



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

 Summer 2013 



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

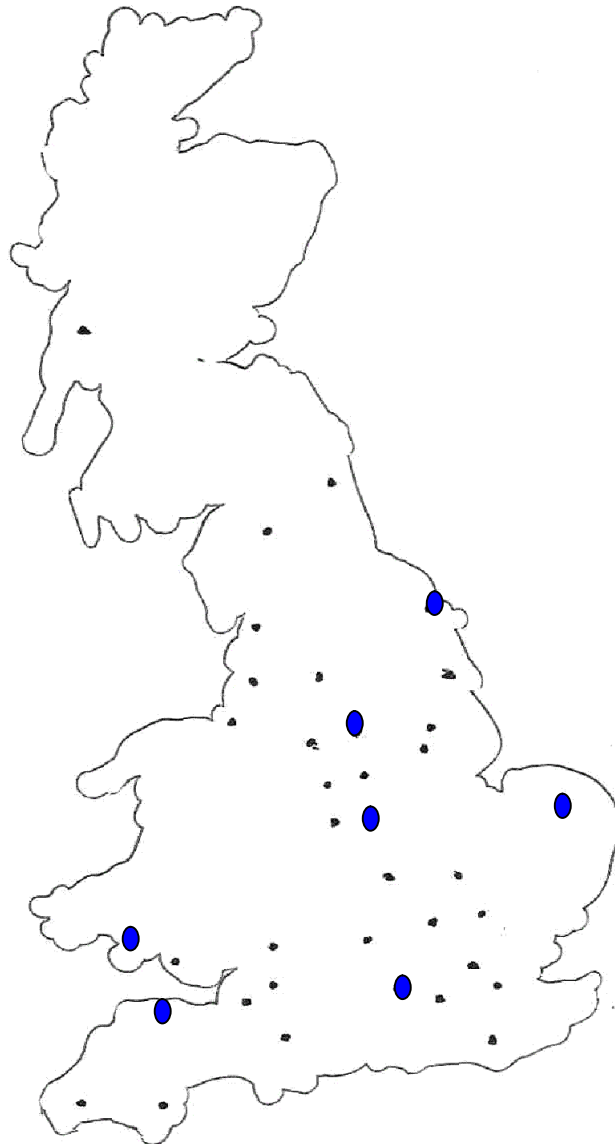
www.raf100groupassociation.org.uk

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Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith, Norwich, Norfolk NR10 3JF
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www.cnam.co.uk

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
South Africa
Thailand
Brazil

RAF 100 Group Association

RAF 100 Group Association

EDITOR'S PAGE



Dear Friends,

It was truly wonderful to see all Family and friends together once again at our Reunion 2013 and to feel the almost electric feeling of friendship and love radiating through and around us. There were new faces this year, new members for whom this was a new experience – Pete Smith, son of Tom Smith (23 Squadron), Chris and Heather, whose father Francis Jones served with 192 Squadron, and Liz Ingham, daughter of author Ron James, who recently re-published her father's writings. All new members were made very welcome, and we do hope you enjoyed your time with us and we'll see you next year. There were also a notable number of families who came to share the occasion ... the Forsyths, the Barrons, the Dobsons, the Witts, Linda and her parents ... It's a wonderful feeling to know that the stories of those who served under Bomber Command during the war in RAF 100 Group are being passed on through generations, to remain a living memory for all who come after.

However, there were notable absences ... not least Roger Jones, a well-known face with his wife Helen at all our Reunions. Helen, please know our thoughts are with you at this sad time after the loss of your dear husband. You were both missed very much indeed. I also have to share the sad news that George Fisher has passed on, as well as John McLaren. Further news about these members are within the pages of this magazine, as well as a full summary of the Reunion which I hope will help those who could not be with us for whatever reason feel valued, included and involved.

There was an unexpected change to our Speaker this year. News of this appears in the second half of the magazine. John Rees, co-author with his father William (Bill) Rees of the book '*Espionage in the Ether*'; was to have been our Speaker and had to give apologies. His father remains seriously ill. With John his main carer it was impossible to leave him at this time. However, Rod Vowler, our Standard Bearer, stepped in and, given the short time he had to prepare, presented the wonderful story of his uncle, Leonard Vowler, a Sergeant in 223 Squadron. A summary of the talk is shared in the Reunion Section of this magazine. Thanks, Rod, for all you did to make your talk come alive through the illustrations and music you put together for us to follow his journey.

I should also mention that a new booklet has been added to Len Bartram's updated collection of writings about the airfields of Norfolk. The booklet covers RAF Little Snoring and is available for £5+pp direct from myself. In the meantime, at Evelyn's request (Len Bartram's widow) I continue writing about the remainder of Norfolk airfields under RAF 100 Group during WWII to complete the series Len began. I would particularly welcome hearing from anyone with past experience of RAF Swannington, West Raynham, Great Massingham or Swanton Morley. All profits from sales go to the Association.

Preparations are already in progress for next year's Reunion, taking place over the weekend of 9th to 11th May 2014. Please put that date in your diaries today!

Love & Hugz
Janine
XX

Items for magazine should be sent to:
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Tel: 01723 512544 raf100groupassociation@gmail.com

Chairman's Report



THE 100 (BOMBER SUPPORT) GROUP ASSOCIATION

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MAY 2013

Dear Members,

Another Reunion has taken place and I was delighted with the attendance; thank you all for the effort and as Chairman may I say how much Valerie and I enjoyed your company again.

I appreciate very keenly that there are many members who simply cannot be with us for various combinations of age, health and distance – but be assured that we recognise and appreciate the contributions that you have all made over the many years. The Newsletter is a vital link between all the members wherever you may live.

I was therefore very disturbed to hear after the Reunion that some of you had expressed concerns that the Newsletter was in any way at risk. I cannot imagine where that started but it is completely wrong. The Newsletter is absolutely secure and, together with the Reunion, forms the very essence of the Association.

The Committee has a clear responsibility to manage the Association funds. The Newsletter together with postal costs is the major expense. In order to conserve funds, we will take the following actions:

- The Reunion Newsletter will be produced in full colour and sent to all members, either by post or email.
- All subsequent Newsletters for the next 12 months ending April 2014 will be produced in full colour for email distribution and in Black & White for printing and postal distribution.
- We will keep careful watch on the costs through the year and will report at the next Reunion how things have developed.

Coming back to this Reunion, I have written to all of the people who made us so very welcome: Foulsham, Oulton, the Aviation Museum, the Church at Horsham and of course the Wensum Valley Hotel. It is a great privilege for me as Chairman to maintain these links and I feel that you would all share my appreciation of the hospitality that we enjoy.

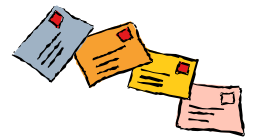
I went to the RAF Museum at Bickling Hall and I was very pleased with the ongoing work. It complements the display at the Aviation Museum and together they provide invaluable visibility to the general public of the achievements of No.100 Group during World War Two. Both of these museums are living displays which are continuously changing and improving. No museum can stand still because it would fail to attract visitors. The Association must help wherever possible.

Finally, may I remind you that we must identify candidates as Vice-Chairman and as Deputy Secretary. Please give this your thought and your ideas.

With my most sincere best wishes to all members,

John Stubbington

John Stubbington, Wing Commander, Chairman



Dear Members,

The new Bomber Command Clasp is now available, both to those who served under Bomber Command through the war, and to relatives. The background to this recognition finally being presented to all those who served is as follows –

The Bomber Command Clasp

In 2012 the Prime Minister asked Sir John Holmes (a former Senior Diplomat) to undertake a review into several medal controversies which had been allowed to run on for many years. He concluded that the airmen of Bomber Command had been treated inconsistently with the pilots of Fighter Command who had been awarded the Battle of Britain clasp. A clasp was deemed appropriate as aircrew had already been awarded the Aircrew Europe Star or the France and Germany Star. A Bomber Command medal would have meant 'double medalling' for the same service. I might add here that there was much grumbling amongst those of us who flew operationally after D Day who were denied the Aircrew Europe star, which many regarded as the 'Bomber Command' medal but, in fact, was awarded to all aircrew who flew operationally from British bases, Fighter, Coastal, Bomber and the those who fought in France before it's fall in 1940.

The requirement for the BC clasp is one operation, the same as the Battle of Britain clasp. Application must be made to the MOD Medal Office with whatever supporting documents you have e.g. a copy of your Log Book, for example, preferably identifying the Unit with which you flew. As next of kin may apply the list is long, so be patient.

The picture below shows Andrew Barron with his Clasp at the Reunion this year. He served with 223 Squadron. The tie he is wearing is that of the Bomber Command Association, and the last medal is the Coronation Medal (QE2 of course!).

You can receive an application form for the Bomber Command clasp by writing to -

Vivienne Hammer
Registrar
Bomber Command Association
RAF Museum
Grahame Parkway
Hendon
London NW9 5LL

020 8358 4841



Please include an SAE when sending for your application form.

Bomber Command Association is addressing first the needs of all who served during the war, and then will be focusing on relatives. Anyone wishing to gain the Clasp on behalf of a relative who served in RAF 100 Group under Bomber Command should make this plain from the outset.

With thanks to Andrew Barron for help in gathering this information

Dear Janine,



*Standing in front of the Bomber Command Memorial, Green Park, London
Dr Peter Lovatt, Andrew Barron and Walter MacFarlane, DFC*

This photograph taken at the unveiling of the Bomber Command Memorial on 28th June 2012, shows Dr Peter Lovatt and Andrew Barron, together with Walter MacFarlane, DFC, 76 Squadron.

John

Wing Commander John Stubbington
Chair: RAF 100 Group Association



Hello John

I have just read the Spring edition of the Association newsletter and your article on 171 Squadron.

Last year, after searching for a very long time, I found a copy of *'Terror by Night'* for sale on a stall at Flying Legends at Duxford. Having seen the prices asked by internet sellers for this book, I could not believe my good fortune on securing my purchase for £6.00!! This title seems to be one of the hardest 100 Group related books to find, although only published in 1982. The author is Wing Commander Michael Renaut, CO of 171 whilst at North Creak.

What caught my eye is that your spelling of his surname in the article is Renaux and I am intrigued to see this. Not sure if you have seen the book? His is a sad story, not the normal bomber pilot autobiography. He died tragically in 1964. His DFC is presently advertised for auction sale. Would be a great Museum exhibit for us, although awarded for service with 76 Squadron. The book was published by William Kimber ISBN: 9780718301392.

The spelling of Wing Commander Michael Renaut was also spelt incorrectly in *'Confounding the Reich'* by Martin Bowman, as it shows Renaun here too! I have the 1936 PSL edition and wonder if it might have been corrected in the Pen and Sword re-release? However, Laurie Brettingham has the name correct in *'When the Sparrows are Walking'*.

Thanks

Kelvin



Dear Janine,

Firstly, I must say thanks for the *Confound & Destroy* magazine. You do a wonderful job. Next, I would like to order one of the booklets you mention: Len Bartram's '*Foulsham Airfield*' ... I met with Len on 27.8.1989 at the unveiling of the airfield Memorial at Foulsham village. He was a lovely man and very helpful.

I was at Foulsham from late '44 until late March '45, mostly in the S.W.OP's Office. While there one morning I was put on Crash Guard, just put into a staff car and dropped off within a 5-10 mile radius of the airfield. The 'plane was a USAAF Mustang, which I understood was in a mid-air collision, date about end of Feb-early March '45. I wonder if any readers have recollections of the accident? I'd love to know more but realise it's a bit late now.

Sorry to say I cannot make the Reunion, much as I would like to. Health etc. will not allow ...

With best wishes,
Des Streatfield



Dear Janine,

I have been given your name by a neighbour. We found out her father also flew with an Aussie Squadron at Foulsham. I joined 192 Squadron on the Wellington Flight in September 1944 as a Navigator until 29 January 1945. When the Wellingtons were grounded for ops in Bomber Command, I stayed on the Squadron as a spare Navigator. During February to 26 April 1945 I flew 10 ops on Halifax aircraft, with F/Lt Stevens and 8 with F/Lt Gray to complete a Tour. I then trained on Transport Command and operated from Croydon on Dakotas.

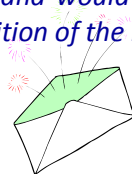
I flew on Dakotas with 147 Squadron at Croydon from November 1945 up to February 1946 when I was seconded to BOAC/BEA at Northolt. Then one year later, I went back to BOAC at Whitchurch, Bristol, where I flew as a Navigator on Dakotas, Vikings, Haltons, Yorks, Lancastrians and DC4M. I retrained as a pilot in 1954 and flew as a pilot until my 60th birthday in 1982.

