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***No 50 & No 61 SQUADRONS'
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER***



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Chairman

Wg Cdr (Retd) Peter Jacobs
61 Fulmar Road
Doddington Park
Lincoln LN6 0LA
01522 826635
peterjacobs83@msn.com

Vice Chairman

Sqn Ldr (Retd) Richard Jones
26 Wadlands Rise
Farsley
Pudsey LS28 5JF
0113 2559931
richardnjones@btinternet.com

Secretary

Gerry Collins
35 Wetherby Crescent
Lincoln LN6 8SY
01522 681482
gerald236@btinternet.com

Treasurer & Membership

Mike Connock
21 Goldfinch Close
Skellingthorpe
Lincoln LN6 5SF
01522 683997
m.connock2@ntlworld.com

Parade Marshal

Alan Biggs
19 St Marks Avenue
Cherry Willingham
Lincoln LN3 4LX
01522 751690
alan.biggs@mypostoffice.co.uk

Dining Secretary

Lynda Skinner
19 St Marks Avenue
Cherry Willingham
Lincoln LN3 4LX
01522 519914
Lynda.skinner@me.com

Editorial Team

Mike Connock
Richard Jones

Peter J Small
63 Jerusalem Road
Skellingthorpe
Lincoln LN6 4RH
01522 827002

EDITORIAL

Once again the reunion weekend proved to be a great success, we include pictures of the weekend in this edition.

We have a couple of pages dedicated to the new International Bomber Command Centre. It is considered such an important part of our heritage that we feel it necessary to keep you up to date with its development.

This is the 20th newsletter Mike and I have had the pleasure of compiling. We began this A5 colour format at Issue 52 in Apr 2009. If this were a wedding anniversary it would be China or Platinum! We took over the reins from Keith Coldron, who was the editor for almost 20 years. His was a hard act to follow.

We've enjoyed the challenge of producing the newsletter and we are grateful to members and friends for their input, for without it the contents could be rather sterile. We always welcome members' and friends input, especially photographs appertaining to either sqn. BUT with photographs we do ask for the 4 necessaries: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN. We have so many pictures of smiling aircrew, but sadly no idea WHO they were; WHAT they were doing; WHERE and WHEN the picture was taken. We would copy and return precious family pictures sent to us.

Richard Jones, Mike Connock

MEMORABILIA

We still have copies of the DVD "Failed to Return" which tells the story of the Associations memorial and has footage of wartime crews. This DVD is £10 including postage.

There are also limited copies of the Associations "Roll of Honour" we offer at £20 including postage.

Please contact me if you require either of these items.

Mike Connock

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Space is short in this edition and so I will just say what another excellent reunion weekend it was a few weeks ago, and how good it was to see so many familiar faces again. As usual, people came from far and wide, including Australia and America, and so I thank all those who continue to support the reunion weekend.

Once again, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight made sure we had an aircraft for the flypast. For those of you who were there, I can inform you that the slightly late arrival of the Dakota (10 minutes) was due to the aircraft being held on the ground at Coningsby because of the bad weather. But, as always, it was worth the short wait and I have thanked the crew on your behalf for supporting us yet again.

This year I was particularly pleased to welcome Adrian Jones, the Head Teacher at the Leslie Manser School, as an Honorary member of the Association. Since taking over as Head nine years ago, Adrian has enthusiastically welcomed us back to the school each year. Those of you who have been to the school will have enjoyed the entertainment by the children, as well as the hospitality of the school, and so I am sure you would like to join me in thanking Adrian, his staff and his wife, Cathryn, for all that the school does for us each year. Thank you.

We can now look forward to the unveiling of the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial Spire, due to take place on 2 October. We will bring you more news and pictures in the next Newsletter. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Peter Jacobs

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

There was a threat of rain, but undeterred we carried on with yet another successful Service.

We had a very good turnout and support from our local councils, for which we are most grateful. RAF Waddington Band ably led by Dave Jackson played us through the hymns and then led the March Past. Standard Bearers turned out in good number, led by Alan Biggs, and the few 204 Sqn Air Cadets helped with their multi tasks.

The Reverend Brian Stalley, this year, the Mayor's Chaplain, was asked to keep his sermon short, to which he ably retorted, that if he cut anything out, there would only be silence! He was as good as his word. The Mayor of Lincoln read the Lesson.

