

"NIGHTJAR"

NEWSLETTER

of

No.214(FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

President:

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

Chairman:

Squadron Leader G W Moffatt RAF (Ret'd)



SPRING 2003

Minutes of the 14th. AGM of 214 (FMS) Squadron Association held at the
Maids Head Hotel, Norwich on Saturday September 28th. 2002

Committee Present

Sqn.Ldr. G.W.Moffatt	Chairman
Wg.Cdr. W.A.Wilkinson	Treasurer
Peter M.Walker	Secretary
John Gulliver	Committee
Roy Monk	Committee
Ian Coates	Committee
Sqn.Ldr. Bob Davies	Committee

and 47 Members

APOLOGIES Apologies had been received from ; MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, AVM Eric Macey, AVM Keith Filbey, Gp.Cpt. John Slessor, Gp.Cpt. P.G.Hill, Gp.Cpt. C.G.Lilley, Sqn.Ldr. Jack Dixon, Sqn.Ldr. D.J.Macdougall, Sdn.Ldr. Maurice Webster, F.Alan Wilkes, Peter Anderson, Mrs. Joyce Hughes, Gordon Reynolds, H.R. and Mrs. Harker, Murray Peden , Harold Ferguson, Peter Jowett, Mrs. Pat Furner, Paul and Mrs. Henry, Peter Frost, Martin Staunton, D.F.Robson, B.A.Mowlem, R.E.Mackett, John Smith, Jack Bennett, Gordon Hart (a regular attender but had to cancel due to illness)

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Our chairman welcomed members and guests from overseas.

" Moff " mentioned that 77 members and guests were here this evening and how important it was to keep the Association going for as long as possible.

Some members had booked but for various reasons had to cancel. These were Sqn.Ldr. Jack Dixon, Ms. Robinson, Sqn.Ldr. Ray Glass, Mrs. Pat Furner, Gordon Hart, Brian Burgess and AVM Keith Filbey and Mrs. Filbey

IN MEMORIAM

Spencer Adams	Historian
Sqn.Ldr. E.J.Longdon	Pilot 1960/66
J.A.Giblin	Flt.Eng. 1941
Tim Yates	WOP 1940
B.Winkworth	???????
J.Dougan	Signaller 1948/49
A.C.G.Pearson	Flt. Eng. Oulton 1944/45
J.MacLennan	Observer 1940/41
Wilf Smith	?????? (new member last year)
Mrs.M.Batchelor	(widow or Gp.Cpt. Batchelor)
	Stn.Cdr. at Chedburgh
Mrs. Bess Glass	(died on Sept. 22nd. 2002)
P.R.Stevens	(died in April 2002)

OVERSEAS VISITORS

From Canada	Abe Levine
	Steve and Mrs. Joan Nessner
	Mr. Bill Nessner (son)
From Austria	Gerhard Heilig

NEW MEMBERS THIS YEAR

Edward (Ted) Turner, Colne, Lancs.	Airframe Fitter 1940
Fred Hitchcock, Paris, France	Halton Apprentice, served on squadron 1935/36 Vickers Virginias
Donald T.Bailey, Somerset	WOP/AG 1940/41 Stradishall
Edward (Ted) Walker, Darlington	Obs/Nav. 1943 Chedburgh (age 91)

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING. The minutes were read and agreed.
Stan Bayliss proposed that they be adopted, this being seconded by John Morton.

MATTERS ARISING . None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Regretfully Jack Dixon resigned as Chairman earlier this year and I have been standing in as Acting Chairman. Jack's resignation was bad news for us, he had been Chairman for many years and a father figure to the Association.

Jack has been made one of our vice presidents and we all wish him a speedy recovery to good health and hope that he will be here with us next year.

In many ways the Association had a good year, new members were recruited due to the efforts of Bill Wilkinson, Peter Walker, Roy Monk and Jock Whitehouse , hopefully we will go from strength to strength.

The nucleus of the committee are Jock Whitehouse who handles the historical side, Bill Wilkinson directs our efforts to stay solvent, (increasingly hard work), with rigorous scrutiny by Vic Pheasant. Peter Walker continues the secretarial work. We all have a job.

John Gulliver, a serving officer with the tanker force, is having to fly further than ever. John produced the new membership and identity cards after an outline design by Peter Walker. John was still producing the new members and guests " tag and clip " identification cards at the Maids Head Hotel only a few hours before the reunion dinner.

Please wear these cards at future meetings , it helps people to get to know each other.

Roy Monk continues to try to recruit new members and keeps an eye on items that could prove useful or of interest to the Association.

Bob Davies continues to provide sensitive advice and support.

Ian Coates takes care of supplies and notes.

The Association has obtained, via Jock Whitehouse, an author signed copy of Michael J.F. Bowyers new book " The Stirling Story ". All the committee members have signed in the front, the book is here this evening so could you all please sign in the back. Thank you. In the coming few weeks the book will be presented to Jack Dixon in person as a thank you from us all.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Wilkinson reports that our funds are going down. income barely covers expenditure.

Travel to committee meetings and reunion expenses have increased and in the short term we will have to restrict expenditure and charitable giving.

The Association has given £214 in 2002 towards the Chedburgh Reunion held last August.

Total funds as at Sept. 27th.2002 were ;

No. 1 a/c -----£1596--59

No. 2 a/c -----£292.62

Cash in hand-- £20--00

TOTAL -----£1909--21

(Total last year = £ 2816--05)

Following the Treasurer's report members were invited to ask questions.

Norman Storey proposed an increase in annual subscriptions.