For the past six years I have suffered with knee trouble. I have had three operations but now can only walk with sticks or a zimmer frame. I may not be able to attend any Reunions, but will enjoy reading any news of my old friends.

Yours sincerely,
Bryce Helm

82 High St, Thame, Oxon OX9 3EQ

NOTE: *Bryce has just joined the Association and would love to hear from friends, old and new. More about his experiences will be in the Autumn edition of the magazine.*



Dear Janine,

I'm trying to find details of a Halifax that flew with 100 Group in either 171, 192 or 462 Squadron for the relative of a crew member. The aircraft was known as "*Trusty*" and assumed to be coded "T" ...

Any help would be appreciated
Regards

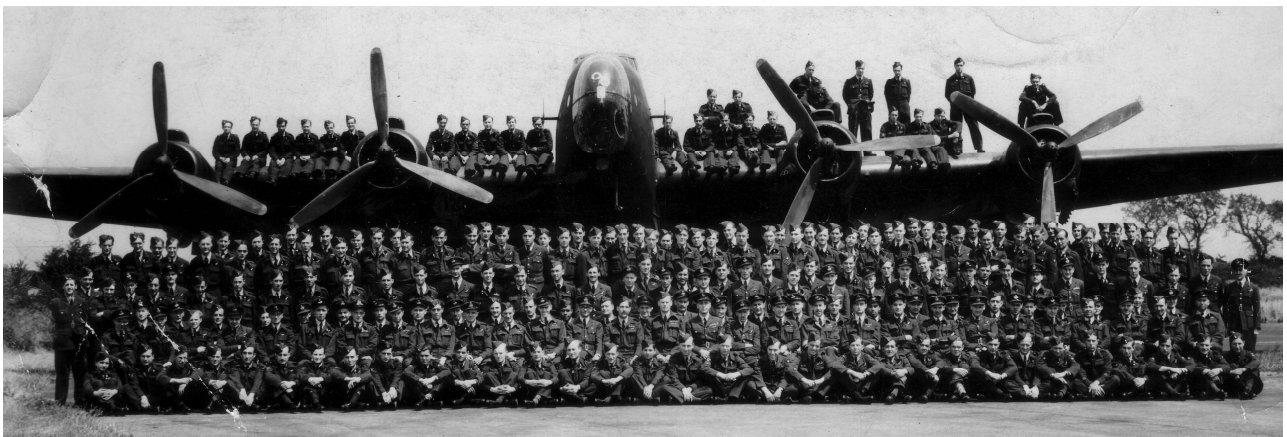
John Walker john.walker08@btinternet.com

Dear Janine,

The last magazine, Spring 2013, carried a very interesting archive report on 171 Squadron Operations as covered by my father's crew.

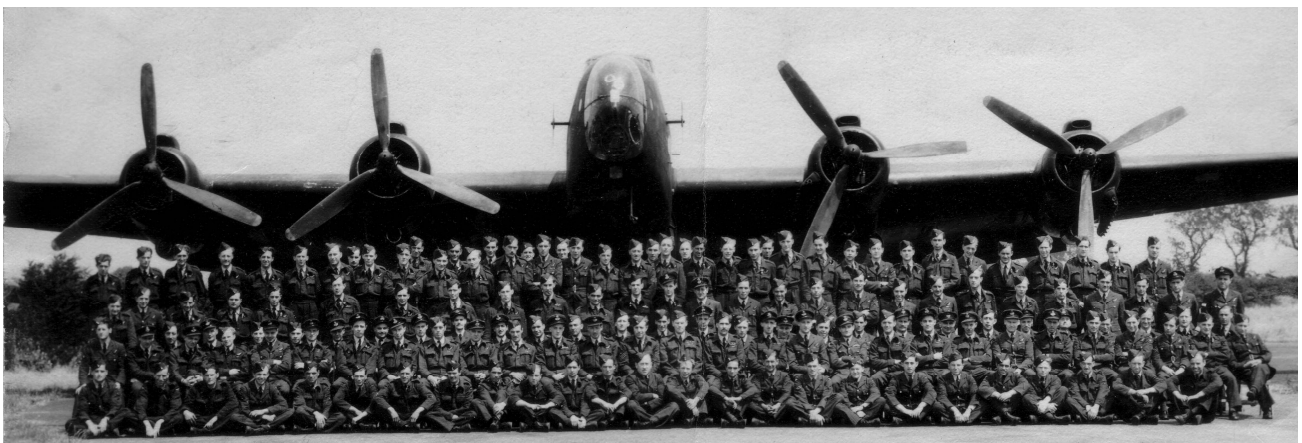
A relative of another surviving member of my father's crew, based in Scotland, has sent me a photograph of 171 Squadron posing in front of a Halifax. By coincidence, I had already come across the same photograph a week earlier, plus another Group photo, obviously taken at the same location, North Creake of (I think) another Squadron – possibly 199. I've sent them both to another surviving crew member near Birmingham to see if he recognises himself and the crew. It looks as though this may be the first Bomber Command photo I have found containing my father – albeit only when enlarged and a bit grainy. I will add some words to these photographs in the hope that members might be able to share something more about them.

171 Squadron & 192/199/462 (?) Squadron/North Creake: Squadron photographs



This photograph was received from the son of James McDonald. James was a Special Wireless Operator who joined his crew at 171 Squadron, as their 8th crew member in October 1944. James can be seen sitting down at the front, 10th from the right. James' crew included my father, Andrew Melvin Robertson, the Flight Engineer, W/O Alan Arthur Digby, his pilot Gordon Mercier (Mid-Upper Gunner), Kenneth J Adams (Rear Gunner), John Dibbs (Navigator), W Brown (Wireless Operator) and S K Smith (Bomb Aimer).

I have also located/met surviving veteran Gordon Mercier and the relatives of 'Skipper' Digby. I would love to make contact with the balance of the above crew or their relatives.



With regard to this second photograph, does anyone know when it was taken? I understand from the Spring 2013 magazine that 171 had a Squadron 'party' on 4 March 1945. Could it have been taken then? Does anyone recognise any faces? I realise the photograph is going to come out small, and the faces almost unrecognisable without use of a magnifier. But I believe that the two standing on the third row, far right, are my father and 'Skipper' Digby (face distorted by the crease in the photo). Does anyone have another undamaged copy of this photo?

It is also possible that the man standing on the left of my father could be Gordon Mercier.

The second photograph came into my possession seemingly taken in the same location with the same Halifax. Which Squadron is this and was it taken on the same day? The quality of this scan is not as good and it is possible some personnel are on both photos. Is it another version of 171 or is it 192 or 199 Squadron? I assume it is not 462RAAF, who also flew Halifaxes?

I would appreciate anyone who knows any of the above or has information about the 177 Squadron photo and particularly any further photos of my father or his crew members. I can be contacted on e-mail: robertson.colin@gmail.com or 0113-284-2859.

Colin Robertson

NOTE: Please contact Janine direct if you would like a full A4 copy of either of these photographs



Dear Janine

My mother is Winifred Elizabeth Seeley (nee Tomlinson), and she was an MT Driver for 214 Squadron and 223 Squadron. The latest *Confound & Destroy* magazine had a picture or two of Patricia Roc, and my Mum also has a photo of Patricia Roc taken at that same time. My Mum was the WAAF directly behind Patricia Roc. I am not sure of the names of any of the other people in the photo. My Mum has an excellent memory, and she does have wonderful stories to tell about her time as a balloon operator and later as an MT Driver. I feel very inadequate trying to put it all down on paper, it's not easy, is it?

Anyway, she had another look at the photograph with Patricia Roc, and came up with a few names. We also found a photograph of many of the MT Drivers for 214 and 23 Squadrons, and she has managed to name quite a few of them for you. She also had a photograph of herself with men from the Signals Section at RAF Oulton. I think she was a bit of a favourite with them, and they asked her to join them in the photograph. All their signatures are on the back, but unfortunately we don't know whose face belongs to which name! Ray Worrall's signature is also there, but he was the photographer, he is not pictured.



All the best

Anne Cheung

cheung33a@gmail.com





214 Squadron, MT Section, Blickling Hall, Oulton

Back Row, 1-16

- 1 –
- 2-
- 3-
- 4-
- 5-
- 6- Walter (Curly) Houghton from Scunthorpe
- 7-
- 8- Corporal Barlow
- 9- 'Sparks'
- 10-
- 11-
- 12-
- 13-
- 14-
- 15- Corporal Sidery
- 16- Doreen Roebottom

Front Row 1 – 5

- 1-Sergeant
- 2-Warrant Officer
- 3-Flying Officer Salew
- 4- Sergeant (known as Snitch!)
- 5- Sergeant

Next Row of 2

- 1-
- 2- Corporal Scholes

Middle Row 1-12

- 1-Corporal
- 2-Dorothy (Dot) Butler
- 3-Hazel Robbins (m Southgate)
- 4-Connie (from Fakenham)
- 5-Corporal Somerset
- 6-'Paddy' Stevenson, from Ballymena
(m Smith, London)
- 7-Nan or Nen Mainwaring
- 8-Winifred Elizabeth Tomlinson
(m Seeley)
- 9-Olga Miller
- 10- Elsie Shultz
- 11-Janet Hodges
(m Moyse, Wigston nr Liverpool)
- 12-

Not on Photo – Nellie Dawson, always with Doreen Roebottom, they were very good pals.



6 9
 5
 2 4 8 10
 1 3 7

1 – Used to be known as Tommy, maybe
 2 – Connie
 3 – Patricia Roc
 4 – Winifred Elizabeth Tomlinson
 5 –

6 –
 7 – Olga Miller
 8 – Corporal Barlow
 9 – Walter (Curly) Houghton
 10 – Madge Prouton



Signals RAF Oulton



Hello

My husband, David, who died 2 years ago; was an avid collector of instrumentation from the Second World War. His particular interest was instruments relating to Spitfires and Lancasters. He assembled the pilots' instrument panels for both these aircraft, buying original pieces and installing them onto reproduction panels.



He also acquired large numbers of dials etc. surplus to his requirements, and several interesting larger pieces such as a reconnaissance camera, communications devices, etc.

I have no idea what all these pieces are, and what they would be valued at. I am keen to keep the instrument panels, but perhaps loan them to a Museum so that people who appreciate them might be able to see them. But the majority of the rest I would like to sell.

Do you know of anyone who would be able to come to see me and work through the collection, identifying the pieces? I live just South of Diss, Norfolk.

I look forward to hearing from you

Regards

Judy Smither
judy@smither.co.uk



NOTE: I have contacted CNAM on behalf of Judy and she is currently awaiting a response..



Dear All

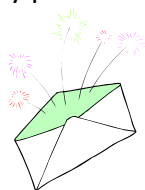
Firstly, please forgive the impersonal nature of this email. I wanted to let you know as soon as possible that my father John McLaren passed away earlier today after a short illness aged 88. His wife Margaret is anxious to let you know that, as she does not use the internet, his email address should no longer be used to contact her, but she would be delighted to speak to you via her correspondence address:

Mrs M McLaren, 'Kimberley', Compton Street, Compton Dundon, Somerset TA11 6PS
Tel: 01458 448605

If you would like to contact me via email, my personal address is gmmclaren@hotmail.com

With very many thanks

Graham McLaren



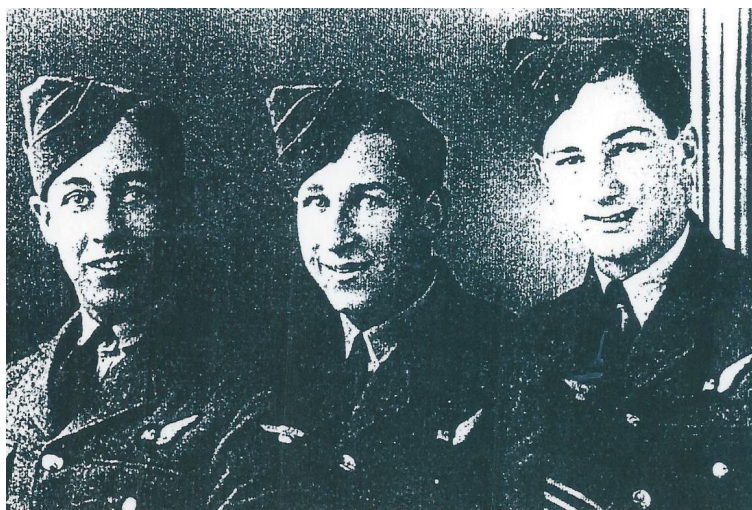
IN MEMORY

Flight Officer Sgt John McLaren

Air Gunner, 223 (Bomber Support) Squadron

'The Last Musketeer'

by Richard Forder



Sergeants Les Matthews, Peter Witts, John McLaren

It was with some sadness that I learnt from Janine that John McLaren had died in March earlier this year. My mind went back immediately to conversations I used to have with Les Matthews and Peter Witts. Well aware of my efforts, together with those of Rod Vowler, to trace former members of 223 Sqn, Les and Peter were always keen to know if there was any news of their wartime pal, John McLaren a fellow Air Gunner. Although other Air Gunners were traced there was no sign of John. To me they became the 'Three Musketeers'.

