



Nightjar

Winter 2010/2011

Contents:

- 1 2010 reunion
- 2 Notices
- 3 AGM
- 10 In Memoriam
- 11 Bits & Pieces
- 12 Flt Lt Jack Wetherly
- 14 100 Group Association
New Standard
- 15 Books
- 16 Richmond Golf Club
- 17 Photographs
- 18 Committee
- Enc Reunion Booking Forms

Annual Reunion - Saturday 9th July 2011

Following discussion by the members of your Committee, we decided to hold this year's Reunion at the Hallmark Hotel, Derby, on Saturday 9 July. The advantages of this location in terms of ease of access by road and rail for the majority of members, and its proximity to the National Memorial Arboretum, where our Memorial is located, were felt to outweigh the attraction of holding the reunion in Norfolk, although the latter option has not been dismissed as a possible location for a future event. As usual, proceedings will start with the Annual General Meeting at 1600 hours. We will then gather in the Main Bar from 1900 hours for pre-Dinner drinks before moving to the Edale Room for Dinner at 1930 hours. Those who came last year will remember that we changed the location to the Edale Room on that occasion, as the numbers attending were not large enough to justify using the Garden Room as we did in 2009. We have elected to use the Edale Room again this year so that we are not unnecessarily preventing the Hotel from using the Garden Room for a larger function. However, this does mean that there will be a limit on numbers and early booking is therefore recommended.

As in 2010, the Hallmark Hotel is offering special rates of £66 per person dinner, bed and breakfast for the Friday and Sunday nights and £72 per person for the Reunion Dinner, bed and breakfast on the Saturday night; this latter price includes wine with the meal. The booking form for the event is attached to this edition of *Nightjar*; it should be sent direct to the Hotel at the address at the top of the form. Please note that the Hotel requires credit card details in order to confirm bookings. You will see the menu we have arranged for the Dinner on Saturday evening. Should any of the courses not suit your taste or dietary requirements then please annotate the hotel booking form accordingly.

On the Sunday morning, at 1200 hours there will be a brief ceremony at our Squadron Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas near Lichfield, when a wreath will be laid on behalf of the Association. So that we know who is coming to the various events, please complete the attached proforma and return it to the Treasurer. In particular, please indicate whether you require a lift from Derby to the Arboretum and back to Derby or whether you would be able to offer such a lift.

We are asking as many of you as are able to come to Derby for this Reunion. Your Committee is happy to continue arranging annual reunions but we do need **your** support to make them a success. We look forward to seeing you at Derby for what we hope will be an enjoyable weekend.

Alan Mawby

Reunion Dinner Menu

Carrot & Coriander Soup

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Pork Steak with Apple Mash  
Fresh Market Vegetables  
Sage & Onion Sauce

~~~~

Fruits of the Forest Pavlova

~~~~

Freshly Brewed Filter Coffee  
Or Tea

#### Alternative (to be pre ordered)

An alternative meat or vegetarian meal can be served but must be pre-ordered with at least 24 hours notice.

Please arrange this with the Hotel.

# Apology

It was my intention to publish the Nightjar in November, but due to circumstances, some of which were beyond my control, I failed, and the decision was made to delay the issue until we had all the details of the reunion in the summer. Many of you had asked what had happened to the Christmas edition and it was gratifying to know that so many of you had missed it, and enjoyed reading it. I will try harder to get better organized this autumn. Who said that you have more time on your hands when you retire?

John

## V-Force Reunion

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012**  
**Newark Air Museum**

After the success of last year's gathering, there will be another reunion for those of you that were on the V-Force in 2012. An event not to be missed!

[www.vforcereunion.co.uk](http://www.vforcereunion.co.uk)

## Bruntingthorpe Air Museum

**Lutterworth Leicestershire**

**Cold War Jets Open Day**  
**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

[www.bruntingthorpe.com](http://www.bruntingthorpe.com)



### Airfix Vickers Valiant BK Mk1

Becoming available in the Spring

Size 456 x 488 mm

**£39:99**

**MINUTES OF THE 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE No 214 (FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION**  
**HELD AT THE HALLMARK HOTEL, DERBY, ON SATURDAY 17 JULY 2010**

|                    |                   |           |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Committee present: | Wg Cdr Alan Mawby | Chairman  |
|                    | John Gulliver     | Treasurer |
|                    | Jock Whitehouse   | Historian |
|                    | Roy Monk          | Committee |
|                    | Shaun Broaders    | Committee |

and 10 other members.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all the members attending and specially those new members attending for the first time: Mrs Linda Fraser (niece of Sgt Holsworthy) and her husband Ian and Danny Daniels (crew chief 1973-1977) and Di Daniels.

Apologies

It was recorded that apologies had been received from MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, ACM Sir David Parry-Evans, AVM Eric Macey, Gp Capt Peter Hill, Wg Cdr John Brown, Geoff Barrell, Alan Deadman, George Fisher, John and Gwen Gilpin, Sylvia and Maurice Harding, Peter Jowett, Godfrey Moffatt, Vic Pheasant, and Alan Skelton. In addition, the Association Secretary, Peter Walker, had been involved in a minor road traffic accident the previous evening and was unable to be present.