John Morton asked if the Nightjar newsletter could be sent only to those who had paid in the past twelve months.

Stan Bayliss suggested that a bill should be sent with the next newsletter with a reminder to those who had not paid that they would not continue to receive the Nightjar in the future.

Peter Walker mentioned that we currently have 259 members and if each one paid their annual £5 subs this would amount to £1295. At present only about 122 members pay on a regular basis, some paying more than the minimum.

The production of two Newsletters per annum plus other running expenses is costing in the region of £1300.

The question to be discussed at the next committee meeting is ;

- (a) Do we increase the annual subs ?
- (b) Do we send out a reminder with the newsletter ?
- (c) Do we only produce one newsletter per annum ?
- (d) Do we restrict the newsletter to only those who have paid ?

Your Committee will discuss the matter and hopefully reach a decision.

The accounts were accepted and adoption was proposed by Gerhard Heilig and seconded by Norman Storey.

For those members who do not already pay by Bankers Order annual subs should be sent to the Treasurer, Wg.Cdr. W.A.Wilkinson (address inside front cover).

HISTORIANS REPORT

Jock Whitehouse was unable to be with us. In his absence Peter Walker read out a personal message from Jock. Full details of Jock's Histoians report will be published in the next Nightjar, due out in the Spring.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In order for Sqn.Ldr. Moffatt to be legally elected as Chairman a vote ~~a vote~~ was called for from the members. This was agreed by a substantial show of hands.

The motion was carried, proposed by Vic Pheasant and seconded by John Gulliver.

The Chairman then proposed that Vic Pheasant join the Committee, to which proposal Vic agreed.

It was then put to the members that the committee, plus Vic Pheasant be re-elected en-bloc. The motion was accepted, proposed by George Cox and seconded by John Morton.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AVM Jack Furner then addressed the meeting to inform us of of the symposium on electronic warfare given at the RAF Museum at Hendon on April 10th. 2002, organised by the RAF Historical Society.

Jack spoke at this meeting, relating his experiences with 214 Sqdn. and 100 Group in 1944/45. Peter Walker and Gerhard Heilig attended and found it all very interesting. One of the speakers was Martin Streetly, author of the book on 100 Group, "Confound and Destroy".

Jack also mentioned the Bomber Command Association service held at St. Pauls Cathedral on April 24th. 2002. This was to commemorate the 60th. anniversary of Bomber Command from the date when Sir Arthur Harris took over.

A Bomber Command Association symposium was also due to be held on Oct. 12th. when Jack was also to speak on his personal recollections.

During his speech Jack mentioned that there are now two Stirling Associations when there should only be one, this ridiculous situation has been brought about by a dispute between members. Jack said that men of aged 77 plus should have more sense than to carry on like silly schoolboys. A very sad situation after all these years.

Jack also mentioned that he liked the new membership and identity cards saying " I know who you all are now ".

Clare Pollard mentioned that 214 Squadron was represented at the Chedburgh Reunion

Stan Bayliss thanked the Committee for keeping the Association going and for arranging this years Reunion.

THE REUNION DINNER

77 members and guests sat down for the dinner and members old and new enjoyed a good meal and a natter about old times.

After dinner, with wine flowing at most tables, Moff rose to make his first after dinner speech as Chairman.

Most members expected that the speech would be based on his days as a Victor tanker captain but he sprang a surprise by going back to an earlier period.

Here it is.

I guess most of you thought you were going to get a distinguished speaker tonight , I'm sorry to have to tell you that you will have me instead.

Some weeks ago Air Vice Marshal Filbey rang to say that with sincere apologies he would have to cry off, he had just found out that his son had to be at Durham University today for the first time. That first trip to university is a rite of passage for both father and son and I was more than happy to understand. Hopefully he will be with us next year.

I was very happy to stand in, firstly I would be able to speak to you all directly in my first year as Chairman so it wouldn't hang over me in the future.

More importantly, in this 60th. commemoration year for Bomber Command , to bring my perspective on the people of Bomber Command, their achievements and what those years of war meant for the country and the whole world.

Recently I have been having an Email conversation, acting as a mouthpiece for Jock, he gives me the facts and I pass them on, with an aviation historian working in New Zealand about a 214 crew. There were four Kiwis in it but I am sure that this crew were not unique and reflected the skill and determination of those young men 60 years ago.

I would like to tell you what I put in my last Email, I quote;

" This was some fantastic crew who, it seems, followed precise tactics of low flying into and out of the target zone. An exceptionally brave and skilful crew, their gunnery and bomb aiming were exceptional but to allow this to happen the pilot had to be one of the very best.

Their exploits were quickly recognised and more to the point they survived their tour on the squadron.

As a peacetime pilot I can understand just how good this crew was both as a team and as individuals ".

This is but one story from one squadron and I know that we, 214, have many more and I will not single any one out by name tonight , you will know of these men better than I .

It is only since I have been involved with the Association that I have come to a full understanding of what we as a small nation and the even smaller populations of the Commonwealth nations did and how it impacted on the world.

We lost many of the bravest, capable, dynamic and intelligent men of their generation.

How much difference would that have made to their countries and the world had they been around in the years that followed.

What we do know is that their sacrifice has not been in vain, we still live in a free world where dictators are not generally tolerated, and, to a large extent our form of democracy, the one they fought for, survives intact. Albeit having been through several mutations.

A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES FOR US ALL TO DIGEST

Until the D-Day landings the aircraft of RAF Bomber Command and then together with the 8th. Air Force of the USAAF from 1942/43, were mainly the only means we had of striking the enemy on his own soil.

