

# The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

## The 49 Squadron Association Magazine November 2019 Issue 55



Photo: Worthing Journal

The commemorative boards on Worthing Promenade to the Essenhigh crew .  
See page 9.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**F. Woolsey   E. Holwill**

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

## **GONE AWAY**

**Murray Duff   Peggy Tester**

## **NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**Nicholas Welch   Michael Mengham**

## **EDITORIAL**

As always I start by thanking those who have made donations. I appeal, particularly to Associate Members who have **never** made a donation to consider why they are part of the association. By definition they are related to deceased 49ers and surely a small donation in their memory from time to time, to maintain the association, is not too much to expect.

I regret to announce the passing of Fred Woosey. Unfortunately Fred was a Member long before I took over as secretary and we have no record of his squadron history. I learned of his death in the saddest way, The 4T9er returned marked 'Deceased'. 'Gone Away' sadly indicates that the member's copy of The 4T9er has been returned unopened. On a similar note I remind all those who receive their magazine by e-mail to advise me if they change their e-mail address. I cannot chase up anyone whose e-mail address is rejected. In her report of the pilgrimage that she and her brother made Associate Member Chris Beare tells of the passing of their mother Elsie Holwill. Elsie was also an Associate Member and the sister of F/Sgt. Dennis Blumfield who was killed, along with his crew, on 19th July 1944. Dennis was the navigator in the crew of F/O W.D. Appleyard RAAF which was on its 26th operation.

We welcome New Associate Members Nicholas Welch and Mike Mengham. Nicholas' great uncle was Sgt Arnold Gregory Welch RAAF. Sgt Welch was an air gunner in the crew of P/O J.P. Carter when their Manchester L7429 went down in the North Sea whilst on the first 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne - 31st May 1942. They are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial. Mike Mengham is the grandson of P/O Philip Taverner who lost his life whilst piloting Lancaster JB413 on his third

operation. All the crew, with the exception of the rear gunner were able to bail out thanks to Phil Taverner's courage in holding the aircraft steady enabling them to do so.

You will read in these pages accounts of memorials at Worthing and Scampton. The association has made donations of £60 to the former and £400 to the latter. We have also donated £100 to the memorial to our dear friend John Ward, a memorial plaque and tree at Fiskerton. See photo on page 13.

Our webmaster Malcolm Brooke advises me that, on Facebook, the 49 Squadron Association page has achieved 500 likes. What good taste people have! Thank you and congratulations Malcolm.

Our warmest congratulations and best wishes to Harold Panton on being awarded the British Empire Medal. It was presented to Harold by the Lord-Lieutenant for Lincolnshire Toby Dennis at Washingborough Hall Hotel. He, along with his late brother Fred, founded the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre, better known to us as 'East Kirkby', in memory of their brother Christopher who was killed whilst flying with Bomber Command.

Several years ago I wrote that Lichfield District Council had named roads, built on the former RAF Lichfield, after airmen, mainly Australians, who were killed whilst stationed at Lichfield and who are buried in nearby Fradley Church. In the past few years a large number of houses have been built on the former airfield and in August the Lichfield Mercury published the following;

*"Roads in Lichfield district are set to be named after war heroes – if their families approve the idea.*

*"Lichfield District Council is seeking the surviving relatives of men and women who served at Fradley's RAF base in World War Two to ask whether 16 local roads can be named after them.*

*"The roads will; be named after pilots, a navigator, an evader who escaped the enemy behind the lines, a rear gunner and a mechanic – men who served in the Royal Air Force, women who were part of the Air Transport Auxiliary, and men from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).*

*"Councillor Andy Smith, cabinet member for customer service and innovation, said: "I am pleased that we are able to honour the contribution of the personnel at the former RAF base in Fradley in this way.*

*'Their names will serve as a reminder of the debt we owe them and will be a lasting memorial to their work and bravery.*

*'As part of the process we need to give their relatives the opportunity to approve the use of the names. So, if you are a descendant of any of the men or women, please get in touch with us to tell us if you give your consent...*

*'Fradley and Streethay Parish Council suggested naming 15 streets in a*

*development at Fradley Park and one street in a development at Bridge Farm after the heroes.'*

*"Now Lichfield District Council, which is responsible for street naming, is seeking the relatives of Don Charlwood, RAAF navigator; GL Dowling, RAAF pilot; Gordon Mellor, RAF evader; Rollo Sharp, rear gunner; Kay Sayles, female mechanic; Lettice Curtis, Joan Mary Allen and Diana Barnato Walker—women of ATA who flew planes into Fradley; TJ Clayton, CP Luther and ES Newell who died in training accidents and GA Dale, F Lupton, RH Chapman, A Easton and RA Hatfield who were sadly lost in action.*

*The 16 suggested street names are: Hatfield Close, Dale Lane, Dowling Drive, Sayles Grove, Curtis Court, Sharpe Close, Charlwood Avenue, Allen Way, Lupton Road, Chapman Close, Easton Street, Luther Way, Newell Road, Clayton Avenue, Walker Drive and Mellor Drive."*

The three whose names I am familiar with are: Don Charlwood, who was born in Melbourne on September 6 1915 and died in the same city June 18 2012, wrote several books on his war experiences including *No Moon Tonight* and *Journeys into Night*. Lettice Curtis was born February 1 1915 and died July 21 2014. Although she flew many types of aircraft her favourite was the Spitfire. Her obituary appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* 25th July 2014. Diana Barnato Walker also ferried many types of aircraft during the war and became the first British woman to break the sound barrier when at the controls of a *Lightning*. She was born January 15 1918 and died April 28 2008 and her obituary appeared in *The Guardian* May 12 2008.

On October 3rd our local free paper, *The Chronicle*, carried a piece on RAF Bridgnorth. I know that a great number of our Members resided there whilst in training sometime between 1939 and 1963. I hope that some are still with us. My father was posted there during the war for basic training after kitting out at Penarth. He spoke ruefully of the climb of 10% gradient Hermitage Hill with full kit whilst marching, after a fashion, from Bridgnorth Station to the camp. The part of the article that caught my eye was a list of some of its notable recruits and/or permanent staff who included: 'Johnny' Johnson, last of the Dam Busters - Ramon Subba Row, England and Northants opener - England and Lancashire opener Cyril Washbrook - Wolves footballers, Bobby Thompson and Peter Broadbent - Rugby League international half back Alex Murphy - comedian Ronnie Corbett and singer and comedian Des O'Connor. Oh, and my dad Jim Parr and my pal of sixty years Bob Aspey!

