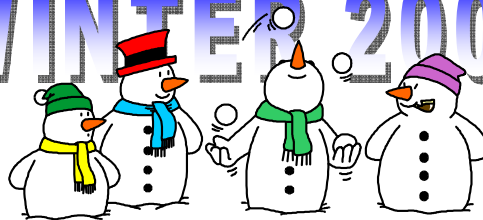




Confound & Destroy

RAF 100 GROUP MEMORIAL MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007



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

RAF 100 Group Association

ROGUES GALLERY



Founders: Martin Staunton & Eileen Boorman (sister), with Len & Evelyn Bartram



Derek Waters
Trustee (Chair)

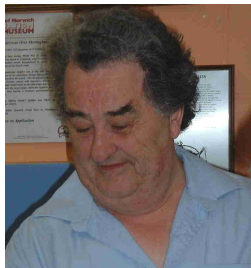


Kelvin Sloper
Trustee (Treasurer)



Kim Barwick
Trustee

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



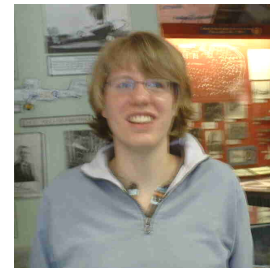
Rodney Scott
Custodian



Ann Scott
(Rodney's wife)



Robert Walden
Trustee/Curator



Steph Walden
Secretary



Right: Glen Ambler, Web Master

The Museum has over 90 volunteers
working for the Museum and on
the Association's behalf

Editors Page



Dear Friends,

Are we alone in believing that this year has slipped by? Almost without realizing it we have reached the end and now we look forward to Christmas and the festive season. We trust for all of you that this year, 2007, has been a good one.

We both feel that the highlight for us, apart from the May Reunion, has been our recent excursion to Belgium and France. It was a memorable visit indeed. We have shared it with you in these pages. To anyone thinking of going, we would thoroughly recommend this particular tour with Travel Guide and Historian Paul Reed and have included details of how to do so. It was both personal and informative and Paul went out of his way to show us where my two great uncles would have been during the Great War. History certainly came alive as we stood in the field where William was, the enemy charging down the hill towards him. He was buried there in September 1918, and remains as one of the few original plots ninety years on. His younger brother, Arthur, died the year before, preparing for Passchendaele, when a shell burst in his trench. From their experiences and in memory of them I am writing a novel for children which we are hoping shortly to have published.

Given that this year marks the 90th Anniversary of Passchendaele, and next year the end of the Great War, we have included in this issue a poem I wrote at Ypres, which I read at their graves, honouring all those killed on foreign soil, including those with no name, of which there are so many. This year's Remembrance Day was that much more special as we remembered them and the place where they lie.

Thank you, as always, to those many members who continue to write and ring us. We only print letters with permission, so please make it clear to us if you do **not** want your letter and information shared. We love hearing from you, and continue to think of you as part of our own Family. You will all be in our thoughts and prayers over the festive season particularly, and as we enter another New Year.

A very Merry Christmas to you all! Keep warm, stay happy, and may 2008 bring peace and goodwill to all!

Janine & Ian
xx

All items for the Newsletter should be sent to Editors:

Janine Harrington & Ian Kirk,
Box 436, Scarborough YO11 9BT
Telephone: 07789 935021 Email: writers.retreat@lycos.com

News from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum



Work is continuing at the Museum on the shelter we have purchased to display the cockpit sections that arrived from RAF Coltishall late in 2006. At the time of writing, two cockpits have been moved under cover and the remainder scheduled to be in position before we close for the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

Additional display area is being created in two wooden sheds that also came to us with the closure of Coltishall. Despite these buildings needing a large amount of work to replace rotten and damaged timber, one of these should be ready for full use for the main visitor season next April.

As always, we have to thank our volunteers for their hard work on these two major projects which are in addition to all the regular maintenance tasks we have to undertake to keep the Museum open to visitors.

Autumn has brought an influx of items to the Museum adding to our ever growing collection. Within the past three weeks, we have gained a section of World War One hangar. This came originally from the landing field used by the RFC at Bacton, Norfolk, the hangar was moved to North Walsham where it was used as a garage until demolished earlier this year. A suitcase full of items from an RAF Lancaster Navigator who lived in Norwich and, adding to the 100 Group collection, logs books and other items from a 214 Squadron pilot.

Visitor numbers have held up well as we have progressed from Autumn to Winter. Looking forward to next year, we are making early plans for our 2008 publicity campaign. In particular, we are targeting the group visit market by sending invitations to various local organisations who we hope will then visit us during the off peak months.

Just a reminder - the Museum is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm and on Sundays from 11.00am to 3.00pm until 31 March. We will be closed from 16th December 2007 to 5th January 2008 for Christmas and the New Year holidays.

Kelvin (Sloper)

Letters Page

Dear Members,

A huge 'thank you' is due to Gerhard and Cissie for so kindly dropping off at the Museum a complete set of RAF 100 Group Association Newsletters going back to its beginnings. We understand they visited Norfolk earlier this year traveling from their home in Vienna. It was Bob Histed who put the suggestion in our Autumn Newsletter that a set be made available to current and future members as a historical account. We are therefore pleased to be able to say that this suggestion has been made possible through Gerhard and Cissie. We believe the Newsletters provide a valuable link between members and the Museum. They are very much part of our history, and offer invaluable insight into what the Association means to its members and the countless experiences shared. They also provide a true and accurate record, showing just how much the Association has developed into the worldwide network of members today. Apart from places in the UK, the Newsletter also goes out to countries such as - Vienna, China, Australia, America, Canada, New Zealand.

Thank you Bob, for the suggestion

Thank you Gerhard and Cissie for responding

Janine & Ian

On behalf of members of RAF 100 Group Association



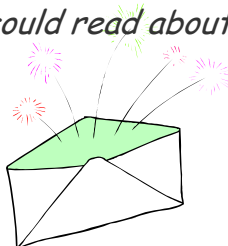
Dear Janine & Ian,

Sadly, I am sending this e-mail to inform you that my Grandfather passed away in August, shortly after his 87th Birthday. He had been bravely battling leukemia for almost a year and was happy and cheery up to his death, and in no pain. Since I initially informed him about the Association, he had been planning on writing his memories of his time in the Ground Crew with 192 Squadron. Sadly time ran out before he was able to do so. However, one of my relatives found some photos in his belongings and I will try to get copies to you for inclusion in the Newsletter.

I would like to say thank you to the Association as I am sure it gave my Grandfather more fight and courage when he could read about his friends and colleagues he served with all those years ago.

