



Nightjar

The Magazine of No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association - December 2009

Christmas Edition – 2009



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Chairman's Report

As I write this, it seems hard to believe that it is already over four months since some 170 members of the Association and friends of the Squadron assembled on Saturday 18 July at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire for the dedication of our new memorial. In spite of the torrential rain the day before, the ground around our memorial was still firm underfoot and the weather on the Saturday, although cloudy, allowed the planned programme to proceed without interruption. A number of us had stayed at the Hallmark Hotel in Derby on the Friday night and were able to travel by coach to the Arboretum, while the majority travelled to the Arboretum direct by car. After an opportunity to walk around the extensive grounds and view the many memorials and the trees planted in memory of various organisations and individuals, the event proper opened with a buffet lunch in the large marquees sited near the main entrance to the Arboretum. From there it was only a short walk along Millenium Avenue to our memorial. We were delighted that, in addition to Sir Michael Beetham three other former Squadron Commanders were present: Air Chief Marshals Sir David Parry-Evans and Sir Anthony Skingsley, accompanied by their wives, and Group Captain Peter Hill. We had hoped that Wing Commander

'Tommy' Tucker, another former CO, would also be present but unfortunately his wife had been taken seriously ill a short time before and he was therefore unable to join us.

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight had confirmed earlier that day that, based on their allotted 'slot time' at the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford later in the afternoon, they would be with us at 1400 hours; we therefore elected to start the dedication ceremony immediately after the flypast. By 1345, all of the key players had arrived apart from our bugler, who had planned to travel up from Kent on the Saturday morning but, unbeknown to us, had been prevented by a family crisis. Fortunately, a couple of the Committee members had spotted an Army bugler, who was to sound the Last Post and Reveille for another group, and, for a





Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force and Canon of Lincoln Cathedral and the memorial was duly unveiled by our President, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Michael Beetham. After the Act of Remembrance, I laid a wreath on behalf of the Association,



Sir David Parry-Evans

the flypast, and at around 1410 hours, we decided to carry on with the formal dedication. The dedication was led by the Venerable Ray Pentland,



Sir Anthony Skingsley

which was followed by prayers, an Act of Commitment, the National Anthem, and the Blessing. There was then an opportunity for those with personal wreaths and sprays of flowers to lay them on the memorial. At that point in the proceedings, the Memorial Flight was spotted approaching from the north-east as planned, heading directly for us. The spectators assembled around the memorial and the many other visitors to the Arboretum were then given the full benefit of three low passes by the Lancaster, Hurricane and Spitfire before they departed to their next scheduled appearance at the Alrewas village fete. There had obviously been a last-minute change in their booked arrival time at Fairford of which we were unaware but, in the event, the flypast provided a most fitting conclusion to the dedication ceremony. Many of those attending the dedication were extremely complimentary about the helpfulness of the Arboretum staff, especially the volunteer members of staff, and expressed their appreciation of the excellent flypast. I have since written to both the Arboretum and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight to express our thanks to all involved.

Later in the afternoon, a select group of around thirty Association members gathered in the Hallmark Hotel at Derby for the Annual General Meeting, the Minutes of which appear elsewhere in this edition of Nightjar. This was followed by the Annual Dinner, attended by some 70 members and guests, including Sir Michael and Lady Beetham, the Venerable Ray Pentland and his wife, and Mr Paul Brackley and his wife; Paul is the grandson of Air Commodore H G Brackley CBE DSO DSC who, as Squadron Commander H G Brackley and later Major H G Brackley, was CO of No 14 Squadron RNAS, which subsequently became No 214 Squadron RAF. After dinner, we were privileged to hear Sir Michael describe the background to his record-breaking flight from UK to Cape Town on 10 July 1959, fifty years before. We were then entertained by Eric Macey demonstrating his abilities as an auctioneer selling a copy of the book *Brackles* donated by the Brackley family. The book had been signed by Sir Michael Beetham and a number of other former 214 Squadron Valiant aircrew, and eventually realised £115. Finally, there was an opportunity to peruse the comprehensive historical display put together by our Historian, Jock Whitehouse.

Overall, the weekend was most successful and appeared to be enjoyed by all who attended. However, this success was due in large part to the considerable effort put in by all members of the Committee over the previous two years, especially Jock Whitehouse, who took the lead on the

design of the memorial and its realisation by Mildenhall Monumentals, Godfrey Moffatt, who was the main point of contact with the Arboretum and the Hallmark Hotel, and John Gulliver, who was the main point of contact for members of the public writing in for details and also received all of the bookings for the Arboretum and sent out the lunch and car parking tickets. Thanks are also due to the large number of members and non-members of the Association who donated to the fund for the creation and erection of the memorial. As a result of their generosity, we have been able not only to pay for the memorial itself and its installation, but also to pay for the cost of its long-term maintenance by the Arboretum. Finally, we were fortunate to receive Lottery funding from *Awards for All* to the tune of £3978.00. This was sufficient to cover all of the other costs incurred at the Arboretum, including their administrative charges, hire of the marquees, the lunch, and car parking charges, as well as the hire of the coach from and to the hotel in Derby. Our thanks go to *Awards for All* and especially to Godfrey Moffatt for his efforts in putting together both the submission seeking funding and the post-event report. It only remains for me to thank everyone who attended the events at Alrewas and Derby. It was a great pleasure for us to welcome not only members of the Association who regularly attend reunions, but also a number of former members of the Squadron who do not normally attend our reunions, as well as the families of people who had served on the Squadron. Thank you all for coming. We hope that memorial will act as a focus for remembrance of the Squadron and those who served on it for many years ahead.