At the end of October I cleaned our memorial in readiness for the Remembrance weekend. Following a period of heavy rain the Rivers Trent and Tame had encroached on the Arboretum as seen on the facing page.

*'Til the next time.*

## THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM - 29th OCTOBER 2019



## STRANGER THAN FICTION - AN AMAZING WAR STORY.

*Last month I read on Kindle 'Secret Naval Investigator' by Commander Ashe Lincoln QC RNVR. This is a story of great courage shown by the personnel of DTMI, Department of Torpedoes and Mines. Their job was to investigate all under water weapons used by the Germans. This not only involved the disarming of existing weapons but also the investigation and countering any new ones. When allied ships suddenly exploded and sank the DTMI moved in to establish the cause. Often this was a completely new weapon and therefore extremely dangerous work, many operatives losing their lives. One of the weapons that Commander Lincoln was called upon to investigate was an acoustic torpedo. A talkative prisoner told of his father, who worked at a torpedo development establishment, telling him of a new acoustic torpedo that zigzagged through the water until its microphones picked up the sound of a victim.. Obviously this was a very dangerous development. Luckily, the Germans had used caves at Houilles, in France, for torpedo storage but had destroyed all the acoustic versions on evacuation. To cut a long story short, Lincoln managed to obtain enough relics to take back to the scientists at HMS Vernon. This is the gist of what followed:-*

The loads of bits and pieces which they had brought back set the Vernon scientists as difficult a jigsaw puzzle as might be conceived. But, painstakingly, they worked away at their enormous task of sorting out the broken parts and fitting them into place. Gradually, on the benches before them, the outlines of two acoustic units began to take shape. Eventually, both were completed. But they could not be made to work.

The centre part of the unit consisted of a bakelite tray. The tray contained twelve sockets, in each of which it was clear there should be a valve. The valves formed the vital core of the torpedo control: the amplifier unit. Without them, the unit could not be made to work.

They were still as far from discovering the secrets of the acoustic torpedo as they were before their dash to Houilles.

As they examined one of the trays, they noticed that there were figures stamped on the bakelite rim of the valve sockets. It seemed fairly certain that these figures were to identify the type of valve which had to go in each particular socket. It looked like the usual German thoroughness, this time to make sure that the assembly workers got the right valve in the right socket. If this were so, it could prove one instance where the Germans had been over-thorough.

At DTMI Commander Lincoln told his boss, Maitland-Dougall, of the problem they had met and the code numbers they had which might be used to solve the problem, if only they could find someone who knew what type of

valves the numbers indicated.

“Your best plan,” he said, “is to go to see the Air Force. They have people in their special wireless and radar section who know the classification of every German valve.”

Lincoln tracked down the department through the Air Ministry. The head of the branch agreed to see him at once. He handed him his list and explained why he believed that the numbers on it would identify certain German valves.

“The Navy wants to get hold of them urgently, or at least valves like them,” he added. “Can you supply me with the British or American equivalents?”

The head sent for one of his technical experts and gave him the list, asking him to check if they had the necessary valves in stock. Presently, the expert returned to say that they could supply six equivalent valves from their stocks.

“But,” he added, “the rest are unknown to us.”

“I’m afraid that six won’t solve our problem. We must have the full twelve. Have you any idea where the others were made?”

“Offhand, no. But if you hang on, I’ll see what I can find out.”

On his return he said that the valves had probably been made by the Dutch electrical firm Philips of Eindhoven.

“But Eindhoven is still in enemy hands,” Lincoln said. “Isn’t there anywhere else we can get them?”

“Just how important is it that you should have these valves?” said the head of the branch.

“I don’t think it is putting it too high to say that the whole course of the war at sea may depend on our obtaining them.”

“It’s like that is it?” The head of the branch paused, his eyes met those of his colleague, and then he said: “Leave it with us will you? I’ll get in touch with you as soon as possible.”

Lincoln returned to the Admiralty to await events. He felt that there had been something almost conspiratorial in the manner of the two R.A.F. experts at the end of his conversation. The look that passed between them when he emphasised the importance to the Navy of getting the valves suggested rather more than had the somewhat vague final words of the head of the branch. He guessed that they had something up their sleeves. Even so, he was hardly prepared for the surprise they produced in under twenty-four hours.

The day after he called on them, an R.A.F. officer arrived at his office accompanied by a civilian. The officer introduced himself and said, “I should like you to meet Mr. Van Tromp.”

He shook hands with the civilian who was fair-haired and about fifty years of age, tall and with a slight stoop.

The R.A.F. officer explained: “Van Tromp is the managing director of Philips

of Eindhoven, who make the valves for the Germans.

“You mean that he was the managing director,” Lincoln said.

“No, he is,” said the R.A.F. officer.

“That is so,” said Van Tromp gently, smiling at his surprise.

Lincoln looked at him more closely, he could see that his suit had not been tailored in London; there was something peculiarly continental about its cut.

He said, “I heard that the British Navy have found themselves in certain difficulties, and so I have come over to help if I can.”

“From Eindhoven?” Lincoln asked incredulously.

He nodded, “That is so.”

Lincoln desperately wanted to ask questions but knew that he must not; this was not the time. It would only have embarrassed the R.A.F. officer, because he would not have been able to tell him the methods he had employed to bring Van Tromp to London like this. Lincoln had, of course, heard of R.A.F. cloak-and-dagger units which flew Lysander aircraft and flitted about Occupied Europe landing or picking up agents. But this was the first personal contact he had with these operations.

Perhaps the most disconcerting thing about the Dutchman was the casualness with which he dismissed his journey out of enemy-held Holland under the eyes of the Gestapo; he might have stepped off a trolley bus from Hampstead for all the signs he gave that he had been involved in a highly dangerous venture.

His gentle voice, speaking in perfect English, brought Lincoln back to his reason for being there: “If you tell me what your problem is, Commander Lincoln...?”