In Memoriam

The Chairman stated that a minute's silence in memory of all those who had served on the Squadron, and especially those who gave their lives whilst serving on the Squadron in peace and war, would be observed at the Squadron Memorial at Alrewas on Sunday morning. The names of members of the Association and former members of the Squadron whose deaths had been reported since the last reunion in July 2009 were then read out:

Mrs Joyce Birch in January 2010  
Brian Burgess on 8 July 2010 aged 77 (Valiant airframe mechanic)  
Mrs Margaret Dain  
Fg Off Patrick Dougherty in 2009 aged 86 (Fortress pilot 1945)  
Wg Cdr Lucian Ercolani in March 2010 aged 92 (Wellington pilot 1941)  
H F Farley on 26 March 2009 (Air Gunner 1941-1942)  
J E (Joe) Fell on 12 February 2010 (Stirling/Fortress air gunner – 30 operations)  
Bob Hooke on 20 March 2010 (Stirling pilot – 28 operations)  
Wg Cdr David Mullarky in November 2009 (OC 214 Sqn 1966-1968)  
WO Arthur Nichol RCAF (Stirling navigator)  
L F Palmer in November 2009 aged 88 (Fitter IIE Stradishall 1941-1942)  
Flt Lt Keith Richards in February 2010 (Victor navigator radar early 1970s)  
Eddie Wheeler on 7 October 2009 aged 88  
G H (Howie) Wing in November 2009 aged 87

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Hallmark Hotel, Derby, on Saturday 18 July 2009

The Minutes of the previous AGM were published in the Christmas 2009 Edition of *Nightjar*. No comments had been forthcoming. The motion that the Minutes be accepted was agreed, having been proposed by Tom Raine and seconded by Paul Henry.

## Matters Arising

The Chairman noted that the amendments to the Association's Constitution, agreed at the last Annual General Meeting, removed the distinction between full and associate members and also reduced the quorum required to pass resolutions at Annual or Extraordinary General Meetings from 20 to 15 members. However, this meeting had only just achieved the revised figure of 15 members. At present, the Constitution did not set out the way ahead in the event that a quorum was not present. The Chairman therefore proposed an addition to paragraph 6 of the Constitution as follows:

*In the absence of a quorum at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting, any resolutions shall be made the subject of a postal and/or e-mail ballot of the current membership. A simple majority of those responding by post and/or e-mail shall determine the result of the ballot. In the event of a nil response to a postal and/or e-mail ballot, the Executive Committee shall determine the way ahead in the best interests of the Association.*

A motion to approve the amendment was passed, having been proposed by Paul Henry and seconded by Tom Raine.

Other matters arising would be dealt with under the appropriate Agenda Item.

## Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that the main activity over the past year, apart from arranging the present Reunion, was the tidying-up following last year's major event. The bill from the monumental mason for the Memorial itself and its installation at Alrewas had been settled, together with the bills for the services provided on the day by the Arboretum and by the coach firm. In addition, the Association had paid £690 to the National Memorial Arboretum for the long-term maintenance of the Squadron memorial. Finally, the donations to the RAF Benevolent Fund (£600) and Bomber Command Memorial Appeal (£214), as approved at the last Annual General Meeting, had gone ahead and been acknowledged by the respective organisations. In part, this expenditure had been made possible by the proceeds from the sale of the 'Brackles' books, which up to the present had realised £1183 (one further book having been sold since the end of the last calendar year).

## Treasurer's Report & Approval of Accounts

The Association Treasurer reported on the accounts for the period to 31 December 2009 (copy attached to these Minutes). The Balance Carried Forward of £3356.60 at the end of 2009 showed a drop of £2249.22 compared with the end of 2008, largely because the latter figure included donations to our Memorial Appeal which had now largely been spent. Included in the Balance Carried Forward at the end of 2009 was £814 representing the donations to the RAF Benevolent Fund and Bomber Command Memorial Appeal, cheques for which had been issued but had not cleared as at 31 December 2009. The balance of the Memorial Appeal now stood at £16.22 which, in accordance with the decision of the last Annual General Meeting, would go towards the cost of wreaths. Although the problem with members forgetting to pay their subscriptions and with the change of bank branch sort code persisted, there was still a net increase in Members Funds Available at the end of 2009 of £402.41 to £2542.60.

The motion to approve the Accounts for the year to 31 December 2009 was approved unanimously, having been proposed by Tom Raine and seconded by Gerhard Heilig. Thanks were extended to John Gulliver for his efforts as Treasurer and to Vic Pheasant for auditing the accounts.

## Historian's Report

The Association Historian briefed the Meeting on activities over the past year related to the Squadron history. An updated and expanded version of the Historian's report appears on page 7.

## Election of Officers

7. The Chairman reported that in October 2009 he had received a letter from John and Carol Edwards, who administer the 214 Squadron Website, stating that they no longer wished to be members of the Committee, citing the reluctance on the part of some members of the Committee to place information from the Squadron Roll of Honour on the Squadron website. Although the Chairman had spoken at length to John Edwards and attempted to persuade him to change his mind, he could not be so persuaded. However, John Edwards had stated that he and Carol would remain members of the Association and would continue to place our material on the website when requested. It had been agreed by the Committee that the Association should continue to fund the hosting of the website, particularly as that would give us some influence over its contents, now that Carol and John Edwards were no longer members of the Committee.

All of the remaining members of the Committee had indicated their willingness to serve for another year. A motion that the existing Committee be re-elected was passed, having been proposed by Tom Raine and seconded by Gerhard Heilig. The Committee for the period commencing from the date of the Meeting thus comprises:

|           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Chairman  | Wg Cdr Alan Mawby |
| Secretary | Peter Walker      |
| Treasurer | John Gulliver     |
| Historian | Jock Whitehouse   |
| Member    | Shaun Broaders    |
| Member    | Roy Monk          |
| Member    | Vic Pheasant      |
| Member    | Godfrey Moffatt   |

## OPTIONS FOR THE 2011 REUNION

Noting that attendance was considerably down on 2009, the Chairman invited views on the date and location of the Reunion in 2011 and beyond. It appeared that holding a reunion in July was no more suitable than September, which had already been problematic for some members. Various opinions were aired, including the possibility of alternating reunions between Derby and Norwich, of combining a reunion in Derby with a visit to the RAF Museum at Cosford, or holding it at Imperial War Museum Duxford combined with a display day. Citing experience of a No 100 Group Reunion, the attraction of holding a reunion in Norwich and being hosted by the local villagers at Oulton was propounded, although it was not clear whether the villagers would welcome a second reunion being imposed upon them. Furthermore, an important consideration, in view of the age of many members, would be transport links, which almost inevitably would limit the location to a hotel with car parking on site and a railway station close by. No firm conclusions were reached, and the Chairman undertook to review the options in terms of both location and date with the other members of the Committee.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman outlined the arrangements for the informal visit to the Squadron Memorial at Alrewas on the Sunday morning.

