



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

Autumn 2018



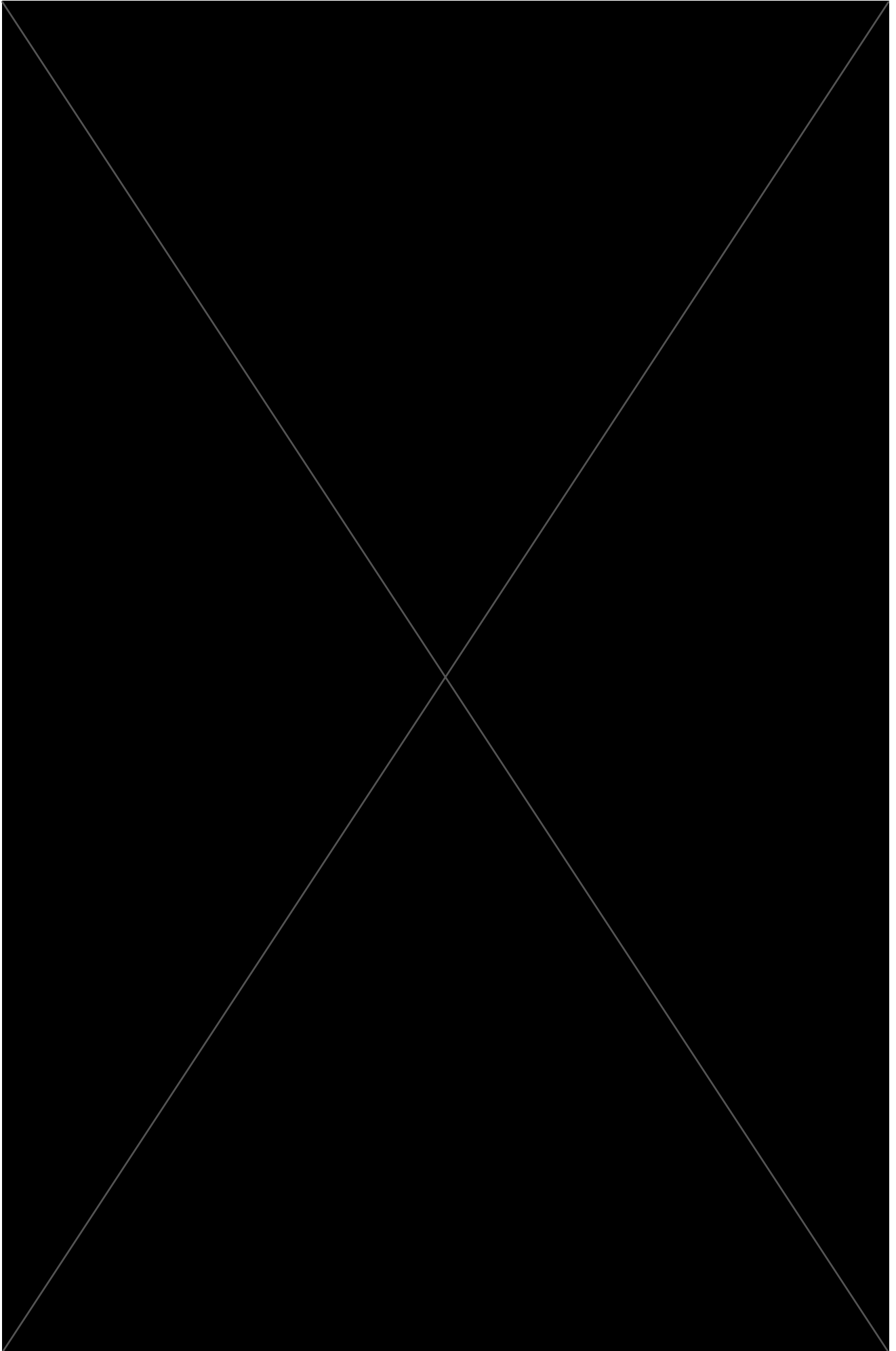
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RAF 100 Group Association



EDITOR'S PAGE



Dearest Kindred Spirits,

Well, there is both Good and Sad news which I must share. I'll start with the sad, so you can get on and enjoy the rest of the pages of this magazine heartened by what the Good News offers. The sad news is that three veterans are with us no more. [Peter Scloverano](#), a firm friend and in contact often, died on 27 June. He served at RAF North Creak as W/O to 171, 199 and 462 Sqns. Chris Lambert also shares that [Jim 'Dinty' Moore](#) of 214 Sqn, Oulton, died during the week of 20 August. A Memorial Service will be held 2pm, 5 October, at Blickling Church. Attendees should phone Geoff Sykes at Blickling Museum. Stuart Borlase in Australia received news that [Paul Henry](#), Navigator in 214 Sqn, died on 29 July. Both Jim and Paul were founding members of this Association, attending Reunions. I would be happy to hear from anyone who can share more about any of these kindred spirits. Meanwhile, Good News is that my 28th book was published on 23 August and will be out shortly. Titled: *RAF 100 Group – Reasons to Remember*, it marks both the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force, and the 75th Anniversary of the formation of RAF 100 Group in November 1943. The aim of the book is to evidence how vital the Group proved in changing the outcome of the war, bringing it to an early conclusion, saving so many thousands of lives, using electronic countermeasures. It will be available through Amazon and any good book seller in around six weeks' time. A sneak preview of the front cover is at the back of this magazine, which promises something different with illustrations throughout.

More noteworthy news is that, following the May Reunion this year, Stan Forsyth DFC and his daughters had a rare Reunion of their own. It came about because the family of Wilf McCann, Stan's crew member in 192 Sqn, contacted me. Happily, I was able to send on to Stan via his daughter a photo of their father. Putting the two families in touch was remarkable ... and the rest, as they say, is history! Son and daughter of Wilf McCann, known in wartime as 'Geordie'; travelled to visit Stan, and together they shared a wonderful time as can be seen from the photograph:



Kevin & Geraldine McCann sitting either side of Stan Forsyth DFC

Now I have a visit of my own to look forward to as Yvonne and Paul Reed are travelling up to Filey for Sunday lunch with me. We'll be going out, the table already booked, to make it an occasion, a celebration of Kindred Spirits coming together. It's a wonderful thing! Yvonne's father was LAC Mansfield who served in 85 Squadron at RAF Swannington. We met at this year's Reunion, and immediately felt we'd known one another years, especially as Paul became my reluctant dance partner! I'm looking forward to seeing them so much ...

Thank you one and all for the joy you bring, the love we share!

*Love & Hugs,
Janine^{xx}*

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Tel: 01723 512544 raf100groupassociation@gmail.com

PRESIDENT: PHIL JAMES MBE



Dear Friends,

On 12 April this year, I was able to travel from my home in Port Talbot to attend the long-awaited Official Opening of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln. Two events had been planned for the day. However, with the day so cold and damp, the Spire shrouded in mist; with almost 4,000 guests, it was impossible to have the multi-aircraft Flypast. The cloud ceiling was 300ft, which meant John Sergeant had to improvise and talk about what we *might* have seen! I was one of 300 veterans from around the globe who helped officially open the Centre – cutting a length of red ribbon and placing it in a specially commissioned commemorative folder. Veterans included representatives from Aircrew, Ground Crew, WAAF, Air Transport Auxiliary, Resistance workers and recipients of the humanitarian food aid mission: *'Operation Manna'*. Nicky Barr, Chief Executive, said: *'The veterans and their memories, coupled with their struggle for recognition, have always been at the heart of this Project. From the outset, we have had fantastic support from all sectors of the veteran community and this was our chance to thank them publicly and formally'*.

Veterans were very well looked after by 100 staff and volunteers, together with 140 serving RAF personnel who volunteered to help at this Event, showing support by the current generation of those who previously served, marking the ethos of the Royal Air Force in its 100th Year. Those who participated in the Event included Government representatives across the Commonwealth and Europe, with speeches from Sir Peter Luff, Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and Lord Howe, Minister for Defence in the Lords, with a Blessing from the Rt Reverend Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

Also present were Carol Vorderman, Invictus Games Choirs, City of Lincoln Male Voice Choir, Lincoln Orpheus Male Voice Choir, Louth Male Voice Choir, Caister Male Voice Choir, Military Wives Choir, Lincoln Rock Choir, Players in the IBCC Orchestra, University of Lincoln Drama Group, City of Lincoln Drama Group, The Band of the RAF College Cranwell, RAF Waddington Voluntary Band, the RAF Waddington Pipes and Drums, Heather Marie Little, Paisley Atlanta, John McAllister.



Photograph by Stuart Borlase during his visit with Janine following the Reunion in May

Everyone who visits this remarkable International Tribute to Bomber Command agrees it's well worth an outing for those who haven't been.



*The Ribbon of Remembrance set either side of pathway the leading to the Spire
Photograph taken by Stuart Borlase*



*Ribbon of Remembrance and pathway leading up to the Spire
Below: Garden of Remembrance with names carved in memory into the steel walls*



Taken by Stuart Borlase on visit with Janine in June this year

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

I was asked to become Chair of our Association ahead of the May Reunion in 2014. I have now passed my fourth Anniversary and today I am writing my 18th Chairman's letter. This does cause a little anxiety over meeting the deadline and there is always worry over finding something new and hopefully interesting to say. This is a challenge, but on balance it is one I enjoy.

Recent weeks have been particularly interesting because I have been receiving post and emails from many of you in response to the Survey about the future of the magazine. Thank you for all your replies and in many cases to your thoughtful comments. So far, I have had 51 responses with three-quarters opting for three editions a year. I guess therefore that we will be adopting this new pattern of three four-monthly editions from 2019. Your comments have been illuminating: the magazine is universally valued both for its content and production quality and everyone appreciates the superhuman effort made by our Secretary Janine in delivering the magazine alongside all her other responsibilities.

Reducing editions to three will make a significant saving to our postal charges and we can be less preoccupied with print costs allowing individual editions to be larger. This should enable us to reinstate 'Final Postings' to all editions rather than just summer. I know that this will be appreciated by many members. One Veteran, John Beeching (ex 169 Squadron) wrote to me from New Zealand expressing concern about the long-term future of the Association and the need for succession planning. It is the case that most of us Committee members are of pensionable age and some have served for a very long time. I believe there will be a constructive role for our Association almost indefinitely and that John Beeching is correct to encourage us to seek successors. We should think about how we might encourage new blood to join us, particularly from younger generations – so please talk to your children and grandchildren!