Lincoln handed him the list of code numbers for the valves which were required to complete the reconstructed acoustic torpedo unit. He scanned it quickly.

“Ah, yes. We make all of these at Eindhoven. How many do you want?”

“A dozen?” Lincoln suggested tentatively, still finding the whole situation unreal.

Van Tromp turned to the R.A.F. officer. “If you come in forty-eight hours to the airfield where you picked me up you can have them.”

To Lincoln he said: “You shall have twenty sets of these valves - export packed.”

It came about precisely as he had promised: the German valves manufactured in a factory working under German orders were delivered. The acoustic torpedo unit was made to work. At last, the experts were to discover all they wanted to know about it. And also, of course, this meant that if they wished to manufacture an acoustic torpedo of their own they had the ready made basis on which to start.



# THE WORTHING CRASH

By  
Alan Parr

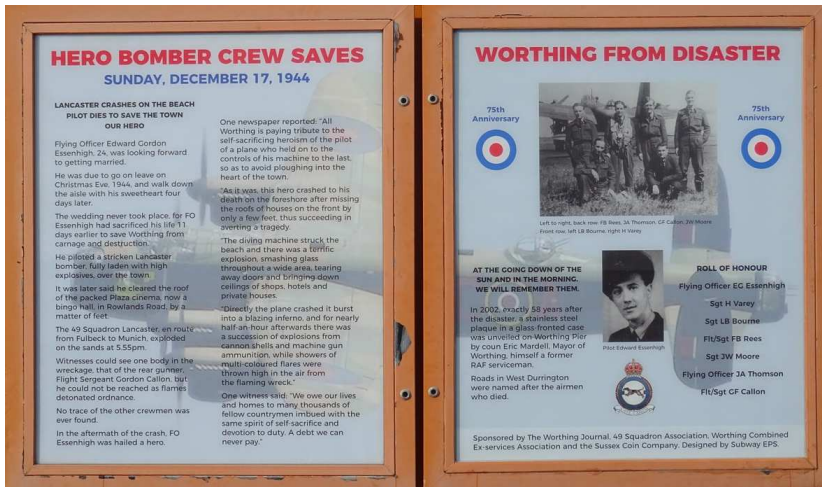


Photo: Worthing Journal

The outline details of the Worthing crash on December 17th 1944 are generally well known but for those who are not au fait with the tragedy here are a few brief details.

On December 17th Lancaster PB355 EA-B took off from Fulbeck, part of a 288 aircraft raid on Munich. The crew, captained by F/O E G Essenhigh, was on its eleventh operation. They came down on Worthing beach at 17.55hrs causing a huge explosion. The exact reason for the crash is unknown but the theory was that the aircraft was unable to climb above a few thousand feet. On board was a 4000lb Cookie, a blast bomb. The safe height for releasing a Cookie without blowing one's own tail off was 5,000ft. but as the aircraft was unable to reach this height the option of dropping it in the sea was not available. Returning to base and landing with a Cookie on board was extremely hazardous, even if they could have reached there, and could have put the airfield out of action for some time. Perhaps the crew elected to crash land in the shallows in the hope that landing on water might be an option albeit one filled with danger.

The good folk of Worthing have never forgotten the 49 Squadron heroes who saved their town, there were no civilian casualties. Streets in the town are named after the crew members who all died in the crash.

The commemoration boards, towards which the association made a donation of £60, were unveiled on October 14th and are to be on display for at least fourteen months.

On the 75th anniversary of the disaster a Commemoration Ceremony is to be held. A report will appear in the February issue of The 4T9er.

*Footnote: I regret to report that a few days after installation one of the boards was vandalised. Repairs will be effected in time for the anniversary commemoration.*

## 49 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REMEMBERS

On Sunday November 10th 4T9ers attended many Remembrance services. There follows some of those that have been reported. I am grateful to all who have sent in reports and photographs.

### FIKERTON

The annual Service of Remembrance, at Fiskerton Parish Church, was well attended as usual. The church service was conducted by the Right Reverend Dr Nigel Peyton Honorary Assistant Bishop of the Dioceses of Lincoln, seen left flanked by association secretary Alan Parr and archivist Ed Norman. The Squadron Roll of Honour was placed on the altar skirted by the Standards of the 5th Lincoln Scout Troop. The Association's wreath was laid at the Memorial by our chairman Stuart Keay.



Following the service we made our way to the Airfield Memorial where, to everyone's delight, we were joined by our chaplain, Revd Penny Green who conducted the short wreath laying ceremony. Our wreath was laid by the only WWII veteran present, Bill 'Titch' Cooke L d'H. The Guard of Honour was provided, as always, by the scouts.

Although the sun shone it was very chilly on the airfield so it





was with alacrity that we moved to the warmth, both in atmosphere and welcome, of the Village Hall. Here, an excellent lunch was served up by Ann Chesman and her wonderful band of volunteers.

On behalf of the association I thank all at Fiskerton for their kind welcome. I often stress the importance that we of 49 Squadron Association attach to our warm relationship with the folks of the village which I am pleased and proud to say is reciprocated.

**All Fiskerton photos: Jan Norman**







**The wreaths and crosses attracted by the Fiskerton Airfield Memorial.  
In the background, to the right of the bench, is the plaque and apple tree in remembrance of our late, much loved, Hon President and Historian John Ward.**



John's widow, Diane, told the editor that, "We have chosen an apple tree because when John was a young boy, he often walked on the old Fiskerton airfield with his mum and their dog. One day he saw an apple tree on the airfield and told his mum that he could imagine an airman walking out to his Lancaster eating an apple and then throwing down the core where the apple tree grew."

The inscription reads:

**In loving memory of**

**JOHN WARD**

**1952-2017**

**A wonderful Husband, Father, Son,  
Brother and Grandad**

**Honorary President and Historian  
49 Sqd. Association**

*Flying with his heroes. Forever in our hearts.*



## NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM, ALREWAS, STAFFORDSHIRE.



Here, the Association was represented by Associate Member Carol Bonfield who, following the service, laid a wreath at the 49 Squadron Memorial. She then placed a Remembrance Cross on the 1st Army Memorial in memory of her grandfather who was killed in Tunisia.