The Treasurer announced that he had represented the Association at the V-Force Reunion at the Newark Air Museum on 24/25 April 2010.

Thanks were extended to John and Carol Edwards for their work on maintaining the Squadron website.

# No. 214 (FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

## 2009 INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

### Income

### Expenditure

#### No. 1 Account

|                        |                         |                               |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Subscription/Donations | £1,122.00               | Donations                     | £0.00                   |
| Sales                  | £50.00                  | Printing                      | £331.10                 |
| Other                  |                         | Stationery                    | £110.66                 |
| Memorial Appeal        | £4,635.50               | Postage                       | £248.93                 |
| Brackles               | £1,178.00               | Telephone                     | £74.49                  |
|                        |                         | Travel                        | £151.50                 |
|                        |                         | Annual Reunion - Contribution | £180.00                 |
|                        |                         | Dedication                    | £7,999.92               |
|                        |                         | Wreaths                       | £75.00                  |
|                        |                         | Committee Meeting Expenses    | £0.00                   |
|                        |                         | Web Site                      | £63.12                  |
|                        |                         | Misc                          | £0.00                   |
|                        | <b><u>£6,985.50</u></b> |                               | <b><u>£9,234.72</u></b> |

#### Total Funds

#### Less Appeal Fund

|                                                                   |      |                  |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2009 Opening Balances                     | Bank | <b>£5,605.82</b> | <b>£2,140.18</b>      |
|                                                                   | Cash | £0.00            | 0                     |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2009 Closing Balances                   | Bank | <b>£3,356.60</b> | <b>£3,340.38</b>      |
|                                                                   | Cash | £0.00            | £0.00                 |
| <b>Increase in No 1 Account Funds Excluding Memorial Fund</b>     |      |                  | <b>£1,200.20</b>      |
| <b>Reserve for donations to RAFBF &amp; Bomber Command Appeal</b> |      |                  | <b>£814.00</b>        |
| <b>Net Increase in Members Funds at 31 Dec 09</b>                 |      |                  | <b>£386.20</b>        |
| <b>Residue of Memorial Appeal Funds</b>                           |      |                  | <b>£16.22</b>         |
| <b>Total Net Increase in Members Funds</b>                        |      |                  | <b><u>£402.42</u></b> |

*Original Signed*

11 January 2010

J GULLIVER

Treasurer

This is to certify that I have completed an audit of the 2009 Accounts of No 214(FMS) Squadron Association and found them to be a true and accurate record.

*Original Signed*

10 March 2010

V A PHEASANT

# HISTORIAN'S REPORT

This is an updated version to that presented at the July Annual General Meeting.

## **Chedburgh. The Final Call.**

Our Association wreath was laid at Chedburgh on Sunday 11 July at the conclusion of the No.218 (Gold Coast) Squadron Association's 18th Reunion weekend to which we have always been invited. 218 Squadron flew Lancasters from Chedburgh (1944-1945) until disbanding in July 1945. 30 ex-aircrew attended the Saturday luncheon (120 in total) at the home of Margery Griffiths (ex-Chedburgh WAAF driver) the organiser, the highlight being a flypast by the BBMF Lancaster in the very close company of Hurricane LF363 (YB-W). Three runs were made, the Hurricane dipping its wings in salute on departure which itself was sadly significant for with time taking its toll, this was to be the final such reunion. However, we will endeavour to lay our Association wreath annually possibly in November along with Stradishall. For his personal closure one Lancaster pilot thanked Margery not only for taking him and his crew out to their aircraft but especially for waiting and collecting them on return.

## **Flt. J W Collins.** (see last edition of Nightjar')

New information has clarified how this officer, the captain of a '214' ferry crew captured in France in December 1940 came to be buried in the military section of Botley Cemetery (Oxford) in February 1945, classified as a 'pilot under training'. It seems likely that after his crew baled out, the captain was either seriously injured when leaving it too late to bale out safely or still in his Wellington when it came down. His injuries ultimately resulted in his repatriation and by early 1945 he had apparently recovered well enough to return to flying duties being posted to a Glider Training School only to lose his life in an accident involving a sortie in an Airspeed Oxford. At this time training schools were producing a surplus of operational pilots but with the massive airborne requirement for the approaching Rhine Crossing plus the effect of the significant loss of glider pilots at Arnhem, it is quite likely that any suitable flying skills were being 'converted' to handling gliders.

## **Stradishall Airfield**

If you have a little spare cash to 'invest' you might be tempted to be the new owner of the historic flying field area which according to notices posted on the gate is now 'surplus to MoD requirements'. The land will first be offered to the farming families from whom it was purchased so long ago, if indeed any remain! So it could well be goodbye to the 'Apaches' from Wattisham (plus other mysterious blacked out night visiting helicopters) which use the area but if the land does return to farming (likely) I anticipate a very careful check being made before ploughing commences as some very interesting pieces of aviation history might make an unwelcome appearance including some from '214' !