The three met at 10 Air Gunnery School at RAF Walney Island, Barrow in Furness at the beginning of July 1944 when they joined 96 Course. The course of 60 airmen was drawn from a band of very disappointed young men who had been training to be pilots under the Pilot, Navigator, Bomb Aimer (PNB) scheme. Unfortunately for them, at this stage of the war, there was a surplus of pilots and they had been forced to re-muster to a different aircrew specialisation or a ground trade. Their disappointment was heightened because many of them had achieved solo standard.

Les, Peter and John were soon acquainted and were fortunate in staying together when they were included in the batch of 38 Air Gunners posted to 223 Sqn at RAF Oulton in early September 1944. They were to remain together with their allocation to Flt Lt Stan Woodward's crew. They were very proud of their new Skipper, a greatly respected aircraft Captain on the Sqn. Stan had already been awarded a DFM for an earlier tour in Coastal Command, and would receive the DSO for his Tour with 223. In the crew, Peter manned the front turret, John was in a waist position, with Les literally bringing up the rear in the tail turret.

The trio were to fly 11 ops together before deletion of the front turret on 223's Liberators resulted in Peter being posted across the airfield to 214 Sqn. Les and John, however, continued an ever present presence in the crew and went on to complete a very impressive 40 ops by the end of their Tour.

Like so many wartime friendships Les, Peter and John went their separate ways at the end of the war. Les and Peter eventually regained contact but, as the years went by, no sign of the elusive John. In May 2004 we lost Les. It was therefore ironic that just a few years later I had a very excited call from Peter to say that he had established contact with John McLaren. Janine had received a membership enquiry from John and it was established that he knew Peter Witts. The missing 3rd Musketeer had been found, albeit too late for Les. The supreme irony was that John was living in Cornwall, very close to Peter's home in the same county. Sadly, I never met John and many Association members will not be aware of him. We had always hoped that John would be able to join us for a Reunion but it was not to be. We always marvelled at Peter's ability to make such a journey each year, but it was just too far for John. We lost Peter in 2011, but how fortunate that the pair were able to get together even for just a few years.

Richard Forder

Association Committee
Specialist 223 Squadron



Dear Janine,

Thank you for your recent letter inviting my late father George Fisher to renew his membership and attend the RAF 100 Group Association Reunion.

Unfortunately, he can no longer do so as he died of a heart attack on September 25th last year, 2012. I apologise for not contacting you sooner in this matter.

My father served as a Navigator from 1942-1946 with No.214 REM and No.206 Squadrons.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Fisher

(son of George Fisher)

NOTE: *George Fisher became a particular friend and is remembered in the Final Postings Section in the back pages of this magazine.*



IN MEMORY

PHILIP ALBERT ARNOLD

Wo2 Air Gunner, Position Rear Gunner, 192 Squadron

Dear Janine,

Thank you for offering to include a piece about my father. He would be very happy, though I can hear him saying '*Don't bother, lots of people did far more*'.

I'm pretty certain he mentioned a guy called Vic Vinnell and Jack Fisher too. I think it may have been regarding a sortie from Norwich when they hitched a lift from a farmer who had what we now know as 'Tourettes'. He said they wished they had walked as the driver was swearing, swerving around and involuntarily throwing his arm out the window. Does that ring any bells ...?

Philip Albert Arnold was born on 4th April 1920 in Northampton.

RAF EARLY YEARS

Our family had a shoe factory in Northampton but Father was bored and couldn't settle in. He was fascinated by flying since being taken for a flight when a boy by, I think, Sir Henry Seagrave when he used to fly at Air Shows.

He joined up at 18 in 1938. After basic training he was given a choice of stations to be posted to. Father saw Cranwell and selected that, mistaking it for CRANFIELD which was only a few miles from home.

It was a bit of shock to experience the discipline and structure at Cranwell and he was glad when posted to Upavon where things calmed down. He was selected for pilot training and was doing well until he pranged a Harvard on landing. It flipped right over, caught fire, and he was lucky to get out alive and unscarred. The RAF took a dim view of such things so he was transferred to Air Gunner Radio Operator training.

Off to Hemswell. During this period he flew in Hawker Harts, Whitleys, Hampdens and the like. Like so many he was sparky, resulting in periods on guard duty.

One wintry night patrolling the perimeter he heard a noise. They had been briefed the IRA might be planning sabotage, (even back then!) so Father gave the challenge three times. The third time he fired at the direction of the noise. A fearful bellow came back with a loud thump.

The alarms sounded. The Station turned out to find ... Dad had shot a farmer's cow! The CO had to pay the farmer, though Dad did hear steak was on the menu in the Officers Mess that week and a Flight Lt. slapped him on the back and thanked him.

WAR BEGINS

War broke out, so Father's misdemeanours were overlooked as more pressing matters needed attention. He only flew missions involving leaflet dropping etc. on Hampdens before he was posted to Trincomalee in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) flying a variety of seaplanes and Fairey Swordfish. Their mission was to monitor the Imperial Japanese Fleet and if war broke out, sink them! One has to admire the optimism of those times. He loved the Fairey Swordfish.



Most of the aircraft were obsolete even by the standards of the time. Life was good though - swimming, sailing, exploring the area, going out in between flights. But then the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and life became more serious. Flights were more regular, and Father said if they had ever spotted a Zero they knew they would never make it back as the Zero would have soon closed and shot them down.

They now also had a Supermarine Walrus on QRA which is a bit of an oxymoron, manned and moored a few hundred yards off shore. The occasional Catalina was a treat. When the seaplanes were taken out or returned to the sea for maintenance they used some of the locals to wade in and help guide it and retrieve chocks etc. Someone always had to be on duty with a Thompson Sub machine gun at such times because the Salt Water Crocodiles and Sharks had acquired a taste for Tamil (the locals) and a burst from a Thompson usually scared them away. I say usually as Father said *'they did lose a few'*. It's almost unbelievable to imagine such goings on now.

One morning while the Station was at breakfast, they spotted some aircraft at high altitude heading their way. One of the new guys said *'Oh look, it's like tinsel falling out of the planes'*. An old sweat said: *'that's not Tinsel. They are f*****g bombs! Run!!!'* The Japanese had decided to join them for breakfast. Zeros flashed in, strafing, and Father said if they had their undercarriage down they would have touched they were that low.

All the defences sprang into action. Father ran for cover, but only got a few paces before a Zero's machine guns found him. Father thinks they were Armour piercing as they went straight through his lower legs and ankles, the scars fascinated me as a child. He was helped by some Marines and Gurkhas who were stationed with them. Expecting an invasion they all fled to the Jungle.

They came across a Japanese pilot whose plane had been shot down and he'd parachuted out. He approached them. Just as he went to raise his hands in surrender, the Royal Marine Sergeant-in-charge screamed *'hit the deck!'* and opened up with his Thompson machine gun. The Japanese had been known to place hand grenades under their armpits which fell away when they raised the arms taking everyone with them.

The base was plastered but no invasion came and after a few days they were ordered to return. Father was admitted to the hospital where he was pleased to be told he would make a full recovery, only to be struck down with Malaria following his time in the Jungle. After he had recovered from his wounds and Malaria he was posted back to England.

BACK TO ENGLAND

Father spent a few months on light duties, riding between Bomber airfields in Lincolnshire with orders and maps etc. The Bomber offensive was now in full swing and Father was sent for Air Gunner Training, again learning how to operate the new turrets, flying various types: Wellingtons, Stirlings & Lancasters for H.C.U. Then O.C.U. and to Foulsham 192 Squadron. Rear Gunner Halifax Mk 3.

192 and Foulsham was Father's favourite posting. A mixture of the scariest moments, sadness at losing friends, fun, friendship and escapades. He met a friend from Northampton, Colin, who was also an Air Gunner on 192. Father was a pianist and Colin played the clarinet and said Father was always in demand to play.

Father remembered the villagers and ground crews waving them off on take-off. The long cold flight to the target, the awesome sight of the various coloured target indicators hanging in the sky like giant chandeliers. Flying back at low level in the first light of dawn passing German castles. Along rivers, having to be 100% alert. As you know, 192 flew Special Ops and would draw fighters away from the main force, gathering intel, sending out confusing RT; so they flew all over.

Apparently one Air Gunner on 192 was succumbing to combat stress, and the crew was getting twitchy. Father knew the guy well. One day he said he just couldn't do it so Father volunteered (unofficially he took his place to save him facing a charge of L.M.F. (Lack of Moral Fibre). This happened a few times so he

actually flew more missions than his Log books show. The guy eventually succumbed and was whisked away sharpish, never to be heard of again. Tragic!

A few aircraft had the machine guns in the rear and upper turrets replaced with cannon to give them increased range, because Night Fighters knew they could sit just out of range of the Halifax's 303 guns and open up with their cannon, knowing the Halifax's guns couldn't hit them. The plan was to give the Halifaxes a better chance of survival, shake the Night Fighters up and hopefully give the main Force bombers a bit more chance.

On the first mission with the new cannon fitted they were bounced over the sea before they had tested their guns. Father pulled the toggles to cock the guns, waited until the Fighter was in range and pulled the trigger. Instead of the turret shaking and filling with cordite fumes there was, in Father's words, just a sickening '*thump*' ... and silence. In the excitement he had forgotten the new cannon needed two pulls, one to load a round, a second to cock the breach.

Father screamed '*corkscrew port go!*' pulled the toggles a second time and opened up as the aircraft lurched into the acrobatic escape manoeuvre. He was pretty shaken but certain his rounds hit, and in seconds it was over. He said the intercom was very quiet for the rest of the flight, though it was just a joke in the pub the following night.

The most feared Night Fighter was the ME 110 with upward firing armament. As you probably know, they would creep up from below and behind and open up, raking the underside of the aircraft. Father had a memorable meeting with a FW190, which he said was grim. The FW (he always renamed it to something similar!) just appeared out of nowhere and opened up. Father said it was out of his range and in any case he didn't want to mix it with one of those FWs.

It stayed with them through two corkscrews, scoring hits with father firing back. They escaped, just. Over the sea, the skipper gave the '*BAIL OUT!*' twice. Everyone was praying he didn't give the order a third time, which meant '*the Jig was up*' in his words.

Another close shave was when Father was in the mid upper turret for some reason. He was scanning forward. The plane shook as though some giant had grabbed it and four Flack shells burst one after the other just along the leading edge of the starboard wing. How the plane survived, and the crew he never could understand. It should have torn the wing off.

SCARECROWS AND FOO FIGHTERS

Crews were told before they went operational that Germans would fire into the sky special shells that would explode and then look just like a burning bomber. They were told '*so don't worry chaps if you think the Germans are shooting planes down. It's just a ruse to sap your morale.*' Father said they looked so realistic. They were! It wasn't until some years later that it was uncovered the Germans never did that. In truth, the scarecrows were actually real bombers on fire. Foo Fighters? He said he saw many strange aircraft at night. He never figured out what they were. Maybe jets, maybe UFOs. He never came to a conclusion.

THE HUMANITY IN WAR

Now while the next piece would have been frowned upon, I include it to show that, in spite of the death and horror, some humanity and humour remained amongst the crews. No doubt there are lots of similar untold stories.

Early one morning when they were returning low level, they spotted a transport column waking up. The crew were in good spirits. It had been an easy night. Someone suggested to take the tops off some of their thermos flasks and throw them out. Father said he could still remember the look of panic on the German's faces as the flasks whistled down. He said the skipper even wagged the wings as they flew away.

Another instance was flying back to Base over the North Sea. They spotted a German intruder/Night Fighter flying towards them away from England. The skipper gave an order '*Guns! Keep your eyes open*'. All the turrets swung their guns to show they had spotted him.

They flew closer, all on edge. The German aircraft made no attempt to change course or engage. They both continued on their course. They passed within a few feet and the German pilot saluted them as they passed. Father said such things were not that uncommon, but never reported and kept to conversations within crews because, if it got out, they could be on a charge. A few hours earlier they were trying to kill each other, now they were all tired and just wanted to survive and get home.