That afternoon at Skellingthorpe, the Methodist minister Reverend Christine Jewitt took the service, and 1237(North Hykeham) Sqn Air Cadets were very helpful & BBMF Dakota over flew, and this year, we had a 'live' bugler to play the Last Post & Reveille! (so I quietly put my RAF Waddington Band CD away!!) Once again, the ladies looked after us well with the buffet lunch and tea.

The night before when we had our dinner at Skellingthorpe (Excellent choice & very well cooked), Tony and Jenny Worth graced our tables, and afterwards, Tony gave us an up to date review of progress, and said that what was needed now (besides some money) was for stories from ground crews to go into the visitor centre when built.. The SPIRE is up and can be seen, and the opening date with the walls built is for 2 October 2015.

Gerry Collins

ABSENT FRIENDS

C J Tidmarsh

We are saddened to hear of the passing of C J Tidmarsh. He apparently passed away in March of this year. He was survived by his wife who a we are advised by his daughter has also passed away recently.

John served with 50 Squadron, and was a life member of the association.

Bill Jackman

As we went to press we were advised of the passing of Bill Jackman in Australia.

More will be said about Bill in the next newsletter.

PLEA FOR PHOTOGRAPHS AND INFORMATION

We have put a plea in the Editorial for old photographs from members, with, please, details of the subject(s) and the and other information to enable us to have a clear idea of those pictured. The photograph below exemplifies the sorry problems we often have. A marvellous picture of a Lancaster crew plus two additions, but sadly we have no idea who they are and when it was taken, although presumably at RAF Skellingthorpe during the bad winter of 1943/44.



HELP WANTED

This picture of NF922, VN-U, was sent by Gary Wright of 101 Squadron Association. Can anyone help to identify the 9 crew members please? Obviously a 50 Sqn (VN) Lancaster Mk 1, but (thankfully) the aircraft does not show up in the lost or missing aircraft sites. The 2 crew members in the heated suits could well be the MUG and rear gunner. Maybe the 2 additional crew members are a pilot and gunner for fighter affiliation training?

Mike Connock and Richard Jones

Reunion Weekend (Saturday)

The Saturday started with the AGM at the Leslie Manser school. The existing committee were elected en-bloc, after which we were entertained by the children over tea and cakes. The 50/61 Sqns' Achievement Award



was made to Sophie Martin. Left can be seen the buffet provided for the evening, which proved to be excellent and already booked for next year.

During the evening James Flowers presented a cheque for £500 to Tony Worth towards the IBCC fund, this was from the sales of his book, after

which Tony updated us on the progress of the memorial. Below can be seen two Wireless Operators, Ted McRae on the left with Reg Payne in the middle, and on the right is Neil Cheeseman a member of the association



and Parish Councillor. Neil had managed to get together a Receiver and Transmitter from a Lancaster, which proved to be a major talking point for the three, especially when they got to play with the morse key.

Reunion Weekend (Sunday Birchwood)



The weather held off and the service at Birchwood went smoothly as ever, taken by the association Padre, Brian Stalley, who also happens to be the Mayor's Chaplain this

year. The salute was taken by our Vice-President AVM Nigel Baldwin accompanied by the Major of Lincoln



Our Vice-President, AVM Nigel Baldwin, and the RAF Waddington Voluntary Band (Bandmaster David Jackson), who perform so well for us on the annual Sunday morning service at Birchwood. AVM Baldwin is also the President of the RAF Voluntary Band Association.



Rev Brian Stalley, who with his wife Ann, stoically attends our Sunday morning service at Birchwood during our annual Reunion Weekend. Brian served in the RAF as a National Servicemen and was awarded the General Service Medal. He is our Chaplain and an Honorary member of the Association. He is known for his ready wit and ability to tailor his address to the time slot “requested” by Gerry(!). Brian celebrated his 50th year of ordination in August 2013

Reunion Weekend (Sunday Skellingthorpe)

Following the service at Birchwood, and as is the tradition all congregated at Skellingthorpe for tea and sandwiches. During which the Flypast by the BBMF Dakota took place, with the service starting at 2pm. The service was taken by the Rev Christine Jewitt. We also had the pleasure of a “live” buglar for the Last Post.

Wreaths were laid by the association, the Parish Council, the scouts and children from the two village schools.

Having urged everyone not to be late for the flypast by the Dakota of the BBMF, due at 12.50 and that they were renowned for their time keeping, the Dakota arrived 15 minutes late. Having to eat my words I was vindicated by a communication from the BBMF to Peter Jacobs apologising for the lateness as it was due to a Spitfire having to abort due to bad weather, which in turn delayed the Dakota.



