



**RAF 100 Group**

**Memorial Museum Association**

**NEWSLETTER**

**Spring 2006**

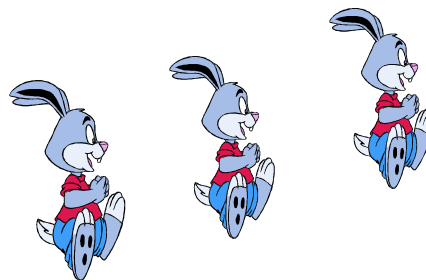
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## Editors Page



## Spring has sprung! Well ... almost?

Welcome to another newsy read. We trust you all had a lovely Christmas.

It has been wonderful to hear from you, the readers, and to receive letters, email and telephone calls saying how much you enjoyed our last issue. Thank you to those of you who have made contact with us. We include in this issue a [Letters Page](#) with a selection of those sent in, including one reader's comments to our mention of Nicol Mowat (Bill the Boffin)'s log book entries in the last issue. We have in this Newsletter printed further information from his log book as sent in by his daughter. If anyone else has anything to say, on this or indeed other matters, we would love to hear from you. However, we would make the point that we can only print what you send and not be held responsible for whether or not inclusions are strictly accurate. If any reader finds something wrong with information that is printed please come back and let us know.



On a lighter note,  
we take this opportunity on  
behalf of RAF 100 Group Association  
to wish **Vera and Phil James**  
Congratulations and every happiness  
on their **Diamond Wedding Anniversary**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> April this year 2006**  
Vera and Phil, we have had so many  
reminders from readers about your  
Event ... we do hope you share  
a very special day!

To all of our Readers, we hope 2006 proves a good year. We look forward to seeing you at the Reunion in May.

Please send all your inclusions for the Summer Newsletter by **1<sup>st</sup> June 2006**.

*Janine & Ian*

## News from City of Norwich Aviation Museum



We have been pleasantly surprised by the number of visitors welcomed to the Museum during early months of 2006. On some days, our visitor numbers have been as high as we expect on a hot day during the summer months. Visitors (and their money) are always welcome, but during off peak months, their contribution always seems to carry extra value. Work is progressing as weather and time allows on [aircraft restoration](#). The Whirlwind helicopter has continued to receive attention with the rotor blades having been recently repainted. The Vulcan's jet pipes, which had become badly corroded, are being repaired and the Mystere is ready to be resprayed as soon as the weather improves.

In the exhibition building, [RAF Horsham St Faith display](#) is being updated, additions are being made to the Norwich Airport display and we have had a minor shuffle of display cases to make best use of floor space. Work on additional space to be created within the portakabins we received late in 2005 is also underway with a small but enthusiastic team preparing these into use in the first part of this year.

In the [100 Group room](#), Colin Thompson is putting great efforts into the construction of a 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale model of a 192 Squadron Wellington to fill a noticeable gap in the display of aircraft operated by the Group. Colin intends to finish this model as LP345 DT-G complete with 'Gertie' nose art of a Land Girl. This is a very complicated model to build, the kit itself is an old vacuum form needing many parts to be either improved or made up, there are no decals for the 192 Squadron markings and Colin will have to paint the 'Gertie' nose art directly onto the model. Our member, Alan Thomsett, flew 'Gertie' on 192 Squadron and he and Colin have spoken about the aircraft on the telephone.

We have organised a number of [social activities for City of Norwich Aviation Museum members throughout 2006](#) and are pleased some of the locally based RAF 100 Group Association members joined us on a visit to RAF Coltishall in February. Details of events are available at the Museum and also appear on our Internet site [www.cnam.co.uk](http://www.cnam.co.uk).

We would like to thank [RAF 100 Group members](#) who have recently purchased books, coasters and bookmarks from the Museum in response to listing of these items sent with subscription reminders earlier this year. We were posting out 4-5 orders a week and sold out of several items which were quickly restocked.

# Messages from the Museum



With the arrival of our member's subscription payments at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum's address, we have a few items of news to share:

Mr **Len Davies** from Felinfach Brecon, Powys tells us that, to his great regret, owing to restricted mobility, he will be unable to attend the Reunion. Mr Davies is ex 223 Squadron; he was an air gunner in Jack Brigham's crew. He tells us that **Jack Brigham** is in a nursing home, aged 89 years.

A warm welcome to new member, **Jeff Watkins** (ex F/Lt, DFC, 214 Squadron) who now lives in San Diego, California, USA. Mr Watkins is a former Halton apprentice, 37<sup>th</sup> entry, January 1938. He visited the Museum late in 2005.

**Taff Hughes** (ex 171 Squadron) has been in contact with us again from his home near Aberystwyth. Taff congratulates Janine and Ian on the new look newsletter saying 'although distance divides us, I really do feel close to you all'

Taff recalls another Welshman he met at North Creake in November 1944, **Gus Evans** who was with 199 Squadron then flying Stirlings. Gus told Taff the story of how his aircraft was shot down by American 'friendly fire'. Operating somewhere near the front line as part of the jamming chain, the Stirling was hit, this despite that those on the ground had been instructed not to fire at any aircraft flying at 16,000 feet or below. Taff cannot remember if all the crew survived or any other details. Perhaps one of our members has knowledge of this incident. Gus Evans passed away a few years back.

A contact in the Netherlands has told us that he has the wreckage of a 100 Group aircraft under his lawn! This is **Mosquito PZ174 of 23 Squadron**, Little Snoring. The Mosquito was lost operating on a target at Florenne, Belgium, crashing at Woubrugge, Netherlands. The crew: F/Lt Francis Grimwood and P/O Bernard Woodman were both killed. F/Lt Grimwood is buried in Bergen cemetery, P/O Woodman in Woubrugge cemetery. We hope to be able to find out more.

A new member to mention is Mr **Les Pedley** from Chalford, Gloucestershire a friend of long standing member Peter Witte with whom he served on 462 Squadron at Foulsham.

We welcome Mr **Allan Chappell** from Buckinghamshire back to our membership after a gap of several years. Mr Chappell was with 214 Squadron at Oulton and welcomes contact with those who know him.

