

# The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine  
February 2017 Issue 44**



**The Obelisk of The National Memorial can be seen in the centre background in this view of the River Tame, near its confluence with the River Trent, as it flows to the east of the National Memorial Arboretum.**

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**R.A. Longhurst    A.F. Anderson**

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.**

## **GONE AWAY**

**Robert Gold**

## **NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

**Shirley Broughton**

## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to Issue 44 of The 4T9er. I hope that you find something to interest you within these pages.

Thank you to those kind persons who have made donations in the form of cash, cheques, postal orders, electronic transfers or postage stamps towards association funds or in response to my appeal in favour of the projected 49 Squadron Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. A drawing of the latter can be seen on page 24.

Only once since I began editing this magazine eleven years ago have there been no 'Postings Out', 'Got the Chop', 'Gone for a Burton' or simply 'Passed Away' to report. This issue saw us four weeks from closing for press without any notification of old friends departing on a late flight then two came in together. I regret to report the deaths of Roland Arthur Longhurst and Andy Anderson. Roland, who was an armourer on 49 from 1941 to 43 and a long standing member of the Association, died on October 14th 2016 at the age of 96. Andy's death, in his sleep on January 9th aged 94, probably severed the last tangible link between 49SA and the famous raid on Peenemunde on the night of 17/18 August 1943. That night 49 Squadron despatched twelve Lancasters but lost four, of which JA892 in which Andy was the wireless operator, was one. Five of the crew, skippered by Sgt. C. Robinson, survived to become P.O.s but the two gunners died bringing 49's total of dead that night to 23. As Graham Boyd, son of the flight engineer and Associate Member of 49SA commented, "It is amazing to think that Andy survived the two gunners by 73 years."

We welcome New Associate Member Shirley Broughton who is the cousin of F/O Stanley Wood DFC who was killed in a flying accident on 25th May 1942.

Our warmest congratulations to Sqn Ldr Mike Ling who was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List. Mike, an Associate Member of 49SA through his late grandfather who flew with the squadron, first joined the Red Arrows in 2008 and is presently Red 10-Supervisor.

In Issue 43 of The 4T9er I told you that I have had discussions with a Lichfield monumental mason regarding the installation of a 49 Squadron Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. This has proved useful on three counts: i) They are experienced in working with the NMA, ii) They are willing to quote for a 'turnkey' project which means that we do not have to involve a number of companies in order to complete the various disciplines and iii) they are within four miles of the NMA and nine miles from where I live making liaison easy. They have given me a budget figure of £5,300 for the manufacture and installation. In addition, there will be an application fee to the NMA plus insurance costs so the estimated budget of £7,000 that I mentioned last issue looks good. We are progressing with the formalities required before we can submit our application to the NMA. As the proposed design incorporates the squadron badge approval of its use is required from the MoD. Our application has been submitted and I optimistically await their permission. Last issue I appealed for donations to enable the memorial to be established in the United Kingdom's major memorial site. I am grateful to those who have so kindly donated but I am disappointed that they only represent a very small proportion of the membership. I appeal particularly to Associate Members, who by definition are part of the association in remembrance of their late relatives who served with 49 Squadron, to make a tangible gesture of remembrance by donating. It will only happen if you make it happen!

I have warned, on a number of occasions, about the folly of 'lending' an aircrew logbook. Once again I read in the papers that an attempt has been made to steal one and it is reported that the military historian faces jail after refusing to return the logbook of F/Sgt. John Fraser who participated in the Dams Raid. According to the Daily Express his widow had sent the item to Alex Bateman to assist with the book he was writing but when its return was requested all sorts of excuses were given. Once again I say, "Be warned. Do not let logbooks or any other documentation out of your possession. If someone wishes to refer to them then by all means let them do so but only in your presence."

I know that you will wish to join me in congratulating Stuart and Pat Keay, our chairman and his lady, on their 60th Wedding Anniversary on February 11th.

I have lost contact with a number of members recently as they have changed their e-mail address without letting me know. If you want to stay in touch then you must advise me if you change your address.

'Till the next time.

# COSFORD VISIT

By

John Lowe

On a rather dull but dry day at the end of January, Fred Hill, Alan Parr, my wife Zena and I visited the RAF Museum at Cosford.

Thanks to Darren Priday we had been granted access to the Conservation Hanger to take yet another look at the rebuild of the Hampden bomber and the Wellington. We had also brought Fred's Log Books which one of the curators kindly copied.

What also made the day very special was the arrival of Fred's son, Nicholas. It seems that Fred mentioned during a telephone conversation the previous evening of what was afoot for the following day. So, without comment the decision was made; Nick drove from his home in Hampshire to spend the day with us all.

The RAF Museum houses five of the aircraft types that Fred flew operationally; a photographic opportunity that was too good to miss!

A wonderful day was had by all and all too soon the 'clock on the wall' made it clear that it was time to start our homeward journey. It is always a privilege to spend time in Fred's company and today was no exception; for the Museum, a rare privilege too.