Best regards,

James Kerlake



Dear Janine & Ian,

W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern, RCAF, died on 15th August at his home in Lanigan, Saskatchewan aged 85. Known as Jerry, he was our old Navigator - popular, cheerful and a superb Nav. I don't think he ever made a miscalculation - or, if he did, he never let on ... a really good bloke! I have lost touch with Reg Wilson but, of the rest, only Cliff Lee and I survive.



Jerry McEachern RCAF Nav, Bill Mitchell RAFVR (Newfoundland) A/G,
Reg Wilson RAFVR Spec Op, Alan Thomsett RAFVR Pilot,
Ken Mainwaring RAFVR Wop/AG, Cliff Lee RAFVR A/G

Alan Thomsett



Dear Janine & Ian

I wrote a year ago and you kindly published my letter in the Winter 2006 Newsletter on page 12. The inside back page quotes 199 Squadron with 466 Sorties, which is incorrect.

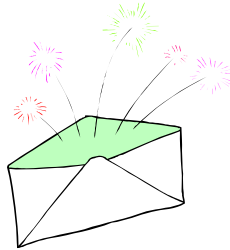
The Bomber Command War Diaries states that 199 Squadron was transferred to 100 Group in May 1944 and carried out 1378 Sorties with Stirlings, and a further 329 Sorties with Halifaxes, making a total of 1707 Sorties, this must include early returns.

I have given to the Museum two bound ring binders containing all the official Sortie Records of 199 Squadron. I now enclose a further set - all 207 pages - to confirm my original statement that a minimum total of 1622 Sorties was carried out by 199 Squadron from 'D' Day till 2nd May 1945.

It is so sad that such records are not made available when Jerry Dennison traveled from his home in Canada to join the recent Reunion for the purpose of gathering details of his brother lost in Stirling EX-P in September 1944. From such records he could have seen that EX-P took off from North Creake on the eve of 15th September 1944 taking part in a Mandrel patrol. With a crew of 8, his pilot was F/S Hegginson and his navigator was F/S Kesselman. There was heavy icing on this patrol which could have been a contributing cause to the crash which happened in the early hours of 16th September 1944 over the North Sea, two other aircraft returned early with problems.

Yours sincerely,

Cyril Bradley

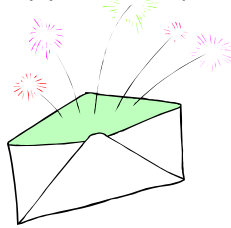


Janine & Ian,

I pulled these figures from one of my RAF books, maybe you could compare them with the figures already given of 199 sorties. I believe them to be correct.

Regards

Phil James



Note from Editors

As Editors for the Association Newsletter, we offer our apologies for undermining the work of 199 Squadron. Cyril asked where we acquired figures given on the back page of Newsletters for the past two years. In fact, our source was the Museum. They appear on the left corner wall on entering the first Exhibit Room. We checked this source again at this year's Reunion, but we had no idea then that evidence exists at the Museum in two complete Sortie Records folders for 199 and 171 Squadrons donated by Cyril some time ago. Thank you, Cyril, both for bringing this to our attention and in undertaking the immense task of photocopying again those files. We have passed on to Kelvin the fact that figures on the board at the Museum for 199 Squadron sorties are wrong. We also thank Phil James for supporting Cyril's figures. This figure now appears on the back page of this edition.

If Jerry Dennison in Canada has not had sight of the files, we would be happy to send on to him information from them. In the meantime, we offer the following two pages showing evidence that the new figures are correct:

The Bomber Command War Diaries

199 SQUADRON

SERVICE

Formed on 7 November 1942 as a Wellington squadron in 1 Group, based at Wynnstay and Higham. Transferred to 3 Group on 21 June 1943 and flew Stirlings until again transferred, in May 1944, to 100 Group as an R.C.M. squadron. Flew Stirlings and Halifaxes from North Crake while in 100 Group.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Raids Flown

1 Group Wellingtons - 35 bombing, 23 minelaying
3 Group Stirlings - 30 bombing, 52 minelaying, 16 Resistance operations, 1 leaflet
100 Group Stirlings - 138 R.C.M.
100 Group Halifaxes - 37 R.C.M. (which were combined with some bombing in the last four weeks of the war)

Total - 65 bombing, 75 minelaying, 16 Resistance operations, 1 leaflet, 175 R.C.M. = 331 raids

Sorties and Losses

1 Group Wellingtons - 475 sorties, 12 aircraft lost (2.5 per cent)
3 Group Stirlings - 481 sorties, 14 aircraft lost (2.9 per cent)
100 Group Stirlings - 1,378 sorties, 4 aircraft lost (0.3 per cent)
100 Group Halifaxes - 329 sorties, 2 aircraft lost (0.6 per cent)

Total - 2,583 sorties, 32 aircraft lost (1.2 per cent)

POINTS OF INTEREST

Believed to have carried out a greater variety of operations than any other squadron in Bomber Command.

Suffered Bomber Command's last casualty of the war when a Halifax collided near Kiel on 2/5 May 1945 and 13 airmen were killed.

14/15 March 1945

VICTORY: JANUARY 17/MAY 1945 - 681

the same task as the Zwenbrücken raid. No local report is available but it is believed that this attack was equally successful, 2 Halifaxes lost.

Minor Operations: 25 Mosquitoes to Berlin and 6 each to Bremen and Brunswick, 52 R.C.M. sorties, 27 Mosquito patrols, 100 Group lost 2 Mosquitoes and 1 Fortress.

The last Stirling operation of Bomber Command was flown on this night when Stirling LJ 216, from 199 Squadron at North Crake, flew a Mosquito screen operation. Squadron Leader J. M. Button, the Australian pilot, and his crew landed safely.

Total effort for the night: 812 sorties, 23 aircraft (2.8 per cent) lost.

171 SQUADRON

SERVICE

Formed in September 1944 for R.C.M. operations in 100 Group and flew Stirlings and Halifaxes from North Crake until the end of the war.