Alan Mawby

REUNION 2010 – A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Following the discussion at the Annual General Meeting in July and in the light of the many favourable comments we received about the Hallmark Hotel in Derby where we held the 2009 Reunion, your Committee took the decision to return to the Hotel for the 2010 Reunion. This will be held on Saturday 17 July. It is envisaged that the Annual General Meeting will take place in the afternoon, followed by dinner in the Garden Room in the evening. The Hallmark Hotel is offering special rates of £66 per person dinner, bed and breakfast for the Friday and Sunday nights and £72 per person for the Reunion Dinner, bed and breakfast on the Saturday night; this latter price includes wine with the meal. On the Sunday morning, there would be an opportunity for those attending the Reunion to drive to the Arboretum to visit our memorial. Hopefully, it would be possible to find lifts to and from the Arboretum for anyone arriving at Derby by rail. Booking forms will be sent out with the Spring 2010 *Nightjar*. If you have any thoughts on whether we should conduct any form of remembrance ceremony at the memorial on the Sunday morning, please let the Committee have your views.

We have not made any decision about where to hold the 2011 or subsequent reunions. There is, of course, still the option to hold a future reunion in Norfolk, with both Kings Lynn and Norwich being mentioned as possible locations. Your Committee would therefore be interested to hear the views of members who were not present at the 2009 Annual General Meeting. Is there anything in terms of the location, date, or format of the Reunion that would make you more (or less) likely to attend?

In the meantime, please put a mark in your diary for the weekend of **16-18 July 2010**. We hope to see as many of you as possible in Derby!

The creed of an SR-71 Blackbird pilot:

“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for I am at 70,000 feet, at Mach 3 and still climbing”

In Memoriam

We are sorry to have to announce the passing of the following Squadron and Association members:

7th October 2009. Flt Lt Edwin Wheeler DFC, aged 88, at Haverhill, Suffolk.

'Eddie' Wheeler joined the RAF before the war, literally just 'to get a bed' with no thoughts of operational flying. But with war declared he was trained as a Wireless Operator/Air-Gunner (WOp/AG). After a few home duties, he flew in the Battles of No 150 Squadron in France, luckily surviving, and then undertook a few Wellington 'Ops' with No 214 Squadron at Stradishall, before rejoining No 150 (now with Wellingtons) at Newton. Instructional duties (including time on the Manchester) were followed by a second tour with No 97 Squadron, a Lancaster Pathfinder unit at Bourn (Peenemunde was amongst many famous targets). In total Eddie completed 66 Operations.

His story (written for the family) became a best-selling book with several re-prints and was accurately titled: 'Just to Get a Bed'. Amongst many other local interests, Eddie took on the role of Chairman of the RAF Stradishall Memorial Trust and guided that project to completion. Always a great supporter of Royal Air Force organisations, Eddie Wheeler was a 'man of his time' and great friend and mentor to many.

November 2009: GH (Howie) Wing. Aged 87. Weybridge, Surrey.

Howie was an air gunner on 214 Sqn operating the Stirling and the Fortress between Dec '43 and Dec '44. He spent much of his time at the rear of the aircraft and, against the poor odds of this crew position, he completed many operations. Following the war, he served in the police force in Kenya and then as a member of the British Transport Police. He was subsequently made a Freeman of the City of London.

Mrs Margaret Dain: Norwich

News has reached us of the death of Margaret who had been a member of the Association for many years.

Wing Commander David Mallarky MBE: November 2009:

Commanding Officer of No 214 Squadron August 1966 – June 1968.

Remembering the loss of the crew of a Valiant which crashed on a night take off from Marham 50 years ago. Valiant XD869 of 214 Sqn on September 11th 1959.

The crew who died were:	Flt Lt T C Watkins	Captain
	Fg Off P E Wormall	Co-Pilot
	Flt Lt D Howard	Nav Radar
	Flt Lt M F Hyslop	Nav Plotter
	Fg Off C Candy	AEO
	Chief Tech R V Sewell	Crew Chief

THE STORY OF A STONE

The proposal for a 'Squadron Stone' was finally agreed in 2007 and, apart from the wider aspects of organising a special day, the stone itself was central to all plans and as such its location, format and cost became priority subjects. The fast developing National Memorial Arboretum seemed an ideal choice for its location; in addition to benefiting from the growing public interest and visits to the Arboretum, it would also counter the near impossible task of selecting a 'correct' site near to one of several ex-Squadron bases.

Whilst one can well appreciate the intense work programme needed for such a project to succeed, what actually lay between 'let's have a stone' and ultimately seeing it unveiled on Saturday 18 July 2009, is probably something of a grey area. This article sets out to explain the stone's progress.

Accepting that Memorial Stones are NOT for the layman, professional advice had to be sought as already both Squadron history **and** an element of Dedication/Remembrance had been suggested as a themes for the stone and, although an ideal concept, there was concern that the sheer volume of information might prove too much in terms of space and/or cost.