**Photos; Carol Bonfield**



## THE BRANSBY MEMORIAL, LINCOLN.



The Bransby Memorial commemorates the crew of 49 Squadron Hampden AT129 EA-O which crashed shortly after take-off from Scampton, 25 January 1942. Member John Galloway, ex Lincoln Flight Engineer, and Associate Member Stan Smith were in attendance. Stan's late wife Dorothy, nee Everett, was an MT driver and actually drove the crew to their aircraft for the ill fated flight. For many years she laid the squadron's wreath.

Photos: Via Stan Smith





# **BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL, GREEN PARK AND THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON.**

**By**

**Robert McEneaney**

Although in previous years our Service of Remembrance centred around the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, this year we had the very welcomed opportunity to attend the Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019

My co-pilot from the ND474 Relatives Group, Louise Jennings Hoole, arranged, through a friend, for us all to attend the afternoon Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall.

It was an honour and privilege to be able to attend such a prestigious event having previously watched and enjoyed the proceeding as they were televised by BBC Television.



The main theme was to commemorate those from Britain, the Commonwealth and the Allies who made victory possible in the Second World War. By May 1945 peace had been restored in Europe, and by August the War was over. We



continue to enjoy the benefits of the alliances and friendships between the nations, that were forged while working together during those often-terrible final months of the Second World War and continue to shape the world we live in today.

It is therefore only right that we should remember that over twelve and a half million men and women from across Britain and the Commonwealth stood shoulder to shoulder during the Second World War, half of which were from the Commonwealth. This included 2.5 million from pre-partition India - the largest volunteer army ever assembled.

With the final Act of Remembrance all present were asked to remember and honour the nearly 600,000 from all British and Commonwealth nations who never made it home.

The programme for the festival of Remembrance was as follows and as I mentioned earlier it truly was an honour and privilege to stand amongst all those serving personnel and veterans and who had given so much for the freedom we enjoy today;

The Massed Bands of the Guards Division

The Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra

String Ensemble of the Royal Marines Band Services

The Royal Air Force Salon Orchestra

The Service of Remembrance

Conducted by

The Right Reverend James Newcome DL, Bishop of Carlisle

National Chaplain to The Royal British Legion.

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Since the unveiling of the Memorial in 2012 it is with sadness that we reflect on the loss of so many Veterans who had worked tirelessly to deliver a lasting tribute to all those who served with Bomber Command. For all of us associated with the 4T9ers we know this all too well as the names of Eric Clarke, Ted Cachart and John Ward are never too far from our thoughts on such occasions.

We remember also those senior members of The Bomber Command Association who had previously attended the annual Service of Remembrance in Green Park, Air Commodore Charles Clarke and the legendry Harry Irons now sadly missing from the parade but no doubt sitting watching the proceeding together with the 55,573 who Failed to Return home.

As in previous years the formal proceeding started at 9.00 am with an RAF wreath laid at the memorial followed by a representative of the RAF Benevolent Fund and finally a wreath on behalf of the Bomber Command Association.



Photos; Robert McEneaney

**Young and not so Young gather at Green Park to remember all those who served on 49 Squadron.**

At 10.30 relatives of Bomber Command crews started to gather and a short service of Remembrance took place as 11 o'clock approached. The two minutes silence was marked by the firing of guns from the King's Troop on Horse Guards Parade. For once the noise of the

traffic around the Memorial seemed to dissipate allowing relatives to come forward to lay wreaths and pay tribute to their loved ones.

Louise Jennings Hoole and Robert McEneaney paid tribute to their relative's crew of ND474 recalling their recent trip to Germany to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their loss. The details of their trip to Bolstern was covered in August's issue of The 4T9er. Also highlighted was the work of the 49 Squadron Association 'crew' and the invaluable information contained in the Association's magnificent website.

Other relatives stepped forward to pay tribute to their loved ones and many were moved to tears in what became a very emotionally charged atmosphere.

Following the formalities, it was time for relatives to mingle and share stories of their loved ones and show photographs of young air crew sadly many of whom were not to see Victory Day.

To conclude our day, a leisurely walk through Green Park to Westminster Abbey and the Garden of Remembrance. Crosses of Remembrance were placed in the Bomber Command area. A cross was also placed by Annette in the Sherwood Foresters section to honour her Great Uncle Joseph Corden who died serving in the First World War. Joseph is remembered at the Arras Memorial sadly his final resting place is 'Known onto God'.

## AABENRAA, DENMARK

**By**

# Marilyn Nissen



**Photo; Franz Christiansen**

## The crash-site memorial to 49's Lancaster JA691 EA-L

We were at the graves in good time, Franz and me, with red roses and crosses. It was a bit windy but sunny and then we drove out to the stone...by then only two roses left and one cross ???

You see, at the graves this man came along, looking around, a bit lost...I went over and said, "Hello, are you looking for a special grave?" "Yes but it's almost eleven o'clock." So I

asked him to join us for a minute's silence...so we stood with each our own memories as the chimes from the church in town reached us. So then he showed me his great uncle's grave. He didn't have the story belonging to his great uncle and regretted this. I gave him one of my roses. Then I gave him the newest edition of The 4T9er so that he could find a contact/help.

So if this person called Steven calls..? That's what it's all about really...just meeting and talking and understanding...and sharing thoughts on this special day.

And why was I short of a cross? Well Franz celebrated his birthday yesterday and there was this lovely flower wreath made by one of the kids...a bit autumnal in colour, but he wanted it down on the Cross...so with red ribbon and a poppy cross and a lot of love we put it on the big Cross down there at the cemetery!





**Above centre; The graves of the crew of JA691**  
**Below; The Cross of Sacrifice, Aabenraa Cemetery.**

**Photo; Marilyn Nissen**  
**Photo; Franz Christiansen**



## **HAMELDOWN TOR**

John Lowe writes that he, and his wife Zena, laid the 49 Squadron Wreath and cross to the crew of Hampden, X3054 EA-S which crashed there on March 21st 1941. Thirty other people had made the climb to the memorial.

## **FULBECK**

Local residents Carol and Peter Hare lay our wreath each year on the Fulbeck Airfield Memorial but this year, as they were walking towards it, wreath in hand, a car pulled up and a young man asked if he could join them. It transpired that he had served in the RAF, including Afghanistan, and it was suggested that it would be more appropriate if he laid the wreath, which he did.

