



Issue 53
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***No 50 & No 61 SQUADRONS
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER***



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EDITORIAL

This will be, we hope, the first of a series of commemorative editions for the annual reunion weekend. Thanks to James Flowers, we have many pictures of the weekend's events to bring back memories and remind us all of the great time it was.

The website contains many more photographs, taken by James, the Association's "official" photographer. For members who are unable to access the website, we plan to set up a presentation at the Leslie Manser School during the 2010 AGM to provide a rolling programme of photographs of previous years' reunions. As always, Mike and I seek input from you, our members, for the newsletter.

Reg Payne has been very kind, as always, to produce some copy, as has Ken Ruskell, but more is always very welcome. We would like a bank of member's input. Arthur Smith has also kindly answered a query posed by a member in the last edition. We have put the Tail End Charlie feature on hold for this edition to enable us to put in more of James's pictures from the reunion. More about the website on page 6.

Apologies to Les Loosemore, living at Steeple Ashton in Wiltshire, for trying to move him to North Yorkshire in the last issue of the newsletter!

Any opinions given in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Association. Moreover, the accuracy of submissions are also the responsibility of the author.

Mike Connock
Richard Jones

ASSOCIATION TIES

We now have 20 more Association ties. Details of the ties, £9 each inc p&p, are on the website. Please send requests for ties (with the delivery address and a chq made payable to "50 and 61 Sqns' Association") to the vice-chairman whose details are on page 2.

Richard Jones

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

I am delighted that we have been able to bring you this Newsletter so soon after our re-union weekend. For those of you who attended I am sure you will agree, once again, that the weekend was a great success. Attendance was the highest in recent years and I was delighted that we had more than 80 members and friends attend the annual dinner on the Saturday night. As always, we were so lucky to have the support of the City of Lincoln, in particular the Mayor and Member of Parliament for Lincoln, the Birchwood and Skellingthorpe communities, the children and staff of the Leslie Manser School, the local air cadets and, of course, the Royal Air Force itself.

Without the support of the Skellingthorpe community, our re-union would never be a weekend; the Friday evening informal dinner at the Community Centre and the Sunday lunch followed by the Remembrance Service, again at the Community Centre, continue to provide us with a wonderful opening and closing to our weekend. My thanks, as always, go to all the people of the Skellingthorpe community. Also amongst the highlights during the course of the weekend is the entertainment provided by the staff and children of the Leslie Manser School. We have been so lucky over many years now to be welcomed back to the school year after year by the Head Teacher and his staff. The link between the Association and the school is so important, not only for our own members but also, I believe, for the children of the school. We are now into a second generation of children who have learnt from a very early age of what took place some sixty-five years ago on the exact spot where they now live and go to school; long may it continue.

Whilst many Association members might expect the present day Royal Air Force to support events such as ours, the pressures and commitments now placed on serving personnel means that not all events like ours continue to get support. The fact that we are lucky enough to know the right people in the right places helps enormously and I am grateful to those serving members of the RAF who helped make our weekend a success: RAF Digby for our most informative visit on the Saturday afternoon; the Station Commander of RAF Waddington, who joined us on the Saturday evening at our annual dinner and again on the Sunday morning at the Memorial Service; the band of RAF Waddington for giving up their time on the Sunday morning and, of course, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight for providing us, once again, with the Lancaster to close the show on the Sunday afternoon. I would also like to thank all the members of the Air Cadet Organisation. Without the involvement of all these serving personnel, and cadets, the weekend would certainly not have the same impact.

My final thanks go to members of the Association Committee for making the re-union weekend work and to all of you who gave up your time to come back to Lincoln to contribute to its success; without the Committee and all of you there would be no re-union weekend. Whilst I cannot help notice the number of wartime veterans has reduced over recent years, the number of new members and friends continues to increase. Each of us who were not members of either squadron (and I include myself in this category) do what we do for our own personal reasons. But the one thing we all have in common is that we want to remember those who served on both squadrons, particularly during the wartime days at RAF Skellingthorpe.

