



Issue No 66  
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***No 50 & No 61 SQUADRONS  
ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER***



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## EDITORIAL

Christmas fast approaches and by the time you read this it will soon be upon us, as will next years reunion. We would just remind you that the **date for the reunion is the weekend of the 31st May-1st June 2014.**

In each edition we report on the events that have taken place since the last edition, and as always with the December edition it's the Remembrance services at Birchwood and Skellingthorpe. We do tend to report in pictures as the saying goes every picture tells a story.

Also enclosed with this edition is the booking form for next year, please be sure to let us know as soon as possible if you are attending the Saturday evening.

Sadly a great deal of space has been taken up in this issue with Absent Friends, we pass on our condolences to the families who have lost loved ones recently.

Member and Author Chris Keltie has kindly reported on the trip to Westminster to meet David Cameron. The association was represented by James Flowers.

Another picture of past reunions has come to light and is published on the back page. We would welcome any identification of those present.

## SECRETARYS REPORT

Remembrance Sunday at our Memorial - once again we were blessed with fine weather, but unfortunately our Padre Rev Brian Stalley reported sick the day before (I was in a long food queue at Waitrose, when my ATC C.O. came up and said I must phone Margaret urgently - to which I replied 'please can I have my lunch first?' Priorities agreed, so later I was able to contact our ATC Padre, Rev Paul Paynton who readily agreed to follow on from his local service to ours at 13.30hrs! We had a good attendance with the Mayor Cllr Patrick Vaughan and his Mayoress and our Lincoln MP, Carl McCartney and his Lady joining us, together with City and Parish Councillors.

As usual, Michelle Liddle played us through the hymn, Last Post (on a bugle) and National Anthem.

70-80 cadets and staff from 204 (City of Lincoln) Sqn Air Cadets joined us, for their 2nd Service that day, and a past member, LACW Jessica Murfin proudly laid Betty Bascombe's wreath.

We are very grateful to the Birchwood Leisure Centre staff, also the Police for their willing help.

**Gerry Collins**

## CHAIRMANS COMMENTS

Mindful of the shortage of editorial space these days, I am sure Richard and Mike, and yourselves for that matter, will be pleased I have decided to keep my words brief. As the year draws to a close, we have just held our Remembrance Service, and I find myself reflecting, once again, on what was a truly marvellous reunion back in June. I know I have said it before but this year was as good as any in my memory and so I very much look forward to next year's.

Many of you will be aware of the current appeal for the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial and so it will be helping this very important project that will be the focus of our efforts for the next couple of years. We made a good start at this year's reunion when we were able to donate the profits from our auction to the appeal and we have since made a further donation from the Association. While the appeal has a long way to go, "every little helps" and I very much hope the Lord Lieutenant will accept our invitation to our reunion dinner next year to update us all on how the appeal is going.

In the meantime, I hope you all have a good Christmas and I wish you all a Happy New Year. For me, I am now in the final six days of my long Service career, which has lasted nearly 37 years. This time next week it will all be over. How strange that will feel!

**Peter Jacobs**

### The Holt Primary School Skellingthorpe

Recently we had a call from the school to say that they were educating the pupils on the relevance and meaning of Remembrance day. Some of the pupils had written letters and asked that they could be passed onto some of the veterans. We took the liberty of selecting some of our members, who will receive these letters with this newsletter, with the intention of asking them to write back to the pupils. Pupils from The Holt School also attended the Remembrance service in Skellingthorpe, and at that service the school head asked of someone would talk to the pupils about remembrance, and our chairman Peter Jacobs offered his services. Peter attended one afternoon and talked to each of the six classes in turn about remembrance and what it meant, and what they understood it meant. The age groups ranged from 5/6 year old to 10/11 year old. Needless to say the questions were varied, with one 6 year old wanting to know who won? Peter did a great job with the children.