# **MICHAEL BEETHAM CONSERVATION CENTRE. (MBCC) RAF MUSEUM, COSFORD.**

**By**

**Alan Parr**

*Manager of the Centre, Darren Priday, writes in the centre's website;*

*"The Michael Beetham Conservation Centre, located at our Cosford site, is responsible for aircraft and large 3-D artefacts in the Museum and those on loan. A world centre of excellence, its primary function includes care, conservation and restoration of the National Collection along with the movement or suspension of aircraft or large exhibits.*

*"The work is carried out by 10 professional technicians, who are ably supported by dedicated and trained volunteers, some 50 in number. Past and present projects include the Sopwith Dolphin, Supermarine Spitfire XIX, a Vickers Wellington Mk10B bomber, a rare Handley Page Hampden TB1 and the recovered German Dornier 17Z Light/Fast Bomber. The team were involved in the recent multi-million pound redevelopment at our London site.*

*"Every project is a challenge, a journey back through time, utilising old or forgotten skills to repair, restore or replicate the original. Such skills were becoming lost, but the Museum has, through the dedication of the MBCC, rejuvenated and retained many through innovative and award-winning schemes. Currently employing six apprentices on an advance modern apprenticeship, the scheme has won numerous national and regional awards over the years. The MBCC and apprenticeship scheme enjoy a great relationship with the Wolverhampton College, who provide the courses and the Rotary Club of Wolverhampton who hold an annual Apprentice of the Year award dinner.*

*"The MBCC is a fascinating place, full of atmosphere, dedication and a passion for preserving our National Military Aviation Heritage. With it being an engineering environment it is rarely open to visitors, but we do have an annual Open Week held in November.*

*"We hope you'll visit us soon, to experience history working at its best and help share the story of the RAF."*

I have made many visits to the MBCC on previous Open Weeks but most enjoyable have been the private visits that I have been privileged to make when accompanying some of our Hampden veterans, sadly many of whom are no longer with us. Having most recently visited the MBCC last November, I was staggered at the progress that has been made when I again enjoyed Open Week on November 12th. Not least amongst the joys of attending are meeting our old friends Darren and Mick Shepherd, both of whom gave freely of their time. I am most grateful for their hospitality and that of the rest of the personnel at the Centre.



**Above: A general view of the west side of the MBCC,  
Westland Lysander in the foreground.**

**Below: The superb Hampden restoration.**







Photos this page: Darren Friday

**Above: The Hampden plus, in the foreground, the actual wind tunnel model used in its development.**

**Below: The pilot's 'office'.**



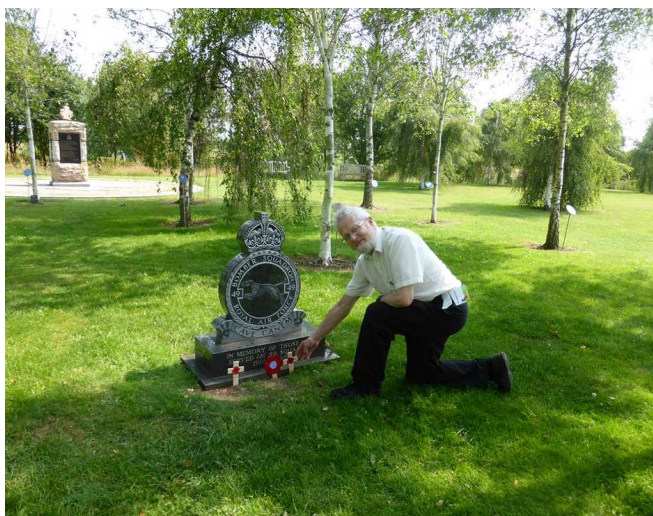
## 75th ANNIVERSARY PILGRIMAGE - JULY 2019

By  
**Chris Beare**

2019 and 75 years since D-Day and many of us have been reminded of family members that were lost to us supporting the D-Day landings. Living near Slapton Sands where American troops practiced for the landings and local villages were evacuated, I was very aware of the history of D-Day. It was only a few years ago, however, when liaising with Steve Darlow of Fighting High publishing to feature my uncle's Lancaster crew in his book 'Bomber Command D-Day failed to return', that I fully appreciated the significance that entries in my uncle's log book in June 1944 detailed their support of the D-Day landings

18<sup>th</sup> July 1944 ND684 EA-V left RAF Fiskerton for the last time on the Revigny raid. Our Mum's only brother Dennis William Blumfield was the 21 year old navigator. As a family we visited the graves of the crew, in the village of Granges-sur-Aube in France, 60 years after they died and had the incredibly emotional experience of walking amongst sunflowers growing at the crash site. Our Mum, Elsie Holwill, was incredibly close to her brother as their father had died when they were very young and it was a devastating loss to also lose Dennis in 1944. Although we were not alive at the time my brother, also named Dennis, and I have always felt the loss of our uncle quite significantly and place great importance on honouring his memory. We have the benefit of being able to read many letters sent to and from Dennis during his training and subsequently his time with 49 Squadron and so visiting some of the places he mentions is always significant to us. To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary we decided that a pilgrimage of remembrance was a good idea.

Our journey from Devon took us firstly to the National Memorial Arboretum to lay



poppy tributes at the new 49 Squadron Memorial. Never having visited before, I was struck by the size of site and the many varied memorials. The main memorial features blank stone walls waiting to receive future names which was a sadly reflective thought. On a happier note we were thrilled that Alan and Barbara Parr were able to meet us for a wonderful catch up over coffee and a walk to the RAF area and the 49 Squadron Memorial stone to spend a time of reflection.



We then travelled on to Lincoln. We visited the International Bomber Command Centre on a hot sunny day vastly different from the cold mists of our previous visit for the opening ceremony. As we arrived early in the day we were able to view our uncle's memorial stone in the Ribbon of Remembrance and walk to the spire almost by ourselves. We placed a cross under the RAF Fiskerton tree and then embarked on the challenge of finding the crew names on the panels. We were able to place a poppy by the name of each crew member and also by the name of Terence McEneaney, uncle to our 49 Squadron Association friend Robert McEneaney. We were able to appreciate the wonderful views from the spire over Lincoln and to the cathedral. We enjoyed visiting the exhibition and growing archive of information which hopes to help future generations learn about the significance of Bomber Command as well as understanding how war changes the lives of many. I was reminded of my promise to scan and send them the many letters, documents, photos and log book that we have at home to add to the archives.



