the help of Katya I was able to make contact with Heinz Grimm's sister, Eleonore, and another researcher Harald Schlanstedt.

Eleonore was happy for me to go to see her in Eisleben and to chat about her brother, on the condition that the newspapers were not involved. This request I was happy to follow. It was a pleasure to meet this lady in her home and to spend the afternoon chatting with her.

It turned out that Heinz, like Cyril, always wanted to fly and joined the Luftwaffe before the war. I was able, with her help, to find out a little more about Heinz, his private life and his future wife. Eleonore allowed me to look at, and copy, a box of photographs of Heinz from his youth, out camping and being with friends, to his training to be a pilot. I also saw the obituary from the newspaper covering his loss and funeral in the local cemetery. The original headstone disappeared and Eleonore had it replaced with the one that is there today.



Heinz Grimm's grave today



Believed to be Heinz's Bf110 G9+BM

Later the same day we met up with Harald Shlandstadt, another researcher who had seen my appeal for help and had found a few more details out about Heinz. From this meeting and the photographs we were able to conclude that Heinz's Bf110 did have Schrage Musik [*Upward slanting cannon. ED.*] fitted and it is with all probability that ED702 was brought down in this way.

UGNY - SUR - MEUSE

THE LOSS OF LANCASTER LL908 AND CREW 70 YEARS ON.

Compiled from a report by Terry and Ann Atkinson.

Ugny-sur-Meuse is twenty-two miles west-south-west of Nancy in Northern France. Lancaster LL908 EA-H crashed on April 27th 1944, half a mile north west of the village.

The crew, who are buried in the village cemetery, comprised:

P/O John Russell Dickinson

Sgt. Richard Beetham Hainsworth

F/Sgt. Fredrick William Wale

WO2 Norman Alexander Freeman Mackenzie RCAF

Sgt. Claude William Frank Sizer

Sgt. John Ellenor

Sgt. Robert Hall Hudson DFM

Every year, since 1945, on May 8th the village has celebrated the ending of WWII. This is known as 'Ceremonie du 8 Mai.

This year is the 70th anniversary of the crash and several family members of the crew made the journey through France to be with the people of Ugny and become part of their celebrations.

Most families spent five days either travelling, visiting war cemeteries or visiting French families that they had made acquaintance with over the years.

The visit went unbelievably well and had a fantastic turnout from England. For some it was their first visit and to see the actual site where the Lancaster finally came to rest was a moving and emotional experience. For those who had passed this way before it was a time to reflect and remember the sacrifice that these young men had made so that we might live.

Sadly for two of the main organisers from the village, Alfred and Therese Delculellerie, Therese was taken ill and hospitalised for the rest of our visit so they missed all the celebrations that they had worked so hard to achieve.

The celebrations started at 1100 hrs. with everyone meeting outside the Town Hall. Then, after a brief set of family introductions we were transported by several cars to where the Lancaster crashed at 0101 hrs. on April 27th 1944. The crash site covered three different fields where parts of the aircraft were found. They are now marked by posts to indicate the positions of the sections. Site one consisted of a wing, cockpit and three engines. Sites two and three consisted of the rear turret and tail fin. One of the observers mentioned that within the last year an incendiary bomb had been discovered whilst ploughing the field. According to Louis Wirtz, who was one of the first French people on the scene

after witnessing the crash, “The Lancaster had six 1,000lb bombs and several incendiary bombs intact.” *[Incendiaries were carried in containers. ED.]*

Our French guides passed increasing amounts of information

for us to consolidate and many questions were forthcoming. It was a most interesting visit to the crash site however, some of the information, accounts and stories are still inconsistent and leave more questions than answers.

Having spent an hour examining the crash site we made our way back to the Town Hall where aperitifs and a three course lunch were already being prepared. The food was of excellent quality, the villagers having banded together.

The Town Hall displayed various photographs of the crew alongside a model aircraft and a map showing every known crash site in France. After lunch the people of Ugny showed photographs, memories and testimonies of what had occurred on the night of the crash and the days that followed.