Some of the characters Father remembered were Mitchell, Worrell, the CO Donaldson, and an Argentinean who would recite in Argentinean a complicated toast that always brought a cheer at the pub. Sorties into Norwich in an overloaded car. Drunken nights and pretty girls.

He was given Leave on one occasion, so rode back to Northampton. On the third or fourth day his mother said he hadn't any more Ration coupons. Father checked, then checked his Pass. It said he was due back on the 7th. He contacted his Squadron to be told he was listed as AWOL and in deep trouble! He raced back, presented himself and showed his Leave slip. Apparently the Adj's '2' looked like a '7'. Donaldson accepted this explanation and all was well, until he went to the Mess.

Father's aircraft had to fly a mission. As father was not there, a scratch Rear Gunner was used. The aircraft failed to return. Now one of the crew, Radio Op I think he said; managed to escape and told Father what happened.

Apparently they got bounced by a Night Fighter. The Rear Gunner never saw it. Some of the cannon shells tore right through the fuselage into the pilot's armour plated seat and the Radio Op said Mitchell (the Pilot; I think father said he was Australian) was just torn to pieces. The plane was in flames and went into a dive, another one of the crew tried desperately to get control to give the crew a chance to bail out. The Radio Op said that was the last thing he saw as he bailed out - Mitchell dead, with the crew member fighting to gain control.

Father said more than once he was sure if he had been there he would have spotted the Fighter and I think felt guilty. He kept the Leave slip somehow and I can say I thought it looked like a 7.

He recalled when a Squadron of Fortresses were diverted to their Base as the Fort's home Base had been bombed while they were away. The Americans apparently would land line astern, one after the other, so aircraft would be touching down while others were still landing. The whole Station had turned out to watch this amazing spectacle. Unfortunately the second or third Fort's undercarriage collapsed after a few yards, probably battle damaged, and started slithering and bouncing, catching fire in the process. Two or three others behind were now on the runway and crashed into it. Another fully committed, tried to abort his landing but failed and that too crashed. Father said it was one of the most horrific sights he ever witnessed.

WAR'S END

When hostilities ended his crew took Ground Crew on flights over Germany to show them how their efforts had contributed to the war effort and as a thank you to them from the crews.

He said he couldn't believe the damage, but even then never fully appreciated it. It hit home when they took some civilians/scientists to Germany for something or other and they were allowed to go off Station with an Army patrol. They were given a lecture about fraternising, don't touch anything in case it was booby trapped etc. During the walk he saw a young girl about eighteen, her clothes not much more than rags, sitting on a pile of rubble in front of a small fire of sticks crying, holding her hand out for some food. He told me he thought '*what have we done to each other?!?*'.

He was always extremely proud of his Service, never felt guilty about what they were asked to do, even Dresden ... because it was war. Us or them! The Nazis had committed terrible atrocities and had to be beaten.

In his twilight years he maintained those views, met some of the German Night Fighter crews who had been the enemy and they shook hands, swapped stories, laughed together with that respect that old adversaries have for each other. He never told me everything he saw or did, I suspect some was so awful he wanted to forget. He would sometimes go very quiet after telling a story. I knew then something had pricked his conscience.

AFTER THE WAR

Father decided to stay on. Flying was now much reduced. He was asked if wanted to go to RAF Bawdsey because of his 192/100 Group background. He did, but missed the flying and only stayed on for a couple of years. Then he left but remained in the Reserve. He flew Tiger Moths from Sywell and Canberra's from Wyton and Upavon, I think. He was always a 'Live One' and when he was courting my mother, who was a nurse at the General Hospital in Northampton; told her to be on the roof with her pals at a certain time and he would give them an Air Show. He did ... looping the loop once, twice, three times. He said near the bottom of the loop, it suddenly went very dark. Then he saw the inside of the electricity power stations cooling tower. They never flew inside it, but it was a close run thing apparently. They beat a hasty retreat back to Sywell before anyone could get their number.

Every one of the Bomber Boys were heroes. They did what was asked of them. Took no pleasure from the human cost they inflicted. Most never even saw it as it was a target 12000ft below. Just fires, coloured target markers, and flak.

From three years old, he took me to Air Shows Farnborough being the first. Every year till he died we went to a few every year. He always looked for 192 badges on people. I took him to Elvington where I'd arranged a secret private tour and lunch for him and days out at Cosford, etc. and operational RAF stations where they always made a fuss of him. We both tried to find if any Reunions were on. We met a few ex 192 over the years and he would have been thrilled at the 100 Group Association.

TRIBUTE

Throughout the years, Farnborough Air Show was the highlight. At that and other Air Shows we dreamed of having our own Jet, Provost or a Vampire Trainer as they are side by side seating and relatively low tech; and of flying into Farnborough. Alas he passed on in 2003 before we did it. Last year I fulfilled our joint ambition. I flew into, took part in, and flew out of Farnborough Air Show in a Jet Provost I own a share in. On the flight back to RAF Leeming I circled low over my parents' house and waggled the wings. Whenever we fly near or over disused WW2 airfields we always take a peak and waggle the wings or roll.

For You Dad and all the Bomber Boys!

Philip Arnold

27, Ashburnham Road, Abington, Northampton NN1 4QY

Joined RAF 1938

Rank Wo2 Airgunner

Position Rear Gunner

Last posting WW2 RAF Foulsham 192 Squadron 100 Group.

Post WW2 RAF Bawdsey RADAR / Intel.

RAF Reserve until 1957 flying Tiger Moths and Canberras

Married Pamela Jean Fitzhugh of Piddington Northamptonshire November 1952.

Airman, Pianist, Magician, Demon Motorcyclist, 'Boys Own' hero.

IN MEMORY

ROGER JONES



It is my sad duty to have to tell members that Roger Jones has died.

This will be rather a personal tribute as Rog and I have known each other for just over eighty years. Our mothers got to know each other at school in London and they, again, were lifelong friends. So the two families knew each individual very well. Sharing joys and tragedies, large and small over the years.

Roger, like his father, always had a funny story to tell on meeting, but never about other folk. He readily poked fun about himself and how he extracted himself from a delicate situation! This is my strongest memory of a gentle man. He loved people, not only his family, but neighbours and the folk at his church. A good gardener and I am not sure how many pastimes he enjoyed. But we often talked about painting as he ran a class, with many chuckles during their sessions, he would not allow a too serious approach over the efforts of those attending.

We both joined RAF 100 Group Association around the same time. I felt I was an honorary member, but Roger, having lost his elder brother flying with 214 Squadron in March 1945 could actively demonstrate that Bob Jones and many others were not forgotten with the passing of years. I'm sure we all share the same view. Roger often told me that it gave him great comfort to meet aircrew who remembered Bob. The late Peter Witts comes to mind ...

The Jones family input to the successful conclusion of WWII was considerable by any standard. Roger's father ran his own wireless shop, selling and repairing sets was a very important job as most of the population listened every day, with good news keeping up morale of us civilians. The loss of his brother, Bob, hit the family badly. But the jewel in the crown, so to speak, was cousin Reg. Professor R. V. Jones had a brilliant career and during the war discovered radio beams, etc. winning the admiration of Churchill. R. V's book '*Most Secret War*' has to be read to appreciate the work he did.

Our thoughts are with Roger's wife Helen, and his sisters Maureen and Barbara over the loss of such a kind man. In the weeks and months ahead they will, I know, have our support.

Ron Durand

Hello Janine

Thank you for passing on the sad news of the death of Roger Jones. As you mentioned he was a faithful attendee at our Reunions for many years, representing his elder brother Bob who tragically lost his life with Flt Lt Allies' 214 Squadron crew on the night of 21/22nd March 1945. It was always a pleasure to meet Roger who was obviously proud of his brother. A few years ago he brought an old case to the Reunion which contained a collection of memorabilia relating to his brother's RAF service, which he kindly allowed us to examine. Apparently, the case had been discovered in the family home having been put away many years previously. Roger was clearly delighted to have discovered these very personal items. I shall remember him with respect and affection.

Richard Forder

IN MEMORY

Peggy Frewen Henry

9th March 1924



1st March 2013

My dear Janine

It was good speaking with you once more after such a long time. I noted that you had to miss your first Reunion weekend last year. I'm sure it wasn't the same without you being there. Hope you are keeping fit and well now. I doubt that regrettably I will be able to attend again this year, so would you please offer my apologies please ... however, I will be with you in spirit.

After sixty-one years of married life I miss Peggy, my wife, so very much ...



Peggy was born in Southport, Lancashire on 9th March 1924, the daughter of Samuel and Molly Holt. She was brought up and educated in the 'Garden City of the North', first attending Clive School, Birkdale, before continuing her education at Notre Dame College where she obtained both her School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. World War II interrupted proceeding to University and the country had need for women to join the war effort in some capacity. Peggy found herself a member of the Women's Land Army.

At the end of the war, Peggy returned to civilian life. She attended Secretarial College, obtaining qualifications to enter the world of business, commencing with a position at a firm of leading estate agents in Southport, followed by becoming an office administrator with Broadbent's Department Store in town, before taking a post in the Electricity Board of Southport County Borough, later to become MANWEB, as secretary to the General Manager of the Yorkshire area.

In September 1951, Peggy met and married Paul Henry who had served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1948. When Paul obtained a place as a management trainee with a Liverpool company, they moved to Cheshire after buying a plot of land at Lower Peover and had a house built, moving into their new home in March 1956.

Peggy obtained a position with a market research company which she held for 30 years, the last 20 years of which she was the Northern Area Manager.



She was a member of two Women's Institutes, one being Little Peover and later on Cross Town W.I. Membership gave her a great deal of pleasure. Other interests were Bridge, Yoga and animals. With her passing she is going to be greatly missed.

*Paul Henry: 'Honeyburrow', Swan Green, Lower Peover, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9QE
I know Paul would love to hear from any member who would care to write to him.*

10th – 12th May 2013
Norfolk



RAF 100 Group Association Reunion 2013

Past & Present Coming Together



*Bob Belton & Andrew Barron, both from 223 Sqn,
with Rod Vowler, Standard Bearer
at Oulton Memorial*

Thanks to everyone
who made this weekend
such a wonderful occasion

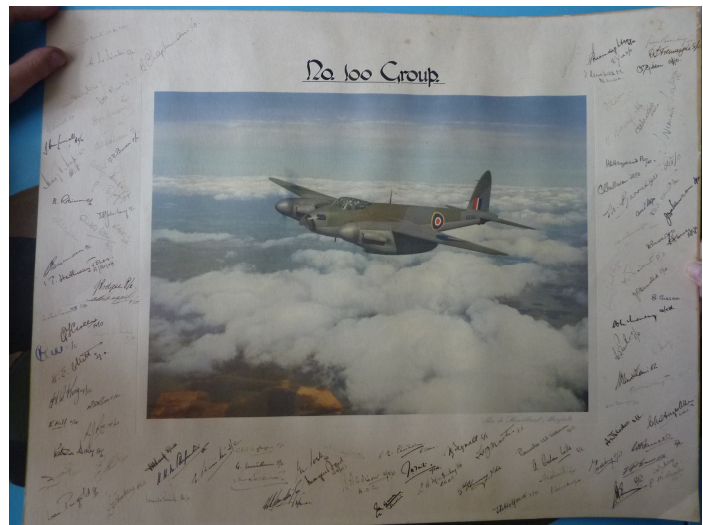
Reunion 2013 Experience

The Reunion this year, as any other, was special. The friendship and love almost tangible. It radiated from faces old and new. And yes, we remembered those, not only who had been lost in wartime, but also those who had passed on recently – Roger Jones, Peggy Henry, Charles Fisher, John McLaren. We felt their loss. And at the same time welcomed newcomers into our Family, each of them bringing something unique and valued.



Pete Smith donated to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum the stunning picture and signatures originating from a 23 Squadron Reunion in Fakenham during 1995 or 96. The picture is unique and stunning, utterly irreplaceable. His father, Thomas Anderson Smith served with 23 Squadron, and he is currently involved in researching and writing a book about his father's life and experiences. One of the signatures halfway down the left-hand side is that of Shirley Peek, and we hope to glean more of the

history about this from her. Above, is Pete Smith (left) and Stan Forsyth of 192 Squadron (right), holding the photograph, which also includes the writings of Don Francis down the front, his pilot Jim and Tommy Smith.



