

# The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine  
August 2015 Issue 38**



**Photo: Dom Howard**

**The BBMF Dakota approaches Fiskerton Airfield Memorial  
following the reunion wreath laying ceremony.**

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**F. W. Smith   H. Church   H. McLeod   A. W. Merrett  
P. Rapson   M. G. Price DFM**

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

## **NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

**Stephen Hill**

## **NEW FRIEND**

**Andrew Gray**

## **EDITORIAL**

I apologize for the late publication of this issue and hope that is worth the wait. As always I thank all you kind people who have made donations of cash, cheques and stamps to ensure that the old dog's tail keeps wagging.

Sadly it is also time to record the passing of six of our members. Frank Smith, who flew 30 ops in the mid upper turret of the Lancaster of F/L George Lee between 15 July and 11 December 1944, died aged 89 on July 5 2014. Former wireless operator, Harold Church died on May 21 this year aged 93. Perhaps the best way to remember him and pay tribute to his courageous pilot is to quote from his entry in our website: "Flak set the port wing on fire and the next moment tracer shells from an attacking JU88 passed inches in front of my chest (Sgt Wood, the W/Op, was killed instantly during this attack). The pilot ordered us all to bale out, but first he asked me to check if the rear gunner was OK; just then, over the intercom, the Aussie voice of F/Sgt Steve List confirmed that he had in fact heard the bale out order. I then put my chute on and followed the flight engineer, Sgt Mason down the steps into the nose ready to jump; the bomb aimer, Sgt Putnam RCAF went first. I turned to take one last look at my skipper, Norman Carfoot, silhouetted by the flames from the blazing wing as he held our doomed Lanc as steady as a rock... he just waved... I think we both knew then that he wasn't going to make it." Just those three crew members who jumped from the nose hatch survived; Sgt Church believes that the Lancaster must have exploded shortly after he left the aircraft. Norman Carfoot was just one of the many pilots who sacrificed their own lives to give their crews a chance to live. Very few received recognition of their supreme courage. Harold and his two

surviving companions spent the rest of the war as PoW's, they went down on their second op on November 4 1943. Hugh McLeod died on July 8. As Sergeant, later Pilot Officer RAAF, he was one of the few pilots who were to occupy the rear turret of Lancasters equipped with 'Village Inn', an automatic gun laying turret. Hugh flew 31 operations on 49 Squadron between October 6 1944 and April 8 1945. All his ops, bar one, were flown with F/O J Milburn, on the odd one out his pilot was our late Chairman Leslie 'Uncle Will' Hay. 'Friend', Arnold Merritt died on July 23rd. Arnold attended the same Methodist Chapel as Barbara and me and, like me, did his National Service in the Army. This gave us a common bond and he became interested in 49 Squadron through our many conversations. He wished to pursue this interest further and became a Friend of the Association. Philip Rapson, who died on September 2 2014, flew three ops as wireless operator with F/O A.H. Westwood in April 1945. A Canadian, Malcolm Price died in the spring aged 92. Malcolm flew 27 ops, all but two with P/O G.P. George. His tour included 12 visits to Berlin and at the end of the tour he was awarded the DFM.

I extend a warm welcome to New Associate Member Stephen Hill whose father was LAC Don Hill, Engine fitter. Don worked on 49 Squadron Hampdens and Lancasters between 1941 and 1943 before being posted to 617 Squadron.

Finally I welcome new Friend Andrew Gray whose father, Cpl. Jim Gray, served with 160 Wing on Christmas Island. Do any of our Christmas Islanders remember 'Jock' Gray who has left a superb collection of photographs to Andrew, one of which appears on page 27?

I have often commented on the close friendships that have been forged at home and abroad as a result of the sacrifice made by our relatives who served, and died, with 49 Squadron. In my case my Uncle Bob, who was killed on August 18th 1943 when his Lancaster was shot down over Denmark whilst returning from the Peenemunde Raid is responsible for forging a friendship for us across the North Sea. He, together with his crew, is buried in Aabenraa churchyard and in 1997 I visited their graves and the memorial stone at Lojt Kirkeby where the bulk of their Lancaster came down. Cutting a long story short, we made contact with a Welsh lady, Marilyn Nissen and her husband Hans, who lived in Loyt Kirkeby, and have been very close friends ever since. They keep the memorial stone tidy and I send poppy crosses every Remembrance Sunday which they place on the boy's graves. Sadly, as reported in the February issue, Hans died in January. Marilyn and Hans met at Capel Curig, North Wales, when he was qualifying as a teacher and he had expressed the wish to have some of his ashes scattered at the lakeside where they had met. His wishes were carried out on July 4th at a moving ceremony which Barbara and I were honoured to attend. It

is a continued source of wonderment that our close relationship with the family should have been forged through the tragic events of so long ago. I have no doubt that many of our readers can tell similar wonderful stories.

In this issue will be found an account of this year's reunion in Lincoln together with the dates of next year's event. Please make a note in your diary. At the service we were introduced to Chris Hewitt who is the new Curate at Fiskerton. A happy coincidence is that he served in the Royal Air Force and therefore has an immediate rapport with us. Revd. Penny Green will still be the vicar at St Clements of Rome and we look forward to continuing our happy relationship with the church and its members.

I am delighted that our very happy and cordial relationship with the villagers of Fiskerton continues to flourish. Once again we are most grateful for their generous sponsorship of our wonderful reunion buffet. I also wish to thank the Stuffins family and the village council for the way that the memorial is so beautifully maintained and Revd Penny Green and all at Fiskerton Church.

Mentioning memorials reminds me that our plans to have a memorial stone at the International Bomber Command Centre on the outskirts of Lincoln will not come to fruition as it has been decided by the trustees not to install individual memorials. In parallel with these plans we were hoping to have a Squadron Memorial dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire. As this is now the only memorial under consideration by us we will be able to make this a more ambitious project. Incidentally, I have been informed by Alrewas that the pathways around the chapel are being redesigned and relaid. I am assured that our pavior stone, installed some years ago, will become part of the new path.