## **P/O Henry Catch.**

In response to a request made by Mr Chris Lowe, (via our S/Ldr Moffatt) a cousin of the above officer, killed from Chedburgh on 12 May 1943 (navigator in the crew of Sgt Broadbent) I provided a comprehensive summary of the events surrounding his time on 214 and his loss. On receipt of thanks from Mr Lowe I was also able to provide him with a photograph of his relative's grave in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

## **Roll of Honour**

The document provided for the Memorial Service in July 2009 has now been further updated and whilst one can never claim 100% accuracy for such work, it is believed that the latest effort is as complete as possible. Any comments and suggestions, however, are always welcome. The copy sent to John and Carol Edwards, who look after our website, should complement their work in the same area

## **Stirling House**

It has been hoped that the many proposed cuts promised for 'officialdom' will not affect the work being carried out on this historic building but even if this proves to be so, the achievements so far are quite remarkable. It is planned to locate the case containing the bound vellum copy of the Station's history (hopefully together with a Roll of Honour) in the Reception Area. The 'RAF Room' is now undergoing a further 'makeover'. Two other ex-214 stations have also been in the news. RAF Upwood held a 'Forties weekend' recently. (My last information on Upwood was that it was in a very poor state of repair) and it seems that the old Sergeants Mess at RAF Feltwell is to become a Community Centre (this via the 'Friends of 75(NZ) Squadron's newsletter).

## **90th Birthday.**

I recently attended the 90th birthday celebrations for Ron Penhaligan who after leaving his beloved West Country to join the RAF ultimately arrived at Stradishall and 214 Squadron in 1940 as an engine fitter, later moving to Chedburgh and to Fairford and Dunmow with 620 Squadron. Ron married a local girl and stayed in Suffolk becoming the local baker and his excellent memory has proved invaluable in writing about 'early 214'. As a surprise item I prepared a display of 'Ron's aircraft' including Wellingtons and Stirlings plus a Horsa glider/Stirling IV pairing to remind him of his Fairford days.

## **Battle of Britain.**

The 70th Anniversary of the above has rightly enjoyed massive media coverage but a few untold stories remain. Although not unknown for pilots to move from 'bombers to fighters' (this being easier later on with the introduction of the Mosquito) rarely did pilots move from fighters to heavy bombers. 'Battle of Britain' aircrew records show that Sgt. Pilot S A Levenson joined No 611 Squadron (Spitfires) in July 1940 and was later credited with one Ju88 and one Do17 in the great September battles. A later note states: 'killed since Battle'.

Just before 21.00hrs on the 16th September 1942, Stirling R9350 (BU-T) left Stradishall bound for Essen, one of eight despatched by No 214 (FMS) Squadron and captained by W/O S A ('Sandy') Levenson who after arriving from No 12 OTU in July had already completed 13 operations, quite an accomplishment in those very difficult early Stirling days but sadly he would not return from his 14th. His Stirling was shot down at 00.08 hours over Belgium, his adversary being the German night-fighter 'ace' Hptm Walter Ehle. W/O Levenson and four of his crew lie in Heverlee War Cemetery, Belgium.

## **Smile Please!**

No 214 Squadron were unknowingly photographed by the Luftwaffe on 3 September 1940 itself a very significant date. Right during the heat of the 'Battle', a high-flying Junkers reconnaissance aircraft traversed eastern and southern England obtaining a very high quality photographic coverage of the country. The roll film (7" square negatives) advanced automatically, controlled by the pilot.

With other things to do, the RAF had no interest in intercept and probably could not do so anyway! The photograph including RAF Stradishall identifies about twenty 214 Squadron Wellingtons at dispersal, plus a whole mass of other detail - a remarkable research tool. Just three nights before (31 August) the squadron had lost its first operational crew - that of Fg Off Craigie-Halkett brought down over Holland whilst on one of the first Berlin 'ops'.

Quite recently, a newly arrived (Australian) neighbour questioned the boundary line between our respective properties (trying to gain advantage) and although I explained the complexity of old field ditches and hedges, I like to think that he was silenced when confronted with a 1940 Luftwaffe aerial photograph clearly showing the ancient field ditch!



## **Guild of Aviation Artists**

As usual, the July London Exhibition displayed many varied works of a very high standard-some remarkably so, especially the 'Vulcan' which featured prominently, along with some excellent 'Victor' studies, one depicting the dramatic moment when Bruntingthorpe's 'non-flying' machine actually left mother earth on its now famous heart-stopping unscheduled 'hop'. In the last 'Nightjar' I made mention of Flt Lt Kirsty Moore flying as 'Red Three' with the 'Red Arrows' and not only was one piece of work a superb pencil portrait of the lady in question and her 'Hawk', but its catalogue number was 214!

## **Sgt 'Jimmy' Hollingworth**

Mrs Linda Fraser, niece of the above wireless operator (Stirlings and B.17s) contacted Peter for any possible help regarding her uncle's service on 214 Squadron. Linda did have a photograph of a crew which included him plus our own John Gilpin and Gerhard Heilig and it goes without saying that Linda was both amazed and delighted to know that both these two stalwarts were active members of the Association. Linda and her husband Ian immediately joined the Association and both thoroughly enjoyed the Reunion when Linda was able to spend time with Gerhard and although John and Gwen Gilpin were unable to be present, the 'Frasers' flew over to Ireland soon after to meet up with them to enjoy John's clear recollections of time on the squadron. Sometimes you have to work for results, but occasionally it just happens! Sgt Hollingworth survived his tour with 214 but unfortunately was killed later when instructing on a Wellington OTU.

## **F/Lt 'Bill' Jacobs DFC (1921-1993)**

Peter was contacted by Mr Ron Jacobs brother of the above officer who had served as a Flight Engineer on 214 Squadron. Ron forwarded a document compiled by Bill which proved to be a comprehensive coverage of his flying career and showed that he had seen more than a little action with both 214 and later with No 195 Squadron (Lancasters) at Wrattling Common. Bill's skill as a Flight Engineer was rewarded with the role of Engineering Leader and also the award of the DFC. Bill's pilot at Chedburgh was F/Sgt. John Sellar a quiet young Scot who quickly mastered the mighty Stirling and proved to be an exceptional captain completing 22 operations.