It was also good to welcome brother and sister: Chris and Heather, whose father Francis James (Jimmy) Jones served in the same crew as Doc Elliott, 192 Squadron. He never talked about his wartime experiences and Chris says he is finding papers discovered after his death fascinating, adding a completely new dimension to the man they knew and loved.

Following the Reunion, they shared their feelings of the Reunion and meeting for the first time those who knew their father during the war: *'Just a quick note to thank you for allowing Heather and I to come along. We greatly enjoyed it and learned a huge amount. It was particularly good to share time with Doc Elliott and learn so much from him – I've made copious notes! It was also a privilege to meet and talk with other veterans, especially others who survived from 192: Phil James and Stan Forsyth ... we'd also like to thank the Oulton Tea organisers. As Chris says, it was a super experience – just like something out of The Great British Bake-Off ...'*

Another new member who joined us this year is Liz Ingham, daughter of Ron James. She has recently published all of her father's works in his memory:



'After publishing a history of 214 Squadron 'Avenging in the Shadows' in 1989, my father Ron wrote four further books, including 'I was one of the Brylcreem Boys' but he was not able to publish them before his death in 1995. Happily, I have now been able to self-publish so that these memories are not lost. His other books are 'Mercy Mission to Java', his experiences in the Dutch East Indies where he was sent at the end of the war to help with the release of prisoners of war and internees held by the Japanese, and 'A Private's War', an account of his uncle Frank James' experiences in the trenches during WWI. The fourth book 'Winged Words, An Airman's Miscellany', is a collection of Air Force poems, sayings, prayers and Mess songs from both World Wars which he collected during his research. This has just been published. If anyone would like to buy a copy of any or all of these books, they can do so by sending a cheque made out to E. Ingham, £6.50 per copy including postage; to

Liz Ingham, 5 Owen Court, Brafield-on-the-Green, Northampton NN7 1BY
liz.ingham@hotmail.co.uk

* * * *

FRIDAY 10TH May



We gathered at 4pm for tea in Foulsham Frost Hall, before congregating beside the Memorial in our first act of remembrance. It is always a peaceful, tranquil place. The sights and sounds of village life seem stilled in time, as if reflecting suddenly the way it was when young airmen cycled down winding footpaths, strolling along country lanes, looking up as aircraft shadow the fields, rushing towards airfields in readiness for another op.

Phil James laid the wreath, and it was particularly poignant to me this year as he mentioned aloud the names of Vic Vinnell, my mother's fiancé from 192 and his friend and Canadian pilot Jack Fisher who flew out in Mosquito DK292 on the night of 26th November 1944 and did not return. I hoped it was enough just to be there, in a place they probably stopped to talk many times; to remember, to let them know they will never be forgotten. In our hearts they are with us still ... their names passed on in time.

The Rector who led us in prayer, had a story to tell about the distinctive cape he was wearing:



The RAF Swanton Morley Cope

About 1960 the wife of an NCO at RAF Swanton Morley made an altar frontal for St Michael's Church. Its motif was the badge of the RAF Chaplains' Branch. It was exhibited at a festival of the RAF Needlework Guild in St Clement Danes (the RAF Church) in London.

After a later tour at Swanton Morley, Flt Sgt Tom Hetherington and Marjorie, his wife, retired and chose to make their home in Swanton Morley. She was the needlewoman, and later the Enrolling Member of the Mothers' Union at All Saints, the Parish Church.

By 1993 the frontal was showing signs of wear and used only for great festivals. At other times St Michael's used the standard NATO issue of the four liturgical colours. The Chaplains' Assistant noticed the careworn article hanging in the usual long box and arranged for it to go to the dry cleaners, where its gold rayon fabric shrivelled away to almost nothing, while the embroidered motif came out bright and shining. It was carefully cut out and wrapped in tissue paper and stored.

The following year the closure of the Base was announced for September 1995. The current members of St Michael's congregation came up with a plan to make a gift from the Station Church to the Parish Church and decided to have the rescued embroidery made into a festal cope. Sadly, after this had been designed and commissioned and being made, internal politics led to an edict that St Michael's Funds would go back to Chaplains' Branch HQ. At this point the Chaplain (and Rector) picked up the cope from the Guard Room on the day it was delivered and personally refunded the invoice total to NonPAS.

The Cope was used frequently in the Parish Church on such occasions as Battle of Britain Sunday and, sadly, the closing ceremony of RAF Swanton Morley on 15 September, 1995 (exactly 55 years from Opening). After retiring in 2000 the Rector took the cope with him, as it was uncertain how the Parish was to be staffed. In 2007, when things had settled and a new Benefice based at Dereham had been formed, it seemed right to give the cope to the new Group for use by its clergy at festivals in Dereham, Swanton Morley etc. where the long association of RAF Swanton Morley with local Churches might happily be remembered.

It is currently kept with TLC by one of the Churchwardens of Swanton. Incidentally the Station itself gave a leaving gift to the Church by completely restoring the Tower clock. There is also a beautiful window in the Chancel showing all the aircraft types which flew from the airfield, all the Squadron and Unit badges in a striking modern design. This was given by personnel past and current to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Station in 1990.



Leslie Wilman, Rector (1979-2000) Officiating Chaplain RAF (1979-1995)

* * * *

SATURDAY 11TH MAY

After a late night for those of us who met for dinner at The Plough the previous evening, dawn crept quietly in. Refreshed after our journeys the day before, we breakfasted and made our way to Horsham St Faith where the first order of the day was our annual AGM, bringing a serious note to the weekend, but necessary to ensure the Association continues for the future. It is a time to reflect, to share thoughts and feelings, and to look at ways of improving and developing:

AGENDA

John Stubbington, our Chairman, introduced the AGM and welcomed everyone to our Reunion 2013 especially all new members attending for the first time -

- Pete Smith, son of Tom Anderson Smith, who served with 23 Squadron at Little Snoring.
- Fiona & Michael Byatt (daughter of Andrew, 223 Sqn & Dorothea Barron)
- Kati & Michael Williamson (daughter of Andrew, 223 Sqn & Dorothea Barron)
- Hugh & Marcus Williamson (grandsons of Andrew, 223 Sqn & Dorothea Barron)

- Liz Ingram (daughter of Ron James, author of 'Avenging in the Shadows')
- Chris Jones & Heather Cutting, son & daughter of Francis Jones who served with Doc Elliott in 192 Squadron

Apologies

- Tom Wallis
- David Porteous
- Paul Henry
- Squadron Leader David Butler
- Stephen Hutton, son of Iredell Hutton who served with 36th Bomb Squadron, U.S Eighth Air Force Radar Countermeasures (author of 'Squadron of Deception')
- John + William Rees. John and his father William (Bill), who served in 192 Squadron, wrote one of the most authoritative books on RAF 100 Group and 192 Squadron. We were sorry not to have them sharing this weekend with us as planned. Janine read out the following letter sent:

'It is with a heavy heart that I write this message and I have been dreading sitting down to compose it, always hoping that things would get better. Dad has deteriorated considerably over the winter which is why I have been quiet – he requires more and more looking after as the months go on. He is 92 and I suppose it is only to be expected. Progressive heart failure is the biggest culprit which means that since last summer he has gone from walking the prom regularly to barely being able to cover a few yards before becoming breathless ... It all makes me very sad because realisation has dawned that before too long there will be no-one left from 192 or 100 Group. Sadly, he can no longer travel any distance, and as I am his constant companion, carer and guardian, it also means that neither of us will be able to attend the event ... Joe Sayer telephoned some weeks ago to relate a similar story due to failing health. Please don't think badly of us because there is nothing more we would like than to be with you all but I'm afraid that the strain could be too much for him ... Please pass on our love to everyone ...'

Given our original Speaker, John Rees, is unable to attend, a huge vote of thanks was extended to Rod Vowler (Committee Member/Standard Bearer) who kindly agreed to stand in and talk about his uncle of 223 Squadron: Leonard Jack Vowler, Sgt Air Gunner.

Deaths

News was shared of the following members who had passed on recently -

- Roger Jones, husband of Helen Jones, well known at Reunions
- John McLaren (223 Squadron)
- George Fisher (214 Squadron)
- 6 weeks ago Peggy Henry passed away, beloved wife of well-known member Paul Henry who would appreciate any members who remember him getting in touch.

Chairman's Report

John Stubbington met a few days previous to the Reunion with the new Rector of Horsham St Faith: Rev Keith Renget. The order of service will follow the same format and he is looking forward to meeting members for the first time. It was also noted that the Rector wife is being ordained tomorrow.

Special thanks was given to Peter Holness, his wife and to the Parish for their continuing hospitality, and provision of coffee/tea/cake & biscuits. Their response was that they are only too glad to see us each year and that it remains an honour and a pleasure.

Treasurer Report

The good news is that Association funds are in exactly the same position as last year, and there is no bad news! Specifically, our Barclays account shows £3,500 with £1600 in the Reserve. However, we still need to pay the bill for dinner at the Hotel, leaving £1800 approximately. A nice stable situation to be in.

Membership

Membership continues to develop and grow, with 150 paid up members. As far as the magazine goes, an increasing number are taking it through email. However, while a small number continue to want to take it this way, there is difficulty in achieving that given different service providers have different capacities as to how much data can go through at any one time. Janine is spending an increasing amount of time nursing members' copies through. We can therefore send printed copies to help things along for those who have this problem if they let Janine know. However, given the expense and the ever rising cost, the next Reunion copy will remain in colour. But thereafter, will go out in black and white. Many pictures included are in sepia or black and white originals and this shouldn't make a great deal of difference.

Our Association year runs from 1st May – 30th April 2014. A reasonable projection will be to keep our overall costs at the target figure of £1500 over those twelve months. Members who take hard copy magazines through the post averages out at £5 per copy, per person, together with postage now at over £1. Those taking the magazine through email are subsidising the others. However, taking it by email is by no means compulsory, and we appreciate there are many not comfortable with email for one reason or another. It remains the choice of members as to how they receive the magazine for the future.

Gerhard Heilig –

My copies always have to be fragmented to get it through email. Would it be possible to put magazines on the Association website so that I can simply download it at leisure?

Len Witts –

Yes, those of us who take the magazine by email are subsidising those who have it by post, but this way, we are able to keep costs of membership down and at a reasonable level.

Caroline Isaac -

Is it possible we can use zip files to send the magazine to members to make it easier?

Technical Explanations -

For those not understanding computer jargon, a **PDF file** is the format in which the magazine is sent through to members on computers at present. This stops print shifting or changing in any way as it goes through to different machines. A **Zip File** is a way of compressing a file, like zipping it up; and can reduce the size.

John Stubbington

Another matter to bring before members, is that it bothers me that we haven't got someone to take over if something happens to myself or Janine? What can we do about finding a deputy Chair and Secretary for the future to share the workload?

- a. Do you agree we should be looking for deputies?
- b. Stand up anyone who would like to volunteer?

Can members please keep this in mind for the future?

Gerhard Heilig

I would help if I could, but feel we are living too far away making it practically impossible for me. However, what John says does make sense. It can happen ... anything can happen ... we need a plan B in place before rather than after a crisis occurs.

Len Witts

We should elect a Vice-Chair and Vice-Secretary every year as we do with the Committee to continue for the future.

Derek Waters, Chairman at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum, was asked if anyone in the Museum would like to take more positive pro-active action.

Website Project Manager Report: Tony Bradley

The Association website has now been going for one year. It remains completely open to everyone. A point for discussion is this – do we want a specific section for Members Only? If we have a dedicated

Members Section, how do we control it and what do we use it for? Do people want personal info going on a website?

What do you feel about the website as it is now ... and where should it go for the future? How many members have actually opened the website and seen what's in it? Numbers on the website suggest a small proportion of members only.

Why do we have a website?

1. *for the benefit of members in the same way as the magazine*
2. *to increase visibility of the global web ... people surfing and find our website.*

The material we show on the website is valuable, often unique. It would be an idea for those sending material to Janine for the future to indicate whether or not they would like it included on the website given that a lot of information is sensitive and personal to that member. We are obviously constrained in putting personal information onto a website without an individual's consent. Once it goes on the website, anyone can download it from around the world and use it to their own ends. Once it's out there ... it's out there!

We are currently in the process of putting magazines on the website from the preceding year. Putting the current year on would only offer the opportunity to access material without subscription and becoming members.

Margaret Taverna

I suggest magazines, because of their personal slant, should be put on password-protected.

Tony Bradley

The mechanics for this to happen are in place already. We haven't done it because we haven't had the need. But it can be done.

If you log on and create an ID for yourself together with a password it will lead you to that protected area as it becomes established. That way we can put up current magazines that only members can access ... and this way members can download the latest one at leisure.