**Dorothy Hudson**(ex WAAF, weather section, Swannington) sent a note to say how much she enjoyed last year's Reunion. At the time of writing Dorothy had a hand in plaster, but was confident of joining this year's gathering. Rob and Steph from the Museum took Dorothy back to Swannington during 2005 Reunion, a visit she enjoyed.

Visiting the Museum in late January was Mr **Alan Hart** from Leicestershire. Mr Hart had come to see **Stafford Sinclair**'s uniform that is on display in the 100 Group room. Stafford Sinclair and Alan Hart had flown a tour together with 9 Squadron from Bardney, Lincolnshire. Mr Hart later joined 101 Squadron and Stafford Sinclair of course joined 214 Squadron at Oulton. We quickly put Martin Staunton, Stafford's brother in law, in contact with Mr Hart who sent the Museum a photograph copy of his 9 Squadron crew.

With the need for us to be aware of the threats of modern day crimes such as identity theft as well as general home security, we have not given full details of member's home addresses in this newsletter. We should assure members that we hold details of their addresses and telephone numbers etc only to send them newsletters and other Association mailings. Under data protection laws, we cannot pass membership lists etc to any organisation or individual. If you would like to get in contact with any of the Association members mentioned in our newsletters, please send your sealed correspondence to the Museum and we will pass it on, unopened.

## **Old Crows Association**

Pat Keating visited the Museum in late February with John Stubbington the Treasurer of the UK Chapter of the Old Crow Association to tell us about a symposium they are hosting at the Hilton Metropole Hotel, Edgware Road, London between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The event is titled '6<sup>th</sup> European EW/IO Conference and Exposition'.

The Old Crows Association has asked the Association to exhibit information on 100 Group and would be very pleased to see any of our members at their event. We are sure that as pioneers of electronic warfare, any 100 Group veterans will be very well received.

For more information, please telephone John Stubbington on 01420 562722 or visit the Old Crow's Internet site at [www.crows.org](http://www.crows.org).

## Reunion News

Details of the programme for this year's weekend were sent to all our members at the end of February. A reminder that the dates are **12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2006**. If you did not receive this mailing, please contact the Museum on 01603 893080 and we will send you another copy.

The first form confirming attendance was returned to the Museum only three days after the programme was sent! Already we have spoken to a number of members to assist with accommodation and travel arrangements. All the signs are that this will be a very well attended event.

**For those of you with access to the Internet and to help with publicity of the Reunion**, a 100 Group Association news section has been added to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum's web site. To find this, enter [www.cnam.co.uk](http://www.cnam.co.uk) to any search engine asking for UK results only. The Museum's own site should then be seen. Enter the site and click on the 100 Group section shown on the right at the top of the page, this will take you to the Association's news page. On the left side of this page you will see that you can choose to look at galleries of photographs of the 2005 Reunion and look at the programme of events, dinner menu etc for 2006. Some of the wording on the Internet site, for full public access, is slightly different from the mailing sent to Association members. Our thanks to **Glen Ambler** from CNAM for his work to add this information to the Internet site. If you don't use the Internet, just telephone the Museum and they will tell you about any Reunion news.

**Just a reminder** that until the end of March, the Museum is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10.00am-4.00pm and on Sundays from 12.00noon until 4.00pm. From April opening hours are 10.00am-5.00pm Tuesday to Saturday and 12.00noon-5.00pm on Sunday.

## RAF Coltishall

At the time of writing 6 and 41 Squadrons are in their last days of Jaguar operations from Coltishall.

41 Squadron will disband on 31 March 2006. The final day of flying from the station will be Saturday 3 April 2006 when all the Jaguars will depart. An enlarged 6 Squadron will head for RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, the aircraft surplus to their requirements will be flown to Shawbury and St Athan for storage. This will bring to a conclusion over 65 years of flying from the last Battle of Britain fighter airfield remaining in RAF use to a close.

Personnel numbers at Coltishall will quickly reduce and redundancies of civilian staff will be made. By November, all equipment will be removed and the RAF ensign will be lowered for the last time.

Both the RAF 100 Group Association and the City of Norwich Aviation Museum will miss the tremendous support that they have received from RAF Coltishall.

City of Norwich Aviation Museum members made their last visit to Coltishall in late February. The RAF Association's visit arranged for Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May as part of the Reunion weekend will be one of the last group visits ever made to the station.

## **RAF Marham**

Over in the west of Norfolk, 39 Squadron are to disband at Marham on 31 July 2006. The three Canberra PR9 aircraft flown by the Squadron are to be retired from RAF service and offered for sale. The Canberra's have seen service over Afghanistan and Iraq in recent times. Despite having been in use for nearly fifty years, the Canberra PR9 remains a capable aircraft and seems likely to be purchased for continued use under civilian operation.

Four squadrons of Tornado strike and reconnaissance aircraft will remain in service at Marham. Marham will be the sole RAF facility in Norfolk after Coltishall is closed later this year. The wide Norfolk skies that were never still will soon be almost empty.

In the early years of the last decade, the RAF had four stations in Norfolk. The busy airfields at Coltishall and Marham were supplemented by two former 100 Group stations, Swanton Morley (Central Serving Development Unit) and West Raynham (Bloodhound and Rapier missiles). Swanton Morley has found use with the Army as Robertson Barracks, West Raynham lays empty and neglected. The fate of Coltishall seems to be a quick sale, the MoD having announced that it has no further use of the site. Another former 100 Group airfield, Sculthorpe, remains in very limited use by the Army along with part of Watton as part of the Stanford Battle Area training ground.

*Kelvin Sloper*

# **Oulton RAF 100 Group Reunion Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2005**

*A Cross for each of the 306 lives that were lost in operations from  
Oulton Airfield during WWII*

*"We will remember them"*



*'The act of remembrance was attended by people from Oulton village. Mob Moorby and myself traveled up to Norfolk and some of our local members attended.*

*Chris Lambert opened the ceremony and was followed by Bob Moorby who recited 'For the Fallen'. Mr Killingback, a local resident and long time supporter of our efforts, then recited a poem written by Hazel Southgate. She wrote the poem after trying to get several aircrew to describe what it was like to be on an operation over enemy territory. We hope to have room for the poem in our next Newsletter.*

*Bob Moorby laid the No.100 Group wreath and the children from Oulton laid the British Legion wreath. It was a moving tribute to the fallen.*

*We shall Remember Them'*

*Martin Staunton*

*(With thanks to Ivan Thomson for permission to use the photograph)*

## Information from Nicol. M. Mowat's Flying Log Book

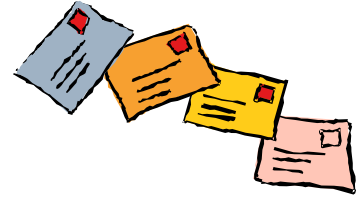
The following are further extracts from 'Bill the Boffin's Log Book sent in by his daughter Mrs Lin Galley via the Museum. Unfortunately, these were not received in time for publication in the last issue on page 15, regarding Mrs Galley's search for anyone who remembers her father.

