

"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)



WINTER/SPRING 2004

Minutes of the 15th. AGM of 214 (FMS) Squadron Association held at the Maids Head Hotel , Norwich on Saturday September 27th. 2003

Committee present ;

Sqn. Ldr. G.W. Moffatt	Chairman
Sqn. Ldr. V.A. Pheasant MBE	Acting Treasurer
Peter McD. Walker	Secretary
Jock Whitehouse	Historian
John Gulliver	Committee
Roy Monk	Committee
Sqn. Ldr. Bob Davies	Committee

and 42 members

APOLOGIES had been received from ; MRAF Sir Michael Beetham , AVM Eric Macey, Gp.Cpt. P.G.Hill , Gp. Cpt. Charles Lilley, Wg. Cdr. & Mrs. Wilkinson, Wg.Cdr. & Mrs. Wynne, Peter J.Anderson, Tom Tate, Charles Renney, D.F.Robson, Martin Staunton, Mrs. Olive Lax, John Lyall (Australia) , Alistair McDermid , F.Alan Wilkes , George & Mrs. Cox , Walter Rowley, G.J.Newman , John Morton , B.A.Mowlem, R.F.Mackett (Canada), H.P. Jowett , Peter Sparks, Keith & Norma Evans (NZ). Neil Scott arrived on Friday evening , was not feeling well on Saturday morning and returned home. Thankfully he was better by the Sunday but sorry to miss the Reunion.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Welcome to you all. First of all I would like you all to stand for a few moments to remember our friends and comrades who are no longer with us.

IN MEMORIAM

January 2003	A.B.(Bert)Lancashire	W/Op. Chedburgh/Oulton
January 2003	R.D. Potter	W/Off AG 1942
January 2003	E.G.(Gordon) Reynolds	1944/45
April 2003	A.C. (Clive) Smith	Fl./Sgt. AG Oulton
	(Shot down & pow Aug. 25/26th. 1944 ,	(W/Off. Lee's crew)
May 2003	S.A.Coxhead	W/Off. AG 1944/45
June 2003	Mick Ward	Jack Dixon's rear gunner 1943/44
June 2003	Gordon Hart	Flt.Lt. Nav. 1943/44
	(Gordon was a founding Assn. member & a regular at Reunions)	
April 2003	Frank Hudson RNZAF	Sgt. AG on Bennett's crew
July 2003	George Stevens (lived in the USA)	W/Op./AG 1940/41
August 2003	Ronald (Peewee) Hembrow RAAF	Sp./Op. 1944/45
	(Flew with Morrison's and Murray Peden's crew)	
Died in 2001	Fred Macmillan (Air Gunner's Assn.)	AG 1952/53

OVERSEAS VISITORS

Welcome also to those of you who have made the effort to travel from far flung foreign parts. GERHARD & SISSY HEILIG from Vienna. We are delighted to see you.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been a good year and if I were Chairman of a plc I would report successful results in all areas ; increased membership , increased revenue ; but we are not a plc , we are a gathering of friends and comrades and the success is the result, not of the efforts of the board and workforce, but the efforts of volunteers working on your behalf.

A large proportion is due to the success of the Nightjar and the sterling work done by Peter and Jock.

We, the Association, all of us, owe them much, for without their efforts there would be no Association, no Annual Reunions and no Nightjar to keep us in touch.

Thank you both for everything.

We have also been successful in that unlike most Squadron Associations we are continuing to recruit , thanks to the efforts of Peter and Roy Monk. I am very grateful and very aware of how much effort you have put into recruiting more members.

In the background and working equally as hard has been Bill Wilkinson to ensure that we are a " balanced " society , at least until after dinner.

Bill has been backed up by the effort that Vic Pheasant puts into his independent audit of the accounts. Between them Bill and Vic have served as the Treasurers over the last 12 years or so. Without a Treasurer there can be no Association but more of that later.

John Gulliver, a sterling member of the Committee and a long serving tanker man, some 30 + years, has now retired from the Air Force; congratulations on a really successful flying career Gulli and best wishes for the future.

One Reunion I hope you can tell us a little about the Tanker Force. The TF has been around for over 40 years and has played a major supporting role in all the operational activities in that time. From the Cold War to the Iraq, from the Balkans to the Falklands where we really came of age, proving that the tactics we had worked on over the years really worked and offensive Air Power could be delivered over many thousands of miles.

Gulli was part of all that and he really has a story worth telling.

Have a really good and happy retirement Lesley and John.

Last but certainly not least is Ian Coates who has kept control of our stores. Ian cannot be with us today because of ill health and for the same reason he has had to resign from the Committee. I have already written to Ian expressing your thanks but we do need to find a replacement.

Last year I reported that it had been a sad year because the Association's father figure, Jack Dixon had had to retire because of ill health. I am delighted to say that Jack, the newest of our Vice Presidents , is with us today in his rude!! , nothing changes, health. Welcome back Jack : the style and image as polished as ever.

Once again our President and Vice Presidents are represented by Air Vice Marshal Furner. Your presence is much appreciated and your company always welcome. It is good to see you.

Well that was the good news now for the bad news. You should all know by now that we have been badly let down by the hotel management and we will not be able to dine in this room (The Minstrel Room) tonight but in the breakfast room.

Peter has sat on top of them since we found out, only last week, and I will reserve my judgement until after the event.

They have, however, apologised fulsomely but not handsomely ; however they have offered to pay for the sherry reception so that, in some measure, is reparation.

We are capable of enjoying ourselves where ever we find ourselves so lets make the most of what is on offer and have a good evening. Its not the place its the people.

Nothing ever happens in twos and late last Thursday afternoon we received the message that our speaker this evening , Bob Anstee , had been rushed into hospital. He is in good hands and we wish him a speedy recovery .

Bob had a good story to tell and we decided we should tell it anyway so in a somewhat impromptu event we will try and present it. In the meantime we will try to arrange to visit him in Kings Lynn hospital tomorrow and deliver your best wishes.

Peter has a card which I hope you will all sign before I go and see him.

(Secretary's note : Sadly , Bob died on Oct. 8th. See news items further on)

Finally, and this is the challenge for all of you, do you want an Association ?

Bill Wilkinson is now 80 and has more than done his stint as Treasurer. He has been absolutely meticulous in all that he has done ; to our benefit. However he now wishes to retire from the Committee at the end of the financial year and pass on the baton.

I have already written to him and expressed our deep and heartfelt thanks. I am sure you would wish that you thanks are formerly expressed in the Minutes and we can deal with that within the Agenda.

The point, however, is this ; we have two vacancies on the Committee that we need to fill. Ian's replacement and Bill's replacement. Bill's we must fill if we are to continue as an Association.

There is an Agenda item , Election of Officers , and each year we have cajoled, pleaded for new blood and new faces . Each year there has been a proposal from the floor that the Committee be re-elected en bloc.

Well this year it is not that easy ; No volunteers for Treasurer - No Association.

Its crunch time ladies and gentlemen. Give it some thought and if we can't resolve it today, come and talk to me.

I am sure that you have heard enough from me so let's get on with the rest of the Agenda so that we can start the enjoyable bits.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING . The Minutes were read and agreed.
Norman Storey proposed that they be adopted and Stan Bayliss seconded the proposal.

MATTERS ARISING . None

TREASURER'S REPORT . In Bill Wilkinson's absence Vic Pheasant presented the treasurer's report. Each member was handed a set of the Association's accounts for the year ending Dec. 31st. 2002. Further copies are available from the treasurer.

At last year's AGM it was reported that our expenditure was exceeding our income and our funds were there reducing.

At the Committee meeting held in March 2003 it was decided not to increase annual subs but as from 2004 we would only send the Nightjar newsletter to those who had paid reasonably up to date.