The first phase of the International Bomber Command Memorial on the outskirts of Lincoln will be unveiled on October 2nd. It is the intention to invite every living Bomber Command veteran to the ceremony. Phase 1 comprises a 102ft spire, which equates to the wingspan of a Lancaster, so is particularly appropriate to 49 Squadron. Lincoln based firm, Micrometric, have started the process of cutting the walls of names that will encircle the Spire Memorial. There will be 120 plates produced covering all the losses from 1 and 5 Groups and a further 140 for losses from other groups. Each panel is 4mm thick and is produced from CorTen A steel. The cutting of each panel takes around 6 hours on one of their precision laser cutting machines. In total there will be more than 250,000 letters cut out by laser – the plates are produced in flat material for laser cutting, then they will be deburred at Micrometric, before being sent to another local company, Hindles of Lincoln, for bending to the correct curvature to allow them to be mounted onto the walls. These plates will be attached either side of



curved walls, four each side and will carry the surnames, initials and where there are duplicates, the last three digits of the service number. Once erected visitors will be able to place poppies directly through the names of their loved ones creating a vibrant and constantly changing memorial to those that lost their lives whilst protecting our freedom.

I am grateful to Jack Hawkins for updating us on the BBMF Lancaster which, as I'm sure that you are all aware, suffered an engine fire earlier in the year. The original target of early September has slipped a little and it is likely to be the end of the month before repairs are complete. No comment has been made regarding the cause of the fire as investigations are still ongoing.

In Reader's Letters, I thank Chris Beare for her e-mail telling of a service which is held at the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park each Remembrance Sunday. If you are in London on this special day and would like to be part of something more intimate to Bomber Command than the main Cenotaph Ceremony then why not go along. Whilst we cannot guarantee a flock of celebrities you will find a moving and more personal experience.

We are in the process of arranging the repatriation of an engine from 49 Squadron's Lancaster ED427 which was lost on April 17 1943. Andrew Panton has kindly agreed to display it at East Kirkby and the necessary paperwork is being prepared with the kind help of the MoD and the German authorities.

*'Til the next time.*

## **HAVE YOU GOT ACCESS TO YOUR OWN OR A RELATIVE'S BOMBER COMMAND LOGBOOK?**

**AS PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOMBER COMMAND  
MEMORIAL THEY ARE CREATING AN ARCHIVE OF  
LOGBOOKS. I KNOW, I HAVE WARNED REPEATEDLY  
ABOUT LENDING THESE PRECIOUS DOCUMENTS AND  
THAT HAS NOT CHANGED. THEY WILL ARRANGE FOR YOU  
TO BE VISITED AND THE LOGBOOK SCANNED AT  
A LOCATION OF YOUR CHOSING. IN THE CASE OF LIVING  
VETERANS THEY WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CONDUCT A  
SHORT INTERVIEW.**

**JUST THINK, THE HEROIC DEEDS OF THOSE WHO SERVED  
IN BOMBER COMMAND WILL BE PRESERVED  
FOR POSTERITY.**

# 49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION 2015

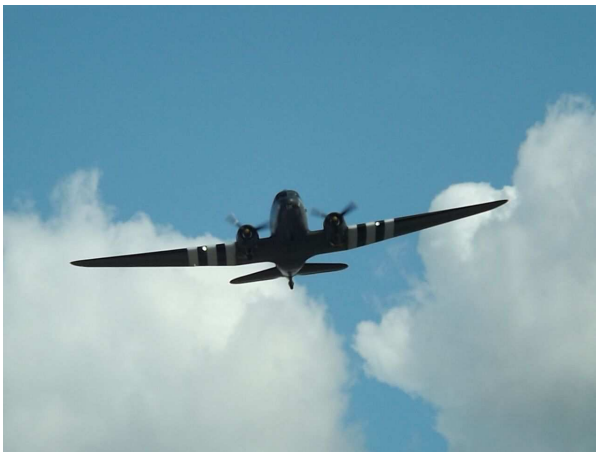
By Alan Parr

**Our 78th Reunion was held, for the second year running, at  
The Bentley Hotel, Lincoln from June 21st to June 23rd.**

## **Sunday June 21st.**

The majority of us gathered at The Bentley during the afternoon, once again enjoying being reunited with old friends some of whom we had not seen for a number of years.

Just before 4-00pm we gathered on the front lawn for three wonderful flypasts by the BBMF DC3 Dakota which brought the large car park at the adjacent Pennells Garden Centre to a halt. Our thanks to Honorary Friend Jack Hawkins and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight for starting our time together with such a moving tribute. As can be seen from the photograph we were once again blessed with fine weather.



**All photographs in this report by Dom Howard  
unless credited otherwise.**

Two of the old 49ers who were present, see photo below, were Reg Woolgar DFC, left, and Fred Hill DFC, right, both of whom flew from Scampton in 49 Squadron Hampdens, Reg as a wop/ag and Fred in the pilot's seat. Happily they had both brought their logbooks and it transpired that they had flown together just once, and then for only a one hour local flight, during the early winter of 1942.



The remainder of the Sunday was free time which was well spent in the bar/lounge by most of us, catching up on a year's backlog of gossip.

**Monday June 22nd.**

Traditionally, the Monday sees our two main events, The Memorial Services in the morning followed by the Annual Dinner in the evening. This year was no exception.

By 10-30am we had gathered at St. Clements of Rome, Fiskerton where Revd. Penny Green conducted our Memorial Service. During the first hymn, the writer presented the Squadron Roll of Honour to Revd. Penny who placed it on the altar for the duration of the service.



The first lesson was read by Robert McEneaney and the second by John Lowe.



Midway through the service the Association's wreath was laid by our Chairman Stuart Keay. Two minutes silence was then observed.