We started our final day with an early visit to a beautifully peaceful RAF Fiskerton to lay our final tribute at the memorial. The peace amongst the derelict runways and fields was absolutely incredible. What a contrast to the activity that would have been taking place on that airfield and surrounding area 75 years ago. We hardly wanted to leave the tranquillity and the memories behind.





No visit to the area is complete without a visit to the Petwood Hotel. As it was my brother Dennis's birthday we enjoyed coffee on the terrace and a lovely walk around the grounds and, of course, the obligatory visit to the Dambusters Officers bar. We viewed the new location of the 'Upkeep' bomb and the figure of an airman carved from the wood of the oak tree that used to stand at the front of the hotel. The cloud stopped us viewing the obvious sound of the Red Arrows passing overhead but the sound added to the atmosphere of a lovely visit.



**Photos via Chris Beare**

We headed home having enjoyed a very poignant trip and happy to have reflected on the memory of seven young men and many others along with them.

*Below is a précis of notifications that we have received regarding the Scampton Window. I regret that it includes links to promotional videos which of course require viewing on-line. I hope that those who are reading this in a printed form will be able to find someone to assist them.*

## **RAF SCAMPTON COMMEMORATIVE STAINED GLASS WINDOW**

The Ministry of Defence have announced that they intend to decommission RAF Scampton in 2022. Whether this happens or not, a project to commission a stunning RAF stained glass window at Scampton Church to mark 100 years' relationship between RAF Scampton and Scampton Church (1918 – 2018), and thereby also create a lasting memory to all who served in squadrons at the base, both in peacetime, during the two world wars and the cold war, is now up and running.

Marking past, present and future The Revd Sue Deacon describes plans for a beautiful tribute that is intended to mark a 100-year relationship between the village church and RAF Scampton...

“A project is underway to install a stunning stained-glass window at St John the Baptist Church in Scampton, which is part of the Springline Parish, near Lincoln. The aim of the project is to mark the 100-year relationship between Royal Air Force Scampton and the village church, and to serve as a lasting memory to all who have served at the base during peacetime and times of conflict....In speaking about this project, Bishop David has said, ‘As one walks towards Scampton Church and sees the graves from World War Two there is an awareness of the strong relationship between the church and RAF Scampton that has existed in times of war and in times of peace. Each of those graves has a story, and inside Scampton Church there are more stories in the RAF Chapel. I am excited that a stained-glass window is going to mark 100 years of relationship between RAF Scampton and Scampton Church. This will be a way to remember all who have served in squadrons at the base. I wish the project well, as through beauty there will be a way to remember the bonds between RAF Scampton and the church. It will also be a reminder of the peace that Christ, the Prince of Peace, calls each of us to live out every day.’ ”

RAF and aviation organisations have agreed to be non-funding community partners in the project.

Two well respected stained glass designers, with an impressive portfolio, have designed the RAF Scampton window. The RAF Scampton badge forms a central part of that design, alongside the winged RAF badge (per ardua ad astra) which sits proudly on the 107 Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard.

<https://scamptonchurch.org/war-graves/>

The inscription on the window, chosen by Wing Commander Parker at RAF Scampton, will read:

“To commemorate those who served in squadrons based at RAF Scampton 1918 – 2018”

The design includes a representation of an Avro Lancaster, Avro Vulcan and the Red Arrows Hawk Jets in a diamond nine formation, all depicted flying over the runway at RAF Scampton.

Also included in the initiative is an associated aviation arts project in Scampton's two local primary schools, which will help teach children of the sacrifice given by others to ensure they live in a free country. Filming for the first crowd funding video was carried out by Lincoln University and is now complete, and heads the campaign site.

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rafwindow](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rafwindow)

The film includes contributions from Wing Commander Parker (OIC RAF Scampton), Wing Commander Keith (OIC RAFAT - Red Arrows) Johnny Johnson (Last surviving member of the original 617 Squadron) and Bill Ramsey (Wing Commander Red Arrows, BBMF and Vulcan pilot)

Aviation sponsors have donated to a 'thank you' scheme which rewards contributions towards the RAF window with original prizes.

<https://scamptonchurch.org/raf-stained-glass-window/>



**RAF SCAMPTON - 18th August 2013**



# **SOME OF US DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE SARACEN'S HEAD ON STANDDOWN**

**By**

**John Chatterton**

After our Lancaster training at Swinderby in the autumn of '43, all we knew was that we were destined for somewhere within No 5 Group. I had visions of being within biking distance of my home at Old Bolingbroke, which was one mile from East Kirkby, six from Spilsby, about eight from Coningsby and Woodhall and ten from Bardney. But of course we didn't get sent to any of these, which was probably just as well for my mother's peace of mind.

We eventually finished up with No 44 Sqn at Dunholme Lodge just north of Lincoln and about 30 miles from home. This was still possible on the trusty Raleigh, with the wonky three speed, especially if I cut diagonally across country through Scothern to join the main Lincoln/Skegness artery at Langworth. Considering the wartime petrol restrictions, this was still fairly well used, and hitch hiking was moderately easy on the many sand and gravel lorries used by the contractors finishing the building of airfields at East Kirkby and Spilsby and the new Strubby. Marvel of marvels!, there was also the occasional Lincs Road Car bus. But I needed somewhere in Langworth to leave my bike.

By 1941/42, my boyhood friend, Marsh Scarborough, was fighting Rommel and sandstorms as a W.Op/A.G. in Wellingtons from Advanced Landing Grounds in the Western Desert. So his bed in Lincoln was free, and made much use of by the three Chatterton boys (two airmen and one artilleryman) when their postings used the Lincoln railway system. I was having tea with his hospitable parents soon after my arrival at Dunholme when his father mentioned his evening job at the Observer Corps post just east of Lincoln. His friend and shift mate was a Mr. Duddles who lived in Langworth. This was heaven sent, his cottage was actually on the main road next to the George Hotel. I could leave my bike in the coalhouse, (the key was under the fourth brick) and help myself if they were all abed. Mrs Duddles hot, sweet tea was real nectar, and I sometimes missed a potential lift passing the door, because I succumbed to a second cup.