*"Between August 1943 and September 1945 Dad flew on the following Planes, working on the following trials, flown by the following Pilots and visiting the following Airfields. He was usually known as Bill the Boffin instead of Nicol (Nick). The list reads down and DOES NOT correspond across.*

*Lin Galley"*

| PLANES        | TRIALS             | AREAS            | PILOTS           |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ANSON         | A.G.L.T            | DEFFORD          | F/L AFFLECK      |
| BEAUFIGHTER   | CORK SCREW         | DOCKING          | F/O ANDREWS      |
| FORTRESS      | DAZZLE             | DONNABROOK       | F/L ATTENBOROUGH |
| HALIFAX 1,2,3 | DITCHING INDICATOR | FARNBOROUGH      | F/O ATTENBOROUGH |
| LANCASTER 2,3 | EXHAUST VISION     | FELTWELL         | F/O BAKER        |
| MOSQUITO      | GUNNERS SEARCH     | FORD             | F/O BATES        |
| PROCTOR       | GYRO FLUPGATE      | BAEDEKER TRIP    | F/L BIRCH        |
| STIRLING      | H2S                | GRIMSBY          | F/L CHICK        |
| WELLINGTON    | FLIGHT TRACKS      | HOLTON           | F/L CLARK        |
|               | MINES              | HENDON           | F/L CONDUCT      |
|               | MONICA             | LAKENHEATH       | W/C CRIBB        |
|               | PHOTO FLASH        | LITTLE STAUGHTON | F/L DANIELS      |
|               | T.I                | NORTH CREAKE     | F/O FOXCROFT     |
|               | TIMED RUN          | NORTHOLT         | F/L GILL         |
|               | TYPE Z             | OULTON           | F/L LEVER        |
|               | UNDER GUN          | PRESTWICK        | F/L MACINTYRE    |
|               | WINDOW             | RADLETT          | F/L PEDEN        |
|               |                    | WOODFOOD         | F/L PERRINS      |
|               |                    | TANGMERE         | S/L PERRINS      |
|               |                    |                  | F/O RAMSEY       |
|               |                    |                  | W/C SPEARE       |
|               |                    |                  | F/L SUTTON       |
|               |                    |                  | S/L SUTTON       |
|               |                    |                  | F/L WALKER       |
|               |                    |                  | F/O WALKER       |
|               |                    |                  | S/L WORTH        |
|               |                    |                  | F/O YEATS        |
|               |                    |                  | F/O YOUNGER      |
|               |                    |                  | LT WRIGHT        |

# Letters Pages



*Hello Janine & Ian*

*One of the oldies' pleasures is to receive WWII Newsletters. But there are moments when some things are wrong - minor matters, I know, but worth putting right. For instance, on page 15 of the Winter 2005 Issue. Mr Nicol Mowat's log book reveals that on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 1944 he flew in a 214 Sqdn Fortress from Oulton with Flt Lt Murray Peden.*

*Now I was Navigation Leader of 214 at that time and 60 years later Murray and I still flash the odd emails across the pond. Both of us know that we moved from Sculthorpe to Oulton on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1944. I remember the date well; I met my future wife that evening in the Aylsham Town Hall.*

*I've asked Murray what his log book records. He replies:*

*'During this period, my crew had been sent to the Bomber Development Unit at Newmarket to take part in night fighter tests (NFT). Flights in Fortress 812 -*

|                 |                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <i>April 9</i>  | <i>Stradishall - Chedburgh - Newmarket</i> |
| <i>April 9</i>  | <i>NFT with W/C Cribb. From Newmarket</i>  |
| <i>April 10</i> | <i>Return Newmarket - Sculthorpe</i>       |
| <i>April 10</i> | <i>Sculthorpe - Newmarket</i>              |
| <i>April 10</i> | <i>NFT with W/c Cribb. From Newmarket</i>  |
| <i>April 12</i> | <i>Return Newmarket - Sculthorpe</i>       |

*As to a title for the Newsletter, I would suppose that the first option could be the motto of 100 Group - the Malayan for 'Confound and Destroy'. But I guess that might be a bit politically incorrect these days.*

*Good wishes and a Happy Christmas*

*Jack Furner,  
AVM, Past President of the 100 Group Association*

Dear Janine and Ian

Congratulations on the successful production of your first Newsletter. It was good to see a return to an issue containing a high 100 Gp input. I am sure that it will set the tone for future editions.

It was nice to see a reference to **Ted Punnett** who you mentioned losing his life with F/L Don Allies 214 Sqn crew in Fortress KJ112 (P) on the night of 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> March 1945. Ted arrived at Oulton on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1944 one of the 38 Air Gunners posted in from 10 AGS to help reform 223 Sqn. It is a sad fact that 9 of these air gunners were lost on ops flying with the 2 Oulton sqns. Two of Ted's fellow air gunners that day, Sgts Bob Jones and Pete Newman, were also to lose their lives with Allies' crew on that fateful night. There have been a number of reports of aircrew sensing their imminent loss, and it would appear that Pete Newman was one of them. Len Davies who shared a hut with him told me that on the night before Pete was lost, he made it quite clear to his fellow hut mates that he would not be returning from his next trip.

