



Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe
(Home of No.50 & No.61 Squadrons)
Newsletter
Issue No.9 Autumn 2022



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FIND US AT
Facebook—Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe (Home of 50 & 61 Squadrons)
www.no-50-and-no-61-squadrons-association.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS/REFERENCES

<https://www.helloblackswan.co.uk/>
<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/>
&
<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/history-archive/losses-database/>

Operation Failed to Return
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNEMHp_c8Vg

<https://raflincolnshire.blogspot.com/2013/05/hidden-gems-of-housing-estate.html>

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter for Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe. Previous newsletters can be viewed on our web site -

www.no-50-and-no-61-squadrons-association.co.uk

Chairmans report

Our web site and Facebook page continue to be a useful research tool and we get many requests for help from people keen to learn more about their relatives who served with one of the squadrons. There are many research tools that we can use but one of the most comprehensive is the International Bomber Command Centre, Digital Archives.

The memorial weekend last June was very successful even though we only had a meet and greet on the Saturday evening. Sadly, though we were unable to get any veterans to attend, any that are still around are generally unable to travel. James Flowers had to decline at the last moment.

At the AGM that was held on the Saturday afternoon it was decided that for next year we would only have the Sunday service. That's not to say that anyone coming for the weekend would not be made welcome as we can always get together at the local hostelry.

We continue to lose veterans, unsurprising really, because of their age and we have notified the recent losses later in this edition.

We have chosen to rename our newsletters to Spring and Autumn, this gives us more flexibility on publishing dates, with our next one due in Spring of 2023.

Best wishes

Mike Connock

Absent Friends

Frank Mouritz



Frank Mouritz passed away last December and has left a long and interesting legacy. He was surrounded by family at Busselton's Capecare.

Frank was born in Gnowangerup and grew up in Katanning and Perth.

Aged 18 Frank was enlisted into the Royal Australian Air Force where he trained in WA before coming to England and flying for the Royal Air Force. As a Lancaster pilot, Frank flew in Mickey the Moocher for 34 missions with 61 Squadron.



Wing Commander Jim Wright DFC



Jim Wright passed away on 2nd of June at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Jim volunteered for flying duties in 1941 and trained as navigator. Following his flying training in Canada he joined Ken Ames and his crew, completing his first tour with 61 Squadron at RAF Syerston.

He then joined 630 squadron at RAF East Kirkby, completing his second tour with that squadron.

This was followed by a third tour with 97 (Pathfinder) Squadron at RAF Coningsby.

After the war Jim worked tirelessly to influence the MOD to create a Bomber Command Campaign Medal. Making several appeals to the media and the government, at one stage visited the Prime Minister at Downing Street. Sadly, he was unable to achieve that aim before he had to give up the quest because of ill health.

His funeral was held on the 1st of August.



Memorial weekend

Unlike previous years the weekend started with a meet and greet on the Saturday evening to welcome those who had travelled for the weekend.

This was held in the Skellingthorpe Community centre, and we welcomed families from many of the veterans who flew with one of the two squadrons. This included Sue McRae and family and Vicky Lyndsey, both had laid a memorial stone at the International Bomber Command Centre to honour their relatives in the afternoon.

Sue is the daughter of Ted McRae and Vicky Lyndsey is the niece of Ian Loveridge who was killed in the crash in which Ted survived.

Other relatives there on the night were Jon Taylor, Neville Street and Roger Paul.

Earlier in the day we had our AGM in which it was decided that we would no longer hold an event on the Saturday evening. However, it was stressed that should anyone come up for the Saturday we can always meet in the local hostelry.

The service on the Sunday morning was taken by our Chaplain Kevin Hart and we are grateful to the Lincoln Civic party for attending along with the 204 (City of Lincoln) Air Cadets and various standard bearers, along with relatives and members of Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe.

Thanks, are also made to Tracey from the Lincoln Hospitals band, who stood in at the last moment to play the last Post.

We then proceeded to the Community Centre where lunch was provided by the Parish Council and this was followed by a service at the village memorial, which was taken by the local rector Sam Durren. We were also pleased to see Jill Harris the daughter of Bill Drinkell who was a great supporter of the former squadron's association.

Mike Connock.

BOMBER COMMAND GATEWAY TRUST

The next phase of this memorial has started, the section shown in the photo opposite is the fuselage. There has been a renewed effort for fundraising. The pandemic unfortunately caused a slowdown, during which time the price of steel tripled in price during that period.

The trust now needs in the region of £180,000.

Although intended to be a reminder of all Bomber Command crews, one such aircraft, Lancaster R5689 (VN-N) crashed on 18th September 1942 as it limped home from a mission over the Baltic Sea and four members of its crew perished. Because that crash site is so close, and the fact that VN-N of 50 Squadron was also the most photographed Lancaster of the war it has been chosen as the basis of this landmark to serve as a permanent reminder of Lincolnshire's link to war-time aviation.