## **'Tommy and 'Micky' Tompson.**

I was pleased recently to meet Mrs Brenda Steele the daughter of the above couple who both served at Stradishall as Stirling groundcrew, 'Micky' being one of few female WAAF engine technicians. Their postings were responsible for a little more than providing TLC for aircraft for they later married! Their respective comprehensive instructional notes clearly illustrate the standards which they were expected to attain.

## **Coronation Review**

Organising the flypast of huge formations of a bewildering variety of aircraft types the 1953 Coronation review must have been a monumental task, but some of the names of pilots airborne on that day might bring back memories. ('Coronation Wings' by Eric Barlow is an excellent data source)

Avro Lincoln. (No 214 Squadron) Captains: Sqn Ldr E P Landon, Fg Off A A Ramus, Flt Lt W H Burden, Fg Off P R Watson, and F/Sgt A Ross. EE Canberra (No 109 Squadron) Flt Lt J G Wynne.

## **Javelin's long distance flight-refuelling. (see last Nightjar')**

John Gulliver has been informed by a participant on this exercise that the facts were incorrect as in fact the Javelins did land along the route. Evidently, even official write-ups can be wrong, for whatever reason!

Jock M Whitehouse

# In Memoriam

**Alan Gardner** 21 Nov 10 - King's Lynn. Alan was an accomplished navigator who had a full career in the RAF and was a member of the Association. He flew the Canberra, Valiant and Victor K1 (214 Squadron) and the Victor K2. He was the historian on 214, and his scrap books and photo albums were a detailed record of the antics of the Sqn. He was also a good friend and mentor to a very new and inexperienced first tourist Nav Plotter (Ed). Alan and his wife Florence were to be seen at the V-Force reunion running the Valiant desk. Sadly, as mentioned in the last Nightjar, Alan's Nav Radar on 214, Keith Richards, died earlier in 2010.

**Geoffrey Parnell** Dec 10 - Didcot. Geoff was an air gunner on the Stirling during WW2 and survived a crash in BF393 P-XE, in Pevensey Bay, returning from a raid on Nuremburg on the night of 10/11 Aug 43 in which 2 of his crew members died, and the other 5 injured. The following month, having recovered, he was on a raid in Stirling EF393 B-UF when he was shot down and was one of only 2 survivors. He spent the rest of the war as a POW. A couple of months before his death he was told about the Sqn website. His God Daughter, Sue Lines, printed out much of it in booklet form for Geoff to read. He was 'over the moon' to receive it, and it gave him great pleasure to read it in his final days.

**JE (Joe) Fell** 12 Feb 10 - Aged 87. Joe was a rear gunner on Stirlings and Fortresses on George Mackie's Crew.

**Brian Burgess** 8 Jul 10 - Aged 76. Brian was a National Service airframe mechanic working on Valiants at RAF Marham. He then worked for the English Electric Company.

**Mrs Eileen Cox** Jul 10. Eileen was the wife of George Cox.

**Mrs Muriel Johnson-Biggs** 10 Aug 10. Muriel was the wife of the late Johnny Johnson-Biggs.

**Lester (Les) Bostock** Bomb Aimer /Radio Countermeasures Operator on the Stirling, he was a member of John Wynne's second crew.

**Robin Murray** 14 Oct 10. Robin's remarkable story was related in the Dec 08 edition of the Nightjar. He celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in September. Unfortunately he suffered a stroke in August which meant that he spent his final days in hospital.

**John Pitchford** 19 Nov 10 at St Thomas' Hospital. John was a FS Bomb Aimer on the Fortress when he was shot down on 22 Aug 44. He was taken prisoner and was taken to the Bankau Camp (Bacow) in Poland.

**Wg Cdr Cyril Miles** 27 Jan 11 - Aged 95. Cyril was a Sqn Ldr on 214 Sqn from Oct 41 - May 42. He crash landed a Wellington in Feb 42 in bad weather near Cambridge. All the crew survived.

**Frank Lee** 21 Feb 10 - Aged 89. Frank joined the RAF in 1940 at the age of 19. Following flying training in Canada, and an instructional tour, he returned to England in 1942 to complete a 'heavy' conversion on the Wellington and was then posted to 214 Sqn at Chedburgh to fly the Sirling. He flew for 3 months of operations, but was shot down over Berlin having dropped his bombs. He just managed to bale out, only to be confronted by angry townsfolk; Two crew members survived. He was sent to Stalag Luft III and then survived the long march in 1945. He was returned to the UK on VE Day. He became a school teacher and RAFVR Officer flying the Chipmunk and Tiger Moth with a short detachment on the Hastings in 1952. He retired from the RAF on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Sqn Ldr Geoff Cole** 20 Feb 11 - Aged 91. Geoff was a Sgt pilot who flew the Wellington in 1940.

## We will remember them

## TIME SLIP

Whilst fascinating stories linked to the subversive role of the 'Secret Army' (sabotage parties operating out of secret bunkers etc) in the event of a German invasion force landing in 1940, are gradually being 'revealed' (even in my Suffolk village we learn that one large secluded house once housed the HQ of a secret Signals Unit responsible for the design, construction, repair and distribution of radios suitable for use by the local 'underground groups'), few of the population may realise that a similar scheme was in being at a much later date.