Previous to arriving in Ugny a slide show had been prepared in both French and English. Photographs and documentation were produced by many people to ensure it's authenticity. (Thanks to our own researcher Colin Cripps). The French part was translated by Patricia Tricker. Martin Baker brought along his PC and for the slide show the script was prepared and delivered by Annette Hitch. This part was most entertaining and being in both French and English gave it that little touch of class.

After this, a great many question and answer sessions took place discussing the photographs and documentation that we had all brought with us.

The time was approaching 1600hrs. when the ceremony at the cemetery was due to begin. On arriving at the cemetery, just a few hundred yards away, many of the participants had already gathered in their allotted places. It was both



All photos: Terry Atkinson





impressive and moving as we watched and listened to the orders being given.

The British and Canadian flags were already raised before the ceremony started. (This is the way it is carried out in the necropolises. The flags must be raised before the ceremony so that they will be flying before all the participants gather). The French band, Tempo Music, was already waiting for the order “Attention”. The Master of Ceremonies explained the different phases of the ceremony and gave the name and rank of each member. This was followed by a series of speeches. These included the First Deputy Mayor (Mr Regis Figel) and then the British Officer (Flt. Lt. Andy Barber), Liaison Officer on Air Base 133 in Nancy Ochey representing the British Ambassador in France and then Captain Blaise.

Then began the wreath laying first by the Deputy Mayor of Ugnay followed by Flt. Lt. Barber. This was followed by the M.C. announcing The Honour Roll. Tempo Music played “The Honour Roll” followed by a minute’s silence. This was followed by the Canadian National Anthem and then the British National Anthem. The order came “At Ease” and The M.C. announced, “The authorities will salute only the British and Canadian families.”

Crosses were presented on each of the seven airmen’s graves followed by each family member gathering behind their family’s headstone. The French newspaper from Nancy along with their photographers were all present.

After the photographs had been taken the M.C. requested all participants to walk to the War Memorial on the entrance to the village of Ugnay. Further celebrations commenced to celebrate the armistice of the 1939 – 1945 War.



First the flag bearers, followed by the formal ranks, members of the association, Canadian and British families and lastly the villagers and public, made their way to the War Memorial.

Once again all the participants were already assigned their respective places along with the band and singers from Vaucouleurs.

The order was given for “Stand Still” by the M.C. and played by the bugle. Once again he explained the different phases of the ceremony.

First, the reading Agenda nr. 9 by General De Lattre D.E. Tassigny. The Deputy Mayor (Mr Regis Figel) read the message of the French Secretary of State for War Veterans. This was followed by “Bugle Call”. Then the message of the Secretary of State read by the Director of the National Office of War Veterans. Once again the bugle call ended, then “At Ease”.

Wreath laying took place followed by a minute’s silence. The bugle played “The Marseillaise”. The singers then performed three songs.

As the choral singing progressed Lilly Baumaux translated the words from French to English. Again this was very moving. Lilly mentioned that they were all quite popular songs at the end of the war. The last of the three songs referred to the crossing of the Rhine.

The M.C. announced that the authorities would salute the flag bearers which concluded the ceremony. The dignitaries then followed round shaking the hands of all the visitors.

The final visit was to the Town Hall for the Reception, a fitting end to what had been a memorable day. It was also a day which was full of events all of which were action packed. Food and drinks were once again served.

Various speeches of thanks were given to our hosts for all the hospitality given.

David Spencer, a RAF veteran from England, gave a speech and presented Mr Regis Figel (The President of Ugny-sur-Meuse village activities) with an inscribed RAF veteran’s badge to commemorate the aircrew who lost their lives.

This was given to the community of Ugny-sur-Meuse for safe keeping.

We finally said our goodbyes about 2000 hrs. after what had been an action packed day.

*Olek Brzeski is a researcher of Polish descent, living in France.
His speciality is the V Weapon sites.*

REMEMBERING ND533 AT LYONS-LA-FORET. PART 1.