Luckily I had already worked with an excellent stonemason on several Air Force memorial projects in East Anglia*, and was sure that he would be interested in our intended project. After an initial meeting, Leon Russell of Mildenhall Monumentals agreed to help, and indeed after his first look, even he thought that SPACE might well be a limiting factor in creating the perceived layout for our budget. Fortunately, this proved not to be the case because modern cutting techniques (handwork having long gone!) were quite able to produce complex and intricate designs. However, cost could be heavily influenced for any stone placed 'away from home' by its actual format. Any memorial of a popular design, eg a panel(s) let into or attached to a pre-built carcass, would usually have both construction elements completed in tandem locally. To undertake and control such work at long distance (as we would need to do) could prove both expensive and risky, so the advice was for us to have a 'stone/plinth/foundation' combination, all elements of which could be completed at Mildenhall and transported directly for placement in one operation. After accepting this advice, thoughts then turned to a 'chunk of granite', a style which had in fact been mentioned in very early discussions.



This format, which also had the added advantage of being virtually maintenance-free (a prime consideration), was eventually chosen as being most suitable and, once the design parameters set by the Arboretum Trustees had been met by our proposed design plans, agreement was reached regarding location and date and, happily, the quote presented by Mildenhall Monumentals for the whole work programme was deemed acceptable.

So began the long and intricate design work. Our 'blank sheet' was a panel of polished granite roughly 3 feet by 2 feet (portrait) standing slightly PROUD from the

main body of dark grey granite, a format easy to work, maintain and keep clean. The panel would have a 2-3 inch wide 'rustic-finish' border and the whole stone would sit within a simple granite plinth with a frontage wide enough to accommodate a standard wreath. Looked at from the side, the stone would be narrower at the top.



The information deemed essential to be displayed required: Squadron name, badge and dates of existence (1917-1977), formation and sequential changes from No 7A RNAS to No 214 Squadron RAF, background of the Squadron title 'Federated Malay States', main bases and aircraft (dated, but accepting the need for some minor exclusions), Flight Refueling logo, dedication/remembrance panel, motto, and 'Squadron Association 2009', all pointing to an estimated total of 1070 individual 'cuts' (words, punctuation, abbreviations but excluding the badge and FR logo).

Continual fine-tuning, always with space in mind, finally enabled all the information to fit comfortably within the panel size and Leon was soon able to produce the first (of several) full scale drawings. The prepared stone was expected at Mildenhall in early June, hopefully with only its polished panel requiring 'further attention', but with delivery totally in the hands of others, there was time to attend to any remaining details.

Low maintenance remained a priority; while gold lettering does look attractive, it can degrade over time. So, an alternative of a light grey 'wash' was chosen as a suitable finish for lettering and designs. A gold badge was considered but rejected as looking 'unbalanced'. After further checks to all type faces, spacing, punctuation and abbreviations, just minor changes to the perspective of the crown's pearls and the orb, plus facial features of the nightjar which needed to be minimal but accurate (Oh, that open beak!) were necessary. Now, believing that all **WAS** correct, the stone itself was anxiously awaited – and true to plan it arrived safely on time. Although I had provided a full-scale mock-up of the stone for viewing at the 2008 Reunion, any belief that I would know what it would look like vanished immediately when I saw the real thing. A blank panel (unveiling in just six weeks) faced me, but even in its unfinished state the stone had a comforting air of elegance, the dark panel (after polishing) contrasting so well with the lighter rock. Where did it come from? Well just accept that UK granite is very, very costly, dark UK granite is extremely rare, Mother Earth is pretty well one huge mass of multi-coloured granite and mankind has created territorial boundaries! Granite is granite and we had a limited budget!

One final, final, check on layout, then the order was given: 'CUT'. On 2 July I arrived to see the finished work, only to be told that there was problem and completion was delayed. A problem? And only days before delivery to the Arboretum. Although only a friendly wind-up, there had indeed been an unheard of problem due to weather conditions! Whilst doing a trial run, Leon had noticed a few of the small-case letters (eg 'h') were showing differing widths of their vertical 'legs', a situation which, in theory, could not occur, and it was some time before the problem was understood. An outside temperature of 36F (and 40+ inside) had caused excess flexibility in the special cutting stencil resulting in some random distortion, a fault probably unnoticed by most - but not the expert eye which had saved a potentially critical situation as of course, once cut, such errors could not simply be erased or corrected.



Working in a cooler atmosphere and with a new template in place, cutting began.

Even in a workshop environment the results of all our work looked were quite stunning, and the stone looked truly impressive. Leon's opinion? "Yes, good". It has come out really well and all the choices were right. I like it. When do we do the next one?" Ian, the other team member was similarly satisfied. Visiting Leon's establishment also had other advantages, being adjacent to the boundary of RAF Mildenhall, which on this particular day was being used by the F15E 'Strike Eagles' from Lakenheath - very noisy but impressive.



I invited Ron Penhaligan to see the finished stone. Ron is one of the oldest surviving ex-214 men, having worked at Stradishall and Chedburgh as an engine fitter and had hoped to have attended the Reunion, but unfortunately was unable to be present. However, he was delighted and honoured to see the stone, which he considered to be a splendid reminder of a fine squadron.