In the period 1939/45 Bomber Command lost approximately 55,000 killed and 8490 wounded. About 10,000 were taken as POW's ; 138 dying in captivity.

The Commonwealth, and I include the RAF numbers here, alone lost around 45.000 men, a staggering total.

On top of this total must be added almost another 10,000 who lost their lives in non-operational accidents as well as those ground crew who died in flying or ground accidents.

Most of these men were volunteers as were, in 1939/40, the wireless operators and airgunners on our aircraft. These brave men were ground crew who had volunteered to fly and initially only retained their airman rank, usually AC1 or LAC with the occasional corporal. This of course was changed later.

Finally all of us who flew know that without the groundcrews and all the support staff, women and men, we could never get airborne. Their dedication and hard work kept the whole show on the road.

TODAY WE REMEMBER THEM ALL.

Those who did not return or were severely injured.

Those who survived to return to their families, amongst them those of you here tonight.

Will you all please stand and join me, firstly in a few quiet moments, and then in a toast to the men and women of RAF Bomber Command.

SECRETARY'S NOTE

So surprised and delighted at the content of our Chairman's speech that the whole floor stood to applaud his efforts with a greater gusto than is usually given to an after dinner speaker.

Historical note ; The 60th. Commemoration of Bomber Command has been celebrated this year giving many people the impression that it was formed in 1942. This is of course incorrect, Bomber Command was formed in 1936.

What the 60th. commemorates is 60years since Air Chief Marshal Harris became Commander in chief and Bomber Command started its growth to the mighty force it later became.

BOB DAVIES now stood up and told us about a book just privately published in Germany by a German lady , Renate Beck-Ehninger who lives in Huchenfeld, a village now part of the town of Pforzheim.

The book titled, " The Plaque " is written in English and is based around reconciliation between people who were formerly enemies, mainly people in Huchenfeld and Llanbedr in Wales. This book is not a novel but involves real people, two who are members of our Association and one late member.

The three members are John Wynne, Tom Tate and the late Norman Rix and what happened to them and their crews on the night of March 14/15th.1945 and what has happened to them and their now German friends since 1992.

The story involves not only Huchenfeld and Wales but Oulton, Blickling and Coventry. It is a very moving story and well worth obtaining because it involves people you know or knew.

Only 500 copies have initially been produced and quite a few have already been sold.

Please telephone Bob Davies (0207 229 2915) or Peter Walker (01605 713754) for details of availability.

The book has 236 pages and costs £10-00. incl. postage and packaging. Proceeds from sale of the book go towards the Llanbedr-Huchenfeld Children's Friendship Fund.

Well worth having a copy on your bookshelf.



VALIANT DAYS

During October/November 1957 214's Valiants were detached to Akrotiri in Cyprus for a period of six weeks. At some time during our stay an engine change was required on XD869, one of our white aircraft. The groundcrew seen here are connecting all the bits and pieces after the new engine had been installed.

Two of the Association committee members can be seen, Roy Monk is the chap with the bare midriff, standing on the left hand stepladder. The fellow kneeling on top of the wing is Peter Walker. No, he has not just been called to prayer and bowing towards Mecca. The ground crew had travelled from Marham in a Hastings and returned in a Beverley, both journeys via Luqa, Malta.

One evening some WRAF officers were shown around XD869, which was a fairly new aircraft and one the few white Valiants on the Squadron at that time. One of these young ladies must have been impressed by it's clean and handsome appearance because she plonked a beautiful red "kiss" on the paintwork just to the rear of the entrance door. The two red lipstick marks were later covered over by clear tape and remained there for many months before they began to fade. Who remembers this after almost 46 years ?

Sadly, in Sept. 1959 XD869 crashed on night take off from Marham killing all six crew, including the Crew Chief, Chief/Tech. Bob Sewell.

A few weeks after our return from Cyprus we received our first Hose Drum Unit (HDU) for ground trials and groundcrew training and so commenced what was to become a very important part in the RAF's history, Air to Air refuelling, 214 being the first AAR squadron.

Peter M.Walker

HISTORIAN'S PERSONAL MESSAGE AUTUMN 2002

Firstly, my apologies to the unsuspecting member who will have been volunteered to read this to you in my absence.

Secondly, my own apology for not being with you on this, the most important date in the Association calendar. I really am sorry to miss 2002, for as far as I can recall I have attended all gatherings from that first hectic day at Chedburgh in 1988.

It is fact that I am not an ex-214 Squadron member, my involvement with 214 coming about via the research projects on the histories of RAF Stradishall and Chedburgh when countless ex-squadron personnel willingly provided a priceless range of data. Many firm friendships were formed and both Pat and I always felt very privileged to be welcomed into the Association.

However, if all has gone to plan, this ex-'brown-job' (olive green actually) will by now be airborne, courtesy of Malaysian Airways en route to Singapore for farewell celebrations marking the closure of our old army guard dog unit. To recover from the trauma of this sad occasion--which I could not miss, R&R will be spent in Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, North Borneo. Wendy also sends her apologies: her part-role is to keep me in order and get me back!!

We will be thinking of your evening and hope it is truly another to remember. Although I have helped in a very minor way behind the scenes, Peter has done a splendid job in pulling it all together. Fortunately we have worked well together in spite of his (at times) very anti-social timing of 'phone calls. He will explain for the price of a drink!

Have a great reunion and enjoy the cake!

HISTORIAN'S REPORT AUTUMN 2002

Again, a fairly busy year on a variety of subjects. Earlier requests were reported in the Winter Newsletter.

