



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

Summer 2011

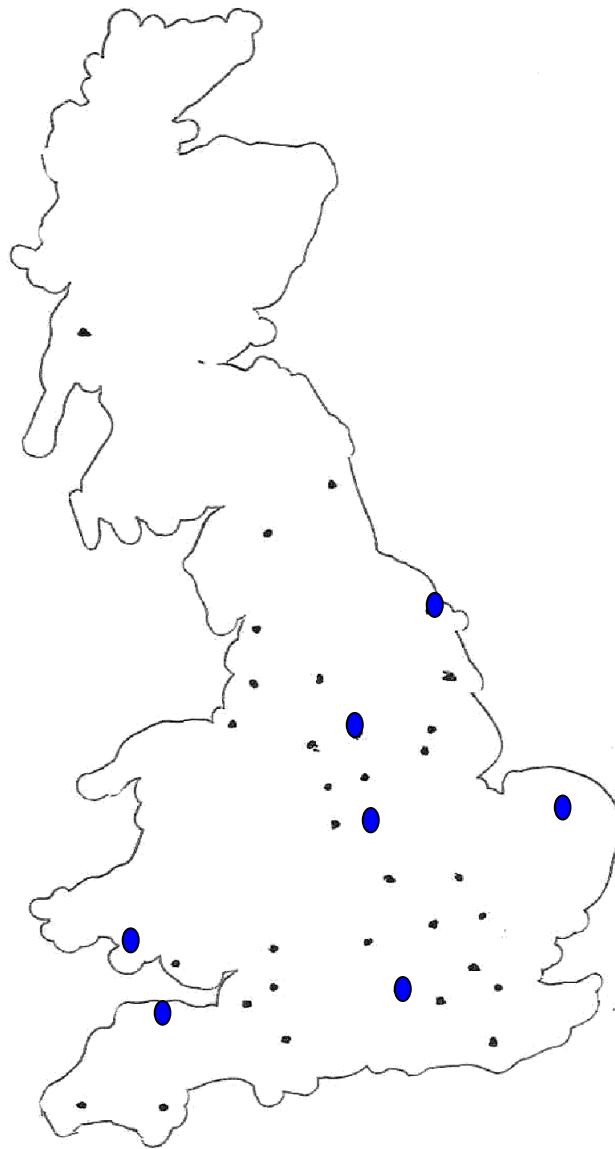


100 Group Association Chairman Wing Cdr John Stubbington: [REDACTED]
100 Group Association Secretary Janine Harrington: [REDACTED]

Home to RAF 100 Group Association
City of Norwich Aviation Museum
Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith, Norwich, Norfolk NR10 3JF
Telephone: 01603 893080

RAF 100 Group Association

Membership Areas



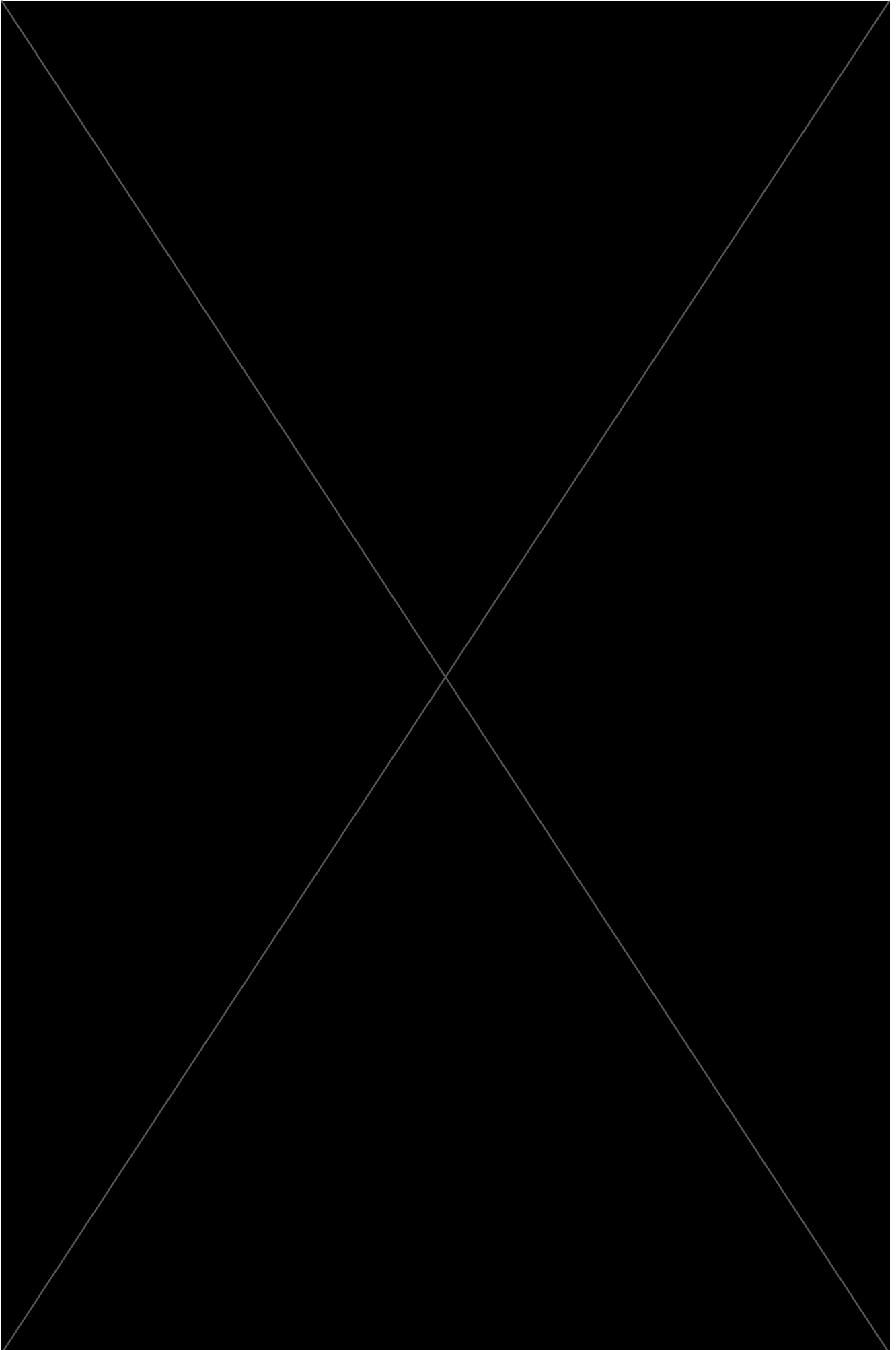
Each dot represents an area where there is a cluster of members
Big dots show where members of the RAF 100 Group Association Committee live

Members who live abroad are in the following countries:

Northern Ireland
Canada
Austria
China
Germany
Australia
USA

RAF 100 Group Association

Committee



EDITORS PAGE



Dear Friends,

How can I even begin to describe the wonderful weekend shared at our May RAF 100 Group Association 2011 weekend? I write this on my return, with memories still so vivid, and the feelings of all those we met and sat with and talked to. Always, this weekend is special. Always, there is something different, unique. And I know there are many who feel as I do right now, because I have the letters, cards and emails to prove it. What made this Reunion even more special was that I was able to share it personally with someone just as passionate about aviation and the Association and its members as I. Finally, I was able to introduce the man who changed my life around - Tony Bradley. So many of you said how happy I looked, radiant was the word used. And yes, bubbling up from somewhere deep inside me was an absolute feeling of joy that finally I had arrived. Finally I was surrounded by all those I love more than anything else in the world.

Tony and I work as a team. We compliment one another's strengths and weaknesses well. And he is as likely to answer the telephone as I. On the Friday of the Reunion, 13th May, we celebrated our first year together. And who better to share it with than members of the Association.

Sadly, this year, we don't have a separate Reunion Supplement. Cost cutting measures means we are limiting the Reunion and photographs to this one edition. But I hope, in creating it, that it will still convey the depth of feeling, the sense of pride and friendship and love that permeated through the three days we spent together. If there is anyone else who can receive this magazine through email please let us know. It is urgent now that we keep down costs where possible.

Out of the Reunion we have two new members on the Committee: Tony and Linda. You can learn more about Linda and her father's experiences at the Reunion through the pages of this magazine. Their story is the essence of what this Association is all about ... bringing together past and present, sharing forgotten stories, giving new life to old memories, and forging friendships that will last a lifetime for all concerned. Linda expressed her own feelings about coming to the Reunion for the first time so well that I am using her writings to share with you the way it was.

A huge thank you to all those who attended and made this Reunion so special. However, it was with much sadness, on our return, that we learned of the passing of a very dear and valued friend: Alan Thomsett. It was lovely to meet his daughter Anne at the Reunion, and our thoughts remain with his family at this sad time.

Over recent months Tony and I have done a trawl through membership archives, sending out letters to lapsed members. A number of people have welcomed the contact and restored their membership and we welcome them back into the family. Others have passed away. Please check the '*Final Posting*' section at the back to remember them all.

Otherwise, your thoughts, letters, writings and shared experiences are most welcome. We love receiving them, and know that members enjoy reading about others who served in RAF No 100 Group.

Janine & Tony
XX

Items for Newsletter should be sent to:
Janine Harrington/Tony Bradley
7 Ashley Court, Filey, North Yorkshire YO14 9LS
Telephone: 01723 512544 raf100groupassociation@gmail.com

Chairman's Report



THE 100 (BOMBER SUPPORT) GROUP ASSOCIATION

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MAY 2011

Dear Members,

My very best wishes to you all; and especially to those who were unable to attend the Reunion earlier in May. I appreciate the difficulties of travel and of health, often increasing as time goes by.

