



# Confound & Destroy

RAF 100 GROUP ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2006

City of Norwich Aviation Museum, Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith,  
Norwich, Norfolk NR10 3JF Telephone: 01603 893080

# RAF 100 Group Association

## ROGUES GALLERY



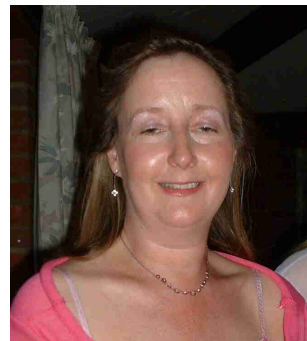
Founders: Martin Staunton & Eileen Boorman (sister)



Derek Waters  
Director (Chair)



Kelvin Sloper  
Director (Treasurer)



Kim Barwick  
Director

Matthew Taylor  
Director.  
Keeper of Exhibits.  
Looks after all aircraft and helps Rob with displays.  
(No Picture)



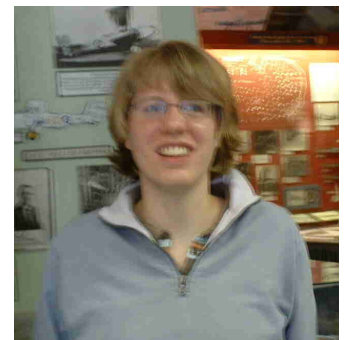
Rodney Scott  
Custodian



Ann Scott  
(Rodney's wife)



Robert Walden  
Curator



Steph Walden  
Secretary



Right: Glen Ambler, Web Master

The Museum also has a host of over 90 Volunteers who work on the Museum and Association's behalf



## Editors Page



Welcome one and all to another bumper read. Take note of the new name adopted by members at the recent Reunion together with a range of new Sections enclosed. We hope within these pages you will find lots to interest, absorb and inform. We have found it a real joy to open your post and discover a treasure trove of articles, emails, letters, photographs. And my, what handsome young officers we have been presented with just waiting to be introduced! Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of the Newsletter and written such lovely letters. We couldn't do it without you. Please keep on keeping in touch.

The theme of the Reunion this year was very much about '*staying connected*'. They were certainly the words used on Sunday by the minister at Horsham St Faith, and how wonderful it was to once again meet and talk and share. We are not alone in believing it to be the best Reunion yet! A very big THANK YOU to Kelvin and the Team for all they did to make it so. For me, Reunions are very much about Family, or should I say how a family SHOULD be, in coming together with people who I truly feel connected with and can relate to. We have tried our best to include as much of the weekend as possible for those who cannot attend so that you too might feel included and '*connected*' also. And our coach trip to RAF Swannington could not have come more timely given that in this issue it has become a main feature. It seems Dorothy as '*The Met Girl*' inspired many of you to share your memories of Swannington and your time there. ([See separate Reunion 2006 Supplement](#))

It was Phil (James) who spotted our '*deliberate errors*' in our Spring issue of the Newsletter - our cover to date has displayed a Boston, which had no real part at Foulsham so note the difference now; and we also named the German ship as '*The Titanic*' instead of the '*Tirpitz*! Thanks Phil.

We would ask for the future to please send ORIGINAL photographs to make it easier for scanning into the Newsletter. We do send all photographs directly back to their owners! But please, keep those letters and memories coming. We love hearing from you and making new friends. Enjoy your Summer!

Deadline for the Autumn Newsletter is **1<sup>st</sup> September 2006**.

*Janine & Ian*

Future items for the Newsletter should be sent to the Editors:



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# News from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum



Much of the volunteer's time at the Museum during the late spring and early summer months is taken up on maintaining the site. With around two acres of grass to cut and hedges and banks to trim, a great deal of time is needed to keep the Museum grounds tidy. Tuesday evenings normally see two or three members busy until dark on these tasks.

With the arrival of many new exhibits from the RAF Coltishall history room, work has continued on preparing new buildings and displays to accommodate these items. A team of members have made a tremendous effort to restore the two portakabin buildings donated by Eastern Airways and the displays that Mick Jennings has transferred from Coltishall look fantastic in their new home.

At the end of May, we dismantled a number of wooden buildings at RAF Coltishall that we were allocated on the run down of the station. These have already been brought to the Museum for updating and re-construction over the coming summer months.

Work on the aircraft has continued as time has allowed, the Meteor, Lightning and Canberra nose section were all worked on during May. A general wash down of all our aircraft exhibits has also been undertaken.

Mixed weather in April and May has brought fluctuations in visitor numbers. Generally good weather in April and early May produced good visitor numbers, a wet end to May resulted in a poor finish to the month. Our fund raising stand endured a very wet day at Duxford on 21 May, we hope for better weather at the other events we will be attending in 2006.

The Museum members enjoyed the 2006 RAF 100 Group Reunion and the event has been well discussed here. Seeing veterans return to their wartime airfields and being able to play a part in ensuring the success of the Reunion is something that is much valued by our volunteers. The highlight for those of us who were at Swannington was watching and hearing Dorothy describe her time there and seeing her excitement at finding her office windows in the now derelict control tower. We don't want time to pass too quickly, but we are already looking forward to 2007!

*Kelvin (Sloper)*

# 2007 Reunion

This may seem very early to give you dates for our 2007 Reunion, but the enthusiasm of our members for our gatherings, has made it necessary for some of the arrangements to be put in place at a very early stage.

The dates for the next Reunion are 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. The dinner venue will again be the Aylsham Lodge Hotel, Norwich Road, Aylsham. We have paid a deposit to secure the booking for the dinner on 12 May 2007. At the time the Association's cheque for the deposit was handed over, we were advised that many of our members had already booked rooms at the Hotel, fifty weeks in advance of the event!

Without a doubt, our Reunions are becoming increasingly well attended. We have already been contacted by a number of people who have heard about the Reunion from regular attendees who wish to come themselves next year. Our advice to those of you who will require accommodation in the Aylsham area is to make an early booking with your preferred or regular venue. If you need any suggestions on where to stay, please telephone the Museum and we will offer some suggestions.