IBCC Memorial

The reunion weekend began with a visit on the Friday to the newly erected spire. There to welcome the veterans and their families were Tony Worth and Nicky Barr.



The spire was erected on the 5th May, and work continues on the walls, which are currently being cut with the names of those who failed to return. This is being done in Lincoln by a specialist company.

The first picture below shows Jamie Barr DFC on the left with Tony Worth Centre and Reg Freeth on the right.



Nicky Barr is shown below with Reg & Jamie with the spire in the background and

the Cathedral can just be seen in the background through the spire. Further visits also took place on the Sunday following the Skellingthorpe service.



The official opening of the first phase of the site will take place on the 2nd October and as many veterans as possible will get an invite. More information can be found on the IBCC web site; <http://internationalbcc.co.uk/unveiling>.

Digital Archive



The International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive aims to provide the most comprehensive record of Bomber Command in the world.

As well as the list of losses that forms the basis of the memorial, the archive will consist of recordings of the voices and stories of those who served and suffered in the bombing war, 1939-1945, and digital copies of donated letters, log books, diaries, photographs, scrap books and so on.

We have currently recorded just over 50 interviews and the aim is have 100 in the archive by the end of September. An average interview lasts about an hour and, as well as wartime service, we are interested in what the interviewee did before and after the war. We are also interested in the stories of Ground personnel and WAAFs. We are looking for both people to interview and volunteers to train to become oral history interviewers.

The archive will be made available on the internet and it will also inform the content of the interpretation centre at the Chadwick Centre which will be built at the memorial.

Dan Ellin

Should you wish to volunteer or have a story to be told then please contact Dan;

Dr Dan Ellin
Project Manager
IBCC Digital Archive
Witham House
University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool
Lincoln LN67TS
Tel: 01522 837706
Email: dellin@lincoln.ac.uk



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50 SQN AND THE DAMBUSTERS

In 1943 Wg Cdr Guy Gibson was charged by AOC 5 Gp, AVM Ralph Cochrane, to form 617 Sqn specifically for Operation Chastise. He was given all the crews in the Gp to select from.

5 Group had always been considered – not least by 5 Group – Bomber Command's crack division. 50 Sqn was one of its outstanding squadrons. In 1941 its commanding

officer was one of the legendary leaders of Bomber Command, Gus Walker. By early 1942 Walker had been succeeded by Wg Cdr 'Beetle' Oxley, a rather more pedestrian figure. The corpulent Oxley was an excellent and forceful administrator, but flew only a minimum of operations himself. At his briefings, crews would sometimes shout that half-serious, half-mocking taunt at groundlings: 'Get some in!' Oxley would say, 'Piece of cake tonight, chaps. Last time I was over Mannheim it was only defended by two men and a dog', which caused a good deal of derisive laughter, since everybody knew that he was harking back to some primeval date in 1940.



Wg Cdr 'Beetle' Oxley DFC is 2nd left. Behind him is Dennis Abrams and next to Dennis is Jimmy Flint.



Henry Maudsley DFC

50 Sqn in 1942 bred and trained a long succession of outstanding pilots and crews, including many who went to form the Dambusters a year later. Henry Maudsley, the quiet, gentle Old Etonian son

of a rich West Country family, was a former Coastal Command 'Kipper Fleet' pilot. Like his 50 Sqn colleague John 'Hoppy' Hopgood, he would die over the Mohne Dam. Les Knight, a little Australian, completed his tour with 50 Sqn and burst the Eder dam before his luck ran out over the Dortmund–Ems canal one night in 1943. The rumbustious



Les Knight DFC RAAF

R i c h a r d 'Trev' Trevor-Roper, with his Oxford accent and Billingsgate vocabulary, was a sergeant gunner on 50

Sqn at RAF Swinderby before he was commissioned and became Guy Gibson's rear gunner. Sadly he failed to return from a raid on Nuremberg raid in Mar 44.



John 'Hoppy' Hopgood DFC*

Micky Martin, who with Gibson, Willie Tait and Leonard Cheshire would be regarded as the four great RAF bomber pilots of the war, transferred to 50 Sqn from 455 Sqn RAAF in 1942 when that sqn became a part of Coastal Command. The son of a well-established Australian medical family, Martin was sent to England early in 1939 to sow his wild oats before settling down to train as a doctor. Single-minded in anything he attempted, he managed to get through a thousand pre-war pounds¹³



Richard 'Trev' Trevor-Roper DFC and Wg Cdr Guy Gibson DSO* DFC* (this pic predates Gibson's VC)



“Mickey” Martin DFC 617 Sqn

in eight weeks, much of it on horses – he rode in amateur races himself.