As the 'Cold War' progressed, it was believed that the initial main threat would be attacks by Soviet Bloc aircraft and to assist the main radar coverage of UK a complex network of underground posts were constructed to be manned by the Royal Observer Corps whose task was to identify, plot and report any aircraft in UK airspace. They were kept in practice by 'home exercises' flown by NATO air forces in which they had to sort out the 'Rats from the Terriers' (friend and foe). As the major threat became one of potential nuclear strikes the role of the ROC changed to one of locating, typing (air or ground burst) and reporting any such attack in their immediate area in the hope of course of actually surviving to report it. As we know, IT never happened and by 1991/2 the bunkers had been vacated and sealed off. Some remain, and I was fortunate enough recently to be present with a few other interested parties, at the re-opening of a 'local bunker'. With some trepidation I descended the vertical ladder (app.12 feet) to enter a well constructed mini complex providing a WC, primitive ventilation and drainage pump and a room (app 9x9x7 feet) and very nearly as it was when closed. Mattresses and chairs remained plus considerable paperwork including the special light sensitive paper which when placed outside in a cylindrical holder would indicate any nuclear flash this data being reported to the main Control Post. On looking around I could only admire the dedication of the many volunteers who had spent so many hours in fairly miserable conditions 'doing their bit'. With the blessing of the landowner, the complex might possibly be cleaned up and returned to a near-operational state, (telephones etc are missing) preserving yet another example of what was undertaken to hopefully retain our freedom. Watch this space!

## ONE FOR THE LADIES

If you ever feel like trying something just a little more unusual and challenging why not consider applying to be one of the 'Breitling Wing Walkers'? Nothing too complicated, just the willingness to be strapped to the top wing of an up-rated 'Stearman' well protected by a 'Lycra' figure-hugging jump suit, and at high-speed and rarely 'straight and level', appear to be thoroughly enjoying it all (including very tight turns) by executing exciting poses and waving enthusiastically to the crowd-all at low level (Even if it is raining!). Apparently hundreds apply when the positions are advertised. Their display is literally stunning and highly skilled, but to perform 'head to head' (one girl inverted just a few feet from her companion flying below) or to leave your main harness to then sit on the leading edge of the upper wing just a few feet from a very big propeller (still posing and waving) or to make your final pass, not in your harness as expected, but sitting back in the cockpit still smiling and waving, is perhaps not for the fainthearted. Apart from being quite fearless, one essential is that you MUST like your pilot! Just a thought!

## SEPT SAULX PAINTING

You may recall the article in last April's 'Nightjar' regarding Ray Quinlan's lovely painting made in the churchyard at Sept Saulx, the centre piece of which was the site, against one church wall, of the seven graves of a No 214 Squadron Stirling crew. We have been contacted (via the website) by Mr Ian Gell who told us of the surprise and pleasure given to his family on seeing the picture especially his grandmother whose brother was Sergeant Robert Ernest Dutton, the air-bomber in the crew. Ian was asking if there was any chance of obtaining a copy of the picture but the actual painting now hangs in Chedburgh church and therefore cannot be used for copying. However, I was able to retrieve a good quality print held by Maurice Leary at Chedburgh knowing that plans for its display elsewhere in the village had fallen through. So now it will go to a good home, but it is worth noting that so far this is the only family link with any of the crew.

Prior to obtaining the above mentioned print I had spoken to Ray Quinlan who was delighted to know of this response to his painting and was more than happy to give his permission for any copies to be taken as and when. I advised Ian of the contact to use if any details are required by the family of Sgt Dutton's service career and will sort out a few Chedburgh 'items'. As regards any cost involved I suggested to Ian that that it might be very appropriate to make a donation to the Bomber Command Memorial Fund a suggestion to which he readily agreed. All in all a rather pleasing chain of events the outcome of which should appear in the next 'NJ'

Jock Whitehouse

***This extract, found whilst trawling through some old aviation publications, is from an article in the very FIRST edition of 'Flypast' (1981) which described the actions which took place on 8/9 May 1941.***

Bomber Command lost a total of 12 bombers. Excluding those noted above, 214 Sqn lost two Wellingtons (Sqn Ldr Eddison R1226 and Sgt Browell R3208), one of these going into the sea. Further Wellingtons were lost by 301 Sqn (Sgt Bojakowski R1227), 304 Sqn (Flg Off Lynes R1473 crashed at Plantijnne) and 305 Sqn (Sgt Dorman R1322). One last loss, Flg Off Gill's 83 Sqn Hampden minelayer, is known to have crashed into the sea. The night intruder claims are difficult to determine, but one NJG2 pilot succeeded in destroying two Defiants on the ground during a strafe of Wittering. S/Ldr F L H Eddison DFC and his crew crashed near Anna Paulowna in northern Holland but were buried in Bergen op Zoom War Cemetery. F/Sgt W H Browell is buried in Becklingen War Cemetery, Germany. His crew, however, are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. Both crews were on an operation to Hamburg.

*(Article reproduced from the edition of 'Flypast' with permission from the publishers, Key Publishing [Ltd. www.flypast.com](http://www.flypast.com))*

## **FLT LT JACK WETHERLY**

Flt Lt Jack Wetherly DFC MID was killed in action on 29/30th March 1943 on a raid against Berlin. He was flying Halifax Mk.11, DT744 MP-K of 76 Sqn. Linton-on-Ouse. He is buried in Kiel War Cemetery. On the date of his death he was on his second tour, the first having commenced in September 1940 with 214 Sqn at Stradishall on Wellingtons, ending on March 13th 1941 with 26 operations to his credit.