A slip to this effect was put inside the summer/autumn newsletter and we are pleased to report that the response has resulted in the 2nd. highest total amount ever received, some members paying for quite a few years arrears. Thank you to all.

(As of Oct. 2003 we have 267 listed members , not all of whom have paid)

As at Sept. 27th. 2003 Up to this date 157 members had paid their subs and others will pay at this Reunion.

The total amount received to date is £1052 plus £393 in respect of advance and retrospective payments.

The Association's bank balances on Sept. 27th. were ;

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>
No. 1 A/C	£2131----15	£1596----59
No. 2 A/C	£ 294----94	£ 292----62
Cash in hand	Nil	£ 20----00
Total	£2426----09	£1909----21

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

Some members voiced their opinion that a base of £1000 should be sufficient to retain in our funds whilst others considered that this was not enough to be comfortable.

AVM JACK FURNER said that £2000 should be the minimum as our base whilst GERHARD HEILIG said that we should always have sufficient to keep the Association together for some in reserve.

NORMAN STOREY asked whether the Committee were happy with the improved situation this year. The answer was of course yes, it was not suprising that some members had still not paid, many are now quite elderly and had probably lost interest.

NORMAN also asked how many members received the Nightjar and was informed that every listed member was sent a copy of the last edition plus every new member plus two or three who reported that they had not received a copy , a total of about 275 copies.

JACK DIXON asked how we could be sure that from now on that only members who had paid would receive the Nightjar. Answer : A list of all members would be kept but following the recent payments received from those who had not paid for some time, the Treasurer would issue the Secretary with an up to date list and the issue of future Nightjars would be based on this.

The accounts were accepted and adoption was proposed by JACK DIXON seconded by GERHARD HEILIG.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

With no one coming forward to fill the Treasurer's position and to replace IAN COATES on the Committee the election of officers was not formally carried out at the AGM.

After the Reunion dinner the Chairman was able to announce that DAVE PARSONS had agreed to join the Committee and when BILL WILKINSON retires at the end of Dec. 2003 VIC PHEASANT had agreed to take over for the year 2004 and from then on JOHN GULLIVER hopes to be in a position to become Treasurer.

With the rest of the Committee agreeing to carry on it would appear that the Association can continue into the foreseeable future.

NEW MEMBERS IN 2003 (Announced in the last Newsletter)

GERRY MICKLEWRIGHT (Attended the Reunion)
E.C.CLIFF
JOHN CRIPPS
GLEN McKAY
GLENN HALL
RICHARD VINALL
JACK VINALL
CHARLES HOLMES

(The following have joined since the last Newsletter)

RAY GAMBLE
JAMES WALKER (Attended the Reunion)
MAX O ' NEIL (Australia)
DANNY O ' NEIL (Australia)
JOHN HEYS (Jersey)

THE REUNION DINNER

As mentioned in the Chairman's report due to a double booking for the Minstrel Room the dinner had to be held in the breakfast room.

At the same time a wedding reception was being held in the Minstrel Room and the dining room staff were serving both rooms at the same time. This resulted in a somewhat slow service with some of our members having finished their main course before others had hardly started. As a result the evening was rather prolonged.

Our speaker, Bob Anstee, had been taken ill a few days beforehand, and it was intended that Jock Whitehouse would give a talk based on Bob's notes. Due to the length of time taken to finish the meal and quite a few bottles of wine time caught up with us and Jock's talk had to be ditched.

A raffle was then held, the prizes being a model of a Stirling bomber (won by Bill Johnson-Biggs), a Marks and Spencer gift voucher , and two copies of The Plaque, signed by Johnie Wynne. These two books were won by John Gilpin and Herbert Harker both of whom were delighted to have a copy .

Norman Storey had kindly donated two bottles of very old moonshine, each in a presentation box with glasses. One was Irish Mist, the other Old Crow , an American bourbon of at least 30 years of age.

In view of the interest shown in these two bottles it was decided that they would likely make more for Assn. funds if they were auctioned.

The auctioneer was Norman Storey who gave us a very professional brief history of the skills and tricks of auctioneering. Thank you Norman it was very interesting.

The bottle of Irish mist was knocked down to "Paddy " Gilpin for £14. The Old Crow was of much interest and was run up between Moff and Vic Pheasant, finally going to Vic for £38, Moff bowing out to save Vic from penury. The raffle and auction raised about £130 for Asn. funds.

With the lateness of the hour there was no time for the " 214 Glee Club " to go into action which was a pity because Bob Froggatt had gone to the trouble of bringing his " Mighty Wurlitzer " . Thank you Bob, hope we can get going next year.

Although the evening did not go according to plan I believe most of us enjoyed the evening, meeting old friends and talking about old times.

I had prepared a small booklet called " Hoffnung the Rocking Horse " , the story of what happened to two 214 Sqn. Fortresses and their crews on the night of March 14/15th. 1945. This is the account of John Wynne and Norman Rix and their crews, five of whom, after bailing out safely, were murdered by Nazi Youth in Huchenfeld, Germany.

The booklets cost 75p each to produce and were offered to our members for £1.50 each, the profits going to the Llanbedr - Huchenfeld Children's Friendship Fund. John Wynne lives in Llanbedr , North Wales and in 1994 the Fund was set up to raise funds to help to send children from the village to Huchenfeld.

Our members gave most generously, many paying well over the odds for the booklet. As a result I was able to send the Fund a cheque for £90. Since the Reunion a few other members have been sent a copy by post resulting in another cheque for £67 being sent.

Thank you to all of you , I hope that you enjoyed this amazing story.

I have since had another fifty copies produced most of which have been sold, a few are still available at £2 -00 including postage. Please telephone for availability . 01603 - 713754

Peter McD. Walker
Secretary

APPOINTMENT OF TREASURER

During the course of the evening our Chairman was able to announce that the problem of finding a Treasurer had been solved.

From January 2004 Vic Pheasant will take over until the end of December and from January 2005 John Gulliver will occupy this vital position . Thank you to Vic and John .

" Moff " was also able to announce that the Committee position vacated by Ian Coates will be filled by Dave Parsons , a retired Chief Technician from Beccles in Suffolk.



214 Sqn. Lincolns lined up for the visit of the Maharaja of Johore.
RAF Upwood 1951

From October 1946 to April 1951 the Squadron codes letters were QN.



The Maharaja being introduced to the crew of a 214 Sqn. Lincoln.
Crew from the foreground , Sgt R.D. (Des) Athol ,Nav.III ,
F/Lt. Miles ; F/Lt. Marsh , Sgt Gerry Moore, Pilot , F/Lt.Charlton
Photos sent in by Des Athol who has just joined as a new member.

Des lives at Kirkdean near Durnafries

Historian's Report

Jock M.Whitehouse

As is usual an Association wreath was laid at Stradishall on Remembrance weekend 2002 and it is hoped that one will be laid in November of this year.

My thanks to Graham Spaxman who was able to answer my request and come up with a photograph of Sgt. Lou Pinn, accidentally killed whilst flying on Lincoln operations in Kenya. I have passed the photo on to Kevin Patience who is a regular visitor to Eastleigh.

Sheila Byrne (Oswego NY State) informs me that George " Steve " Stevens died at his home in the USA. George was a recent regular correspondent and flew and flew in Wellingtons at Stradishall in 1941.

Peter has heard from Danny, the son of Max O'Neill who flew Stirlings at Stradishall and Chedburgh (with Clarrie Woods and Ray Glass). Jean Handbury has also been in touch with the family as Doug was also a crew member. Max is now 87 but is hard at his computer writing his memoirs!

Max and Danny both live in Adelaide and have joined the Association, we offer them a warm welcome. Danny hopes to visit the UK some time soon.