15.9.44		R.C.M. Bomber Support.		62	
Posn	A/C	ROUTE	Posn A	B.	C.
1	A	BASE - CAMER - A - B - CAMER - BASE	5726N 034E	5055N 0625E	
2	Z		5255N 0340E	5422N 0604E	
3	B				
4	B	BASE - SOUTH - A - B - BASE	5220N 0300E	5432N 0625E	
5	X		5145N 0320E	5552N 045E	
6	G		5109N 0340E	5422N 0604E	
7	L				
8	P				
9	E				
10	S				
GA	Y				
TIMES		Posn A - 2240	A 5/c B 2500	LEAVE B 0215	
MANDRETS		215 - 0235			
A/C	CAPTAIN	NAVIGATOR	REMARKS		
1	W. R. L. D. Y.	Sgt GULL	O/S AREA T/O		
2	F/O McCOLL	F/O KYNASTON	OK ASTRO USED		
3	F/O MERRIFUL	F/O BRIMSON	O/S T/O, LATE FUEL, R/E - Had y 1000		
4	F/Lt HANCOCK	F/O WOOD	OK		
5	F/Lt GARRON	F/Lt WARDEN	OK		
6	F/O GILBERT	F/S WEBBER	OK R/E 3/0 O/S		
7	F/O DICKINSON	Sgt FEE	OK DIVERTED FUEL		
8	F/S BEGGS	F/S KOSSELMAN	MISSING		
9	F/O LANDRUM	F/S CANNON	OK diverted Posn 2 of the T/O		
10	F/O MARSHALL	F/O MORRIS	OK diverted Posn 8		
11	F/L HOLMES	F/S MOORE	T/O LATE Posn 5		
WINDOW FORCE		B	C	ROUTE	
A/C	Posn A				
G	5055N 0143E	4852N 0649E	4918N 0740E	BASE - ORFORD	
H	5052N 0143E	4851N 0649E	4915N 0740E	A - B - C - B	
T	5041N 0146E	4843N 0650E	4912N 0740E	5055N 0140E	
V	5055N 0143E	4852N 0649E	4918N 0740E	ORFORD - BASE	
P	5041N 0146E	4843N 0650E	4912N 0740E		
K					
TIMING		Posn B - 0100	EXCEED K - 0143	CENTREWEAVE 0600E - 10C	
HTS + A/S		ORFORD - INT - 1400'	A - C 15000', 160 IAS.	C - B - 13/000', 150 IAS.	
		B - A - 12000' 165 IAS.			
WINDOW		M.B	N		
ORFORD - 0220E		5 fine	5120N 0220E	5 fine	

Kindly provided by
Cyril Bradley

Hi Jan and Ian,

I received the September Newsletter and it reminded me of the good time I had at the Reunion and the wonderful people I had met. Carol, my wife, and I are already making plans for the May 2008 RAF 100 Group Reunion and will tie the visit with some narrow boat canal cruising in central England.

The main reason for my e- mail is to share with the membership a source of information that I have found.

In my search to create the military life of my brother, P/O Gordon Joshua Dennison with 199 Squadron, I came across a man in England by the name of John Reid. He has obtained copies of the original records of 199 Squadron, the names of the crews, the aircraft, their serial numbers, the call letters, the Ops they went on and who flew as well as the latitude and longitude coordinates of each of the planes objectives, courses as well as rate of climb, speed, time on target and course home, when MANDREL was to be turned on or off or the rate of dropping tin foil for WINDOWS.

From him I was able to get all the information of the 13 ops that my brother flew as Tail Gunner, including the last Operation when he and the crew he flew with were lost (Sept15/16 1944).

When I had this idea of sharing with the membership this source of information, I wrote to John and asked for his permission to pass on this information and he said that it would be fine with him. He would welcome all inquiries, particularly if they served with 199 Squadron. He is currently compiling all this data into a book which he hopes to publish soon.

Another piece of information about John Reid is that, when he visited North Creak Air Field years ago, he saw a large painting of a Stirling on the brick wall of the Officers' Mess. He undertook the task of having this painting in its entirety moved to the Hendon Air Museum in London. I saw it on my visit in May after the Reunion. It is about 4 feet high and 6 feet long secured in a frame work still intact as it was in the Officers' Mess.

Mr. John Reid: 18 Ronaldsway, CloseBacup, Lancashire OL13 9PY, England
Tel:01706 874797 john.reid27@ntlworld.com

Hopefully this information will be of benefit to some of the members. He mailed me a bundle of info more than could be sent by e-mail so I sent back to him a little honorarium for his expense and his troubles.

Another bit of personal information: There is a professor of History at a nearby University who has opened a website where he has posted letters and documents from those who served First, Second, and Korean Wars. I sent my brother's correspondence to him in late August and now some of his letters are on the site. He uses under-grads to do the work of writing and scanning the materials listing is slow.

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/collectionsSoldier.php?collectionid=362&warid=4>

I was thinking of the new friends I had made when we saw the flooding in Central England. Glad to hear that you survived.

Looking forward to next year.

Sincerely

Jerry Dennison

If anyone can help Jerry further with information relating to his brother and trips he made, it might be helpful to know that his Pilot's name was 'HIGGINSON' and the Navigator 'KESSELMAN'.

He also includes information for people interested in WWI and WWII letters which include some of his brother Bill's. They are still putting in more letters all the time.

<http://web.mala.bc.ca:80/davies/letters.images/collections.index.htm>

If the above does not work, try this one:

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/collectionsMain.php>

Shared Experiences



The Price Paid on Faulty Intelligence

by Cyril Bradley

Nearly six years of conflict was coming to an end with Bomber Command having carried out its last attack on Germany on the 25th April 1945.

It therefore came as a great surprise on the morning of 2nd May when the call came to 100 Group for a maximum effort on Kiel to use its countermeasures of Mandrel screen, jamming, feint attacks and Window and to follow in with bombing runs upon the dockland area. Intelligence reports gave details of ships assembling for the transporting of troops to Norway to carry on the war.



Flt Sgt Arthur Bradley
37th Op was 2nd May 1945,

Some 293 aircraft took part in this last raid of the war. They were drawn from 8 Group and 100 Group. 189 of these aircraft were from 100 Group and included Mosquitoes, Liberators, Fortresses and Halifaxes, this included 22 Halifaxes of 171 and 199 Squadrons from North Creak. They first took off from base at 20.31 hours and the last was off at 21.14 hrs.

While on their bombing runs over the target area, two Halifaxes of 199 Squadron collided, scattering wreckage around the village of Meimersdorf. From the 16 aircrew, 13 perished.

It was many years after that it became known the intelligence report was false and the raid need never have taken place. The assembled ships in Kiel docks were being boarded with prisoners from slave labour camps in the area. It was intended to return them to their original homeland, but many thousands perished in this, the last air raid of the war.

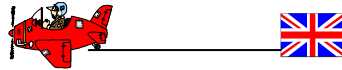
Cyril Bradley

Brother of Arthur Bradley

199 Squadron North Creak EX-R flying Halifax BIII RG 375

Navigator of the last Bomber Command aircraft to be lost in action in WWII

Too British?



The world famous Red Arrows have been banned from appearing at the 2012 London Olympics ... because they are deemed '*too British*'.

Organisers of the Event say that the Arrows military background might be '*offensive*' to other countries taking part in the Games.