Earlier this week, I was persuaded that it would be responsible for me to update my Will – something I recognise one should do regularly. I was considering bequests that I might make, including my model collection. Some years ago, I started to collect aircraft models, specifically aircraft that my father had flown in as Navigator. I have a model of probably the most unusual – an American Lockheed P38 Lightning. Dad flew in a P38 on one occasion from Foulsham



with an American pilot. Like the Mosquito, the Lightning was a twin-engine fighter bomber with an unusual twin-boom tail. The Lightning flew first in January 1939 and served throughout the war with 10,037 being built. In September 1944, two-seat versions of the P38J equipped with electronic intelligence gathering equipment were detached from the USAAF 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group to 192 Squadron. They were assigned to search for radio signals controlling V2 rockets, which was also the task my father was engaged in on his last operational mission, but in his case by Mosquito.

Very best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Roger Dobson'.

Roger Dobson Tir A Môr Uchaf, Cemaes Bay, Isle of Anglesey

8th AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVE

Stephen Hutton



Hello Friends,

From America with Autumn upon us, my thoughts turn toward the essence of this splendid season – a bountiful harvest and Thanksgiving. Past Thanksgiving holiday gatherings especially come to mind with family and friends and the sharing of food, fellowship and love.

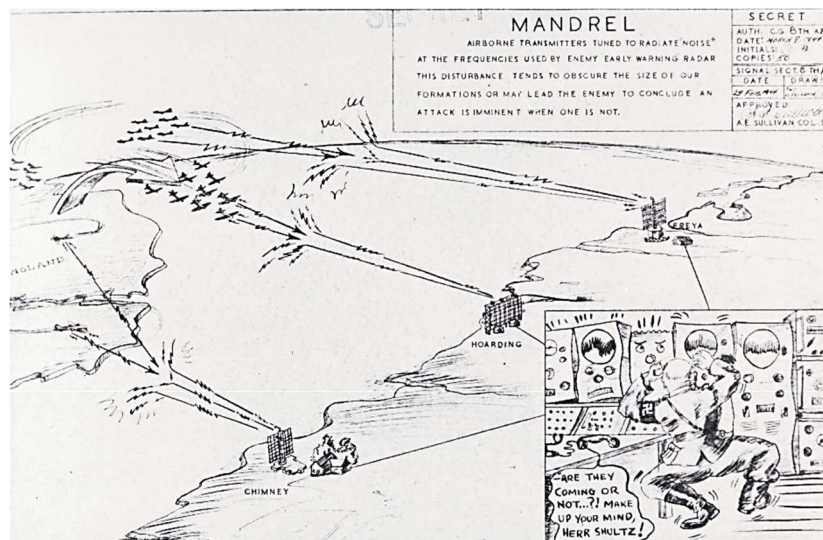


Yet in the Thanksgiving season of November 1944, America was at war and joining Great Britain and Allies toward defeating the evils of Nazi Germany and ending its tyranny and captive oppression over Europe. At this time, my father's 8th Air Force 36th Squadron operated with RAF 100 Group's 199 and 171 Squadrons by providing MANDREL screen.



199 Squadron, RAF North Creake, Norfolk

They flew on eighteen nights of the month of November in support of RAF Bomber Command bombing operations. The screen supporting RAF operations continued to work toward countering the German long-range Radar-plotting system. The screen was used in conjunction with other countermeasures such as WINDOW patrols, Intruders, and diversionary forces. The effectiveness of the screen was based on RAF 100 Group Raid Analysis Reports.



The poem which follows (*I love it!*) is from the original 36th Squadron History File written at Thanksgiving time and gives a fairly good picture of the RAF 100 Group spoofery carried out for that mission:

From: Headquarters, No.100 Group.

To: R.A.F. Stations: West Raynham, Foulsham, Little Snoring,
North Creake, Great Massingham, Swannington.

Serial No: A.I.471

An Immediate Analysis in a Lighter Vein

By Y. Smif

Night of 23/24th November 1944

Bomber Command has laid on a raid
To be carried out with 100 Group's aid,
But Bomber considered the weather was poor
So, Group took a hand at alerting the Ruhr.
They put up a suitably placed MANDREL Screen
Through which, so they hoped, not a thing would be seen.
They sang to the Hun a Serrate serenade
Round the beacons they danced a Perfectos parade.
They intruded up high, they intruded down low
(Just to be beastly they'd put on this show).
The WINDOW force WINDOWed 100 per cent
And came through the Screen with offensive intent.
The Hun plotted hundreds of heavies around,
But hadn't a hope of control from the ground.
He put up some fighters and led them astray
In a huge mass of blips that faded away.
Our immediate analysis shows in the main
That the poor bloody Hun had been fooled once again.

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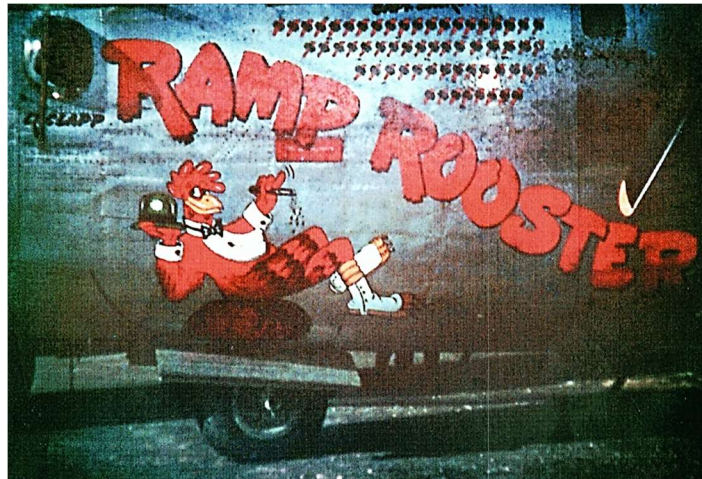
L. W. Wells,
Wing Commander,
Group Intelligence Officer

My father Iredell Hutton, a B24 Liberator Gunner in the 36th Squadron then based at Cheddington, had just turned 24, celebrating his birthday on November 21st, only two days before Thanksgiving. His Squadron had been flying with RAF 100 Group since its first mission on the morning of D-Day. I do not know how my father celebrated his Thanksgiving Day on November 23rd, however, I am confident many of his thoughts were surely of home, his wife Caroline and family.



The 36th Squadron history file stated those on the RAF 100 Group Raid Analysis Team concluded the Thanksgiving night operations were successful. For its part, the 36th's file stated that, on 23/24 November, six Squadron B24 Liberators were launched with five completing their mission. One B24 returned early due to an engine fire. That B24 was Liberator R4-F, nicknamed '*Ramp Rooster*'. The position of the screen was 5000N-0519E to 5114N-0414E and time of jamming was from 2030-2120 hours. The RAF main attack consisted of 79 Mosquitoes which attacked Hanover and other targets in Germany. The RAF 100 Group Raid Analysis further indicated that the enemy's

plotting system was confused considerably with just one RAF aircraft failing to return from the Hanover raid.



My father was not assigned to fly the Thanksgiving mission and I've not uncovered any additional mission data regarding the RAF 100 Group operations. Quite naturally though, I would very much welcome any further information from anyone regarding this successful operation.



With best wishes to all for a wonderful Autumn season!

Stephen Hutton

Author: *'Squadron of Deception'*

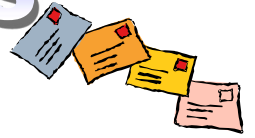
8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Contact

36th Bomb Squadron RCM

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LETTERS PAGES



Dear Janine,

A belated thank you for a memorable May Reunion weekend John and I had in Norfolk. Everyone was so friendly, and we received such a warm welcome. We realise that these Events require a lot of preparation by many people, but especially yourself. No doubt you are busy with the magazine now. We've gained a wealth of knowledge about my father's wartime experiences, made new friends and have many happy memories to treasure. I thought you might be interested in these letters I read in the 'Daily Telegraph' yesterday, 27 May 2018:

'LETTERS to the EDITOR The Ultimate Sacrifice

Sir - The recent correspondence (Letters, May 20) about the lack of individual recognition of those who served in wartime Bomber Command struck a deep chord with me, as indeed did the earlier reluctance to provide overt recognition.

I served in the RAF from 1940 to 1946, injury free. My younger brother followed me a year or so later, as soon as he was old enough after a spell in the RAF Cadets, and gave infinitely more than I did. In late 1944, aged 22, he was lost in a downed Lancaster in the Baltic. I went on to enjoy 65 years of happy marriage and the comfort of a loving family. He left virtually nothing apart from his name on the Runnymede Memorial. Now a near Centenarian, I have always been bitterly conscious of possessing the medals still pristine in their delivery box. The clear injustice has prevented me from ever considering wearing them.

John Vaughan

Sir – The often-overlooked living memorial to 617 Squadron is the RAF Foundationers Trust, established jointly by the late Sir Barnes Wallis and the RAF Benevolent Fund in 1953. Its purpose is to educate deserving sons and daughters of men and women serving in the RAF at Christ's Hospital. Over 150 boys and girls have passed through the school, and continue to do so, wearing the special badge, designed by Sir Barnes, on the left shoulder of their Tudor uniform.

David Miller'

As mentioned in the letter by David Miller, I was lucky to be accepted as a RAF Foundationer, and attended Christ Hospital school in Hertford from 1956 – 1961. I am very proud of these connections and still have contact with school friends and another RAF Foundationer whose two sons have been in the 'Red Arrows'.

With love and best wishes,
Lesley & John Hews



Hi Janine,

Thank you for another great magazine. I really enjoyed reading it. We had a lovely day out on Saturday of the Reunion. My grandson Thomas, an Air Cadet, and I enjoyed it very much. Fingers crossed: hope to be there next year.

I thanked everyone at the Museum and Oulton Street for putting on a lovely spread. We were going to Blickling Hall to the Museum and loft, but at the AGM your colleague said we had to be at the loft for the tour by one-thirty ... and it was twelve-thirty when we left the AGM. We still had to get to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum with the buffet lunch provided, so it was just after two when we finally reached Blickling Hall where the guy there said we were too late for the loft tour. We just had to go around the Museum and leave it at that. What is the 'Loft Tour'?