Already we are considering the programme of events for 2007. If you have any suggestions or requests for consideration, please let us know as soon as possible. One aspect of this year's event that we know was appreciated was the visits to 100 Group airfields other than the two visited by the coach tour. We are investigating if it will be practical to hire in a number of smaller vehicles rather than one large coach to enable us to take smaller groups to more airfields.

The Reverend Andrew Beane, the very recently appointed vicar of Horsham St Faith church, has already been in touch to discuss the Memorial Service to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. We are confident that the warm welcome always extended to us at Horsham St Faith church, will be accompanied by a more traditional service next year.

*Kelvin (Sloper)*

# Messages from the Museum



We welcome the following new members to the RAF 100 Group Association;

Mrs J Cunningham, Nottingham, Mrs N J Hewitt, Norwich, Mr Alan Hough, Hyde, Mr Donald Hulbert, Sheffield, Mr E Le Strange, Warminster, Mr Donald Maxwell, Kaiserslauten, Germany, Mr J Reid of the Stirling Bomber Research Group, Mr R Walden, Newmarket and Mrs S M Whitlock, Rayleigh.

## Obituaries

### Mr J Creech

We were sad to hear that Mr J Creech (ex 214 Squadron) passed away in April 2006. Mr and Mrs Creech attended our 2005 Reunion and we remember with fondness how much Mr Creech enjoyed our visit to Oulton and particularly the coach tour around the airfield.

### Arthur Anthony



On the day before this newsletter's deadline for completion, we received a letter from Arthur Anthony's son, Clive telling us that Arthur (ex 223 Squadron) had died peacefully in hospital on 13 May 2006. Arthur was one of the founding members of the RAF 100 Group Association and served in the RAF between 1941 and 1946.

I first met Arthur at a small 'fly in' at Swanton Morley in 1996. We were there with our stall, raising funds for the Museum, and Arthur also had taken a stall to sell copies of his book, *Lucky Liberator* which he was selling to generate funds for RAF and other charities. When the 100 Group room opened at the Museum in 1997, Arthur was in attendance and recited his poem on the *Liberator* as he was always invited to do at subsequent reunions he attended.

We will always remember his enthusiasm for the Reunions, often Arthur was the first 100 Group Association member to arrive, up to an hour before the event started. He never wasted that time, volunteering to polish the glass on display cases to help prepare the 100 Group section of the Museum.

### *Kelvin Sloper*

Martin Staunton also remembers Arthur as 'a very worthy member of our first Committee' and believes it would be very nice if we could acknowledge his efforts in this Newsletter. He shares these few words in memory of him -

*'Arthur volunteered for the RAF at 18 years old. He served first as a flight mechanic, then a fitter/engines. After volunteering for Aircrew he became a flight engineer destined for Coastal Command, flying B24 Liberators. After being retrained in the Bahamas he was transferred to 100 Group Bomber Command and was posted to No.223 Squadron at RAF Oulton. He flew on 36 operations with pilot John Briscoe, DFC and never missed an Op. He was a founder member of our first committee and was unstinting in his support and efforts. Arthur leaves a widow, Jean, and son. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.'*

*Martin Staunton*

# Letters Page

*Hello Janine & Ian,*

*Congratulations on the Spring Newsletter. This will have to be maintained now you have set a standard.*

*With reference to my question re the Mid-Upper Turret on the Trenton Halifax, I believe I have found the answer to it, and if only I had thought about it I would not have needed to ask the question but would have gone to my bookshelf.*

*According to 'Halifax at War' by Brian Rapier. the aircraft in question was constructed in March 1945 and delivered to Tarrant Rushton as a HALIFAX A Mk.7. The A stands for Airborne. If the Mid upper turret had been incorporated in this aircraft it would have restricted the movement of paratroops as the seat and some equipment would have been blocking the centre of the aircraft. To confirm this thought, there is a picture of a collection of Halifaxes from 644 Squadron confirming No Turret.*

*See you in May.*

*Harry Freegard*

(see pages 20/21 in Spring Newsletter to which he refers)

\* \* \* \*

Dear Janine and Ian,

For many weeks now I've scolded myself for not writing to you to say "thank you" for such a refreshing Newsletter. It was read from cover to cover, then items re-read. A great effort.

The reminder to now get a cheque off for renewal of membership was acted upon as having had experience of getting money in, and the paper work. It only has to be done once, I tell myself...

We joined the Association to remember a friend who gave all, but the history of the RAF has been my great interest since schooldays in WWII, so as you can imagine any reference to a crash with the crew "getting away with it" has my full attention.

But all articles in the Newsletter are useful to Researchers as it confirms facts that have alluded us for too many years. It is a great way of remembering these young men who gave so much and the story on page 9 had me pulling books off my shelves as the village of Scarning stuck in the memory. It was a name new to me when first in print some years ago. The story can be found in the book "*Out of the Blue*" edited by Laddie Lucas, and it is in print that the Mosquito was a known rogue aircraft, having had various problems already. Serial number MM797 and to contemplate taking a dodgy 'plane across the North Sea, that takes courage!