It is with that in mind that I express my tribute to Janine for her work with the Newsletters, which act as a connection between all of our members wherever you may live. The Committee has given a great deal of thought to the production and postage costs of these Newsletters, which consume about 85% of our annual income from subscriptions. We have chosen to continue forward for the next 12 months with an issue every three months, and to review the situation again before the next Reunion which will be held over the weekend of Friday 11th through to Sunday 13th May, 2012.

The outstanding element of the Reunion just held was the presentation and dedication of the No. 100 Group Association Standard, for which we are all indebted to Peter Witts and his family. The Standard, together with the Accessories and – by no means least – the noble work of Rod Vowler as the Standard Bearer, will be a feature of activities over the years to come.

This year we were blessed with remarkably good weather, which acted as a wonderful backdrop to a very successful Reunion. We must all pay tribute to the outstanding hospitality of the local communities at Oulton and Foulsham; to the church at Horsham St Faith and the Aylsham Town Band; and the Aviation Museum. Without their continuing help and support, the Reunions would be but a shadow of what has been achieved. However, I make the point that the Association cannot afford to take that hospitality for granted. I have written to each of those communities to express our appreciation, but we should also consider what else the Association could do to contribute to those communities. I will ask the Committee to think on this and to make recommendations, which we will discuss in future Newsletters.

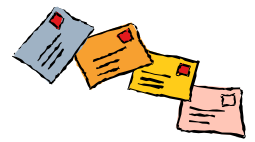
Arising from discussions with National Trust staff at Blickling Hall it is most likely that the No.100 Group plaque, which was produced in 2009 for display at Bylaugh Hall, will be relocated to the RAF Museum at Blickling. The plaque will have much greater visibility to the public at Blickling than it would have at Bylaugh, but of course the script on the plaque will reflect the central role of Bylaugh as the Group Headquarters.

It is with great sadness that I conclude this letter with most recent news, to announce the death of Alan Thomsett. It had been my great privilege to have known Alan and to have valued his friendship and historical advice. He had initially flown operations with 1473 Flight during the Battle of the Beams in 1941, then as part of No.80 Wing. 1473 Flight subsequently merged with No. 192 Squadron and then on to No.100 Group when it formed at the end of November 1943. He was a master of the trade and will be sadly missed. An officer and a gentleman. I note that the role of No. 192 Squadron remains active to this time, having been re-numbered to No. 51 Squadron in 1958.

With my most sincere best wishes to all members,

John Stubbington, Wing Commander, Chairman

LETTERS PAGES



Dear John,

I am writing with the very sad news that my father died this morning. I think my brother will be sending an email to everyone on father's address list. Please forgive possible duplication, but I wanted to write individually to those friends of Alan's whom I have met.

Many, many thanks to you and to members of the RAF 100 Group Association for making me so welcome at the annual Reunion in Norfolk, and for all your good wishes to my father. I'm so glad I came, and father thoroughly enjoyed debriefing me on my return!

With kind regards, many thanks, and my very best wishes,

Anne Thomsett

Dear all,

I enclose information about Dad's funeral in the form in which it will appear in the Telegraph (Thursday 2nd June), and the Wiltshire Times (Friday 3rd June):

THOMSETT

Alan Henry died peacefully at home, in his sleep, on 27th May 2011, aged 87.

The Thanksgiving service will be held at St Mary's Church, Steeple Ashton, Nr Trowbridge, on Friday 10th June at 2.30pm. Donations, if so desired, to the British Heart Foundation or the RAF Benevolent Fund, c/o Arthur Mays, Funeral Directors, 52 Warminster Rd., Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3PF.

On behalf of Alan's immediate family, I would like to take this opportunity to thank so many of you for all the flowers and messages of sympathy and lovely memories that you have so kindly sent us. They are a great comfort to us at this sad time.

Many thanks,

Anne Thomsett



Dear Janine,

Thank you for Confound and Destroy. We will not be attending the Reunion this year as it coincides with my 60th birthday and my retirement from work. We will be away in the sun. Though not there in body, all our thoughts will be with you.

Best wishes

Clive & Lynne

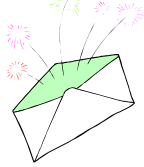


Dear Janine,

We trust you are both well and expect you are very busy with the Reunion. We are sorry to tell you that we will be unable to attend the Reunion. Helen has had an ongoing problem with becoming dizzy and finding it difficult to stand for long. Unfortunately, travel makes it worse at the moment. Although Helen has an appointment to see a Specialist, we have decided it would be best to avoid a long journey at this time.

We are very sorry to miss such a great weekend. Could you please give apologies for our absence at the AGM. Also a special greeting to Peter Witts, who flew with my brother Bob and is always able to tell me more about their flying times together. Thank you again for all the dedicated work you do on our behalf. We wish you all a very happy and successful weekend.

*Very Best Wishes,
Roger & Helen*



Dear Janine,

Would you please be so kind as to offer my sincere apologies for not being able to attend the 100 Group Association AGM on Saturday 14th May.

I am sure you will all have a chatty get together as always. Thank goodness 100 Group still survives so well, when so many of our other aircrew organisations such as 12 & 626 Squadron RAF Wickenby Register (my first Squadron) A.G. Association and Air Crew Association have fallen by the wayside or should I say, 'failing to take off' ...

Take good care now, will be with you all very much in spirit. The magazine is always superb and memorable.

David Butler, Sqn Ldr
Ex 171 Sqn RAF North Creake (2nd Tour)



Janine



I have recently come across a photo of my father (Arthur Norman Nelson, known as Norman) who was a Flight Sergeant in the RAF.

The photos are dated 1943/1944 and references Squadron 192, 100 Group.

My father passed away a number of years ago, but I was wondering whether you had any information regarding his service and time with 100 Group? He mentioned very little about his service with the exception that he was a Wireless Operator I believe.

If anyone could provide any relevant material I would be grateful to complete this important part of my family's history.



Regards

Howard Nelson howard@meadow-barn.net

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I regret to inform you that Squadron Leader Patrick Keating RAF (Ret'd) passed away on 14 February 2011.

Pat was a very long serving member and stalwart supporter of the AOC UK Chapter. Many of you will remember him as our active link to Norwich Aviation Museum and the 100 Group Museum within it. Illness alone had prevented him from attending this year's Chapter AGM in London.



His cremation and a celebration of his life was held on Wednesday 2nd March at Earlham Crematorium, Norwich at 4.30 pm.

Donations in his memory can be sent to The RAF Benevolent Fund, c/o Nicholas E Potts and daughter, Angel House, Angel Road, Norwich, NR3 3HP.

Our thoughts are with his family,

David Kitching



To anyone who knew [Mrs Joan Cunningham](#), this is to say that she died suddenly in a Nursing Home on 20th February 2011. Janine was telephoned with this sad news by her sister.



Dear Friends

It comes with great regret to announce the closure of the RAF Millom Museum and its entry into Voluntary Liquidation due to escalating debts, a reduction in visitors and severe lack of funding.

If you have any items on display/loan can you please forward a list of the items along with your full contact details to myself so they can be excluded from the liquidation. However, you may wish to remove your items immediately from the Museum for safe keeping. Please note access to the Museum is restricted and done so at your own risk due to no liability insurance remaining in force. Access can be requested via Mrs Dot Neate who will record who enters and what is removed from the Museum – contact 01229-770119, jrneate@aol.com.

Being a volunteer I am only able to assist and answer questions on non business related matters, all creditors will be contacted directly by the Liquidator in due time.

If the Museum owes you any payments i.e. for items placed in the shop for sale; could you please send your request for payment to the business contact below. Any business related queries should be directed to the former Museum Directors, Mrs Maureen Gleaves & Mr Denis Gleaves who are running the company through the liquidation process – 01229 778189 maureen.gleaves@sky.com.

Please use the normal Museum postal address for any correspondence –

RAF Millom Aviation & Military Museum, Bank Head Estate, Haverigg, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4LZ

Thank you for all of your support over the years

Mark Gaskell, Volunteer/Supporter Co-Coordinator, mark.gaskell@live.co.uk,

Dear Janine,

The photos (attached) were taken on my 77th Birthday (ten years ago) when my grandsons were 3 and 5. The one of me crawling through the tunnel beside the nose wheel (that's its Oleo, on the right) illustrate correspondence featured in the last magazine (Spring edition) by Jack Hope about the nose wheel doors and the way he nearly fell through them. As a matter of interest I've only put on about half a stone since the days when I did it all fully kitted up with Mae West and parachute harness etc.



Regards

Andrew Barron



Jan,

The picture (right) shows me with my 100 group hat sitting down in the front row. This is at the Frommelles Memorial for the Australians.

Last weekend I went on a tour of WW1 battlefields. We stayed at the hotel Beatus at Cambrai. Our tour guide was a retired Lt Colonel Tim Courtney ... brilliant! The owner of the hotel about 5 years ago dug up a WW1 tank. It is in his private Museum. We got to see it. The owner is also an expert on the battle of Cambrai. He and his helpers have made their own monument on the hill near Cambrai. From this hill he gave us a detailed account of the battle. So different when you can see the terrain.



We went to the Menin Gate where the Last Post is sounded by a bugler at 20.000 hrs every night. There were about 300 people. For some reason there was no electric lighting. We had a police vehicle spotlight. Given I was looking directly into it from where I was standing it was difficult to see what was happening. But it certainly added to the effect.

Several wreaths were laid. While this was going on the piper was playing. He played the hymn 'Abide With Me', then 'Amazing Grace' amongst others. There was a general hum in the audience. It was being sung in various languages.