I left three nice Halifax prints at the Museum and one with Claire and Nigel for their Auction which were surplus to requirements as our house is full of them. Like you, I am totally RAF and Bomber Command, and I love anything relating to World War Two!

Please will you let me know when your new book is out and what it is about?

Great to see you,

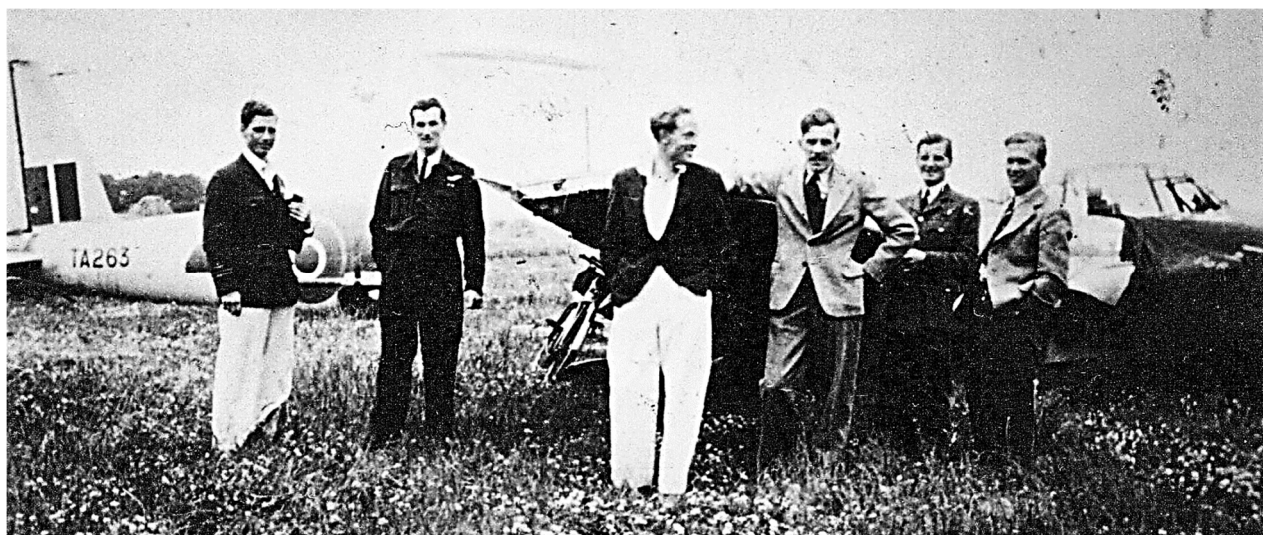
All the best,

Peter Thompson



Hello Dear Janine,

As always, I enjoyed the magazine immensely, particularly glad to see the 'Last Post' pages back again! The letter from Jane Fairweather gave my memory a great nudge with her mention of Keith Miller, AM, MBE, who I knew. The photograph of Keith Miller's Mosquito lying on its belly just north of the airfield was taken after he had a bit of an argument with flak or night-fighters over the Continent and was obliged to make a belly-up landing across the road near Great Massingham aerodrome. Keith isn't in the picture, but the man second from left is Jim Brown, his Navigator, so perhaps Keith took the photo:



Keith used to be given time off to go play cricket at Lord's in London, as he was an Australian cricketer of great repute. I believe I regaled you a long time ago with my little comedy of errors involving him, leaving my radio transmitter on during a cross-country flight. Keith died in 2008, a physical wreck. You can find his history in Google.

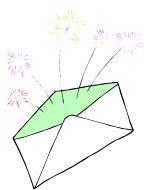
Meanwhile, my son Greg was down in London and took pictures of the 100th Anniversary RAF Flyover. I must say, it looked impressive, but not like seeing a thousand Lancasters going overhead, or for that matter, hearing them, each burning 4 gallons of 100-octane petrol every minute!! This meant that on a ten-hour operation, they would have got through nearly two and a half *million* gallons! Greg brought me back a book from the Museum in Norfolk called: 'Arrivals of Eagles', about the German aircraft which landed in England during the war for one reason or another.

There is quite a bit about electronic intelligence, but nowhere does 100 Group get the slightest mention. However, it is a book well worth reading.

Cheers,

John & Wendy xx

John Beeching, 169 Sqn veteran



Dear Janine,

A belated 'thank you' for the Winter 2017 magazine which always fills me with admiration for the crews flying those covert missions. The one story about the 'Gremlins' of Cheddington was an insight into how difficult flying was from that airfield, especially during winter with iced-up control surfaces, struggling to climb out and avoid the dreaded hills which I know well. Most made it safely, but some poor souls did not.

On a lighter note, I have to admit to a Senior Moment regarding father's Service. I have been emailing the wrong RAF Branch - the information I need is held at the Air Historical Branch! Not Disclosures!! To that end, I have enlisted the help of my sister who is an ex-RAF ATC Sergeant. Her husband is also an ex-RAF Sergeant Electronics. I had a good holiday in SA visiting my sister, and she has written to the RAF's Air Historical Branch. It has been four months, and she has received no information regarding our father's post-war activities. There are another five family members who are ex-RAF. It's become quite a tradition! I will finish with the remarkable fact that father began his wartime Service in May 1941 at 14 OTU Cottesmore. My sister finished her Service at RAF Cottesmore in 1992!! It is one of those 'you-couldn't-make-it-up' stories. He never said, but I think my father found it quite overwhelming.

One final thought: I have started to build models of 100 Group aircraft and included is a picture of my first finished one, a Halifax. The aircraft has ABC masts and Piperack aerals on the wing tips.



Well, that's enough of my ramblings.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Beasley

beasley14otu@gmail.com



Hi Janine,

Can you help by placing the following request in the next magazine please?

De Havilland Mosquito Manuals, Tech. Docs. Ancillary and Training Docs, Photos & Drawings

As you know, I'm a Mossie Enthusiast, Member and Volunteer at the Mosquito Museum, Salisbury Hall, also a member of most Institutions, Museums, Restoration Groups and individuals operating the Mossie. As well as being a Member of The People's Mosquito Team and RAF 100 Group Association, I have helped most in providing tech info and in sourcing and finding parts.

Personally, I have been for many years trying to compile the ultimate Reference Library for the Mossie. I'm hoping that Members of RAF 100 Group Association may be able to help in finding any such documents, whether originals and/or copies. I'm happy to pay for originals, or for copying and postage, or to share copies of those I have already found and obtained.

Thank you for your help.

David A. Coeshall djcoeshall@aol.com

Hi Janine,

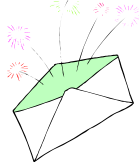
Hope you are well – your energy given all the health issues is amazing ... *you're amazing!!* Thanks for all your hard work for the Association. I'm just packing to go off to 'Flying Legends' at Duxford where we are displaying the B17 MTU with 'Sally B.'

Will speak when we get back next week.

Love and hugs,

Heda

xxx



Hello Janine,

I was in Cromer on Saturday, exhibiting the RAF Swannington display for their Armed Forces Day celebrations. There was a lot of interest shown by people in all the photographs and information about RAF Haverlingland (sorry, Swannington), also interest was shown in the display of photographs and information boards I made about Electronic Warfare, the 39th and of course 100 Group.

I met up with Air Commodore (Rtd) Jack Broughton who is a great supporter of the display: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Broughton_\(RAF_officer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Broughton_(RAF_officer)) I also met up with Ian Moreland (85 Sqn Warrant Officer 1959-1989) who is Secretary of 85 Squadron Association. Ian asked for some stories for the 85 Sqn Association's newsletter, so I gave him the information about LAC Mansfield (Yvonne's Dad) which he is going to put in the next edition. I am just about to let Yvonne know. I'm sure she'll be over the moon that her Dad hasn't been forgotten.

Mike Hillier

Haverlingland Representative



Hi Janine,

... We had a lovely couple of days 'down south' near Cambridge ... the time spent at Duxford on the first day wore me out! We made it 'hot foot' (*temp was 33 degrees*) to the main exhibit (*for us, that is*) and found the Mosquito suspended from the ceiling. Trouble was that the support beams were in the way from nearly all angles I needed to photograph (*typical!*). Anyway, I'm sending a picture or two, the first the Mosquito of course, and the second is what we get up to when we're unsupervised. We did have a wonderful day and a half there, and of course, the fantastic experience of the open cockpit! We'll catch up with all our news when we see you for Sunday lunch ...

Yvonne & Paul





Yvonne & Paul Reed at Duxford



Hello Janine,

Subject: 171 Squadron, North Creake

I'm an 18-year-old RAF Historian and recently bought your book in the hope of finding information on a Sergeant Alexander Christison (Flight Engineer). His aircraft is mentioned in your booklet on RAF North Creake – Halifax III NA108. He was on board when it was ditched on 26 November 1944 east of Paris. On returning from a 'Window' mission, they became lost, the aircraft was icing up and fuel running low. All crew survived. Records state that Sergeant Alexander Christison was Flight Engineer on the flight. He would have been in charge of the revs in the engine and fuel, and of course he would have been the one to give the order to bail (with confirmation from the pilot).

I'm no relation of Alexander Christison, just researching each crew member of NA108 as 171 Squadron is of particular interest to me. I'm unsure exactly why! I build up files and currently am trying to write a book of my own, a private book that I can give friends. Nothing too flashy. It's to be called '*Voices of Bomber Command*'. Basically, it's made up of personal accounts from veterans, and I was wondering if you or an Association member might have further information on Sergeant Alexander Christison? Some Records give his name as Sergeant R. Christison which is incorrect, as his Christian name was Alexander. It's an uncommon surname, and I find it therefore difficult to believe that there would be two of the same unique name, both Sergeants, both Flight Engineers.

I've had a great read of your RAF North Creake book (which is, by the way, fantastic!) and highlights points of interest which concern my research. At the age of eighteen, on my database I believe to have 450+ airmen recorded for my own personal research. Some of these have, again, been inputted incorrectly by the Air Ministry!

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my initial enquiry. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Yours,

Sam Lowe

Home: 01142490750

Mobile: 07702670271



Dear Sir/Madam,

I had the good fortune, while visiting my aged mother-in-law, Mary (94 years) to pick up your booklet titled: '*RAF Matlaske*' produced a few years ago by Janine Harrington.