**Mike Connock**

## REMEMBRANCE DAY BIRCHWOOD



**LACW Jessica Murfin  
proudly laid Betty  
Bascombe's wreath.**

The Remembrance service at the associations memorial on the Birchwood estate was as always well attended. The service being carried out by the Rev Paul Paynton , who stood in for our Padre Brian Stalley, Brian sent the following message; *“ I am sure my non-attendance at the Remembrance Day service will have caused inconvenience to many people. I can only express my sincere apologies. Remembrance Day has always been an absolute priority. It is at least 67 years since I last failed to attend. I look forward to being with you all at next year's Reunion.”*



**ATC Standard Bearers**

The service as always was very well supported by 204 Squadron (City of Lincoln) Air Training Corps. The day although cold was blessed with good weather. A good number of people in the local community attended, along with the various dignitaries as Gerry has indicated in his Secretary's piece.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY SKELLINGTHORPE

The service at Skellingthorpe was, as always, held at 11am on Monday 11th



November. The homage being said by our Vice Chairman Sqn Ldr Richard Jones for whom this has become a tradition. Wreaths were laid by Richard on behalf of the association, by a young man on behalf of the youth of the village, and one being laid on behalf of the Parish Council, by Vice Chairman Terry Scott. This was followed by crosses

presented by the children from the local Holt Primary School.

One of our members John Roberts who comes from Hull every year to plant a cross, did so in remembrance of his Father Sgt A E Roberts who Failed to return in 1943. He also planted a cross in remembrance for another member Ray Gregg who's father Sgt S A Gregg failed to return in 1942.

As always on this date and time, there is a service at the main War Memorial in Skellingthorpe, attended by other villagers, after which the two parties come together for refreshments at the Community Centre, provided by the



Parish Council and organised by Pam Connock. The top picture shows pupils from The Holt School with Head teacher Mrs Julie Leach, after the pupils had planted crosses in remembrance. (Photos courtesy of John Roberts)

## RAF YEADON

My wife, Jane, and I moved to Farsley, Leeds, last Oct. We are still close to the sound of aircraft though; it was RAF Waddington when we lived in Lincoln and now we are near Leeds/Bradford Airport. (at 681ft AMSL, the highest airfield in England). Driving past the airport a few months ago I saw the memorial to 609 Sqn, so I did a bit of ferreting.



Yorkshire Aeroplane Club. The aircraft are mostly DH 60 Moths, but also DH 87 Hornet Moth G-ADNE, and Short Scion G-ACJI. The early World War One vintage 'temporary' Bessoneau Hangars are also visible.

In 1943 the airfield was requisitioned again, this time for the manufacture of the Lancaster, Anson and York with the construction of the giant AVRO building. The factory, at the time the largest single building in Europe, was cleverly camouflaged from the air with fields and hedgerows and dummy buildings (and even dummy cattle) on the roof. The factory (shown on the right) employed thousands of local people, mostly women); it was extremely successful. The factory closed in 1959 and the site became Leeds/Bradford Airport.

**Richard Jones**

In 1931 the Yorkshire Aeroplane Club formed in a couple of fields close to the village of Yeadon. However, in 1939 the airfield was requisitioned by the Air Ministry initially for 13 Gp and subsequently 12 Gp. The only RAF sqn ever based there was 609 (West Riding) Sqn RAuxAF with, firstly the Hawker Hart and then the Spitfire.



609 (West Riding) Sqn personnel with Hawker Hart in 1936



## **Bomber Command Veterans and Chris Keltie meet PM David Cameron on Wed 9 Oct 2013.**

On Wednesday 9 October 2013 a group of Bomber Command Veterans travelled from all over the country to meet British Prime Minister the Rt Hon David Cameron. The purpose of the visit was to thank him in person for his hard work to gain recognition for WW2 Veterans. This included wiping the debt for the Bomber Command Memorial in London, the award of the Gold Clasp to Bomber Command Veterans past and present, and the Arctic Star Medal for the Veterans of the Arctic Convoys.