So please keep up the good work. Will not write more, you are busy people. But "thank you"

Sincerely  
*Ron Durand*

\* \* \* \*

*Dear Janine & Ian,*

*Congratulations and thanks for the splendid 100 Group Newsletter which caused me to read it twice, and am now doing so again! Coincidentally it fell on the mat on the same morning as the ACA Magazine, which I continue to support, but find its contents incredibly boring with its format largely of Branch Reports.*

*I am also a member of RAFA (magazine fairly readable) and Bomber Command (magazine second to yours). I feel that if they do not soon merge they will inevitably go out of business (so will their members like me, 85 if I make it to June 18<sup>th</sup>!)*

*In total I flew 1007 hours, much of the time as an Instructor, and only 16 Ops (the interesting bit, as a Special Operator, 192 Squadron, Foulsham).*



**F/O Jack Ball March 1945**

*Your feature on P24 about Al Burgess, states that S.Os were a "special breed who ... kept themselves to themselves, understandably considering the nature of their work". Not my experience, with respect to Al, as apart from the operational 'intrusion' into my timetable, I was the Mess piano player, took part in excellent variety shows, played squash, soccer, cricket and rugby, and particularly enjoyed*

*knowing many of the superb ground crews (Sgt William Rees wrote "Espionage in the Ether" with his son John, a policeman whom I met in Saundersfoot).*

*As for the Officers Mess, the piano survived many dangers; the song lyrics unprintable!; good times with great blokes, including the Australians of 462 and the Americans of the small Lightning Flight, generous beyond belief, I still treasure USAAF 'wings' given to me.*

*On the subject of the Special Operators, two stand out. They are **F/Lt Jordan DSO**, who, with the gallant Wimpy crew, though with injuries and damage, survived, and obtained the vital "A1" frequency of German equipment, to enable jamming action to be taken against it. The second, **F/Lt H.B (Hank) Cooper, DSO DFC**, the most self-effacing man it was possible to meet, was a W/Op AG who I think flew in that capacity elsewhere (two tours to the best of my recollection), and somehow got himself as Nav/Spec Op with Mosquitos, on which he flew forty Ops, the last being his hundredth operation, when Group Captain Willis presented him with the DSO.*

*Hank, with whom I kept in touch since 1947, when we both left the RAF after doing some "Y Service" work on Lancasters from Shepherds' Grove, died last year, and his Obituary in the National Press was the first description in print of this remarkable man's exploits. Incidentally it was my great ambition to win 'one' game against Hank on the squash court, but I never succeeded.*

*Lastly, an account of my VJ night. After a huge party in the Mess I somehow found myself in a car driven by F/Lt Charlie Matthews, an Aussie pilot, in the direction of Bylaugh Hall. I have no idea why I wanted to go there, but Charlie had the most important 'Op' of his tour in mind, to make contact with AVM Addison, the 100 Group Boss, which incredibly, he did, via a public phone which stood in the lobby of the Hall, telling the AVM of the end of the \*/\*!\*/ war, and reminding him to give up the Aussies who were heading 'down under'. Unbelievable language! The AVM took it in good part, and the episode closed. A great cheer when up for Charlie and me!*

*Finally, I must regretfully say that, at 84 I am disabled by rheumatism, and my wife, 85, is blind and has only part mobility, thus I do not get to Reunions.*

*Thank you again. With kind regards*

***F/O Jack Ball**, Spec.Op, 192 Squadron, 100 Group (Special Duties)*

*(We include a special memorial piece for **F/Lt H.B (Hank) Cooper, DSO DFC**, in our next Autumn Newsletter)*

Dear Janine and Ian,

My initial reason for writing was to say a '*Thank You*' for the New Member mention in the Spring Newsletter, and the reference to long standing member Peter Witts. When I rang recently, I was intending to correct a small misunderstanding in as much as I was not at Foulsham with Peter, that singular honour belongs to him and his contemporaries in 100 Group. We met up at lunch in the W/O's and Sergeant's Mess in the Citadel at Plymouth after attending the Memorial Service to Allied Air Forces on the Hoe. Peter recognized me as a member of 462 Sqdn, stationed at Driffield, which was also the home of the other Australian Squadron, 466. He was puzzled that our crew had not been posted with the rest of the Squadron to Foulsham.

About the time the proposed transfer was scheduled to take place, the Squadron had, naturally, to remain operational, so on the 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 44 we embarked on a daylight raid to Sterkrade in the Ruhr. We met extremely heavy flak and suffered heavy damage during which our rear gunner was killed. We returned to Driffield and subsequently took Jimmy's body to his home at Glasgow where he was buried with family and our crew in attendance. Also with our party was Bill Glennister, rear gunner from another crew and Jimmy's friend from training days.

On returning to Driffield, we were told that Bill's crew had been on an Op with a spare gunner and been lost over Germany. Our crew was given a few days leave and on our return found 462 Sqdn had gone to Foulsham.

The final outcome was that we were a crew with no rear gunner and Bill Glennister a rear gunner with no crew. Obvious solution ... Bill became our rear gunner and our crew were signed over to 466 Sqdn, and remained at Driffield, finally completing 38 operations on Halifax Mk IIIB's.

Peter Witts and his wife have remained good friends with my wife (ex Wren) and I, and although we shall not be able to attend this years Re-union Dinner, we look forward to more enjoyable meetings in the future.

That's the story, complete with spelling mistakes, typing errors, bad grammar, little or no punctuation or correlation ... but what can you expect from an 83yr old ex aircrew member. Incidentally, although it has never been disproved I think I have the dubious honour of being probably, at five feet and one half inch, the shortest Navigator/Bomb Aimer in the Commonwealth Air Forces.

*Les Pedley*

*Dear Janine & Ian*

*What a wonderful weekend we had at the 100 Reunion, thanks to all those who made it happen.*

*I expect you are still working through the notes you made. But first, we need to record our thanks for the effort and dedication Martin made to produce 'Avenging in the Shadows'. What a wonderful historic record of 214 Squadron! It is a pity that a credit was not recorded in the book of Martin's work to produce it.*

*I was so interested in Richard's article in the Spring Newsletter, concerning the seven Air gunners from 10 AGS. My elder brother, Bob Jones, was one of those who went missing in P Peter. All my parents ever knew was the telegram reporting 'Lost on a special mission over Hamburg'. Thanks to Eileen and Martin and their formation of the 100 Group Association we now know so much more about those times and for our family, how and where P Peter was lost. I well remember how excited Eileen was when she found someone who knew and had flown with her husband and Bob, at the Opening of the 100 Group Room at the Museum in September 1997. That person was of course the one and only Peter Witts! At each Reunion Peter has given me such an insight into life with 100 Group and tells me about Bob, as he was in the bed opposite Bob; and of the great friendship they shared.*