I next saw the stone on Friday 10th July at the Arboretum strapped inelegantly to the bed of a lorry. Leon, Ian and I had left Mildenhall at 08:00 on a fine warm morning and, via the old A5, arrived safely at Arlewas at 10:30. Yes, we were expected, and yes, our lorry driver was parked safely at the selected spot where the head groundsman gave us ultra-simple instructions as to where to dig (between two small wooden pegs) and left us to it. We had arrived - in more ways than one, for lashed down on that vehicle was the end result of a long, very exacting road, and the potential centre piece of a very special day.



My 'Jock' hard-hat may have looked important, but I took no part in any actual work other than that of photographer and to make the odd 'clever' comment (nobody wore hard hats anyway) although the driver and I took the chance to remove moss and lichen from the bench adjacent to our site- a family memorial (sadly neglected) to a young air-gunner from No 97 'Straits Settlements' Squadron (PFF). Once the foundation sections had been satisfactorily bedded in and a central dowel fixed (to prevent it all falling over I was told!) full attention turned to the stone.

After removing its ropes and protective padding, the slings of the strong canvas harness around the stone were carefully attached to the lifting hook, and then followed the most skilful and certainly the most

testing minutes of the day. But it was fascinating,

if not a little traumatic, to watch the driver deftly control the hydro-arm, lifting the stone onto its base, raising it clear and then moving it out and up to hang, swinging gently, over the excavation area

(a time for silent prayers) and certainly not for the faint hearted to see our HALF a TON of work and effort airborne in a creaking harness. But these were 'old hands' and, with remarkable skill, the stone was gently lowered for Leon and Ian to guide it right onto the dowel - down in one! Three hours of non-stop work followed, carefully setting in, fixing the plinth (I still see that huge rubber mallet at work on our stone!) levelling, pointing up, disposing of the excavated earth and re-laying the turf - no let-up until the job was finished. A perfect operation had seen the stone safely in place. All in a day's work for

some maybe, but for me it was one that I shall always remember.



Packed up, we looked back with satisfaction and not a little pride and, before departing, we had time to visit the very impressive and moving Armed Forces Memorial - one week to go. The next time I saw the stone was on the morning of Saturday 18th July when, in near gale force conditions, I managed to sort out how the Royal Air Force Ensign could be dropped at the appropriate moment, also remembering to polish the brass plaque on the bench. The rest as they say is history, but very soon the stone would be there for all to see, hopefully for a very long time to come.

Jock M Whitehouse



** Three Memorials for No 75 (New Zealand) Squadron Association: Feltwell Churchyard; Sutton (RAF Mepal) Cambs; July Race Course Entrance, Newmarket, Also Stirling House (RAF Stradishall) and Hundon village, Suffolk.*

The Dedication





The Reunion Dinner



No. 214 (FMS) Squadron Memorial Dedication & Annual Reunion Day Dinner

18th July 2009

After Dinner Speech

by

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Michael Beetham GCB CBE DFC AFC FRAeS

On his Record Breaking Flight – UK to Capetown, in July 1959

No 214 Squadron was reformed in January 1956 at RAF Marham as a Valiant B1 bomber squadron under the command of the legendary New Zealander, Wg Cdr L H Trent VC AFC. Sir Michael described how he took command of the Squadron in early 1958 and was quite happy with the bomber role, so he was a little dismayed when instructed to undertake a series of trials to achieve an in-flight refuelling capability. However, with no detailed directive and seemingly 'free to do as he wished', a trial plan was devised, starting with the practice of flying in close formation, then practising dry contacts before completing the exercise to full 'wet' contacts. The next endeavour was to determine a programme by which the capability could be exploited. Non-stop long-distance flights were an obvious objective, and the Squadron was soon able to complete 12 hour flights, Marham to Marham. Aircraft-to-aircraft rendezvous (RV) procedures were a clear necessity, and they were duly devised and practised. Having now accomplished the full capability of multiple contact in-flight refuelling, the question was where to go next? Sir Michael described how he had a penchant for Africa, having served on No. 82 Squadron Lancasters in the reconnaissance role, so Nairobi became the selected destination. In March 1959, with a Valiant tanker operating out of Malta to transfer 12,000lbs of fuel, Sir Michael made the first non-stop Valiant flight to Nairobi. Subsequently, many crews flew and practised on this route and it became the 'Squadron milk run'.

With the in-flight refuelling capability becoming more-or-less routine, the thought of non-stop distance record flights came to the fore. Pre WWII, the world had been circumnavigated by air in 45 days; Amy Johnson, one of the pioneers of long distance record flights, flew from UK to Cape Town in under 4 days, and post WWII it had become less than 24 hours. Pre WWII, the RAF had set quite a number of these records, and continued post WWII. In 1947 an RAF Mosquito had flown from UK to Cape Town in 21½ hours, and in 1953 an RAF Canberra had flown from UK to New Zealand in just less than 24 hours with two refuelling stops. Staying with Africa, Sir Michael described how the Squadron had set its sights on the UK to Cape Town non-stop record. But it was to be approached with caution by working up to the distance down the African continent. On 10th April 1959, Sir Michael flew from UK to Salisbury, in then Southern Rhodesia, in 10½ hours, refuelling over Idris, with two refuellings on the return flight over Nairobi and Tunisia. Then, in June 1959, it was from UK to Waterkloof in South Africa with the refuelling Valiant tankers using Kano in Nigeria as the operating base from which they provided him with two in-flight refuellings. On the run in to landing at Waterkloof, his aircraft was accompanied by four Sabre aircraft of the South African Air Force.