Our group included four of the Veterans featured in the book by Chris Keltie called *Riding In The Shadow Of Death*: Jeff Gray (61 Sqn), and his granddaughter Charlotte Gray. Bill North's Mid-Upper Gunner Dennis Bartlett (61 Sqn). James Flowers (50 Sqn, Rear Gunner and representing the 50/61 Squadron Association) with his two sons Phil and Robert Flowers. Representing their father, Veteran Bill North who passed on in Dec 2011, were his three sons David, Alun and Rhys North. Percy Cannings (97 Sqn PFF) was due to come, but was unable to as he was unwell. Representing Percy was his daughter Sandy Cannings.

The idea to contact David Cameron came from F/Lt Jeff Gray who is a Veteran Lancaster pilot from 61 Squadron and featured in the book *Riding In The Shadow Of Death*. He suggested we both write to Downing Street and offer to present David Cameron a copy of the book as a thank you on behalf of the Veterans. After a challenging task to organise and arrange the travel arrangements and timing of the event.

We were then met in the Central Lobby (which is stunning) by the PM's assistants Julia and Lawrence. With two of our Veterans in wheelchairs we then had to take quite a long detour around the Commons network of long corridors to the PM's office. James Flowers kept us entertained on the way with his distinctive Yorkshire accent. 'That was Lord so and so, oh look there's this MP or that MP!' I don't know how he recognised them all!

**Left to right:- Charlotte Gray, Chris Keltie, Rhys North, Alun North, Sandy Cannings, Dennis Bartlett, Phil Flowers, James Flowers, David North, Robert Flowers and Jeff Gray.** (photo, James Flowers)





David Cameron suddenly appeared, greeted us all, shook everybody's hands and led us into his office where we sat down on armchairs and sofas. The meeting was very relaxed and everybody had a chance to chat and talk. The Veterans thanked him for his work gaining recognition for them and he explained the complex and difficult process he had gone through to push through the Gold Clasp award and the Arctic Star Medal.



James then took the opportunity to mention that Bill North had received no medal for his courage and bravery when he crash landed his Lancaster on 5 July 1944. I also highlighted the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Bill's crash and the whole crew's survival that night.

Sandy Cannings then read out her father Percy Cannings' speech explaining how Percy also thought that Bill had been overlooked for a medal for his outstanding skill and courage as well. The PM took Percy's speech and was very sympathetic explaining that it was very difficult to get medals after such a long period of time, but he would look into it and to leave it with him. As David Cameron sat amongst us we found that he was very down to earth and easy to talk to. He was extremely knowledgeable about Bomber Command and it's critical contribution to shortening WW2



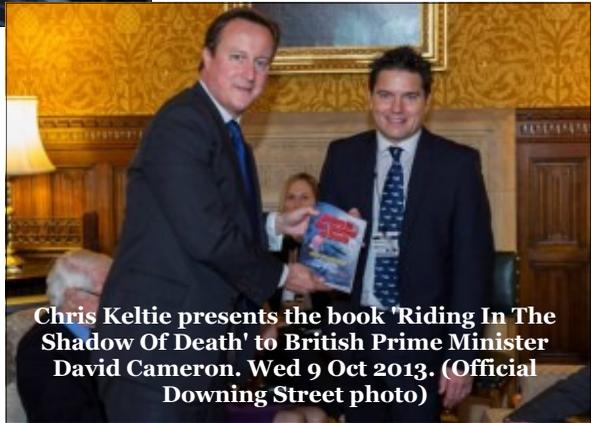
**David Cameron and James Flowers shake hands on their shared birthday. (Official Downing Street Photo)**

. We were told it would be a very short meeting, but to everybody's surprise we actually got over 20 minutes of the PM's time. As it came to a natural end the PM then got up and shook everybody's hand again and said goodbye.

We then moved on to the RAF Club at Piccadilly, where Bill's sons had booked a fantastic lunch for us all. We also met up with the book's editor Brandon Robshaw who

joined us at the RAF Club. Brandon played a critical role in the editing process and I would like to thank him for being so brutal with the script, it wouldn't be what it is without him.