Usually, any help following requests is gratefully acknowledged but there are still instances where even long complex replies which obviously have taken considerable time to compile, fail to produce appreciation of any sort. Perhaps a reflection of a particular section of society which assumes that we are simply there for 'their benefit' or possibly one which believes all that is needed is to press our own 'button'. It might be that simply in the mass of modern communicative jargon, 'Thank You' is no longer 'Cool'.

CHEDBURGH. August 2002.

The Chedburgh gathering in effect the annual reunion of No.218 (Gold Coast) Squadron, this year, to mark the 60th anniversaries of both the opening of the station and the massive expansion of Bomber Command in 1942, included an invitation to other Chedburgh-based units namely No.214(FMS) Squadron, No.620 Squadron, No.1653 HCU, and Nos. 301 & 304(Polish) Squadrons (post-war). The weekend activities culminated in a simple service at the memorial on Sunday 18 August. No.214 Squadron Association was well represented and Bill Wilkinson laid a wreath on behalf of all members. A further important event for 214 was the placing of a small plaque in Chedburgh Church commemorating the life of Harold

Bidmead who, off-duty as an operational flight-engineer often played the organ in the church and who in 1988 was the prime force behind the formation of No.214 Squadron Association which met for the first time at Chedburgh in 1988. Bettie Bidmead who had agreed the wording on the plaque with Maurice Leary, Chairman of the Chedburgh Memorial Trust was present on Sunday with her daughter and son-in-law.

After a filling and tasty buffet the weekend programme drew to a close at 16.20 hrs. when to the second, the BBMF Lancaster roared in low over the trees to fly four superb passes, the final one coming in right over the old airfield--an unforgettable sight and sound. Sincere thanks are again due from all to Margery Griffiths who laboured tirelessly to provide a memorable weekend for so many.

RUSSELL OWEN DOUGLAS ('Doug')

Now living in Nelson, North Island New Zealand . Rear gunner in Norman Rix's crew shot down on March 14 1945. Made contact via one of our reunion adverts and wonders if anyone is in touch with the following (possible last survivors of the crew).

L Pound(London), A McIntosh(London) R* Gamble(Skegness) and B R Burgess(Manchester). As Doug also enquired about Norman Rix, his skipper, Peter has set up contact with Margaret. Doug, who ran a sign-writing business after the war, drew the two remarkable pictures of Norman's B17 (Rix's Gen Wallers) which Margaret brought along two years ago and from which prints were sold to help Association Funds. Doug was delighted to learn that these masterpieces had survived via Norman, so we have been able to send him copies! Doug also sent copies of the autographed Oulton Christmas 1944 menu. These are on show

* RAY GAMBLE
SINCE FOUND

SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCE CENTRE.

A new fairly high-powered history project requiring financial project and members. Peter has a brochure explaining it all to any interested.

EDWARD WALKER. (Darlington)

Attended the Chedburgh reunion. Edward was a commissioned navigator who flew with a 214 Squadron crew at Chedburgh for a short while prior to being moved to help form the new No.620 Squadron. Ted was shot down in August 1943, one of three survivors from P/O G MacDonald's crew and retains crew photographs and all his PoW documents.

PAM BOADELLA (nee Colburn)

Pam was a Met. WAAF at Chedburgh during the time of 214 Sqn. and 1653 HCU. Lives in Norfolk and has a number of photographs of her time at Chedburgh. She also has an interesting signed Christmas 1943 menu. Names include Padre Winstanley, Dr. Vesey(?) S/O Bedworth (WAAF) and a certain F/Lt. J A Dixon (214 Sqn)! It is amazing what still survives in private collections!.

MRS V HOLDEN (nee Lancashire, but not related to bert whom she knew) Worsley Manchester.

Vi was a WAAF (Mess) at Oulton, who thinks there should be more stories from the groundcrews and airwomen especially regarding Mess staff. Peter has two photographs from Vi.

REMEMBER! It is YOUR newsletter so please jot down some recollections for the interest and possibly amusement of other members.

F/LT. N A 'Nicky' WILLIAMSON DFC

Request for information on this New Zealand pilot from a Mr Max Lambert who believed that F/Lt Williamson had a reputation for low flying and was especially interested in the operation of 16 December 1942. Quick research uncovered a remarkable story of a crew of the early Stirling days at Stradishall before moving to Chedburgh. They were indeed 'experts' in low-level attacks claiming success against searchlights, flak emplacements (including flak ships) trains and factories plus the usual combats with enemy fighters. Team work was a vital part of this success. F/Lt Williamson received his DFC early December 1942, and two gunners--Sgts Florence(RNZAF) and Passingham, DFMs later on.

Station records casually mention that pieces of a tree were found lodged in one Stirling on its return from operations on 16 December! The crew survived their tour with 214 Sqn. but a later point of interest is that Ron Florence was lost on No.617 Sqn. His pilot was F/Lt E E 'Ted' Youseman who had also completed a tour with 214 Sqn. at Chedburgh.

Any other recollections about F/Lt Williamson are welcomed.

FRED HITCHCOCK.

One of our very 'mature' ex-Squadron members living in France (see last Newsletter). Fred has sent a copy of his book 'Shillings worth of Service', (held by Peter) a detailed and humorous read, if a little risqué in parts.

MR. D T BAILEY

Served as a W/Op.AG at Stradishall in 1940/41. Later commissioned and transferred to RAF Regiment. In civilian life worked as airfield manager including London Heathrow (BEA/BOAC). Was an Association member until 1989, thought we had ceased to exist but is now 'back on the books'.