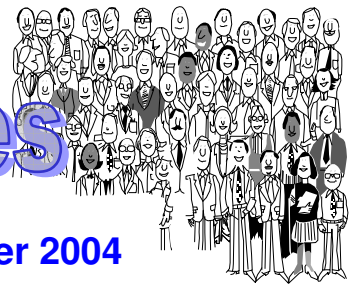
*It is a privilege for me to share that friendship with Peter, one of the great characters and supports of the Association.*

*As for Pete Newman's sensing their eminent loss, on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> March, Bob wrote a letter saying that they had just returned from an operation and was sitting in the sun, but 'I really hope we do not have to go again tonight'.*

*The 100 Group Association and the Norwich Aviation Museum ensures that all those that served in 100 Group and those that were missing are assured of a permanent tribute and safe touchdown there, now and for the future.*

*Roger Jones*

# Shared Experiences



In memory of Ted Gomersall who died 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004



**Centre of Picture: Ted Gomersall (13<sup>th</sup> Oct 1944)**

*"that's me in the middle - acting, unpaid O.C of the so-called 'Communications Flight'"*

Ted was born in 1914 and brought up in Wakefield, moving to York in 1947 and to Bishop Wilton in 1976. He married Hilda in 1937 and had two sons, David and Andrew. Sadly, Hilda and David died in 2000 and 2003 respectively.

Ted volunteered to join the RAF in World War II and was a Navigator in Mosquitoes, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.

During this time, Ted and Hilda his wife wrote to one another every day. Hilda kept all his letters and it was through these that Ted was able to write to Nina, (Editor Janine's mother) in her quest for information about her wartime fiancé Vic Vinnell. It is within these words that we catch a glimpse of the man as he was in 1944:

*"Vic and I were close, and shortly before he and Jack went missing, on the night of the 26/27<sup>th</sup> November 1944, we had been to London together, when flying was off for some reason. He introduced me to the Wings Club (in Grosvenor Square?) and we gate-crashed some posh parties in Belgravia.*

*Bud George (known universally as George, the automatic pilot) and Jack Fisher were close friends - I believe they came across to the UK together after initial training in Canada (George was my pilot). I too was a Special Operator/Navigator in 192, using equipment to identify enemy radio/radar wavelengths, confusing and jamming transmissions. I would say that Vic was occupied in some such activities on the night of the 26/27<sup>th</sup> November 1944 when he went missing with Jack (pilot). I see from my Log Book that I was not flying that night, but on ops to Neuss on the following night, the 27<sup>th</sup>.*

*From letters to my wife, Hilda, at the time, I remember those days well ...*

**Sunday 26.11.44** *In the evening Vic and I went to the flicks and saw 'Lifeboat'...*

**Monday 27.11.44** *... Jack Fisher and Vic failed to return last night, and we have no news of them yet. There is a slight possibility that they managed to get down in Belgium or France. I do hope so. It's at times like this that one realises the futility of war ... but they're probably quite ok at some airfield across the Channel.*

**Tuesday 28.11.44** *There is still no news of Jack Fisher and Vic, and today they are officially posted as 'Missing'. Vic was going to be married on his next Leave, and his girl, who is in the WAAF, (Nina) was trying to get posted to Foulsham. In fact, he was half expecting her coming this week ... There is still hope that they put down at some obscure airfield in France. If it had been one of our larger airfields, we would have heard by now. And then, of course, they may have baled out over France or Germany. Anyhow, I hope they are both safe ... George (my pilot) is very shaken about Jack Fisher ... they were very good friends - rather naturally, I suppose, being the only two Canadians in the Flight at the moment ...*

**Wednesday 29.11.44** *... there is still no news of Jack and Vic, and their names have been rubbed off the crew list ...*

**Thursday 30.11.44** ... *There is still no news of Jack and Vic, and it begins to look as though they've bought it, reluctantly as one is to come to that conclusion ...*

**Sunday 3.12.44** *Our worst fears about Jack and Vic have been confirmed by the washing up of Jack's cap and a sock with Vic's name on it, on the south coast of France yesterday. It seems almost certain that they came down in the drink, but there are certain mysteries about it which will never be cleared up, I suppose ...*

*Vic was actually talking about Nina, his fiancée, and his plans just prior to the night of the 26/27<sup>th</sup> when he disappeared with Jack, his pilot.*

*Photograph (above) shows Jack Fisher on the left in flying jacket and capless on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1944, before Tony Emett (shown in picture with moustache) and I skived off to Yorkshire in a Tiger Moth.'*

Following the war and leaving the RAF, Ted went on to become a Customs and Excise Officer and, on retiring in 1976, he successfully studied several subjects at the Open University. He was also Vice President of York City Knights Rugby League Club. His other main interests were gardening, crosswords and various community activities in the village of Bishop Wilton.

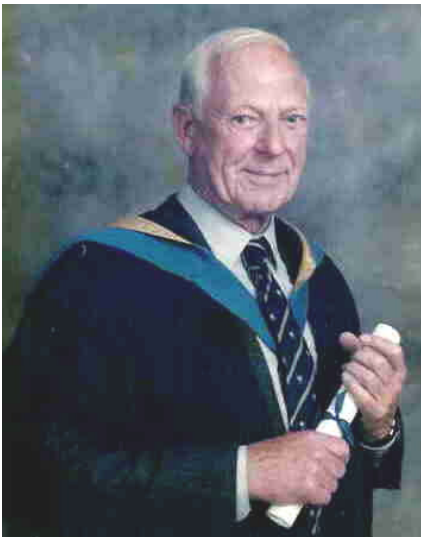
Andrew, Ted's surviving son, shared a close relationship with his father to the end and adds these personal memories of him in tribute:

*'I retired early and moved back to Yorkshire on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1998. My Dad died on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004. And these six years of seeing my Dad every day were very important to me. I would have described him as my Best Friend before this time, but over this period we became particularly close, especially when dealing with the deaths of my Mum and Brother, David. Although he was fully independent up to the day he died, we had all our meals together apart from breakfast. When we went out for lunch, I tried to get him to talk about his wartime exploits and occasionally he would tell me interesting things. We visited Foulsham, where he was based for most of the war, and the RAF 100 Group Museum at Horsham St Faith. We also visited the Mosquito Museum at St Albans, usually in conjunction with a York City Knights rugby league match in London. On two occasions, I sat in a mosquito with my Dad and experienced the cramped conditions in which he and his pilot had to work.*

*From what I picked up, he had the rank of Flight Lieutenant and was a navigator in mosquitoes. He told me he won the Distinguished Flying Cross for his general war record, but I do know he was involved in an incident where his mosquito was shot down with very sensitive secret equipment on board. He and his pilot managed to get the plane back out of enemy territory. However, I cannot find any citation with his DFC.*

*He was also based in the Middle East with the RAF, but I think that this was just after the war ended.*

*He and I also travelled abroad a little after my Mum died, visiting Jordan, Italy (twice), Germany and central Spain. We were both particularly interested in Roman history.'*



Ted, says his son, lived life to the full and will be remembered for his honesty and generosity in every part of his life.

Open University Award

Personal Note from the Editor:

Ted's letters were both a comfort and a strength to my mother, Nina, before she died in 1996, as they were one of the few times she was able to speak with someone who had known Vic, her fiancé, personally and served with him in 192 Squadron.

Thank you, Andrew (Ted's son) for letting us to use these words alongside your own as a tribute to him.



2 Photographs sent by Phil James Air Crew 'C' Flight  
Far right: Phil James, next to him Ted Gomersall



Ground Staff 'C' Flight

## LIFE AT RAF SWANNINGTON

By Bryan Gale

*In our Spring issue of this Newsletter we included a piece written by 'The Met Girl' at RAF Swannington, Dorothy Hudson, to which we have had some response in further letters and photographs. We therefore continue the theme with a collection of memories from Bryan Gale.*

Built in 1943, **Swannington** became operational on 1st April 1944, as part of the 100 Group. Home to 85 and 157 squadrons, equipped with Mosquito aircraft. Their role was largely one of supporting Bomber Missions over enemy occupied territory.

The airfield became disused in 1947. Much of the runway concrete has been lifted, crunched and used for aggregate, but there is still plenty of evidence of the three runways and perimeter tracks, and several derelict buildings remain.

I joined 157 Squadron when it was first formed in the last war at Castle Camps in February 1943. I was previously with 534 Squadron at Tangmere which was a turbolite Squadron where my Navigator and I were one of the Havoc crews. We served at Camps for a month before the whole Squadron was relocated to Bradwell Bay. We were the first Mosquito equipped Night Fighter Squadron in the RAF and the AI equipment was MK4 and 5 which was severely limited by height above the ground, which was the first thing the radio waves struck, generating a carpet of ground returns which smothered anything at greater range.



When the Squadron moved to Hunsdon in the defence of London, the Squadron formed a third flight using straight MKVI fighter/bomber a/c in an intruder role without any radar. At this time the battle of the Atlantic was hotting up and we were re-deployed to Predannack which is on the tip of Cornwall close to Mullion Cove

where we were employed in an operation called Instep, which really was us looking for the Ju88s which were looking for the Sunderlands (etc), which were looking for the U-boats. We flew in "finger 4" formations at 30 feet above the Atlantic down as far as Cape Ortugal on the north coast of Spain, which you will recall, was Fascist controlled and not very friendly towards us. We were assured that any fishing vessels we saw there were reporting our position to the Germans so were fair game for attack!! We had a fair amount of success at this, getting several 88s and a 177 which my Flight Commander and I dispatched, but one of our formation determined to get a shot in, struck the water and hit the sea, forcing him to ditch, which he did successfully. We returned and refuelled and re-armed at Predannack, before returning to the area and finding our downed comrades. We returned to Base and returned yet again, in company with an airborne lifeboat which was successfully dropped and we saw the two Mossie crew scramble into the lifeboat in which they sailed back to the Scilly Islands in 4 days, being awarded the DFC and DFM for the Sergeant Nav.

In March 1944 the Squadron moved to Valley to re-equip with Mossie 18s, equipped with new centimetric radar which was not so badly affected by ground returns, and gave much improved range up to over 10miles at 20 thousand feet; and eventually moved to Swannington, just outside Norwich, in May 44 in time for D-day as we were not allowed to take the new MKX radar out of the country until then.

My first raid as an intruder with 100 group was on June 7, to the airfields of Lesquin-Chievres in France in support of the D-Day landings, and we continued to fly in this role until we were withdrawn to West Malling for operations against the Doodle-Bugs; as we were the only thing anywhere near fast enough when refuelled with 150 grade petrol. These were called anti-Diver Patrols and involved flying just about 10,000 feet to be above the target, parallel to the coast, and watching for one flying out of France, turning towards it and well above, applying full throttle and rolling onto one's back and pulling through at speeds in excess of 400 mph to match them up and shoot them down. Of course, in those days the flight instruments were all air powered Gyroscopes which didn't have full freedom of movement in all planes and were toppled by the A/Cs inversion, forcing you to fly on "limited panel" for the recovery and subsequent kill, which, with 4 cannons was inevitable

In the September, we returned to Swannington and our role as Bomber Support acting as long range Night Fighters for the Bomber Stream flying above and below and to either side of them, looking for anything attempting to cross into the stream. This was quite good fun, if ever war can be; as with the superior speed of our a/c we could watch the bomber stream set off and still arrive over the target simultaneously and patrol for about an hour and still leave with them.