On behalf of the whole group I would like to thank David Cameron for meeting with us. It was a special day for our Bomber Command Veterans and they were extremely appreciative of their



**Chris Keltie presents the book 'Riding In The Shadow Of Death' to British Prime Minister David Cameron. Wed 9 Oct 2013. (Official Downing Street photo)**



**Lunch at the RAF Club. James Flowers showing Sandy Cannings his Facebook page!**

Gold Clasp award and the recognition they truly deserve. The look on their faces said it all. Also a big thank you to our chaperone's Julia and Lawrence. Jennifer Snell for helping me to organise the meeting and all the staff in the Central Lobby who were so kind and assisted with the wheelchairs. A big thanks to David, Alun and Rhys North for a wonderful lunch and also all the London Taxi drivers who ferried us around London that day. Much missed was 97 Squadron's

Percy Cannings who couldn't be with us, get well soon Percy.  
**Chris Keltie**

## Do you remember? Sgt Harnett Richard (Dick) Richardson

**RAF Observer/Navigator  
526112 61 Sqn 1937-1940**

Dick Joined the RAF at 17 years and became a Sgt on 61 Sqn Bomber Command. Flying Hampdens out of Hemswell, Lincoln.

In December 1940 aged 22 years, he married Lillian Greenfields. Lillian had a brother Lester who was also in the RAF. Tragically Dick and his colleagues were killed on their last tour of duty before extended leave, two weeks after his wedding. (All photos here were taken at his wedding). Dick and Sgt Pilot George E Cowan DFM, Sgt A J P Casey and P/O E



Reeves took off from Hemswell in Hampden X3128 on Dec 16th 1940 on an op to Mannheim in Germany, but failed to return. The only correspondence Dick's family in Hartlepool ever received was a telegram via Lillian from the MOD saying Dicks



**Sgt George E Cowan DFC, Sgt Dick Richardson  
Sister Jean**

Hampden and crew were lost without trace, and were missing presumed KIA. The crew are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial to the missing, Lincoln Cathedral and the "Hampden Files" by Harry Moyles.

**If anyone can remember Dick, Lillian, Lester or Dicks colleagues his remaining sister Jean would love to hear from you.- [jeanwkr9@aol.co.uk](mailto:jeanwkr9@aol.co.uk) or mobile**

**07450107742**



**Lester Greenfields**

## Information required

### **Sgt Robert Craig.**

Recently I have been gathering information on my Uncle Robert Craig who was a member of 50 Squadron RAF during WW2 based in Skellingthorpe. My dad was his youngest brother. I have discovered over the past year that he is buried in Pontchataeu in France. He sadly was KIA with all his crew (mainly Canadian) on their first mission to Donges on 24-25th July, 1944. I was wondering if there is anyone who remembers my Uncle who was 19 years old from Glasgow and have any photographs. Sadly no photos have survived in the family. The other crew were P/O C.B. Haaland RCAF (Pilot), Sgt J.L. Nelson RCAF, F/O S.J. Sullivan RCAF, Sgt W.J.B. Doughty, Sgt N. Gronbeck RCAF, Sgt G.F. Finch RCAF. Thanking you for your assistance in this matter. Hope to visit Skelly 2014. Mrs. Lynne Sayar, 61 Sinclair Drive, Langside, Glasgow. G42 9PU  
Email; mete@sayar.orangehome.co.uk

### **Leslie Alfred Davies**

My father flew with 50 squadron during the latter months of 1944 and the early part of 1945. He never spoke very much about his wartime activities, and now, very belatedly, I am doing what research I can so that his grandchildren can have a permanent record of what their grandfather went through.

Dad was a navigator on Lancaster's, usually flying VN-F, although sometimes other aircraft. His pilot was Pilot Officer Fred Jones DFC, who I was privileged to meet on a couple of occasions (sadly the last being at Dad's funeral).

I have Dad's log book which contains a wealth of information, albeit very much in shorthand, and the National Archives have revealed much I did not know, but I know next to nothing about the men who made up the crew with whom he flew, other than their names as they are revealed in the short summary of the operations from the National Archives. I write in the hope that you will be able to tell me more about these men who were my father's colleagues in dark times, and who were part of a team that survived their tour of operations, and to whom I should give thanks for my own existence. Where did they come from, what were their Christian names, what were their occupations before their flying days, and what became of them after the War was over? Are any of them still alive, and would it be possible for me to be put in touch with them or their families?