As in previous years the Revd. Penny delivered a most apt and meaningful sermon. Afterward we were delighted to meet the new Curate, Chris Hewitt who, coincidentally, previously served in the RAF.

Following the church service it was time to make our way to the airfield for our wreath laying ceremony at the memorial.

Once again led by Revd. Penny, a brief service saw the laying of our wreath by Reg Woolgar escorted by Fred Hill and Bill Cooke. Prior to the wreath laying Revd. Penny invited those who wished to lay personal tributes to do so first.





Excitement now rose as the time drew near for the second of our Dakota flypasts. Appropriately Jack Hawkins was the first to spot her approaching from the south over Fiskerton village. Coincidentally, the area of the airfield between the two runways was liberally sprinkled with poppies which provided a most poignant scene as can be seen in Dom Howard's lovely photograph on the front cover of this issue. Three perfect passes were made right over the memorial for which we are truly grateful to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

After the excitement had died down we repaired to The Village Hall for the



**Alan Gibson      Jenny Hayes      Ann Chesman**  
**Christine Ward   Iris Taylor      Jill Prichard**

customary excellent buffet lunch, served up by the wonderful folk of Fiskerton, for which Stuart Keay expressed our sincere gratitude.

After demolishing the buffet, the former members of 49 Squadron formed up for the traditional photograph.



**John Fray                      Fred Hill                      Bill Cooke                      David Boughton**  
**Stuart Keay                  Reg Woolgar                  Bill Violet (160 Squadron)**



Next, the complete gathering assembled for a group photograph.

It was then time to return to The Bentley for a lazy afternoon before gathering in the bar at 7-00pm.

At 7-30 we were called into the beautifully set Dining Room for our Annual Dinner.



Grace was said by Revd. Penny and following the first course Stuart Keay proposed the Loyal Toast, Absent Friends and 49 Squadron Association. After an excellent dinner the raffle followed its normal semi chaotic course and at this point it is appropriate to thank all those who donated various bottles as prizes.

**Tuesday June 23rd.**

The organized visit this year was to RAF Scampton Heritage Centre.

At 11-00am twenty-one of us arrived at the Main Gate where we were met by David Wright, The Curator, who led our car convoy through the famous station to the former 617 and 49 Squadron hangar.

A huge amount of work has been carried out since our last visit. As reported last year Guy Gibson's office has been recreated and the former offices have been transformed to themed exhibition rooms.

Whilst in the room dedicated to Scampton's VC winners; Rod Learoyd (49), John Hannah (83) and Guy Gibson (617) plus 49's GC winner Jim Flint, Reg Woolgar gave us an amusing account of his crew's ditching and subsequent rescue. With Reg in the photo to the right is David Wright who, throughout our visit gave us an in depth account of the exhibits and the history of this famous station.



**Photo: A still from a video by Alan Parr**

**Reg Woolgar tells his story to David Wright.**

| DATE | TIME | AIROPLANE | TYPE | No. | PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT        | 2ND PILOT, OR PASSENGER  | DUTY (Including Bombardier, Navigator, etc.)  |
|------|------|-----------|------|-----|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1944 | 7    | LANCASTER | V    |     | SELF                       | ORIAL CREW   | TO MANSTON - BARE.  |
| "    | 8    | OSWALD    | U    |     | SELF                       | S/L SMITH  | TO MANSTON.   |
| "    | "    | VE912     | ?    |     | SELF                       | 1/2 CREW   | MANSTON - MANSTON.  |
| "    | "    | OSWALD    | U    |     | S/L SMITH                  | SELF   | MANSTON - BARE.   |
| "    | 11   | LANCASTER | ?    |     | SELF                       | ORIAL CREW   | LOW LEVEL, OPENED. DROPPED AT 40 FT. FROD ROW OF GUDVAM. BOMBING LOW LEVEL AND F.H.P. TEST. |
| "    | 14   | "         | ?    |     | SELF                       | "  | "   |
| "    | 16   | "         | ?    |     | "                          | "  | "   |
| "    | "    | "         | "    |     | S/L WHITNORTH. D.O. D.F.C. | "  | FOUL DAREL REHEARD. ON DRANTHAM LARE AND FOLCHSTER RES. COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL.              |
| "    | 16   | LANCASTER | G    |     | SELF                       | Sgt PULFORD<br>P/O OERING<br>P/O TREMBLE<br>P/O HITCHMAN<br>P/O SPANARD<br>P/O THORNTON. | LED ATTACK ON TONNE AM BEEB DANCE. SUCCESSFUL.  |

We are most grateful to David and his colleagues for making our visit so enjoyable.

Parties also visited the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at Coningsby and The Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby.

**Photo: David Etherton**  
**Left: W/C Guy Gibson's logbook showing the dams raid.**



**Lancaster 'Just Jane' at East Kirkby.**

In closing I wish to thank all those, too numerous to name, for their help in making this, once again, a successful and enjoyable reunion.

A video of the reunion can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/R3bCV2GSXhI>

A further video featuring two large radio controlled model Lancasters can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/oU1vYuzJdm4>

**THE 79th REUNION OF  
49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION  
CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY  
OF THE INITIAL FORMATION OF  
49 SQUADRON**

**WILL BE HELD AT THE BENTLEY HOTEL,  
LINCOLN**

**BETWEEN JUNE 12th and 14th 2016**

**Whilst it cannot be said with any certainty that it will be the last reunion of 49 Squadron Association it will definitely be the last to be organized by the current secretary.**



# **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 4**

During wartime aircrew just flew aircraft but now in peacetime aircrew and Officers had other duties to perform. I found myself as Squadron Adjutant as well as the Flight Engineer to the Squadron Commander. At one time I was required to attend an Intelligence and Photographic Interpretation Course and was then required to do raid reporting during exercises as well.