I have been contacted by Mike York (Camberley , the son of Flt.Lt. P.P.O'Connor, a South African (Wellingtons at Stradishall in 1940) who is seeking any information on his father whom he never knew. I have sent him a copy of a 1941 feature on Flt.Lt. O'Connor's early career (including his time at Stradishall) in " Outspan ", a South African journal which I believe was among Harold Bidmead's huge file, although I do not know how it arrived.

Mike had not seen this and was obviously very pleased to see it. If anyone has any recollection of Flt. Lt. O'Connor (of slim build, pencil moustache , was married and used to be collected off "ops" by his wife in their small car)please let me know. Mervyn Leyshon and Geoff Cole have written to Mike, Mervyn unable to help but but Geoff was able to.

A new and really excellent book has revealed the information of the fate of a 214 Sqn. airman, the facts of which have so far eluded Bob Davies and myself. The book is " Footprints on the Sands of Time " by Oliver Clutton - Brock which details all pows of Bomber Command, plus masses of information much of which makes very disturbing reading.

Records have always shown W/Off. F.J.W. Steele as of 214 Sqn. but we were never able to pinpoint his time of service. He is buried in the Berlin War Cemetery, no "trade" given but his date of death is 19th. April 1945 suggesting that he died in one of the many pow columns on the move at that time.

Sgt. Heathman ("214) shot down and captured in September 1943 also suffered such a fate and is also buried in Berlin.

The book states that W/Off. Steele became a pow on December 8th. 1940 having " baled out in error".

... - Sgt. lost two crews that night (Pilot Harris and Pilot Dadswell) with no survivors and it is quite possible that another aircraft was in some trouble but returned minus at least one crew member. The aircraft is not identified neither did we pick up any information during our research. So what did happen ?

Pt. Sgt. Steele (as his then rank) was 28 years old when he was captured and came from Stoke Gabriel in Devon. The book confirms that he was killed by RAF Typhoons.

Any help welcome although I hope to contact the author to check his source of information. As a result of this of course, the Roll of Honour needs to be amended.

214 Sqn. had 172 of their crews made POW (1.57 % of the total).

Christopher Jary has added a few more facts re the career of Maurice Hartford, a Wellington pilot at Stradishall (you may recall I spotted him identified as a test pilot in a book on the Handley Page Hermes. Evidently he certainly was a test pilot in the 1950s (The late Ian Lawson met him at Farnborough) but after Stradishall he took a Wellington out to the Middle East and won a DFC on 148 Sqn. (" Steve " Stevens also flew with 148).

In April 1943, just prior to the Dams raid, Maurice flew as an " Upkeep " test pilot on A & AEE at Boscombe Down. Obviously a very accomplished pilot, and it is a little unfortunate that contact with him was lost.

Jock Whitehouse

Reported at the Reunion, Sept. 27th, 2003

REUNION DINNER, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2004

Despite the problems with the 2003 Reunion Dinner we have decided, after very strong complaints to the management (including the Head Office), that we would give them one more chance to get it right.

We have therefore booked the Maids Head Hotel, including the Minstrel Room, for the weekend of September 24th to 26th.

Many of our members, and especially our older members like to visit Norwich and stay at the Maids Head which is one of the few largish hotels within walking distance of the city centre and shopping area.

Details of prices and booking forms will be sent out with the summer newsletter, due out about mid July.

Peter M. Walker
Secretary

'DEEP PENETRATION'

This was the title of the after-dinner presentation to have been given at the 2003 reunion by Squadron Leader Bob Anstee AFC AFM, and which summarised two highly secret 'spy flights' over Soviet Russia during the early Cold War period. Due to illness, Bob was unable to make his presentation and we were all greatly saddened to learn of his passing just ten days later.

It was thought appropriate therefore to include a version of Bob's talk in this edition of 'Nightjar' for all to read and in his memory.

In July 1951 whilst on No.115 Squadron (B29 Washingtons) at Marham I was ordered to report to HQ Bomber Command to learn that I was to be part of a 'Most Secret' 'Special Duties Flight' and as it would be using the North American RB-45C, a four-jet strategic reconnaissance aircraft, selected crews would be leaving for immediate conversion and specialist training in the USA.

The Flight would consist of three aircraft each crewed by two pilots and one navigator. Totally unaware of what their role would be, the aircrews left Sculthorpe on 3 August for an intensive 60-day detachment, firstly at Barksdale Air Force Base (10-day familiarisation on the basic RB-45) then to Langley AFB (introduction to the comparatively rare RB-45C) and finally on 2 September to Lockbourne AFB, home of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing which operated the only three existing RB-45C squadrons (one each at Lockbourne, Sculthorpe and one in Japan). Whilst undergoing a short but first-class conversion course a heavy night-landing wrote off one aircraft and although no injuries resulted, this incident incurred the wrath of the famous and fiery General Curtis LeMay (of WW2 8th Air Force fame) who left the Base Commander, S/Ldr John Crampton and the unfortunate pilot in no doubt that he did NOT like people who 'broke his valuable aeroplanes'. Fortunately an RAF pilot already on secondment to an American B-45 unit made an excellent replacement within the team.

Soon after we returned to Sculthorpe to form an additional Flight with the resident American squadron but still with no idea of our future. Theories abounded including comparative trials between in-flight re-fuelling methods (American 'flying-boom' versus RAF 'probe and drogue') and little was done to discourage such talk but we had an excellent American Liaison Officer on hand to deal with the many and expected difficult questions flying around.

Our theories could not have been more wrong for early in 1952 at Bomber Command HQ, we watched in great apprehension as the 'target' maps were unrolled--three separate tracks running from Sculthorpe: one to the Baltic States, one to the Moscow area and one to Central Southern Russia. The plan, we were told, was quite straightforward. All routes would be flown simultaneously, the aircraft would leave in close succession, make a maximum top-up from awaiting tankers and then climb at full power to the highest altitude possible. All we had to do then was to collect as many 35mm photographs possible of radar images of identified Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (IBM) sites! Timing was critical if we were to benefit from clever diversionary tactics laid on by our own Intelligence 'listening' Service, no navigation lights were to be used, and we were to maintain strict R/T silence (I was relieved

to know that I was responsible for the OMG (Oh my God) frequency in case of any real emergency!

Prior to the 'live' sortie my crew actually undertook a 30-minute probing flight testing defences over Soviet East Germany, and when our Intelligence monitoring reported 'all quiet' we prepared for the 'Big One'.

In the event of ending up in Russia, the aircraft flew devoid of their American markings in the hope of convincing Ivan that this was nothing to do with America and that the RAF had no such machines on inventory-we had little faith in this ploy.

However, in April 1952 the three RB-45Cs and their RAF crews departed Sculthorpe, topped up from the tankers and headed off into the black night sky toward Soviet Russia. The operation proved a total success. Equipment worked well, the photographs were taken and after seeing the lights of Moscow we headed home. All of our three crews returned safely and a few days later we flew our aircraft (now wearing RAF markings) back to Lockbourne AFB to be congratulated by a very relieved General LeMay. Then it was back to our own RAF careers--- until October when we learned that the operation was to be repeated but after a period of intensive training the whole thing was scrubbed (evidently due to an ultra sensitive political situation). In March 1954 it was all 'back on' so we returned to Sculthorpe

Again three routes were to be flown, our crew taking a much longer southern one ('Why us?' we asked). This time briefing was very thorough. Although there 'could be SAM's', there were no radar-equipped night fighters and those relying on ground radar-control were not thought to be a risk! We were told no 'flak' was possible as we would be flying too high and fast which was good news indeed. All went well.