With the Menin Gate both inside and out of the Memorial are listed the dead with no known grave. We went to Wilfred Owen's grave, the poet. He died on the 5.11.1918, Armistice was on the 11.11. 1918. Apparently this was the day his relatives were told of his demise. Sadly they presumed as he had come this far that he was safe. Surprising how many graves are of unknown men. The biggest cemetery we went to was a German one with 44,000 buried there. Seemed very strange seeing Jewish graves there also as in the Second World War they were hated.

Best wishes *Rod Vowler*



'Wear Your Poppy with Pride Campaign'

Dear Janine,

I hope you don't mind me sending you this message but I would like your help & support. Can you please pass this message on to all members who might help with my campaign?

My name is Harriet and I'm 18 years old. I am standing just to the right of the poster in the photograph above.

Back in November 2010, I changed the Employment Policy of an American clothing company because I was told I couldn't wear my poppy whilst at work. I am now on a mission to lobby the Government to look into this matter and put it up as a subject for debate in Parliament:



*'Should employees be allowed to wear a poppy,
our National Symbol of Remembrance,
at work or not?'*

Please take a moment to look at my website and my Petition:

www.poppywithpride.com

www.gopetition.com/petition/43263/signatures.html

I do hope I can rely on your help and support as I need **100,000** signatures or more to help make this Petition work and be eligible for a debate in Parliament.

My campaign / petition and website are now in full swing. The count of those who have signed the Petition is currently 8,592, a long way to go yet but I intend to hand deliver my Petition to No.10 personally.

Please help me by spreading the word as this is such an important and most sensitive issue to be addressed.

BBC Midlands Today covered my story on Monday 7th March. A clip of that broadcast can be watched on my website.

Thank you for your assistance
Best Wishes.

Harriet Phipps
01789 299109

13th – 15th May 2011
Norfolk



RAF 100 Group Association Reunion 2011

Past & Present Coming Together



Thank you everyone
who helped make this weekend
such a wonderful occasion

RAF 100 Group Association Reunion Experience

This year marks my 14th Reunion attended, although I was a member for a couple of years before the first. The programme has changed little. And yet, every year, there is something very different, very unique and very special that marks the occasion.

With the production of a new Standard for 100 Group members were excited about seeing it for the first time.



The Standard was the brainchild of Peter Witts, also a member of 214 Squadron Association. Peter is now 85 and has felt strongly for some years that 100 Group Association should have its own Standard. With the help of the Chair, Wing Commander John Stubbington, the Standard is now a reality. John had it made to Peter's approximate design sketch and obtained the necessary authority to use the 100 Group badge.

Peter paid for the cost of the Standard (£631) and the Association funded the accoutrements (£250). The latter includes white gloves, gold tassels, leather cover for staff etc. Thanks are also due to John for getting it approved and made. For those not familiar with Peter, he was an air gunner in 1944/45, first on Liberators of 233 Squadron and then Fortresses of 214 Squadron, both at Oulton. Towards the end of the war he flew in the Halifax aircraft of No 462 Squadron (RAAF) Foulsham, also a jamming unit in 100 Group.

The Standard's first showing was at Foulsham New Frost Hall where members gathered for the start of the weekend and a lovely afternoon tea laid on by villagers. Rod, our new Standard Bearer, paraded the flag, while Peter Witts took a turn in a jeep (see picture above).



It was in the hall at Foulsham that I was presented with a question which I share with you now: Can you name the people in these following photographs ... and it's not a quiz, and there is no prize!! But it is needed for local archives.

I understand the dashing man on the left is Flying Officer Spencer Edwards of 214 Squadron.

But can you name others in the photographs below?

If any of these are known or familiar to you please let me (Janine) have their names and I can pass them on.





Following a wonderful spread of sausage rolls, sandwiches and cake at Foulsham, we moved on for Phil James to lay a wreath at the Memorial in the village.

Again, the Standard came into its own, and with Rod as Standard Bearer, it became even more of an occasion.



Saturday 14th May 2011

Early arrivals to the Reunion spent a pleasant evening at The Plough, hosted by Val and Roger who have, through the years, become firm friends. This year Tony and I stayed at The Wensum Valley Hotel & Golf Club. It was here we met up with new members: Linda Fraser and her parents Hugh and Eunice Hollingworth, David Hales who proved such a help in ferrying them round, and Bob Belton, back in Norfolk for the first time in 66 years. We will hear more about Bob in the next magazine.

The following morning, Saturday, there came the first of many magic moments ... the coming together of two people who had never met, and yet who meant the world to one another.

Hugh Hollingworth, as a boy, had grown up with his sister and elder brother Jimmy. Then one day Jimmy was in uniform. He'd joined the RAF. He'd take him to the Pictures when he came home on Leave but he never said a word about what he was doing. And then, one day, Jimmy just never came home. One day, he was gone. Hugh, his sister and his parents knew nothing more about where life had taken him, his service in the RAF, or what happened all those years ago. Hugh grew up and married Eunice and they had two girls. But he never forgot his brother or the times they'd spent together. And then, one day last year, Linda his daughter found a photograph in the attic. It was a picture of her Uncle Jimmy. He was in RAF uniform, and was standing beside other men dressed the same. On the back was written 214 Squadron, 100 Group.

With these clues, Linda contacted the 214 Association, and attended their Reunion last year where she met John Gilpin, Peter Witts and Gerhard Heilig who were in the same crew as her uncle, Jimmy Hollingworth. Linda and her husband Ian then became members of 100 Group Association. They were both looking forward to coming and meeting us all this year. But then, Ian, Linda's husband, died suddenly over Christmas. He meant everything to her, and she didn't know how she could continue without him. Christmas was hard. As she entered a new year, life became even harder. Each moment of every day was like treading a step up Everest. We began to write and speak to one another at least once every day, which we have continued to do since. We weren't at all certain that she would manage to get to the Reunion on her own. But then, as we waited for her at the hotel as promised, there she was, accompanied by her parents, Hugh and Eunice. She's a lovely warm sweet person, as are her parents. And her father Hugh was buzzing about meeting for the first time ever someone who had known his brother Jimmy, sharing that part of his life he had never known.

It was Saturday morning and we were all having breakfast in the Hotel. Suddenly, through the doors came John Gilpin and his wife, who landed the night before from Ireland. For the first time Hugh Hollingworth was able to meet and touch and talk to someone who had known his brother Jimmy well.

The years rolled back.

It was an incredible moment for everyone who shared. The joy that lit up both their faces is something for which there are no words.

Time took a pause ... held its breath ...



Look at the faces of the two men on the back row, far left ... [Jimmy Hollingworth](#) and [John Gilpin](#) known as 'Paddy'. And then see the way his brother Hugh and Paddy are today below:



It really is the essence of what the Association is all about ... and the Reunions as we come together each year from all parts of the globe. You really have to be there, to be a part of it, to realise the full depth of emotion that came in that very personal reunion. Hugh and John ... adopted brothers ... long may it last!

[Jimmy Hollingworth](#) was one of the crew of Flying Fortress Mark II SR386 BU-N:

Fg/Off 'Tommy' Thomas, Bomb Aimer

FS 'Paddy' Gilpin, Mid Upper Gunner

Sgt Gerhard 'Harry' Heilig, 1892246, Special Operator, Royal Air Force, Nationality: Austrian

Plt/Off Ken Hovers, Navigator

Sgt Hewitt

Plt/Off Jake Walters, Pilot

Sgt Bill Howard, Flight Engineer

[Sgt Jimmy Hollingworth](#)

Sgt Alf Read, Rear Gunner



SR 386 BU-N: P/O Ken Hovers (N), Sgt Alf Reed (RG), [Sgt Jimmy Hollingworth \(S\)](#), Sgt Hewitt (WG), [F/Sgt Paddy Gilpin \(MUG\)](#), F/O Thomas (B), P/O Jake Walters (P), Sgt Bill Howard (E) [Sgt Heilig \(SDO\)](#)



214 Squadron Fortress II SR 386, BU-N, Sculthorpe, 1944

Many were the stories shared that evening by John Gilpin as we sat around the dinner table at the Wensum Valley Hotel, with Hugh firmly at his side, still hardly able to believe that after all these years finally he was talking to someone who had shared their life with his brother Jimmy, and knew and loved him as a dear friend.

The day caught up with us at Horsham St Faith where we gathered in the Mission Hall for the AGM ... and tea and cake kindly provided by the villagers.

[Photographs courtesy of Gerhard Heilig, 214 Squadron website](#)

Annual General Meeting

Welcome

As John Stubbington, our Chair, welcomed everyone to the Association Reunion 2011, the sun put on its happy face and smiled in at us through the windows.

The welcome was extended especially to all new members attending for the first time

- Linda Fraser
- Linda's Parents – Hugh and Eunice Hollingworth
- David Hales
- Bob Belton (first time back since the war)
- Anne Thomsett – attending on behalf of her father Alan Thomsett
- Tony Bradley

Apologies include:

- Stephen Hutton (36th)
- Bob and Jill Histed,
- Alan Thomsett (his daughter, Anne came in his stead to represent him),
- Clive Anthony,
- Roger and Helen Jones
- Sqn Ldr David Butler
- Dan Foster (new member who's great uncle's plane has just been uncovered in Oulton)

It was explained by John that Stephen Hutton, author of '*Squadron of Deception*'; had been hoping to join us for our Reunion representing 8th Air Force's 36th Bomb Squadron Radio Counter Measure Unit. They held what may have been their last Reunion the weekend before at Long Marston. John attended their Reunion with the few remaining members. And it was very appropriate that he met the current Commanding Officer, Lt Col Shannon Driscoll. The Unit is still operational, flying B52s from the Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. And for the occasion there was a flypast of a Hurricane over Long Marston.