Our sincere thanks are extended to all the Museum Staff for their kindness and hospitality, all so greatly appreciated.

Treasured moments!



Photo: John Lowe

**Fred beneath the bomb aimer's position in the nose of the Wellington.**



Photo: John Lowe

**Fred describes the workings of an early bombsight to  
49 Association Secretary Alan Parr**



Photo: John Lowe

**“That’s the Hampden bomb aimer’s panel”**





**The bomb aimer's panel in the Hampden.**



**Following his tour on Hampdens with 49 Squadron and a period as an instructor on Wellingtons Fred went on to fly bombing missions in the 'Wooden Wonder', the incomparable Mosquito.**

**Photos this page: Alan Parr**

# NEWS FROM LINCOLNSHIRE AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE



## EVENTS

**Above: Lancaster Winter Restoration Tours.**

**Right: 1940's Dance 27.5.17**

**Below right: Large Model Air Show.  
29.4.17 — 1.5.17**

**Below: Lanc., Tank & Military Machines.  
27 — 29 5.17**

**For Further Details see:  
[www.lincsaviation.co.uk](http://www.lincsaviation.co.uk)**

**Photos: Courtesy Andrew Panton.**



# THE DOOR OF VALIANT XD818 FINALLY OPENS

By  
Alan Parr



February 7th 2017 was a red letter day as 49 Squadron Valiant XD818 was finally opened for public viewing at the RAF Museum at Cosford.

For years access had been denied because of concern over radio activity from the instruments...and there are a lot of instruments in a V Bomber. As an aside, I once asked Lancaster pilot and late chairman of 49 SA, Leslie 'Uncle Will' Hay if this was a concern on Lancasters and with a whimsical smile he replied, "Oh! We used to worry a lot about that when on ops!"

I don't pretend to know why and how the radio activity is an issue but on one of the other aircraft on display the volunteer helper said that he was only allowed to spend an hour at a time explaining the cockpit of the MIG 21. Did you former pilots, navs and AEO's notice that you were sporting a green halo after a sortie?

The £12.5 million National Cold War Exhibition, opened in 2007 by The Princess Royal, celebrated its 10th anniversary and to mark the occasion a number of exhibits were opened up to the visiting public. These included internal access to the Vickers Valiant B1, Handley Page Victor K2, Avro York C1 and Short Brothers Belfast with peeps into the cockpits of the General Dynamics F-111F-CF, MiG 21PF and MiG 15bis. Accessible too were the Hawker Hunter F4 and McDonnell Douglas FG.1 (nose sections). Also opened up were a Soviet BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicle, a Green Goddess auxiliary fire engine and the Tracked Rapier missile launcher.





The event proved to be extremely popular, I queued for 55 minutes to get inside the Valiant but decided to give the Victor a miss as the access time was of similar proportions. I did however, manage to cover all the other aircraft on display apart from the F111 which was also proving to be high on visitors' 'to do' lists.



**W/Cmdr K.G.Hubbard, O/C 49 Squadron, sat here when, as captain of XD818 he dropped the first bomb of Britain's Operation Grapple nuclear test series.**



**In a rather claustrophobic area behind the Valiant fight deck and facing the rear of the aircraft sat the two navigators (radar and plotter) and the AEO.**

Association Member Alasdair Campbell e-mailed me: “My log book records that I flew in XD 818 on 17th, 19th, 20th & 21st Aug 1964 on a detachment to RAF Luqa (Malta) for bombing practice at El Adem range (Libya) with the 100lb training bomb. I flew again in XD 818 on 20 Sep 1964 on a training sortie from RAF Marham. I was the Nav Radar.”

Of interest to 4T9ers was the Avro York which is, apart from the bulbous fuselage and central fin, pure Lancaster. Over 200 of these useful aircraft were built and proved their worth during the Berlin Airlift, 1948-49.



**The York's capacious fuselage and huge access door can clearly be seen.**

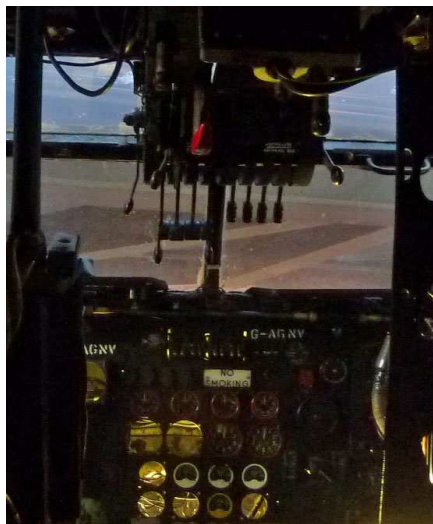


**Note the York's wing, engine nacelle and undercarriage... pure Lancaster!**



**Not exactly Club Class but would Lancaster crews have welcomed the wash basin, mirror and the luxury of a proper toilet pedestal in place of the Elsan?  
Probably not in the case of the former two but under the pressure of bomber operations the latter might have had its attractions!**





**Above:** One obvious difference to the Lancaster is the engine controls which are mounted at high level.

**Left:** The flight deck with the navigator and wireless operator's positions on either side nearest the camera.

I must congratulate the museum on the organisation of the event which drew a considerable number of visitors. However it would not have been possible without the wonderful service and co-operation of the volunteers. Although many of them were in their seventies they treated us with courtesy and enthusiasm throughout the day. I cannot praise them highly enough.