Too well. Whilst Don repeatedly gave new courses requesting 'straight and level' when necessary and happily photographing his radar images we were slightly puzzled by occasional flashes from the ground which reflected off the clouds but concluded that they were either lightning or bombing ranges in use but when at 39,000 feet near Kiev these flashes seemed to be more frequent and always just below us, rather strange for a random phenomenon and disturbingly reminiscent of 'flak' of the German variety experienced in a previous 'life', but had we not been assured at briefing that 'flak' would NOT be encountered. They were proved horribly wrong when the sky ahead suddenly exploded into a huge golden flare path 'Flak!' dead ahead and at our height. There then followed some purely instinctive flying turning west at speed and at a decreasing altitude all in the hope of confusing the gunners responsible. Poor Don's initial concern for his cameras quickly faded when informed of the 'flak', that we had probably been tracked due to his 'steady stright and level' courses and could we please have the tanker rendezvous, a course to steer and a declared alternative in an emergency. After a successful re-fuelling we returned safely to meet up with the other crews who had had another quiet trip, but measured our own luck by how fortunate we were that the Russian gunners, after correctly predicting our height, failed to judge and correct for our speed thus giving us time to 'depart in haste'.

After all these years I still wonder how the Russians knew exactly where we were.

A remarkable story of successful trial operations which set the scene for the whole dramatic spy plane scenario which was to develop.

Jock Whitehouse

NEWS SINCE THE REUNION

OCT. 8TH. 2003 Our speaker at the Reunion should have been Sqn.Ldr. Bob Anstee AFM,AFC. Sadly Bob was taken ill a few days before the event and died in Kings Lynn hospital on October 8th.

A resume of Bob's life and flying career is included in this newsletter.

Oct. 9th. Ray Gamble who was one of Norman Rix's waist gunners when they were shot down on March 14/15th. 1945 in Fortress HB802 " 0 "

Ray and his son Peter visited Oulton and Blickling on the 9th. and I was able to spend a couple of interesting and enjoyable hours with them.

Ray is now 82 and is in touch with some of his former crew , especially " Doug " Douglas in New Zealand.

Oct. 9th. On the following day, to my surprise I received a telephone call from " Doug " Douglas in New Zealand. He had just spoken to Ray Gamble and learned that we had met up met at Blickling the previous day.

Doug is not an Association member but has been pleased to have been " found " and put in touch with old comrades.

Many of you will remember that "Doug" was the artist who painted the two cartoons, " Rix's Gen Wallers" , the originals being owned by Margaret Rix and Ray Gamble. About four years ago Margaret Rix allowed the Association to produce some copies which some members were then able to purchase.

When we " found " Doug in August 2002 we sent him a copy and it now has pride of place in his house. He had almost forgotten that he had painted it all those years ago and was very surprised that the original has hung in Norman and Margaret Rix's house for all those years.

Oct. 10th. We learned that our President , MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, was to have a hip operation about this time, so at our Chairman's suggestion I sent him a golfing get well card on behalf of the committee and all members.

On the 27th. I received a telephone call from Sir Michael to thank us for our thoughts and to inform me that he was making a good recovery . Sir Michael sends his regards to all.

Oct. 20th. Jock Whitehouse and I represented the Association at the funeral of Sqn.Ldr. Bob Anstee at the Mintlyn Crematorium, Kings Lynn.

Bob's sister Mary and members of the family had travelled up from Bristol and area and afterwards Jock and I were invited back to Bob's house in Wisbech. Mary wanted me to take Bob's mess uniform and greatcoat for eventual display in a air museum in the Norfolk area.

I have since presented the uniform to the Blickling museum and the greatcoat to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum for placing in the 100 Group exhibit.

Oct. 23rd. New member : John Heys (known as Jersey) and who lives on the island. John served on the Squadron in the period 1961 to 1964 when he was a Cpl. engine fitter. Remained in the RAF until 1983 , retiring as a Flt.Sgt. on Vulcans.

NEWS SINCE THE REUNION (Cont.)

Oct.23rd. As a result of the sale, at the Reunion and in the weeks after, of the little booklet " Hoffnung the Rocking Horse " I have been able to send John Wynne a total of £167 for the Llanbedr - Huchenfeld Children's Friendship Fund.

This is thanks to the generosity of members who gave more, in some cases far more than the asking price of the booklet of £1---50 . Thank you to all.

On Thanksgiving day, Nov. 27th. I attended a dinner in honour of the 2nd. Air Division of the US 8th. Air Force. (The B24 Liberator boys). I took along some copies of the booklet and sold some more, resulting in being able to send John another cheque for , this time for £70.

If any of our members would like a copy I have a few left at £2 each including postage.

November : Three New Members

Frank Reynolds ; Black Notley , Braintree, Essex . LAC engine mechanic at Stradishall in 1941/42 . Frank served in the days when the rank of LAC was achieved by a good deal of experience and hard work.

Don Crossley ; 23, Tower Avenue, Upton, Pontefract , West Yorkshire.
Wireless Op./Signaller , 1953/54 on Lincolns at Upwood.

R.D. (Des) Athol ; Deanwood , Kirkbean, Dumfries .

Des was a Sgt. Navigator III on Lincolns at Upwood in 1950/51.

He asks if anyone knows or remembers Sgt. Freddie Ebbs, a Flight Engineer.

Also Sqn. Ldr. Graham Douglas OBE , AFC , MA ?

Nov. 19th. Received an enquiry from a B17 enthusiast who has a Corgi diecast model of a 214 Sqn. B17 HB819 BU-U . He would like to know when " U " joined the Squadron and if any of our members have her in their log books and when. ? please contact Peter Walker on 01603 - 713754

December Of interest to some of our members are three recently published books, two of which include 214 crews from WW11. They are :

" The Final Fling ", by William J. Rees, published by Compaid Graphics.

ISBN No. 1900604132 . I paid £8.99 from City of Norwich Aviation Museum.

It is about the final Bomber Command raid on Kiel on May 2nd. 1945 and lists all aircraft and crews who took part, including eleven Fortresses from 214. Recommended. 113 pages, lamimated cover.

Bomber Command Losses, Volume 8 ; Heavy Conversion Units and Miscellaneous Units , 1939-1947. Bill Chorley's latest in this series. ISBN No. 1 85780 156 3

I paid £16.99 from the publishers, Midland Publishing. Also available from good bookshops.

NEWS SINCE THE REUNION (Cont.)

New books continued

" Footprints on the Sands of Time ", RAF Bomber Command Prisoners of War in Germany , 1939 to 1945 by Oliver Clutton-Brock . Published by Grub Street at £35...00 , ISBN No. 1 904010 00 0 . 528 pages , 16 pages of photographs. This is a fantastic piece of research from official British and German records as well as interviews from those who survived, and apparently 1 in 20 did not. Lists over 10,000 pows and their fate, including all recorded 214 Sqn. personnel. This book is a " must have " for anyone seriously interested in the history of RAF Bomber Command.

An apology to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum

In the last newsletter I mentioned the future of the Squadron's archive material and what to do with it to make sure it does not disappear.

I mentioned that small museums such as Blickling and the City of Norwich Aviation Museum may not survive into the long term.

As a result of this statement I have had my knuckles rapped by the good people at the C of N who have informed me that they are a registered charity with the published aim of preserving Norfolk's aviation heritage.

It is run by a subscription paying membership who elect a board of trustees who are responsible for ensuring that the charity is properly run.

To financially protect it's individual members, the Museum is also a limited company. None of it's members or trustees is allowed to have a personal financial interest in the museum.

The Museum is also registered with the government body, Resource, as a museum, this means that they have to meet demanding standards of recording and caring for it's collection.

To meet this criteria, the exhibits at the Museum are held in trust by the C of N Av. Mus. and do not form part of the assets of the limited company.

This protects any of the exhibits being sold in the unlikely event of the Museum being placed in receivership.