By Olek Brzeski

At 21:20 on June 1944 as part of Operation Crossbow, Lancaster ND533 EA-M crewed by Pilot B.E Bell 151471, Flight Engineer S Holmes 1810022, Navigator D Macfadyen A425176 (R.A.A.F), Wireless operator/Air gunner J Holden 1521290, Air gunner H. Clark 1281835, Air gunner J Reed 1281835 and Bomb aimer P. Hemmens 152583, took off from RAF Fiskerton on a dull, rainy day, their destination to destroy the V1 facilities, German emplacements and railway station at Etampes, approximately 50 kilometres south of Paris.

At approximately 23:50 whilst the local population were fast asleep a low humming sound could be heard over Etampes, the sound of RAF bombers on their approach. What followed shortly was a rain of approximately 2,000 bombs exploding all around. Although the mission was considered a success over 500 people lost their lives including members of the Hitler Youth some of whom would have been as young as sixteen!

Once their mission was complete it was time for ND533 to return home! However, after an attack brought on by Oblt. Johannes Werth of 5./NJG2 their fate was sealed and M-Mother was brought down over the village of Lyons-La-Forêt, crashing just two miles away from the village in a clearing next to a little hamlet called La Villenaïse.

70 years later, on the beautiful sunlit morning of 21st June 2014, within a clearing in the forest of Lyons at the site of the crash, an atmospheric service of



Vanessa Burden and Jackie Snell.

remembrance was held whilst the local countryside lay silent as if out respect for the crew of ND533. In attendance were the mayor of Lyons-La-Forêt - Monsieur Thierry Plouvier; Major Steven Ward of the Australian Embassy; local dignitaries and residents; members of the local resistance group and most importantly Vanessa Burden [Assoc. 4T9er ED.] and Jacqueline Snell, the two nieces of the Flight Engineer, Sergeant Sydney Holmes.



L-R: An Officer of the local Gendarmerie; Maj. Steven Ward; Colonel Emmanuel Davout; Colonel Nardeaux; Andre Olivier, treasurer of the Souvenir Francaise; Commandant Georges Van Rysel,

During the ceremony and with the aide of her cousin Jackie, Vanessa Burden gave an emotional speech telling of how her grandmother suffered terribly after hearing about the loss of her son Sydney and how she would not leave her bed for six months after receiving the news.

George Jones was invited as he has incredible story to tell. His father ((Tom Jones) came over during World War 1 as a member of the Welsh Guards, was injured and later married the nurse who treated him and settled in Lyons La Forêt, George had several brothers and sisters (I think 11) and in 1942 whilst returning from a walk in the local forest with his sisters he saw his dad and brothers (bar one) being taken away by the Gestapo! He was advised by the mayor at the time to go to Rouen as he knew a family there and thought George would be safe with them. Apparently George then befriended a German driver who one day, told him to leave Rouen as they had heard it was about to be bombed (*the raid by 49?*). George spent time travelling around France and one day whilst riding his bike, he blacked out to later wake up in a

bomb crater with his bike in the tree above him. He had been bombed by the Americans and spent 6 months in hospital.

Later that morning a similar ceremony took place in honour of the crew of Lancaster ME614, JO-K, who died when their plane was shot down after attack on the V1 assembly plant at St. Leu D'Esserent in July 1944. The morning finished with a light hearted 'Verre de L'amitié' or 'Glass of Friendship' offered by the local town hall.

REMEMBERING ND533 AT LYONS-LA-FORET. PART 2.

Edited from an e-mail and photographs sent to our Honorary President John Ward by his friends Heather and Nigel Allsworth.

We had a fabulous time at Lyons-La-Foret. Olek was a great guide and he took us around several sites in the area which was steeped in history.



All photos by Heather & Nigel Allsworth.

**Heather placing flowers at the memorial to the
49 Squadron crew of ND533**

Our first port of call was of course to see the crash site of ND 533, we placed some flowers and a card on behalf of the Association for you. Although the memorial was erected in 2010, a picture of which we found on the 49 Squadron Association website, the ceremony took place on Saturday 21st June 2014. Olek said that there were around a hundred people present and

there were some very interesting people among them. He told us that there was a member of the resistance and also relatives of the crew.