Looking ahead, I welcome Alan Biggs and Lynda Skinner onto the Committee. Both Alan and Lynda have been strong supporters of the Association over so many years and I am personally delighted they were both formally elected on to the Committee at the AGM; Alan is the Parade Marshal and the perfect under-study to our Secretary, Gerry Collins, and Lynda takes on the responsibility of Dining Secretary. Lynda has a hard act to follow after so many successful years of annual dinners organised by David and Susan Jellett; I would like to thank David and Susan, once again, on behalf of the Association for the work they have done over so many years and I very much look forward to seeing them back in Lincoln next year.

Finally, we intend making a donation to the Bomber Command Memorial Fund later in the year. Many of you will know of the Bomber Command Association's plans, with the help of the Heritage Foundation, to erect a permanent memorial in Central London to the 55,000 Bomber Command aircrew killed during the Second World War. If you wish to make a personal contribution to the project you may do so in one of two ways. You can either send a cheque direct to Doug Radcliffe, Secretary of the Bomber Command Association, RAF Museum Hendon, London NW9 5RR (the cheque should be made payable to the Bomber Command Association) or you can send your donation to us (cheque made payable to the 50 & 61 Squadrons' Association) and we will include it as part of our overall donation. If you choose to include your donation as part of the Association's overall donation then please let us know whether you would like us to include your name as a personal donor or whether you would rather remain 'anonymous' – your choice. We will let you know in due course how much we have donated to the appeal.

That's enough for me. It is late July and summer has gone already; just in time for me to take my family to Cornwall – typical! Enjoy your summer wherever you are!

Peter Jacobs

ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

The Association website (<http://50-61squadron.com/default.aspx>) is an excellent tool for seeking information about the Association and other topics. We also have the newsletter available on-line, starting at Issue 52, and many of James Flowers' photographs of past reunions. The webmaster is David Jellett and his assistant is Pattie Townsend. We are very grateful to them both. David's details are on page 2.

Richard Jones

THE TOILERS FAR BELOW

Those who flew were not alone, behind them stood the friends unknown;
The fitters working day and night; their main reward, an A-One kite;
The riggers working hard to heal the damage done by flying steel;
The armourers loading tons of bombs and working hard on all the guns;
WAAFs who drove the transport round, all the toilers on the ground;
Bowser drivers, cookhouse bods, a thousand willing odds and sods;
Supporting by their skill and care, operations in the air.

Ken Ruskell

DAR DAR DAR DIT DIT DIT

In Sir Michael's crew our navigator, Frank Swinyard, was a wind finder. His job was to find the present wind speed and direction, and I had to transmit the details to HQ 5 Gp. I had to send four or five winds back on all long ops. Flying home over the North Sea I had to send the last wind back and I finished the end of my message in Morse with - - . -. (GN) (Good Night). I got a GN back in return. So I sent . -- .- ..-. (WAAF); the answer I got was - - (GS), presumably telling me to Get Stuffed. During the debriefing I asked if the wireless op on duty was a WAAF or RAF male. I was told they were all WAAFs on that evening. Nice girls.

Reg Payne

2009 REUNION PICTURES



Veterans and villagers at the Friday evening informal dinner and get together. The two veterans sitting with villagers are Arthur Smith and Johnny Firth

Sir Michael and Lady Patricia Beetham at the reunion dinner



Sir Michael with The Mayor of Lincoln and Wg Cdr Jimmy Flint

Veterans assembling for the march past at the Birchwood Memorial



A MONUMENT UNVEILED TO LANCASTER LL840

A monument was unveiled on Monday 22 June 2009, exactly 65 years to the day after RAF Lancaster Bomber; LL840 of 50 Sqn, with a crew of 8 it was shot and crash landed whilst returning from a bombing raid on oil refineries in Germany. Two of the crew perished in the aircraft, 6 parachuted out, 3 were captured and taken as POWs, 2 escaped back to England and one (21 years old) although evaded capture for 3 months, was later captured and executed without trial by the Germans as a terrorist. Despite many attempts to find other family members of the crew to attend the unveiling of the monument only FS K H C Ingram, Sgt F



H Shorter and FS Beresford were represented, the remaining crew Sqn Ldr T B Cole, Fg Off J Craven, Plt Off E J Blake-more, WO J F Lane & Sgt P F J Hayes could not be traced.