This event has been long awaited and it did not disappoint. Hopefully it will not be ten years before it is repeated...I want to be there!

One final point, whilst I was there I delivered a sprocket puller, that I had found in one of my tool boxes, to the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre. It dates back to my 1960's motorcycle days. Have you any tools or nuts and bolts, preferably Imperial, that you could donate? BA nuts, bolts, taps & dies are particularly sought after.





**Hawker Hunter**



**Mig 15**

**McDonnell Phantom**



# **THE WAR...**

**By**

**Tom W. Reed**

## **Part 5**

As my mother was at home alone, my elder brother was also in the merchant navy manning a troopship and my younger brother was in Italy with the SAS Airborne division, I applied for compassionate posting and arrived in Newcastle on VE eve.

I had been posted to RAF Woolsington, now Newcastle airport, and lived out with Deenie and the two girls at my mother's house. After six weeks RAF Woolsington was handed over to the Free French Forces and I was posted to RAF Dyce.

I was given permission to live out with my grandfather and his wife (number three) Margaret, and travelled into the airfield daily by bus and got a pass each weekend. Deenie managed to come up for a weekend twice whilst I was there.

My grandfather occupied a flat in a tenement-type building on the first floor with a bedroom and living room/kitchen with a recessed double bed so Deenie was unable to bring the girls. In the meantime she stayed in Newcastle with my mother. As nothing was found of my father we could not have a burial service which caused my mother much anguish.

At the airfield I was employed disarming American fighters which had been stationed in Norway and mothballing the guns and returning them to stores.

I was sent for by the station armament officer, Flight Lieutenant Mullen, and asked if I could construct a clay shooting range as the station commander wished the officers to do some clay pigeon practice.

In my section I had a variety of peacetime tradesmen. We got together and marked out an area and I produced drawings of what was required and set about obtaining portable materials. Between us we set up two launching boxes and two covered shooting boxes made from aircraft packing cases which were painted orange with white stripes. The CO was delighted with our efforts and shooting practice began. Before long queries were raised about the amount of 'bird scaring' cartridges that were being consumed.

As I had elected for demobilisation I was expecting to be 'demobbed' at any time. Deenie and I had discussed what we would do and she suggested that we speak to Jack Wilson, her previous employer, who was now confined to a wheelchair with advanced MS, and we agreed to go into partnership with him in the village general shop.

Whenever I managed to get home he was always asking when I would be demobbed and I couldn't give an answer as I didn't know.

It appears that the two young ladies who replaced Deenie had been selling some groceries without getting the adequate number of coupons in exchange; we learned later that he was some thousands of points in deficit. One of his 'travellers' had discussed his predicament and offered to go into partnership as he had a business with 60,000 points which could be transferred.

We found this out three days before I was to be demobbed on 21st November 1945, so after going to Cardington for my 'Civvie suit' etc., I returned to Newcastle with 50,000 other jobseekers.

We had previously acquired our first home, a little two up and two down miner's cottage just off the A1 in Framwellgate Moor, 12 Newcastle Terrace, with no hot water system apart from a boiler with a tap in the kitchen and an outside loo and miner's bathing facilities, a snip at £150.

I had my paid leave (end of war and terminal), a wife and two children (nine and ten) to support. So I made enquiries about the now derelict Main Road Service Station but couldn't trace an owner so eventually gave up.

I heard about a window cleaner who was giving up due to ill health. He had equipment in three villages (ladders, buckets etc.) so I approached an ex-sergeant armourer and we eventually bought three sets of equipment and a book of addresses for £25. There were addresses in Framwellgate Moor, and surrounds, more in Nevilles Cross and some in my partner's village, including contracts with a large pub and a huge Co-op building.

After three days my partner said, "I'm not carrying another bloody ladder I've had enough."

So I paid him £12 10s. and was on my own. I had coloured flyers printed with the name Target Window Cleaners and an RAF roundel as a logo which I distributed on my rounds travelling between villages on my bicycle. As it was winter I was restricted by the weather but managed to earn enough to keep the 'wolf from the door'.

As well as the private housing there were two large contracts, one the pub in Nevilles Cross which was a four storey building which needed the three extension ladders and had windows with postage stamp-sized panes, and the other a huge Co-op with acres of glass in the ground floor windows and windows in two floors above, each with a twelve inch ledge running around underneath them. It was just possible to go from window to window walking the ledge, the main problem was to have a safety man at the bottom of the ladder. I always managed to find someone for this task.