If for any reason the Museum was to close, Resource, previously the Museums and Galleries Commission would take charge of the exhibits and ensure they are passed into the care of other Registered Museums.

So now you know. My apologies to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum, long may they continue. Peter M. Walker

For very many years the City of Norwich Aviation Museum have hosted the 100 Group Reunion in mid May each year. Many of 214 Sqn. Association members attend and all are generously fed and watered.

For those of you who may not be aware the Museum also has a 100 Group exhibit, including photographs, artifacts and models. Well worth a visit.

The 100 Group Association is also run by the keen volunteers who are also involved with the Museum.

NEWS SINCE THE REUNION (Cont.)

December 16th. 2003 W/Off. Alfred " Stan " Stanley DFM , W/Op. on Murray Peden's crew , 1943/44 , died in Manchester after some time in hospital. Information passed to me by AVM Jack Furner via an E-Mail via Murray Peden..

CHANGE OF TREASURER Earlier in this newsletter I mentioned that Vic Pheasant would take over from Bill Wilkinson at the end of December 2003. Please note that this arrangement will not now take place until April 1st. 2004. Any subscriptions due before April 1st. should be sent to ;
Wng. Cdr. W.A.Wilkinson, " Charlcombe ", 8,The Paddock,
Maresfield, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 2HQ . Tel. 01825 - 761861
From April 1st. please send to Vic Pheasant whose address and telephone number are in the inside front cover of this newsletter.

NEWS FROM JOCK WHITEHOUSE

As is usual on Remembrance weekend, wreaths were laid at Stradishall and Chedburgh in memory of our Squadron members who lost their lives and we are extremely grateful to Mrs. Olive Lax , whose brother , Sgt.Norman Ventham died at Chedburgh,for her very generous donation. Thank you Olive.
We shall remember.

There has been mention of possibly creating a memorial rose garden adjacent to Stirling House at Stradishall. A new roadside entrance sign to the building complex, which will include a Stirling logo is, however, a certainty and although it is early days, we will keep you informed on both counts. It is hard to believe, but it is TEN yaers in May since the Stradishall memorial was unveiled. Like many of us, it is "mellowing " nicely.

NEW BOOKS (AMENDMENT)

Earlier in these notes I mentioned a new book , " Footprints on the Sands of Time". I have since been in touch with the author who informs me that if any of our members want a copy he can arrange for one to be sent for £30 post paid. (saving £5 on the bookshop price.) Please contact Peter Walker first.
Tel. 01603-713754 .

JANUARY 25TH.

Martin Staunton telephoned to inform me that he had just come out of hospital, having been there since the end of December.

I had sent him a card, on behalf of the Association, and he was ringing to offer his thanks and regards to all members.

He now needs quite a long time to recover, but hopes to come to a future reunion, either the 100 Group or 214 Sqn.

We all wish you well Martin .

IT'S THAT NUMBER AGAIN!
Jock Whitehouse



On a recent visit to RAF Cosford in my own '214', I was able to complete this remarkable 'independent' numerical lineup alongside two earlier arrivals



A neighbouring vehicle(a later arrival), conveniently carried the squadron codes!



Cosford's Avro Anson
It pays to keep your eyes open.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT SINCE THE REUNION

Three queries have materialised since the reunion.

i). From Mr Giles Drake-Brockman (Brandon, Suffolk). Giles is seeking information on his great-uncle, F/O RMP ('Peter') Jenkyns, captain or second pilot in Wellington T2992 shot down over Belgium on 7/8 July 1941. The aircraft had taken off from Stradishall for railway targets in the Cologne area. Five crew were killed (Sgt Roughton r/g, became a PoW) and are buried at As-en-Campine. I have been able to provide Giles with photographs of the burial location and of the crash site.

ii) From Mr E Jones (Haverhill) seeking information on a relative, Sgt G C Bunning (Wisbech) who lost his life when Stirling W7534(BU-E) was lost on the first '1000-bomber' raid on Cologne, 31 May 1942. The Stirling is believed to have collided with a Wellington of No.101 Squadron. All on board both aircraft lost their lives. This was the first Stirling loss for No.214 Squadron.

iii) From Mr Dave French (Clutton, Bristol) who, as a result of Heilig's article in 'Aeroplane Monthly' is seeking any information on his uncle, Richard Fileul, who flew a first tour with 214 on Wellingtons at Stradishall and was one of many who 'returned' for a second tour with the squadron, sadly losing his life on 12 September 1944 from Oulton. Geoff Cole, who flew as second pilot on 'ops' with Richard at Stradishall and knew him well is willing to be put in touch with Mr French.

Any other information reference these three queries would be greatly appreciated.

At the AGM Jack Dixon asked if anything had materialised regarding a plaque in Chedburgh church recording the great personal achievement of Harold Bidmead (who had flown as a flight/engineer from Chedburgh) in setting up the No.214(FMS) Squadron Association. The answer is a definite YES. The brass plaque, its text approved by Bettie Bidmead, is on the wall just above the cabinet containing the Book of Remembrance. The inscription reads:

<p style="text-align: center;">In Memory Flight Lieutenant Harold John Bidmead Distinguished Flying Cross 1918-1989. 1942-1943 Flight Engineer No.214(Federated Malay States) Squadron Royal Air Force Chedburgh</p> <p>Off-duty, Harold would play the organ in the peacefulness of this church.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No.214(Federated Malay States) Squadron Association founded by Harold Bidmead 1988 'Ultor in Umbris'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">August 2002</p>

Thank you again Harold.



Photo: Bill Jay.

Jock and Keely again provided a splendid 'themed' cake for the reunion, this time of a very colourful design depicting a map of Malaya and the flags of the original 'Federated Malay States' who established links with '214' in 1940/41. Sadly these were severed by the Japanese invasion and although never revived, the title 'Federated Malay States' was retained by the squadron until disbanding in 1977. Today the luxury aircraft of the superb Malaysia Airlines carry 'local' names but not quite as dramatic as 214's Stradishall's Wellingtons. Remember 'Sri Guroh' (Thunder), and Raja Langit (Lord of the Sky)?

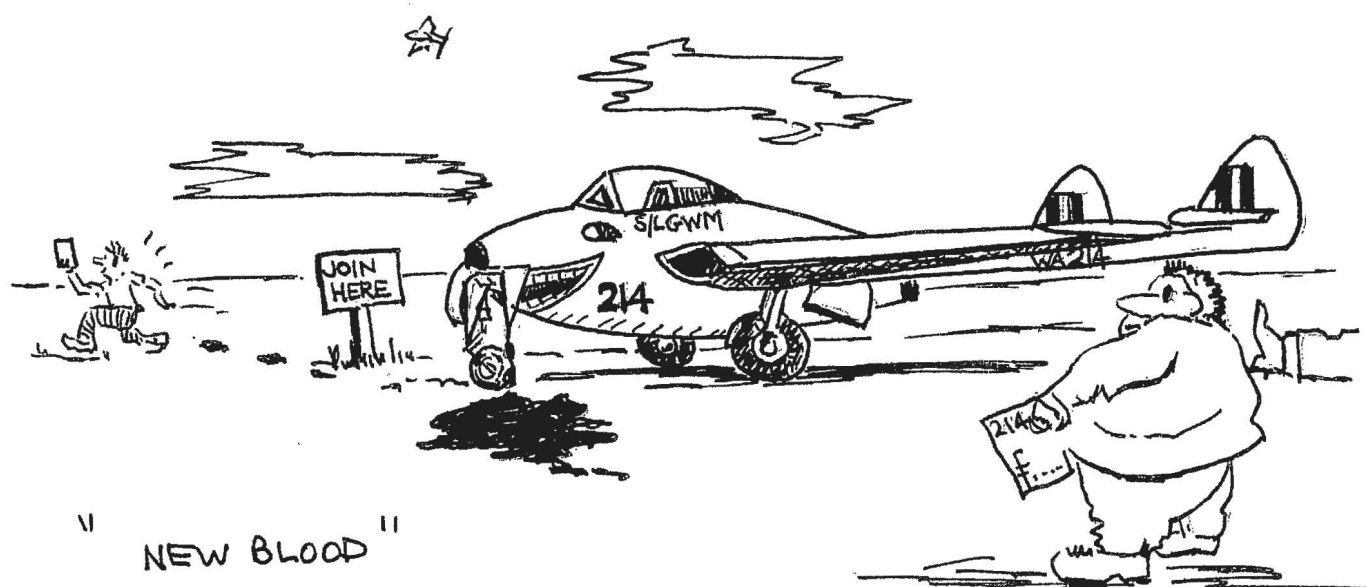
Some of you may recall the large and impressive painting, 'The Briefing' by Frank Salisbury which hangs in the Officers' Mess Dining Room at Marham. It depicts Hampden aircrew of No 83 Squadron (plus pigeons in their baskets) being briefed by their tall fair haired CO, in fact Wing Commander Dermot Boyle who soon became Station Commander at Stradishall when he flew a number of operations with Stirling crews of 214 and in the Wellingtons of No 101 Squadron.