My wife's family lived at Gap Farm, Matlaske, from the 1930s and occasionally talked about the airfield and the war. Walter Callaby was my wife's father (died 5 years ago) and he took over the tenancy through the Barningham Estate when his father, Charles, retired.

Frank Webster's entry of his two months at Matlaske in 1941 caught my eye as noted in your booklet, as he recalled visiting the local shop for eggs. He met the young shop assistant who sold him more eggs than he expected:

RAF MATLASKE

'It was on 6 May that No. 222 (Natal) Squadron moved from Coltishall to Matlaske and left on 30 June 1941 for Manston:

Frank Webster remembers his time with them well:

'I was an instrument basher and very much a 'Sprog'. I had served for a time with 151 Squadron at Wittering before joining 222 at Coltishall. A fine Station with the luxury of modern lights and airy spacious Barrack Blocks and many other modern facilities. Matlaske I found so different – lovely quiet rural countryside. We interpreted the move as a rest for the pilots, many of whom had served long days during the Battle of Britain based at Hornchurch, Essex. At Coltishall, the Squadron was held at readiness from dawn each day and there were many actions and losses.

There were no runways at Matlaske. It was just a large grass field with some blister hangars and a small Watch Tower, but very few buildings. We were billeted in a stately home, Barningham Hall. It was a handsome building, but with all furnishings removed the rooms were bare except for Service beds and 'biscuits' (servicemen's expression for the narrow mattresses on which they slept). Some of us were in a small room in the top storey.

The Cook House, the Airmen's Mess and NAAFI were in outbuildings and stables in the Hall courtyard. When our work on the aircraft was complete, we were allowed time off on some afternoons and we spent many lazy hours by the lake in the Park near the Hall and walking in the Gardens and fields close by.

One evening, a touring concert party called in, unheralded, to entertain us. All the 'Erks' and NCOs enjoyed the songs and entertainment performed by the artistes out in the open air.

Being a 'Townie', I decided to send some country fare home to my folks. Calling at what was the local village Post Office-cum-everything-else shop, the only one in the area; hesitantly I asked if there were any eggs to spare. To my amazement, the young shop assistant in a rich friendly broad Norfolk accent (which I love!) asked: 'How many you want, two score?' I never expected there would be so many eggs available during such an austere time. I purchased the lot, packed them very carefully in a strong tin and sent them home. Alas, on arrival, my parents found the tin had been boycotted by our Censor or someone! It had done the eggs no good at all.

When it came time to leave, I sensed an organised change take place. New huts were being erected in the Park, including an Airmen's Mess. Everything pointed to Matlaske being made to resemble a proper airfield. During a nostalgic visit in 1977, I stumbled on the remains of an old building with the words: 'Guard Room' just discernible, but I had no recollection of this building being there in 1941.'

That shop assistant would probably be my mother-in-law then aged 17, known by her maiden name of Mary Smith. The other assistant working there at the time was the daughter of the owner, Vera Coughlan. Mr Coughlan used to buy any old bike he could and get a neighbour, a Mr. Young in nearby Baconsthorpe, to renovate them; then he sold them to airmen from the airfield.

Mary was delighted to talk a little about that period (she is fading gently) and even remembered the German raid and machine gunning of the bike shed!!

I hope this is of interest to you and feel free to share this information. Thank you for the publication and best wishes for your endeavours for the Association.

Ray McGowan
randrmcgowan@gmail.com

Dear Stuart (Borlase)

Thank you for your email and voice message ... Unfortunately, I have very sad news regarding Paul (Henry). Paul sadly passed away suddenly on 29th July at his home. It was his funeral on Friday, 17th August. There was a very full church, with over 60 people in attendance. The weather was fine, and all went well. It was a lovely service conducted by the Reverend Dr Jane Lloyd. Tim Cookson gave a speech about his memories of Paul and read out a piece from Tim Knowles concerning Paul's involvement in Masonry. Our eldest daughter, Isobel, made a lovely warm speech about Paul and all our family adventures.

After the church service, Paul was laid to rest in a grave in the churchyard next to Peggy (his wife). A Royal Air Force coffin drape was placed on his coffin as well as a bouquet of flowers. A representative of the RAF, holding an RAF flag, marched in front of the coffin between to church and the grave.

Afterwards, we had refreshments at The Crown Inn close to Paul's house, and that was well attended, with over 40 people.

Paul will be deeply missed by our family, we all loved him dearly and he was very special to us ...

Kindest regards,

Victoria (Paul's cousin)



Taken in May 1994 at the dedication of Oulton Memorial where Oulton veterans gathered:

Paul Henry kneels fourth from left on front row.

There are many more faces familiar to most of us, including 'Paddy' Gilpin front left, Gerhard Heilig, with Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner centre in uniform. Jim 'Dinty' Moore should also be among them ...

Hi Janine,

Jim 'Dinty' Moore sadly passed away during the week beginning 20th August. His son is arranging a Memorial Service at Blickling in September which I hope to attend.

Jim was present during the 1994 Ceremony when the Oulton Memorial was dedicated, and, I believe, planted the Remembrance evergreen oak in Oulton Street. I'll try to find out more about him from his son when I attend his Memorial.

Chris Lambert, Oulton Representative

NEW MEMORIAL SITE

LITTLE SNORING AIRFIELD



*Tom Cushing, Kenneth Bannerman of the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust
Gary Thompson for Macaully Flying Club, Flight Sergeant Stefan Poole from RAF Marham
Courtesy: Gary Thompson*

For a long while now this magazine has been providing members with updates regarding the Opening of a Memorial Site at Little Snoring in memory of those based at the airfield from where airmen flew operations in wartime. A Memorial Stone was to be placed by MacAully Flying Club, in conjunction with the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust. Gary Thompson has been the main instigator in making this happen working together with Tom Cushing. An invitation was sent out to all Association members to attend this Event as it slowly came together. It has taken a great deal of time, energy and planning.

Saturday 21 July was finally given as the date, and a programme for the day shared, including a Barbeque from midday if the weather was favourable, with tea and coffee available at the MacAully Flying Club at Little Snoring. It was also hoped that there would be the opportunity for people to take short flights after the main Event was done – the main Event being the commemoration of a large Memorial Stone aimed at marking the presence of wartime activity at Little Snoring airfield by 23, 115, 141, and 515 Squadrons, in recognition of the Service these Squadrons made during World War Two.



Courtesy: Tom Cushing

Hi Janine,

Many thanks for advertising this Event. We had a wonderful attendance today of over fifty people as well as glorious weather. The highlight of the day was, of course, meeting families of some of the servicemen who flew with the RAF 100 Group from RAF Little Snoring – some of which were not even aware of the existence of an RAF 100 Group Association. I have now corrected that and passed on contact details to them ... apologies for increasing your workload further.

Kenneth Bannerman is very keen to place markers on any wartime airfield, so if any member is aware of an airfield that is not adequately remembered, he is quite happy to place a Memorial Stone in the same way, so long as he has the appropriate permission from the land owner where the stone can sit. His contact details are on his website:

www.abct.org.uk/airfield-markers/future-abct-marker-events/

So once again, thanks for all your help.

Regards

Gary Thompson

McAully Flying Group

* * * *

Dear Janine,

I attended the Opening Ceremony of the Memorial Stone at Little Snoring this afternoon. I arrived at Little Snoring airfield late morning, introducing myself to Gary Thompson of McAully Flying Club who was setting up a BBQ by the Club House. People started arriving for a 12-noon start. I had a nice conversation with Tom Cushing and told him of my connection with RAF 100 Group (father: Flt/Lt Ron Carpenter DFM, 223 Sqn, Oulton). I also had some very interesting conversations with relatives of aircrew who flew from Little Snoring and those who lived locally both then and now.

At 14.30, after the BBQ, we drove in convoy to the Memorial Site at the far end of the runway for the unveiling of the Memorial Stone. After a brief ceremony, we returned to the Club House for refreshments. Tom showed me one of his photo albums which included many photos of aircrew and aircraft at RAF Oulton. Some people took up the opportunity for short flights.

It was a marvellous day, and I would express my thanks to the McAully Flying Club and all those who supported the day, especially members of the RAF 100 Group Association and local community.

David Carpenter



Aerial view taken by Tom Cushing – George Stewart Wood at top of photo

SHARED EXPERIENCES

JOHN FREDERICK DAVIDSON WINCOTT

Air Gunner, 199 Squadron, North Creake, Norfolk



John Wincott

In September 1939, I was living in London two miles north of the city. At home, we heard the Prime Minister tell us on the radio that we were at war with Germany. We understood that, in a short while, the bombs would drop, and we would all die. We were stunned and felt lost, many people were crying in the streets, the air raid warning sounded, wailing for ten minutes, then the all-clear came ... and we were still alive!

Men aged 19-30 were told to enlist in the Armed Services, while women had to register for factory war works. A call was put out for others to join Air Defence Groups. My friends and I went to the Stoke Newington Town Hall and put our names down. We were enlisted as messenger boys, cycling from the site of a bomb blast to the Warden post. We had steel helmets and bicycles. My age at that time was 16 yrs.

I worked at Buzzards in Oxford Street, London W1, as a pastry cook, my hours being 6.30 am to 4.30 pm. We had a string band playing music in the Palm Court on the first floor in the Dining Room and on the ground floor they sold bread, cakes, etc. We made wedding cakes for the rich and famous, including a wedding cake for Princess Marina. Shortly after I started there, I moved to Morden, Surrey.

It was a Defence Order that a person should be on the roof of every shop, bank, store and other buildings in London from 3.00 pm till 6.00 am seven days a week. I had Monday to watch for fires, all we had to do was put sandbags on top of the fire to extinguish them. It was some time after that when I had my first bombing raid at night, where I put a sandbag on a fire-bomb which was on a steel fire escape. Next morning, I discovered it had burnt through all the steps to the ground. Then, two weeks later, on a Wednesday evening, a bomb destroyed Buzzards!

I used the underground train to get to work. When I got off at the Temple and walked two miles to Oxford Street, shops were laying across the roads, and I had to walk over dressed dummies and piles of shoes. One shop had a dozen cycles outside on the road, and Victoria Street was burning from Westminster to the railway station; five miles of fire. Some underground stations had caved in and people sleeping in them were killed, laid out on the pavement for the Army to move. When I arrived at work at 7.00 am, I saw the whole of the building laying across Oxford Street. We tried to clean it up, but the risk was too great of the neighbouring building falling on top of us. Gamages, a department store was hit, and Holborn around St Pauls was burning, as well as other buildings.