The display team has performed at more than 4,000 Events worldwide. But the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has deemed the display team '*too militaristically British*'. Red Arrow pilots were said to be '*outraged*' as they had hoped to put on a truly world class display for the Games, something which had never been seen before. Being axed from a British-based Event for being '*too British*' is an insult - the Arrows are a symbol of Britain.

The Red Arrows have been excellent ambassadors for British overseas trade, as they display their British-built Hawk aircraft all over the world.

The Arrows performed a short Flypast in 2005 when the winning bid was announced, but their Flypast at the Games was to have been truly spectacular.

It is hoped that common sense prevails.

However, if you disagree with this decision, please show your support and sign the petition online at the link -

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/RedArrows2012/?ref=redArrows2012>

Sent in by *Bob Histed* and *Len Witts*

Do YOU Believe ... in Ghosts?



At first glance it looks like many other pictures of comrades of long ago. But this photograph, taken in 1919, is at the heart of a real life ghost mystery.

The man half concealed in the back row is Freddy Jackson. He was killed three days before this picture was taken on the runway of HMS Daedalus, at Cranwell, Lincolnshire. The Navy air mechanic had died instantly on the same tarmac strip after stumbling into a whirling propeller.

Some of those in the official picture to commemorate the disbanding of the transport yard at the Base, taken by Bassano's Photographic Co, marched behind his coffin during the military funeral.

And yet, the shadowy figure remains there in the photograph. It has haunted Bobbie Capel, widow of Air Vice Marshal Arthur Capel, ever since that summer of 1919. Australian born Mrs Capel, was then a Wren driver at the Base, and she is in no doubt that the face peeping out from the back row is that of Freddy Jackson.

She clearly recalls the collective gasp as the photo was pinned up. Soon afterwards, the unit was disbanded and the ghost picture of Jackson passed into memory.

It was recorded briefly in a book '*Flight Towards Reality*' by Air Marshall Sir Victor Goddard, one of the Founders of the RAF. Sir Victor wrote: '*There he was, and no mistake, although a little fainter than the rest. Indeed, he looked as though he was not altogether there; not really with that group, for he alone was capless, smiling; all the rest were serious and set, and wearing service caps. What is somewhat unusual, to say the least, is that this was an official photograph ...also the certainty that there had been no hanky-panky in the dark room. Not only would Bassano's not dare to fake it; the negative was scrutinized for faking and was found to be untouched.*'

The Daedalus mystery was revived by Mrs Capel's neighbours when they persuaded her in 1996 to send the photograph to the Royal Navy newspaper '*Navy News*' with a plea for any other witnesses to come forward. Mrs Capel said: '*I cannot entertain the idea that this was a deliberate fake. For one thing, the photographer came from outside the Base. He didn't know any of us and once he had taken his picture he left immediately. He just would not have known about the accident. I have thought and puzzled over it for years but I can think of no explanation other than it is the picture of a ghost. When we lined up for that photograph we all knew one familiar face would not be with us. Only later did we actually discover that he was!*'



*Bobbie Capel
As a Wren of 18*

In Memory

William James & Arthur Birkett Croman

by their Great Niece

Janine Harrington

Our story begins in a little place in Denmark close to the sea in 1824 where John Kroman was born. He grew up in his native country learning to speak several different languages, and went on to become a Linguist on ships sailing between Copenhagen and London. In time, he came to meet and court Sarah (*seen right*), a Londoner, and they went on to marry and to settle in the district of Poplar in London where he became a Dealer in Nautical Instruments.



In 1858 William, their first son was born, and in the following year came their second, Joseph. Joseph, like his father, began to work with ships, and became clerk to a shipping firm. Later, he met and married Mary Ann Carter (*seen left*), living close to his parents. Mary and Joseph, (*yes, really!*) went on to have ten children.

Their first son survived only until eighteen months. But in the year he died, 1881, **William James Croman** was born. Two further sons followed.

In 1888, already there was talk of war. Countries were vying for power. Mary and Joseph wanted a better life for their children, away from what was fast becoming a busy thriving city filled with smog. With young sons William and Henry, they moved to Poulton, Wallasey, Cheshire. And it was here, in 1889, another son died aged 3, and their first daughter, Emily Florence was born (*my grandmother, right*).



Emily Florence went on to work with her mother in the slums of Wallasey, from where the family adopted six '*motherless children*' on top of their already eight remaining offspring. She then worked with Christabel and her mother Emmeline Pankhurst as a Suffragette, and became a Speaker in her own right. It was through the Temperance Movement and church in Wallasey that she met her future husband, and at the age of 29, in 1916, she married William Chessall aged 53. They had just six wonderful years together before he died. Until 1977 when she passed on, Emily remained a widow with three children of whom my mother Nina, was eldest.

Meanwhile, [William James](#), Emily's elder brother, moved back to his roots in Poplar, London where his grandparents remained, and in 1908, at the age of 27, married Eliza with whom he had two children. They lived at Limehouse, in Bow, London. At weekends he trained with the Territorials, the Poplar and Stepney Rifles and went with them on summer camps, so he was ready when the country went to war in 1914, and was immediately sent to the Western Front in Belgium and France.



With the 2/17th Battalion London Regiment he was Lance Corporal Croman and fought in several major battles including the battle for 'High Wood'. Then in November 1916, he was posted to Salonika via Marseille and Malta where he was amongst those engaged in the Battle of Doiran in 1917. His Division moved on to Egypt and the campaign in Palestine where he was wounded in the head and sent home to convalesce. He returned in 1918 to France to serve with 30th Division and was killed in action on 28th September during the Fourth Battle of Ypres. It was on this day his battalion took part in fighting at Ontario Farm and Kruisstraat a few weeks before Armistice and the end of the war. He died aged 37 years old.



[Arthur Birkett](#) (meaning: *the head of a river*) was born in 1891 and Mary and Joseph's second to youngest son. He and Emily remained very close. He was educated at St John's in Birkenhead, and went on to become a Printer by trade. The truth was important to him. He loved reading. Studious, he paid attention to detail, and he was always seeking out facts.

He came into the war by joining up with the first PALS Battalion at St George's Hall in Liverpool. It meant he was with friends in training at Lord Derby's Knowsley Park. However, months on, they were the laughing stock of the Army given that they had one out-dated rifle for every 100 men, and had ended up basically working Lord Derby's land with no prospects of going abroad. With no sign of weapons, proper uniforms or equipment, he was one of many who left as a Private in D Company, 21st Reserve Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment to transfer to the new 9th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, serving with 19th Western Division in France in 1915.