The memorial is situated about where the cockpit would have been and you can still see the craters in the wooded ground where the four engines would have compacted, I'm sure you can imagine it was quite a moving sight looking along the ground where the four engines would have hit. It was extremely peaceful in the woods and the memorial was really nice and so well kept.

As well as the crash site of ND 533, Olek took us to Beauvoir-en-Lyons, we don't think that he realised this was a Lancaster also from 49 Squadron. It was a

memorial to LL976 EA-A which was shot down by a nightfighter, the crew are buried at Beauvais-Marrisel.



The memorial to the crew of LL976.



The graves of five members of the crew of ND533.

headstones appeared in the television programme from Normandy on the 70th anniversary of D-Day.ED.]

Overall, a great holiday to Normandy, third year running! It was enhanced by the trip to Lyons-la-Foret and we were so pleased that we went.

Next we visited the crash site of Lancaster ME 614, 463 Squadron, followed by the crash site of a B17 near La Fayel. Then the crash site of a Mosquito and also the crash site of a Canadian Spitfire Pilot Allan Cashion. Although he managed to bale out, he died, his Spitfire still lies in the woods a short distance away.

This was followed by a trip to the house of resistance member Huguette Verhague which had a plaque by the side of her name saying "Thanks Hugy" from a crew of 102 Squadron.

We finished with a trip to some woods near Lyons-la-Foret where eight young resistance members were executed by the Gestapo and left in a mass grave.

Following our visit to Lyons-la-Foret we did take a trip to Bayeux cemetery to find the graves of the crew of ND533. It was nice to see that someone had visited but very, very sad to see five of them buried with two grave-stones. [Coincidentally these

For many years former flight engineer Geoff Brunton, accompanied by his son Michael, attended the commemoration of the disastrous raid on Mailly-le-Camp which took place on 3/4 May 1944. Since Geoff's death in 2011, Michael and his partner Nikki have continued to make the pilgrimage. Geoff flew 24 ops in the crew of F/O William Green DFC. Whilst Geoff was off sick with a broken leg the Green crew went missing during a raid on Revigny, 18/19 July 1944. The Brunton family have always combined their visits to Mailly with paying homage to the crew who are buried at Herbisse.

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO MAILLY-LE-CAMP

From an e-mail to the editor from Michael Brunton

“We attended the Mailly-le-Camp Memorial Service as normal that was incredibly well supported by the UK including several veterans and the RAF (including the OC of Brize Norton – 101 Squadron, Grp Capt J. Ager). It is, I have to say, a very important occasion for the locals as their numbers seem to increase including many children, obviously every year some faces are not there.

In response to an e-mail from author, John Nicholl, Michael added:”...I can give a detailed appraisal of my father’s vivid recollection of the raid which he



was lucky to survive as they got pretty badly damaged having flown through an explosion of a Lancaster in front of them that had taken a direct hit.



“Also I know very well a French gentleman who is now over 90 who wrote a book (in French only) about the raid. He was a young boy at the time, the son of a local farmer that lived about 4 miles away. Not only do his recollections confirm the constant “go-around” with aircraft being picked off by AAA but completely contradicts the German’s

claim that few Nazi Army personnel died because he saw trucks full of bodies going past their farm for days and days to overloaded incinerators. Their families allegedly were told their sons/husbands had been killed in action at the front and not at Mailly.”



Left: Michael at the graves of the Green crew which, but for a motorcycle accident, could have contained his father and thus prevented his own life.

All photos via Michael Brunton.