In a special 2003 publication 'Bomber Command' appeared a photograph of No 83 Squadron Hampden crews being briefed for operations. Virtually identical in content to 'The Briefing' (minus the CO!) this study was almost certainly the basic 'model' on which the painting was based. Both are reproduced here for you to judge.



Reproduced from the edition of 'Flypast' with permission from the publishers: Ke Publishing Ltd. www.flypast.com

Channel 5. Tues. 22nd. December 2003 " Flying Misfits ". An entertaining American war film of 1976 vintage. It told the true story (nearly) of Major " Pappy " Boyington, a maverick 39 year old Marine officer, already an "ace" but grounded for a variety of reasons, who rounded up a number of fighter pilots, all awaiting court martial, and by further totally illegal means, bordering on the criminal, "established his own squadron which in the end turned out to be one of the most successful and highest scoring Marine fighter units of the Pacific war. " Pappy " Boyington (who ultimately received the Congressional Medal of Honor), named his squadron " The Black Sheep "(cos that's what they are). It's number ? 214 . It is hoped that any resemblance to the RAF squadron bearing the same number be entirely coincidental. !!!!



The Chairman insists that we need more and more " new " blood.
(Now if only we had been a "Vampire" squadron ---!!!!)

GUILD OF AVIATION ARTISTS ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Try to visit the Mall Galleries in London (just behind Admiralty Arch) on 19-25th. July 2004. Apart from the usual superb of aviation art , there will be an additional section celebrating the Centenary of Rolls-Royce so expect something a little different.

Other Guild work is displayed at many of the regular aviation venues/museums.

OBITUARY

June 2003 . Colin Clarke (Devon). Colin was a Stirling ground engineer at Chedburgh and in June 1943 was transferred "over" to the new 620 Sqn., formed from "C" Flights of 214 and 149 Squadrons..Clarice, his widow, serving as a WAAF driver at the same time , drove the badly burned "Dinty" Moore to hospital after his dreadful crash in March 1943.

A NOTE FROM OUR RETIRING TREASURER

On 1st. January 1994 I took over the role of Treasurer from Vic Pheasant, who had kept the flag flying for a number of years, previous to my appointment, and during that period I audited the books of account.

It is with regret that I had to inform our Chairman that I wished to relinquish the post, and Vic Pheasant has volunteered to act as interim Treasurer until handing over to yet another volunteer, John Gulliver, on 1st. January 2005.

These appointments were duly proposed and agreed by members present at the AGM on 27th. September 2003.

Our bankers have advised that in this present age of centralised banking there is no need to transfer our accounts to the branch nearest to the new Treasurer's home. Our bank accounts will therefore continue to operate as at present, but with all mail being addressed to the new Treasurer, with effect from the date of handover on 1st. April 2004.

Vic's home address and telephone number are shown on the inside front cover of this Nightjar.

In signing off, I would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their cooperation and expressions of appreciation of my efforts. I shall miss the interesting anecdotes included in letters, forwarded with subscription cheques.

Finally a wee word of thanks to my wife for her support and forbearance. Kay kept the wheels turning on the occasions when I was in hospital for long periods.

Best wishes to you all.

Bill Wilkinson.

SECRETARY'S NOTE

Quite a few of our members pay their annual subscriptions by sending them to me. I then have to spend 21p of the Association's money on a stamp in order to send it on to the Treasurer.

Whilst we are grateful to our members for paying promptly could you please pay future subs by sending them **DIRECT TO THE TREASURER**.

Thank you

Peter M. Walker

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

RATES OF PAY AND TRADE GROUPS.

N.B.—The following are the current rates of pay of airmen, aircraft apprentices and apprentice clerks:

DAILY RATES OF PAY.

Rank.	Group I.	Group II.	Group III.	Group IV.	Group V.	Medical Branch.		
						Group A.	Group B.	Group C.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Aircraftman, 2nd class	3 6	3 3	2 6	3 0	2 0	3 3	3 0	2 9
Aircraftman, 2nd class (over one year) ..	—	—	—	—	2 6	—	—	—
Aircraftman, 2nd class (over three years)	—	—	—	—	—	4 3	4 0	3 9
Aircraftman, 1st class	4 3	4 0	3 3	3 9	2 9	3 9	3 6	3 3
Aircraftman, 1st class (over three years)	—	—	—	—	—	4 9	4 6	4 3
Leading Aircraftman	5 6	5 0	4 0	4 6	3 3	4 3	4 0	3 9
Leading Aircraftman (over three years) ..	6 0	5 6	4 6	5 0	3 9	5 3	5 0	4 9
Corporal	7 6	6 6	5 0	5 6	4 3	5 6	5 3	5 0
Corporal (over two years)	—	—	—	—	—	6 3	6 0	5 9
Corporal (over four years)	8 0	7 0	5 6	6 0	4 9	—	—	—
Sergeant	9 6	8 6	6 6	7 0	6 0	7 3	7 0	6 9
Sergeant (over two years)	—	—	—	—	—	8 0	8 0	8 0
Sergeant (over four years)	10 0	9 0	7 0	7 6	6 6	—	—	—
Sergeant (pilot)	12 6	11 6	9 6	10 0	—	—	—	—
Sergeant (pilot) (over four years) ..	13 6	12 6	10 6	11 0	—	—	—	—
Flight Sergeant	11 6	10 0	8 0	8 6	7 6	9 6	9 6	9 6
Flight Sergeant (over four years) ..	12 0	10 6	8 6	9 0	8 0	—	—	—
Flight Sergeant (pilot)	15 0	13 6	11 6	12 0	—	—	—	—
Flight Sergeant (pilot) (over four years) ..	15 6	14 0	12 0	12 6	—	—	—	—
Sergeant Major, 2nd class	13 0	11 6	10 0	10 6	10 0	10 6	10 6	10 6
Sergeant Major, 1st class	14 0	12 6	11 0	11 6	11 0	13 6	13 6	13 6
Sergeant Major, 1st class (over five years)	16 6	15 0	13 6	14 0	13 6	—	—	—

	1st Year.	2nd Year.	Afterwards.*
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Aircraft Apprentices	1 0	1 0	1 6
Apprentice Clerks	1 0	1 6	1 6

* That is until the aircraft apprentice has both attained the age of 18 years and been posted to a unit for duty as an aircraftman after the completion of training; or, in the case of an apprentice clerk, until he is classified as an aircraftman.

TRADE GROUPS.