(There will be further news of the 36th and its final Reunion in the next magazine.)

Introduction of new No 100 Group Standard

Peter Witts has been the driving force behind having a 100 Group Standard. He has been asking for some years for this to happen. He was the instigator and had contributed to the design of the flag, with our Chairman. A tribute was therefore paid to Peter and his family for the monies and inspiration which has gone into the design and planning.



It was another of those magic moments as Rod Vowler marched slowly forward to present the Standard for Peter to officially receive on behalf of the Association.

For Peter, this was his dream finally a reality.

As the Standard was recovered, Peter spoke a few words in response:

'Veteran, comrades, family, friends ... yes, it's long been a dream ... for 100 Group to have its own colours ... its own Standard. That dream is now reality. I only did the easy part. All the work was done by John, our Chair, and he has made me a very happy man.'

His son Len continued for him:

'I would like to say on behalf of my family, that we have supported Dad in this. We feel this is our contribution to say thank you to all vets and in memory of all those who didn't come through. It is but a small appreciation.'

Gerhard spoke for the Association:

'Peter ... this dream for the Standard ... we hope you have many years left to see it being carried with 100 Group. And on behalf of everyone, I say thank you very much, thank you.'

Chair Report

John began his report with a question: Should current positions of the Association Committee remain the same? A question had been raised about John's role both as Chair and Treasurer. Is there a conflict of interest? A point of formality to note is that the Association is not a registered charity. Therefore we are not obliged by their rules.

Gerhard made the comment that *'since you (John) took over, the Association has taken off. Therefore John Stubbington should remain in post both as Chair and as Treasurer'*.

It was unanimously agreed by all members that there is no problem, and that the Committee should remain the same.

John then went on to say that the Committee met for a meeting the previous evening at The Plough and it was believed there will come a need in the future for a Deputy Chair and Deputy Secretary.

We may also call someone to the position of Association Historian. This person would effectively act as a point of contact to create a Bibliography, archive reports, documents, etc, which collectively illustrate the history of 100 Group. We are however anxious not to trespass on other Association's work, such as 214. This is about looking at 100 Group as a collective.

Rod Fowler accepted the position of Standard Bearer, and has agreed to be a designated point of contact until a dedicated Association Historian is in post.

It should also be said that this idea of having an Association Historian is NOT in any way duplicating the archives at the Museum, which remain achievements of 100 Group. But rather is seen as complimenting them to eventually produce a complete picture of the whole.

Members were asked if they are happy with what the Committee is doing? Members agreed.

John extended our thanks for all the help and hospitality we gain over our Reunion weekend from local communities – Oulton, Foulsham, Horsham St Faith, the Mission Hall, etc. Without them, our Reunion as we know it wouldn't be anywhere near as comfortable. John will be writing to them all with letters of thanks.

John next asked the question about visits we make over the Reunion weekend, asking if there were further external visits members might like to make, such as to the Radar Museum and

Blickling Hall. The programme is already full. When would we best fit them in? And how might we get there in terms of travel?

Gerhard Heilig pointed out that the basic idea was interesting of involving further and different points of interest. However, it was already a full programme, and a satisfying one. He personally wouldn't want to miss out on any of it. The only way to get more things in would be to extend the weekend by a couple of days and that just isn't feasible for everyone who attends. There is also the factor of age.

Len Witts made the point that we had previously met up at Bylaugh Hall for lunch on a Friday. Could we perhaps fit in Blickling Hall then? But then we now have the Foulsham tea.

However, given a number of members are already visiting Blickling on the Saturday afternoon when we all divide off into personal visits, the decision was taken to leave the format as it is for now, but that thoughts are always welcome about including additional visits for the future.

Treasurer Report

Accounts show a balance in the Current Account of £2500 ... £1200 after the main Saturday evening dinner is paid. That is just about the same as last year.

There is a Reserve Account of £1665 ... also the same as last year.

But numbers don't really tell the story. £1700 income from members is eaten up almost in total by the '*Confound & Destroy*' magazines four times a year + one off expenses – such as the RAF 100 Group Association leaflets printed one year ago, and the Standard this year. Otherwise we are just about cash neutral.

The Committee has looked very closely on how we can move forward with the magazines. Options include reducing the number from 4 to 3, or else raising subscriptions from £15 to £20 per year.

The Committee reached the decision which was now put to members of capping the budget for the magazine at £1500 and leave the decision of how that comes about with Janine and Tony.

One factor which does help is when members can take the magazine by email. Printing in black and white as opposed to colour is nowhere near as expensive. And the clear advantage therefore of having the magazine by email is that you see everything in colour clearly.

It was also decided that, because of the need to cut costs, there will be no separate Reunion Supplement. The summer edition will merge the magazine and Reunion together.

Members agreed for this as the way forward, and the Committee promised they would keep an eye on expenditure for the future.

Janine (Editor) made it clear that members need to keep sending to her material for the magazine. Without this material there would be no magazine ... and it remains the tangible link between us.

Museum Report

Kelvin Sloper and Derek Waters shared their good news that the Museum has had a very good year. Attendance and therefore income was up by 30-40%. They thank all visitors and members for their support.

Jessica is leaving the end of June. But already they have secured her replacement. And by the end of the summer the Museum will have four paid members of staff, which is something totally new.

Derek, Chair of the Museum Committee, expressed a very warm welcome to members back to Norfolk and said we all look younger every year! Days after our last Reunion in May 2010 they had a phone call from the Ministry of Defence asking '*Would you like a Nimrod?*' And then was added: '*You've got 48 hours to make up your mind, cause we'll deliver on Friday if you agree.*' That was on a Tuesday.

The Museum has never had a Nimrod. Derek said: '*it represents you guys, it is equivalent to what you did. And the Nimrod we got by all accounts is the very best in the fleet, with a most illustrious history. It was going to RAF Cosford. But they changed their minds at the last minute. Now they've changed their mind again and are dismantling Nimrod XK235 for Cosford instead.*'

The other bit of news shared by Derek is that Time Team dug up an old dump at Fulham Market and found old bits of aircraft. One was particularly intriguing. Bob Collis has identified it as an Airborne Grocer from a B17. They are proud to have it at the Museum.

It was suggested by John (Chair) that, in gratitude for all the Museum does on the Association's behalf, Derek Waters be made an Honorary member of the Association, which he was '*very honoured to accept*'.

AOB

Peter Slumen introduced himself as a new member to the Association. He is the brother in law of Peter Witts. He wished to say how well organised both the Association and the Reunion appeared, and that he felt privileged to join us.

He asked how many members we have in total, to which Janine (Secretary) replied: approximately 150 people. Peter asked how many of these are veterans? Janine responded: 70%, living all over the world. Between 50 and 60 attend Reunions each year, travelling various distances. We have taken 12 new members just this year.

Peter then asked about magazines. 37 only receive through email. There remains a wealth of information to go into magazines for the future, and more is coming in all the time which members ask to be published.

Tony Bradley, partner to Janine, works alongside her in all things relating to the Association. He bought a Duplex Printer which we use for the creation of Association letters, magazines, leaflets, etc. He also acquired specialist software to make the task easier of collating members' details. It was he who created an up to date record of accounts for the magazine as of 10th May 2011.

Len Witts put forward his brother in law, Peter Slumen, as someone interested in creating an Association website for the future. Tony Bradley also has contacts given he works in the computer industry. Talks are already underway. However, the question of just how many actual members will be able to get sight of this given the uptake of receiving the magazine in email form is only 37 remains an issue. Although a website would widen public awareness of what 100 Group was all about and promote the Association, hence drawing in new members.

Chris Lambert, our Association Oulton representative, invited everyone attending the Reunion to lunch at Oulton where villagers already were preparing a wonderful afternoon tea.

David Kitching presented last year at the Defence Academy a Paper relating to 515 Squadron on the first operational use of Deceptive radar countermeasures by the RAF. He has progressed with this Paper as more information has come in. We will be hearing more about this for the future.

David Lloyd has become involved in conducting a fascinating piece of analysis about the American intercept of German air defence communications during the conduct of bombings over Germany. Gerhard has been helping with de-coding and analysis. In a very real way, this constitutes original analysis and research deeper than at Bletchley Park when it was actually happening at the time. John Stubbington expressed how much members would look forward to the outcome of his work which he is enthusiastic in getting into archive evidence.

Rod Vowler brought members' attention to RAF No 100 Group baseball caps available direct from him at a cost of £10 each.

Finally, Peter Witts gave a vote of thanks to John for all he has done on behalf of the Association.

Next RAF 100 Group Association Reunion 11th – 13th May 2012

Members left the Mission Hall at the end of the AGM for the Museum just up the road, where tables were heaving with a buffet lunch that volunteers from the Museum had prepared. There was time to reflect, to talk to friends old and new, and to catch up with exhibits, including the Nimrod which stood proud at the top end of the field. A few members took the opportunity to go on board the Nimrod and explore the historic aircraft with guides from the Museum.



Nimrod XV255 arrives at Norwich Airport for CNAM

Derek Waters (Chair: CNAM)
gets keys to Nimrod XV255



Afternoon Visits

Blickling Hall Museum

Many of us spent a pleasant Saturday afternoon dodging showers at Blickling Hall Museum. It is a very friendly place, where there is always someone ready to share and answer questions. But this time Tony and I had come with a specific purpose in mind.

We were on a quest.

We needed to find out about a local Oulton haunt known as ‘*The Bird In Hand*’. It had been regularly used during the war years by those serving in and around Oulton.