Such help as you are able to give me would very much be appreciated.

As at 14th January 1945, when the records show VN-F suffered flak damage and made a forced landing at Juvincourt, the crew members were:-

179360 F/O Jones, F.D. 1591134 Sgt. Smith, R.M. 1581024 F/Sgt Davies, L.A.

1614104 Sgt Jarmy, C (possibly "G") 1087204 F/Sgt Marrs, E. 1591245 Sgt Mellefont, G.J

1135931 Sgt Parrinder, N

Murray Davies email; murrayandnicky@hotmail.co.uk

## **Dennis Gregory**

I'm attempting to research my Grandfathers war efforts. I know that he served aboard an Avro Lancaster.

After searching the forces-war-records website I have obtained the following information:

First Name: D            Surname: Gregory    Nationality: British

Incident Details: Landed at base and struck van and next plane

Incident Date: 26/11/1943    Incident Time: 1706

Squadron: 50 Squadron    Crew: Sgt D Gregory

Command: Bomber Command    Aircraft Mark: I            Aircraft Type: Lancaster Aircraft

Serial: DV377

I'm not 100% sure that this information his, due to the first name being displayed as 'D' only.

Do any of your members remember a Dennis Gregory?

Ashley Gregory    email: ashleyjgregory@hotmail.com

## **P/O L.W. Metcalfe DFC**

My uncle, Pilot Officer Leonard Walter Metcalfe DFC, was I believe a navigator in 61 squadron. He was killed in 1943 but I don't know how or why he was awarded the DFC.

Does anyone know if any records survive? Also is there any way I could contact any remaining veterans to see if they knew him? Many thanks for any help you are able to give.

Steph Blackwell, email :- stephablackwell@yahoo.com

## **Wreck of missing Lancaster bomber found**

As we go to press this story has emerged. The wreckage of a wartime Lancaster bomber shot down on a raid over occupied Europe is discovered on farmland in Holland.

The bomber, ED470, from 61 Squadron based at Skellingthorpe, had set off for its last mission at 7.20pm on 23 September 1944.

It was one of 136 bombers, accompanied by five Mosquitos, sent to attack the Dortmund-Ems Canal near Gravenhorst.

However, near to Arnhem, in Holland, it was intercepted by a Junkers 88, a German nightfighter, which attacked it from above and astern. It was repelled by gunfire from the Lancaster, but either the same or a different aircraft attacked again, setting the bomber on fire and sending it to earth.

The story has been published in the Daily Telegraph and also on the BBC news site, these can be accessed via the internet.

We will report more on this story, in the future

**Mike Connock**

## ABSENT FRIENDS

### **Ernest Oddy.**

We are advised by Jeanette Baron that her uncle passed away on January 1st 2013 just before his 93rd birthday. He was veteran of 61 squadron and attend many reunions in past years.

### **Roy Day.**

We have heard from Roy's son Nigel that Roy died on 9 Aug aged 89. Roy was a pilot on 50 Sqn and has given the Association many gifts including the 1943 RAF Skellingthorpe Officers' Mess Christmas menu and most precious of all, a photograph of the first 50 and 61 Sqns' Association reunion photograph in 1946. There is an article about Roy in the Dec 12 (Issue 60) newsletter. We believe the only surviving member shown in this historic photograph is Jimmy Flint.

### **Jean Lascelles**

We are advised by Jeans son David that she passed away last April. Jean was the widow of F/Lt Jack Lascelles DFC who was a founder member of the association and Secretary for over 30 years, from around 1946. Jean remained a member of the association after Jack passed away.

### **Frank Hercliffe**



Sadly Frank passed away on Sunday 29th September. Frank was a pilot on Lincolns and Roy Davidson attended the funeral service. Unfortunately his other crew member Danny Thomas was unable to make it. The story they used to tell was of the Queens Coronation fly past in 1954, when they were airborne for four hours as there were 600 aircraft in the flypast. Frank, centre, flanked by Roy Davidson (Right) and Danny Thomas.