The months of 1947 passed with plenty of flying, it was different and relaxed after the hectic and dangerous wartime operations. On the 12<sup>th</sup> November there was a pleasant flight out to Egypt to deliver spare parts to some of the squadron's aircraft. They were on detachment to RAF Shallufa in the Canal Zone. The Pilot was Flt. Lt. Cumber and the aircraft, Lancaster TW 909, this being my first flight with a landing outside England in a foreign country.

The first part of the flight was to RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire for customs clearance. At 23.05hrs, we took off to fly by night to RAF Castel Benito in Tripolitania on the North Coast of Africa. Prior to World War II Castel Benito had been an Italian airfield and during the war the German Luftwaffe had used it. Later the airfield was renamed Castel Idris and in years after it became the International Airport for Tripoli.

The next day it was a five hour flight along the North African coast to Shallufa in Egypt passing over the great battle areas of Sollum, El Alamein and Knights-bridge. On this flight I flew the aircraft for two hours. RAF Shallufa was beside the Suez Canal and it was quite a sight to see large ships appearing to be travelling across the sand and to experience an RAF airfield in a hot desert.

After three days we took off for the return flight to the UK via Castel Benito making a detour to fly over the Pyramids and the Sphinx. On the 20<sup>th</sup> November we arrived back at Wyton after a total flying time of 25.40hrs.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1948 the Squadron again flew out to RAF Shallufa for a month's stay on exercises. I flew as the Flight Engineer to Flt. Lt. Bristow in Lincoln No. RF 426.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March with Flt. Lt. West in Lincoln RF 514, we flew to Khartoum in the Sudan for an overnight stay returning to Shallufa the next day. This round trip took 11.20hrs. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March the whole Squadron returned to Wyton via an overnight stop at Castel Benito.

In May 1948 the whole squadron was engaged in preparations for Operation "Chessboard". This was to be a goodwill visit to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) at the invitation of the Government. It was in recognition by the Royal Air Force of the Rhodesians who had served, and those who had been lost, with the RAF during the war.

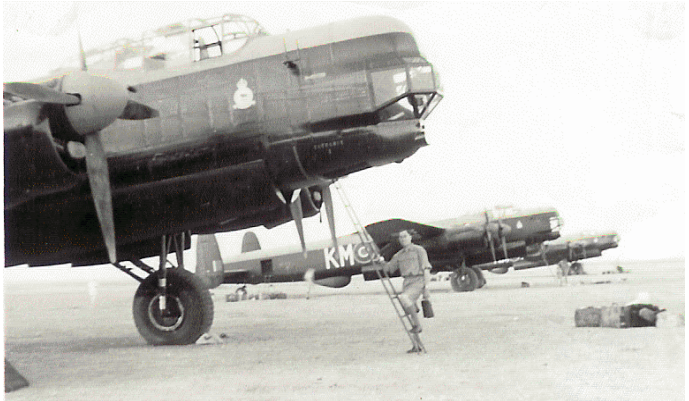
On the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1948 the squadron of six aircraft took off on the first leg of the flight to Southern Rhodesia with an 8hr45min flight to Castel Benito. I was flying as Engineer to Flying Officer Barnes in the lead aircraft RF417.

On the following day the Squadron flew on to RAF Shallufa for a three-day rest and for the servicing of the aircraft. This flight took six and half hours.

The journey continued from Shallufa on the 14<sup>th</sup> flying along the Nile Valley to Khartoum in the Sudan for an overnight stop. From Khartoum it was on to Nairobi in Kenya the next day for another overnight stop.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we went on to the Belvedere airport at Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. The outward flight took 38hrs 25mins. This was to be the base for the Squadron's stay in the Country. The aircraft arrived over Belvedere in formation and after landing the personnel paraded for a reception by the Prime Minister Sir Godfrey Huggins.

There was now a two day rest for the Squadron. On the 18<sup>th</sup> Barney and I, with the rest of our crew, took off to take mosaic photographs of the area of Salisbury for



the local authority. We think it was for the proposed building of a Dam on Lake Kariba. It was a flight of over five hours.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> the Squadron did formation flying over Rhodesia to be seen by the population. On the second of the flights we had on board a passenger, Mr Catsicas, the Mayor of Umtali a town in the NE of the country.

The Squadron now had a two day stand down. The personnel were split up into groups of six to be the guests of prominent Rhodesians. Barney and I, with two of our aircrew and two of our ground staff, were to be the guests of the Mayor of Umtali. This involved a long overnight sleeper journey to Umtali, in a rather antiquated colonial train which was quite an experience. Barney and I were the guests of the Mayor and we were rather surprised at the low standard of the accommodation. However this did not detract from the entertainment of

Sundowner Parties of good food and drink in comparison to conditions at home. There were visits to the Vumba Mountains and an upmarket hotel, the Leopards Rock. We were also taken to a gold mine and an orange orchard. What lovely orange juice it was.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> June the Squadron flew from Belvedere to Kamala Airport Bulawayo flying over the Victoria Falls on the way. Here there was another Sundowner Party and an overnight stay as guests of the locals. Barney and I stayed with a lady doctor.

We returned to Salisbury on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The following day we took off to return home via the way we had flown out. On the way we flew low over the African Veldt and arrived back at RAF Wyton on the 5<sup>th</sup> July having flown for over 80 hours on a good will trip. What an experience. On return to Wyton the squadron members went on leave. There was a break in flying until August.

I then flew regularly as the Flight Engineer to the Squadron C.O and served as his Adjutant until the end of the year. On the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1948 came an appointment to a Permanent Commission in the Secretarial Branch. I was now a Flying Officer. The need for Flight Engineers was ending with the introduction of the new jet aircraft and so, after nearly one thousand hours of flying, my General Duties flying career was ending. It had been two very happy years on 49 Squadron.

In January 1949 I was posted to Headquarters No. 3 Group Bomber Command for Intelligence duties but after three months I was moved on to Headquarters Bomber Command at High Wycombe for further Intelligence duties. The post was for a junior in the Intelligence Section of four Officers. A few years before my wartime flying destiny had been under the command of Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris (Bomber Harris). My feelings when working in the underground Operations Room from where my wartime flying operations had been ordered and controlled cannot be described. My new Commander-in-Chief was Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh P. Lloyd. One day in the Officers Mess I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard - the Father of the RAF.