I had been sent a letter via founder Association member Evelyn Bartram. Evelyn was unable to attend the Reunion this year, and please know Evelyn that you were missed. The letter goes as follows:

‘Dear Janine

Please find enclosed a letter and poem that was written for the landlord of the pub in Oulton. Eileen was the daughter of the landlord. She is now aged 80 years old. She is a lovely lady to talk to ...’

The letter goes on and I have since spoken with the lady concerned. However, I have just learned that Eileen is very ill. I therefore promised I would not delay in sharing this poem with members. I hope those who frequented ‘The Bird In Hand’ and have stories to tell will write to me and share them. The name of the lady who is the daughter of the landlord is Eileen Cooper. She has bone cancer. And I really would love to be able to pass on comments, memories, and good wishes of those who remember her family.

I found at Blickling Hall Museum a few precious and very poignant reminders of a bygone age that included ‘The Bird In Hand’. Any further writings or photographs would be most welcome.

‘My parents kept THE BIRD IN HAND, opposite the main entrance to the airfield with the guardrooms on one side and a shelter on the other. As we had no shelter when things got really bad, the chap on guard duty would come over and take us down.’ Civilian Eileen Cooper

‘There was a shop near the camp where you could buy a cup of tea and a doughnut.’ B. T. Roberts, 214 Squadron, 1944-45

‘Often in the early morn of a warm summer’s day, a placid quiet would drowse as the sun’s shivering minions played over them. What deception! Re-armed, re-fuelled, bombed up and lethal. On one such occasion ‘Bunny’, our one solitary WAAF armament assistant, floored us with her admiration of its sky blue livery with the words: ‘Isn’t it pretty?’ Bless her, it was refreshing.’
T. C. Long 139 Squadron 1941

‘I recall one Battle Order for 500 lb. semi-armour piercing, for an attack on shipping. It was a bad day. Of the six that went out, only three returned. Long before the Dambusters there were those on 139 who practised skip bombing, the pre-requisite of which was an attack on the beam at low level, infinitely more hazardous. With those 3 crews the Squadron (139) lost a small amateur dance band.’ T. C. Long 139 Sqdn.



The Local

*There's a little pub in Oulton Street
where Yanks and British often meet
and lads just coming off the 'drome
make it like their second home.*

*It owns the name of 'The Bird In Hand'
the landlord's great and the beer is grand.
all through the week it rings with song
and at 10pm they sound the gong.*

*The customers are a decent crew
and everyone enjoys their brew,
there's civvies playing darts all night
and AC2s getting tight.*

*Everyone is doing fine
while tipsy airmen 'shoot the line'.
but careless talk is never heard
under the wing of the dear old 'bird'.*

*Our stay at Oulton may soon end
and over the ocean our way we'll wend.
But wherever we are in any land
we'll always remember 'The Bird In Hand'.*

LAC Willis, J. C
'Johnnie'

9th July 1944

RAF No 100 Group Airfields in Norfolk

When members visit Norfolk it is a time of remembrance. We pay our respects either to where we served during the war, or to where we know relatives or friends have been who have now passed on. On a Saturday afternoon, we make our own pilgrimage to a place which is special to us ... and remember.

A while ago I was contacted by Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust. It is a new charity established to acknowledge the enormous and unique contribution airfields have made in numerous spheres since 1909. A memorial is intended to be erected at each known disused airfield site in Britain in order to provide a permanent reminder for future generations. Information will be gathered and made available to boost existing airfield history. Education support will be provided to help enthusiastic young people secure airfield or aviation-related employment.

To this end, they shared a weekend in Norfolk over 26/27th February 2011. At this time they established lasting memorials at a few of the airfields we usually visit which might be of interest.



They marked the occasion with a Tiger Moth flypast.

The Trust believes that history is showing us that our airfields have always had to cope with a crisis of some kind and as ever our disused airfields are suffering today terrible indignities. Mindless destruction continues as priceless pieces of land or buildings vanish - all too often for shallow aesthetic reasons - when they could all be easily retained and employed in perfectly viable alternative roles.

They believe the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust fulfils a vital role and is urgently needed.

If you have a computer and would like to find out more about the Trust, put the link below into your browser.

www.abct.org.uk/news/abct-norfolk-memorial-weekend.php



Afternoon Tea at Oulton



At 3pm we gathered at the home of Sue and Richard Bryan. And on entering the garden, found the marquee tent bright and colourful, with welcome chairs set around long covered tables. Huge pots of steaming tea were waiting to be poured by villagers into dainty cups with matching saucers and plates. And immediately our eyes were drawn to the almost overwhelming display of sandwiches and cake awaiting our attention ... each tasting every bit as delicious as it looked. And as our hands hovered, uncertain which to choose next, our eyes

were drawn to the bunting overhead. I discovered on asking that every single diamond shaped flag which made up that bunting had been handmade by someone of the village. Each was a work of art. It was their way of being a part of our Reunion weekend ... an expression of welcome and thanks, remembrance and love.

The time we spent here gave us moments to reflect and to catch up with friends old and new. I wondered what members attending this Reunion for the first time made of it all ...



David Porteous last came to a Reunion in 2002: 214/223 Sqn



David Hales is a new member here for the first time: 192 Sqn



Tony Bradley is Janine's Partner, his first time



Bob Belton, back for the first time since the war ... 66 years ago: 223 Sqn.



Welcome back Angela Witts after a year's absence



Welcome back [Roger Dobson](#) after a two year absence (3rd from left) sandwiched between sister Sue and her husband Norman Eccles



Lovely to be a part of your own Reunion, [Hugh ... with Eunice his wife and daughter Linda Fraser](#). We hope you and John Gilpin and Gerhard will all remain in touch.

Thank you Sue and Richard Bryan for the use of your lovely garden.

Thank you Oulton villagers for all your work and preparation that went into making this day so special, especially the bunting which was memorable.

Thank you to all who contributed sandwiches and cake, particularly the chocolate cake which has become a firm favourite and which members are still talking about now.

Finally the rains eased. It was time to join together at the Memorial in the village.

There is always this stillness and quiet that transcends all else. You can almost feel it settling around you as you stand quietly reflecting. Always it is times such as this I feel the presence of spirits such as Vic Vinnell (my mother's fiancé, and Jack Fisher. They were with 192 at Foulsham. But did they ever come here together?

Others share the same thoughts about their own family and friends.

The ceremony begins with a short welcome by Chris Lambert, our Association Oulton representative. Then an Oulton villager, Alison Shaw, reads *"For the Fallen"* by Laurence Binyon. First published in The Times on September 21 1914, Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) wrote it while working at the British Museum. He did not go to the Western Front until 1916, as a Red Cross orderly. It is a poignant piece, given that it is the poem's fourth verse which is used all over the world during services of Remembrance, and is inscribed on countless war monuments ... *'we will remember them'*.

Another villager, Rob Hannan, read *"High Flight"* by John Gillespie Magee Jr. This is a poem featured in our magazine only recently.

Linda Fraser with her father Hugh Hollingworth laid a wreath, holding Hugh's brother Jimmy Hollingworth, close in their hearts. Jussy and Isaac from the village laid wreaths also.



Trumpet Boy, George Jefford, played note perfect and was a joy to listen to.

Again, thank you one and all for everything you did to make this occasion so moving and memorable.

Wensum Valley Hotel & Golf Club Dinner

Speaker: Gerhard Heilig

The dinner was a grand affair. As always, everyone turned out in their best bib and tucker.

As we entered the room servers were on stand-by, ready to accommodate our every need and whim. Gaily wrapped packages at the far end made it look like Christmas, adding to the specialness of the occasion. These were the raffle prizes, over thirty lovingly prepared by Phil James which, together with a sale of books, by the end of the evening, raised £250.

I sat on tenterhooks, hoping everyone's meal went according to plan, and that place-cards were a true reflection. I don't think I am alone in saying that, after the wonderful tea at Oulton, I struggled with a three course meal. It was a full day crammed with visits and the emotion of meeting old and new friends. Pain was kicking in. Feet swelled in unfamiliar heels. But then Gerhard stood to speak, and transported us to a bygone era. It was easy to climb through the portal he created ...



Nina with father Peter Lovatt & June Stephenson



'One Saturday afternoon, 9 January 1943, I happened to be walking along Euston Road when I spotted a recruiting office. It had been my ambition to fly and on the spur of the moment I went in to make inquiries. A kind and solicitous Army Sergeant politely inquired what he might do for me.

'I want to volunteer for air crew duties with the RAF.'

'You've come to the right place, sign here.'

'I don't think it's going to be as simple as that. You see, I am Austrian, technically an enemy alien. Is there any chance of being accepted for flying?'

'Oh yes. You'll have to make a special application stating your case. It will be considered on its merits. This will take about six weeks. Now if you'll sign here and take a preliminary medical, don't worry if your application should be turned down. You won't have to join up in any other capacity. Being technically an enemy alien you can't be called up at all. Good luck.'

I stopped at the next phone box and called my father.

'Hullo, would you mind sitting down? Never mind why ... I just want to tell you that I have volunteered for flying duties.'

My father agreed it was a good idea to have him sit down before telling my news. I'd been worried how he would react but he didn't bat an eyelid. He helped me formulate my letter and later told me he had also written one in support of my application. He wasn't all that taken with the idea but took the attitude it was my life, to do with as I thought fit. We'd become close since I came to live with him in London. Eleven days after volunteering I passed my aircrew medical and two months after my first visit to the recruiting office, on 9 March, a letter from the Air Ministry informed me I had been accepted. On 12th March I passed my aptitude tests and appeared before the aircrew selection board.