Caroline Isaac

Is any of the content taken out of magazines before going on the Web ... even in old issues?

Andrea Sluman

Anyone tapping on our Association website and reading it through would make them want to know more and hopefully become a member for the future.

Derek Waters

I would add a note of caution, given that I know a website where magazines are posted up for an Association which is open to abuse ... people can use it for criminal activity. For example, dates showing the next Reunion will suggest members won't be at home over that weekend. If they had names and addresses, they could burgle a house in their absence.

Margaret Taverna

Is everything going on non-contentious?

John Stubbington asking Tony

If we have a password-protected section, are we saying that every member could have the same password ... an Association password ... we can use to enter the protected area?

Len Witts

Someone might use that password if it's the same and gain access?

Margaret Taverna

Could members' passwords instead relate to their membership number?

John Stubbington

We will give continued thought to this and keep members informed for the future through the magazine.

'Cloud Man' Forsyth Jnr

Can the Association magazine go in The Cloud where people can download it more easily?

Tony Bradley

We could set up a Google or Sky Drive, as a community-related area ... restricted until it's one year old?

John Stubbington

We don't want to put more work on Janine

Roger Dobson

I would suggest this whole matter about the website and where it's going for the future is a complicated subject and of far greater concern than can be agreed today. We need it discussed outside, and via the Committee.

Caroline Isaac

I would suggest however, that members sending anything from this point on should say whether it's for open publication or not, in order to know whether there is agreement for it to go on the website as well as into the magazine.

* * * *

CNAM MUSEUM REPORT**Derek Waters****Chairman**

We welcome all RAF 100 Group members back to Norfolk.

For some considerable time the Museum has continued to hang in the shadow of a new road being constructed ... but it now looks like our Museum will be staying where it is. There are however some downsides.

We will lose the ambience of Norwich airfield next to us ... dead airplanes look more alive with an active airport and these same lanes of traffic are not going to be there for the future.

We are currently trying to get as much land from the Council as possible. The Museum will extend west, down to where the Nimrod is. WWII spectacle dispersals are there, and we've asked for those, although we've never had any concrete and asked for more than we need. What we have to bear in mind is the clarity of tenure and a new lease, moving forwards to Lottery funding for a new hangar. To build a hangar we need enough room for not only the hangar but space to build aircraft and to house them. We are ultimately hoping for twice as much land as we already occupy.

The good news is that we hold the last F27 Fokker Friendship in the UK. All our aircraft are under the British Aviation Heritage Register. We therefore create the benchmark with the F27. And with a hangar to house it, it would raise the benchmark again. We stand a good chance of getting money from the Lottery to make this happen. We also have a Handley Page Herald.

Staff-wise at the Museum, Nancy has now left. When she moved to Diss, the travel was too much. Daniel Bygrave had been working alongside her for some time and now taken on her position. In the last couple of weeks we have also taken on an American lady, Yvette, who was already a member of the Museum, so we knew her when she applied for the position.

Last year as far as visitors were concerned, August was dead due to the Olympics. But overall we were 20% up on previous years, so everything is looking rosy.

We do have a new aircraft to your left as you enter. Bought last year, it is a Carter Rally originally purchased from Norwich Aero Club. Matt's father learned to fly in this very aircraft at Horsham St Faith. It's still got its engine and propeller but is otherwise incomplete. It's just nice to be able to bring an aircraft home. We have assembled it and will paint it in its original colours ... so it truly will have come home!

John Stubbington

I would like to add to Derek's Museum update, having spent a considerable amount of time there this past week before the Reunion. There has been a significant improvement in the archiving of material. It is a long and tedious job, and there is always so much to be done in terms of registering items coming in.

ADDITION TO AGM

by Janine on behalf of Kelvin Sloper,
Treasurer of City of Norwich Aviation Museum

Dear Members,

It was with regret that we were unable to attend this year's Reunion and share with you this wonderful weekend.

However, to update you about the Museum, we have now appointed Yvette Townshend to fill our part-time vacancy at the Museum. Those members attending last year's Reunion will have met Yvette who was the American lady helping out as a volunteer. Yvette will be working at least two days each week until the end of October. Yvette has gained some experience of MODES as she helped Jessica and Nancy with archive work. Some induction training has been arranged for general Museum duties. This means we now have four staff members: Daniel and Jamie Bygrave, Yvette and a young man, Bradley Bygrave (no relation to the Bygrave 2) who is available to us as an occasional person to cover holidays etc.

We are now ready for the main season, as far as paid staff are concerned. Business is picking up, it needed to after the cold never-ending winter. The Easter school holidays certainly brought in visitors, and we have had one of our best ever April weekdays.

The tea room update is just about complete, with a bit of external completion to be finished and we have ordered the updated City of Norwich Aviation Museum Guide Book. Only a few thousand jobs now remain!



We have found a limited quantity of 192 Squadron pin badges and now have these for sale for £3.00 (including postage). We can take orders by telephone using a card or by post. The badge is very good quality with a gold backing and pin. It is ideal for wearing on a jacket lapel and just a bit smaller than a 1p coin - small enough to be shuttle, but classy! However, we only have 192 Squadron badges available.

Our thanks to everyone who supports us

Kelvin Sloper, Honorary Treasurer, CNAM

AOB

Gerhard Heilig continues to work with a film maker who has already made a documentary of Bomber Command entitled: *'Into the Wind'* (previously advertised in our magazine). This DVD is the best he's ever known and for the future it will be available at the Museum. The same film maker Steve Hatton, has also completed a further DVD as a full documentary of Gerhard, his life and service in the R.A.F.

Andrea Sluman asks if name cards can please be made available for the next Reunion to enable members to immediately identify each other? Also a Visitors' Book as, other than the magazines, there is no actual record of Reunions to keep for the future?

Chris Lambert (representative for Oulton)

The Marquee has proved difficult to get up with heavy winds. But finally, for this year, it is done and we can cater for 80 people. The Marquee is in the back garden of the farmhouse where we were the year before last. Tea will be at 3pm, followed by a Memorial around 4.30pm with the usual Ceremony of Remembrance.

John Stubbington brought the AGM to a close with grateful thanks to Peter Holness for making all the arrangements for the AGM in the Mission Hall, and to the ladies who provide tea, biscuits and cake both today and on Sunday after the service.

* * * *

AIRFIELD & LOCAL VISITS



Blickling Hall

Tony and I chose to go to the Museum at Blickling Hall. Unable to visit last year as we couldn't attend the Reunion due to personal reasons, it was the first time we had seen the Museum since it had moved inside the main building. There were many stairs to climb ... but once there, we discovered the area given to photographs and memorabilia is considerably bigger and easier to walk round. The disadvantage for the future is that the Museum now seems to have a permanent base here, rather than moving to the outside courtyard.

We took time to look at the history surrounding us. It was as if we were stepping through a portal into a bygone age, and we could almost hear the sounds that went with what we were seeing in picture form, the roar of aircraft engines, uniforms standing proudly to attention, caught in a time out of Time, expecting any moment to take to the air and feel the wind in their wings, the sun on their faces, ready to fight again if our freedom is ever threatened again.



*'The Jig's Up'
Crew of B24, Number 42-51232
R4 'J' 803 BS, Oulton 1944*

Photo source: Iredell Hutton
collection via Stephen Hutton.
Copy by Sam Sox Jr

The Radio Counter Measures Squadron was formed from within the 8th USAF in the UK. The unit resulted from the USSTAF's desire to participate in radio counter measure activities with the RAF. Personnel was drawn from several stations (originally on detachment). Captain G E Paris was in command and came under Snetterton Heath for administration. The unit was trained with the RAF at Sculthorpe from January to March 1944 and then went to Oulton in that month. They left in August 1944, moving to Cheddington.



* * * *

OULTON TEA



Oulton Tea was, as always, a delightful affair, this year in the garden of Richard & Sue Bryan, where we came together to share our visits of the day, and to re-acquaint ourselves with friends old and new. It was a time for celebration, and the tables were laid out with a veritable feast of delights.

It was also lovely this year to see so many family groups coming together –

A bevy of beauties sat at the far table – Phil James' family with wife Vera, daughter Barbara and granddaughter Tracey.

Not far away sat Roger Dobson (top right), his wife and family who joined us this year with Ian and Teresa Wolff at the top of the table.



It was just as someone commented: *'It's like being invited to eat at The Great British Bake-Off ... the food is superb. It happens every year, and yet always it is a joy to come together at Oulton, to share with villagers who give so much of their time and energy into preparing this for us.'*

A heartfelt 'THANK YOU' from us all!

As we gathered at Oulton Memorial, tears from heaven rained down upon us. We ended up drenched, and rushing to our cars after. But not before a wonderful and very touching ceremony.

While Rod stood off to one side presenting the Standard, Chris Lambert, our Oulton representative, welcomed us, introducing briefly those villagers taking part. Carolann Killingback was first to read a poem written by an unknown 12 year old girl in 1966, matching the mood –

WHO ARE THESE MEN?

*Who are these men who march so proud,
Who quietly weep, eyes closed, heads bowed?
These are the men who once were boys,
Who missed out on youth and all its joys.
Who are these men with aged faces
Who silently count the empty spaces?
These are the men who gave their all,
Who fought for their country for freedom for all.
Who are these men with sorrowful look
Who can still remember the lives that were took?
These are the men who saw young men die,
The price of peace is always high.
Who are these men who in the midst of pain,
Whispered comfort to those they would not see again?
These are the men whose hands held tomorrow,
Who brought back our future with blood, tears and sorrow.
Who are these men who promise to keep
Alive in their hearts the ones God holds asleep?
These are the men to whom I promise again:
'Veterans, my friends – I will remember them!'*



Andrew Barron spoke the well-known words into the silence, following which Charlie Jefford played 'The Last Post' on his trumpet:

*'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 ... we will remember them.'*



This 'Ode of Remembrance' is taken from Laurence Binyon's poem: 'For the Fallen', first published in *The Times* in September 1914. The poet wrote the poem which has seven stanzas while sitting on the cliffs between Pentire Point and The Rumps in North Cornwall. A commemorative stone plaque was erected at that spot in 2001. Over time, the third and fourth stanzas of the poem were claimed as a tribute to all casualties of war, regardless of State.

After a 2 minute silence to remember those who did not return in WWII, Dr Peter Lovatt shared The Kohima Prayer:

'When you go home tell them of us, and say; for your tomorrow we gave our today'

The Kohima Epitaph is carved on the Memorial of the 2nd British Division in the cemetery of Kohima (North-East India). The verse is attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds (1875-1958) and is thought to have been inspired by the epitaph written by Simonides to honour the Greek who fell at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480BC.

John Gilpin laid a wreath on behalf of the Association, while Sue Bryan laid flowers on behalf of the village of Oulton.

Our second reading came from Gerhard Heilig who read:

'FOR THE FALLEN':

*'Sightless now, once watchful eyes;
Blank or shuttered to stormy skies;
Through shattered glass and twisted frames
The keening winds proclaim the names
Of those – or so they said;
Were members of the living dead.
For many, true, their time short leased
Death prevailed and living ceased.
Some still come, we that remain,
To pause, and live those times again.
To linger and to wonder why,
We should live whilst others died.
A lot of luck, no doubt of that,
Your number taken from a hat?
A raffle for the Devil's hod
Or was it by the Grace of God?'*



These are the words on the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, London, unveiled on 28 June last year, 2012.

Phil James gave the third and final poem:

Requiem for an Air Gunner, by R W Gilbert

*'The pain has stopped
For I am dead
My time on earth is done.
But in a 100 years from now
I'll still be 21!
My brief sweet life is over
My eyes no longer see
No summer walks
No Xmas trees
No pretty girls for me.
I've got the chop, I've had it,
My nightly ops are done;
Yet in another 100 years
I'll still be 21!'*



Chris Lambert brought the proceedings to a close: *'Freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it'. The men and women who we remember here today and those amongst us had the courage to defend our freedom. Thank you.'*



*Past & Present - Flight Officer
Robert (Bob) Belton, 223
Squadron*

as seen at Blickling Hall Museum



SATURDAY EVENING DINNER

Wensum Valley Hotel & Golf Club

It was time to put on our glad rags. We needed to dry out after the heaven's opened on our parade! And it was nice just to sit awhile, filled with thoughts of all we had done and seen, remembering who we were here for, bringing those names so easily to mind.

There was just time after collecting drinks at the bar, to view two magnificent paintings commissioned by Pete Smith in memory of his father. Both were by the artist **Ivan Berryman**.