The posting to High Wycombe was made even more enjoyable by being able to participate at weekends in the ATC gliding at Booker Airfield. In December 1949, the Air Officer in charge of Administration detailed me to represent



Bomber Command at a meeting in the Air Ministry. The subject was the formation of the Royal Air Force Gliding and Soaring Association. Members left the meeting charged with organising and encouraging gliding in their respective Commands. Throughout my service Gliding and Soaring became a great passion which I have recorded separately.

The duties, mess life and atmosphere at Headquarters Bomber Command continued to be very pleasant but ended in early 1951 for as a Secretarial Officer I was required to do accounting duties so it was necessary to attend an Accounting Course. After the course, I was posted to No.9 School of Recruit Training at RAF Bridgnorth in Shropshire to be an Accountant Officer. This involved collecting cash from the local Bank, the payment of bills, the accounting for the cash transactions and the conducting of pay parades for the Airmen.

In July 1952 came promotion to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. My next unit was at RAF Padgate near Warrington in Lancashire. It was another recruit training school. This urban area was a contrast to the lovely Shropshire countryside of Bridgnorth.

Accounting duties continued at RAF Padgate and time passed until April 1953 when I was posted out to Air Headquarters Iraq for duties as the Accountant Officer on a RAF Staging Post located on the Pakistan Air Force base at Mauripur near to Karachi.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1954 came a flight by Hastings aircraft of RAF Transport Command from RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire to RAF Station Habbanyia. The unit was situated between the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris near Baghdad in Iraq and was the Headquarters for all of the RAF stations in the Near East. There was an overnight stop at RAF Castel Benito now named, Castel Idris. It brought back happy memories of



when life was relatively slow before the introduction into the RAF of jet powered transport aircraft. All services from the Pakistanis had to be accounted for and this was to be a large part of my work. In addition, I had to pay and account for the twelve Officers and three hundred Airmen of the unit and those RAF personnel seconded to the Pakistan Air Force. There were also the Services staffs at the High Commission in Karachi to look after which included the Air Attaché, Group Captain Sands, who had been my Senior Intelligence Officer at Headquarters Bomber Command in 1949.



Mauripur was on a flat, barren, desert plain with the hills of Baluchistan away in the distance to the Northwest. The Station, together with Drigh Road at the other side of Karachi, had been RAF during the days of the Indian Raj before Independence and partitioning into two States of that great country in 1947 with its great loss of life. The effects of that period were still very evident in the refugee camps around Karachi where the people lived in appalling filth and squalor.

The small RAF unit was the only British one left on the whole of the Sub-Continent of India. This became very evident when I had to account for all of the petrol used by the British from 1947 to 1954. After protracted negotiations with the Pakistan Air Force Ministry, which fortunately was based at Mauripur, the time came for the bill of around ten million Rupees to be paid; this was the equivalent of about one million pounds sterling. In 1954, at today's values, this would be about £15-20 million. This would be the largest cheque that I would ever sign but finally the Pakistanis wanted the credit in £'s in London for International trade so the bill was passed on to the Air Ministry.

The special nature of the unit required me to deal direct with the Air Ministry and not through Air Headquarters Levant at Habbanyia to the north of Baghdad. I received great credit for my work at Mauripur.

Mauripur was a two-year posting and difficult to bear especially when bouts of dysentery confined one to the Sick Quarters. The climate was always hot and humid and the khaki uniform, of shorts, required daily 'dhobi' (washing) by the Bearer (Batman) - these were the servants employed to do the domestic chores. Because of the hot, humid climate, duty was from 7am to 1pm for those who were not required to meet and service incoming and outgoing aircraft.

Afternoon siestas were needed. There was always a daily coach to Hawks Bay on the Arabian seashore about three miles away for swimming and this was a favourite facility.

*To be continued.*



## 49 SQUADRON LANCASTER ME808. LOST 22 JUNE 1944

By Jim Dalton

Until quite recently I knew only a little about this aeroplane and its demise. I knew that my uncle, F/O James Freckleton, who became my Godfather when I was 8 weeks old, was killed in a Lancaster over Belgium 10 weeks after that.

At home no-one would talk about it, so neither did I. I learned quite young that he was a good man, but in the end I have concluded he was a brave and good man whose life, like so many more, came to a horrible and tragic end.

It was only after the death of my mother that I inherited the family documents box and many years later before I started to read them. Amongst all the stuff you find were all the letters etc. that came from the War Ministry at the time of his death and also later. Amongst those documents were ones that connected him to 49 Squadron and also to the Van Looveren family into whose farm the plane crashed. There was a photo of the farmyard the morning after showing a burned-out wreck and a scorched house.

I tried to 'drive' down the road mentioned in letters as home of the Van Looveren family using Google Street View but did not find anything. I therefore wrote, more in hope than anticipation, a letter to 'Family van Looveren' at the address given. Amazingly within 14 days there was a reply from the family which told me a lot.

One thing was that the addresses had all changed since 1945, so Google was probably in the wrong place! Nevertheless I did learn that the family house was still there, in the hands of the family, and that the little girl standing on the wreck was still alive. There was also a photo of a monument in the garden which related to the crash.

Shortly after that I heard from Guido Van Wassenhove who, it turns out, is a very active local historian and leader of the local group that honours Allied involvement in liberating their town in particular, but also Belgium in general. He has written books and organised various things including a



All photos: Via Jim Dalton  
**Guido Van Wassenhove and  
Geert Van Looveren**

memorial to the 49<sup>th</sup> (Polar Bear) Division, Allied Army, that fought a hand to hand confrontation in the area in October 1944 in which 98 British soldiers died. This memorial was renovated and re-dedicated just two years ago but I was unable to be there.