Carrying out his first op on 223 Sqn in the company of Bob Jones on the 28<sup>th</sup> September, Ted went on to complete 7 ops with 223 Sqn before he was posted to 214 Sqn via 1699 Flt on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The decision had been made in October 1944 to remove the guns from the front turret of 223 Sqn Libs and Ted was one of a number of air gunners who drew the short straw to leave the sqn. It was certainly a fateful decision for the 7 air gunners posted out to 1699 Flt to recrew on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

They comprised Sgts Peter Witts, Bob Jones, Pete Newman, Tom Pollard, Len Vowler, David 'Brock' Brockhurst and Ted Punnett. Of the 7, all from the 38 air gunners from 10 AGS, only Peter Witts was to survive. Tom Pollard, who flew 14 ops on 223 with Allnutt's crew, also lost his life with 214 Sqn on the night of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> February 1945 when on ops with F/O J M Shortt's crew in Fortress HB805(C). David Brockhurst and Len Vowler were lost with Liberator TS526(T), F/O N S Ayres, on the night of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> March. Peter Witts obviously bore a charmed life as he flew ops with Allies crew for a while before a further posting to 426 Sqn. Peter, I am glad to say, remains a stalwart 100 Gp member and has attended all reunions since the formation of the association.

We should not forget Sgts Ted Whittaker and Ernie Dobson, also among the 38 arrivals from 10 AGS. Ernie Dobson flew on a couple of ops with F/L Briscoe's 223 Sqn crew before moving to 214 Sqn. He was flying with P/O J P Robertson RNZAF when their Fortress HB796(T) came down on the Kent coast after a Window sortie.

Incidentally, the nav on this aircraft was F/S Peter Buckland who had been one of the Nassau founder members of 223 Sqn. Ted Whittaker was lost with F/O Thompson's Liberator TS520(J) in the early hours of 21<sup>st</sup> February 1945.

I enclose a photograph taken at 10 AGS RAF Walney Island in July/August 1944 showing the syndicate containing Ted Punnett and Tom Pollard. The photo also shows George Simmons, Ken Smith, Mick Stirrop and Ken Stone who were among the 38 destined for 223 Sqn. I am sorry to record that George who was a regular member of F/L Dyck's crew received his final posting in 2005. If anyone can provide the missing names on the photo I should be very pleased to hear from them.



Back row (from left) Ken Stone, Ken Smith, unknown, Tom A J Pollard  
Middle row (from left) E 'Mick' Stirrop, unknown, Instructor Sgt N Carter, ?  
Front row (from left) Unknown, George Simons, E L 'Ted' Punnett, Padgett

Finally, some further congratulations on the successful publication of your book. I thought it was a very moving record of wartime love. I suspect that it would have revived a lot of wonderful, and painful memories, for your mother's generation who will have read it. For the younger generation, it will open their eyes to some of the realities of war. I am sure your mother would be very proud that her and Vic's story will live on, and the fact that you pursued and finally established the fate of DK292.

Best wishes

*Richard R M Forder*



Hi Jan and Ian

My name is Dorothy Hudson, I am a member of the 100 Group Association. I was a Met 'girl' stationed at RAF Swannington and have attended two reunions so far. I have just received your Newsletter which I think is excellent, it must be for it included a photograph of me! The photo is on page 13 and I am wearing the pearls! Nuff said.

I read your notes on Phil James and Vera, they were very good to me for I stopped in the same hotel and they chauffeured me around. They are hoping, I know, to be at the next reunion as myself, but they mentioned to me that they would be celebrating their Diamond Wedding on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Whether they will thank me or not for letting you know - I will have to wait and see.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that Mr Bryan Gale who was with 157 Group at Swannington had now joined the Association, for up until now I had been the only representative from that station. I was there from 1943 to 1946. My name then was Howard.

I hope to meet you in May - bones allowing. I wish you a very Happy New Year and success with your newsgathering venture.

Yours

*Dorothy Hudson*

We asked Dorothy if she would be willing to write about her experiences as a 'Met' girl stationed at RAF Swannington to share with members. After a little coaxing, she has kindly sent in her reminiscences of that time. We look forward to meeting up with you, Dorothy, at the Reunion in May, and thank you for sharing with us. We hope to hear more from you in the future?

Janine & Ian

# Shared Experiences



## A Bombers Moon?

*The Reminiscences of a 'Met Girl'*

*by Dorothy Hudson*

I first took an interest in meteorology when as a youngster at the beginning of the war I joined the Women's Junior Air Corp.

After having survived the heavy blitzes on Merseyside, at one stage I watched the famous Argyle Theatre burn down, and having passed exams - I decided at the age of 16 years to join the WAAF. In due course, I presented myself at Renshaw Hall in Liverpool, the local enlisting office. Naturally, I was asked for my birth certificate and convincingly I told the recruiting officer that we had been bombed out the night before and none was available. I cannot remember how I told my parents that I had enlisted. My mother had no objection for she was an ambulance driver and had done the same thing in World War I. My father wasn't sure as my two brothers had been called up at the beginning of hostilities. However, I passed all the procedures and eventually landed in Innsworth to be kitted out and moved on to Morecombe where I did my square bashing. What a rude awakening!

My training was done in a famous furniture store building in London, where we learned to teleprint c/o the GPO Hendon and how to read temperatures, do slide rule calculations, recognise clouds etc., plot charts, read barometers sort out the Stevenson Screen and code up the reports. At this time the Meteorologists were civilians. Having passed the course exams, the time came for posting. I was asked where I would like to go. My posting was 250 miles from my choice to No 9 Group, Royal Canadian Air Force - Middleton St George, Co Durham. They were flying Wellington Bombers on ops. My colleagues realized that I was still only a youngster - took me under their wings and I had a good initiation into life in the Met Office. The weather wasn't always suitable for flying but we still had to report it. There were nights when I went on duty in fog and it was so dense that at one time I was lost on a dispersal point and finished up on my hands and knees crawling around the edge until I got to the office! That was a time when I wished I hadn't joined.

From Durham I had three other short postings - Croft (now a car racing track), Liverpool Speke (now John Lennon Airport), and Sealand. At Speke we were contacted by N.W Army HQ nightly, to give them wind readings for the upper air, this apparently was to enable them to set their guns correctly - I was never quite

sure how this worked but I often wondered if my slide-rule calculations would enable them to sort out any German invasion of Liverpool! I had my uses there too - the Irish planes would come in from Dublin and I looked forward to these for they brought gifts of sweets, but nevertheless I still had to sit upon the weather charts that the forecasters didn't want the pilots to see.