MY SERVICE CAREER IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE 1940/1968 INCLUDING BOMBER OPERATIONS WITH No. 49 SQUADRON IN 1943/44

**By
SQUADRON LEADER T. J. PAGE DFM**

Part 1

The years of my youth from 1922 to 1938/39 slowly passed and the storm clouds of war were gathering over Europe again. This was something that youth and many others in the countryside were unaware of because news was very limited, wireless was in its infancy and newspapers were few; in fact, many of the older people could not read. The young did not see newspapers because some parents considered them a corrupting influence. On reflection, perhaps this was a good thing. Now seventeen, and on the first Sunday in September 1939, and not required to work I decided to visit my grandmother at Coleswood near Ramsgate and cycled the thirty miles there through the lovely countryside, past my old schools and my birthplace at Sarre and on along the road that passed through Manston aerodrome. Already there was greater activity at the air station and once more, my boyhood ambitions came to the fore.

Soon after arriving there the air raid siren sounded, it was eleven o'clock the 3rd September. The government had declared war with Germany. Being apprehensive, and, like many others, thinking there would be an immediate invasion as the place was near to the South East Coast of England, I decided to return home straight away. History relates that nothing much happened until the following springtime. The winter of the year 1939/40 was very harsh with snow and ice. As spring approached aerial activity over Southern England increased. Fighting aircraft appeared overhead, their long condensation trails making patterns in the sky. There were sounds of machine gun fire. At times aeroplanes would streak fast and low across the countryside further kindling my love of flying machines and the air.

At the time I was living in the small village of Westwell in Kent below the North Downs. In April 1940 at the age of eighteen, I began to feel more independent and assertive so I left my employment and cycled fifteen miles to the recruiting office at Canterbury and enlisted in the Royal Air Force and was immediately accepted and placed on reserve service until called for duty. I had accepted the 'King's Shilling', signed the Oath of Allegiance and proudly travelled home wearing the badge of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. The first part of my dream had come true.

Overhead the air fighting continued with Fairey Battles streaking low over the

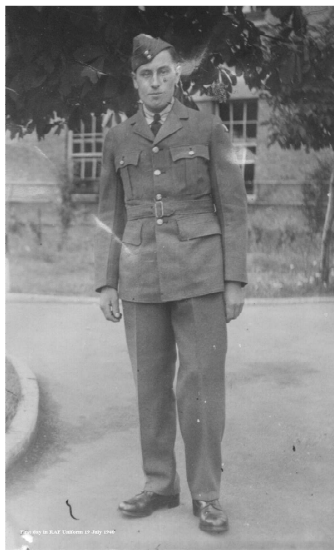
Kent countryside. They had taken great losses over these early days of the war. The three months passed and orders came to report for Royal Air Force duty.

On the 19th July 1940, the time came to leave home. My dream was coming true. This was a day of apprehension; I was now committed to whatever lay ahead. Where would life lead me? RAF service could be worldwide as the Empire still existed and now there was a war on. My dreams of being an Airman did not include war. Walking away down the lane there was a last look at the cluster of cottages of Westwell nestling at the foot of the wooded downs before they disappeared from view.

On the Monday afternoon the 19th July 1940 I arrived at the sand bagged and barbed wire protected gate of the RAF Depot at Royal Air Force Uxbridge, entered the restricted doorway into the guardroom and reported for duty.

There were many Volunteer Reservists from all parts of the country joining for duty that day. We wondered what was before us. Each barrack room contained about twenty beds and a certain amount of overcrowding was necessary because of large numbers of new recruits. The iron beds were rather unusual in that the foot part slid under the head part. The mattress was in three parts named 'biscuits'. When not in use the whole bed was neatly stacked away. This provided extra space in the barrack room for day use and was in accordance with the spick and span neatness of service life with a place for everything and everything in its place, a form of discipline. The staff NCOs explained the routine of the barracks.

Next was the first and foremost of the induction formalities. This was the 'Swearing In' to become legally bound by the Air Force Act and allegiance to the Crown. There was a roll call of Names, Initials and Religion. Each Airman received a service number, mine was 922297. Afterwards we were officially Airmen of the rank of Aircraftsman 2nd Class. Each Airman received an Identity Card RAF Form 1250 and Identity Discs; called 'Dog Tags', both to be carried on the person at all times, uniform, kit and accoutrements. The kit was such items as shaving brush, button stick, cleaning brushes, knife, fork, spoon, mug, kit bag, and mess tin. The button stick is still in my possession. The accoutrements were, webbing belt and harness to support a haversack, water bottle and bayonet, finally there was a gas mask. In the evening, the new recruits were off duty. I went to the cinema in Uxbridge town.