As a non-smoker I could not offer my lorry driver a cigarette as a reward for his kindness, but I got into the habit of saving the chocolate in my flying rations. This was a fairly small bar of dark plain but with sweets rationed, it was still a quite acceptable gift "for the kids". With my battle dress and pilot's

wings, I think they had no trouble believing me when I said it had been in the flak over Schweinfurt or Brunswick etc about eight hours previously. Alvar Lidell had mentioned the target and how many bombers were missing in the early news bulletin.

This was all forgotten after the war, but remarkably called to mind about thirty years later. We had finished loading twenty tons of malting barley, and the white haired, loquacious lorry driver was having a sandwich and cup of coffee. He got to reminiscing about his wartime driving on our nearby Skegness road. "There wasn't a branch of the Armed Services that I didn't give a lift to, but my favourites were the local bomber boys. I still remember one giving me a bar of chocolate that he said had been "over Berlin". "Did you eat it?" "No it was far too precious for that, we kept it on the mantle piece in the kitchen and it went quite grey in the end – I think my wife threw it out when we moved house".

I hadn't the heart to tell him! I was a middle-aged yokel at this time, a far cry from his hero in blue.

I didn't do a lot of hitch hiking after that, having acquired some transport. Firstly, I got 600cc Panther motorbike, which frightened me to death, even though I never got beyond third gear. This was rapidly superseded by a 1931 Austin Seven which had been laid up for the "duration" on a local farm. We scraped off a two-inch layer of poultry manure, cleaned the plugs and points, borrowed a second hand battery and put in some clean petrol. There were no self-starters in those days, and several minutes of hand cranking produced coughs and the odd resounding backfire, eventually settling down to fairly even running. The tyres were fairly bald, but held up well, and she would do 30 mph, (or 40 downhill with a following wind). I never did pass a driving test and to this day the Family maintain that it shows. She served me well right through the rest of the war and for three years at university afterwards. - I wish I had her now!

For the next ten years, until she left the district, I still called in to see Mrs. Duddles whenever I was passing. No one ever made a cup of tea to rival hers!

*Adapted from "Ploughshare and Shining Sword" by Richard Underwood with thanks to Mike Chatterton.*

## **READER'S LETTERS**

Associate Member Graham Boyd e-mailed:

"I have taken two of our three daughters to Peenemunde and Stalag IVB - so there is one daughter still to go! It's getting too late this year - as she has two children - but hopefully next year. Our grandchildren still talk about "Grandad Bill" and his Lancaster Bomber even though they never met him.

*Further extracts from Paul Gaunt's tribute to his father, reproduced here with his kind permission.*

## **SHADOWS OF THE PAST**

**By**

**Paul Gaunt**

### **Part 6**

November 25th, 1941

Just two weeks after the Hackthorn Hall tragedy, another of the Squadron's Hampdens crashed whilst on a training flight. 20 year old Sergeant Pilot Ron Hough and Sergeant George Edward Smith were both killed instantly when their aircraft AD759 spun into the ground at Scamlesby, on the Lincolnshire Wolds. During low flying at 1455 hrs on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 25th, Hampden AD759 was seen making a very low approach towards the village of Scamlesby where Sergeant Smith's family lived. Tragically, the Hampden's wing struck the ground and the aircraft crashed through the fields just on the edge of the village. Smith, whose relatives still live in the village, is buried in St Martin's churchyard, Scamlesby, whilst Hough rests in Clayton-Le -Moors cemetery in Lancashire.

Crashed AD759

Sgt R R HOUGH: pilot (killed)

Sgt G E SMITH: wireless operator & air gunner (killed)

***Twelfth Operation: – Bombing Lorient Docks, France, November 23rd/24th, 1941.***

HAMPDEN AD896

Sgt JENKINS: pilot

Sgt CLOUGH: navigator

Sgt WOODROFFE: wireless operator & air gunner

Sgt GAUNT: air gunner

*Up 1614 hrs, down 2215 hrs (6 hrs 1 min)*

Details of Sortie: - Very little cloud and good visibility. Target seen in moonlight. Bombs went alongside railway lines, burst seen, no fires and no opposition from heavy flak on coast, which had fired on outward journey.

Summary of Events: -

Weather fog - Violent squally showers, with hail, low cloud and poor visibility.

18 aircraft to stand by to bomb the docks at Lorient. All aircraft took off and 13 were successful in attacking primary target in conditions of slight cloud and good visibility. Of the aircraft which were unsuccessful, two were unable to locate the target owing to being off track and returned with their bombs. Another could not positively pinpoint the docks and jettisoned wing bombs to gain height. One aircraft suffered complete W/T failure. Five aircraft reported fires seen and in three cases, bursts were observed. All aircraft returned safely from this operation.

Results, BCWD: - 51 Hampdens and 2 Manchesters attacked, large fires seen in vicinity of docks, there were no losses.

### *Aircraft & Crew Losses*

December 8th, 1941: Killed on Active Service

The Squadron suffered its sixth flying accident casualty within a month, when Sergeant Thomas Hardisty was reported killed on active service. On Monday, December 8th, Hardisty was the Wireless Operator on Hampden AE227 taking part in a practice flight around the local area of Scampton. For some unexplained reason, Sergeant Hardisty fell to his death from the aircraft. The Welton police reported that an airman, subsequently identified as Thomas Hardisty, had been killed after baling out over Sudbrooke, there is no further information as to the cause of this tragedy. 21 year old Sergeant Thomas Hardisty is buried in St John the Baptist churchyard at Scampton.

December 12th, 1941 – Bombing Bremerhaven in Daylight

The unit despatched two aircraft to attack the barracks at Bremerhaven. The Hodges crew (AT124) of Cadman, Fry and Ellis were unable to attack the barracks due to lack of cloud cover over the Frisian Islands and the crew returned safely with its bomb load.