Life was different at the MU Unit at Sealand. Different aspects of Meteorology were used as there was no flying. One of these was to fill huge white balloons with hydrogen and tie a gondola underneath with a lighted candle, release and follow the light with a Theodolite to work out the upper winds. How I managed not to blow the office up never ceases to amaze me! Nevertheless, I was gaining experience all the time, particularly how to get home without a pass.

From Sealand I was posted in 1943 to a new station - RAF Swannington and I was there until 1946 with Mosquito Squadrons 157 and 85. There I met up with my WAAF colleagues and by this time RAF Meteorologist Officers. F.O's Ernie Dearing, Laurie Rendell, Corrigan and A.N Other. The WAAF contingent was LACW's Joyce Dobb, Barbara Jeffries, Sylvia Cheeseman, Pam Watson and myself, Dorothy Howard.

As far as we observers were concerned we worked a three-shift system, 7am to 3pm, 3pm to 11pm and the night-shift 11pm to 7am. The latter, unless there were ops, or circuits and bumps, I used to dread. Why? Well having no running water we were supplied with a water bowser outside and filling a kettle meant running the risk of rats. There were also the odd occasions when we had tremendous thunder and electrical storms which lit up the whole of the countryside and the whole of Flying control were snoring their heads off and I had to go outside to 'do' the weather! I was lyrical now when I say that I used to love the starlit nights and, dare I say, 'the bomber moon' nights. This wasn't a romantic streak in me - it was easier to calculate vision and report the weather, which had to be done every hour. Sometimes I might have nodded off if there was no flying, and if I had a 'phone call from Group quickly repeated the last ob, with a slight variation and giving them some excuse why I was late.

Plotting charts became skilful using two pens together, one black and one red, from the coded messages received from ETA via the teleprinter. They usually took  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour as speed was often of the essence for the forecaster. We also had to encode the weather report and send via teleprinter back to ETA for the next chart. It almost became an artform. I think we all took pride in producing neat and tidy charts every three hours.

The office was pretty hectic before ops especially on the eve of D-Day when I was on night duty. We were always glad to hear the telling drone of the Mosquito engine and we knew that they were safely back. There were sad times too, when any failed to return. They were brave men and my little bit was nothing compared to their efforts.

Times were helped when we played mixed hockey with the air crew and I remember playing a team with F/Lt Chisholm (Chris)(his dog lay on the sideline) "Get back Howard I'll play forward" and they used to knock 7 bells out of one another. Then off they'd go on ops.

There were also trips into Norwich via the Liberty bus, one shilling (5 pence) return. It was good camaraderie and times, on reflection. I would not have missed.

I was often posted around the Group to stand in when they were short staffed - but always managed to get back to Swannington. I'd made so many friends and I didn't want to miss the jollifications down at the Ratcatcher's or the Kings Head in Cawston.

I still look at the sky and work out the clouds and amounts and often think of the days, some good, some bad and long gone, but am happy to recall and am pleased that there is an Association to keep them alive.

If this epistle seems to be frivolous on any way with regard to my duties, please disregard it for they were taken in a very serious way and which I was proud to do. It also meant that I grew up very very quickly.

Eventually when the war was over, time came to think what I would do in Civvy Street. Because of my 'sporting' instincts and I mean that literally, I decided to remuster as a Physical Training Instructor. Thereby hangs another tale and maybe I might write a bit more and head it "Just before I go".

*Dorothy Hudson*  
*2006*

**Bryan D. Gale** has written an email to us with a plea:

I would love to hear from any ex- members of 157 who were at Swannington - by e-mail for preference as I am very deaf and can't hear on the phone.

E-mail address is: [go2joby@aol.com](mailto:go2joby@aol.com)

*Look out for Bryan's shared experience in our next Newsletter!*

# **Cartwright from Sturgeon One Zero**

by Eric Clarkson

On the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1945 my Pilot and I set off for our first sortie in a Mosquito MkIV with the serial number W 4071 which you may wish to note was the 20<sup>th</sup> Mosquito ever built, and according to Martin Bowman's book on the Mosquito in the Osprey series, was among three delivered to 105 Squadron then at Horsham St Faith on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1941, by Geoffrey de Havilland and Pat Fillingham. These details are recorded at the foot of page 7 of Martin Bowman's book.

If you look at page 188 of 'Espionage in the Ether' by William and John Rees you will see the family history of W 4071 which was eventually sent to 44MU on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1945, and finally SOC on 21/6/47. I have a model of that aircraft made by one of the ground crews which is still in good order.

The Bomber Command War Diaries show that on the night of 12/13 February 1945 there were 100 Mosquito sorties of which we were the only one from 192 Squadron and therefore from 100 Group flying that night. We were tasked to do a 'Big Ben' patrol but because the weather was pretty foul we only were required to do the patrol once. Usually we were tasked to do it twice. My Pilot was F/O Joe Reay and my job as Navigator/Special Operator was to carry out the two functions of navigation and looking for the possible radio communication control which V2's were thought to have. Later it transpired that this was not the case but at that time we still had to search for the possibility of there being one.

We took off at 18.45 and flew on flight plan. The plot was to fly from Antwerp to the North of Holland in a northerly direction, and then turn back and arrive over Antwerp and then turn for home. Unfortunately, the 'Gee' box packed up onus fairly soon and we were left with doing the rest of the flight on DR. What we did not know was that the Met. Forecast proved to be inaccurate and as we turned for home on flight plan we had, as it later proved, been in the force of a 180 degree wind shift. There was nothing wrong with my calculations merely that I had plotted for a southerly wind which in the event turned out to be from a northerly direction, and at 25000 feet winds can reach as much as 100mph! It also has to be remembered that we were flying in 10/10ths cloud, and in an area of deep depression.

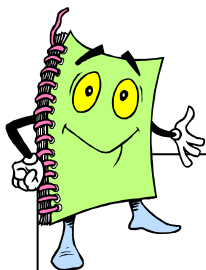
We didn't know it but we were hopelessly lost. Joe Reay tried to contact all of the three VHF frequencies both in France and the UK but got no reply to any. At long last some twenty to thirty minutes later we got a very faint call from 'Kingsley'

which I think was Tangmere, and telling us the course we needed to steer for Foulsham. When we back plotted using the correct wind, we reckoned we were over the Rheims area and on a course of 300 magnetic would, had we continued, been heading for the Atlantic. As I recall I think Kingsley gave us a course of about 360 degrees.