We were all out of work, and the Fire Watch was never seen again. Some of the men went into the Army.

I left work at 4.30 pm thinking if I got into a train before the Germans came over, I could get a ride home. However, the raids mostly started at 3.30 pm and gates under the river were closed. It meant I had to walk three miles to the Thames and cross the bridge with the air raid going on. The guns fired on aircraft, but the shells always came down like red hot stones. If they hit you, you died!

My home was ten miles from the city, and along the way I saw many bridges down. A large bus was in a hole, which had been Balham Station. One hundred people died from drowning in the Station. When I reached home, I found houses down and my family in an air-raid shelter. My grandmother was staying with us and she would not enter the shelter. She was covered in ceiling plaster from our roof coming down. It was work as usual for me next day. No-one went mad or gave in, they just cleaned up and carried on.

My own near miss came one Sunday when a bomber dropped a stick bomb in the next street. My friends and I were talking outside, when down came the next bomb. We would count them as they hit the ground, knowing they carried twelve bombs in total, waiting to get hit. The last bomb, number twelve, hit the roundabout where we were hiding under the earth. We got covered in mud and ran back to our homes.

I went to join the RAF and was given an interview for aircrew. The interview and RAF-type Medical was tough. I had to look at multi-coloured dot-cards, name the letters, then they had me walk through a dark room and out the far door, no stopping in the room after. I saw an aircraft hanging from the ceiling, a river on the table, and barrage balloons in the air. When I got out, I had to tell an Officer all I had seen. He told me then that I had passed for aircrew and wished me luck. Next day, the enemy bombed, and a hundred young girls were killed in a nearby scent and soap factor.

*That day, I got my **RAF number: 1396456 (shown right)**, and as I had joined under age, I was to wear a VR Badge on my tunic when I received it. I was sent home, and a few days later, received a telegram to report to Preston Armament School for Training next day. On my arrival, I was given another Medical, together with Battle Dress and kit.*



Four weeks later, I was on a beach in Wiltshire drilling, and after ten days went to an Air-to-Air Gunnery School somewhere in Scotland. I had no idea where I was, but I guess now it could have been St Andrews Golf Club. I won the shot of the course by shooting down the target which a bomber was towing over the sea ... I'd shot through the towing rope and hence lost the target in the sea!

At the end of training, we were told there was an urgent need for fighter crews, and for the present, we were to be in Fighter Command, 12 Group, sent to Duxford, near Cambridge, Suffolk. I was promoted to Leading Airman First Class, with a rising pay of 15 shillings a week. Aircrew pay would have been 17 shillings, with 7 shillings being sent to my mother every week.



We were sent by train to Cambridge, then by transport to the flying field which was an ordinary field in peace-time near a village by the main road to London. This was 56 Squadron, Douglas Bader's old Squadron. He had been shot down before I arrived. They had been hit hard, suffering big losses out of a possible 100+. However, all aircraft couldn't be in the air at the

*same time. These were **Hurricanes (as above)** covered in calico and painted over with dope, the body made of wooden slats. If the aircraft was damaged, all you could do was to put dope and calico over the hole, which worked well.*

My place was overseeing the guns and browning machine guns on each fighter, with one cine camera on the wings. As soon as my pilot landed, I replaced ammo boxes and camera, which I then gave to the photo airman, Jim. The aircraft on instant readiness, had the engines kept warmed up ready for take-off, waiting on the red 'Very pistol' to be fired from the Control Tower. When it came, fighters just took off together across the wide grass field. Often the field was under attack while aircraft were in the air. We were bombed and machine-gunned by the enemy, while me and others manned twin machine-guns placed around the airfield. Any aircraft on the field at the time was destroyed. We suffered some losses in Ground Crews, including WAAFs in the Ops Room.

It was due to our losses we were put on 'rest' and sent to a safe field at Blackpool for a week. As it was, we lost Sgt W. A. Jones when he hit a train signal-arm while training to destroy the railway. Later, I left with four other airmen, one a WAAF, another a pilot, to form a new Squadron with a new type of aircraft. The pilot was 'Ginger', an old friend. We arrived together at Hutton Cranswick, near Hull, at midnight, 29 November, and after walking miles from the rail station, we came across the airfield. We were hungry, tired, and glad to see a Duty WAAF waiting for us at the gate. The WAAF was [Hilda Downing \(seen right\)](#) who later became my wife. Hilda was an electrician technician from Yorkshire. She found me a bed in a Canadian Squadron Hut and I slept nice and warm.

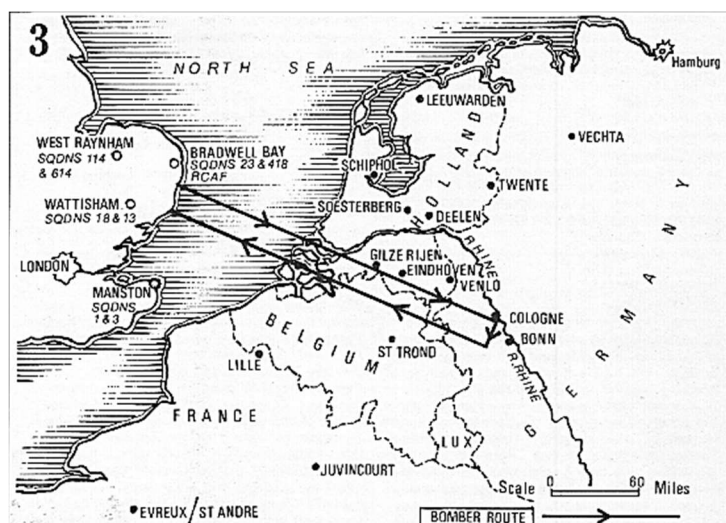


Next day, we went to our section of the field. We had one Hurricane, old but still able to fly even without a radio, and a Typhoon which no-one had flown. Hilda came with other Station staff to visit the new boys. We managed to get the [Typhoon](#) airworthy ([seen left](#)), and the Hurricane was test-flown by Ginger. However, a wheel came off as he took off. He had no radio, so I had to hold the wheel in the air as the fitters waved him off. He got the message, put his wheel up, and crash-landed! The aircraft was gone, but Ginger was okay. When Ginger tried to taxi the old Typhoon to the runway, a WAAF driving a small van hit him and she was killed, but the aircraft remained undamaged. Soon, more Typhoons and pilots arrived. We were named 195 Squadron, an anti-tank unit. Hilda and I often went to Beverley Village and Driffeld to the pubs with the crew. There was a small cinema and films made us forget the war for a while.

After a few months, the Squadron moved into action at Coltishall. Hilda arrived months later, and we then got engaged. 195 Squadron was busy testing Typhoons. We lost a lot of good men as these aircraft were killers to fly. On take-off, it would try to turn to the right and spin in as Armoury Lac. I often had to go to the crash-site with a crew to render the site safe. Village people would take anything in sight, and often we saw them with arms full of live shells, but we had orders to shoot anyone taking parts of the secret aircraft. I recovered all I could of the pilot, that wasn't easy! Hilda also had a close call when one aircraft went into a spin and on into the ground near her. Some weeks, we could have two burials a week. We also buried two German airmen found on the beach. They were given all due honours, with the German flag and an Honour Guard. Meanwhile, Hilda continued to face the bombs as well as enemy machine-guns alongside the men.

We were under attack almost daily from enemy 109 fighters, who also carried two large bombs under their wings. They shot up anything they could see, and once destroyed the local village church. This was on Palm Sunday when they thought the scouts attending were troops, so attacked with all they had. It was a shocking sight! We just wanted to kill all Germans in retaliation. The Spitfire Squadron went up after them from a nearby field and we all wished them luck.

Our Squadron moved all over the south, sometimes flying from fields. We washed in rain water, while our food came from a nearby field. At last, I received orders to report to 149 Stirling Squadron, Lakenheath. From there, we took part in the first 1,000 bomber raid on Hamburg and later Cologne, dropping bombs as we left the Rhine just as we saw the church, with the bomb falling four miles further on.



Flight Path Map

The Squadron then went to Norway, mining the coast, before we changed to Halifax aircraft and became 199 Squadron, RAF 100 Group. Our aircraft was named 'Jolly Roger'.



RAF 100 Group 199 Squadron, North Creake

Hilda and I were engaged and bought the ring from Hull. Our wedding rings we got in Norwich when we were at Coltishall. We had Leave together and married on 31 July 1943 at St Lawrence Church, Morden (seen right), in front of Hilda's family from Yorkshire and my cousins from Scotland. We spent the weekend in Hampshire. Then it was me to Coltishall and Hilda to Wiltshire, writing to one another daily.

As a Squadron, we supplied the French with guns, etc, as well as Agents. D-Day we were in 'Operation Titanic', towing a Horsa Glider and Paratroops. We did three operations on D-Day, losing 4 aircraft and 25 crew. D+1 the Squadron were airborne without loss. 'B Flight' dropped 'WINDOW', using radio beams to distract the enemy. We landed safely at Mildenhall on return.



I had a close call with a Coastal Command Spitfire playing stupid games over the Channel at Hastings. The Radio Operator tried to fire a red flare but missed the flare socket in the side of the Halifax. The red flare came down to my position near the tail, just beside the photo flash chute. I grabbed the flare with my gloved hand and tried to put it out of the aircraft. However, it stuck to my hand. I was wearing silk wool and leather gloves. But somehow, I managed to put them all down the chute.

When we landed, I was sent on Leave for 36 hours. However, while on Leave with Hilda, I was taken to an Army Hospital Burns Unit at Pinderfields E M S Hospital. I did not return to my Squadron for five weeks.

In the RAF, if you go missing over four hours, all your kit gets sent to be destroyed. This is to save any distress to the next of kin. Ted, a close friend in the Unit, told me much later that my bed was taken by a replacement airman a day after I was reported as 'Off List'. I never saw any of it again.

The Squadron was now at North Creake, Norfolk, flying Lancasters. Hilda was posted to the same Station and we lived in a cottage by the sea.