### **Robert Brown**

Robert Brown who had recently found the association and became a member earlier this year sadly passed away on September 24th. His Daughter Marcia tells us that at 97 he had no specific illness but just that his time was up.

Robert, known as "Topper Brown" served on 61 Sqn as Pilot on Hampdens, carrying out 31 night raids.

He trained between 1939 and 1940 on de Havillands, Magisters and Oxfords.

Between 1940 and 1945 he flew ops in Hampdens as Pilot or 1st Pilot with various 2nd Pilots including Sgt Cooper, Sgt Bernard and Sgt Matthews.

His Service and Release Book records his Authorisation of Release date to be 22nd December 1945.

He had served as Sergeant, Pilot Officer and Flight Lieutenant and was authorised as a Class A Release - Squadron Leader.

## Robert (Bob) Charles Yates



50, 467 and 106 squadrons RAF WWII, RNZAF 1954-75. Bob passed away earlier this year in a New Zealand hospice. Bob flew as a mid-upper and tail -gunner for a full operational tour with 50 squadron from March to Aug 1943. Between September of 1943 and April 1945 he completed a Non-Operational tour with 1661 Heavy Conversion Unit, and Central Gunnery School, as an instructor and in April 1945 returned to operational flying joining 467 (RAAF) squadron as their gunnery leader. He completed 3 more operational sorties prior to the German surrender. Before leaving 467 he took part in the repatriation of POW's from Juvincourt.

In June 1945 he joined 106 squadron, again as gunnery leader, training for "Tiger Force". Following V- J day on 15 August he did two trips to Bari in Italy bringing back 8<sup>th</sup> Army troops. Notable operations he flew on with 50 squadron included the opening night of the *Battle of Hamburg* – using 'window' for the first time, The *Skoda Woks Raid* (the feature of Peter Cunliffe's recent book), and the raid on which his skipper Arthur Hollis OBE received his DFC for bring back a badly shot-up aircraft with wounded crew (including Bob). Bob was twice mentioned in Dispatches and left the RAF in 1948.

In 1954 Bob Joined the RNZAF and emigrated to New Zealand being joined by his family the following year. He served in the RNZAF for 21 years in various roles throughout New Zealand, and then became the New Zealand supply manager for Bell Helicopters, finally retiring in 1979.

In 2008 Bobs airline pilot, grandson Garrick made contact with Arthur Hollis and became a regular visitor when he was in UK. this also lead to visits by other family members from New Zealand. During one of these visits Arthur told of how they used to go to dances in Lincoln and as Bob was "a bit of a ladies' man" it was his job to go over to the girls and persuade them to join the crews table. One night Arthur spotted a particularly pretty girl and said "Look at that smasher over there" to which Bob replied "Hollis we didn't think that you were human". In the event Bob did chat her up and he married Joy in late 1943. These visits sparked correspondence between Bob and Arthur that continued until their deaths.

Joy died in 2003 and at the time of his death Bob had two sons, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Bobs family would like to hear from anyone who has any information about other members of the crew:

Richard (Dick) Palmer (DFC) – Navigator

Edward (Ted) Kemp (DFC) – Bomb Aimer

Donald Adshead – Engineer

Tom Cheshire (DFM) – Wireless Operator

Jock Walker – Gunner (Killed in Operations 1943)

## Memories of past reunions



The above picture was passed to us by Murray Davies, who's Father Leslie Alfred Davies flew with Fred Jones on 50 Sqn. Fred is standing behind the chap seated, front left, holding the glass with two hands, and to Fred Jones' left is Leslie Davies. Jimmy Flint as always is obvious, third from right front row standing. If anyone can name any of the others, we would be pleased to hear from you. The sleeve holding the picture says "*Portrait by E.Sharpe, 221 Westminster Bridge Rd, London*". As the first meetings were held at the New Inn on Westminster Bridge Rd. We can perhaps assume that that is where the picture was taken. Based on that we can assume it was between 1946 and 1949.