He initially applied to join the RAF as a fighter pilot, and after some bureaucratic problems he was accepted and abandoned his flat in Mayfair for initial flying training.

He ultimately became a bomber pilot; and an outstanding one at that. By early 1942 he had completed part of a tour of operations on 455 Sqn, flying the

Hampden, with his all-Australian crew. Foxlee and Simpson, his gunners, Bob Hay, his bomb-aimer, and Jack Leggo, his navigator, eventually became almost as famous as Martin himself.

Although English colleagues viewed their reckless life-style on the ground with some awe, they made a reputation for brilliance and utter determination in the air. It is hardly surprising that Martin was one of a select band of like-minded spirits selected by Gibson for Op Chastise.



Air Mshl Sir Harold Martin

Martin not only survived the war but went on to an illustrious RAF career. Upon his retirement as AMP in 1974, he had become Air Mshl Sir Harold Brownlow Martin KCB DSO* DFC** AFC. He died in 1988 aged 70 years. A hero and, with his colleagues, we are proud of his association with 50 Sqn.

Richard Jones

(Acknowledgments to Max Hastings and 617 Sqn)

FRENCH VISIT

Many of you will recall the stories told in previous issues of Betty Bascombe, whose husband Sgt R H Jones failed to return from a raid in 1943. For many years the French people have honoured the loss of this aircraft with a service in the village where it went down and Betty has for many years attended that service. A friendship has developed in recent years with them and the village of Skellingthorpe, such that they decide to visit us this year and were entertained by the community. A few of our local veterans were invited to meet them. The picture on the right shows the French and British standard bearers along with three of our veterans; Kenneth Green, Reg Payne and James Flowers. In the front is Betty Bascombe.



Our visitors laid a wreath at the memorial in the village and sung their local anthem for the Burgundy region, as well as their national anthem. The visitors were welcomed by the Chairman of Skellingthorpe Parish Council, Chris Goldson., with thanks from the organiser of the French Sylvie Monin-Badey



After the formalities the French were invited to join the community for a meal and, were entertained by the village choir.

Mike Connock

In the year anno domini one nine four one
 Operations decide there was job to be done
 Could have been Dusseldorf or Bremen or Ham?
 But the laddies in 5 group did not give a damn
 As they went into briefing the CO's did call
 'There'll be plenty of fighters/searchlights but no flak at all'.
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 As 50 squadron Hampdens went out to bomb Kiel
 The aircrew as usual had not had its meal
 And as they crossed Texel the gunner did cry
 There's a Messerschmitt fighter .. port quarter and high
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 They looked o'er the side .. it was easy to see
 The pride of old Goering.. the 109E
 There was no sign of panic, no sign of fear,
 But they took violent action in defence of the rear
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all.
 From a night fighters cannon the tracers did shoot
 The gunner cried out it had missed by a foot
 He blazed off his Vickers, called Jerry rude names
 And cheered when the Messerschmitt went down in flames.
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 And over the target down there below
 The city was lit by a dull reddish glow.
 The observer to the pilot did shout,
 Open the bomb doors, let the beggars look out
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 He pressed the old tit and the s**** whistled down
 Hurrah cried the gunner, they're smacking the town
 But the natives of Kiel took a rather dim view
 And showed there are flak guns there was more than a few.
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 They blazed out their armament, heavy and light,
 'till the heavens resembled Brock's benefit night.
 Each AA's opened up over the drink
 And the crew to the observer created a stink
 Oh get us a fix to the wops they did yell
 If you don't hurry up we will end up in hell
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 Fix was obtained to dm three?
 As they went in to pancake they chortled with glee
 Shot horrible lines to intelligence blokes
 Who give air crew cheer up coffee and smokes
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all
 Here's a moral for pilots, for gunners and wops
 If you want to stay healthy don't do any ops
 And if in the next war they want you to fight
 Keep your feet on the deck and sleep tight every night
No flak, no flak at all. Plenty of searchlights but no flak at all

Having read the poem in the April newsletter I thought I would send you this one that my father (ex 50 Squadron) would sing to me as a child.

I only remember the refrain being sung to me but it is one of those things I will remember all of my life, The refrain is sung to the tune of the Rugby song "No balls at all.
 Regards,
 David Layne.