Sir Michael then described how he felt that the Squadron was now ready to make an attempt at the non-stop record UK to Cape Town, but was dismayed to find that there was some reluctance within the Bomber Command hierarchy. Nonetheless, on 10th July 1959, he rendezvoused over London airport for the attempt, which he duly accomplished, covering the 6060 miles in 11hours 28 minutes to go into the record books. On landing, he was central to the press conference that was convened, and remained to be feted in South Africa for some four days before returning to the UK. In-flight refuelling had connected Europe to South Africa, and potentially to the rest of the world. The in-flight refuelling trials, for which the Squadron had been tasked, were now considered to be complete.

Sir Michael was warmly applauded for his unique insight to this record breaking event.

Minutes of the 21st AGM of No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association held at the Hallmark Hotel, Derby on Saturday July 18th 2009 at 5pm

Committee present: Wg Cdr Alan Mawby
John Gulliver
Peter M Walker
Jock Whitehouse
John & Carol Edwards
Roy Monk
Sqn Ldr G W Moffatt
Shaun Broaders
and 22 members

Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary
Historian
214 Sqn Website
Committee
Committee
Committee

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME : The Chairman welcomed all members attending and indicated that because we had not long returned from the Arboretum and the Reunion dinner was commencing at 7.30pm his intention was to keep the meeting as short as possible. It was also necessary to check that we had a quorum of 20 full members and this was confirmed by a show of hands of those who had served on the Squadron. The list of Apologies was then read out followed by the names of members who had died since the last AGM held on September 27th 2008.

APOLOGIES : John Mathews (Australia), Sylvia & Maurice Harding (Australia), Graham & Mrs Spaxman, Alan Mercer (since died), Shirley Whitlock, Peter brown, Norman Storey, H P (Peter) Jowett, Sqn Ldr Trevor Hurrell, Sqn Ldr John A Brown, Monica Reynolds.

IN MEMORIAM : The following members have died since the Reunion in September 2008:

Sqn Ldr JEFF BRAY DFC, Pilot Stirling/Fortress on 7 December 2008 aged 90.
G J (JIM) NEWMAN, Navigator Wellington on 1 June 2009 age 89.
A F (ALAN) MERCER, Navigator Fortress on 6 June 2009 age 84.
K E W (KIWI) EVANS, Navigator Stirling/Fortress in June 2009 age 87.
Mrs JOAN CLARIDGE, in December 2008.
Mrs ELIZABETH WING (wife of HOWIE) on 26 June 2009.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING : The Minutes were published in the December 2008 edition of *Nightjar* and as no comments were forthcoming they were accepted as read. There were no matters arising and the motion that the Minutes be accepted was agreed, having been proposed by Geoff Barrell and seconded by Bob Tuxford.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : The main activity over the past 9/10 months had been directed towards the production of the memorial and the arrangements for the unveiling and dedication and also the Reunion dinner, including advertising the event in the specialist press and on the Squadron website. In parallel, Godfrey Moffatt had led the preparation of a submission to AWARDS FOR ALL for a grant from the National Lottery. This was successful, and we had been allocated an award of £3978, which would cover the cost of the unveiling and dedication plus the coach to and from the hotel, as well as the associated administrative costs.

As well as activities associated with the memorial, earlier this year Peter Walker had made contact with the family of the first commanding officer of No 14 Squadron RNAS and 214 Sqn RAF, Air Commodore Herbert Brackley. As a result, the family donated 228 copies of a biography of Herbert Brackley to the Association, which Jock Whitehouse and Peter Walker had been selling for a minimum donation of £5, to be split between the RAF Benevolent Fund and the Association. We would seek approval for this, and for a donation to the Bomber Command Memorial Appeal, under AOB.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS : John Gulliver reported on the accounts for the period to 31 December 2008 (copy attached to these Minutes). Essentially the closing balance of the Association's fund was down slightly mainly due to problems with the bank's sort code for those paying subs by standing order, and also some members who had forgotten to pay.

The actual balance carried forward had been considerably enhanced by funds donated by members towards the Memorial Stone, this being further enhanced during 2009 by funds from the Lottery award and by the sale of the *Brackles* books. Of course, over the coming weeks substantial amounts would have to be paid for the Memorial Stone and the cost of the event. Nonetheless, our funds should remain healthy by the end of this account year. The Treasurer also thanked Vic Pheasant for auditing the accounts as in past years. The acceptance of the accounts was agreed, having been proposed by John Foot and seconded by Paul Henry.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT : As usual, Jock Whitehouse's report would be published in the next *Nightjar* newsletter. However, one item that was mentioned at the AGM was a recent painting by Mr Ray Quinlan, which was on loan for display at the dinner that evening. It was of seven graves of 214 Sqn airmen (see April 2009 *Nightjar*) in the churchyard of Sept Saulx in France. Eventually this would be placed in a suitable location in Chedburgh, either the church or the village pub.

AMENDMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION : The Chairman reported that the need to submit a copy of our Constitution as part of our bid to AWARDS FOR ALL had prompted a review of the document. The present Constitution had been drawn up in 1988 and it was quickly realised that it did not reflect the changing membership of the Association and also imposed requirements that were difficult to observe. A proposed revision of the Constitution had been published in the April 2009 *Nightjar*.

In particular, the revision would remove the distinction between Full and Associate members and create a single class of membership: members who have served on the Squadron; persons within the immediate family of those who have served on the Squadron; and persons with a close association with or interest in the Squadron.