This year, just two days after the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the crash, we went over to Belgium and Guido showed us around, took us to the two crash sites (the plane came down in pieces after an in-air explosion) as well as to the war memorials. The actual crash was just a couple of miles outside Loenhout. Geert Van Looveren, grandson of the then farmer, showed us around. It is no longer a farm but the buildings are pretty much unchanged.

It seems that ME808 had delivered its bomb load but was in some way damaged. Instead of taking the usual more northern route home, it seemed to be heading directly to the sea. I guess it was the shortest route to GB. ME808 was flying quite low. It seems that a night fighter from Eindhoven spotted them and attacked, damaging them even further. It may well have been that they were too low to bail out and were hoping to reach the sea less than ten minutes away.

No such luck, and at a low altitude and just a mile or so from the crash site the plane exploded in the air. The tail section, complete with the body of the tail gunner, landed in a field almost a mile short of the main crash. The plane was in flames before it came to earth just feet away from the farmhouse, and the flames blackened the walls. It actually landed on top of two grain silos which were flattened. Luckily the family were in their beds at 2.00am as their air raid shelter was under the silos. No one on the ground was hurt. I was told that the 'footprint' of the crashed plane was too small for it to have been intact at the moment of the crash.

In thanks and in memory, the farmer's wife organised that a memorial be built by the farmhouse commemorating both the loss of our airmen and thanking Holy Mary for the salvation of her family by such a near, but in the end total, miss. This roadside memorial has been moved slightly and also rebuilt after a car crashed into it a couple of years ago. Next to the



memorial, clearly visible in the picture, is the story of ME808 on that night. It is

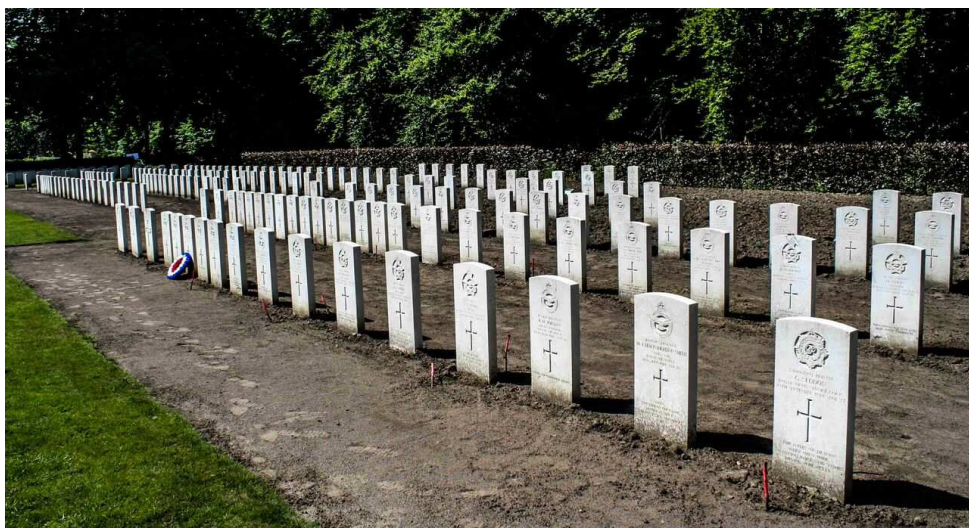
part of a Polar cycle trail where visitors can get some gentle exercise (it is very flat out there) and visit all the sites which relate to WW2 and the liberation of the district.

The newest memorial in the district is in Wuustwezel, the chief town. The town council have moved their WW1 and WW2 war memorial from a busy road junction to the park in front of the council offices. Apart from a refurbishment, they asked Guido to design a wall of remembrance naming all who lost their lives.

After this we returned to Antwerp and then visited the crew's graves in Schoonselhof cemetery, which is a major cemetery of the city with a WW2 military section. It consists of beautiful avenues of trees with well maintained areas, one per country of origin. The CWG commission keep the UK sector in fine order, but when we arrived renovation was underway and many headstones were missing for repair. Fortunately ours were not. The directions to the graveyard on CWG website are out of date, and TomTom did not find it either, but with perseverance we got there.

There is one grave for five of the crew because the bodies were sadly unidentifiable due to the fire. The rear gunner and the flight engineer were separate for a reason I imagine is obvious.

My grandmother did visit the Van Looverens but as far as I was told, no other relatives have been.



If there are any other relatives in the association I would love to hear from them.



## READER'S LETTERS

*Our Hon. President, John Ward, sent 'The Crew' this slightly whimsical e-mail. However, there is a very serious meaning to all followers of Bomber Command:*

"A self indulgent shot of myself sat at 'Butch' Harris's desk in the former Bomber Command HQ at High Wycombe. Should anyone wish to make a visit....normally as a small group, then I have the contact details. The photo I have entitled;

**"DID I HEAR YOU  
CORRECTLY  
PRIME MINISTER...  
DID YOU SAY DRESDEN?"**



*One of the joys of being involved with the Association is being able to put old friends back in touch with one another. Non-member Steve Williamson sent this speculative e-mail:*

"I wonder if you could help me. I have found details on your website about Mr Fred Hill, and I was wondering if it would be possible to get contact details for him. The reason I ask is that he was my headmaster at Tamar High School in Plymouth between 1979 and 1984 and he fostered a great interest and love of aircraft which I still have to this day. I would love to get back in touch with him, and thank him for what he did for me, not only at school but for his service during WW2. I incorrectly assumed that he had passed away, as he wasn't a young man when he taught me, so was delighted to see that he seems to be very much still with us. I appreciate that you would need to ask his permission which I hope he would give."

***It came as no surprise when Fred replied to me welcoming the contact:***

"Thanks for your email; glad to hear that we shall all meet up again on October 1st. It's pleasing when an ex-pupil wants to thank you! Do, please, give him my email address - I can't see how to do that directly. Certainly I'll let you know the outcome. Oddly enough I was recently browsing through the extensive website of the Nairobi School (was then the Prince of Wales but is now the Nairobi School) of which I have very fond memories and came a compliment from an ex-pupil there. Two compliments!!!! Makes me think it was all worthwhile."