As you may well imagine, we were very thankful to hear our control tower replying to our 'Cartwright from Sturgeon One Zero' giving us permission to land.

Strangely enough on our next sortie three days later in the same aircraft, once again the 'Gee Box' packed up on us after about an hour's flying, so we terminated the op not wishing to go through a similar situation, and it happened again in the same aircraft on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. We didn't seem to have much luck with that particular aircraft, and we got Mk XVI's delivered on 19.2.45 but they all needed to be adapted for our RCM operations which took some time.

*Eric Clarkson*



### NOTE OF INTEREST

'It may be of interest to members to know that I applied for a Veteran's Badge to the Veterans Agency. It is rather a handsome badge produced by Toye, Kenning and Spencers Ltd, the medal specialists. It is intended to wear with civvies. It comes with a citation from the MOD thanking you for your service in WWII. Veterans in this case doesn't mean ancient but having served in the forces at some time. There is also advice available for ex-service people.

The number is FREE - 0800 169 2277.

Dorothy Hudson

## Halifax Lives Again!

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2005 at the RCAF Museum at CFB Trenton Ontario, a restored Halifax was unveiled. This bomber was Halifax NA337 of 644 Sqn, which was brought down by anti-aircraft fire on a mission to drop supplies to a Norwegian resistance group. The aircraft ditched in Lake Mjosa and only one member of the crew survived the icy waters. It was found in 1982 and recovered in 1995. The sole survivor, rear gunner Tom Weightman, was unable to attend the restoration ceremony due to health problems. Both Phil James and Harry Freegard hoped this may be of interest to ex-Halifax members of the Association. Len Fanstone, Harry's old crew member, was invited to attend the unveiling, and his daughter took these photographs (there is also information on this Event in the January 2006 edition of 'Aeroplane'). Harry meanwhile has a question: this aircraft does not have a mid-upper gun turret. Was this the original design as delivered to Transport Command from the manufacturers?



Restored Halifax at Trenton, November 2005





L E Fanstone (R/Gunner), November 2005

Crew (May 1945 North Creake)

Self (Harry Freegard) E J Hurrell, C W Sapsford, V W P Andrews, H G Ellis.  
(L E Fanstone, Photographer & P J Conners - not in picture)



L E Fanstone (1945)



Self (1945)  
Harry Freegard

# **MZ717, Canadians and Me**

By Phil A. E. James MBE

After finishing training at RAF St Athan, I was posted to the HCU (Heavy Conversion Unit) at Dishforth. On arrival I was sent to a hangar, along with about twenty other Flight Engineers and sufficient personnel to crew twenty Wellington bombers. Here, we were told in no uncertain terms to 'Get crewed up'. I was approached by a 6 feet 2 inch Canadian WOP/AG (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) named John Yakimchuck, who asked me if I would like to join him and his (all Canadian) crew. After some discussion, I joined him and the rest of the crew led by Flight Lieutenant George Ward. That night we all cycled down to the pub. When asked what I was drinking, I said 'Orange Juice'. There followed a deadly silence and many looks passed between the crew. It was assumed that because I had a fresh complexion and ginger hair that I was a drinking man - and to their dismay, I wasn't. From that night on, I was known as 'Red' and I am still called 'Red' by what is left of the crew and their families.

We did our conversion on to Halifax I's and II's; how we were so lucky to have survived that episode of flying is hard to understand - I think it was down to the quality of George Ward's flying abilities and strength. Now came the postings to squadrons and after all the banter and remarks we found that we had been posted to 192 (SD) (Special Duties) Squadron, No 100 (Bomber Support) Group. None of us had even heard of 192 Squadron. We did later, when we arrived at RAF Foulsham in Norfolk and found that it had Halifax III's, Wellingtons, Mosquito's and a Lockheed Lightning on its strength.

After a short conversion on the Hali III's we were allocated MZ717, a new aircraft built by English Electric - in my view they were the best built aircraft in WWII. Our aircraft was duly named the 'RICH(D)ALE EXPRESS', after a brewery in Sheffield, where the crew used to spend their leaves and were looked after by a Mr 'Dad' Morris who was the brewmaster. MZ717 was adorned with a large beer barrel, with the name 'RICH(D)ALE EXPRESS' above it, and pint pots below it as indicators of how many trips we made. Our work at 192 Squadron was all hush-hush and cameras were strictly forbidden, but!!

Although we flew with Bomber Command (BC) most times we also 'visited places' on our own, sometimes before BC or even after they had done their work. The objective of No. 100 (BS) Group and its squadrons was to support the main bombing force during a raid, electronically jamming enemy radar with high-power radar jamming equipment such as 'Mandrel'. Additionally, German VHF telephony and direction finding centimetric signals were recorded.

Two examples of our work involved keeping a 24-hour watch over the Bay of Biscay, and a trip along the Norwegian coast. The Bay of Biscay was necessary in order to monitor the beams sent out over the Atlantic by the Germans to enable their submarines to home in on their concrete pens in the French ports. Because our authorities also made use of these beams, it was vital to know the moment that there were any changes. Regarding the Norwegian coast trip, we and three other aircraft were sent to Lossiemouth in Scotland. From here, we embarked on a trip of over nine hours which involved flying under 1000 feet to a certain point, then up to 5000 feet, by then we were well up the Norwegian coast and a German capital ship put on its radar. Unknown to them we had special equipment and a Special Operator (that's what he was called) and he would map the weak points and gaps in that radar screen so that (hopefully) our Lancasters could make an undetected approach to the German ship and sink it with 'Tallboy' 12,000lb bombs. That ship was the Titanic.

We soon finished our tour of 30 trips and we had flown when other squadrons were not flying. One No. 100 Group station commander would say, 'We fly, gentleman, when the sparrows are walking', that sums it up really. All those trips that were flown with, or without, BC were by directions from Air Intelligence or the Y service.

On our last leave together, we all went to Sheffield and visited the Brewery, where 'Dad' Morris had put aside in the cellar two small barrels of special brew to celebrate the completion of our tour. After sampling the special brew, we were invited to dinner at Mr Morris's home. What a very kind and generous man he was.