At the same time, the opportunity had been taken to propose three other minor changes to the Constitution:

1. A change to the objectives of the Association to include the families of those who served on the squadron.
2. An increase in the amount that the Treasurer may disburse in emergency from £100 to £250; and
3. A reduction in the number of members constituting a quorum from 20 to 15.

The remaining changes were either consequent upon the adoption of a single category of membership or were minor wording changes for clarification. In the proposed revised Constitution (see April 2009 *Nightjar*) the deleted text was identified with a 'striketrough' and the new text was in red.

The motion that the revised Constitution be adopted was agreed, having been proposed by Eric Macey and seconded by Vic Pheasant. A copy of the revised Constitution is attached to these Minutes.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS : All of the existing Committee had indicated their willingness to serve for another year. In addition, it was proposed to recruit Vic Pheasant as an additional member with no specific responsibilities. However, Vic already helped John Gulliver with various administrative tasks.

The motion that the existing Committee be re-elected was agreed, having been proposed by Paul Henry and seconded by Geoff Barrell.

The motion to appoint Vic Pheasant as an additional member of the Committee was also agreed, having been proposed by Bill Wilkinson and seconded by Bertie Jukes.

OPTIONS FOR THE 2010 REUNION : Over the next few months, a decision would need to be made on when and where to hold the next Reunion. Do we revert to September? Do we go back to Norwich or elsewhere in East Anglia or do we come back to Derby? Derby would, of course, give us the opportunity to visit the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas.

Shows of hands for the different options indicated a mixed view, with Derby being the marginal favourite. For those not at this AGM, the next issue of *Nightjar* would solicit views on the various options.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS : The receipts from the *Brackles* books were now over £800 (over £1000 since this meeting). The wishes of the Brackley family were that the proceeds from the books should be divided between the Association and the RAF Benevolent Fund. It was therefore proposed to donate half of the proceeds to the Benevolent Fund and retain the other half for Association funds. The final amounts would be confirmed once we knew how much the books had raised (we still had a few hopefully to sell). A decision on a possible donation to the Bomber Command Memorial Appeal had previously been postponed awaiting the outcome of our own Memorial Appeal and the application to AWARDS FOR ALL for lottery funding. We now had sufficient funds for our memorial and its long-term maintenance, and the grant from AWARDS FOR ALL would cover the expenses incurred at the Arboretum for the unveiling and dedication. It was therefore proposed to donate £214 from Association funds to the Bomber Command Memorial Appeal. Finally, we needed to decide what to do with any surplus funds from our own Memorial Appeal. It was proposed that any surplus funds should be transferred the Association general fund but 'ring-fenced' to cover future expenditure on wreaths and donations to other appeals.

The motion to donate half of the proceeds from the *Brackles* books to the RAF Benevolent Fund was agreed, having been proposed by Vic Pheasant and seconded by John Foot.

The donation of £214 to the Bomber Command Memorial Appeal was agreed, having been proposed by Paul Henry and seconded by Bertie Jukes.

The motion to transfer any surplus funds from the No 214 Squadron Memorial appeal to the Association's general fund but 'ring-fenced' for wreaths or memorial donations was agreed, having been proposed by John Brown and seconded by Bertie Jukes.

Finally, John Foot proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all their efforts in arranging this weekend, seconded by Geoff Barrell.

Peter M Walker
Secretary
August 28th 2009

No 214(FMS) Squadron Association

REVISED CONSTITUTION

TITLE

The Association shall be known as:

‘The No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association’

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Association are:

- To maintain contact between those who served on the Squadron.
- To maintain contact with the families of those who served on the Squadron.
- To foster good fellowship and maintain comradeship through gatherings of members.

1. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all persons who have served, in whatever capacity, with No 214 Squadron; to all persons within the immediate family of persons who have served, in whatever capacity, with No 214 Squadron; and to persons who have a close association with, or interest in, No 214 Squadron.

2. SUBSCRIPTION

An annual subscription shall be due on 1 January. The amount shall be proposed by the Committee and shall be subject to agreement by the membership at the AGM.

3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Association shall have an Executive Committee consisting of at least four Members of the Association. At a minimum, the Committee shall consist of:

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Member (additional members may be elected or co-opted)

The Committee shall be responsible for the affairs of the Association and for arranging the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Reunion. The Committee members shall be elected annually. Notification of volunteers or nominations of Members to serve on the Committee must be received at least 7 days prior to the AGM. In the event of an election for a particular office being necessary, a vote shall be taken by a show of hands at the AGM; a simple majority of those Members present shall elect the nominee. The Committee shall have the authority to co-opt additional Committee members at its discretion.

4. PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENTS

The Association shall invite a distinguished Member to serve as Association President. Other distinguished Members may be invited to serve as Association Vice-Presidents.

5. FINANCE

The financial year shall be from 1 January to 31 December. Accounts shall be opened in the name of the Association at a bank nominated by the Committee. Cheques shall be signed by two members of the Committee. Committee Members may be reimbursed, from Association funds, any reasonable out-of-

pocket expenses incurred on Association business. In emergency, the Treasurer shall have authority to disburse a sum not exceeding £250, such disbursement to be ratified by the Committee and the nature of the emergency payment to be explained to the members at the next AGM.