Members with use of a computer might like to view his website to see more of his outstanding work: www.ivanberrymandirect.com



'Never Say Die' depicts what must surely be one of WWII's most extraordinary acts of bravery which occurred on the night of 16/17 January 1945 when F/L T A Smith and F/O A C Cockayne were on an ASH patrol over Stendal. Flying Mosquito FB.VI RS507 (YP-C) they inadvertently stumbled upon the German airfield of Fassberg on their return trip, fully lit up with aircraft taxiing. Taking full advantage of the situation, F/L Smith went straight in to attack, destroying one Ff.109 on the taxiway and another two as they attempted to take off. RS507 received ground fire hits to its starboard engine during the chase down the runway, Smith feathering the prop, but continuing to press home his attack. Knowing there was no way of saving their aircraft, Cockayne was ordered to bale out, but sadly lost his life in the attempt. F/L Smith fought gallantly to bring his Mosquito down into snow with minimum damage, but the aircraft hit trees before striking the frozen ground and a furious fire broke out. Smith was trapped in the wreckage. Against all odds, he survived the crash, albeit with terrible burns, and saw out the war as a prisoner of the Germans.

The tables in the dining room were quickly filling with family groups for an eight o'clock start to the meal. We took our places, and this year, following the presentation of the Standard; Gerhard said the 'Grace' before we tucked in to our choices already made from the menu. Laughter and chatter filled the room and it was just lovely to be a part of it all, catching up with friends.



The Witts Family



*The Barron family, with Nina Lovatt second left
(Thanks Nina, for changing places so your father could sit alongside Andrew Barron, top table)*



The Dobson Family – Sue left, brother Roger Dobson right



The Forsyth Family

Phil James daughter, Barbara (seen left) with granddaughter Tracey did an absolutely superb job of selling raffle tickets for Phil's delightfully wrapped gifts. Thanks for the floor show! It was wonderful!! Phil says since he started doing the raffle, he has raised over £1,000 for the Association. There were also a couple of books donated by John Stubbington which went to auction.



SPEAKER

Rod Vowler

Speaking about his uncle,

Sgt Air Gunner, Leonard Jack Vowler, 223 Squadron

As a founder member and Standard Bearer of our Association, Rod needed little introduction. And given the short notice he had about being our After Dinner Speaker he gave a very moving account of Leonard, his uncle. It was also lovely to have his two daughters, Sarah and Abi, share the occasion, together with Geoff West, who was filming for a DVD to be available for family and members of the Association.

Leonard Jack Vowler

Sgt Air Gunner

Service Number: 1850003



Young Leonard was a bit of a scamp, as it turns out. He deceived his family in joining the RAF. With their knowledge, he already belonged to the ATC and had been going on Courses, which in truth, covered his interviews, etc. When the time came, it was my Dad, his brother, who helped him in get away from home on an RAF lorry. He couldn't use the railway station as his sister worked there!

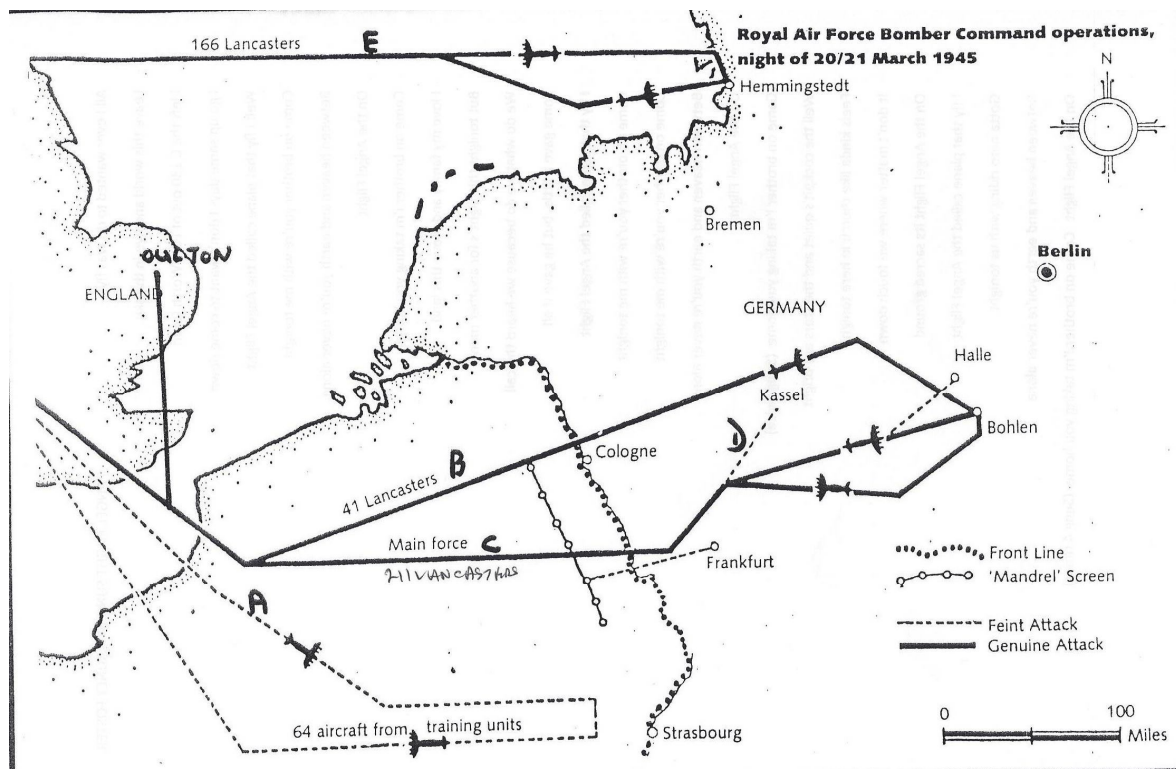
He joined up in 1942, attending an Air Gunner Course in 1944. He then went on to serve in 223 Squadron at Oulton.

He was shot down on 21st March 1945, the day before he was due to go on Leave. His family, sadly, wouldn't talk about him. And it wasn't until 1995 that I started looking into his RAF time.

It was RAF Innsworth that sent letters to the last known addresses of his crew. And it was in this way I made contact with Richard Forder, rekindling his interest.

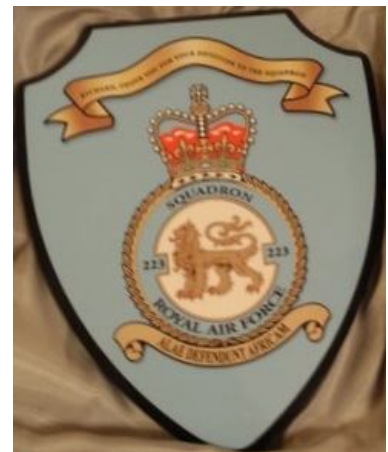
Together, we tracked families of the crew. One took some time. Always there was disappointment and dead ends. It was such a long time ago. And with nothing much to go on, it would have been easy to give up. But Richard and I worked on. He became a good friend and ally, using his own experience, knowledge and contacts to lead us where we needed to go. One of the crew members' wives we found in Australia on her 3rd husband! There were so many personal stories, so much information slowly gathered in, reaping the harvest of the years ...'

Rod went on to talk about his uncle's last flight and how it fitted in with RAF Night Ops. Members who are interested in knowing more about this compelling story would be advised to get a copy of Geoff West's DVD and hear about it first-hand. But the following map Rod shared illustrates his uncle's final fateful journey ...



Rod ended his talk with an unexpected surprise for Richard Forder. Richard was presented a unique, one-of-a-kind shield in gratitude for everything he had helped uncover about Rod's uncle through the years, and the deep friendship shared, forged from his uncle's death all those years before. Rod had designed and commissioned the shield from Nick Hamling. The inscription on the shield reads:

*'223 Squadron -
Richard thank you for your
dedication to the Squadron.'*



Rod acquired the shield through a website: www.militaryfigures.co.uk which supplies pins, tie bars, cufflinks and a large amount of military insignia, printed and personalised items for Museums and Associations. Nick who owns the business has indicated that by adding his link to our website, he will donate 10% of the cost of any item purchased by members to our Association. Personal contact can be made by writing to: nick@militaryfigures.co.uk

FINAL NOTE:

The route given by Rod during his talk and his reference to the RAF Night Ops of 20/21 March 1945 came from a book called 'Sky Warriors' by Alfred Price.

A DVD of Rod's talk about his uncle Sergeant Leonard Jack Vowler is available to members at a cost of £10 including post and packing.

Cheques should be made payable to G. R. West, Bancroft, The Street, Little Snoring, Fakenham, Norfolk. NR21 0HU. Tel 01328 878501. Email: grwest@btinternet.com

As I write this for members, I am listening again to the beautiful words of the song '*Angel Flight*' sung by Radney Foster played at the end of Rod's talk. The words are shared in '*A Quiet Corner*' section of this magazine. Quietly, around us, soft voices joined in, bringing again past and present together. They serve as a tribute to all who lost their lives and never returned from war ... we will never forget them and all those who gave us the greatest gift of all – Life! – in the service of their country that we might live in the freedom we enjoy today. The words come at this time as a heartfelt 'THANK YOU' to all who served under Bomber Command in RAF 100 Group and indeed in human conflict across the world. If you don't know the song or have never listened to it before, it is the haunting melody as much as the words that bring tears and melt the heart. For those with use of a computer, I would urge you to visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySHg2a0hcaY>

* * * *

SUNDAY 12th MAY



At 11am we gathered for a service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance at Horsham St Faith Parish Church where Aylsham Town Band gave us a rousing welcome and send off as they have done in past years. It is always stirring music that touches your heart, and leaves you with the feeling that past and present unite, sharing memories of those we knew and even those we never knew, but who remain an aching part of us, celebrating our freedom today for which so many gave their lives.

The service is always a poignant reminder of what Reunions are all about, why it is important to come together in the way we do each year where villagers of Norfolk always give such a warm welcome as we return year after year. This year was no exception. The new Rector, Rev Keith Rengret, introduced himself to us, and led a service very much centred on the need to love one another, love being at the heart of peace, at the centre of a united nation, a united world. Rather than looking to the future, worrying about things that might come to pass, such as laid out in the book of Revelations; we need to focus on today, living for the moment, bringing love to everything we do, everyone we meet, making it the heart and soul of our very being.

It was an uplifting service, the words of which we carried across the road to the Mission Hall where we met one final time for tea/coffee and biscuits before wending our way homewards. As I write this, I can still feel the overwhelming sense of emotion at meeting our Association Family, feeling that very real connection between us, knowing the friendship and love we share. May it remain with us long into the future and become something tangible that we may pass on to those generations who come after.

As we look back with thanks on our weekend shared, there are so many 'THANK YOUs' to be offered to so many people who made our weekend what it is. Please know that if you haven't been mentioned in this magazine, you are by no means forgotten. I have already sent out so many letters of thanks to a variety of people, and I know John has done the same.

However, I would offer a very special thank you to Linda who took the above photograph for us of the proceedings as our Standard Bearer Rod walked with the Standard down the centre aisle. It was only after I got home, I received the full story of how this came about from her husband Peter:

'At the moment the bells are rung from the floor above and when they finished ringing on Sunday the ringers came down the tower and locked the door, as is usual for safety ... not realising that Linda was on the new floor. Some ten minutes or so into the service we realised that Linda hadn't joined us and looked round for her, only to spot her frantically waving from the ring floor. She was locked in!'

Apologies, Linda ... we hope you have recovered from your ordeal. But thank you for the photograph which shows off so wonderfully the proceedings in the church at that time.

* * * *

POST REUNION THOUGHTS

Hello again Janine,

It was good to see you all again on the 10th.

While you were all here Doc Elliot commented he thought the tree planted by him & Jack Short in 2000 didn't look very good. I mentioned this to a friend who helps organise the tea, [he happens to be an undertaker]. Later that evening he rang to say he'd looked at the tree and it was ok, alive and well and just about to shoot.

This evening he rang me again to say he had looked at the tree again, and was sure someone had sprinkled someone's ashes round the tree. He is of the opinion this should be recorded, for the sake of future family members, possibly looking for answers.

We just wondered if you could shed any light on this for us.

Don Wright

Foulsham Representative

donniewright@hotmail.com



Dear Janine,

I can honestly say that I have never experienced anything like it before and feel so honoured to be a part of it, having done nothing to deserve such a privilege of even just being there. Even though I am a relative newcomer to the Association, I feel that all those of us who arrive seem to be pulled together by an invisible cord and the caring hospitality shown by the good people of Norfolk is humbling. If someone asked, I would find it very hard to explain the emotion of it all. All I ever wanted to do was honour my Uncle's memory and pay tribute to him, finding the men who flew with him and being where he served was more than I could ever hope for.'