I completed more than 40 of these Sorties, completing my tour just before VE day, before going to Bomber Support Training Unit at Great Massingham as an Instructor. I was released in May 1946 to go to Edinburgh University (paid for by the Service, on the understanding that if they wished I would return afterwards); and in 1952, I was recalled, as I thought, for the Korean war with thoughts of Meteor and Vampire Night Fighters, which is where all my experience had been. But, no, it was to Control Flying School, which was then at Little Rissington!!!!!! For the next fourteen years, I was engaged in teaching people to fly, including the First All Through Jet FTS at Hullavington with the Jet Provost, which I was to meet again at The College of Airwarfare at Manby, before starting my last tour in the RAF with 99 Squadron at Lyneham.

I have worked for Airworks in Saudi Arabia at Rhyadh and for the CAA, then the MOCA in London and BAA at Heathrow, before becoming Director of Operations at Birmingham Airport, from where I retired to live in Lincolnshire.

It's been a bit of a mix up, but I've enjoyed it, except for getting older, which we can't avoid. It feels as if I have been shooting a line, as we used to say in older days; so I had better quit now. If there is anything else I can do for you just ask.

Yours now in retirement,  
Bryan D. Gale

(third front on photo)





Bryan Gale is far right, standing third up

- Far back row:      ?, ?, Gordon Lang, ?, John Collins, Bucky Cunningham, Lou Brandon, Oscar Wilde,
- Far right side:      Les Scholefield, Chris Woodcock, **BRYAN GALE**, Laurie Waters, Ken Pybus (intel. Off.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> row from back:      Les Butt, Satch Churches (RAAF), Jimmy Penrose, P/O Vale (RAAF)  
                                          ?, Ron Goss, Basher Broom
- Far left, standing:      Radar Officer
- 3<sup>rd</sup> row from back:      ?, ?, Dennis Crowther, Syd Astley, Geoff Edwards, R.N. Crew, R.N. Crew, Alan Brookes, R.N. Crew, R.N. Crew.  
                                          (*Two slightly forward of last two persons unknown*)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> row from front:      F/O Balderstone, Frank Money, ?, F/Lt Sumner, F/Lt Tweedale,  
                                          F/L Hanahan, Bill Tofts, Jimmy Matthews, ?, Brian Whitlock,  
                                          F/O Gilbert Davidson
- Front row:              John Smythe, Steve Stephens, Sqn/Ldr Chisholm, W/Cdr Dennison,  
                                          S/L Drummond, Flt/Lt Benson, Sqdn/Ldr Doleman

... not forgetting, Towser, Doley's Dog!



**85 Squadron Swannington Aircrew, Tour 1945**  
**C.O Wg Com. K Davison sits centre of the front row.**  
*(photograph sent in by George Honeyman)*

**George Honeyman** writes:



The Night Fighter contribution within 100 Group must be worth an occasional mention! At RAF Swannington, from 5<sup>th</sup> June 1944 - 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945, 157 and 85 Squadron statistics combined came to -

1958 Sorties, 9622 Flying Hours  
 106 enemy aircraft destroyed

RAF Swannington closed in September 1945 after 157 and 85 Squadrons had left.

The Night Fighter force within 100 Group totalled seven squadrons of 25 a/c each and a development unit (23,85,141,157,169,239 and 515).

**George Honeyman**

There are 12 members of 85 Squadron who served in 100 Group (of all valued) still going strong, who are members of an active 85 Squadron Association. Martin Bowman, who is publishing a book on 100 Group this year is the best authority on the subject. Meantime, read '*Confounding the Reich*' published in 1996.

George goes on to say:

Re: Spring Newsletter 2006 - Page 14, Dorothy Hudson

Re: Spring Newsletter 2006 - Page 17, Bryan Gale

Dorothy is not quite right! I was at Swannington from November 1944 onwards, as a navigator on 85 Squadron, engaged in 100 Group Mosquito intruder operations supporting the heavy bomber force. I am a member!

We shared Swannington with 157 Squadron and our exploits have been extensively covered in *'Fighter Squadron at War'* and Martin Bowman's (also one of our members) *'Confounding the Reich'*, *'Mosquitopanic'*, etc, etc. Four or five Norfolk airfields were involved in night-fighter operations against German night fighters intent on causing casualties to our bombers. Some of the top aces were at Swannington, including Burbridge and Skelton (21 kills) of 85 Squadron; 'Dolly' Doleman of 157 Squadron, and others.

I never cease to be amazed at the few references to 100 Group exploits which mention the Mosquito night fighter force.

The 'heavies' involved in 'jamming', redint, elint, window dropping, using Maudrel, Jostle, etc seem to have cornered all the attention in the Newsletters.

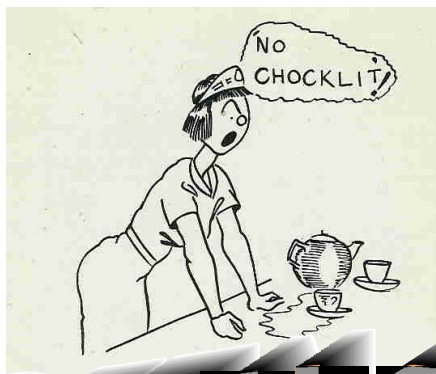
The efforts of our Mosquito forces also played a decisive part in 100 Group bomber support operations!

85 Squadron still has an active association with annual get-togethers, but not many wartime members are left. Ginger Owen is still on the go! (15 kills)

Perhaps Dorothy could tell us about the romances involving her WAAF colleagues. One M.T driver married 'Dolly' Doleman of 157 Squadron. Others gave the young aircrew boys lots of cuddles!

Sincerely,  
George ('Jock') Honeyman

Altogether I stayed in the RAF for nearly 31 years, 1942-1973



# NOSTALGIA

This is a new Section designed to help people looking for something or who have something to give away

**Janine** is looking for old knitting patterns which use up old balls of wool to make little cottage toaster covers, doll toilet roll holders, novelty tea-cosies and the like. Patterns used to appear in a small magazine called '*Bazaar*'. She is also looking for a set of original 1944 Navigator Wings.