An audited Annual Statement of Accounts and Balance of Funds shall be produced by the Treasurer for presentation at the AGM. Where possible, a copy of such documents shall be provided to the membership prior to the AGM. In the event that the Association is dissolved or the affairs of the Association are discontinued for a period of at least two years, all monies held in the name of the Association shall be transferred to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

At all General Meetings, a minimum of 15 Members shall constitute a Quorum; resolutions may only be passed at General Meetings where a Quorum is present.

a. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM shall be held during the Annual Reunion, which will be on a date determined by the Committee. This will be advised to the membership by letter/e-mail at least 60 days prior to such a meeting. Members wishing to have a matter included in the AGM Agenda must advise the Secretary in writing at least 30 days prior to such a meeting.

Any proposal to alter the Constitution must also be made in writing to the Secretary at least 30 days prior to the Annual General Meeting and the proposal will be debated at that meeting. A vote shall be taken on any proposed alteration; a simple majority of those Members present shall determine the result of the vote.

b. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Executive Committee or by 10 Members. The subject to be raised at such a Meeting shall be communicated to the Members in the notice calling the Meeting, which must be sent to Members at least 30 days before the date of the meeting.

This Constitution was approved at the Annual General Meeting on 18 July 2009

Treasurer's Topics

My thanks to those of you who have paid your subs promptly, or have taken out a standing order with your bank. It helps to make my life much easier. I will be reviewing the payments next year as a number of members appear to have lapsed, or had their standing orders cancelled by our bank. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries about your subs. To answer the question that I am often asked, the present subscription is £10 per annum and becomes due on 1st January.

I have had many letters regarding the Dedication. Some of you wrote to say that you could not attend, and I hope the photographs in this edition will give you some idea of the proceedings. I also received many letters of thanks which I have accepted on behalf of the committee – it was our pleasure to organise the dedication and we are delighted that so many of you were able to attend and enjoy the day. It is pleasing to see that our memorial has now been complemented by that of the RAFA, which now presents a suitable backdrop. Our congratulations go to Ray Pentland, who conducted our service of dedication and who, in October, was appointed Chaplain in Chief of the RAF with the rank of Air Vice Marshal.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and wish you the best of health and happiness for the coming year.

John Gulliver

No. 214 (FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

2008 INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
<u>No. 1 Account</u>			
Subscription/Donations	£1,327.00	Donations	£0.00
Sales	£182.00	Printing	£387.48
Other		Stationery	£88.65
Memorial Appeal	£3,370.64	Postage	£414.29
		Telephone	£78.50
		Travel	£213.76
		Annual Reunion - Contribution	£150.00
		Committee Meeting Expenses	£77.55
		Web Site	£58.50
		Misc	£224.41
	<u>£4,879.64</u>		<u>£1,693.14</u>
		<u>Total Funds</u>	<u>Less Appeal Fund</u>
1 st January 2008 Opening Balances		Bank £2,419.32	£2,324.32
		Cash £0.00	
31 st December 2008 Closing Balances		Bank £5,605.82	£2,140.18
		Cash £0.00	
Nett Changes in No 1 Account Funds - Including / Excluding Memorial Fund		£3,186.50	(-£184.14)

Signed

30 January 2009

J GULLIVER

Treasurer

This is to certify that I have completed an audit of the 2008 Accounts of No 214(FMS) Squadron Association and found them to be a true and accurate record.

Signed

27 February 2009

V A
PHEASANT

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

This report replaces that presented at the AGM at Derby in that I leave the events of that memorable weekend to be reported fully elsewhere. One or two of my previous reports have been updated where necessary.

Painting by Ray Quinlan: This lovely piece of work of the churchyard of Sept Saulx in France, which includes the seven graves of a No 214 Squadron crew (see last issue of 'Nightjar'), is to hang in All Saints Church, Chedburgh. You may recall it being on show in the hotel at Derby. It is hoped that a smaller copy of the painting may hang in the 'Marquis of Cornwallis', the hostelry directly opposite the old airfield.

I have been able to provide John Jewsbury with additional information for his research into the flying career of his father Bob, who was Jack Dixon's bomb-aimer. The work is based on Bob's log book, and John is willing for it to be used for an article in *Nightjar*. Following on from this, the owner of the mysterious 'Chedburgh Autograph Book' was revealed at the Dedication service. It was, as I suspected, Jonathan Shipley, whose grandfather flew as an air-gunner at Chedburgh. I had a very quick glance through the book and hope at sometime to provide Jonathan with information behind the names. By coincidence it contained all the signatures of Jack Dixon's crew.

Via Carol and John Edwards I received a telephone call from a French gentleman seeking information on the loss of Stirling R9194 which crashed in Sinceny, France (Sgt Gatland DFM, RNZAF survived with three of his crew). This may be progressed later.

I was also contacted by a person from Yaxley near Peterborough who was seeking information on an old friend of his, Spencer Edwards, who, after time on 1657 HCU at Stradishall, served as a gunner at Oulton in Sgt Crosbie's crew. I was in touch with Spencer when researching Stradishall (long ago) so had some information on his training flights from there. By chance, one of the pilot instructors in Spencer's log book was Jim Hinwood, whom I had met only recently at a Stirling Aircraft Association luncheon. If anyone can recall anything about Sgt Crosbie (Bing) please let myself or Peter Walker know.