The new intake of Airmen were mustered for training as Airframe Mechanics and on the Wednesday, we travelled by troop train to the training school at Morecambe in Lancashire. On the way to the railway station at Uxbridge small local boys offered to carry the heavy kitbags for a few pennies, an offer taken up by many of the new Airmen. It was obvious that the lads were well versed in the routines of the RAF and were showing enterprise. Each group carried food rations for the long slow journey and at various stops on the way urns of tea appeared.

Some of the recruits passed the time by playing cards. This was wartime and the trains were steam driven. Rail traffic was heavy with troops and war material on the move.

Towards evening the train arrived at Morecambe. The Airmen then were marched round the streets and given accommodation in private houses known as billets. Billets were private houses where the occupants with space to spare were required by law to accommodate Service Personnel. Compulsory billeting is only authorised by Parliament in wartime. Three of us found ourselves in rather a poor billet whereas some other Airmen found relative luxury, a home from home atmosphere. The billeting was rather unexpected as everyone thought we would be in Royal Air Force Station barracks.

The technical training took place in various commandeered large garages and factories. Tuition was by lectures and practical work amongst a collection of aircraft and aircraft parts. Workbenches, tables and chairs completed the layout of what was a large classroom. Here I was in my element and enthusiasm made it easy to learn, the practical work was most satisfying. A Fairey Battle was in the classroom. It was the first aircraft that I was able to inspect and sit in.

Towards the end of December the course was finished and we became qualified Flight Mechanics 'A' (for Airframe) and were promoted to Aircraftsman 1st.Class. Over the Christmas, I went home to Westwell in uniform for the first time. I carried posting instructions for a new unit. On this leave, there was a shot down German Me 109 fighter aircraft at Westwell. Later I would be required to dismantle crashed German aircraft.

The new unit was No.257 Hurricane Fighter Squadron whose Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader Stanford-Tuck, one of The Few of the Battle of Britain. Soon my new





skills were tested. This was a fighter squadron. The aircraft took off to repel approaching enemy aircraft. The term used was "scrambled". When the alarm sounded, the mechanics would rush to their allotted aircraft to assist the pilots into their parachute harness and strap them in the cockpit seat. When with the engine started and

the aircraft ready to go the wheel chocks would be removed before positioning oneself at a wing tip to help turn the aircraft if necessary and then salute to the pilot before he took off. It was then a wait, hoping that the pilot and aircraft would return. Sometimes they did not return and everyone waited for any news of what had happened.

Between flights the aircraft had to be refuelled and checked for any damage and made ready for the next sortie.

After three months on No.257 Fighter Squadron, it was time for more training at RAF Insworth near Gloucester for a three-month course to increase my skills to that of a Fitter. The course finished in July, 1941 and I was remustered to a Fitter IIA in the rank of Leading Aircraftsman after being in the Royal Air Force for the happiest year of my life, so far, despite the fact that there was a war on.

The new posting was to No.71 Maintenance Unit at Slough in Buckinghamshire. Arriving there, I found that the unit was in a commandeered garage close to the Hawker Aircraft factory at Langley. The factory was manufacturing Hurricane aircraft.

The duties at Slough were the collection and delivery of aircraft between storage units and stations and the recovery of crashed aircraft, both RAF and German, for salvage in the area of London, Kent and Essex. I remember collecting a small aircraft from a place named Fairfield. It is now London Airport.

The duties also included the sending out of servicing parties to RAF Stations to service aircraft that were beyond the station's capability.

At one stage, there was a month's detachment to the RAF Station at Cosford in Shropshire to do a Junior Non Commissioned Officers course to learn the disciplinary aspects of service life and leadership. The course member's accommodation was in Fulton block, a barrack that was a byword in the service for its extremely high standard. This was to learn the art of commanding Airmen on parade and of Air Force Law. I returned to Slough as a Corporal and given charge of a servicing party.