The monument to the crew of the plane LL840 was organised by 2 Dutch researchers Jan Kiesbrink and Teunis Nooteboom, working with the organisa-

tion “Stichting Broken Wings ‘40 -‘45”, they found the exact sight at Oene just on the outskirts of Apeldoorn in the east of Holland. The monument was jointly unveiled by Mrs Margaret Allman (nee Ingram) a cousin to FS Ingram, who was from the Portsmouth area whose parents had a chemist shop in Regents Park Road in 1927 and then brought the Railway Tavern pub in Claremont Road Fratton. Kenneth attended King Edward VI School from 1937–39 and who’s story about a prize book turning up in a flea market in Holland appeared in the Portsmouth News on Saturday 17 May 2008 with a follow up in the same paper on 26 August 2008.



The Dutch researchers after the unveiling launched a book, giving details of how they discovered the crash site with information from senior citizens, plus the use of a metal detector and found some remains of the plane which the Germans had left behind after taking most of the plane parts back to Germany for equipping their own air force as was the custom at that time, (it is ironic to think that people in England were being bombed by German planes made from British parts).

The unveiling of the monument was a very impressive occasion with the route from the village of Oene being lined with lots of the local people in honour of the fallen heroes that the villagers in 1944 helped escape.



Transport by way of old war time military was provided for the people that could not walk to the monument site following a local brass band following at the rear was children for a local school carrying a red rose each which they later laid on the monument. During the speeches a fly past of 4 planes flew over the gathering.

Mrs Allman’s husband Michael researched and printed a book titled “Ken’s Story” for

the family to mark the 65th Anniversary, (despite not receiving any assistance from the RAF nor the family that helped raise Kenneth after his mother’s death when he was only 4 years of age). He researched the flight, crash and eventual capture, the book details exactly what occurred to the plane’s crew and later to the 8 Apeldoorn Martyrs, 6 of who were members of a local Dutch resistance group, who assisted allied air crews to return to England. But due to the capture of Kenneth and an American pilot together with 6 members of the local resistance group they were all executed without trial on 2 October 1944. But an official investigation after the war by the USA War Department (JAG), revealed that both Kenneth and the American’s death was as a result of bayoneting, which fact has never been disclosed by the RAF, who to this day hide this information under a clause of the Freedom of Information Act.

There are already 2 monuments dedicated to the 8 Apeldoorn Martyrs of which Kenneth and the USA pilot are amongst these. For more information visit the following:-

- 1) <http://www.monument.apeldoorn-onderwijs.nl/monument%grootschuylenburg.htm>
- 2) <http://www.Ugchelen.org/heidehof/herdenkn.htm>
- 3) <http://info-oene.nl>
- 4) <http://homepage.mac.com/martinvandepoel/PhotoAlbum518.html>

2009 REUNION PICTURES

Birchwood Memorial



Standards and veterans ready to march

RAF Waddington
voluntary band



March past of the veterans

March past of the veterans



ACCOUNTS AND MEMBERSHIP

I am pleased to confirm in this newsletter the report as presented at the AGM in June. A summary of the accounts is shown below. The closing balance on the General account shows a marked improvement on the previous year. This was partly due to the transfer from the memorial account of £1000 to cover expenditure paid out for the memorial from the general account. In addition, apart from the many donations sent in with subscriptions there were two large donations from Betty Bascombe (£100) and Mr L C Green (£500) for which we are extremely grateful. Whilst the Memorial account only shows a small income, there is an amount of £212 due to this account from the General account, which is donations.

General Account

Income	£3164.25	Opening balance	£419.28
Expenditure	£1453.68	Excess	£1710.57
Excess	£1710.57	Closing Balance	£2129.85

Memorial Account

Income	£153.89	Opening balance	£4264.00
Expenditure	£1000.00	Excess	-£846.11
Excess	-£846.11	Closing balance	£3417.89

Once again sincere thanks go to Gloria Poole for auditing the accounts.