MRS. SYLVIA HARDING (nee Dribbus--WAAF, OULTON: see previous Newsletters)

Sylvia has enjoyed the previous newsletters, thinks the new membership card very smart and has forwarded two more photographs of staff in the aircrew Mess. Sylvia remembers pilot John Verrall ('a very nice man from Wanganui, who was also a very good dancer').

J V (JOHN) NELSON FLIGHT ENGINEER

Request from the daughter of the above airman for contact with anyone who may recall her late father who flew from Oulton.(31 'ops' September 1944-April 1945) John also had Halifax experience and we have copies of some excellent drawings he made of the gear train of a Hercules XVI (Halifax) and also a 'Q'-type dinghy. Apparently John did attend some of our earlier reunions at the 'Maids Head'.

Please contact: Mrs. Cheryl Morris, Maltfield, Mill Lane, Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4DN.

MURRAY PEDEN.

Murray sends his greetings to all members of the Association. He enjoyed Peter's Suez article and also had reason to recall a beautiful silver aircraft model on display in the Chedburgh Officers' Mess of a type originally flown by the squadron. (almost certainly a 'Harrow').

DEREK PARRY.

Derek, who had a request in the Summer Newsletter(W/O Hassell) points out that his correct telephone number is : 01953 602852

OTHER CONTACTS.

Mrs Joyce Hughes. (Ealing). Enjoyed the article on Suez which explained a lot on the actual operations. Joyce's husband was Sgt 'Paddy' Hughes, mid-upper gunner in Bernard Haynes' crew at Oulton. Joyce also mentions that Charlie 'Taffy' Jones, the Flight Engineer died in June 2001 and that she is still in touch with Roy Howard and Bernard Haynes but has not traced any more of the crew who might still be with us.

Capt. Glen McKay of the Canadian Armed Forces (help provided on the loss of his uncle F/Sgt MacKay) has by now retired from his last posting deep underground in Cheyenne Mountain USA and is probably back home in Nova Scotia. He will be joining the Association.

Mrs Shelia Byrne (see previous Newsletters) asked if I could identify where her parents lived at Stradishall. Their cottage close by the main entrance was called 'The Neuk' (Scottish version of the Nook?) but so far no one recalls any house by that name. Sheila reports that her 214 car-sticker travels all over Oswega County and has raised a few comments from ex-servicemen who served in UK.

NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr P Craig. (Query on his uncle's RAF flying career on Lancasters).

Mr C Dyhouse. Help given reference loss of his uncle in a 101 Sqn. Wellington from Stradishall

Mr M Brown. Complex list of queries on the history of 214 Sqn. at Stradishall in 1941/42 when his father served as aircrew.

Mr B Seaton. Query on the loss of Chedburgh Stirling. Grandfather was W/O Todd in the crew.

FINAL ITEMS

The two Guild of Aviation Art exhibitions (London and Baginton, Coventry) were excellent the former containing extra works commemorating Bomber Command. One study of a damaged Wellington being serviced was easily identifiable as a combined study based on two official photographs of a Stradishall machine (very likely from 214!). The study: 'Air Tattoo' was a real breakthrough as it was of a single 'Red Arrow' tattooed on a very shapely female thigh. Now I can get back to painting!! (Commissions taken).

Bob Davies has obtained copies of a remarkable book. 'The Plaque' by Renate Beck-Ehniger which tells the story behind the tragic loss of crew members in John Wynne's B17 and the reconciliation which has taken place in the German town involved in those terrible events. Not light reading but a book which should be read. Bob will provide details.

JNW.

Additional Historical Enquiries via Peter Walker

Enquiry from Mike Loveridge of Whitstable, Kent regarding his cousin, Sgt. G.D. (Gilly) Loveridge, Bomb Aimer on Stirling EF409 "V" of 214 Sqdn. lost off Wilhelmshaven August 2/3rd. 1943. (4th. Hamburg raid).

Was able to inform him that the full crew were : Sgt. A.A.R. McGarvey (Pilot), Sgt. J.P.Taylor (Flt. Eng.), Sgt. A.B.Grainger (Nav.). Sgt. G.D.Loveridge (B/Aim.), Sgt. A.S.Biffin (W/O), Sgt. C.D.Curtis (A/g), Sgt. J.J.Evans (A/g).

All the crew were lost apart from McGarvey and Grainger.

The story of Sgt. McGarvey saving the life of Sgt. Grainger is well documented and after the war McGarvey was awarded the George Medal. Later Grainger wrote a book of his rescue, titled, " Rescued from the Sea" .

Mike Loveridge wonders if anyone has or knows of a copy of this book. Also if anyone knew " Gilly " Loveridge. ?

Note

This Stirling, EF409 was illustrated in our Winter/ Spring Newsletter.

A Mr. A.Wells of Camborne, Cornwall wrote to say that he was enquiring on behalf of a contact in Australia whose father Mr. A.R.Tonkin was a pilot of a 214 Sqdn. Stirling R9326 which crashed in the sea off Memmert Island on the night of 11/12th. June 1942.

The Stirling had taken off from Stradishall on a " Gardening " operation. all the crew being rescued and taken POW.

One of the crew W.D.Horne was an Association member in the early years but is not now listed. The rear gunner, Sgt. A.Ballentine could be the same person as Alex Ballantine who is currently a member of the Association.

The pilot Sgt. A.R.Tonkin RAAF is still alive and would be pleased to hear from any of his old crew. I have sent the enquirer from Cornwall a copy of our last Newsletter and the name and address of Alex Ballantine (Ballentine) in Belfast for passing on to Mr. Tonkin.