To be continued.

READER'S LETTERS

Following the Gathering I was pleased to receive a number of e-mails expressing enjoyment of the event, one from Honorary Friend, John Lowe read:

“Just to say a very big thank you for giving me the opportunity to be with you all at the ‘Gathering’, so, so enjoyable. I have amazing memories backed up by wonderful photographs of a very precious time spent with incredible people.

“Thank you so much once again.

“I really look forward to being in your company again in the future.”

Similarly, Associate Member David Haines e-mailed:

“Firstly may I say how much my wife and I enjoyed our stay at the re-union in June. It was a real eye-opener and I learned a lot from the visit. One of the gentlemen I chatted to (sorry I am terrible with names) stated that the website/ archivist/ author would be grateful for any further information relating to former members of 49 Squadron. I do not really know what is useful and what is not, but I am sending you files relating to my Dad's Service record and subsequent career. I do not want to flood you with stuff which is not suitable (ie Thor Missile projects and such), but if you would like to delve deeper on any issues, just ping me an email and I would be glad to help if I can.”

From former Flight Sergeant Tom Reid:

“Congratulations for a superb Gathering event. It went down well with everyone that I came into contact with.

“My son Michael drove the 250 miles to get me there and back and was very impressed with the large turnout.

“I was very proud to be chosen to lay the wreath at the Memorial Stone and have my picture taken with the other two oldies.... It was a bit embarrassing to be photographed by the 49 paparazzi.

“My son and I went to East Kirkby and I was lucky to get on board the Lanc. I tried to get up into the mid upper turret but couldn't manage it.

“On Tuesday we went to Scampton for a good look round the hangar museum and the Red Arrows who had just returned from Cyprus. It was an amazing event for both of us.”

And from Annette and Robert McEneaney:

“Thank you and the crew for another wonderful and eventful weekend at the Reunion we both enjoyed meeting everyone again. We were also very pleased to be asked to deliver a reading at the service in Fiskerton Church especially following our recent trip to Germany to mark the 70th Anniversary of the loss of “Our boys”. We as a group are very grateful that you thought of us....”

There were others in a similar vein.

Although not a member or reader, I felt that this is an appropriate place to record the following e-mail that I received from Cpl Lloyd E Hill, A400M Maintenance Instructor, 24 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton:

“As part of a staff ride to France in June, myself and some colleagues of 24 Squadron RAF Brize Norton are visiting amongst other places, the site of the former WW1 airfield at Fourneuil. We are mainly looking into 24 Squadron history but are looking at a few other non current Squadrons as part of our visit. I have been tasked with researching and delivering a presentation on the 19 days that 49 Squadron spent at Fourneuil.

“I would like to thank all at the 49 Squadron Association for the extremely helpful information provided on your website, it has been invaluable as part of my research. The new look website is very easy to use with all the hyperlinks providing ease of access around the information.”

Associate Member, Jake James, e-mailed from Australia:

“Hope you & the family are all well. Thank you for another great edition to The 4T9er, it was such a great read, as always.

“I thought I'd send you an email, regarding my Great Uncle P/O Stanley Way. I recently sent off for his war medals as I found out the family never received any. I was thrilled to receive three shiny medals, about six weeks ago now. The family is just over the moon to finally have them.

“So when is the reunion? Hopefully in the not too distant future I'll be able to make it to one of them.”