The Robinson crew (AD979) consisting of Black, Price and Mossop could not locate their target (barracks) at Cuxhaven and went on to bomb and strafe the local aerodrome. Facing intense ground fire, Sergeant Pilot Robinson took his aircraft down to 100 feet to carry out the attack and during the assault, one hanger was seen to blow up and two aircraft were set on fire on the ground, also the town was machine gunned. Inevitably, the Hampden sustained numerous flak hits and was severely shot up. Sadly, Flight Sergeant Stuart Black RNZAF was struck by fragments from a cannon shell and killed. The pilot now had to get the battered aircraft back to England, making landfall over the Norfolk coast, the aircraft made for Bircham Newton, where without the use of hydraulics, the pilot managed a successful crash landing timed at 1635 hrs. Flight Sergeant Black is buried in Great Bircham churchyard in Norfolk.



Crashed AD979

Sgt R J ROBINSON: pilot (unhurt)

F/Sgt S C BLACK (RNZAF): pilot & navigator (killed)

Sgt J PRICE: wireless operator & air gunner (unhurt)

Sgt W MOSSOP: as above, (unhurt)

***Thirteenth Operation: Bombing Huls (Camara) December 28th/29th 1941***

HAMPDEN AE12

Sgt HAMER: pilot

Sgt HADDOCK: navigator

Sgt MINCAIN: wireless operator

Sgt GAUNT: air gunner

*Up 1735 hrs, down 0014 hrs (6 hrs 39 mins)*

Details of Sortie: - Target - synthetic rubber works at Huls. No cloud and good visibility. Pinpointed railway, river and canal. Bombs released on target when in sight and one burst and large fire seen visible 60 miles after leaving. Flak very accurate. Nickels over Wesel on return.

Summary of Events: - Weather isolated snow showers and later fog. Good visibility decreasing heavy frost. 20 aircraft to standby for bombing attack on synthetic rubber works at Huls, alternative town of Munster and any resort in



**Above: The synthetic rubber plant at Huls. Photo taken from Tubby's aircraft.**

**Left: Sgt. Hamer**

built-up areas NW Germany. All aircraft took off at intervals and 17 found and successfully bombed main objective, in excellent visibility. Owing to intense AA barrage, one aircraft had to bomb Dortmund Dock area and being unable to locate Huls, another attacked a factory in Essen. One aircraft was missing from operations; no signals were received from it. Of the successful aircraft, 14 saw bursts or large fires resulting from their attacks and several huge explosions resulted. Excellent photographs were taken in several cases, showing the target to be hit directly many times.

Missing Aircraft: - FTR. AE419 piloted by Sergeant Archie Watt and crew. The bodies of this crew have never been recovered. It is believed that the aircraft came down in the sea. Sergeant Watt and his crew are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial. It was a very sad note on which to finish the troubled year of 1941.

FTR AE419

Sgt A C WATT: pilot (missing)

Sgt E G SAWDY: navigator & pilot (missing)

F/Sgt E C ATKINSON: wireless operator & air gunner (missing)

Sgt H W WISDOM: wireless operator (missing)

All the above are missing in action.

BCWD: - Total effort for the night 217 sorties, 4 aircraft lost.

Results: - Excellent bombing backed by photographs. 81 Hampdens in all attacked. Four aircraft lost in total.

### ***Aircraft & Crew Losses***

January 6th, 1942 – Crash at South Carlton 0700 hrs on the morning of January 6th, Hampden AD896 ‘M–Mother’ approached Scampton to land after night of training. As the aircraft passed over the small hamlet of South Carlton, one of the engines suddenly cut out. The aircraft stalled, then fell into Middle Street, killing two of the crew, including the pilot, Sergeant Godfrey West. Also killed in this tragic accident was wireless operator Sergeant George Atkins. Fortunately, there were no civilian casualties. It cannot be established if these were the only two airmen aboard this aircraft that fatal morning.

Crashed AD896

Sgt G L WEST: pilot (killed)

Sgt G T ATKINS: wireless operator & air gunner (killed)

January 9th/10th, 1942: Bombing & Mining in Brest - 14 aircraft sent to Brest, nine aircraft to bomb the battle cruisers in Brest harbour and five to plant mines in the Brest area. Of the minelayers, three were successful in planting

their mines and one was unable to find the target area. Sadly, the fifth was reported missing. Pilot Officer Thomas Jacobs (AD909) and crew are presumed to have come down into the sea and their bodies have never been recovered. The crew is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

FTR AD909

P/O T F JACOBS: pilot (missing)

P/O P T CLOSE: air observer (missing)

Sgt W B ROBERTSON: wireless operator & air gunner (missing)

Sgt J WARREN: as above (missing)

January 21st/22nd, 1942 – Bombing Emden. The Squadron sent five Hampdens to attack Emden. Two aircraft failed to attack any target owing to icing and failure of heating and two aircraft bombed the primary target. No signals were received from the fifth aircraft and it was reported missing. Flying Officer Alex Harvey (AT148) and crew were shot down over Groningen by Oberfeldwebel Paul Gildner of 11/NJG.2. Sadly, all the crew perished when S-Sugar fell to earth near the farm of Mr. Ritsema at Roodehaan, Noorddijk, in Holland. The crew rest together in Noorddijk general cemetery.

FTR AT148

F/O A M HARVEY: pilot (killed)

Sgt W A GREY: navigator (killed)

Sgt J W HALLAM: wireless operator & air gunner (killed)

Sgt R M KNAPMAN: air gunner (killed)

January 25th/26th, 1942 – Bombing battle cruisers. The Squadron despatched 17 Hampdens on a cold night with snow and ice on the ground. At 1712 hours, immediately after take-off, Hampden O-Orange, piloted by Sergeant Charles Stewart (AT129), crashed to earth near the small hamlet of Bransby, between Sturton and Saxilby - there were no survivors. It is thought that the aircraft may have been brought down by ice collecting on its flying surfaces.

Crashed AT129

Sgt C D S STEWART: pilot (killed)

Sgt A HIBBIT: wireless operator & air gunner (killed)

Sgt K E NORTHROP: as above (killed)

Sgt L A JARDINE: as above (killed)

Of the aircraft that continued on towards Brest, one returned to base with mechanical problems, 8 failed to attack any target owing to the effect of 10/10 cloud making fixes impossible. The remainder attacked alternative targets within the dock area. There were no further losses.

*To be continued.*