He married Florence Louise Liggett on 4th January 1916 at St Michael's Church in Liverpool and together, they lived in Sherlock Lane, Wallasey. Like his brother Will, in July 1916, he too was in the Battle for 'High Wood'. But was wounded enough to be sent home to convalesce. He later returned to France and was killed in the third Battle of Ypres on 19th July 1917, at the same time his brother Will was wounded.

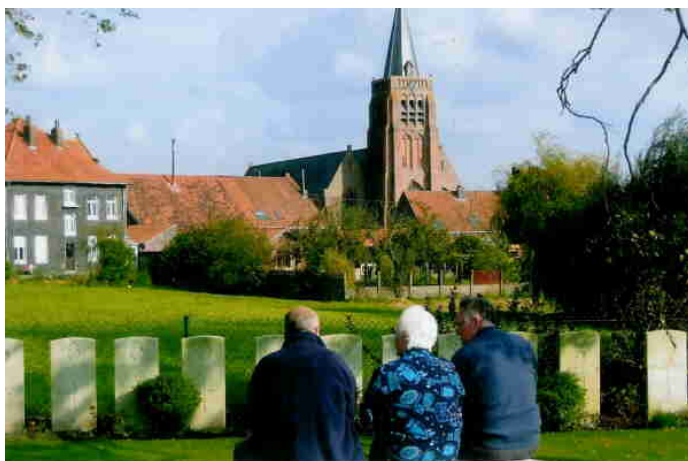
Ian and I are passionate about our ancestry and dedicated historians, as you might imagine from reading this. In fact, on my father's side I have traced back to the beginning of the 16th Century. The lessons of the past do have something to teach us today. They were precious moments indeed when I was actually able to represent my family for the first time in 90 years and visit Will and Arthur where they remain today on foreign soil. It is difficult to put into words the emotions I felt then. Seeing the acres of white gravestones echoing the names of literally thousands of men who lost their lives fighting for their country through the First World War, brings home to you just what it means, how many died. It also poses the question: why was there ever another war to follow? Can we never learn?



Arthur was killed by a shell which exploded in the trench. His Officer had visited him just two minutes prior to the explosion which left the six men with him injured. He shared less than three months together with his new wife and they had no children. Will, on the other hand, was trained and older. He left two children.

When you actually know someone whose name appears on one of these fields of graves it brings home to you the total futility of war. And when then you begin to find out about the lives they had, the people they came from, those they left behind, it is something you feel compelled to pass on, to share.

The War Graves Commission now tends the graves and they are kept beautifully. We watched men while we were there, gently washing the stone. As the writing fades, they are replaced with new, free of charge. The gardens around them are filled with flowers and colour. *'In the midst of life ...'* We followed the rows up and down, down and up, feeling that every one of these names deserve a visit, to know



that someone cares and that they are not forgotten heroes.

[William James Croman](#) lies in Danoutre Military Cemetery, facing down the hill towards where the enemy came. Behind him the village steeped church strikes the hour. His brother [Arthur Birkett Croman](#) lies in a quiet corner of Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery some miles away.



We traveled by coach with a party of 30 people, each making a pilgrimage, seeking to find a relative and stand for a few moments, remembering, letting them know they are not alone. The coach took us to Calais, and the ferry which carried us across the sea to Belgium. The service on the coaches was brilliant. We were well looked after. For the next

five days we stayed at the Novotel in Ypres. It was situated in one of the many cobbled streets filled with tempting cake and book shops leading off the main square, and the beautiful architecture which held us spellbound. It was hard to imagine the work which must have gone into reshaping and remoulding it after the war given that Ypres was all but flattened.

We chose to visit every one of the silent cities and support others on the coach who quickly became friends. Our guide, Paul Read, was superb. From the start he made himself available, staying in the same place, and filled with information, quirky stories, and history. He made



those silent cities



come alive and vibrate with the spirit of love we shared over our time together. He lives in France. He knows the people. He too has a great uncle buried there from the war. Far from being a morbid, doomy-gloomy pilgrimage, there was so much else to see. Each evening at 8pm we gathered with the many others at the Menin Gate. It is a truly wonderful and moving occasion.

Cars are prevented coming through for the time it takes for the buglers to gather to play 'The Last Post', the flags raised and lowered, and wreaths laid in memory. It is something which has happened since the end of the First World War. And being there, sharing those moments, each evening we came away with a real sense of peace, often walking on along the river, unwilling to break the spell.

What else did we do apart from look at cemeteries?

We saw the trenches at Sanctuary Wood. The tunnels buried deep beneath the trees, winding their way up and through. It gave us a real sense of what it might be like to be there, particularly at night, with flashes of gunfire, machine guns 'rat-tat-tat-tat' ing, up to your armpits in wet sludgy mud when the weather turned, and the order comes: 'over the top!' There would have been little hope for Arthur as he ducked deep down in the trench, when the shell exploded. I thought of the two brothers fighting together, yet apart, each in a separate battalion, under different orders, in 1916 at 'High



Wood'. The wood was a bank of trees which stood on the curvature of a gentle slope, a silhouette on the skyline. It was a prime position and well defended by the enemy. Woods had been taken before it. This was the final one. And they were going to hold onto it at all costs. This was to become the start of the Somme offensive.



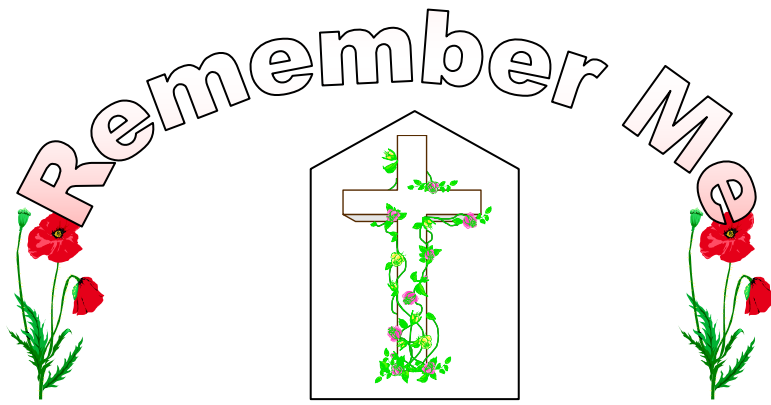
But then there were gentler paths to follow.

A hedgehog trying to stay hidden, yet caught on our walk, too young to understand the dangers. Squirrels racing up trees. The waters of the river under which tunnels still exist today.

Belgium and France are beautiful, peaceful places. They are there to be enjoyed. And yet, deep beneath the surface, there is the gentle stirring of the past, the memories, the silent cities and the sentinels, stark reminders of battles that should not have been, and the ceremonies which are still held, like that at the Menin Gate, moving and meaningful, a fitting end to a day spent wandering down yester-year.