Our Webmaster advised that our website had received, via FaceBook, the following e-mail from non member David Thomas:

"I am a regular visitor to Bournemouth. On Overcliff Drive I was somewhat surprised to find a plaque to Flt Lt J. H. Green DFC, a Canadian pilot with 49 Squadron, who was killed in Bournemouth during a flying display for The RAF Benevolent Fund. This is by the side of a memorial to Flt Lt Jon Egging, a Red Arrows pilot, who died following a display. Whilst the memorial to Flt Lt Jon Egging is new, the memorial to Flt Lt Green DFC was in a poor condition. On reading the plaque I was somewhat shocked to find that Flt Lt Green DFC died on the 17th September 1947, the day I was born. He was 29, which was the same age as my late father when I was born, he was also a POW, as was my late father. So I approached the Bournemouth Council, with a view to having the plaque refurbished, the plaque was removed and sent for repair, it was found that due to it's condition, it will need to be replaced as it was beyond repair. I have agreed to pay for the replacement plaque. I had an affinity with the RAF from an early age, and in fact joined up and spent 12 years in the Royal Air Force as a Police NCO Dog Handler."

We are in the process of making contact with David as we go to press. ED.



The 4T9er

E-Supplement

August
2014



The arrival of the Canadian Lancaster to join the BBMF Lanc at RAF Coningsby has created great excitement among the aircraft fraternity. There have been many photographs published of the pair together, non better than this. I am grateful to Peter Zabek for allowing me to publish it.

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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LANCASTER OVER FISKERTON

Two stills from the YouTube video of the wonderful salute by the BBMF on June 2nd, during our 2014 reunion.

<http://youtu.be/ueKNnSbXDFM>





STAND UP THE REAL XH558!

Only the colour scheme distinguishes the superb model from the big jet.

See them both on YouTube:

<http://youtu.be/T8yC-Gf7J-A> and <http://youtu.be/4eaohp7iJVw>





You Band of Brothers, and Sisters. — The 2014 Reunion.



Eric Clarke and Fred Hill compare logbooks outside Bentley Hotel.



Ich glaube, Sie in etwas getreten habe!



One of the perks for being 101!

Photos on pages 4 - 7 by Dominic Howard



RAF Scampton.



‘Reds will take to the air in threes!’ Those who have never done drill won’t appreciate that! The Red Arrows take off for Anglesey.



Guy Gibson’s office at the time of the Dams Raid is on the 1st floor extreme right. An ‘Upkeep’ bouncing bomb is just below his window.



PER ARDUA AD ASTRA

ON THE NIGHT OF 15/16 MARCH 1944,
A LANCASTER BOMBER OF 49 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE
WAS RETURNING FROM A MISSION TO STUTTGART.

PASSING OVERHEAD, THE DAMAGED AIRCRAFT CRASHED
IN THE FIELD BY THIS MEMORIAL. ALL SEVEN MEMBERS OF
THE CREW LOST THEIR LIVES.

THE PEOPLE OF BOLSTERN LAID TO REST THE SEVEN AIRMEN IN
THE GRAVEYARD OF THEIR VILLAGE CHURCH, TENDING THE
GRAVES UNTIL JULY 1948. THE SEVEN MEN NOW LIE PEACEFULLY
IN DURNBACH MILITARY CEMETERY NEAR MUNICH.

THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED BY THE FAMILIES OF THE
SEVEN YOUNG AIRMEN, TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR SACRIFICE
AND TO REMEMBER THEM FOREVER

"THEY PASSED FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT,
INTO THE AWAITING ARMS OF GOD"

THE AIRCREW OF ND474 (EA-T)

SGT. DOUGLAS BRIGG BIRBECK	AIR GUNNER 21 YRS
SGT. WILLIAM EDGAR HARDY	WIRELESS OPERATOR 22 YRS
SGT. RONALD HOOLE	FLIGHT ENGINEER 20 YRS
FLT. OFFICER JOHN JOSEPH KNOWELS	BOMB AIMER 23 YRS
FLT. SGT. TERENCE CONLON McENEANEY	NAVIGATOR 22 YRS
PILOT OFFICER THOMAS WILLIAM WAUGH	PILOT 23 YRS
SGT. JOHN GRENFELL WISE	AIR GUNNER 19 YRS

WITH HEARTFELT APPRECIATION TO THE MAYOR
AND VILLAGERS OF BOLSTERN PAST AND PRESENT

15th MARCH 2014

Close-up of the Bolstern Memorial, the dedication of which is described in the
current issue of The 4T9er on pages 6 to 10