TECHNICAL—GROUP I.	TECHNICAL—GROUP II.— <i>cont.</i>	NON-TECHNICAL—GROUP V.
Blacksmith.	Rigger (airship).	— <i>cont.</i>
Carpenter (boat builder).	Wireless Operator.	Driver (petrol).
Carpenter (rigger).		Driver (steam).
Coppersmith and Metal Worker.		Driver (winch).
Draughtsman.	TECHNICAL—GROUP III.	Hospital Orderly (unclassified).
Electrician.	Cook and Butcher.	Hospital Orderly (under training).
Fitter (aero engine).	Fabric Worker.	Musician.
Fitter (armourer).	Hydrogen Worker (2nd class).	
Fitter (constructional).	Motor Boat Crew.	MEDICAL BRANCH—GROUP A.
Fitter (driver, petrol or steam).	Painter.	Pharmacist.
Fitter (general).	Storekeeper.	Trained Nurse.
Fitter (torpedo).	Upholsterer.	
Hydrogen Worker (1st class).		MEDICAL BRANCH—GROUP B.
Machine Tool Setter and Operator.	ADMINISTRATIVE—GROUP IV.	Dental Mechanic.
Metal Rigger.	Clerk (General duties).	Dispenser.
Moulder.	Clerk (Pay accounting).	Hospital Cook.
Wireless Operator (Mechanic).	Clerk (Store accounting).	Laboratory Assistant.
		Masseur.
		Operating Room Assistant.
		X-Ray Attendant.
TECHNICAL—GROUP II.	NON-TECHNICAL—GROUP V.	MEDICAL BRANCH—GROUP C.
Armoured Car Crew.	Aircrafthand (General duties).	Mental Nursing Orderly.
Armourer.	Aircrafthand (Physical Training Instructor).	Nursing Orderly.
Carpenter.	Aircrafthand (Visual Signalling Instructor).	Sanitary Assistant.
Coach Painter.	Aircrafthand (under training for technical trades).	Special Treatment Orderly.
Meteorologist.		
Photographer.		
Rigger (aero).		

(5774) Wt. 1293/80 35,000 5/31 Hw. G.1/27

FROM THE ARCHIVES, A BIT OF HISTORY

When did the Royal Air Force last have the rank of Sergeant Major ; presumably it was replaced by Warrant Officer , but when ? If anyone knows please inform Jock Whitehouse.

ROLL OF HONOUR 1943 to 1942

As in previous Roll of Honour lists in the Nightjar I have continued backwards through the months, from May 1943 to September 1942.

Stirling Mk. 111 BF528 "L2"

May 23/24th 1943

✓ Sgt. J.K. Wilkins RNZAF	+
✓ Sgt. A. Mason RNZAF	pow
✓ Sgt. W.S. Clifton - Mogg RNZAF	pow
✓ Sgt. L.G. Freeman	+
✓ Sgt. W.A. Leslie	pow
✓ Sgt. E.T. Hutchinson	pow
✓ Sgt. B.A. Kennedy	pow

Stirling Mk. 1 R9242 "0"

May 13/14th 1943

Sgt. R.M. Gibbney	+
Sgt. F.D. Stannard	+
F/Off. A.R. Minton	pow
Sgt. R.F. Gullick	pow
Sgt. L. Sutcliffe	pow
Sgt. L. Leake	+
Sgt. S.R. Tinkler	+

Stirling Mk. 111 BK653 "A"

April 16/17th. 1943

F/Off. D.E. James	evd
Sgt. W.G. Grove	evd.
Sgt. J. Hall	evd.
Fl./Sgt. J.A. Smith	pow
Sgt. C.G. Walton	pow
Sgt. R.W. Adams	evd.
Sgt. G.B. Gallagher	pow
Sgt. E. M. Lee	+

Stirling Mk. 1 BK612 "Z"

April 11/12th. 1943

Sgt. G.A. Davie	+
Sgt. D.O. Dowson	+
Sgt. A.C. Wade	+
Sgt. J.B. Woods	+
Fl/Sgt. L. Copley	+
Sgt. T. F. Richardson	+
Sgt. A. Bowers	+

Stirling Mk. 1 EF362 "N"

March 29/30th. 1943

✓ F/Off. W.G. Cooper	+
✓ Sgt. R.D.T. Kearns	ok
✓ Sgt. C.R. Logan	inj
✓ Sgt. F.E. Smith	ok
✓ Sgt. A.T. Boosma	inj
✓ Sgt. E.R.H. Dyde	ok
✓ Sgt. F.T. Lovegrove	ok

Note; This aircraft collided with Stirling BK663 flown by Jack Dixon whose rear gunner, Sgt. H.L. Burt RNZAF was killed.

After the collision Jack was able to level out and bellied on to the grass alongside the Chedburgh runway. It was not until the crew were safely out of the aircraft that they realised that the rear turret had been torn off in the collision.

Stirling Mk. 111 M7261 "T"

May 23/24th 1943

✓ Sgt. J. J. Egan RAAF	+
✓ Sgt. F.J. North	+
✓ P/Off. P.H. Liddle	+
✓ Sgt. D.E. Alford	+
✓ Sgt. L. Martin	+
✓ Sgt. V.H. Archer	+
✓ Sgt. J. Dodd	+

Stirling Mk. 1 BF381 "P2"

May 12/13th. 1943

P/Off. H. Broadbent	+
Sgt. S.F. Dean	+
P/Off. H. Catch	+
Sgt. N. Douglas	+
Sgt. W.F.W. Hards	+
Sgt. W. Duthie	+
Sgt. J.A. Brown	+

Stirling Mk. 1 EF331 "H"

April 14/15th. 1943

Sgt. L. Powell	+
Sgt. T. Shepherd	+
P/Off. E.H. Scott	+
Sgt. R.E. Dutton	+
Sgt. H.C. Dent	+
Sgt. J. Williams	+
Sgt. E. H. Ingram RCAF	+

Stirling Mk. 1 W7621 "G"

April 4/5th. 1943

Sgt. K.R. Burton DFM	+
Sgt. J.H. Strathear	+
Sgt. G.H.J. Cash	+
Sgt. H.M. Parsons	+
Sgt. A.J. Gordon	+
Sgt. E. McGloin	+
Sgt. J. Broderick	+

Stirling Mk. 1 BF453 "L"

March 27/28th. 1943

P/Off. E. Challis	+
Sgt. R.G. Martin	+
Sgt. R. Anderson	+
Sgt. C.K. Phin	+
Sgt. E. Greenhalgh	+
Sgt. S.A. Woodrow	+
Sgt. D.J. Rae RAAF	+

Stirling Mk. 111 BF469 " M "

March 11/12th. 1943

✓ F/Off. A. Curruthers RCAF	+
✓ Sgt. E.L. Eaglen	+
✓ Sgt. E. Parker	+
✓ Sgt. P.P.Oakes	+
✓ Fl/Sgt. B. Carnell	+
✓ Sgt. B.R. Jennings	+
✓ Fl/Sgt. A.J. Tyrell	pow

Stirling Mk. 1 EF329 " C "

March 3/4th. 1943

P/Off. C.W.V. Pepper	+
Sgt. H.M. Felce	+
Sgt. F. Manglesen RNZAF	pow
Sgt. R.S. Allen	+
Sgt. J.N. Unsworth	+
Sgt. A.V.G. Cridge	+
Sgt. J.W. Rider	+

Stirling Mk.1 R9163 " C "

Feb. 17/18th. 1943

✓ Sgt. J.R. Rundle RNZAF	+
✓ Sgt. H.G. Claridge	ok
✓ Sgt. J.C. Chalmers	ok
✓ Sgt. L.G. Wright	ok
✓ Sgt. T.J. Wilson	ok
✓ Sgt. J.E. Flack	ok
✓ Sgt. H.A. Wilson	ok

Note; Abandoned near Alton, Hants
on return from target.