I wanted to become a fighter pilot, flying Spitfires. The selection board had other ideas, but after further scrutiny of my aptitude tests, I was promised the chance of pilot training once I completed a tour as a wireless operator. The next day I was attested and became officially an aircrew cadet on deferred service pending my call-up. I was given the King's Shilling, twelve of them in fact as befitted a budding bold aviator. It was the Ides of March, near enough, and all but five years to the day since Hitler had marched into Austria.

The minimum age for the commencement of aircrew training was 18 years, 3 months. In order to fill the intervening time usefully, I joined the ATC. By June I had reached a Morse proficiency of 6 words per minute and thought I was very clever. But I did not know what I was in for. On 2 June I received my call-up papers with instructions to report on 28 June to the Air Crew Reception Centre, or ACRC, at Lords' Cricket Ground in St. John's Wood.

I spent three weeks at St. John's Wood going through the various motions of being absorbed into the Service. On 17 July my intake was posted to the Initial Training Wing (ITW) at Bridgnorth in Shropshire where I spent six weeks doing general things such as square bashing, rifle drill and particular training such as aircraft recognition.

On 8 September we heard that Italy had capitulated. My mother and brother had been interned on Italy's entry into the war but occasional letters indicated they were not badly off. Now German troops were flooding the country. I wondered with anxiety what would become of them.

Ten days later I finished my initial training and received orders to proceed to Number 4 Radio School at Madley near Hereford after the ten days leave now due to me.

I reported to Madley on 30 September for my six months course as a wireless operator. It was a sprawling camp with the various living and working sites widely dispersed around the airfield. Our accommodation consisted of wooden huts divided into rooms, each containing two double bunks. The sole facilities on the sleeping site were lavatories, and in order to wash and shave we had to walk a mile to the messing site. I found myself sharing a room with Tom Harvey and we soon became an inseparable pair. The other two, Ernie Philips and Ted Sissons also chummed up and the four of us formed a close quartet.

Weeks stretched into months. There was no letup in the treadmill. Then one Saturday, it was the 11th March, we were having our evening meal when our Corporal came into the Mess Hall and shouted for Johnny and I to report to the Flight Office immediately. We thought we were in trouble. We were ordered into the Chief Instructor's office.

'You two are required for immediate posting to a Squadron. I do not know why. Can you get your tests and flying finished by Wednesday?'

We were not due to complete our course for another three weeks, in fact it would take longer than that to finish our flying and there was a bottleneck on further postings. However, 48 hours later, with Signaller's wings and Sergeant's stripes, Johnny and I were told to get cleared and collect our marching orders for a secret destination. The date was the 15th. Again, the Ides of March. Six years to the day since my father had been arrested by the Gestapo in Vienna. Ominous - but for whom? It took us until Thursday afternoon to get through all the bumf and be issued with travel warrants for Fakenham in Norfolk - to report to 214 Squadron at Sculthorpe.

It was Friday 17 March 1944. Johnny and I had been humping our kit since early morning on a wartime train journey in fits and starts across country. Now we were surrounded by our kit on a deserted platform at Fakenham Station. However, a phone call to the station soon had us bouncing along lanes in a transport to our new home. We were bursting with curiosity, but all we could get out of our driver was: *'It's all very secret. You'll have to find out for yourselves.'* He would not even tell us what type of aircraft the Squadron was equipped with in case we turned out to be German spies in disguise.

Our quarters were in a hut accommodating about two dozen NCO aircrew in one long undivided space. To reach the two vacant beds at the far end we had to run the gauntlet of our new companions who eyed us with undisguised curiosity. We had heard tales of scruffy, devil-may-care aircrew, but what we saw here out of the corners of our timid eyes were immaculate uniforms of Warrant Officers, Flight Sergeants and the odd Sergeant, nearly all sporting the 1939-43 Star and some even the DFM. We felt very small indeed.

'Just been posted in?' said a voice.

'Yes.'

'Where have you come from?'

'Radio School.'

'Been instructing?'

'No. Just passed out.'

There was a deathly silence.

'How many hours have you got?'

'Ten and a half,' said Johnny. *'Eleven,'* said I.

Another deathly silence. We felt like crawling away into a hole.

'Ah well, never mind. You'll soon get into the swim of it. Better kip down for the night and we'll show you around in the morning.'

One of the lads took us to the Sergeants Mess for breakfast next morning and told us to check in with the PMC, then report to the Adjutant. We had no idea who or what a PMC was, so he enlightened us that he was the bloke who ran the Mess and if we wanted feeding we had better go and say hello to him. The Adjutant proved the efficiency of the system by expressing great surprise at our arrival. But being a man of infinite resource, as well as of a generous nature, he promptly sent us on seven days Leave.

However, someone had evidently tumbled to the fact our posting to the Squadron had been of a very urgent nature. On the Tuesday we received an immediate recall to duty. This time they were ready for us. We were informed the sole object of the Squadron was to carry Special Operators like ourselves along in the main bomber stream. Our duty was to find, identify and jam enemy

fighter control transmissions, causing havoc and confusion to their defences. The whole thing was so secret that not even the Commanding Officer knew what it was all about.

No time was wasted in getting us trained on our equipment. It consisted of a control unit with a cathode ray tube scanning the German fighter frequency band and any transmissions would show up as blips on the screen. We would then tune our receiver to the transmission by moving a strobe spot onto it, identify the transmission as genuine (this was where our knowledge of the language came in as the Germans were expected to come up with phoney instructions in order to divert our jammers), then tune our transmitter to the frequency and blast off with a cacophony of sound which in retrospect would put today's pop music to utter shame.

The transmitters were standard T1154 mf/hf transmitters modified to operate on 38-42.5 mc/s. Later on, specially designed equipment was to be used. The Squadron was not yet operational, having recently been converted from Stirlings. The B17 Fortress had been chosen for the job, later to be followed by B24 Liberators for 223 Squadron, as the American type bomb bay was better suited for the installation of the planned equipment than the British underfloor bays. As there were not enough Special Operators to go round, we were allocated to whoever happened to be flying until our establishment would be complete and allow permanent crewing up.

We soon made friends and found our favourite crews. The old hands, a number on their second tour, made us welcome and we soon lost the feeling of being intruding greenhorns. Training went on apace and we all felt it could not be long now before we became fully operational.

One day Johnnie and I were called to the Adjutant's office. He advised us that our German names would put us at considerable risk in the event of being captured by the enemy. Arrangements could easily be made to change them to something more innocuous. Johnnie took him up on his suggestion, promptly opting for Hereford. I was not so sure. What were the options? First of all, they would have to shoot me down. Secondly, I would have to survive. Thirdly they would have to catch me. My innate optimism, or more likely ignorance, told me none of this may ever arise. But supposing it did and I was captured, might it not be just my luck to be interrogated by some former school fellow who would recognize me and brand me a spy sailing under false colours? On the other hand, we had been told that under the Geneva Convention all we were required to reveal, and in fact obliged to do, was number, rank and name, and so long as we did this with a correct military bearing, the Germans were not likely to press for more.

What finally decided me was my father's example. When the crunch came at the time of the Anschluss he unhesitatingly decided to face the music - and, though sorely tried, got away with it. One day, during his time in concentration camp, the head of the Gestapo and SS, Himmler, had come on a tour of inspection and had all the prominent politicals from Vienna paraded for his particular attention. Amongst others, he stopped to address my father.

'What were you,' he asked.

'Journalist.'

'Do you know where the publisher of the Stimme is?'

'I last saw him at the Gestapo headquarters in Vienna.'

After Himmler had passed on, my father realised how that man's ignorance had saved him from a difficult, if not potentially fatal situation. The publisher is only the business head of a newspaper, the man Himmler had been looking for was the editor, the man responsible for what was actually written - and he himself had been the editor! It had been a close shave.

Another instance of facing things boldly came to mind. In the early twenties my father worked in the editorial office of a Budapest paper and this frequently involved a lonely walk home in the

early hours of the morning. The direct route home would take him past the headquarters of the Arrow Cross party, an anti-Semitic and fascist-oriented organization, which, being a Jew, could well involve him in an unpleasant and perhaps even downright dangerous situation. The alternative was a lengthy detour which he was averse to taking at the end of exhausting working day, or rather, night. There were invariably a pair of sentries in front of the house and his first instinct was to slink past in the shadows on the opposite side of the street. But they would hardly fail to notice his surreptitious passage and, if only to relieve the boredom of their stint, hail him if only to amuse themselves at his expense. No, he decided to put on a bold face and march past under their very noses as if they did not even exist, though inwardly he quaked. To his utter amazement, they not only allowed him unhindered passage, but jumped to attention and gave a smart salute as he passed. This happened on each subsequent occasion and it was only very much later that he discovered the reason for this unexpected mark of respect. He bore a superficial resemblance to one of the senior members of the party and his bold approach had convinced the sentries that it must indeed be he. Had they taken a closer look at the shadowy form across the road it would have been a different story.

No, I would not change my name. I had calculated the risks and decided to follow my father's example. He had borne his name with honour and not deviated from his true course; I would do no less and place my trust in providence.

I can't remember many details about my time with 214 Squadron but I have deep and lasting impressions of a happy unit with a high morale and a great sense of professionalism. Survival in war is largely a matter of luck, but it has always seemed to me that the high standard of airmanship on 214 must have had something to do with the fact that of the twenty-odd crews I knew only four were lost. 214 Squadron has certainly always had a very special meaning for me.