***A few days later Steve came back with:***

“Thank you so much for helping me get in touch with Fred. I have had a couple of emails from him and he has said if I am ever in his neighbourhood I should drop in where he would be pleased to see me. I’ve been doing some research and have copies of the ORBs from 692 Sqdn detailing his missions with them, and that he came to them from 1655 MTU a specialist Mosquito training unit. The more reading up I’m doing on Fred the more I find myself in awe of the flying he did and where he went, on one occasion to Berlin on consecutive nights!...I know that a lot of the guys in Bomber Command did this also, and I will make sure I never forget the sacrifices made by them, and will make sure my children don’t either.”

***Associate Member Chris Beare e-mailed:***

“I have recently made contact with the brother of a member of my uncle’s crew. Bob Viollet was the wireless operator on ND684. His brother Bill was also in the RAF and missing at the same time. In letters written to my Grandma from the parents of the other crew members at the time, Mr Viollet mentions that their son Bill has just returned safely and they had to remain hopeful for their other son. As we know, sadly this was not to be.

“Bill was shot down on the Mailly-le-Camp raid and two of his crew died but he evaded and fought with the Maquis and was awarded the Legion d’Honneur last May. As Bill was busy with his own operations he had no idea what his brother was doing and has been asking me for details. I have been able to send him copies of the log book pages and he finds that they were actually on some of the same raids. We have been able to arrange for him to have a copy of the ‘D Day Failed to return book’ which features a chapter on the crew (As I showed you last year). Bill lives in Northampton and I had been hoping that he might attend the reunion with me this year. He has recently been unwell and been in hospital and is not able to attend the whole weekend. At the moment I am hoping that he might be able to join us just for the day on Monday at Fiskerton. I won’t know until nearer the time but wondered if it would be alright for Bill and his companion to join us for the lunch at the village hall. *[See veterans photo in the reunion report on page 9. ED]*

“...As you know I have been a member of the Facebook support group since before the memorial was built and we now have a group membership to the upkeep club as a result of our fundraising. We meet at the memorial every June and November. For the last 2 years we have been involved in leading a time of reflection at the memorial on Remembrance Sunday for those that choose to gather there instead of going to the Cenotaph. The first year we read some poems and our personal stories and were amazed at how many people gathered. Last year we attended the wreath laying ceremony at 9.30 with the RAF and were then given the use of the RAF club library to plan our service together for 11.00. We again read some poems and prayers and each mentioned our reason

for being there and then invited members of the gathered crowd to step up and mention the names of their loved ones lost. It was very moving to witness the release people felt to be able to call out a name or tell their stories to a group of people who understood and many were in tears as they spoke. As you know, Robert and Annette attended last year with all their group and they asked if they could sing 'Abide with me' as their contribution which was very well received and everyone joined in. One man approached us afterwards with the offer of a small pa system which he has since given us so that next year we can be heard by everyone over the sound of the traffic.

"We also placed a cross in the Bomber Command section in the garden of Remembrance at Westminster and took lots of photos there as well as the Tower of London but I expect that you have lots of your own photos from there and so I won't include any." [See Editorial page 5 for comment. ED]

***Robert McEneaney sent the following by e-mail:***

"We attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of unveiling of The Bomber Command Memorial at Green Park on Sunday with Chris Beare and her son Peter. Following the Act of Remembrance service we placed a wreath on behalf of 49 Squadron Association. It was a beautiful service and I retained a copy of the Order of Service and have sent that to you in the post.

"The Act of Remembrance was well attended and Annette captured most of the service on her iPad and I will send it to you under separate cover once we enlist the services of the junior 49ers who have greater knowledge of such technicalities as I do not wish to crash your system."



Photos: Via Robert McEneaney



***Robert sent a further e-mail:***

"Following the Act of Remembrance on Sunday we were exchanging best wishes with all those in attendance when a gentleman walked up to me and said 'Cave Canem' as he had seen the wreath from the Association and noticed my Association badge. Top marks for his eyesight, however I acknowledged his

remark with "The 49 Squadron Association" and both Chris and I then engaged him in conversation and he told us that he was enjoying a weekend in London with his wife and by chance had decided to visit the Memorial. He was taken aback to stumble in on the Memorial service and noticed the wreath with the Association Ribbon. The gentleman in question is Mr T. Deane who served with the Squadron post war. We explained that we both had relatives who served with the Squadron in WW2. We also told him that we both had just returned from the Association Reunion in Lincolnshire. Mr Deane went on to say that he had last attended a reunion many years ago at the Pathfinder Club in London..."

***John Ward received the following e-mail from non-member Emma Fishwick which he copied to The Crew:***

"I came across your web page while chatting to my Father tonight and he mentioned some of his days in the RAF. When he mentioned the name 'Freddy' Fausch I looked it up and found his name on 49 Squadron! My Father now has dementia and is 85 years young, but he remembers so much about his early days in the RAF, it was even a bigger surprise when he remembered Freddie's name! He said he'd never forgotten his surname as it was so unusual.

"I just wondered if you know if he is still alive?"

***Stuart Keay came back:***

"The first flight I had with 49 Squadron was with Freddie Fausch. I believe he was a nav/plotter in Flt/Lt Rickard's crew. John Galloway might know what happened to him as he must have flown with him a few times....

"I would like to know Emma's father's name."

*Does anyone else remember Freddy?*

***Our Webmaster, Malcolm Brooke, received the following e-mail from non Member Ruth Myers who lives in Newcastle, NSW, Australia:***

"I am emailing you with regard to a group photo showing a relative of mine, which I discovered on one of the pages of the 49 Squadron Association website...

"...I was very excited to find a photo of Albert Alan Boad online. He died on 10th March 1944, and this is the only photo I have ever seen of him. I am wondering whether it is possible to obtain this photo in a larger resolution?