Membership

There are currently 216 members listed. 123 Annual paying members and 93 life or honorary members. Of the 123 Annual members, some 20 or so members have not paid subs for the current year. As in previous years, I am in the process of contacting these members to resolve the issue.

The total membership is down on last year but part of this is due to some consolidation of the listing. Whilst we do inevitably lose some members, we still get some veterans joining as well as relatives of veterans.

Mike Connock

GERRY'S PAGE

Our AGM went off very well, and I was able to show members present the copy of the 50 & 61 Sqns' Notice Board that is to be erected at the entrance to Birchwood Nature Park (Opposite Damons Restaurant), the park being a small part of RAF Skellingthorpe. It is nice that the park want to keep alive the memory of the past. There is also a "history" board on the old peri track adjacent to the Leisure Centre.

Our Sunday morning service was conducted by the Rev. Brian Stalley, with the usual congregation attending. Also, the parade was well attended by 204(City of Lincoln) Squadron Air cadets and many standard bearers. Alan Biggs our Parade Marshal looked after us well, and we came to halt on the march past as he ordered, but the Air Cadets and the RAF Waddington Band marched on! The band about turned and met the cadets!! We were pleased to see the Air Cadets with us again, and they were a big help putting out chairs and laying wreaths.

In case there is not another letter before Remembrance Sunday, there is no price increase on the wreaths, the service starts at 13.00 hours, you are all very welcome.

You must all watch the forthcoming edition of the Antiques Roadshow from Lincoln Cathedral, which will be shown in September/October. Jimmy was interviewed at length about his medals and AR are very pleased with the recording (Made in the Cathedral on 19th March). For those of you on our email list we may be able to give you an exact date.

Attending a recent Ex-Service meeting, I was not pleased to hear that a "lady" at our June service said to a standard bearers wife that she could not sit there!! The SB's wife did sit there, and next year we will put out more chairs. I do hope the "lady" was not one of our clan—we welcome all.

Gerry Collins

LETTERS

Concerning the article by AVM Nigel Baldwin in Issue 52, in which he asks where the "Dingoes" originated. I served as an AEO on 50 Sqn for a total of nine years, starting when all the aircraft were under centralised servicing and was one of those who "raged" at the iniquity of this arrangement, having enjoyed the experience of serving as an airman under squadron identity with 65 Sqn at Duxford in 1951. "My first real Squadron". At the beginning of my time on 50 Sqn the centralised ground crews had adopted their own badge which consisted of a gold pig on a blue background surrounded by the words "sincerity, integrity & guts" which was their way of creating an identity!

Naturally I was delighted when the Squadrons at Waddington regained their own ground crew and as one of the part time artists on 50 Sqn at the time, I sought an alternative identity to the odious pig image that was still evident on the overalls of our trusty ground crews. I discovered that in the early days of the Sqn that the "string bags" (BE 2c aircraft) were decorated with a decal depicting two hunting dogs (greyhounds I believe) chasing down a Dingo with the caption "All Dingoes Run" underneath. A search of the archives may well reveal the reason for adopting this symbol.

To cut a long story short, I made a copy of the two "Greyhounds" in their original running posture and offered it as an unofficial badge for the CO's approval (Either Wg Cdr Lowe or Parkes) . This was accepted and the rest is history !!

Al Butler (AEO 50 Sqn)

Some possible answers to the query posed by Les Loosemore in Issue 52 about the 3 raids:

I remember we went at night to Bohlen on 4 Mar, we were in the air for ten hours. Then on the night of 5 Mar we went to Sassnitz which was 9½ hours. I can confirm the 9 April daylight raid to Hamburg and 4 Apr daylight raid to Nordhausen.

So in view of these raids I think it must have been 22 Mar.

I remember the daylight raid but cannot state the target, it was, probably a synthetic oil plant. I remember three aircraft going down on the starboard side but on return at debriefing they said they had no knowledge of any such aircraft. I think it was just to deter any panic among the crews.