The Squadron moved to Oulton on 16 May 1944. One of our specialities was spoof raids, small groups of aircraft shovelling out great quantities of Window (aluminium foil strips) to simulate a bomber stream. Following the pattern of attacks on French railway marshalling yards, several of these had been flown over France giving the real raids to Germany a clear run while the German night fighters were chasing Window. Then one night we flew a spoof to the Dutch coast while the real attack consisted of a force of Mosquito night fighters over France. The Germans fell for it and flew straight into the waiting guns of our Mossies. Another spoof was in support of the D-Day landings. Months later I was told that in the late autumn of '44 some twelve aircraft of 214 and 223 had stood by for 48 hours, waiting for some particularly nasty weather over Germany. Due to our intruder raids, German aircraft were not allowed to approach their airfields without prior clearance as all unidentified aircraft were immediately fired on and they had instructions to bale out if they failed to get permission to land. The spoof force flew a Cook's Tour of enemy territory and the threat forced their night fighters up into the murk. Our aircraft returned unscathed, while many of the enemy either came to grief in the filthy weather or had to abandon ship as we fouled up their communications.

In mid-July we had reached our full complement of Special Operators, which enabled us to be crewed up permanently and I joined Jacko's. We had all done the same number of trips and I could expect to finish my tour with him. His mid-upper gunner was Dave Hardie, a nephew of the actor Leslie Howard, to whom he had quite a marked resemblance. We did our tenth op on July 17 and two days later I was told I had been posted to 101 Squadron of 1 Group along with Johnny and an Australian whose name I believe was Bluey Glick. 101 had pioneered airborne jamming and had continued the job as a sideline. They were short of Specials and for some reason had priority over 214. Three of us had to go and the powers that be had decided on us. I protested and pleaded to no avail, I had to pack my bags and leave my cherished friends to finish my tour with strangers. In fact, this probably saved my life. Jackson and his crew were lost some weeks later.

July 22 saw me airborne in a Fortress for the last time when F/Lt Bray took us to fly on Lancasters at Ludford Magna in Lincolnshire.

On 25 April I got news that my mother and brother were safe in a displaced person's camp behind British lines. I went along to the Squadron Adjutant, explained the situation and asked if I might transfer an allowance from my pay to my mother through some local service channel. This was quickly arranged so I was able to provide her with some comforts. It wasn't very much in the way of cash, but it turned out to be of far greater value than could be expressed in mere monetary terms as I would hear some years later.

When Italy had capitulated some six months previously, the authorities of the camp where my mother was being held threw open the gates and told inmates they were free. They could stay on if they wished, but German troops were on their way to take control. It was up to each individual to do what they thought best. Mother did not fancy being caught up in the approaching Nazi maelstrom. She packed a few essentials, and together with my brother made her way south towards Allied lines. They hid where they could and eventually, as the Germans retreated, they went to ground in a hayloft and waited for the battle to pass. When things had quietened they emerged from their hideout to find themselves safe behind British lines. They made themselves known and were taken to a displaced persons' camp where they were provided for.

A little while later she received a note advising her that an allowance from her son was awaiting collection at the local RAF station and she went along to pick it up. At first she was looked upon with askance as another DP on the scrounge. But when she explained her purpose she was given a family welcome - as the mum of one of our boys! She got more than just my modest money, she was given all sorts of comforts and some of the lads would visit her with titbits she could never have obtained otherwise. This warmed her heart and when she told me about it made me more convinced than ever that I had done the right thing in joining up. If anyone concerned should ever read these lines, let me express my heartfelt thanks for their kindness to a courageous lady.

My time with 214 Squadron had left such a mark on me that I had been less than happy about my involuntary transfer to 101. I made no real friends with the crews but this may well have been my own fault. I had not wanted to go there, but this posting probably saved my life. I spent most of my time with the radio mechanics and one of these, Ken Bradshaw, became a close friend. He introduced me to Mrs Knott, a middle-aged lady living in a lovely house on the fringes of Louth. Her husband was away in the army and I became a frequent visitor. I had become a keen theatre goer and she gave me an old leather bound volume of Shakespeare's plays which her brother, a merchant navy engineer, had carried all over the world on his travels. It is still one of my treasured possessions.

And amongst my most valued friendships are those I served with on 214 Squadron, including John Gilpin, Peter Witts, and Jimmy Hollingworth. Jimmy's brother and niece are with us for this Reunion, as are John and Peter. It means so much, knowing that the true spirit of friendship I found in 214 is still a part of our today.'

For more of Gerhard's remarkable and fascinating story visit: www.214squadron.org.uk
Gerhard's book '*Circuits and Bumps*' is available from Woodfield Publishing.

Sunday 15th May 2011

Service of Remembrance & Dedication



Sunday was a family affair, in more ways than one. It was the final gathering of our family as an Association. It was also a family event for the Witts family as they joined Peter in seeing the dedication of the Standard at Horsham St Faith church. A proud moment indeed!

Rod Vowler did us proud, as did Phil James and John Gilpin who accompanied him down the aisle. The service was moving, as always, with the inclusion of the Dedication of the Standard.

Then it was across the road to the Mission Hall for tea and cake (yes, more cake!) before bidding our farewells. There was a meal booked for those who had time at Elm Farm. Tony and I had to leave in the end because I was in so much pain. But ... maybe next year ...

Thank you one and all for making this Reunion Weekend such a special occasion. Again, it is the members who make it so. And I would end with the words of one of our new members, because she puts it so eloquently, and in a way everyone can share:

Thank you for the weekend. You must have put your heart and soul into it. It was marvellous. I know I wasn't myself, I can't even begin to explain but whatever I imagined the emotions to be, they were multiplied a million-fold. I felt in another dimension, surrounded by love and care but heartbroken, not just for me but for the losses that everyone has suffered. People who I have seen just once before and even those I was meeting for the first time showed me such compassion it was overwhelming. Tears flowed at Foulsham and they threatened at Oulton, but in my mind Ian and Uncle Jimmy were standing in the lane, a little way from us, watching and approving.



The kindness and hospitality of the villagers of Foulsham and Oulton is wonderful, touching and so humbling.

Gerhard and Sissy are lovely. I love them both. I call Gerhard my Hero and Sissy is so caring towards me. So understanding. I love how Gerhard is so proud and loyal. He says he feels more at home in England than in Austria. He told me all about how he likes to take back things he can only buy here, Colman's horseradish and Pears soap.

Peter Witts is a gem. He too was so kind and expressed how sorry he was for my loss. He spoke to me again on Sunday, saying even from a distance he could see such sadness. He doesn't miss anything does he? Everyone loves him, and rightly so. My daughter Jane only met him briefly and thought he was so sweet. He is a charmer.

Mum and Dad enjoyed the weekend very much. Dad was thrilled to meet Gerhard and John Gilpin. To him they were those he would have hero-worshipped during the war, and the fact that John was his brother's, my Uncle Jimmy's close friend made it doubly thrilling. I don't think that he has come down to earth yet. When we went to the Museum, Dad saw Gerhard's book, 'The Cry of the Nightjar' for sale. On the front cover was a picture of the crew with Uncle Jimmy included.

Well, he was beside himself, started trembling and couldn't get over the fact that his Brother was on the cover of a book! He insisted on buying two, one for himself, one for me. That evening he asked Gerhard to write in them both and then asked John Gilpin to do the same for good measure.

Everything went beautifully didn't it? The main Saturday evening dinner was lovely and I enjoyed hearing Gerhard as our Speaker. He makes the time come alive and his pride is very touching. Like all the others he was very brave and I told him so and how proud I was to know him.

Wasn't the afternoon tea at Oulton lovely, the Marquee, the bunting and oh those cakes! All the afternoon teas, both at Foulsham and at Oulton, as well as the buffet lunch at the Museum were superb. As you know I'm a keen cake person and those we had were very good. I will write a personal 'thank you' to Chris Lambert asking him to pass on thanks to the ladies who made all those gorgeous cakes.

The church service was very moving. Again I felt Ian and Uncle Jimmy there, observing and approving, which gave me strength when looking at Peter's pride in the new Standard. I have never witnessed anything like that, so heartrending and yet uplifting. I'm sure your emotions would have been sky high too Janine. What special people came together...

We are very grateful to David Hales for taking us around in his car. I don't know what we would have done without him. Now I can't wait for the next magazine to come out so that I can relive all those wonderful feelings again, and remember the very special people I met at the Reunion. Throughout the weekend Uncle Jimmy Hollingworth was in my thoughts. I'm only hoping he knows just how much he is remembered and loved ... especially now we know so much more about him.

The Reunion weekend was such a wonderful experience. But I found it very hard, as I'm sure you can imagine. It was something Ian and I had planned to do together, and I missed him so desperately. Arriving home and alone again is terrible now it's all done.

The day after my return was Ian's Birthday. It was unbearable, especially thinking of last year when he retired and we spent the day in the Derbyshire countryside. We had the Reunion of the RAF 214 Squadron Association to look forward to, the meeting with Gerhard and John Gilpin and unbeknown at the time, joining 100 Group Association. Life was filled with hope and promise.

What a difference a year can make.

My world changed with Ian's death. My mind was in turmoil about whether I should continue with the plan to attend the Reunion alone. Very little mattered to me any more. But when I made the decision to go ahead I was sure. I know that you will understand.

And it was all worth it when my parents joined me, and for Dad to come together with John and Gerhard. After all those years, finally finding people who had known his older brother ... those moments were priceless. Without the Association, that could never have happened.

Thank you.

*Take care and look forward to hearing from you,
Lots of love,
Linda (Fraser)*

xx

Linda would welcome hearing from any member who would like to write to her. Her details are on the inside cover of this magazine.