A small cry for help from Jim Mitchell (Oulton) via Godfrey Moffatt was quickly resolved. Jim's family wished to know the details on his DFC citation which could not be found. Jim rang later to say all was well as the document had been located.

Chedburgh Reunion weekend - July 10-12th 2009. Although officially a No 218 Squadron occasion (they flew Lancasters from Chedburgh 1944-45), we are always invited. Bob Moorby is now of course sadly missed. I attended the garden party on the Saturday at the home of Margery Griffiths (ex-Chedburgh WAAF) and also the small Service of Remembrance at the Chedburgh Memorial in the village on the Sunday, when I laid a wreath on behalf of our Association. It was good to meet up with old friends once again. Our wreath will be laid at Stradishall in November as usual.

If you saw the programme on 6th October about the bombing of Coventry, one of those featured was Alan Hartley who, although not ex-214 Squadron, was present at the Dedication Service and took a nice little film of the proceedings which he sent to Peter Walker. Alan, who was with No 38 Group, still lives near Coventry and regularly visits the Arboretum.

One of the speakers at a recent meeting of Haverhill Aviation Society (don't be confused, as we meet in the relative luxury of the RAF Room in Stirling House, Stradishall) was Kevin Patience, an old ex-Stradishall friend who was responsible for obtaining the photographs of Sgt Lou Pinn's grave in Kenya. Kevin, from Poole, has many associates in the 'aviation fraternity' of the area and was fascinated when I showed him a copy of *Brackles*, so much so that he left with four copies (which he has already sold) and since has asked for more. Airlines and flying boats are very much local history down there. So we are down to the last few copies of this remarkable book, which has

regularly been reported as a 'good read'. Kevin was accompanied by John Batchelor, a close friend who is a professional artist and illustrator (who started his career as a young artist on the *Eagle* comic). John brought along some of his lovely pencil work, plus a recently finished painting - a cut-away of a 'Merlin III'. Stunning! If anyone is interested in a print, let me know.

Three models of Squadron aircraft which were on display at Derby have gone to 'good homes'. The Handley Page 0/400 is with Paul Brackley (grandson of 'Brackles'), the Lincoln has pride of place with Roy Monk, especially so as his records show that he had flown in this one when in Kenya, and the Valiant is with Don Walter who has found that on one occasion he was in the crew of the 'record breaker' when captained by our President.

Jock M Whitehouse

On Friday September 11th 2009 a short remembrance service was held and wreaths laid on the graves of the four crew who are buried in the RAF cemetery in Marham village. Four Tornado aircraft flew over in salute. The service was attended by some family members and friends; representing the RAF was Air Commodore P W Taylor. This short service was organised by David Cobbald from Wisbech who was a school chum of Peter Wormall.

V FORCE REUNION 24/25TH APRIL 2010 NEWARK AIR MUSEUM

Newark Air Museum is pleased to announce that due to continued requests they are planning to host another V-Force Reunion Event. This event is expected to closely follow the style of the 2004 gathering which was enjoyed by so many. The same team have agreed to be involved with this event, so Mike Pearson, Alan McLoughlin and Don Chadwick will once again reform the team of former V-Force personnel that made 2004 so successful. Invitations to display at the event will, in due course, be sent out to all of the groups that today support live V-Force aircraft. These, along with others, will be invited to add to the displays during the weekend. These activities will be co-ordinated by Newark's Bill O'Sullivan, and will provide added interest to those attending that were not part of the V-Force.

The prime day of the reunion is likely to be the Saturday. But for those who may wish to attend on both days a specially priced ticket will be available. It is also likely that an evening "gathering" at another site, will be organised in due course, as this proved very popular with those lucky enough to book tickets for it last time.

This Reunion Event is open to all who served with aircraft of the V-Force as air or ground crew, those involved in the manufacture and servicing of the types are also included. More details will be added to the Museum webpage as event updates become available. Please pass this information along to anybody who may wish to know, as word of mouth is likely to reach many who may not otherwise be aware of this reunion opportunity. See the reunion website for details www.vforcereunion.co.uk or contact Alan McLoughlin on 01326 573509

100 Group Reunion/Dinner 2010

Weekend of 7-9th May 2010 at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum.

Dinner will held on the evening of Saturday 8th May 2010 at the Wensum Valley Hotel when the guest speaker will be AVM Graham Jones, Secretary General of RAFA. Further details from the Museum; Tel 01603 - 893080

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Wg Cdr A J Mawby OBE BSc
Treasurer	John Gulliver Chucky's, Swains Lane, Bembridge, Isle of Wight, PO35 5ST Phone: 01983 873248 j-gulli@supanet.com
Secretary	Peter M Walker 21 Beverley Road, Brundall, Norwich, NR13 5QS Phone: 01603 713754
Historian	Jock Whitehouse
Committee	Sqn Ldr G W Moffatt
Committee	Roy Monk
Committee	Shaun P Broaders MBE MSM

Squadron Website	www.214squadron.org.uk
Web Site Managers	John & Carol Edwards

raf214squadron@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries on Association matters please feel free to contact, by telephone, letter or email, any member of the Committee.

The Nightjar has been compiled by your committee; it has then converted to a computerised form, proof read, then printed, assembled and distributed by Association Treasurer – John Gulliver.

If you would like to receive your copy of Nightjar electronically, which would save us over £1:50 per copy; please e-mail the Treasurer.