We trust you will not mind us sharing our journey with you. And if, in the sharing of it, you feel you would like to visit, we can thoroughly recommend it:

Battlefields of Flanders, Ypres Pilgrimage Tour, Leger Holidays, Sunway House, Canklow Meadows, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 2XR. Tel: 1709 839839
www.leger.co.uk



Graves, like markers,
map lives snuffed out before their time

Set out in random regiments
Standing on parade,
A permanent reminder
Of a country saved.

Next to them a stranger
With a story all his own,
Buried deep within a field
A long long way from Home.

In the air around them
I feel their spirit near:
*'Remember how and where we died
And why we're lying here.'*

*Please do not forget us,
We didn't die in vain.
Let our Life and Death have meaning;
One day we'll meet again.'*

Men who died in battle,
Brave boys who went to war;
Each and every one a Hero
Left ... on a foreign shore.



By Janine Harrington
In memory of her two Great Uncles:

Arthur Birkett CROMAN, died 1917, aged 26 yrs
William James CROMAN, died 1918, aged 37 yrs



Health MATTERS?



We nearly died laughing!

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said: "Your hearing is perfect! Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." The gentleman replied: "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my Will three times!"



An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table to go into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said: "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly." The other man said: "What is the name of the restaurant?" The first man thought and thought ... Finally, he said: "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know ... the one that's red and has thorns?" Do you mean a rose?" "Yes, that's the one!" replied the man. Turning towards the kitchen, he yelled: "ROSE ... what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

A senior citizen said to his 80 year old friend:

"So, I hear you're getting married?"

"Yep!"

"Do I know her?"

"Nope!"

"This woman ... is she good looking?"

"Not really."

"Is she a good cook?"

"Naaaw, she can't cook too well at all."

"Does she have lots of money?"

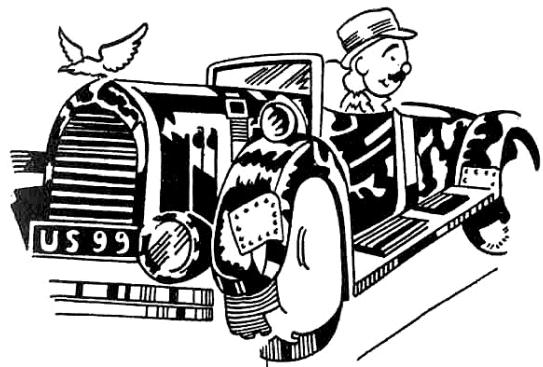
"Nope! Poor as a church mouse."

"Well, then, is she good in bed?"

"I don't know."

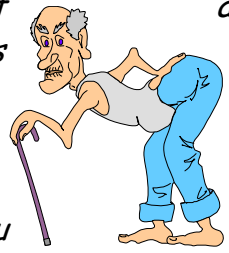
"Why in the world do you want to marry her then?"

"Because she can still DRIVE!"



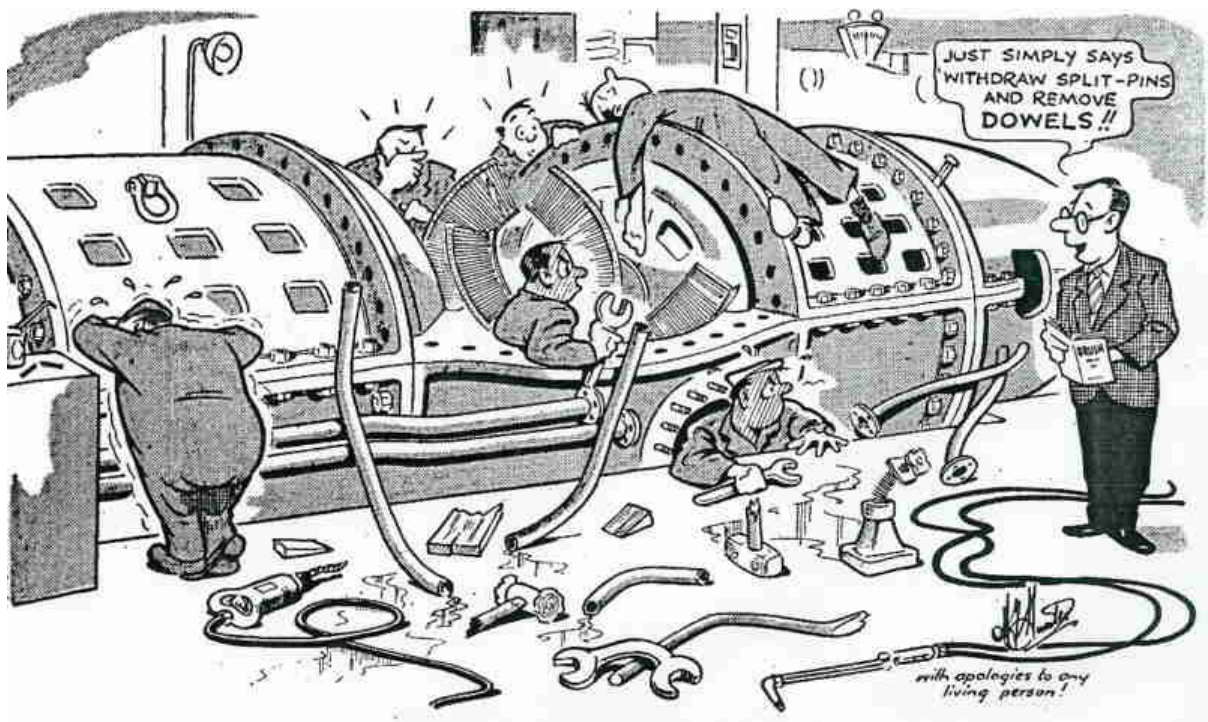


Morris, an 82 year old man, went to the doctor to get physical. A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. A couple of days on, the doctor spoke to Morris and said: "You're really doing great, aren't you?" Morris replied: "Just doing what you said, Doc ... 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'" The doctor said: "I didn't say that! I said: 'You've got a heart murmur ... be CAREFUL!'"



A little old man shuffled into an ice cream shop and pulled himself slowly, painfully, into his seat. After catching his breath, he ordered an ice-cream. The waitress asked kindly: "Crushed nuts?" "No," he replied, "Arthritis."

Sent in by Bob Histed



"Just simply says '... withdraw split-pins and remove DOWELS!!'"

Heath matters ... even in the skies!