At the beginning of December Deenie's sister-in-law, Tom's wife, and their two girls arrived to stay with us as Tom, a squadron leader in the RAF had been to a diplomatic course in Oslo, and stayed with us until he managed to get accommodation there.

‘Dinky’, as we knew her then, and her two daughters, Carol and Beverley, were very welcome guests although space was at a premium.

Her visit was very fortuitous as Deenie and I were expecting an addition to the family. As the birth became imminent the midwife called daily to check progress and on the night of the 22nd she said everything was OK at 10-30p.m. and said she would call in the morning. The baby had other ideas as Deenie started contractions before midnight.

I was immediately directed to fetch the nurse who lived in the next village about 3/4 mile away. In spite of the snow and ice I sprinted as fast as I could and saw an upstairs light on in the midwife’s house. I threw a couple of snowballs at the window, the window opened and the nurse shouted she would come immediately.

I belted back and arrived simultaneously with the baby and was promptly handed the placenta to dispose of. The midwife arrived later.

Our third daughter had arrived to celebrate our third anniversary.

I carried on window cleaning and applying for jobs until April, when I received a postcard from the RAF offering me my old job back as flight sergeant (substantive), as the time I had spent out of the service was mostly leave they would count as unbroken leave— end of war leave and terminal leave. It was an offer I couldn’t refuse.

I was posted to RAF Acklington, the armament officer was a Flight Lieutenant Corbett and a Warrant Officer Bull was in charge of the station armoury which included the firing range at Druridge Bay.

Warrant Officer Bull seemed to take an instant dislike to me and at first I couldn’t work out why. He seemed to take delight in delegating menial tasks to me which bothered me not.

He eventually put me in charge of the firing range at Druridge Bay.

I realised later that there were only sixteen married quarters and I had been allocated the first available one as I had been put at the top of the list ahead of W.O. Bull which was probably the cause of his resentment.

A few months later the problem was resolved when the RAF dissolved all acting ranks and W.O. Bull (acting) was granted his substantive rank which was sergeant. He immediately applied for a posting elsewhere and I took over as NCO/IC the armament section.

I was given notice that a married quarter was available so I went with the housing officer for the preview. It was the typical prewar MQ with dark green and brown décor and a motley amount of furniture.

I ‘took over’ the house and arranged to bring Deenie and the girls up the following week. I went through the permitted furniture items and selected what we would need and returned the items I didn’t want to the equipment section,



and spent all my off-duty time redecorating. I obtained the necessary paint etc. and substituted pastel green for dark green and cream for brown.

I had managed to acquire a car, a fabric hooded Rover 10 with genuine leather seats which had belonged to the Percy family. So off I went on removal leave to pick up the family from 12 Newcastle Terrace.

Everything went smoothly at work and I developed a good working arrangement with Flight Lieutenant 'Tich' Corbett.

Two squadrons of fighter aircraft arrived each month to do their annual practice camp stint, during which their stoppage rate was usually transformed as nobody needed guns now and armourers were in short supply and usually employed elsewhere in the squadrons most of the time.

Heather went to school in Red Row and had difficulty at first with the language (Geordie! Where Red Row became Reed Raw) but she soon got used to it, Wendy started in 1947.

In the summer of 1947 Deenie and I decided that we would have one more try to produce a boy to carry on the family name and on 10th June 1948 we were blessed with the arrival of Michael John.

All went well until the winter of 1947-48 which was really severe. The snow fell and drifted until Acklington was cut off by road for six weeks.

We were fortunate in one respect. The Flying Scotsman travelling north to Edinburgh was stopped by snowdrifts just beyond the airfield boundary and we were detailed to dig it out, which we managed to do, and as the train had cleared a way behind it a snow plough got through and towed it back to Morpeth so we had a clear line south.

The snow had drifted on the roads to telegraph pole height and the fields were in a similar state.

In the married quarters we were supplied with rations of basic foods except for milk and meat so we organised a roster of volunteers and on two days a week trekked across the fields to Amble with a sledge for meat and milk.

Flight Lieutenant Corbett was on leave and a signal was received from command with a posting for me to RAF Brafferton, so off I went to the W/CDR admin and told him the boss was away and I was in charge of the armoury. He informed group of the situation and was told that it was imperative that I went, but he managed a stay until Flight Lieutenant Corbett returned, but he was unable to stop me going.

I immediately packed my kit and drove south to RAF Brafferton, a hutted camp in the middle of nowhere, consisting of miles of roadside storage of 1,000lb American GP bombs with a designated explosives area at the camp. I reported to the commanding officer, a flight lieutenant air gunner, who suggested that I go with the flight sergeant ACH in charge to inspect the explosives areas.

The bomb dump was a collection of designated buildings in which specific explosives were stored with revetments where necessary.

As I went round I was horrified to find that there were mixed groups in most of the buildings, so I compiled a list of what should go where and had it typed as a report for the commanding officer.

When he read it he went apoplectic and sent for me. He really laid it on and forbade me to go anywhere near the bomb dump.