For The Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)

First published in The Times on 21 September 1914



Final Postings

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

Martin Albert Staunton, Eileen Boorman (nee Staunton), Len Bartram

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered with love.

192 Squadron	George Ward DFC Sqd/Ldr; Phil James' Canadian pilot
192 Squadron	Kenneth 'Paddy' Passmore: DFC Flt/Lt; Canadian, died 2005.
192 Squadron	John Cooke left memorabilia to the Museum archive collection.
192 Squadron	Ron Phillips passed away late 2005
192 Squadron	Ted Gomersall passed away 30 th November 2004,
192 Squadron	Hank Cooper DSO, DFC passed away 2005.
192 Squadron	Michael Simpson W/Op & F/O passed away on the Isle of Man.
192 Squadron	Richie' Richards Rear Airgunner, flew Wellingtons. His son, F L Richards, passed on in August 2009, both members of the Association.
192 Squadron	Air Commodore Vic Willis, C.O, RAF Foulsham, passed away 30.7.06
192 Squadron	Group Captain Jack Short passed away December 2006. Chair of RAF 100 Group Association until 1996.
192 Squadron	W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern RCAF died 15th August 2007 at home in Lanigan, Saskatchewan aged 85.
192 Squadron	LAC Harris, Ground Crew passed away 15 th August 2007. His grandson James Kerslake is now a member of the Association.
192 Squadron	Wing Commander David Donaldson, DSO*DFC passed away 15.1.2004.
192 Squadron	Wilhelmson, F/O Sander Willie Raymond (J10026).Distinguished Flying Cross. Home in Elbow, Saskatchewan.
192 Squadron	F/Lt Richard (Dick or Dobbie) William Dobson, died 1996, remembered by son, Roger & daughter Susan, both members.
192 Squadron	W/O John Rhys Powell, rear gunner flying Wellingtons, died 1992 remembered by son John Powell.
192 Squadron	Sgt George Richards, tail gunner, posted missing 4th/5th July 1944. Remembered by niece Cheryl Cairns nee Colgan & sister Agnes Colgan.
192 Squadron	F/Lt Henry Victor Vinnell (Vic), posted missing 26/27 th Nov 1944. Remembered by fiancée Nina Chessall always & her daughter Janine H.
192 Squadron	Jack Glen Millan Fisher, Pilot Officer with Royal Canadian Air Force, posted missing 26/27 th Nov 1944. Remembered by sister Audrey.
192 Squadron	Flight Lieutenant Albert Victor (Vic) Parker passed away November 14 th 2010. Daughter Ann Felsky says: 'We were lucky to have him 95 years and take care of him until the end.'

192 Squadron	Spec/Op (Wop) John Henry BALL , Association member for many years, passed away 23 April 2009. Remembered by daughter, Susan Lawford.
192 Squadron	George Lowe , originally 1473 Flight before becoming 192 Squadron, Special Signals, Foulsham. Died 24 th March 2011.
192 Squadron	F/O Alan Thomsett passed away 27 th May 2011. Initially flew ops with 1473 Flight during Battle of the Beams, 1941, then as part of No. 80 Wing. He will be sadly missed by so many. A valued friend. A very special man.
199 Squadron	F/O Ed Emmerson , Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, Canadian Pilot.
199 Squadron	Arthur Fitch , former RAF Bomber, passed away July 2006
199/171 Sqdn	Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, FRMets passed away 2005. Wife Betty donated memorabilia to the Museum. Also remembered by Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
171 Squadron	Joe Brogan , Halifax pilot, finished the war at North Creake; passed away 2004, remembered by widow Sheila.
171 Squadron	Arthur Adcock passed away February 2008 & Syd Love, Canadian crew member, passed away April 2008. ' <i>Friends to the end!</i> '
171 Squadron	Len Fanstone passed away 13 th January 2010. Greatly missed by Harry Freegard & wife, who were in touch since his return to Canada in 1946.
171/102 Squadron	Ken Ratcliffe Nav/Bomb Aimer passed away March 8 th 2010 age 86. He flew Halifax & Lancasters, in touch with his crew all their lives.
157 Squadron	Bryan Gale Flt/Lt passed away 2 nd January 2009. Remembered by daughter Valerie & son Chris.
214 Squadron	Geoff Liles , pilot, passed away 4 March 2006.
214 Squadron	Mr J Creech passed away April 2006.
214 Squadron	Don Austin , remembered by Les Bostock.
214 Squadron	Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner passed away 1 st Jan 2007.
214 Squadron	Sqdn Leader/Flight Commander Bob Davies passed away June 2007.
214 Squadron	Bill Howard passed away October 2007.
214 Squadron	Flt Lt Blair passed away Sept 2007.
214 Squadron	John Hereford , Spec Op.
214 Squadron	Robert Moorby W/Op passed on January 2008. Remembered by sons, Michael and Robin. Also Shirley Whitlock.
214 Squadron	Ft/Sg Hadder , Air Gunner in Fortress III HB815, bearing code letters "BU-J" killed 3/4 th March 1945, remembered by nephew Leslie Barker.
214 Squadron	Alan Mercer passed away 6 th June 2009.
214 Squadron	Warrant Officer Gordon Wing , ' <i>Howie</i> ' (character out of Australian newspaper cartoon page) passed away end of Nov 2009 age 87. Rear

Gunner in Eric Morrison's crew in Stirlings & Fortresses; also Founder member of Airgunners Association.

- 214 Squadron** [Robert Louie William Darracott](#), navigator, died May 8th 2010, 94 years. Sadly missed by family & friends.
- 214 Squadron** [Flying Officer Reginald Coates](#) completed the whole of his 2nd tour of operations as Bomber Pilot with 214 (FMS) in March 1945. Died at home 10th November 1963. Remembered by son, R I Coates
- 214 Squadron** [Bomb Aimer Les Bostock](#) in Don Austin's crew died just before Christmas 2010. He is remembered by m/u gunner C A Piper, 'Pip'.
- 223 Squadron** [Flt Lt A E L Morris \(Tony\)](#) died June 2005. Remembered by Andrew Barron, his skipper: Oct 44 – 1945.
- 223 Squadron** [Tom Butler 'Bishop'](#), remembered by Peter Witts.
- 223 Squadron** [C. L. Matthews \(Les\)](#) rear gunner, Peter Witts nose gunner in Flt/L Stan Woodward DFC crew before Peter went on to 214 Squadron.
- 223 Squadron** [Arthur Anthony](#), Flight Engineer, passed away May 13th 2006.
- 223 Squadron** [F/Lt Jack Brigham DFC](#) passed away 2008. Original Captain when 223 reformed. Flew mainly Liberator TS 524, 6G-0; 36 ops. Remembered by Len Davies, Waste Gunner, only surviving member of crew.
- 223 Squadron** [F/L/Sir John Briscoe](#) passed on a few years ago has now been identified as one of 223 Squadron.
- 223 Squadron** [2nd Pilot Mervyn Utas](#), Canadian in late Tony Morris's crew, passed away 8 Nov 2010. News came from Andrew Barron, the crews' Nav.
- 223 Squadron** [James Edward Bratten](#), 26.11.1922 died 16.11.2001. With Andrew Barron crew.
- 88 Squadron** [F/Lt Len Dellow](#) passed away Christmas/New Year 2006-7; veteran of 88 Squadron, 2 Group & rear gunner/wireless operator on Bostons.
- 49 Squadron** [Len Bradfield](#) passed away Nov 2005. Len & pilot Johnny Moss survived as war prisoners when their Lancaster ED625 was shot. Len returned to Britain with injuries sustained in escape attempt, nursed back to health by Nora, who he married.
- 462 RAAF Sqdn** [F/O H .R. Anderson DFC 'Andy'](#) passed away 6th April 2008 at home in New South Wales with family around him.
- 462 Squadron** [Donald Hulbert](#) passed away October 2009.

100 Group Order of Battle

SQD	AIRCRAFT	1st 100 GROUP OPERATION	BASE	SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL
192	Mosquito, Halifax Wellington Lightnings	Dec 1943	Foulsham	2171/5 Losses Electronic Intel/Elint
141	Beaufighters, Mosquito	Dec 1943	West Raynham	1214/11 Losses 80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Dest
219/239	Mosquito	Jan 1944	West Raynham	1394/9 Losses 51 En AC Dest
515	Mosquito	March 1944	Little Snoring	1366/21 losses 29 En AC Dest
169	Mosquito	Jan 1944	Little Snoring, Great Massingham	1247/13 Losses 25 En AC + 1 V1 Dest
214	Fortress	April 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1225/13 Losses Electronic Jamming
199	Stirling, Halifax	May 1944	North Creake	1707/6 Losses Electronic Jamming
157	Mosquito	May 1944	Swannington West Malling	1336/6 Losses 37 En AC +39 V1 Dest
85	Mosquito	June 1944	Swannington West Malling	1190/7 Losses 71 En AC+30 V1 Dest
23	Mosquito	July 1944	Little Snoring	1067/8 Losses 18 En AC Dest
223	Liberator Fortress	Sept 1944	Oulton	625/3 Losses Electronic Jamming
171	Stirling, Halifax	Sept 1944	North Creake	1583/4 Losses Electronic Jamming
462 RAAF	Halifax	Jan 1945	Foulsham	621/7 Losses Jamming/Windows
36 & 803 BS	Boeing B-17F P38	Jan 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1211/0 Losses Electronic Jamming
857 & 858 BS	Consolidated B-24G	Jan 1944	Oulton	280/2 Losses Electronic Jamming

See you all next year!

RAF 100 Group Association Reunion 2012

Friday 11th – Sunday 13th May

Produced by
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