John Wincott with crew in 199 Sqn, North Creake

While we were there, the V1 and V2 bombs were fired from Holland, just across the Channel from our Station. They were flying 50 feet above our heads, destined for London. My Section was detailed to man the anti-aircraft guns on the airfield. We could see very clearly the V rockets being fired up in the air and had first crack at them. The enemy also flew them on the bomb racks of M109 fighters, and these we had a chance to bring down. The fighters were not game enough to cross our airfield and often dropped them in the sea.

The war ended while we were in Norfolk, and Hilda went home to live with my mother. First, we went to London to join the thousands of people in Whitehall where we all went crazy – a day and night to remember! My Squadron went to Poland to fetch back RAF Ex-PoWs. They had to fit in the bomb bay and were very cold. We then became air-sea rescue, carrying lifeboats in the bomb bay. We had our own Boat Club and sailed all around Cornwall. That lasted three months before I was posted to Wales as a Training Instructor to new airmen. They saw my medals and war stripes and called me 'Sir' all the time! I took them to the Firing Range and they loved it all. Hilda came to Barry Island where we lived with a dentist and his wife for a few months. They wanted me to become a Palestine Police Officer, but I had no wish to go to the Middle East. So, they put me down for BAOR to render British Bombs safe in Germany. However, due to my damaged right hand, in the end that was ruled out. Instead, they gave me rush training on the first jet plane as Rigger, but then nothing came of it. All I wanted was to get out before all the jobs were taken, and finally, I was sent to Hendon to get out of the RAF. I was on reserve for three years and then it was 1946. I received a new suit, a pair of shoes and a ticket to my home. Hilda now worked at St Hellor Hospital, Morden.

We went on to live at my family's new home in Morden, Surrey. Many houses nearby were destroyed in the war. A Spitfire had crashed in Morden Park a few hundred yards from the church where Hilda and I married. It was impossible to get a house or flat due to the damage of homes around London. Meanwhile, I was working all hours, and the pay was good. We often went to stay in Yorkshire ... a nice place, very open moors and lovely people; but there was no work in that part of England, which was a pity.

I would like to mention at this point members of 199 and 149 Squadron at Lakenheath. I will never forget them. We drank at the local pub singing old Air Force songs together. There was no difference in rank when off Camp, it was first names or nicknames only. I was 'Winny' or 'Johnny'.

One of our pilots was Ron Middleton, an Australian from Yarrabandi NSW. The Squadron went to Turin in November and had a bad time of it. Ron's aircraft was badly hit, all on board were wounded while he lost an eye and too much blood to bail out. The Air Gunners, Mackie and Jefferies, bailed out, but their chutes failed to open, and they were killed. Ron crashed into the sea just off Dover and was buried together with his crew at Mildenhall. Ron was awarded the Victoria Cross, and an Australian Stamp was created commemorating [Ron Middleton \(seen right\)](#).



We saw one aircraft come in, landing on fire. We just had to stand and watch it burn with no hope of getting the crew out. A 1,000lb bomb fell on the ground and three aircraft also blew up. Hardly a week went by without losing friends. Some made it back only to be taken to hospital and never seen again. Some just went out and never came back. We never knew what happened to them as we received no news.

On our raid on Cologne our losses were:

Pilot D. Falconer – downed at 4 am, all crew killed.

G. Foels – downed at 4 am, all crew killed.

Cuddington – downed, with 3 crew members lost at sea.

A. R. Moore – downed over Eindhoven at 2.30 am, 3 crew killed.

Syerston – over target at 1.32 am, 7 crew killed.

RCAF crew over target at 1.32 am, 7 crew killed.

RCAF crew over target at 1.32 am, 7 crew killed.

S. Wright at Tegelen, 2 crew killed.

E. Ford at Leeveroi, 6 crew killed.

A Wellington and a Sterling hit each other over target, 12 crew killed.

Tom Ramsay over Holland at 2 am, 6 crew killed.

A. Wadell at Dusseldorf, 5 crew killed.

W. Davis at Aachen, 6 crew killed.

G. H. Everatt on take-off, 5 crew killed.

This was just on one night!

A week after the capture of Berlin, I flew over Cologne and saw the damage to the city. The church was the only thing not a shell. We went on to Berlin and saw the ruin of that city. 20,000 airmen went out over Germany, and nothing further was ever heard from them, or their aircraft. To this day, they remain listed as 'Missing in Action'.

Shared by son: Tony Wincott ajwincott@gmail.com

SHARED EXPERIENCES

B-17s v STIRLINGS

by George Mackie



George Mackie

George flew B-17s at night above the RAF main force on RCM operations, not as a day bomber. These are his writings. George features quite a bit in the book: '*A Thousand Shall Fall*' written about RAF 100 Group. This first article introduces readers to the Stirling, followed by an account of what it was to fly, finishing with a comparison between this aircraft and the B-17.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST



Short Stirling TR03

At nineteen, you are challenged to fly your first four-engine aircraft. Den Cash rose to the task of mastering the RAF's first four-engine monoplane bomber, and it is sad there is no example today, static or airworthy, of what was Britain's first four-engine bomber!

Conceived as early as 1936, a half-scale wooden version, powered by four 90hp engines, capable of carrying two pilots only, flew as an aerodynamic testbed in 1938, with the full-size aircraft reaching Squadron service in late 1940. *Awesome and enormous!* That just about summed up the impression gained when standing alongside the Stirling for the first time. With its huge single tail fin, high nose attitude, four giant radial engines and the largest tyres ever used in the RAF, it really did look big, seemingly more so than the Halifax or Lancaster. In fact, it was longer than either of them and shorter in span, but only just.

The design path of the Stirling had been somewhat chequered. In correcting one problem it caused another which, when rectified, highlighted something else. It was a chain reaction, not unlike that of the Tiger Moth. In the case of the Tiger, it ended up with its wings staggered, swept back and non-parallel. With regards to the Stirling, it went something like this. For the projected all-up weight, it was the intention to use the already proven engine and wing installation of the Sunderland flying boat, which would have provided four Bristol Pegasus engines and a wingspan of 112 feet. But the Air Ministry of the day laid down that it must be possible to get the Stirling in a hangar, the widest of which at the time was just over 100 feet. For this reason, the wingspan was reduced to 99 feet. To retain the same all-up weight, this immediately increased the wing loading, and even with an engine change to the Bristol Hercules, the take-off run, and maximum ceiling suffered badly. To improve the take-off run, the wing incidence and undercarriage length were increased, the latter placing the pilot's cockpit some 22 feet above the ground. Because of its increased length, it was not possible to rotate the undercarriage backwards into the available space in the inner engine nacelles, not to mention the enormous hydraulic loads that would be required to do so. The undercarriage was therefore modified, so that the bottom halves could be telescoped into the top halves, and the then shorter assemblies retracted into the nacelles, which accounted for the curious-looking cage affairs halfway up the undercarriage legs when they were in the down position.

Due to the complexity of this arrangement, any idea of still driving it hydraulically became highly questionable, hence electricity came to the rescue in the form of two extremely large electric motors, but they too were to contribute problems.

Entry to the aircraft was via a door in the port side aft followed by a clamber over the long bomb bays to reach the flight deck, from which, except directly forward, the view was excellent.

Immediately behind the flight deck canopy was an unmistakable radio mast as thick as an arm, followed by the streamlined housing of the direction finding (DIF) loop; and then running down to the tail-plane and the rear gun turret, the long flat-topped fuselage, wide enough to take a casual stroll to the end and back without fear of falling over the edge. The same view aft revealed that the flight deck canopy was directly in line with the top of the tail fin, for which another problem was looming.

On or near flight deck were the cockpits for the two pilots, plus stations for the navigator, wireless operator, flight engineer and a bomb aimer. The front and rear turrets were homes for the gunners. To keep the crew down to the usual seven, a certain amount of doubling up had to be done inasmuch the navigator could also be a wireless operator or even a bomb aimer, one of the gunners could be a wireless operator, or the flight engineer could perform as a second pilot. The pilot's control columns were like large steering wheels taken from a bus or lorry, where in front of the left-hand one was the usual T-panel of flight instruments surrounded by others relating to undercarriage status, D/F loop, oxygen supply, blind approach indication, and so on; together with warning lights for this, that and everything else. On the left-hand side of the fuselage were banks of auxiliary controls which included those for the automatic pilot. Ahead of the right-hand control column were the engine instruments, ignition switches and booster starters, quadrupled in every respect, there being four engines.

There was also a Distant Reading (DIR) compass, a device designed to overcome the deviation effects of so much metal and electrical equipment around, which comprised of a gyro-stabilized magnetic element located in the starboard wingtip and unaffected by the all-duralumin structure there. An electrical pickoff transferred the indications of that unit to a slave unit in the cockpit. A much up-dated form of the DIR compass and not requiring a magnetic element is still in use today where it is known as a Gyro Compass.

Overhead were the flight control trimmers, flap controls and engine slow-running cut-outs, whilst between the two control columns was the engine-control pedestal. Four throttle levers stood up like sentinels – none of this business of curving the outers over the inners for ease of operation! There were four propeller pitch levers, but only two mixture controls, one for each engine pair. Alongside this pedestal was an undercarriage selector lever and a large automobile-type handbrake which likewise seemed more suited to a bus or lorry. All engine controls were of the Exactor type (presumably named after the manufacturer) which meant they were hydraulically instead of mechanically driven. As such, the top inch or so of each throttle lever was hinged to permit movement either way by about 1/8" before picking up the main lever. To open a throttle, the black ball on the top of the hinged part was pushed through its 1/8" movement, which released a ratchet (there being no friction nut) and applied the hydraulic power.

Thereafter, the main lever was collected, which then performed as any other throttle. When the ball was released, the hinged part would return under spring tension, in would go the ratchet to lock the throttle in position and off would come the hydraulic power. As would be expected, closing a throttle was the same, but in reverse direction. As all four throttles had to be operated together on occasions, it can now be seen how almost impossible it would have been to do so if the outers were curved over the inners. The mixture and pitch levers were operated in a similar way, except that their coloured ball tops had to be pressed downwards to do the honours.

As an aside, if the hydraulic supplies to all three sets of controls were lost, say due to hostile activities; then all four engines would go to full power, rich mixture and coarse pitch, an undesirable situation to say the least. In normal use, however, these Exactor controls had to be primed regularly ... that is before take-off, every twenty minutes or so in flight, and immediately prior to the landing approach.