Final Postings

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

Martin Albert Staunton and **Eileen Boorman (nee Staunton)**
Founders of RAF 100 Group Association - remembered with love.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 192 Squadron | George Ward DFC Sqd/Ldr ; Phil James' Canadian pilot |
| 192 Squadron | Kenneth 'Paddy' Passmore: DFC Flt/Lt ; a Canadian pilot who flew Halifaxs with Phil James; died 2005. |
| 192 Squadron | John Cooke , attended Reunions each year from 1997-2004 travelling from his home in Kent. He left a bequest to the Museum's building fund and his collection of aviation books and memorabilia to the archive collection. |
| 192 Squadron | Ron Phillips passed away after facing illness with great dignity in late 2005. |
| 192 Squadron | Ted Gomersall passed away on 30 th November 2004, |
| 192 Squadron | Hank Cooper DSO, DFC passed away in 2005. |
| 192 Squadron | Michael Simpson W/Op and F/O passed away on the Isle of Man. |
| 192 Squadron | 'Richie' Richards passed away in the latter half of last year. Richie, a Rear Airgunner, was based at Foulsham, mainly flying in Wellingtons. |
| 192 Squadron | Air Commodore Vic Willis, C.O of RAF Foulsham passed away July 30 th 2006, remembered by Flt Lt Vic Parker, RAFVR (Ret'd). |
| 192 Squadron | Group Captain Jack Short passed away in December 2006. Chair of RAF 100 Group Association until 1996, his photograph appears on a memorial plaque at Foulsham. |
| 192 Squadron | W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern RCAF died on 15th August at his home in Lanigan, Saskatchewan aged 85. He is remembered by Alan Thomsett. |

- 192 Squadron** **Mr Kerslake, Ground Crew**, passed away in August this year. His grandson was kind enough to notify us, and we hope to hear further from him including more of his grandfather's experience.
- 199 Squadron** **F/O Ed Emmerson**, Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, a Canadian Pilot, has passed away.
- 199 Squadron** **Arthur Fitch**, a former RAF Bomber, passed away in July 2006.
- 199/171 Sqdn** **Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, FRMets**; passed away in 2005. His wife donated memorabilia to the Museum. He is also remembered by Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
- 214 Squadron** **Geoff Liles** passed away on 4 March 2006 after a long illness. Geoff was a pilot with 214 Squadron at Oulton and a member of the RAF 100 Group Association for many years.
- 214 Squadron** **Mr J Creech** passed away in April 2006.
- 214 Squadron** **Don Austin** has passed on and is remembered by Les Bostock.
- 214 Squadron** **Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner** passed away on 1st Jan 2007.
- 214 Squadron** **Squadron Leader & Flight Commander Bob Davies** sadly passed away in June 2007.
- 214 Squadron** **Bill Howard** passed away in late October. News of his death comes from Peter Walker who represented both RAF 100 Group and 214 Squadron at his funeral in November. Bill's wife passed some years ago, but he was one of the most local members living less than 5 miles away from the Museum.
- 214 Squadron** **Flt Lt Blair** who lived in Cumbria passed away in September.
- 223 Squadron** **Flt Lt A E L Morris (Tony)** died mid-June 2005. He is remembered by Andrew Barron as his skipper from October 1944 - 1945.
- 233 Squadron** **Tom Butler** nicknamed 'Bishop', passed away just before his birthday. He is remembered by Peter Witts who grew up with him and for whom he was like a brother.

- 88 Squadron** **Len Dellow** sadly passed away over Christmas and New Year 2006/7. Len was a veteran of 88 Squadron Boston operations from Oulton prior to the airfields 100 Group days. He had been ill for some time.
- 49 Squadron** **Len Bradfield**, a founder member and director of the City of Norwich Aviation Museum for many years, passed away in late November 2005. While on Operations, Len was shot down in Lancaster ED625 of 49 Squadron. Only Len and his pilot Johnny Moss survived, spending the rest of the war as prisoners. Len returned to Britain with injuries he had sustained in a frustrated escape attempt and was nursed back to health by Nora, who he soon married. He became a surveyor for Norfolk County Council until his retirement.
- 223 Squadron** **Arthur Anthony**, a Flight Engineer on 223 Squadron and a valuable member of our Committee at the start of the Association; passed away on May 13th 2006 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. He leaves a widow and son.
- 223 Squadron** **Jack Brigham** passed away in April. Jack was the original Captain when 223 was reformed. He did 36 ops in total. Waste Gunner in 223, Len Davies, the only surviving member of his crew writes: *'I write sadly to report the death, at age 91, of F/Lt Jack Brigham DFC of 233 Squadron, Oulton, August 1944-May 1945. With his crew he flew Liberator TS 524, 6G-0 mostly. Unfortunately, Jack and I are the only crew members to have kept in contact and this, only since I sent a crew photograph to the ACA's Intercom' some years ago. I was privileged to be able to attend his funeral at Aldershot Crematorium on Thursday 10th May.'*

A Quiet Corner



O Search of Death

Oh give us a square search
The mad captain said
Visibility was zero
The Observer was dead.

The great ship lurched
The bullets they whine
The deadly message
of the Folke Wolfe behind.

The target unsighted
Not a hole in the sky
But we'd bomb Berlin,
T'was our aim or die.

The Folke Wolfe have got us
Their 'Spundo' gun sings
Alas good friend they've got me
Hallelujah, I've got my new wings!

Jack Fisher



Pilot 192 Squadron with 'Vic' Vinnell Navigator
Mosquito DK292, missing 26/27th November 1944



Available from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum Shop

*A few members now have read John Stubbington's book below and commented.
We invite readers to write us a review of this or any other books.*

BLETCHLEY PARK AIR SECTION

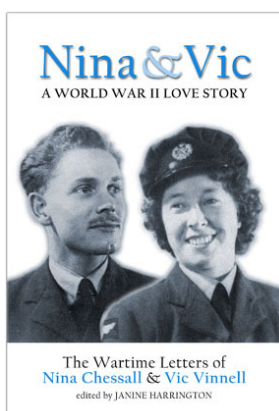
support to **RAF BOMBER COMMAND 1943-45** by John Stubbington

The description of the Special Intelligence support in both strategic and tactical contexts provides a unique insight into the relationship with the Bomber Offensive and Radio Countermeasures. The Foreword is written by Sir Arthur Bonsall, KCMG, ex-Director of GCHQ, a key member of the Air Section at Bletchley during the war.

152 pages, A4 size with graphics and diagrams.

£19.00 post paid to the UK.

Nina and Vic: A World War II Love Story by Janine Harrington



This is the fourth published book written by our Newsletter Editor and shares the story of her mother, Nina, and Vic Vinnell, a Navigator with 192 Squadron, who failed to return from a mission to Munich on 26/27 November 1944. It follows the comprehensive research undertaken to track the last fatal journey of mosquito DK292, which Vic and Jack Fisher, his pilot, were flying, culminating in what is believed to be the final location of the plane. Nina and Vic were to have been married the week following the night their plane went missing. The story is told through letters, diaries, photographs, official documents, and the voices of those they worked with and knew.