The other members of the crew were Sgt. G.H.Ransome, Sgt. W.D.Horne. Sgt. G.D.Morton. Flt. Sgt. C.L.Honeychurch RCAF, Sgt. S.G.Goodey, Flt. Sgt. S.G.Beagles.

REUNION DINNER 2003

NEXT REUNION DINNER WILL BE HELD AT THE MAIDS HEAD HOTEL, NORWICH, ON SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27TH. 2003.

AGM AT 14 :00HRS. DINNER 19 :30 FOR 20 :00 HRS.

FURTHER DETAILS AND BOOKING FORMS WILL BE SENT OUT IN THE SUMMER/ AUTUMN NEWSLETTER DUE OUT ABOUT THE END OF JULY EARLY AUGUST

REUNION DINNER 2003



LINCOLN DAYS

214 Squadron was based at Upwood, Hunts. from November 1946 until December 1954 when it was disbanded. It was firstly equipped with the Lancaster B1 (FE) and, from February 1950, the Lincoln B2.

From June to December 1954 the Squadron was detached to Eastleigh, Nairobi in Kenya where it was used against the Mau-Mau terrorists.

This selection of snapshots shows Roy Monk running the No.2 engine of RE423 (top left) and RE299 during an intermediate service (top right). The two photos at the bottom show a line up of the squadron's Lincolns with SX976 in the foreground.

In the early 1950s many Bomber Command aircraft, including some Canberras carried very large fuselage serial numbers.

On return to Upwood, in December 1954, the Squadron was disbanded and eventually reformed at Marham with Valiants on January 21st. 1956.

Between this period however , 214 served for six weeks as a Canberra PR7 Squadron, being based at Laarbruch, Germany in mid 1955 until being renumbered as 80 Sqn. Not many people know that ?

Peter M.Walker
Photos by Roy Monk

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE: BY PETER M.WALKER

NOV. 2002 On Remembrance Sunday a short ceremony was held at the Oulton Memorial, a wreath of poppies was laid by Martin Staunton.

On behalf of the village Chris Lambert had arranged for 306 British Legion Crosses to be planted in front of the memorial , one for each life lost by RAF Oulton personnel during the Second World War.

DEC.2002 Received an enquiry via Roy Monk from a Mr. Trevor Gardner who served as a ground crew member in 1956/57. Trevor had seen Roy's notice in the RAFA magazine, Air Mail , and decided to make contact. I telephoned him to explain about the Association and later sent him a copy of the last Nightjar and membership form and am pleased to report that he has joined us as a new member. Welcome Trevor.

DEC 2002 I recently visited Chris Lambert at his home in Oulton , the purpose being to present a copy of the book " The Plaque " to the people of the village as a thank you on behalf of 214 Sqn. Association, for their hospitality over the past years to many of our members and members of 100 Group Association.

During my conversation with Chris we talked about Norman Rix and his crew who as many of you will know had some amazing adventures after all 10 baled out over Germany in March 1945, the story being told in " The Plaque ". I told Chris that we had "found" two of the Rix crew living in New Zealand , R.O. (Doug) Douglas and Joe Cuttance, but despite our efforts we could not trace those who could still be alive.

Chris then informed me that a chap in the next village had made a connection with one of the former crew and after a telephone call we had found one of the gunners , Ray Gamble, now living near Uttoxeter , Staffs.

The 214 historical department then went into action, a telephone call being made to Ray who was delighted to hear about his former crew although sad to learn that Norman was no longer with us. I then telephoned Margaret Rix who had just returned from the USA, was a little jet lagged and had just gone to bed. (earlier than usual). Nonetheless she was very understanding and delighted that another of Norman's crew had been " found ". I rang her next morning with Ray's address and telephone number and no doubt she will be in touch with him.

Jock Whitehouse was informed as was Doug Douglas in New Zealand, the latter by post.

Ray also told me that two others of the crew, McIntosh and Burgess had died some years ago.

BOOKS OF INTEREST Murray Peden's A Thousand Shall Fall , first published in 1979, is back in print (in Canada) and currently available at £13....91 incl. delivery from [www. amazon. co. uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) A large 490 page paperback. Highly recommended.

VICKERS VALIANT, The First of the V-Bombers is a 128 page, highly detailed book of the development and service history of this aircraft which served with 214 from 1956 until 1965. Printed on good quality paper with plenty of detailed drawings, photos and a brief history of each aircraft,

Available from Midland Counties Publications, 4 Watling Drive , Hinckley , Leics. LE10 3EY
Tel. 01455 233747 or [www. midlandcountiessuperstore. com](http://www.midlandcountiessuperstore.com)

A ROCKING HORSE CALLED HOPE

Following the broadcast on December 19th. 2002 on BBC Radio Four and the two page article in the Daily Mail I telephoned Tom Tate, who is an Association member , we had a long and very interesting chat. Tom, together with Bob Davies, had only very recently been to the tenth anniversary of the reconciliation in Huchenfeld (Pforzheim).

Tom may well try to get to the next Reunion Dinner in Norwich on September 27th. 2003. Perhaps we can persuade John and Pip Wynne to also come.? Any volunteers to keep an eye on the sheep for two or three days ? Only hardy souls to apply.



Austin's Crew 214 Sqdn. Oulton 1945

This photo was sent by Abe Levine of Montreal, Canada and was taken just at the end of the war. Back row left to right ; W/O Jimmy Pate rear gunner , F/Sgt. Harry Knox F/Eng , F/Lt. Don Austin skipper , F/Sgt. Nelson Godfrey nav., F/Sgt. Lester Bostock b/aimer , Front row left to right ; F/Sgt. Cyril Piper m/upper , F/Sgt. Harry Richardson w/op , F/Off. Abe Levine Sp. Op. , F/Sgt. Charlie Lewis swg , Sgt. Alfred Buller pwg . After the war seven of this crew were taken over by Johnny Wynne, the exceptions being Pate, Austin and Levine.