In July this year I had a 'phone call from a lady in Hertfordshire who had a very great friend, Ann, who was the daughter of Jack Wetherly. Ann knew little of her father's RAF background and she wondered if I could be of help. She knew that her father had won the DFC but does not have the medal or the citation. After Jack's death Ann's mother married again and had more children and the medal is held by her stepbrother. Sadly her stepbrother has no contact with her. After consulting Jock Whitehouse I was able to advise this lady to contact RAF Disclosures at Cranwell in order to obtain a copy of her father's RAF service record. Only a family member can request a service record so she must apply herself. Next I thought that she might like to have a copy of her father's DFC citation. For this I consulted our Chairman, Alan Mawby. When I mentioned the name Jack Wetherly, 76 Sqn. and Linton-on-Ouse, Alan tapped his memory and was fairly sure that a copy of this citation, signed, as C/O of 76 Sqn, by Leonard Cheshire, was on display in the Linton history room. On a later visit Alan was able to confirm that it was the citation for Jack Wetherly, he had to remove it from a frame, copy it, then put it back on display. One copy has now been sent to Jack's daughter, Ann, another will be held in the 214 Sqn archives. Alan is also hoping, when next at Kew, that he can find a copy of the promulgation of the MID in the London Gazette. In the 214 Sqn Operations book and in the DFC citation Jack's name is spelt as Wetherley but I am assured that it is Wetherly without the last 'e'. I have produced a list of Jack's 26 Wellington operations with 214 Sqn. for two reasons. Firstly they will bring back memories for those of our members who were serving at that time, and secondly, it will show the wide range of targets attacked, including oil refineries. This list is reproduced on the next page and a copy has also been sent to Jack's daughter Ann.

# FLT LT JACK WETHERLY No 214(FMS) SQUADRON

## OPERATIONS FLOWN 1940/41

| 1940  | Wellington                     | Target        |                             |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 8/9   | 2nd Pilot                      | Boulogne      | (Invasion barges)           |
| 14/9  | 2nd Pilot                      | Antwerp       | (Invasion barges)           |
| 17/9  | 2nd Pilot                      | Ostend        | (Invasion barges)           |
| 24/9  | 2nd Pilot                      | Hamm          |                             |
| 30/9  | 2nd Pilot                      | Leipzig       |                             |
| 7/10  | 2nd Pilot                      | Berlin        | (Power station)             |
| 10/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Hanover       |                             |
| 12/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Bitterfeld    | (Nth. of Leipzig)           |
| 16/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Kiel          | (Shipping)                  |
| 20/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Hamburg       |                             |
| 25/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Hamburg       |                             |
| 28/10 | 2nd Pilot                      | Kiel          |                             |
| 5/11  | 2nd Pilot                      | Emden         | (with Geoff Cole)           |
| 29/11 | Captain                        | Boulogne      | (Docks)                     |
| 27/12 | Captain                        | Lorient       | (Barracks & power stn)      |
| 1941  |                                |               |                             |
| 1/1   | Captain                        | Bremen        |                             |
| 3/1   | Captain                        | Bremen        |                             |
| 9/1   | Captain                        | Gelsenkirchen | (Oil refinery )             |
| 15/1  | Captain                        | Wilhelmshaven |                             |
| 10/2  | Captain                        | Hanover       |                             |
| 14/2  | Captain                        | Gelsenkirchen | (Oil refinery)              |
| 22/2  | Captain                        | Brest         | (Hipper class cruiser)      |
| 28/2  | Captain (2nd Pilot, Ray Glass) | Wilhelmshaven | (Tirpitz )                  |
| 2/3   | Captain                        | Brest         | (Cruiser in docks)          |
| 12/3  | Captain                        | Bremen        | (Focke-Wulf aircraft works) |
| 13/3  | Captain                        | Hamburg       | (Shipyard)                  |

These notes are taken from the 214 Sqn Operations Books held at the National Archives at Kew. The full copies of all these records were taken by Ian Hunt a few years ago and are extremely useful when answering queries. They cover all operations from 1939 to 1945, Wellingtons, Stirlings, and Fortresses.

Peter M Walker - Aug 2010

## A new Standard for 100 Group Association



A new Standard for the 100 Group Association has been produced and will be dedicated at the 100 Group reunion to be held in Norwich over the weekend of May 13/15th. 2011. It has been the brainchild of Peter Witts who is also a member of 214 Sqn Assn. Peter is now 85 and has felt strongly for some years that 100 Group Assn should have its own Standard and, with the help of the Chairman of the Association, Wg Cdr John Stubbington, it has now become a reality. John has had the Standard made to Peter's approximate design sketch and obtaining the necessary authority to use the 100 Group badge.

Peter has paid for the cost of the Standard (£631) and the Association have funded the accoutrements (£250). The latter includes, white gloves, gold tassels, leather cover for staff, etc.

This is a very generous gift by Peter and we hope that he will be the first to carry it on parade although I believe the staff is about 3 feet taller than he is. Thanks are also due to John for getting it approved and made.

For those of you who may not know Peter, he was an air gunner in 1944/45, first on Liberators of 233 Sqn and then Fortresses of 214 Sqn, both at Oulton. Towards the end of the war he flew in the Halifax aircraft of No 462 Sqn. (RAAF) Foulsham, also a jamming unit in 100 Group.

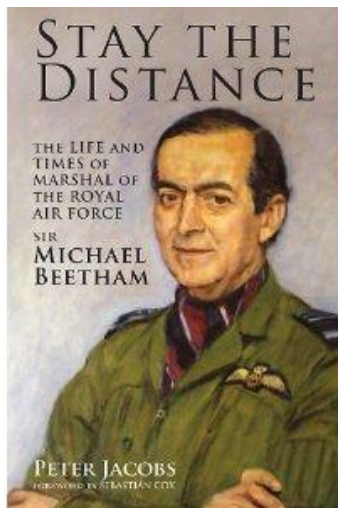
## No 214 Squadron Website

**Did you know that there is a 214 Squadron website?**

The website was started by Ken Krawford in Canada but since March 2006 it has been developed, and maintained by Carol and John Edwards in the UK, and is becoming ever more popular. They tell me that they get around 8 enquiries every day. There is a comprehensive list of personnel who have served on the Squadron with many stories and records dating back over several years. It is well worth a visit, if you have not done so already, and if you have anything to add, then please contact Carol and John. See P18 for their contact details.