**Ernest Hughes** would very much like a print of a 171 Halifax if anyone can oblige.

Anyone who can help or who has something they would like to advertise, please contact the Editors direct (details on Editors Page at start of Newsletter).

## MEANWHILE ...

**Doc Elliott** wonders if anyone can help identify any of these crewmen from North Creake?



# Where Are You Now?

This is a new Section suggested by a member in the hope of tracing someone from the past



This is a photograph of the **MT Section at RAF Oulton** in 1944. Does anyone know any names or what became of them?

It has been sent in by a member who is particularly interested in tracing **Mary**, who worked in the MT Section at Oulton and drove the crew coach, taking crew to and from aircraft. Mary was from Potter's Bar and worked for the Lifeboat Institute at their HQ before joining up. Mary would have been 25yrs in 1945 and of slender build.

Can anyone help?

\* \* \* \*

Can anyone also help in knowing what has become of **TREVOR ALLEN** of 192 Squadron who hails from New Zealand and attended the RAF Association Reunion in 2003? Janine and Ian would be most interested to hear from anyone with news of Trevor. Trevor is seen here in the picture talking with Peter Witts.





## 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*).
- 192 Squadron** **Ted Gomersall** passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004, and his son Andrew has kindly written to tell us the news. *We have included in this Newsletter some of Ted's shared memories and photographs as a dedication.*
- 192 Squadron** **Hank Cooper DSO, DFC** is remembered by Jack Ball (F/O J K Ball) also from 192 Squadron who knew him well. Hank died last year, 2005. In the Letters Page of this Newsletter, Jack shares experiences and memories of him. (*Look out in the Autumn issue where we will be including a memorial piece to him.*)

- 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.
- 214 Squadron** We were sad to hear that **Mr J Creech** passed away in April 2006. Mr and Mrs Creech attended our 2005 Reunion and we remember with fondness how much Mr Creech enjoyed our visit to Oulton and particularly the coach tour around the airfield.
- 233 Squadron** It is with deepest regret that we record the passing of **Arthur Anthony** who was a Flight Engineer on 223 Squadron. Arthur was a very valuable member of our committee when at the start of the Association. He died on May 13th after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. He leaves a widow and son. Arthur will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. *(Martin Staunton)*
- 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 of 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 names they would like to put forward, please send them to us to be included in the next issue.

# A Quiet Corner

*We received a lovely letter from Ernest Hughes, with a copy of his book: 'The Silver Thread'. We will include a different poem in this new section of the Newsletter which we trust members will appreciate.*

*Ernie (Taff) Hughes served with No. 171 Squadron late December 1944 to the end of hostilities ... 'I understand 171 did, initially, fly Stirlings, but it was all Halifax Mk 3s when I joined the Squadron. I would very much like a print of a 171 Halifax if anyone can oblige?'*



## SQUADRON MEMORIES - REMINISCENCE

Do you sometimes turn the pages  
Of your log-book - sit and dream:  
Once again the battle rages -  
There they fall - (a silent scream).  
Now they glimmer - distant jewels  
In a crown - (not now of thorn)  
And they twinkle - pardon - sprinkle  
Tears o'er those who sneering - scorn  
Freedom's warriors of the Starlight -  
'Guardians of tomorrow's Dawn'.

*Ernie (Taff) Hughes*





### Recommended by Members

#### **'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, published by Woodfield Publishing

Copies now available through Bookshop at Museum

*(a documentary film about this book will be shown on ITV in December this year)*

#### **'Life and Times of Roy Hastie'**

By Peter Lovatt, published by Compaid Graphics

About Flt Lt Hastie, 223 Squadron.

#### **'Out of the Blue'**

Edited by Laddie Lucas

#### **Halifax at War**

by Brian Rapier

#### **One Man's War**

by Johnnie Clark D.F.C

Published by Peacock Press of Holt, all profits going to the RAF Benevolent Fund

#### **First Light**

By Geoffrey Wellum, published by Penguin

Geoffrey did a four year tour of duty with 192 Squadron, and shares in this book his experiences as a fighter pilot through World War II.

#### **Mosquito Pathfinder**

By Albert & Ian Smith, published by Crecy

A Navigator's 90 WWII Bomber Operations

### **The Silver Thread**

By Ernest W Hughes

A lovely book of poetry, dedicated to all those who served in RAF Bomber Command 1939-1945. *(See our new Section in this Newsletter entitled: A Quiet Corner)*

### **Circuits and Bumps**

By Gerhard Heilig, published by Woodfield Publishing  
Reminiscences of an airman in war and peace.

### **The Cry of the Nightjar**

By Gerhard Heilig

A novel based on the author's wartime RAF experiences.

## **... & Magazines**

**'Aeroplane'** Published monthly £3.45

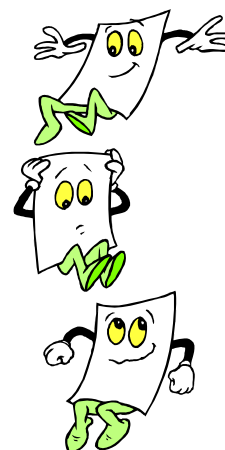
**'Airmail'** Published quarterly

Journal of the  
Royal Air Forces  
Association

**ACA Magazine**

**RAFA Magazine**

**Bomber Command Magazine**



# 100 Group Related Items

Available from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum Shop

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

Now available is the recently reprinted history of 214 Squadron, Royal Air Force. Detailing the history of 214 from its formation on 1 April 1918 until final disbandment in 1977, the book contains full details of World War 2 operations including those from Oulton as part of 100 Group.

A4 size softback 255 pages £18.00 including UK postage, £15.50 if collected

## **Pursuit Through Darkened Skies by Michael Allen**

An absorbing first hand account of the authors operations from West Raynham with 239 Squadron. RAF 100 Group.