I'd thought of joining with the other flight sergeant ACD HD who was in charge of the roadside storage. The bombs were loaded onto lorries and sent for deep sea dumping but decided against going.

The only alternative to keep out of trouble was to go to the sergeant's mess, which consisted of two very large aircraft packing cases joined together by a small passageway with a total area of 1,000 square feet by 10 feet high with four small windows. It was very dark and dingy inside with one electric light bulb in each section.

I donned a pair of overalls and set to work. I listed all the furniture and carpets and made out return vouchers and exchange vouchers for all of it and made out vouchers for paint to lighten the mess up a bit with the usual cream and pastel green. As soon as a lorry was going to the parent station at Cottesmore I loaded it all up and went with it to see what I could get.

In the meantime I started cleaning down the existing paintwork which was thick with tobacco tar which took some shifting.

When I returned from my stores safari I got down to it and started painting walls and ceilings, doors the lot. I replaced the light bulbs with 100watt bulbs and acquired some new lampshades.

I had almost completed the task about three weeks later and was painting the last door when the group armament officer and his retinue arrived to do an inspection.

Apart from the billets and HQ buildings and the bomb storage areas there was little to inspect, so they came round to the sergeant's mess. I was still in overalls minus badges of rank when the GAO approached and asked who I was. I think he thought I was a civvy.

I told him who I was and he asked why I was painting. I told him I had been banished from the explosives area because I had written a derogatory report and given it to the commanding officer.

He turned to the commanding officer and asked him whether he still had my report and was told it was probably still on file.

They returned to the admin office and found it and after reading it they all went off, including the commanding officer, and a few hours later a new commanding officer arrived. He listened to my story and I started immediately to relocate the explosives in the bomb dump. The next morning he sent for me

and said I'd be going back to Acklington and cancelled the confinement (twenty-one days) I was serving as a punishment for going on forty-eight hours pass which hadn't been signed by his predecessor.

The following day my posting back to Acklington came through but my stay there was shortened. I had been reinstated as NCO I/C armoury much to the pleasure of Flight Lieutenant Corbett as he was hoping to take a week's leave for a wedding and had just filled a timely gap.

Three days after he had gone on leave Group HQ came through with another posting for me, this time to the central flying school at RAF West Raynham Norfolk. I was to go two days later.

I went back to married quarters and broke the news to Deenie and we started packing immediately.

I had sold the old Rover to the Rolls Royce rep who had a similar car, the open roadster sports car type, which needed a new transmission.

I had replace the Rover with a Standard 12 saloon. So I arranged the handover of the quarter for the following day and we stacked all the crockery, cutlery and kitchenware ready to be counted.

We loaded our belongings in the car and on the roof rack ready for the off to Framwellgate Moor. We had rung Clare (senior) to let her know we'd be coming and the following day said our goodbyes to Acklington.

I had been given a rail pass for the journey so I left the car and joined the train the following day at Durham.

I arrived at CFE and found a room at the sergeant's mess and unpacked my kit and went to the admin section to collect my arrival form and started the arrival process.

I visited several sections and obtained signatures but decided to have tea in the mess before continuing and after tea called it a day.

Next morning I carried on arriving and got to the armoury about 10.40 a.m. and knocked on the armament officer's door and was told to enter.

I was 'under a cloud' from the word go at West Raynham.

*To be continued.*

## **SCAMPTON AIR SHOW 2017**

This will be held on 9th and 10th September.

A number of 4T9ers have bought tickets for the Saturday.

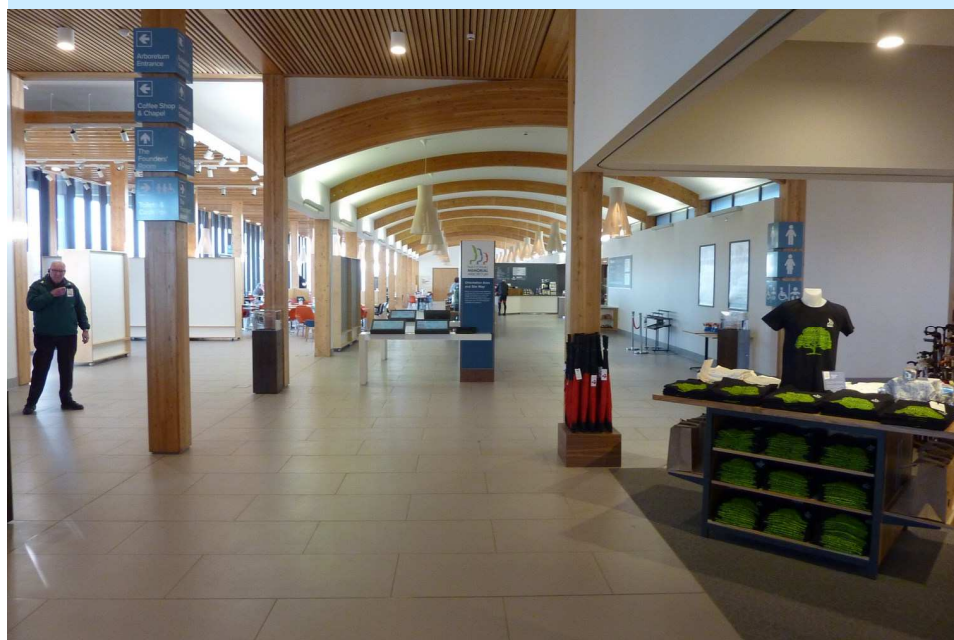
A block booking for the weekend has been made by 49SA at the Bentley Hotel, Lincoln and few rooms are still available through the association.