[www.214squadron.org.uk](http://www.214squadron.org.uk)





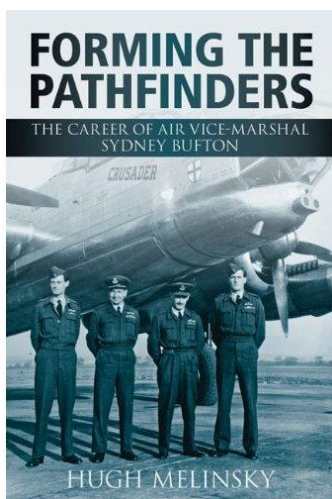
# BOOKS

Sir Michael Beetham enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the Royal Air Force. He joined the RAF as a pilot in 1941 and was awarded the DFC whilst serving with Bomber Command during 1943/44. Remaining in the post-war RAF, a number of flying and staff appointments followed. Notably he drafted the first specification for the ill-fated TSR 2 and later joined the V-Force as commanding officer of 214 Sqn at Marham. Sir Michael then served at the heart of Bomber Command's affairs when the V-Force was at the forefront of the Nation's defences. The most critical moment came with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. In 1964 he was given command of Khormaksar in

Aden, the RAF's biggest overseas station. His arrival coincided with the start of a terrorist campaign against British forces in Aden. More senior appointments followed, notably as Commander 2nd Tactical Air Force and Commander-in-Chief RAF Germany, but the big prize came in 1977 when Beetham was appointed Chief of the Air Staff. In 1982 came the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands; as acting Chief of the Defence Staff, he was involved in the decision to send the Task Force to battle. After victory in the Falklands, Sir Michael Beetham handed over as CAS and was appointed Marshal of the Royal Air Force. *Stay the Distance* was launched at a reception at the RAF Club on 3 March 2011 attended by Sir Michael and Lady Beetham and a host of former Chiefs of Air Staff and other senior officers. Among the guests were AVM Eric Macey, Wg Cdr Alan Mawby and Peter Walker representing the Association.

Priced from £17:50.

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This fascinating biography reveals the great battle between the Air Ministry, Bufton and Harris in the quest for precision bombing in World War Two. Sidney Bufton was a modest Welshman who joined the RAF in 1928. Serving in France as a Staff Officer though 1939/40, he was posted to a bomber squadron, won the DFC as a pilot, and went on to command a squadron himself. By 1941, at just thirty-three, he was Deputy Director of Bomber Operations at the Air Ministry. By this time he had already formed a clear idea of what would improve bombing operations and became responsible for conceiving and forming the Pathfinder Force in the face of bitter opposition from 'Bomber' Harris, who treated him with great contempt. Nonetheless Harris lost his battle and Bufton went on to be the joint chairman of the allied committee advising on targets - including the notorious Dresden raids, which policy of total devastation muddled Harris's name forever. Post-war, Bufton

held a key role in the introduction and tactical use of nuclear weapons and ended his career as Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Intelligence). In this gripping history Revd Canon Hugh Melinsky presents the career of an often overlooked but pivotal figure and offers a revealing insight into the decisions of war.

*The author was, in 1942, recommended for aircrew duties as a pilot but to apply again when he was 18. In the meantime he went up to Cambridge for a year and there he learnt Japanese. When he reapplied to the RAF he was told that there was a desperate shortage of translators in the Far East. He had to join the army and was sent out to Australia in early 1944 where he worked as a decoder and translator of messages intercepted from Japanese naval aircraft. He maintained a great interest in the war period and especially of RAF Bomber Command.*

*In 2005 it was suggested by Anthony Furse that he should write the life and work of AVM Button. Furse was the author of the life of ACM Sir Wilfred Freeman. Hugh Melinsky has had access to Bufton's papers at the Churchill Archives, Cambridge, papers held at Kew, and private letters and photographs owned by Sydney Bufton's daughter. The book was launched in Norwich on the evening of October 8<sup>th</sup>, and I was invited to attend. It is available at most leading bookshops and from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Priced from £10:46.*

*The publishers are The History Press and the ISBN No. is 978 0 7524 54535.*

*Sydney Button's brother Hal had flown as a pilot with 214 Sqn in 1939/40, first on Harrows and then Wellingtons. It would appear that he was on detachment from Boscombe Down and did not fly on operations. This new book, I believe, should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history of RAF Bomber Command in both WWII and the early Cold War period when Sydney Button was a serving senior officer.*

*Peter M. Walker*

**An article sent to us by Maurice Harding in Australia.**

**An example of British Phlegm during the dark days of 1940; demonstrated by this notice.**

## **RICHMOND GOLF CLUB**

### **TEMPORARY RULES - 1940**

1. Members are asked to collect bomb and shrapnel splinters to save these causing damage to the mowing machines.
2. In competitions, during gunfire, or whilst bombs are falling, players may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.
3. The positions of known delayed action bombs are marked by red flags at a reasonably, but not guaranteed, safe distance.
4. Shrapnel and/or bomb splinters on the Fairways, or in Bunkers within a club's length of a ball, may be moved without penalty, and no penalty shall be incurred if a ball is thereby caused to move accidentally.
5. A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or, if lost or destroyed, a ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.
6. A ball lying in a crater may be lifted and dropped no nearer the hole, preserving the line of the hole, without penalty.
7. A player whose stroke is affected by the simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place. Penalty one stroke,





The first 214 (FMS) Squadron Association Reunion - 1988  
Were you there?  
Harold and Betty Bidmead are in the centre of the front row

218 Squadron Association Reunion wreath  
laying at Chedburgh. 214 Sqn wreath  
(on right) laid by Jock Whitehouse  
July 2010



**For those of you who flew the Flying Fortress**

**The Sally B should be displaying again this year, starting at Duxford on 16<sup>th</sup> May.**

[www.sallyb.org.uk](http://www.sallyb.org.uk)

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

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

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