Linda Fraser

A great big Thank You to Phil James, his daughter Barbara and grand-daughter Tracey for all their excellent work with the Raffle and the Book Auction after Dinner on Saturday night. The final balance was £276 for the Association funds. THANK YOU to all of them. (shown left: Barbara holding winning Raffle ticket!)

John Stubbington



Dr Peter Lovatt with Peter Witts and Roger Jones

Kindly sent in by Richard Forder

... a reminder of times past



We were happy to see Pete Thompson again this year at the Reunion. Many members are asking about his jersey with the stunning motif of a Halifax from 171 Squadron.

His daughter, Lucy Thompson did the work. She runs a company: 'Diamond Embroidery' specialising in embroidering logos such as this onto clothing. All it takes is to send her a photograph or drawing of what you would like on any item of clothing, and she can do the rest.

Anyone interested contact: Lucy Thompson, 07850404644
email: diamondembroid@aol.com

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

City of Norwich Aviation Museum + volunteers
Foulsham Frost Hall + volunteers
Chris Lambert, Oulton Representative
Oulton villagers
Horsham St Faith + villagers/volunteers
Rev Keith Rengret
Peter Holness
Aylsham Town Band
Hannah Steele + Wensum Valley & Golf Club Team
Val & Roger Stock: The Plough
Rod Vowler
Geoff West
Phil James MBE, Barbara and Tracey
Pete Smith
All Association members who gave their support



ANGEL FLIGHT

*All I ever wanted to do was fly
Leave this world and live in the sky
I left the C130 out of Forth Worth town
I go up some days, I don't want to come down.
Well, I fly that plane called the Angel Flight
Come on, Brother, you're with me tonight
Between heaven and earth you're never alone
On the Angel Flight
Come on, Brother, I'm taking you home.*

*I love my family and I love this land
But tonight this Flight's for another man.
We do what we do because we heard the call
Some gave a little, but he gave it all.
I fly that plane called the Angel Flight,
Come on, Brother, you're with me tonight
Come on, Brother, you're with me tonight.
Between heaven and earth you're never alone
On the Angel Flight
Come on, Brother, I'm taking you home (sung twice)*

*Well the cockpit's quiet and the stars are bright
Feels kinda like church in here tonight.
It don't matter where we touch down
On the Angel Flight it's sacred ground.
I fly that plane called the Angel Flight,
Gotta hero riding with us tonight;
Between heaven and earth you're never alone
On the Angel Flight
Come on, Brother, I'm taking you home (sung 4 times)*

Radney Foster

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySHg2a0hcaY>



Final Postings

Death is but a pause...

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

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered in 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 30th 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. Association Chair till 1996
- 192 Squadron** W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern RCAF died 15th August 2007, Saskatchewan aged 85
- 192 Squadron** LAC Harris, Ground Crew passed away 15 August 2007. Grandson James Kerslake is an Association member.
- 192 Squadron** Wing Commander David Donaldson, DSO*DFC passed away 15.1.2004
- 192 Squadron** Wilhelmson, F/O Sander Willie Raymond (J10026). DFC Home: 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
- 192 Squadron** Sgt George Richards, Tail Gunner, posted missing 4/5 July 1944. Remembered by niece Cheryl Cairns nee Colgan & sister Agnes Colgan.
- 192 Squadron** F/Lt Henry Victor Vinnell (Vic) posted missing 26/27 Nov 1944. Remembered by wartime fiancée Nina & her daughter Janine H.
- 192 Squadron** Jack Glen Millan Fisher, Pilot Officer with Royal Canadian Air Force, posted missing 26/27th Nov 1944. Remembered by sister Audrey.
- 192 Squadron** Flight Lieutenant Albert Victor (Vic) Parker passed away November 14 2010. Remembered by daughter Ann Felsky.
- 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 March 2011.
- 192 Squadron** F/O Alan Thomsett passed away 27 May 2011. Initially flew ops with 1473 Flight during Battle of the Beams, 1941, then as part of No. 80 Wing. Sadly missed by daughter Anne, and other Association members who knew him.

- 192 Squadron** Eric Clarkson, [Wireless Operator/Navigator](#), passed away beginning of 2012. Remembered by daughter Jenny Bentley & friend Dennis Wildman.
- 192 Squadron** Squadron Leader Cecil William Cornish, passed away 19 August 2011. Flight Sergeant at Foulsham. Initially with 98 Squadron, he was a survivor of the sinking of TS Lancastria. Mike, his son, is an Association member.
- 192 Squadron** Flight Sergeant John Eggert (2202199) aka 'Shorty'. Passed away 28 April 2006
- 192 Squadron** Sgt Hugh Holm, [Radio Mechanic](#), is remembered with love by Phil and Vera James, especially for his kindness to them while holidaying with him in Canada.
- 199 Squadron** F/O Ed Emmerson, Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, Canadian
- 199 Squadron** Arthur Fitch, former RAF Bomber, passed away July 2006
- 199/171 Sqn** Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, [FRMets](#) passed away 2005. Remembered by Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
- 171 Squadron** Joe Brogan, [Halifax pilot](#); passed away 2004, remembered by widow Sheila
- 171 Squadron** Arthur Adcock passed away February 2008 & Syd Love, Canadian crew member, passed away April 2008. 'Friends to the end!'
- 171 Squadron** Len Fanstone passed away 13 January 2010. Greatly missed by Harry Freegard & wife, in touch since his return to Canada in 1946.
- 171/102 Sqn** Ken Ratcliffe [Nav/Bomb Aimer](#) passed away March 8 2010 age 86. He flew Halifax & Lancasters, in touch with his crew all their lives.
- 171 Squadron** Flight Engineer Andrew Melvin Robertson passed away 1998. Remembered by son Colin Robertson, Association member.
- 157 Squadron** Bryan Gale [Flt/Lt](#) passed away 2.1.09. Missed 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 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 away 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 March 1945, remembered by nephew Leslie Barker.
- 214 Squadron** Alan Mercer passed away 6 June 2009
- 214 Squadron** Warrant Officer Gordon Wing, 'Howie' (character in Australian newspaper) passed away Nov 2009 age 87. Rear Gunner in Eric Morrison's crew in Stirlings & Fortresses; Founder member of Airgunners Association.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Louie William Darracott, [Navigator](#), died May 8 2010, 94 years
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer Reginald Coates completed whole of 2nd Tour of Ops as Bomber Pilot in March 1945. Died 10 Nov 1963. Remembered by son.

- 214 Squadron** Bomb Aimer [Les Bostock](#) in Don Austin's crew died just before Christmas 2010. Remembered by M/U gunner C A Piper, 'Pip'.
- 214 Squadron** Flight Sergeant [George V Cox](#) passed away 21 July 2011. Flight Engineer in crew of Squadron Leader Miller DFC.
- 214 Squadron** Squadron Leader [William 'Bill' Doy DFC](#) passed away 28 November 2011.
- 214 Squadron** P/O Peter Witts [223/214/462 RAAF, Airgunner](#), commissioned after the war. 1925 – 2011. Missed by family and friends, remains in our hearts, a Legend.
- 214 Squadron** [George Fisher, Navigator](#) with No. 214 REM & No. 206 Squadrons 1942-1946 sadly passed away with a heart attack on 25th Sept 2012
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer [William 'Bill' Foskett](#) passed away 21.12.2011. Sadly missed by wife Pauline, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, good friend Tony Cooper.
- 223 Squadron** Flt Lt [A E L Morris \(Tony\)](#) died June 2005. Andrew Barron's skipper: Oct 44 – 1945.
- 223 Squadron** Tom Butler '*Bishop*'.
- 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 13 2006.
- 223 Squadron** F/Lt [Jack Brigham DFC](#) passed away 2008. Original Captain when 223 reformed. Flew Liberator TS 524, 6G-0; 36 ops. Remembered by Len Davies, Waist Gunner, only surviving member of crew.
- 223 Squadron** F/L/Sir [John Briscoe](#) passed on a few years ago.
- 223 Squadron** 2nd Pilot [Mervyn Utas](#), Canadian in late Tony Morris's crew, passed away 8 Nov 2010.
- 223 Squadron** James Edward Bratten: 26.11.1922 - 16.11.2001. Andrew Barron's crew.
- 223 Squadron** [Mick Stirrop](#) passed away in March 2012.
- 223 Squadron** Flying Officer [Reggie Wade, Navigator](#), passed away Christmas Eve 2012. Reggie served in the crew of Squadron Leader Carrington, 'B' Flight Commander.
- 223 Squadron** Air Gunner [John McLaren](#) passed away 31.3.2013, leaving wife Margaret and son Graham.
- 23 Squadron** Flight/Lt [Johnny Rivas](#), passed away on 2 January 2013.
- 23 Squadron** Wing Commander [Phil Russell](#) passed away last week in November 2012.
- 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. PoW with pilot Johnny Moss when shot down in Lancaster ED625. Nursed to health by Nora, who he married.
- 462 RAAF Sqn** F/O H .R. Anderson DFC '[Andy](#)' passed away 6 April 2008 in New South Wales.
- 462 Squadron** [Donald Hulbert](#) passed away October 2009.
- 462 Squadron** Pilot [Bruce Drinkwater](#) passed away 2 May 2010. Peter Witt's Skipper.
- ?** Flt Lt [Eric Atkins DFC* KW*](#) died 22.11.2011. Blenheim pilot with 139 Sqn flying from Horsham St Faith & Oulton in 1940/1. Flew Mosquitoes with 2 Group.
- ?** Corporal [Charles 'Fred' Savage](#) passed away 18 Dec 2011. Fred was a Wireless Operator, serving in No 2 Heavy Mobile W/T Section in France, 1940.

Dates for your Diary

2013/2014

2014 RAF 100 Group Association Reunion

Put these dates in your diary now. We look forward to seeing you there!

* * * *

9th – 11th May 2014

**Guest Speaker at main Saturday evening dinner:
Bill Ramsey, current QFI and Vulcan display pilot,
Former BBMF Lancaster & Dakota pilot, Tutor display pilot,
Wing Commander for 4 years of The Red Arrows**

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2013 MAGAZINES

We would ask all members with use of a computer
to familiarise yourselves with the Association website

www.raf100groupassociation.org.uk

You need to put this in as a link and log in, creating a user ID and password.
Look at what is already on offer, and please write to Tony (Website Project
Manager: apgbradley@aol.com) if you have any problems or queries.

There are clear signposts to wherever you might want to go, and whatever
information you might be looking for, including MAGAZINES to go to past issues.

The next Autumn edition of this magazine should be out 1st October 2013.

100 Group Order of Battle

SQD	AIRCRAFT	1st 100 GROUP OPERATION	BASE	SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL
192 USAAF 7 th PRG	Mosquito II, B.IV, B.XVI, Halifax IV Wellington B.III Lightnings P-38	Dec 1943 Aug 44 – March 45	Foulsham	2171/5 Losses Electronic Intel/Elint
141	Beaufighters VI, Mosquito II, VI, XXX	Dec 1943	West Raynham	1214/11 Losses 80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Dest
219/239	Mosquito II, VI, XXX	20 Jan 1944	West Raynham	1394/9 Losses 51 En AC Dest
515	Mosquito II, VI	March 1944	Little Snoring	1366/21 losses 29 En AC Dest
169	Mosquito II, VI, XIX	20 Jan 1944	Little Snoring, Great Massingham	1247/13 Losses 25 En AC + 1 V1 Dest
214	Fortress II, III	April 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1225/13 Losses Electronic Jamming
199	Stirling III, Halifax III	May 1944	North Creak	1707/6 Losses Electronic Jamming
157	Mosquito XIX, XXX	May 1944	Swannington West Malling	1336/6 Losses 37 En AC +39 V1 Dest
85	Mosquito XII, XVII	5/6 June 1944	Swannington West Malling	1190/7 Losses 71 En AC+30 V1 Dest
23	Mosquito VI	5/6 July 1944	Little Snoring	1067/8 Losses 18 En AC Dest
223	Liberator VI, Fortress II, III	Sept 1944	Oulton	625/3 Losses Electronic Jamming
171	Stirling II, Halifax III	15 Sept 1944	North Creak	1583/4 Losses Electronic Jamming
462 RAAF	Halifax III	13 March 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

Created by Janine Harrington

A heartfelt thank you goes to David Mortimer and his team for the printing of this magazine at Prontaprint, Scarborough, North Yorkshire