January 2003

Another new member , Charles Holmes of Wallington, Surrey . Tel. 020 8647 3862 Charles was a bomb aimer on 214 at Stradishall and Oulton and informs me that his crew finished their first tour on the same night as Norman Rix. They celebrated with a party including their ground crews, the wife of the C/O , G/ Capt. Dickins, made some ice cream, a rare treat in those days.

Norman had an old banger that he could not sell so he put it up for a raffle and it was won by Charles's skipper, F/Lt. Frank Scholes DFC.

If anyone remembers Charles give him a call, he would be pleased to hear from you.

Obituary . January 2nd 2003

A.B. (BERT) LANCASHIRE . Bert was a Wireless Op on the squadron at Chedburgh and Oulton. In the Spring of 2000 Bert and his wife Dorothy moved from Darwin, Lancs to live in France near his son. He was an early member of the Association and had attended some Reunions in past years. Our sincere sympathy to Dorothy and her family.

ROLL OF HONOUR 1945

214 Sqn. aircrew members who died or taken pow whilst flying with the squadron.
Those who lost their lives are marked with a +

Fortress KJ103 " M "

16/17th. Jan.

F/Off. R.V. Houston RCAF +

Fortress HB 796 " T "

8/9th. Feb.

P/Off J.P.Robertson RNZAF +
Sgt. T.W.H.Usher +
F/Sgt. P.G.Buckland +
F/Sgt. G.S.M.Fowler RAAF +
F/Sgt. F.R. Olds RNZAF +
W.Off. L.J.Bennett RNZAF +
Sgt. W.Bunyan +
Sgt. E. Dobson +
Sgt. R.J. Carrott +
Sgt. W.T.Banner +

Fortress HB 805 " C "

24/25th. Feb.

F/Off. J.M Shorttle DFM +
F/Lt. F.R.Woodger +
F/Lt. L.G.Fowler DFC died from injuries
P/Off. R.W.Towell +
F/Off. K.C.Allan +
W/Off. F.H.Dix RNZAF +
F/Off. A.M.Jones +
F/Sgt. S.L.Jones +
F/Sgt. T.W.J.Pollard +
F/Sgt. G.J.E.Jennings DFM pow

Fortress HB 815 " J "

3/4th. March

P/Off. H.Bennett DFC +
Sgt. L.E.Billington +
F/Sgt. H.Barnfield +
W/Off. L.J.Odgers RAAF +
F/Sgt. J.W.Bridden +
F/Sgt. L.A.Hadder +
F/Sgt. F.Hares +
Sgt. P.J.Healy +
One of the two survivors of this crew, Alistair McDerimid, is a member of the Association and a regular attender of 214 Sqn. and 100 Group Reunions.

Fortress KJ106 " G "

7/8th. March

F/Off. G. Stewart RNZAF +
Sgt. W.P.Mulhall pow
F/Sgt. H. McC. McClymont +
F/Off. N.Peters +
P.Off. J.W.Winstone RNZAF +
F/Sgt. J.V.Mathews RAAF pow
Sgt. A.J.Goldson pow
F/Sgt. H.L.Henderson RCAF +
W.Off. J.Henderson pow
Sgt. K.J.Phelan pow

Fortress HB802 " O "

14/15th. March

F/Lt. Norman Rix DFC pow
Sgt. L.J.Pound pow
P/Off. H.T.Sergeant RAAF pow
P.Off. W.J.Lovell-Smith RNZAF pow
W/Off. A.R.Irvine RAAF pow
Sgt. A.D.Macintosh pow
F.Sgt. J.L.Cuttance RNZAF pow
F/Sgt. R.O.Douglas RNZAF pow
Sgt. R.Gamble pow
Sgt. B. Burgess pow

Fortress HB803 " L "

15/16th. March

F/Lt. J.E.Cryer +
W/Off. M.C.White +

Norman Rix was an Association member until he died in 1998. His wife Margaret is a member and attends reunions.

" Doug " Douglas and Joe Cuttance are still around in New Zealand having been " found " in this past year. Ray Gamble has also recently been traced, living near Uttoxeter in Staffordshire.

Fortress HB 779 " L "

15/16th. March

F/Lt. J.G.Wynne DFC	returned alone
F/Off. J.W. Vinall DFM	murdered
F/Off. D.P.Heal	pow
F/Lt. G.Pow	pow
F/Lt. T.H.Tate	pow
F/Sgt. N.J. Bradley	pow
F/Off. G.A.Hall	murdered
F/Off. H. Frost DFM	murdered
F/Lt. S.C. Matthews DFC	murdered
F/Sgt. E.A.Percival DFM	murdered

Since these notes were typed Tom Tate has confirmed that the date was 14/15th. March not 15/16th as indicated.

Note ; This flight and crew form the basis of a book, " The Plaque " , published in English in Germany in 2002. A very amazing but very moving account of the terrible ordeal of seven members of the crew, five of whom were murdered by the Nazi Youth. Tom Tate, Norman Bradley and John Wynne are central figures in the story and Norman Rix and his crew, shot down the previous night, also have their adventures related.