Airlife hardback 347 pages, reduced from £22.95 to £6.99

## **The Other Battle by Peter Hinchcliffe**

This book traces the parallel development of RAF night bomber operations with that of the Luftwaffe's night fighting force.

Airlife softback 352 pages, special price £3.99

## **Bomber Boys by Mel Rolfe**

Twenty dramatic World War 2 bomber aircrew experiences.

Grub Street hardback, reduced from £17.99 to £3.99

## **Lie in the Dark and Listen by Wing Commander Ken Rees**

The remarkable exploits of a bomber pilot and great escaper.

Grub Street hardback 224 pages, reduced from £17.99 to £6.99

## **Men Behind the Medals by Graham Pitchfork**

Paying tribute to the bravery of RAF aircrew who risked, and all too often lost, their lives, during World War 2.

Softback, 272 pages reduced from £12.95 to £5.99

## **Air War Over Europe by Chaz Bowyer**

The author traces the broad pattern and effect of air power in Europe during World War Two.

Softback, 229 pages, reduced from £12.95 to £3.99

### **Enemy in the Dark by Peter Spoden**

The story of a Luftwaffe night fighter pilot.

Originally written as a private book for the author's family. Translated into English by RAF Bomber Command veteran Peter Hinchcliffe.

*Cerberus softback, 160 pages, reduced from £8.99 to £3.99*

\* \* \* \*

### **Postage rates on books;**

*One book £2.00, two £3.00, three and over £4.00*

*(rates valid until postage rate changes due in mid August 2006)*

\* \* \* \*

### **Blazer Badges**

We have the following in stock; 100 Group Crest, 171,192,199,214 and 223 Squadrons. £12.00 each (including postage)

### **Plastic Coasters**

We have square plastic coasters with the following squadron crests; 171,192,199,214 and 223 Squadrons and 100 Group headquarters.

Each Coaster costs just 75 pence (including postage)

\* \* \* \* **Coming Soon** \* \* \* \* **Coming Soon** \* \* \* \*

*Books, copies can be reserved and we will contact you when they are available.*

### **Ordinary Man, Super Pilot by Peter Lovatt**

The life and times of Flt Lt Roy Hastie, DFC, AE. Describes the RAF service of a pilot who flew Hudsons and Liberators with Coastal Command and went on to serve with 223 Squadron at Oulton on 100 Group operations. Peter Lovatt is a member of the RAF 100 Group Association.

Full details of this book will be given in the next Newsletter.

*A5 size, softback, price details awaited.*

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

to be published in September 2006, the first title in a new aviation heritage trail series. Looks at the history of 100 Group and gives details of what remains to be seen today.

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

### **I was a Brylcreem Boy by Ron James**

By the author of *Avenging in the Shadows*, tells of his own RAF service including operations with 214 Squadron.

Should be available late 2006, details of price etc awaited.

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

Or send your order with payment by post to ;

The City Norwich Aviation Museum,  
Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith, Norwich, Norfolk. NR10 3JF

## **Dates for your Diary** **2006/7**



### **SEPTEMBER**

**1<sup>st</sup>**

Deadline for writings, articles, inclusions in Autumn Newsletter, to be sent direct to Editors: Janine Harrington & Ian Kirk, address on Editors Page.

### **JANUARY 2007**

**1<sup>st</sup>**

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

*(Please note: Membership fees have gone up for the first time since the Association was formed.*

*They are now £10 per person. Please contact the Museum if there is a problem.)*

### **MAY 2007**

**11, 12, 13<sup>th</sup>**

RAF 100 Group Association Reunion

*(Any suggestions for visits and activities gratefully received!)*

# 100 Group Order of Battle

| <b>SQD</b>   | <b>AIRCRAFT</b>              | <b>1st 100 GROUP OPERATION</b> | <b>BASE</b>                | <b>SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL</b>                      |
|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 192          | Mosquito, Halifax Wellington | Dec 1943                       | Foulsham                   | 2088/5 Losses<br>Electronic Intel/Flint          |
| 141          | Beaufighters, Mosquito       | Dec 1943                       | West Raynham               | 1214/11 Losses<br>80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Dest |
| 219          | Mosquito                     | Jan 1944                       | West Raynham               | 1394/9 Losses<br>51 En AC Dest                   |
| 515          | Mosquito                     | March 1944                     | Little Snoring, Messingham | 1366/21 losses<br>27 En AC Dest                  |
| 169          | Mosquito                     | Jan 1944                       | Little Snoring             | 1247/13 Losses<br>25 En AC + 1 V1 Dest           |
| 214          | Fortress                     | April 1944                     | Sculthorpe, Oulton         | 1225/12 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming             |
| 199          | Stirling, Halifax            | May 1944                       | North Creak                | 466/6 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming               |
| 157          | Mosquito                     | May 1944                       | Swannington                | 1336/5 Losses<br>37 En AC +39 V1 Dest            |
| 85           | Mosquito                     | June 1944                      | Swannington                | 1190/7 Losses<br>71 En AC+30 V1 Dest             |
| 23           | Mosquito                     | July 1944                      | Little Snoring             | 1067/8 Losses<br>18 En AC Dest                   |
| 223          | Liberator Fortress           | Sept 1944                      | Oulton                     | 629/3 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming               |
| 171          | Stirling, Halifax            | Sept 1944                      | North Creak                | 583/4 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming               |
| 462 RAAF     | Halifax                      | March 1945                     | Foulsham                   | 621/7 Losses<br>Jamming/Windows                  |
| 36 & 803 BS  | Boeing B-17F P38             | Jan 1944                       | Sculthorpe, Oulton         | 1211/0 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming              |
| 857 & 858 BS | Consolidated B-24G           | Jan 1944                       | Oulton                     | 280/2 Losses<br>Electronic Jamming               |



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