Air show tickets must be pre-booked on: [scamptonairshow.com/airshow](http://scamptonairshow.com/airshow)

## A VISIT TO THE REMODELLED NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM



The reception area







**The cafeteria**

**The Gift Shop**





## **The National Armed Forces Memorial**





**At 11-00am on November 11th the sun shines through the vertical slot in the west wall and strikes the centre of the wreath. This photograph was taken early afternoon in late January but illustrates the principle.**







This sketch shows the proposed 49 Squadron Memorial for installation at the NMA. The 6" deep base will carry the inscription:

**"IN MEMORY OF ALL WHO SERVED ON 49 SQUADRON  
1916-1965"**

In polished grey granite the overall height will be 36" including the 6" deep base. The proposed thickness is 4". The squadron badge and inscription will be engraved and gilded.

**MAKE YOUR DONATION  
AND BE PART OF THIS MOST WORTHY PROJECT.**



## READER'S LETTERS

*For some years now we have been featuring reports on the search for relatives of the crew of 49 Squadron Lancaster ND474 by Louise Dexter and Robert McEneaney and their families. Both lost a relative when the aircraft went down on the night of 15/16 March 1944. They have been tireless in their dedication to the task and I was delighted to receive the following e-mail from a jubilant Louise:*

"Today we received the best news ever, say hello to Douglas Briggs Birbeck. The picture of this young man has just been found by my friend Mandy Stieber who has been working to find the two missing pictures of crew from ND474, it has taken her four years and thousands of hours work. Last week Mandy discovered that Douglas's godmother was still alive and that she had a picture of Douglas!! Now we have six of the seven pictures and in 2019, when there will be another short visit to Bolstern, we will be able to put this picture together with the others that now hang on the wall of Bolstern village hall.

"I have also attached a picture of Douglas's parents Leonard and Florie Birbeck. Douglas was their only son and like many other parents, they never came to terms with the loss of their son.



"Douglas was the Air Gunner on ND474 Service No: 1685263 Aged 21

"Now Mandy is busy looking for a picture of John Joseph Knowles."

### ***Louise followed this with:***

"Many thanks for your message and congratulations, its much appreciated.

"The relatives were so very pleased to find a picture of Douglas, we feel as if we have brought him back together with his crew. It is our intention to frame the photograph and to take it out to Bolstern, Germany on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which will be on 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> March 2019. There could be as many relatives attending in 2019, as in 2014 or possibly more. Our researcher and friend, Mandy Stieber will also be attending with her family.

"The other five photographs of the crew have been hung in the village hall in Bolstern, so we are looking forward to including Douglas's picture there too. Mandy continues to search for the relatives of John Joseph Knowles and we pray, that something will turn up in the next year or so.

"Robert and I are now thinking about writing a book about our journey of

research but I'm not sure when, as we are both very busy with work and families. Since I first started looking for the relatives of the ND474 crew, I have met some amazing people. My research has rewarded me many times over, with very special friendships and I'm very proud to be part of the team, who ensure that Our Boys are never forgotten. Our gratitude will always be extended to the 49 Squadron Association, as without the 4T9ers kind assistance, none of this would have been possible.

"I hope that we do have one more piece of good luck and find the photograph of J. Knowles, I know we will never give up. Anyway thank you again Alan and I hope to see in soon."

*I'm sure that you join me in congratulating Louise, Robert and the team on their marvellous achievement and wish them every success in their search for the final crew member's family. Anyone who has searched for a missing relative will be aware of the magnitude of the task which is made infinitely more so when searching for someone else's relation. I'm grateful to Louise for her recognition of the association's help. In 49SA you all have the best crew in the business at your disposal!*

**Associate Member Shirley Broughton sent the following e-mail:**

"...Thought you might like to see cross for my cousin F/O Stanley Wood, 1922-1942, of 49 Sqn., which the RBL do for me every year at Wootton Bassett & which my daughter & son in law went to see. I'm in my 80s & the last person to remember him but I know the young will take over!..."

**Shirley followed this up with an e-mail from her friend Peter Blackman:**

"Please see below photos of The Cross of Remembrance for Stanley Le Visconte Wood in the Walled Garden at Lydiard House in Royal Wotton Bassett.

"We were a little concerned to start as we were looking in the wrong place as I had assumed that the labelling provided by the Royal British Legion was for the surname of the person being remembered. After about 10 minutes of trying to find the cross in the wrong place we went to look under Broughton and there it was near the front.