Stirling Mk. 1 R9282 " Q "

Feb. 3/4th. 1943

✓ S/Ldr. W. Clarke	+
✓ Sgt. D. J. Connearn	pow
✓ Sgt. G.E. Johnson	+
✓ Sgt. J.A. Lawton	pow
✓ Fl/Sgt. T.W.Burke RAAF	pow
✓ Sgt. R.F. Crawley	pow
✓ Sgt. J.C. Adam	+

Stirling Mk. 1 R9194 " N "

Nov. 28/29th. 1942

✓ F/Sgt. F.E. Gatland DFM RNZAF	pow
Sgt. A.D. Short MiD	+
P/Off. P.M.W. Butler	pow
Sgt. C. Pinner	pow
Sgt. G. Booth	pow
Sgt. H.A. Harris RCAF	inj (died)
Sgt. J. Stammers	+

Stirling Mk. 111 BK662 " K "

March 5/6th. 1943

Sgt. H.W. Baldock	+
Sgt. P.R. Kimber	+
F/Off. H. Etienne	+
Sgt. W. Taylor	+
Sgt. W.H. Trotter	+
Sgt. E.H. Wright	+
Sgt. A.B. Amirault RCAF	+

Stirling Mk. 1 R9145 " K "

March 1/2nd. 1943

Fl/Sgt. J.M. Lyall RCAF	pow
Sgt. N.G. Etherden	pow
F/Off. B.F.R. Hotson RNZAF	+
Sgt. D.B. Scoble RNZAF	pow
Sgt. R.H. Thom RNZAF	pow
Sgt. J.G. Jack	pow
Sgt. J.E. Powell	pow

Stirling Mk. R9197 " V "

Feb. 3/4 th. 1943

P/Off. D.H. Smith	+
P/Off. D.G. de Garis	+
Sgt. R.F. Evans	+
F/Off. J.I. Mackenzie RCAF	+
Fl/Sgt. W. McK. Murdoch RCAF	+
Sgt. W.O. Powell RCAF	+
Fl/Sgt. D. O' Neill RCAF	+
Sgt. A.H. Thiessen RCAF	+

Stirling Mk. 1 W7637 " W "

Jan. 15/16th. 1943

S/Ldr. P.W.M. Carlyon DFC	+
Sgt. C.E.C. Ransom	+
F/Off. D.K. O'Donnell RNZAF	+
Sgt. J. L. Kemp	+
Sgt. L. Carr	+
F/Sgt. J.N. Peck RCAF	+
P/Off. P.F. Pinder RCAF	+

Stirling Mk.1 W7584 " D "

Nov. 20/21st. 1942

F/Sgt. E.M. Corlett	+	✓
Sgt. A.H. Bradley RNZAF	ok	✓
Sgt. F.R. Woodyer	ok	✓
Sgt. E.J. Wrigglesworth	ok	✓
Sgt. R.R. Shipley	ok	✓
Sgt. H. Brookfield	ok	✓
Sgt. G.E. Webber	ok	✓

Note: Crew baled out , crashed west
of Stradishall

Stirling Mk. 1 R9146 " S "

Oct. 15/16th. 1942

F/Off. J.M. Paape RNZAF	+
Sgt. J. Holmes	+
Sgt. L.F. Meadows	+
Sgt. J.G.Ferris	+
F/Sgt. R.G. Brasnett	+
Sgt. K.P. Stibbs	+
Sgt. H.Hancocks	+

Stirling Mk. 1 BK599 " R "

Oct. 13/14th. 1942

F/Sgt. R.W. Davison	+
Sgt. S.A. Miller	+
Sgt. R. Dempsay RCAF	+
Sgt. G.D. Murray RCAF	+
Sgt. G.F.J. Phalempin RCAF	+
Sgt. J.D.F. Melrose	pow
Sgt. J. G. Cameron	pow

Stirling Mk.1 R9356 " U "

Sept. 19/20th. 1942

W/Off. P.J. McNamara	pow
Sgt. J. Holland	+
F/Off. C.J. Whittingham	+
Sgt. R.T.J. Collett RCAF	+
Sgt. C. J. Hanna RAAF	+
F/Sgt. W.M. Thompson RCAF	pow
F/Off. G.W. Findlay RCAF	pow

Stirling Mk.1 R9350 " T "

Sept. 16/17th. 1942

✓W/Off. S.A. Levenson	+
✓Sgt. G.B. Melton	+
✓F/Sgt. S.S. Newcombe	+
✓Sgt. W. J. Davies	+
✓Sgt. L.C. Tillin	+
✓Sgt. G.A. Barrow	pow
✓Sgt. R.J. Cox	pow

Stirling Mk.1 R9166 " H "

Sept. 13/14th. 1942

F/Sgt. R.J. Cartmell RCAF	+ ✓
Sgt. R. Dicks	+ ✓
P/Off. P. Fussey	pow
F.Sgt. J.G.Spouler RCAF	+
P/Off. H.E. Orr RCAF	+
Sgt. R.F. Reynolds	+
Sgt. S. Watson	+

Stirling Mk.1 BF337 " B "

Sept. 4/5th. 1942

F/Lt. J.G. Smith DFC , RCAF	pow
Sgt. E. Meredith	+
P/Off. D.N. Osborne	pow
Sgt. W.B.Watt	pow
Sgt. I.M.R. Stewart	+
Sgt. G. Davison	pow
P/Off. A. McCarthy RNZAF	+

Stirling Mk.1 R9355 " O "

Sept. 8/9th. 1942

P/Off. C.D. Ince	ok
P/Off. C.J.Whittingham	ok
Sgt. F.C. Fray	ok
P/Off. R.S. Peach	ok
Sgt. W.J. Demster RCAF	ok
P/Off. A.F. Arnold	ok
Sgt. W. Johnson-Biggs	ok

Stirling Mk.1 R9155 " Q "

Aug. 27/28th. 1942

F/Off. A.R. Skone	+
Sgt. J. King	+
P/Off. R.H.Dunckley RNZAF	+
Sgt. W. J. Bushell	+
Sgt. C. Lyle	+
F/Sgt. R.A. Coleham	+
Sgt. R.R. Gray RCAF	+

NOTE : Hit by flak which caused the port inner engine to fall from it's mounting.
The aircraft made an emergency landing at Manston, Kent when the Stirling was wrecked.

Bill Johnson-Biggs, the rear gunner , is one of our oldest members (93) and a regular attender at Reunions. He went on to fly many more ops and ended the war as a Flt. Lt. and holder of the DFC.

These aircraft and crew listings have been taken from Bill Chorley's Bomber Command Losses for 1942 and 1943. (With Bill's permission)

Peter M. Walker

-----To be continued in the next Nightjar -----

SERGEANTS' MESS
R.A.F. Station, Stradishall



Christmas Day, 1943

✠✠ MENU ✠✠

DINNER

Tomato Sauce

Roast Turkey
and
Stuffing

Roast Pork
and
Apple Sauce

Roast Potatoes

Brussels Sprouts

Cauliflower

Christmas Pudding

Mince Pies

Brandy Sauce

Celery

Cheese

Biscuits

Dessert

Apples

Drinks

ANY COMPLAINTS ?

Did any of our members partake of this wartime feast ? Jock would like to know .
Roast Turkey , (a Norfolk turkey ? Bootiful).

Many permanent RAF stations had a pig farm to use up the swill from the various messes. Did Stradishall have a pig farm that supplied the (roast) pork ?

Certainly some permanent RAF stations had them into the 1950s of perhaps later. I remember that Marham had one in the 1950s , situated in some buildings that had previously been part of the old Narborough WW1 airfield .

Peter M.Walker