Our pilot and our navigator were each awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the pilot for his flying abilities and the navigator for his accuracy in relation to the Special Operators findings. After this, we all went our separate ways, the Canadians going back home.

Now I move to the year 1982. Over the years 1946-1982, I had sent many cards to Canada but received no reply. Then, in 1982, I received a telephone call from Bert Taylor, our navigator, who was in London doing a UK tour. He had received a card that I had sent to Nova Scotia that was subsequently forwarded to Vancouver by a postman who had been drafted in to help with the Christmas mail!.... How lucky can you get!

That same weekend, I was going to be in London for a Bomber Command reunion, so I arranged to meet Bert at the Ritz for tea, along with my daughter and some friends. At this meeting we arranged to meet up again during his tour, this time at Bristol, a one and a half hours drive from where I live in Port Talbot, so that my wife could also meet Bert and his wife. Bert then contacted the rest of the crew and arranged a meeting in Eckville, Alberta, for all the crew (except the WOP/AG who had shot himself when he could no longer cope with life). We had a wonderful

reunion with the crew members and their wives. One of my outstanding memories of this occasion is of the time at breakfast, with about 18 sitting around a kitchen table with two huge dishes, one loaded with eggs and the other with crispy bacon. What a feed we had and what a time we had! That was the last time that we all met together.

My wife and I have visited Canada nine times since the reunion and each visit has been truly wonderful. Sadly, in June 2004, there are now only three members of the crew remaining.

### **'Our' Special Operator, Al Burgess**

This is a separate story ... after finding my crew in Canada, I decided to try and find our SO. I advertised in various RAF-associated magazines and even went to RAF Innsworth - no joy. After many months I wrote to the 'Daily Mirror' and received a very prompt reply consisting of 4 pages of suggestions on how to proceed. Although I had already tried most of them, one suggestion was that I should write a letter addressed to Al and send it to Innsworth, so I did. Later, my letter was returned - with the address, the postmark and all the other bits crossed through with black marker pen... I thought that this must surely be the end of my quest.

I was sitting by my window when, lo and behold, I noticed that under the black lines on the envelope I could just decipher an address in Ipswich. I sent a letter to the address and was subsequently informed that the Burgess's had moved to Newmarket. A telephone call later told me that the current occupiers at Newmarket had recently had a problem with a wasps nest in the attic over the garage. During this period they had found Al's log book - I just couldn't believe this coincidence. Now I had Al's telephone number. I telephoned him, explained who I was and told him about his log book and how it was found. He was completely taken aback. Later, the people who had found the log book very kindly delivered it in person to Al. Very soon after this, I too went to see him. Al told me that his log book must have been at the top of a box of odds and ends and, when they moved, it must have fallen off and lodged itself between the rafters. Here it had remained for many years until the wasps nest episode.

Sadly, Al has since passed away. SOs were a special breed who never really mixed with the crews, they just kept themselves to themselves. This was understandable really, considering the nature of their work. There are a few books around telling of No. 100 Group and its squadrons and the work they did, some of it is still undercover.

## Postscript

MZ717 never let us down, we only ever turned back once from a trip when the autopilot went unserviceable. Some time after we left it, the aircraft was crash-landed at Manston and never saw service again. It was struck off charge on 25th November 1946.

The crew that flew MZ717 when it crash-landed at Manston later went on to fly another aircraft that crashed in Poland and their SO, named Scotty Young, wrote a book entitled "Descent into Danger", what a story!

In February 2003 I was awarded the MBE for my work with ex-RAF for over 50 years and my 40 years with the Air Cadets

*Phil James*

**Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention**

### WARTIME LOVE

Testimony Films is making a series for UK TV History about love, and marriage during the Second World War.

Do you have a special love story to tell which took place during the Second World War? Did you rush to marry for fear of the war? Was there terrible heartache? Romance? Did you find forbidden love? Or even dangerous passion abroad? Did you marry a GI and move abroad only to find life away from home terribly hard? What was it like to be far away from husbands and boyfriends in wartime?

If you have a dramatic story to tell we would love to hear from you.

**Contact** - Lisa at Testimony Films, 12 Great George Street, Bristol BS1 5RH  
**Tel:** 0117 925 8589 **email:** [lisa.lipman@testimonyfilms.com](mailto:lisa.lipman@testimonyfilms.com)

**Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention ... Attention**



## Final Postings

Death is but crossing the world as friends do the seas  
-they live in one another still.

**192 Squadron** Sqd/Ldr **George Ward** DFC Phil James' Canadian pilot

**192 Squadron** Flt/Lt **Paddy Passmore** DFC Canadian pilot

**192 Squadron** It is with great sadness that we must report that **John Cooke** has passed away.

**John Cooke** was a regular at 100 Group Reunions, travelling to Norfolk from his home in Kent. John always enjoyed the Reunions and we believe that he attended each year from 1997 to 2004. John left the Museum's building fund a bequest and also left his collection of aviation books and memorabilia to the archive collection.

**192 Squadron** It is also with great sadness that we report that **Ron Phillips** has passed away.

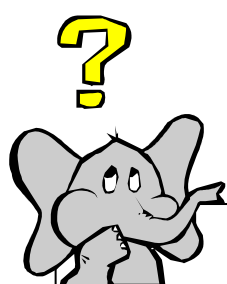
**Ron Phillips** died after having faced illness with great dignity in late 2005. Ron, although a native of Cornwall, was a resident of Aylsham and therefore very much a local member of the Association. Kay and I represented the Association at his memorial service at Aylsham Methodist Church where Ron had been a committed member of the congregation. (*Kelvin Sloper*).

**214 Squadron** **Geoff Liles** passed away on 4 March 2006 after a long illness. Geoff was a pilot with 214 Squadron at Oulton and was a member of the RAF 100 Group Association for many years. We thank his daughter, Jeanne, for writing to us with this sad news and our thoughts are with this family who will miss him terribly.

**49 Squadron** **Len Bradfield**, a director of the City of Norwich Aviation Museum for many years, passed away in late November 2005. Len was one of the founder members of the CNAM and provided valuable advice on many occasions. Len joined the RAF at the

start or World War Two training as a navigator bomb aimer. While on operations, Len was shot down in Lancaster ED625 of 49 Squadron. Only Len and his pilot Johnny Moss survived spending the rest of the war as prisoners. Len returned to Britain with injuries he had sustained in a frustrated escape attempt and was nursed back to health by Nora, who he soon married. He became a surveyor for Norfolk County Council until his retirement. His friendship, advice, patience and knowledge were an inspiration to all who knew him, we shall miss him.  
(Robert Walden)

If anyone else has any names they would like to put forward, please send them to us to be included in the next issue.