"I hope I have addressed my email to the correct person. If not, would you mind forwarding it to whoever may be able to help.

Many thanks."

*After flying 10 ops with 49 Squadron F/O Boad was killed, whilst on 207 Squadron, during a raid on Clermont-Ferrand. Ruth had indeed addressed her request to the 'correct person' and received a higher resolution copy of the composite photograph, which Ed Norman had drawn from the archive, from Malcolm:*



**F/O Boad is third from the right.**

“I attach the best image we have...although it doesn't show the entire crew. For some reason we had to make a composite image, manually adding Sgt New to the LHS. However, the attached is sharper of F/O Boad.

“I have only just returned from Clermont-Ferrand [*To photograph the crew's headstones. ED*] and it is wonderful to see that the trip was worthwhile.”

***Ruth acknowledged:***

“Congratulations on an excellent website, and thank you for the wonderful photo. I am amazed at your very quick response, only a matter of a few hours from one side of the world to the other, and I appreciate this photo of my cousin, Albert Boad, very much.

“It's sad to think that these young men standing together for the photo later died together. It's interesting to see that Albert was wearing a different hat to the rest of the crew. I believe he was the navigator on the flight.

“Thank you also for displaying the photo of the headstone from Clermont-Ferrand on the page. It is wonderful to see it, and to know that these young men are remembered with honour.

“Thank you and best wishes.”

*That just about says it all doesn't it! Happiness for Ruth and the nice warm feeling of a job well done for Ed and Malcolm!*

***John Lowe sent an e-mail referring to the crash site of Hampden X3054 on Dartmoor :***

“I am delighted to say that I will be escorting Fred Hill to the crash site on 11<sup>th</sup> August, weather permitting. Bill Allen, National Park Ranger and I will use the park’s Land Rover to get Fred to the top. (Fred asked if he could drive it ‘off road’, Bless him) Jury is still out on that one!

“We will then take him onto Widecombe for lunch, all being well. To my knowledge, no other pilot from 49, of that period, has ever been to this location. I expect that the National Park might want to record this event in some way. I have a meeting with managers from DNPA today regarding aviation archaeology so if anything transpires from that of interest I will keep you all in the picture.

“On Friday I continued with the archaeological investigation of Hameldown, some of that time in company with the Senior Archaeologist from the National Park, (which really is a measure of the creditability of our work). I am pleased to say that several items were found; but one in particular (14”) caused more than a tremor of excitement because of the depth to which it had penetrated, angle in the peat and geographical line of approach to the crash site. At 17:45 on Saturday it was confirmed by John Marshall East from East Kirkby to be part of a ‘Bomb Slip’ from the Hampden. The significance of this is high; because, whether it be from under wing or bomb bay we are now more confident of the point of impact on the hill side and possibly the actual line of approach to it.

“All GPS data related to artefacts retrieved in 2014 and 2015 archaeological investigations is now going to be fed into the National Park’s computer which in turn should produce a three dimensional picture when combined with the Geophysical survey data of the previous summer; all courtesy of the archaeological team from the National Park.

“This Tuesday, weather permitting, sees Fred Hill and Stephen Wilson, (Lord Nunburnholme) with editors of magazines and newspapers at the crash site. More of that in the near future. Off to have lunch with Fred today together with the ‘Bomb Slip’. The archaeologists from here are also in touch with their counter parts in Lincolnshire because we are on a mission to find the field into which Fred’s engine fell in 1942. I am going to reunite him with his crash landing field and the farming family that still own the farm in October! How about that.”

*Regular readers of The 4T9er will know that this Hampden crash has become a passion for John and he is to be congratulated on his success thus far.*

***I must acknowledge the hard work of ‘The Crew’, examples of which feature in this section. Thanks Chaps!***



## CAN YOU HELP?



**This Scampton football team photograph was sent in by Steven Hill whose father, LAC Don Hill, is the goalkeeper. Can anyone add any further details?**



**New 'Friend' Andrew Gray sent the above photograph which shows his dad Cpl. Jim Gray in the centre. As Jim was from Scotland and had a Scottish accent it is highly likely that he was known as 'Jock'.**

**Do any of our 'Operation Grapplers' remember him?**



# The 4T9er

## E-Supplement

**August**  
**2015**



Photo: Dom Howard

We were honoured to have the company of three Second World War veterans at this year's reunion.  
Bill 'Tich' Cooke was an air gunner on Lancasters with 49' before going to Burma as a Liberator gunner.  
Reg Woolgar DFC was a wop/ag on Hampdens at Scampton. His tour included 'The Channel Dash'.  
Fred Hill DFC flew Hampdens from Scampton before becoming a Mosquito pilot.  
It was a privilege to have their company.





### CHRISTMAS ISLAND

**Dave Simpson, Jim Gray and Jackie Ham are the healthy young chaps in the top photo but can anyone add names to the group below?**

**(Photos on pages 2 & 3 via Andy Gray)**











**BIG BOY'S TOYS!**  
**LARGE MODEL SHOW**  
**RAF COSFORD**





**Coincidentally the VC10's full size brother, or sister, was being assembled nearby as the beautiful model showed off its profile. Sadly, models are all that we shall see of this elegant aircraft now that they have all been retired.**

**Below we see an equally superb model of a Boeing B17G Flying Fortress.**





**The two model Lancasters flying together evoked memories of last year when we thrilled to the sight of two real ones in the air.**



**All the Large Model Show photographs are ‘stills’ from videos shot by Alan Parr.  
The full length video of the Lancasters can be seen on YouTube on: <https://youtu.be/oU1vYuzJdm4>**





**Many 49ers would have trained on the full size version of these two types.  
Above is a Miles Magister and below is an Avro Anson.**





**Superb spatial skill was required to fly a Red Arrows type display over a wide area.**

**The video showing this exceptional routine can be seen on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/CNw1WdTvvck>**