In 1992 a reconciliation was arranged between the people of Huchenfeld (Pforzheim) and the village of Llanbedr, North Wales where John Wynne lives. The tenth anniversary was recently celebrated in Huchenfeld, attended by Tom Tate and Bob Davies. John Wynne served on 214 Sqn. again, flying Valiants from Marham in the 1950s.

Fortress HB 785 " A "

20/21st. March

F/Off. R.V.Kingdon RCAF	+
Sgt. W.D.Dale	+
WO2 W.A.Routley RCAF	+
WO2 Peiliant RCAF	+
F/Sgt. D.F.Miller	+
F/Off. D.N.Donald RCAF	+
F/Sgt. H.M.Carter RCAF	+
Sgt. W.Perkins	+
WO2 R.G.Wilson RCAF	+
Sgt. D. Parker	+

Fortress KJ 112 " P "

21/22nd March

F/Lt. W.D.Allies	+
W/Off. J.McFarlane	+
F/Off. B.F.Kerr DFM	+
F/Off. W.J.Cunningham	+
F/Off. S.H.G.Sinclair DFM	+
W/Off. N. Cooper	+
F/Sgt. C.R.Braithwaite	+
Sgt. P.Newman	+
Sgt. R.A.D.Joned	+
Sgt. E.L.Punnett	+

These aircraft and crew losses have been taken from W.R.Chorley's book Bomber Command Losses , 1945 . (with Bill Chorley's permission)

These excellent series, seven volumes to date, list all Bomber Command aircraft losses from 1939 to 1945. Volume 7 covers the OTU's and Bill is currently working on Volume 8 which will cover the HCU's , Finishing Schools and other training and special units.

The books are widely available, although I have purchased my own by mail order direct from the publishers, Midland Counties Publications , 4, Watling Drive, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 3EY. Tel. 01455 254450. Very reliable people.

It is my intention to continue this series of 214 Sqn. losses in future editions of our Newsletter. Because we have more members from the later war period I have commenced from 1945 and will now continue working backwards from December 1944.

I hope this series will prove of interest, especially to those of you who knew and remember some of the crew members.

WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO WERE SO YOUNG AND DID NOT LIVE TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF YOUTH AND BEYOND.

ROLL OF HONOUR 1944

Fortress HB 787 " J "

15/16th. Nov.

F/Sgt. C.J.Ashworth RNZAF	+
Sgt. G.L.Hislop	+
P/Off. A.H.Leitch RCAF	+
F/Sgt. W.A.McLaren	+
Sgt. P.E.Durman	+
F/Sgt. E.H.Armstrong RNZAF	+
F/Sgt. T.F.McCormack RNZAF	+
Sgt. C.G.M. Ogilvie	+
Sgt. R.E.Mooney RCAF	+
F/Sgt. A.McLaughlin RNZAF	+

Fortress HB702 " A "

12/13th. Sept.

F/Lt. P.R.S. Filleul	+
Sgt. P.J.Wilson	+
P/Off. R.L.Dodds RCAF	+
F/Off. K.P. Dack	+
Sgt. R.Birkby	+
Sgt. J.P.Hanet	+
Sgt. G.H.Benson	+
Sgt. T.H.Billington	+
Sgt. E. Dobson	+
Sgt. R.Cooper	+

Fortress SR382 " B "

21/22nd. Aug.

P/Off. J.D.Cassan	+
Sgt. S.H.Bryant	+
F/Sgt. G. Orr	+
F/Sgt. W.Milne	pow
WO2 D.R.Jennings RCAF	evaded
F/Off. J.H.Whatton	pow
Sgt. N.W.S.Abbott	+
F/Sgt. A. Sharpe	+
Sgt. T.S. Sparke	pow

Fortress SR384 " A "

24/25th. May

P/Off. A.J.N. Hockley RAAF	+
Sgt. W.W.Hallett	pow
F/Sgt. T.D.Glenn	pow
F/Sgt. R.Y.Gundy RNZAF	pow
F/Sgt. R.T.Lyall RAAF	pow
F/Sgt. R.F.Lloyd	pow
Sgt. J.E.McCutchan RCAF	pow
Sgt. R.G.V. Simpson	+
Sgt. E.Lovatt	pow

Fortress HB788 " B "

6/7th. Nov.

F/Off. J.M.S. Jackson	+
Sgt. R.C.Bartlett	+
P/Off. W.R.Harding	+
WOI R.D.Picciano RCAF	+
F/Sgt. H.C.Pollard	+
F/Off. D.Hardie	+
Sgt. N.V.Madgwick	+
W/O K.M.Bright RAAF	+
Sgt. K.J.Fletcher	+
Sgt. E.G.Kelly	+

Fortress HB763 " T "

25/26th. Aug.

W/O J.R.Lee	pow
Sgt. P.J.Curtis	pow
WO2 G.H.Gibbens RCAF	pow
F/Sgt. J.E.M.Pitchford	pow
F/Sgt. A.C.Sraith	pow
Sgt. A.J.McNamara	+
Sgt. P.Barkness	pow
Sgt. D.Williamson	+
F/Sgt. G.Boag	+
Sgt. G.Caulfield	+

Fortress SR381 " F "

21/22 Aug.

F/Lt. D.M.Peden RCAF	
Sgt. K.W.Bailey	
F.Sgt. S.Mather	
F.Off. J.B.Waters RCAF	
F/Sgt. A.Stanley	injured
Sgt. A.E.Lester	
F/Sgt. R.H.Hembrow RAAF	
F/Sgt. J.D.Phillips RAAF	
F/Sgt. J.W.Walker RCAF	

Note : Badly shot up by two night fighters this aircraft made it to the emergency airfield at Woodbridge where it collided with a Lancaster.