"It was a lovely day and to cap it all the coffee shop did us proud with lovely cake and coffee.

"The other photo at the end is at Fovant where a poppy has been carved in the chalk alongside the other 1st World War Regimental Badges.

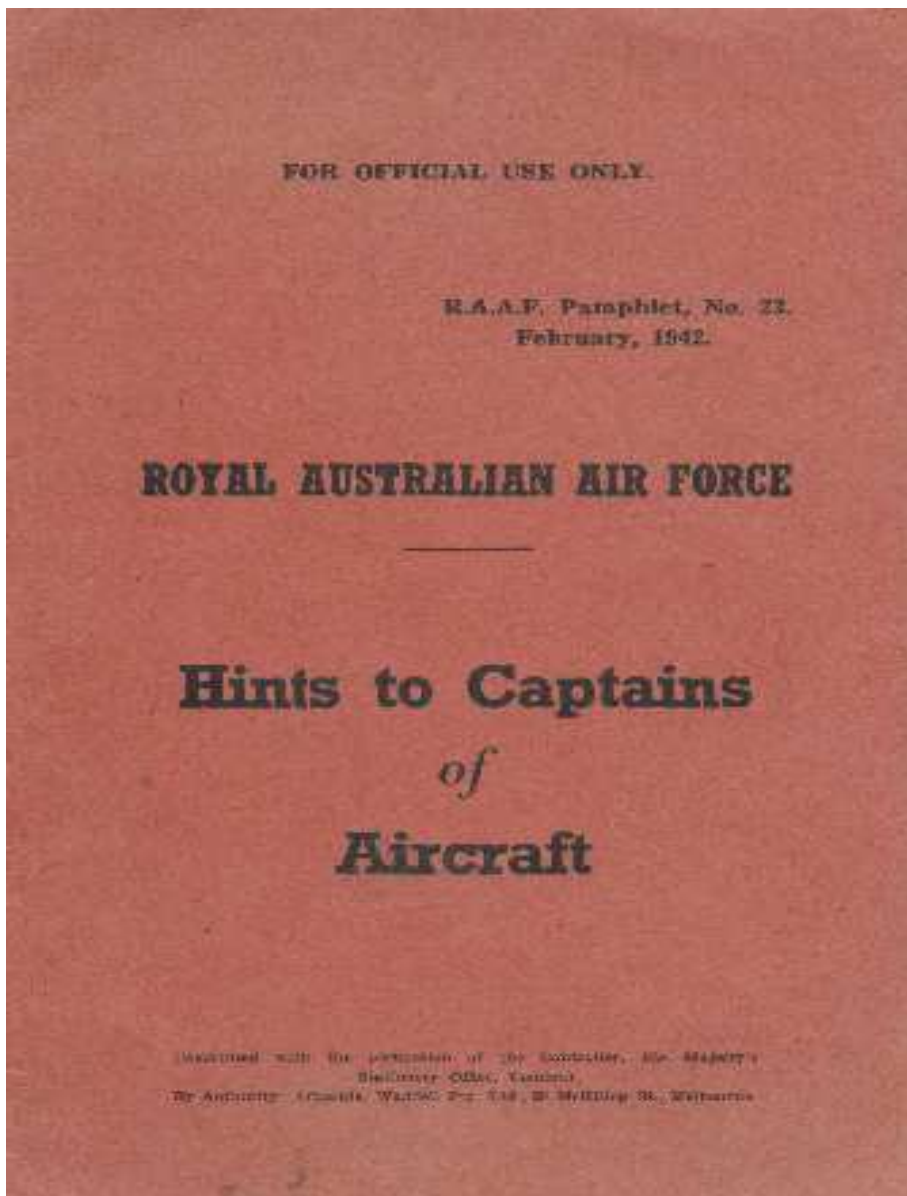
"I have attached a website address which will give you more information on them: <http://fovantbadges.com>

***I must confess that I was unaware of the badges that were carved in the chalk in Fovant, Wiltshire by soldiers during World War One but the link above tells us that there is a society dedicated to maintaining them.***



*I'm grateful to Associate Member Graham Bairnsfather for sending the following:*

“I've recently returned from Adelaide & met up with Bruce's widow, Carol & came home with a stack of Bruce's stuff. One thing that caught my eye was a brochure issued in 1942 entitled 'Hints to Captains of Aircraft'.”





## **Hints to Captains of Aircraft**

Air Board Memoranda No.2 and No.7 gave only a very general indication of a captain's (aircraft) responsibilities.

The following notes are designed to give an embryo captain a clear idea of what he must do and what he must be if he wants to be an asset to a squadron in wartime:-

(1) The captain must know his aircraft. This means he must know every nut and bolt in the aircraft, how it is stressed, what its most vulnerable parts are, how the hydraulics, petrol systems, oil systems, cooling systems work, what limits of speed he is allowed, what limits his engines will work to, best methods of carrying out evasive action, areas of fire of his guns, best methods of manoeuvre under any conditions, of giving his gunners a shot, in fact, he wants to KNOW his aircraft. Not only this, but he must see that his second pilot also knows his aircraft. This necessity to know the aircraft is stressed, because in wartime conditions it could well mean the salvation of his aircraft and crew.