Publisher Woodfield, softback 348 pages £14.50 (including UK postage)

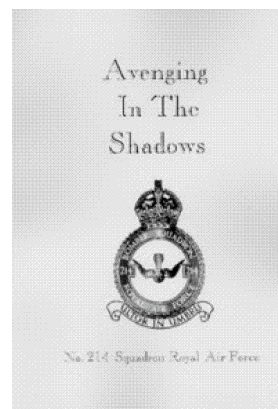
(a signed copy is also available direct from the author)

Avenging in the Shadows by Ron James

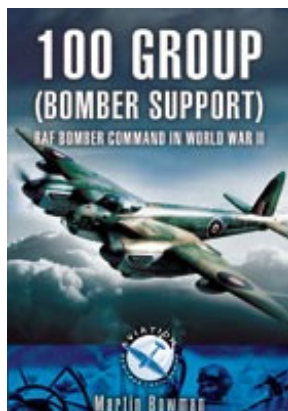
The history of 214 Squadron, including operations with RAF 100 Group 1944/5.

252 pages A4 softback,

£15.50 (including UK postage)



100 Group (Bomber Support) by Martin Bowman



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

Publisher Pen and Sword softback 192 pages £12.99 (incl UK postage)

World War 2 RAF Airfields in Norfolk by Martin Bowman

Another book in the Pen and Sword Aviation Heritage Trail series. Has details of all the airfields used by the RAF in Norfolk and brief details of the squadrons and aircraft based at each station.

169 pages A5 soft back £12.99 (including UK postage)



Confounding the Reich by Martin Bowman

Fully describing the operations of 100 Group and the electronic counter measures employed, we have a limited copies of this book at a special price.

246 pages hardback (normal price £19.99) £9.99 (including UK postage)



Target for Tonight by Squadron Leader D A Braithwaite

The memoirs of a pilot who flew both reconnaissance and Pathfinder operations before being posted to India to command a Mosquito Squadron.

143 pages hardback (normal price £19.99)

£8.99 (including UK postage)

Focus on Europe by Ronald Foster DFC Cdg

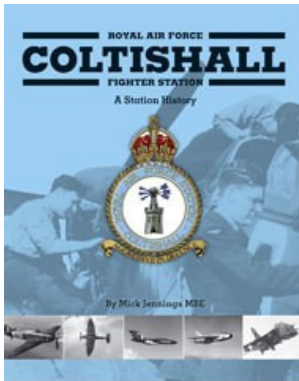
The story of a New Zealand pilot who flew sixty-nine Mosquito photo reconnaissance sorties over Europe in 1943/5.

207 pages hardback (normal price £19.95)

£6.99 (including UK postage)



RAF Coltishall, Fighter Station a Station History by Mick Jennings



Comprehensive 304 page history of the famous fighter station that closed in 2006. Fifteen chapters covering WW2 operations with details of every squadron and aircraft that served at Coltishall and post war operations, including the Gulf War. Bonus chapters on the satellite airfields of Ludham and Matlaske. Mick tells us that there are over 162,000 words and 300 black and white photographs in his book!

£27.00 (including UK postage)

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Please see separate sheet included with details for how to pay.

2008

1st MARCH

Deadline for inclusions in **Spring issue** of Newsletter, due out in April.

MAY
9TH/10TH/11TH



2008 RAF 100 Group Association Reunion

Be warned -

Members are already booking their places to stay in Norfolk so get in while you still can! *See you there!!*

1st JUNE

Deadline for inclusions in **Summer issue** of Newsletter, due out in July.

1st SEPTEMBER

Deadline for inclusions in **Autumn issue** of Newsletter, due out in October.

15TH NOVEMBER

Deadline for inclusions in **Winter issue** of Newsletter due out in time for Christmas.



REGULATIONS FOR FLIGHT ENGINEERS

If the Flight Engineer will kindly observe the following rules,
it will be a hell of a lot easier for the rest of the crew.

Regulations are listed in their order of priority.

1. Keep the navigator awake.
2. Don't get smart with the crew - remember your pilot is still learning to fly and he is more scared than you are.
3. Wake up the navigator.
4. Don't ask embarrassing questions of the crew, such as:
 - a. Where are we?
 - b. Where are we going?
 - c. What time will we land?
 - d. Is that a German fighter outside my window?
5. Tell jokes, but don't interrupt the radio programmes.
6. Pour tea and give a cuppa to the navigator to help him keep his eyes open.
7. Don't use the relief tube, use the sextant opening.
8. You just woke up the navigator!
9. Don't ask for the comic book from the Reverend-Sir-in-The-Front-Seat until he has finished it. Where are your manners?
10. If the left engine fails, discuss it quietly with the navigator before telling the pilot. You may scare him.
11. Take notes of anything you see. It will help your case before the board.
12. Check the navigator.
13. Brace yourself for every landing, you could get airsick after the first bounce.
14. When leaving the aircraft, bow to the East and give thanks.
15. Go back and wake up the navigator.

100 Group Order of Battle

SQD	AIRCRAFT	1st 100 GROUP OPERATION	BASE	SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL
192	Mosquito, Halifax Wellington	Dec 1943	Foulsham	2088/5 Losses Electronic Intel/Elint
141	Beaufighters, Mosquito	Dec 1943	West Raynham	1214/11 Losses 80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Dest
219	Mosquito	Jan 1944	West Raynham	1394/9 Losses 51 En AC Dest
515	Mosquito	March 1944	Little Snoring, Messingham	1366/21 losses 27 En AC Dest
169	Mosquito	Jan 1944	Little Snoring	1247/13 Losses 25 En AC + 1 V1 Dest
214	Fortress	April 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1225/12 Losses Electronic Jamming
199	Stirling, Halifax	May 1944	North Creak	1707/6 Losses Electronic Jamming
157	Mosquito	May 1944	Swannington	1336/5 Losses 37 En AC +39 V1 Dest
85	Mosquito	June 1944	Swannington	1190/7 Losses 71 En AC+30 V1 Dest
23	Mosquito	July 1944	Little Snoring	1067/8 Losses 18 En AC Dest
223	Liberator Fortress	Sept 1944	Oulton	629/3 Losses Electronic Jamming
171	Stirling, Halifax	Sept 1944	North Creak	583/4 Losses Electronic Jamming
462 RAAF	Halifax	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



Produced and printed by
HARRINGTON-KIRK Enterprise