### ENQUIRY

Has anyone heard from Trevor Allen recently in Queensland, Australia?

We have just had our last Christmas card to him returned and would welcome news.

Janine & Ian



### **'I was a Brylcreem Boy'**

by Ron James

This is Ron's second book and is being prepared for the printer. It is hoped to be available early in the New Year.

### **'Instruments of Darkness'**

by Alfred Price

This book comes highly recommended by Phil James who says you need the 2005 edition which might be obtained at the library.

### **'Espionage in the Ether'**

by William and John Rees

### **'Mosquito - Bomber/Fighter Bomber Units 1942-45'**

by Martin Bowman

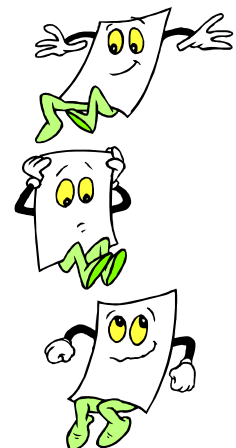
### **'Nina & Vic: A World War II Love Story'**

by Janine Harrington

## **... & Magazines**

**'Aeroplane'**      Published monthly      £3.45

**'Airmail'**      Published quarterly  
Journal of the  
Royal Air Forces  
Association



We would welcome more ideas about 'good reads' to add to our Book and Magazine List, together with reviews by readers where possible?

*Janine & Ian*

# **100 GROUP RELATED ITEMS**

Available from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum

## **BLAZER BADGES**

At the time of writing, we have the following in stock:

100 Group Crest, 171,178,192,199,214 and 223 Squadrons.

We can now obtain blazer badges for any Royal Air Force squadron to order.

Please contact us with your requirements; delivery of specially produced badges will take around four to six weeks.

**All badges are £12.00 each (inc postage)**

## **100 GROUP AIRCRAFT PRINTS**

Posting these in their glass frames has in all but one case been successful but to avoid the disappointment of anyone else receiving a damaged print, we would now prefer only to send unframed prints by post.

The prints are 16.5"x11.7" and are side view artwork. At present we have 171 Squadron Stirling, 192 and 199 Squadron Halifax, 214 Squadron Fortress and 223 Squadron Liberator

**£11.00 each (including postage)**

## **PLASTIC COASTERS**

We have square plastic coaster available with the following squadron crests 171,192,199,214 and 223 squadrons and 100 Group headquarters. The Engineering Science Aviation Group at Oxford University, who donate the money they charge us to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, produce these coasters especially for us.

**Each coaster costs 75 pence (post free)**

## **LEATHER BOOKMARK**

A fairly recent addition to our stock is these 9" RAF 100 Group bookmarks at £1.00 each (post free)

## BOOKS

### **Avenging in the Shadows-Ron James**

We already have many orders for the reprint of this book the history of 214 Squadron. Please spare a thought for Martin Staunton who volunteered for the task of preparing this book for the print on demand publisher. This has not been an easy job. For the requirements of modern methods for small run publishing, Avenging in the Shadows will be A4 sized and Martin has the difficult task of arranging all of the text and photographs to fit this page size. If you would like to reserve a copy, please let us know and we will contact you as soon as the book is available.

### **100 Group (Bomber Support)-Martin Bowman**

A new book to be published in September 2006, this is the first book in a new aviation heritage trail series. This is what the publisher has to say; 'as part of the AHT guidebook series, the airfields and interest in this book are concentrated in a particular area, in this case Norfolk. The growing importance of the electronic war in the air in 1943 caused the creation of 100 Group to fly both defensive and offensive sorties employing highly secret radio counter measure equipment. This book looks at the history and personalities associated with each base, what remains today and explores favourite local wartime haunts where aircrew and ground crew would have gone.'

Martin Bowman lives in Norwich and is a good friend and supporter of both the Museum and the RAF 100 Group Association, we are sure that this is a book to look forward to. You can reserve a signed copy from us for dispatch on publication.

**Publisher Pen and Sword softback 192 pages £10.99 plus postage of £2.00.**

### **Corgi Die cast Model, Liberator 223 Squadron, Oulton**

This 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale highly detailed model of Liberator, 6G-J, has a wingspan of around 12/15" and being made mainly of metal is quite heavy. It can be displayed on a stand or on its undercarriage. Retailing in the shops at between £99.99 and £109.99, we now have access to a very limited number of these models at special price of £45.00. If you would like one, we can have your model at the Museum for your collection during the Reunion weekend or can send it to your for £53.00 including carriage.

**We can accept credit card payments by telephone,**  
just ring the Museum on 01603 893080 during its opening times.

**Or send you order with payment by post to:**  
The City of Norwich Aviation Museum,  
Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith, Norwich, Norfolk. NR10 3JF.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2006



## JANUARY

1<sup>st</sup>

Annual Subscription due for RAF 100 Group Memorial Museum Association Membership.

## MAY

12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>

RAF 100 Group Reunion

The Weekend will follow the now familiar format.

*Information on this will come direct to you from the Museum. If you have paid your subscription and do not hear, please contact the Museum direct 01603 893080.*

## JUNE

1<sup>st</sup>

Deadline for writings, articles, inclusions in Summer Newsletter, to be sent direct to Editors: Janine Harrington & Ian Kirk, address on inside front page.



### Suggestion Box

Future name for RAF 100 Group Association Newsletter?

1. *The Malayan for 'Confound and Destroy' - 'Sarang Tebuan Jangan Dijolok'*
2. *'GEE' (navigational aid used by all aircraft)*
3. *'Confusion'*
4. *'Yesteryear'*
5. *'Bygones'*
6. *'Homecall'*
7. *'Frontline'*
8. *'Club 100'*
9. *'Windows - View from the Past'*

Perhaps we could take a vote for the actual name to be used for the future at the AGM during the Reunion weekend in May? In the meantime, please keep sending in suggestions.



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