### **Examples:**

(a) If, during enemy action, one or more petrol tanks are hit, it may be possible to pump petrol from the damaged tanks to undamaged tanks by intelligent manipulation of the petrol cocks, etc., and so conserve enough petrol to return to base.

(b) If normally essential, engine instruments are put out of action, a full knowledge of the engines may allow efficient working by using other instruments, for instances, cylinder head temperature gauge, and deducing from them how the engine is working.

(c) If a main spar is hit by cannon shell or shrapnel, it is well to have a good idea of how much safety factor remains, and the aircraft may be brought home by careful flying which puts least strain on the spar, as, for instance, flying as slowly as possible in bumpy weather.

(ii) A captain must interest himself in the maintenance of his aircraft on the ground, encourage his maintenance crew and keep notes of anything to be attended to from the last flight.

### **Example:**

Oily perspex in the rear turret may mean the loss of your aircraft because the rear gunner was unable to see the attacking aircraft.

You must always remember that there are a million things that can be done on the ground that cannot be done in the air. Give the aircraft and crew the maximum chance of smooth working in the air by careful forethought and supervision on the ground.

(iii) The captain must know his crew. See that they keep fit, see that they get a square deal, specially with regard to station administration.

**Example:**

A man who has been on guard duty all night is not fit for operational flight the next day.

See that all members of the crew are happy, get to know something about their private lives and help them if they are in trouble. A preoccupied member of an air crew may easily miss a chance that only occurs once.

A captain must have a working knowledge of the jobs of each member of his crew and must be able visualize each one at work in his aircraft.

**Gunners:**

Gunners are sitting in cramped turrets where it is draughty and cold. See that they are relieved at regular intervals. Every movement in the aircraft is exaggerated for the tail gunner, so don't carry out unnecessary manoeuvres and add to his discomfort.

**Wireless Operators:**

All things being equal, fly at a reasonable height for the working of W/T. Keep out of electrical storms, if possible to cut down static. Note your operational procedure, D/F stations, etc. Give your operator plenty of notice of landing or low flying so that he may finish his transmission and receptions and reel in his aerial.

**Engineer:**

See that the engineer keeps the flight log showing all gauge readings, petrol consumption, etc, and sign this every half hour or hour.

**Navigator:**

See that the aircraft is flown at the height, speed and course that the navigator has ordered. Nobody can navigate if the pilot is slack in his flying. The aircraft must be flown extra steady when the navigator is using his sextant.

(iv) Before starting on an operational trip, get the crew together in the aircraft and put them in the picture. Tell them all about the job in hand, what they are likely to expect and what your plan of campaign is. Ask for their opinions and take heed of any advice which you can usefully incorporate. Your crew will realise that you are all doing a job together and they will take an intelligent interest in the venture.

Members of a crew hate being left in the dark.

(v) A captain cannot have too much knowledge of any subject to do with flying. The more he knows the more chance he and his crew have of coming through any operational flight. Meteorology, Aircraft Recognition, Latest Intelligence of Enemy Tactics, many more subjects are there awaiting his study.

He must not forget that the crew's lives depend on the decisions made by him, and the captain's life depends on how his orders are carried out by the crew.

"Muck in" with the crew, work as one with them, but NEVER be familiar. He must

always be conscious that he is the captain and the crew will treat him as such.

Never use bad language, never shout and never get excited either on the ground or in the air.

The captain's demeanour should always be one of calm assurance (not over-confidence), which will inspire confidence in the crew, which, in turn, will pay dividends when things get "tough."

*Whilst I am grateful to Graham for drawing this to my attention I can't help feeling that whoever compiled it was short of something to do! I have copied this verbatim!*

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

***Non Member Peter Bennett e-mailed the following request:***

My name is Peter Bennett ex AEO on 207 Sqn. RAF Marham.

Kenny Edmonds and I both attended Selhurst Grammar School Croydon. We lived close, so often walked to School together

Ken joined the RAF in 1951 and trained as a Navigator. I joined in 1952 and trained as Air Signaller on 204 Sqn flying in Shackletons. Later in 1955 I was accepted for a posting to a Valiant Sqn 207 RAF Marham.

I did manage to keep in touch with Ken when he left the RAF and later lived in France.

Alas I have lost his E Mail address and postal address.

Can you help?

***Kenny Edmond's entry in the 49 Squadron Association website-personnel reads:***

Name EDMONDS

First Names K. A.

Rank Group Captain

Service RAF

Crew Position Navigator

A member of the Megaton Club.

Standby aircraft (Valiant WZ367) for Operation Buffalo.  
On Valiant XD825 which dropped the Christmas Island weapon  
Grapple Y...28/4/57