The crew were -

Sergeant E J Morley (RAAF)
P/O G W M Harrison
Sergeant H Male
Sergeant S C Garrett
Sergeant J W Dalby
Sergeant J Frazer
Sergeant J R Gibbons (RCAF)

To support this memorial, you can donate through the web site which is www.bombergatewaytrust.co.uk

You can also find them on Facebook



Roy Chadwick 1893 to 1947
by David Willey

**This portrait below is courtesy of the LAHC East Kirkby
- Roy Chadwick**



The 23rd of August 2022 marks the 75th anniversary of the tragic death of prolific aircraft designer Roy Chadwick CBE, FRSA FRAeS at Woodford in Greater Manchester. Roy Chadwick was born on the 30th April 1893 at Farnsworth, Widnes and at the age of 18 in 1911 he started work as assistant draughtsman at A.V. Roe and Company AVRO based at Brownsfield Mill, Manchester.

Throughout Roy Chadwick's working career Roy designed many aircraft including iconic aircraft such as the Avro Anson, Manchester, Lancaster, Lincoln, Vulcan and Avro Tudor which was an airliner based on Avro Lincoln Parts.



On Friday night the 22nd of August 1947 modifications were carried out overnight on Avro Tudor II G-AGSU which involved disconnecting the ailerons. The idea was to carry out a test flight early on the Saturday morning from Woodford carrying out flight tests over the Lake District.

The crew boarded the AVRO Tudor with Bill Thorn Avro's chief test pilot at the controls. As Bill Thorn went through the cockpit checks and had to rely on a third person to tell him the position of the ailerons as you could not see them from the cockpit. Sadly, despite the checks it was undetected that the ailerons had been cross coupled.

Bill Thorn started his take off run and just getting airborne Bill Thorn tried to correct the port yaw caused by the engines and with the ailerons being incorrectly coupled he tried to correct to Starboard. Bill Thorn realised he had a problem, so he cut engines and the Tudor slid across the field next to the runway. The aircraft then slid into a dew pond surrounded by trees at Shirfold Farm Woodford causing the nose to break off. Roy Chadwick whose usual position was to stand between the pilot's seats was thrown out the cockpit and he suffered a fractured skull that killed him instantly. Sadly, Bill Thorn and his co-pilot David Wilson were drowned. John Webster engineer and wireless operator also lost his life in the crash.

I would like to thank the late Peter Thorn for the insight on his father Sidney Albert (Bill) Thorn in writing this article.

The Crew of Avro Tudor II G-AGSU

Roy Chadwick - Avro Technical director and designer

One of Britain's legendary and accomplished aircraft designer of the 20th century

Bill Thorn

Captain Avro Chief Test Pilot.

David Wilson

Co-Pilot.

John Webster

Engineer and Wireless operator.

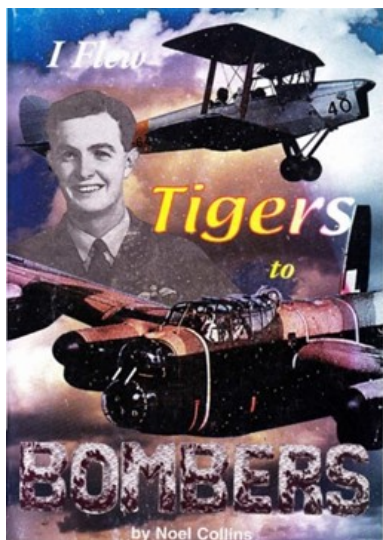
Survivors

Eddie Talbot

Engineer.

Stuart Davies

Chief Designer



Publications

This book by the late Noel Collins comes to us courtesy of Ken Stone in Australia and because it was out of print, he obtained permission from his next of kin to publish it electronically.

The book is available to read by downloading from our web site, under “Books and Publications”.

Avro Lincoln RF471 Memorial

By David Willey

In the months leading up to the Covid lockdown the Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe were preparing to dedicate a memorial plaque to the crew of a 61 Squadron Avro Lincoln RF471 which crashed near RAF Skellingthorpe on the 15th of July of 1949.

Sadly, with the restrictions imposed we had to postpone the event. During the lockdown we have still been researching the Avro Lincoln crew with the hope of finding some of the crew's family and friends.

I am really thrilled to say we have found Pauline the daughter Navigator II Morris Waterfall and his two granddaughters. Morris who at the time of his death lived in Moorland Avenue, Lincoln.

We were also contacted by Mat Knight nephew of Navigator F/LT Raymond Knight. Mat contacted us via the FRAFS Face book Page. It appears that Mat's uncle Ray had recently married Evelyn and lived in Boultham, Lincoln.

We have also been contacted by Gerry McCarthy son of Engineer II Gerald McCarthy via the FRAFS Facebook page. Gerry told us he was born a month after his father was sadly killed. Gerry left the UK soon after his father's death and moved to Canada he now lives in the USA.

During a recent FRAFS committee meeting we have proposed to dedicate the plaque to the memory of the crew near to the July 15th July 2023.



Above left - F/LT Raymond Knight

Above right - Engineer II Gerald McCarthy

Below is the grave of the Pilot Officer Robert Radcliffe taken by Alan Biggs at the family grave at Minster Kent.





*As part of a series of events and illustrated
talks over the Winter and Spring Months
Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe
Presents*

An illustrated talk by Mike Connock

RAF Skellingthorpe at War

At

The Skellingthorpe Community Centre
Lincoln Road,
Skellingthorpe,
LN6 5UT

Friday 28th October 2022 @ 7.30PM

Entrance £4-00 which includes tea, coffee, and biscuits.
Proceeds in aid of the Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe

Tickets available from Mike Connock 01522 683997

Come along and learn more about RAF Skellingthorpe during the war and the airfield's contribution to the war effort.