Arthur Smith (Flt Eng 50 Sqn)

In 1941 I was a Rigger with "C" unit looking after 50 Squadron aircraft at Lindolme. One of the guys senior to me had a "Dingo" painted on his helmet. I got him to paint a Dingo on my helmet. We were always disappointed not to be known as "50 Sqn." guys, just C unit and we had painted underneath the Dingo, the words "Dingo Squadron" as we had pride in being part of 50 Squadron. We subsequently moved with them to Swinderby.

Sid King

ABSENT FRIENDS

No information given to the Editors.

If you are aware of any recent losses, do please let us know for the next edition.

NEW MEMBERS

Kenneth Ballantyne, Admaston, Shropshire. Kenneth joined at the last memorial weekend and has written a book on a 61 Sqn rear gunner, soon to be published.

Ray Gregg, Queensland, Western Australia. Brother of 404420 Sgt Stanley Gregg RAAF (KIA 24 Oct 42).

Tom Holmes, Pinner, Middlesex. Served as an armourer on B Flight 61 Squadron July 43 to June 45.

Ernest Oddey, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Ilkley. Ex 61 Sqn member recently moved into a nursing home and rejoined by his niece Jeanette.

Mr & Mrs Wright, Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. Joined at the re-union weekend.

Mrs M Yates, Skellingthorpe. Wife of the late Richard Yates a former Chairman of Skellingthorpe Parish Council.

Mrs Pamela Connock, Skellingthorpe. Some of you will know Pam and be surprised to know she never been a member of the association, but be pleased to know she has been made an honorary member.

NEWSLETTER BACK NUMBERS

We are seeking the following missing newsletters for our library:

1-25, 27-35, 37 and 40. If you have any of these issues we would be delighted to have them. You can either donate your copy or allow us to copy it. Again the vice-chairman would be pleased to receive any offerings.

Richard Jones

CAN YOU HELP

I'm trying to obtain any contact names who may have known my father who served on 50 Squadron at RAF Skellingthorpe during the WW2, details as follows:

Sgt. Albert E Roberts (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) 50 Sqn, RAF Skellingthorpe between 1942-43. KIA 2 Apr 1943.

The aircraft he flew in was ED482 VN and on the return flight after completing an operation of laying mines off the west coast of France, the aircraft was shot down & all crew members were listed as missing then killed in action.

I would appreciate any information or contact details you can give concerning any RAF personal who served on the squadron at the same time.

Kind regards

John Roberts jrobbie@jrobbie.karoo.co.uk

I am researching the story of my uncle, Wg Cdr Walter Franklin (Wally) Parks, DFC and Bar RCAF, who tragically disappeared over the North Sea on 17 May 54 when he was serving with the RCAF at RAF North Luffenham. He was my hero as a small child of 4 or 5 years old - mainly I confess because he was the source of chocolates, jellies and sweets, something a small wartime child put a high value on - and it was he who was responsible for my switching my childish allegiance from the Army (in which my Dad served) to the Air Force.

I have discovered that in April 1943 he transferred from 408 (RCAF) Sqn to 50 Sqn. At the time he held the rank of Sqn Ldr. While I have his wartime flights from Uncle Wally's time with 408 Sqn, I have nothing from his time with 50 Sqn. He clearly won a bar to his DFC while he was in 50 Sqn and served with the Sqn until the end of the war. And unusually for a bomber pilot, he must have survived a great number of sorties. I would dearly love a picture of him. I have none. And unfortunately after my Aunt died, I lost contact with his surviving son.

I live in New Zealand and am not likely to be able to get to the UK in the foreseeable future, so any help you can give me would be much appreciated. Any photographs in which he featured would be wonderful. I would be happy to pay for them (I don't have a UK account but could do so by credit card). I'd be happy to have them sent digitally, if you have the ability to do so.

Caroline Mackersey (formerly Haines) nee Honeywill
caromack@ihug.co.nz

2009 REUNION PICTURES
Skellingthorpe Memorial



Guests seated for the service



Sir Michael laying the wreath



Fly past of BBMF Lancaster PA474



Skellingthorpe children
laying flowers at the memorial



Pam Connock thanking
everyone for attending