The navigator had his usual plotting table and a drift sight mounted in the floor of the fuselage. It consisted of a large tube open at both ends, but with a rotatable grid ring on top. Whilst peering down this tube, the ring was rotated until ground features tracked along parallel lines etched in the glass, whereupon the drift was read from an adjacent scale. A craftier way of achieving the same thing existed on some of the gun turrets. Degree marks had been hand-painted on the turret rings. The gunner swung his guns until ground features tracked along them, after which the drift was read off from the painted marks.

The navigator had to carry the remainder of his equipment to the aircraft himself, prominent of which was the Dalton Computer, essentially the same as that used today, but quite a cumbersome device with the Appleyard Scale on one side and a large windable blind for plotting courses, etc. on the other, with lots of straps for fixing it to the leg if required. I still have such a thing! *But then, what was this tucked away to one side?* A Ground Position Indicator, something previously heard of but never seen, and not fitted to all aircraft.

A Ground Position Indicator was a mechanical computer which gave a continuously updated dead reckoning ground position on a set of dials in the form of latitude and longitude. Switches were used to enter the start position when over the airfield. The aircraft's heading was taken from the D/R compass and airspeed from an ASI, whilst the wind velocity was entered by further switches. It was from this, the computer worked out the triangle of velocities and applied the

result to the starting point to display the current position and did so progressively as the flight unfolded. *Real cutting-edge stuff this!*

The flight engineer's panels were spread across both sides of the fuselage behind the pilots' seats. They gave him control of carburettor intakes, superchargers, cabin heating, fuel jettisoning and electrical distribution. Similarly, a large array of valves and selecting cocks gave him control of fourteen fuel tanks located in the wings and a possible further three in the fuselage, the total contents of which were 2,700 gallons ... enough to keep a Tiger Moth in the air for 450 hours, or one year's flying by Group standards!

The wireless operator had the then standard T1154/R1155 radio set, plus an additional TR9 with its controls extended by Bowden cables to a panel in the cockpit, accessible to the pilot in the left-hand seat. As all long-distance communications were by high frequencies (H/F) there was also a Morse key to accommodate, which in an emergency could be screwed down tight to transmit a continuous signal in the hope that someone might trace it.

Right up front of the aircraft was the forward gun turret beneath which was the bomb aimer's position with the MK IX bomb sight – a strange-looking piece of mechanism consisting of an eyepiece, long parallel sighting wires, and a series of rotatable knobs which allowed adjustment to cater for airspeed and wind drift.

The whole of the inside of the aircraft was coloured in a matt green. Whilst it could be asked why this should have been, it is difficult to imagine any other acceptable colour. To this very day, the insides of military aircraft are so coloured. Look inside the Tiger Moth, for example. However, that just about ends the grand tour of the Stirling. *Awesome? Enormous?* Well, let's just say it was big. But the saga is not yet over. It still had to be flown ...

FLYING OUR FIRST 4-ENGINED BOMBER

I first flew a Stirling on 15 Squadron in June 1941. There were no Heavy Conversion Units in existence at the time and all training, such as it was, was done domestically on the two Squadrons concerned – 15 at Wyton, 7 at Oakington.

Wyton was all grass and I did not land on a runway until I went 'solo' one day and delivered an aircraft to Alconbury, the satellite airfield nearby with runways and bomb dumps. The approach was over the A1 and I seldom drove down the A1 motorway in later years without remembering that first solo flight, the aircraft full of ground crew unaware of my inexperience. I had 200 flying hours to my credit, of which 2 hours 30 on Stirlings. Later, when I was instructing, an average pupil pilot had something like 400 hours before venturing on '*the Beast*'.

Den Cash described in detail how the Stirling was essentially ruined in mid-design as a bomber and never became as effective in operations as the Sunderland was as a flying boat. In the process, it became a joy to fly. Yes, it could only carry 500-pound bombs. Yes, its ceiling wasn't much, but never as bad as sometimes made out. Yes, in some circumstances it was absurdly difficult on take-off. Yes, electrically it was a horror to keep serviceable. But it was an absolute joy to fly, exceptionally light on the controls it could be whizzed around in a tight turn so that in no time at all, you met the turbulence of your own slipstream. It could even be induced to make a stall turn, collapsing the gyro compass in the process. Its horizontal stall was benign, with no tendency for a wing to drop. It was nervy in flight, anxious to please. And in a high wind, such a joy it was to plonk down in a very, short run. Lots of engine over the boundary, stick well back, inches over the runway, throttles back, bump, no run, hardly. A fun aeroplane!

B-17s v STIRLINGS



*Colonel Maurice 'Mo' Preston Commander of the 379th Bomb Group
seen here with his personal 'Hack', a B-17 Flying Fortress.*

*As 414/BS/97BG Polebrook 11.4.42; flew first 8AF bombing mission with
Lt. Thomas H. Borders, the Ball turret gunner: Kent West, credited with destruction
of 1st German aircraft destroyed on 17 August 1942.*

Courtesy: American Air Museum in Britain, Imperial War Museums

No worse model of aeroplane could have been engineered for mass-produced pilots. None better than the B-17. 214 Squadron left 3 Group and its battered Stirlings in January 1944 to join the recently formed 100 Group. It had a variety of Squadrons and aircraft, but our fate was to fly the much-publicised Fortress or B-17 which could accommodate the sometimes-enormous pieces of radically new Radar in its fuselage.

We were, it seemed, to accompany the bomber stream while attempting to disrupt communications between German night fighters and their Ground Controllers. We got a few circuits and bumps with American pilots and off we went, on our own, feeling I suppose very much up to date. Throat microphones, for example. But what a bore the Fortress turned out to be. Its throttles, beautifully designed for use, so unlike the Stirling's clutch of levers wider than my hand, almost opened by themselves. No pushing forward of the stick to raise the rudder to get some counter to the swing. Nor any oblique opening of the throttles to counter the swing. *What swing?* It trundled into the air with never a suggestion of swerve, even in cross winds. Wheels up, all it wanted to do was Onwards and Upwards! But such was its stability that it became almost coy when you wanted to fling it about a bit. It was docile in landing too. A three-point landing scarcely changed its angle from normal flight.

Gone was the moment of stick in belly to stall the Stirling gently onto its three points. Gone the need to use an outboard engine to deal with a landing swing. *Relax!* It rolled along like a London taxi. All in all, admirable fitness for purpose, tight formation flying by pilots trained for the duration by the thousand.

Thanks to George Mackie, Jamie Woodthorpe, and John Gilder

SHARED EXPERIENCES

BERNIE HOW

199 Squadron, RAF North Creake



The very first operation to be carried out from RAF North Creake was on 6 June 1944. It might not have meant much then to airmen who were called to a Briefing during the early hours, but looking back on that time, we know today it was to become a world-changing event that would be remembered long after that day was done.

Bernie How was twenty years old at the time he was called into that Briefing, listening intently to what had been planned for 'Operation Overlord', codename for the Battle of Normandy. Hours later, he was in an aircraft flying low just off the coast of France where fellow airmen would drop 'Window', or 'Chaff' as Americans call it, aimed at fooling the enemy into believing the invasion was heading to Calais. 'Window' was basically a simple ruse, made up of strips of aluminium foil dropped through the chute of an aircraft. As it wafted about in the air, it showed up on enemy Radar as if a major raid was taking place involving hundreds of planes. This was used many times during the Second World War leading up to the use of more sophisticated electronic countermeasures being developed by Boffins, intent on turning the war around towards a successful outcome.

Bernie was a Flight Engineer. He remembers:

'I was only 20. I didn't worry about anything. I just saw that I was doing my job, we all did. We messed about with their (the enemy) Radar and did our bit.'

So much secrecy surrounded this equipment used that not even Special Operators using it understood what it could do, much less the crew. They simply did what was ordered. As with other airfields under RAF 100 Group, Bomber Command, RAF North Creake was subject to a 30-Year Rule, with information remaining classified until the early 1970s. Meanwhile, this first Operation on 6 June 1944 lasted six long hours in total, with all seven members of Bernie's crew arriving back at RAF North Creake tired but safe.

Bernie has fond memories of his time spent at RAF North Creake, but then there were moments when he would have wondered what might happen. Like the Stirling he was flying in which had a puncture and crashed on take-off. On board were two 400lb sea mines. However, all crew got out safely with only one minor injury. He remembers getting out and running for safety in case of

explosion. He also recalls walking an extra mile to drink at 'The Black Swan', nicknamed 'The Mucky Duck', instead of 'The Bull' he could have gone to in Walsingham. The Land Girls were stationed next to the pub and the walk was for the extra fun they might have on reaching their destination!

Bernie is the only surviving member of his crew today.

CREW



Bernie How with crew, 1944, based at North Creake, 199 Sqn

Stan Pallant – Mid Upper Gunner

Harry Durrell – Wireless Operator

Bernie How – Flight Engineer

Ernie Harper – Pilot

Alf Salter – Bomb Aimer

Bob Sewell – Rear Gunner

John Russell – Navigator



Bernie How today, with Stuart and Janine, May 2018

NEWS UPDATE

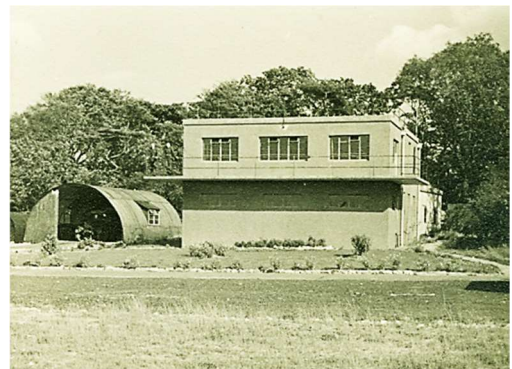
TIME TO REMEMBER – RAF North Creake Memorial Nigel Morter & Claire Nugent



On the evening of 2 May 1945, 39 Halifax bombers took off from RAF North Creake for sorties over occupied Europe. Part of this operation involved the bombing of a target in Kiel, Germany; at 23.26 hours, two aircraft of RAF 100 Group's 199 Squadron collided on the bomb run, thirteen of the sixteen on board were killed. These crew members were to have the dubious honour of being the last operational losses of Bomber Command in the Second World War and made up thirteen of the 69 operational crew losses from North Creake.

Sadly, this was not to be the last losses for RAF North Creake as an accident in Cromer, where a Halifax flew into the cliffs in June 1945, resulted in the last four casualties from this Station.

The period from 1942 – 1943, when RAF North Creake was constructed, is considered by many to be the most extensive programme of British Military engineering ever undertaken. This time saw the construction of hundreds of Military airfields in order to accommodate the growing requirements of the RAF and the influx of American Air Force personnel. RAF North Creake operating as a RAF Bomber Command Station had, at its height, 3,000 people stationed on it within and beyond the formerly quiet hamlet of Egmere, in North Norfolk.



Flying 'heavies' in support of the bomber streams of Bomber Command, RAF North Creake became operational in 1944, flying their first operation in support of the D-Day landings on the night of 5 June. Two RAF Squadrons were based there; the 199 and the 171, both part of RAF 100 Group flying initially Stirling bombers and latterly Halifax bombers. These were part of the RAF 100 Group of Bomber Command and their role was to carry out secret radio countermeasures.

Today, you can't find any commemoration around the former airfield site of the sacrifices made by these young men. There is a marker stone that identifies this area was once an airfield, but if you have little or no knowledge of Second World War architecture, you could be forgiven for not realising that this was an airfield at all. Nigel and Claire, who bought the Control Tower on the former RAF North Creake in 2011, plan to change all that. They started to uncover the much-overlooked history of the airfield while converting the Control Tower into a period style Art Deco Bed and Breakfast and as a result, they have become convinced that, because of the secret nature

of the operations undertaken from this airfield, the story of North Creake has mostly been lost. Given it made such a critical contribution to the war effort, they feel it is time it was remembered.

As part of that remembrance, they want to celebrate those who served and commemorate those who were lost by building a befitting Memorial in a public place on the old airfield site. Thereby allowing people to learn more about what happened on the Station, the people involved, what they did, and those who were sadly lost. Their aim is to complete this Memorial by August 2020 – the 75th Anniversary of the disbandment of RAF North Creake.



Funds are already being pledged by local land owners (Walsingham Estates has designated the land for the Memorial and the Earl of Leicester has pledged £5,000 towards the Fund), businesses and individuals. There are also a number of planned 'Time to Remember' fundraising initiatives such as 'Dance to Remember', 'Cycle to Remember', and history talks. The first initiative is that Nigel and Claire have teamed up with Mark Riches, the award-winning brewer of Beeston Brewery, to produce the fundraising beer 'Drink to Remember' – a hoppy amber bitter with lightly toasted malts, from which approximately 15p per pint sold will go towards the Memorial. It was

launched at the Norwich Winter Beer Festival and sold in both cask and bottle-conditioned bottles, available for the duration of the 'Time to Remember' Campaign (ends August 2020). Several pubs frequented by RAF North Creake servicemen will serve the beer during this fundraising period.

The Memorial

A sculpture of a Stirling Bomber (the aircraft based at North Creake between May 1944 and March 1945), will be designed and sited, as if in flight, banking but in line with an original runway. It will be in a public place designated by Walsingham Estate on the old Airfield Site and will celebrate those who served, commemorating the 73 Servicemen who were lost with a Roll of Honour.



The Memorial Site Plan is being drawn up by Architect David Exeter, who offered his service free as he is a lover of the Control Tower B&B, Art Deco design, and his father was Ground Crew in the RAF during the war. Approximately £30,000 is needed to create the Memorial sculpture and associated structures. Andy Knighton is ready to take on the Commission of creating The Stirling Memorial aircraft sculpture; one of his previous pieces is a Lancaster bomber presently on display at RAF East Kirkby (*see photo*).

If you would like to support the Project, there are a number of ways to get involved: buy the beer either in pubs or by mail order from 'The Real Ale Shop' (01328 710810), make a donation as a business or individual; attend or sponsor an Event; or simply spread the word. If you are interested, please contact Nigel & Claire at email: mail@controltowerstays.com or phone on: 01328 821574. They would very much appreciate your support and are also fascinated to hear from anyone with a connection with RAF North Creake.

Extracts from: **Control Tower Calling...** the e-newsletter of the Control Tower B&B – June 2018

As we have now embarked on our Project to fundraise for and build a Memorial for RAF North Creake by August 2020, we are often asked: *'Why do we feel so driven to do this?'* Here are just a couple of reasons ...

We had a wonderful weekend celebrating the RAF 100 Group Reunion in May. The Association holds the most special Reunion each year here in North Norfolk on airfields they served on. This year was even more special for us as Bernie How – a 199 Squadron veteran who served here at RAF North Creake as a Flight Engineer came along too. He and his family visited CTHQ first and Bernie made it all the way to the roof again (we are very privileged that Bernie is a CTHQ frequent flyer!)

In May, we also had the brother of a Rear Gunner staying with us who flew from RAF North Creake. Jerry and his lovely wife Carol Dennison were visiting from Canada for the RAF 100 Group Reunion. Sadly, Jerry's brother Gordon 'Billy' Dennison and all his crew, eight in total, went missing on the night of 15/16 September 1944. It is still not known what happened that night. Almost 75 years later, his loss is still felt. Jerry has compiled a series of letters, photos and information about his brother which he has shared with us. It is a lovely tribute to him.



Living in this Control Tower has completely won our hearts. Its history has seeped into our souls. The more we find out, the more we get sucked in. We have spent this week creating display boards for the Memorial Dinner and one task was to compile the Roll of Honour – the names of all those lost from RAF North Creake. 73 men never went home, most were in their 20s. As we compiled it, we both had lumps in our throats.

These young men gave everything, and we feel it is Time to Remember!

Fundraising is going well for the Project with lots of fantastic pledges (almost £12K) already received. We are delighted with the support from local businesses, especially Walsingham Estates for designating the piece of land, and Holkham for a very generous pledge of £5,000. Once we have planning in place we will be calling in the pledges and commissioning our sculptor. We can then also open a 'just giving' style page so that individuals can contribute. We'll let you know when this is live. 'Drink to Remember', our fundraising beer by Beeston Brewery, has been selling better than anticipated and is now available in bottles from The Real Ale Shop and Walsingham Farm Shop. We have had a few fundraising talks and events – The Three Horseshoes in Warham raised £250 for us in March during National Pie Week and a Fun 1940's Day at The Lifeboat Inn has brought in over £300 in April (*thanks to our wonderful son Cillian who organised that*). We have other events planned, including a fundraising Auction on 11 November at The Black Lion Hotel, Little Walsingham, and others in the pipeline which we will let you know about when they are finalised.

Control Tower Calling is the e-newsletter of The Control Tower Bed and Breakfast – to subscribe, email Claire & Nigel: mail@controltowerstays.com



BLACK LION HOTEL
LITTLE WALSINGHAM NORFOLK

Fundraising Auction Night with Olly Day

Remembrance Sunday
11th November 2018

Raising funds to build a
memorial to those who
served at RAF North Creake



EX-B 'Bear' 199 Squadron Stirling Bomber RAF
North Creake – nose art by Claude (Ted) Allen



TIME TO
REMEMBER



4.30pm - Common Place
Lighting the Beacon
100 Years of Remembrance

From 5.30pm - Black Lion
View auction lots &
memorial plans
Hot & Cold Buffet
Remembrance Talk -
*Commemorating Walsingham in
both world wars by Nigel Morter*
Fundraising Auction
Raffle
Free Entry

Buffet tickets (£20pp) and more
information available from Black Lion
or Control Tower 01328821574
mail@controltowerstays.com
www.controltowerstays.com/history.html



To Maintain or not to Maintain? That is the Question ...

The following entries were taken from
United States Air Force Aircraft Maintenance Logs:

(P=Problem, S=Solution)

- (P) Left inside main tire almost needs replacement
- (S) Almost replaced the left inside tire.

- (P) Dead bugs on windshield
- (S) Live bugs on order.

- (P) Something loose in cockpit
- (S) Something tightened in cockpit.

- (P) IFF inoperative
- (S) IFF always inoperative when left switched off.

- (P) Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick
- (S) That's why they're there.

- (P) Aircraft handles funny
- (S) Aircraft warned to straighten up, 'fly right' and be serious.

- (P) Number two engine missing
- (S) Number two engine found under port wing after brief search.

- (P) Evidence of leak on right main landing gear
- (S) Evidence removed.



Taken from:

'SQUADRON DAYS'
Poetic Thoughts from the Crew Room
by
Mike Hillier (Erk' Ret'd)

Illustration by 'Raff'

Dates for your Diary



2019: 17 – 19 May (confirmed) dinner Holiday Inn Hotel Norwich - North

2020: 15 – 17 May (provisional) Spring National Holiday 25 May

2021: 21 – 23 May (provisional) Spring National Holiday 31 May

Be sure to put these important dates in your diary.

* * * *

Winter 2018 magazine - out start of December. Deadline for material: Start of Oct.

* * * *



RAF 100 GROUP SPECIAL EDITION 2019 CALENDAR

Available for Christmas. Please put your orders in now with Janine.
Contains rare wartime photos as well as present day.



* * * *

2017 REUNION DVDs

Stuart Borlase in Australia still has a few 2017 Historic Reunion DVDs left.

These provide a treasured keepsake of our very special occasion last May when we were joined at our May Reunion by veterans of the 8th Air Force 36th, together with present-day members of the 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron.

Such a wonderful, not-to-be-missed occasion, with lots of extras added to the DVD!

To save costs in postage and packing, these are available by contacting:

JANINE HARRINGTON

whose details are at the front of this magazine.

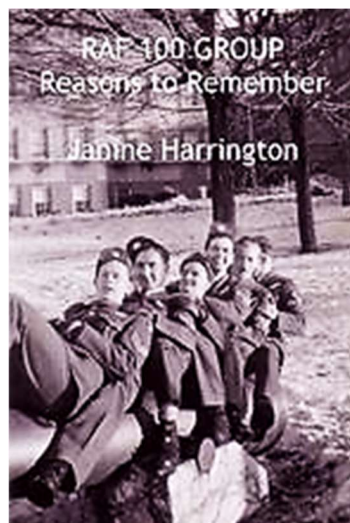
Price: £20 + pp

* * * *

RAF 100 GROUP
Reasons to Remember
by
Janine Harrington

£8.99

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Available on Amazon

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Illustrations, maps, photos,
shared wartime experiences.

Created by Janine Harrington

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