



# NEWSLETTER

## Book for Guest's Buffet and Aircrew Lunch

### July Meeting

It was another great presentation from Richard Smith. Captivating, as were his previous presentations (this was his third!)

Whilst another runway is under discussion where does it go? The Staines 'side' which would bring immense construction problems not to mention anything from 14 to 16 Billion in cost. Plus to satisfy those people in it's flight path not to mention discounting the Thames 'Hub' new airport. There are also problems restructuring the existing services to avoid lost luggage..? ..connecting flights....?.....you name it...

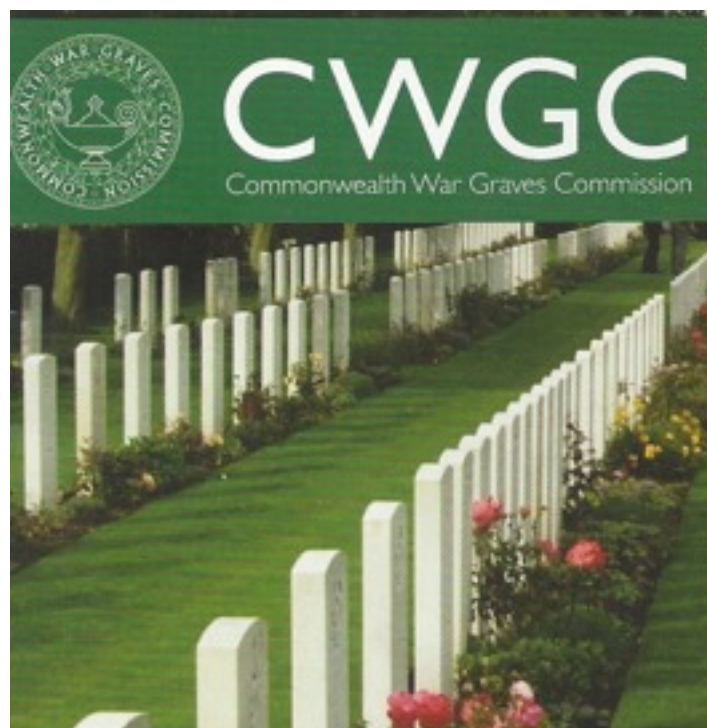
Richard is due to retire in a few years time but we will try and get him back to give us an update once the Government makes a decision on the future of aviation in the South East...don't hold your breath!

### RIP

As you will have seen **Don Francis** passed away in June. Alas apart from the 1st para the remainder of his obituary was for the 'other' Francis. The Editor apologises for the mix up, particularly to Dave, who upon reading it must have thought he had a twin brother! The good news is that Dave Francis rang

me to explain the mix up and I am glad to report he is doing well. The corrected version is on Page 3.

Sadly we have lost our longest serving member with the passing of **Harry Le Marchant** (see P 4).



Remember 20 August 2014

“Commonwealth War Graves”  
a presentation by  
Roy Rigg

Greenacres 10.30 for 11.00am.

“Their name liveth for evermore”



## **My Memories of WW 2** **(Part 5 of Harold Purver's story)**

Our first 'productive flight' in Transport Command was an overnight trip with freight, returning the following day from Allalabad with ground staff on posting to Bilaspur. We then started a programme of supply parachute dropping, formation flying and glider towing using 'Waco' gliders, and Ghurka paratroop dropping. A month's activity in preparation for the Zipper Operation on Malaya, though no one mentioned it at the time!

Over several months we then entered a period of extensive flying on consecutive days during the week between Calcutta and Madura, Southern India and when the freight turned into personnel, the rumour strengthened.

After four weeks of lunching on USA 'K' rations, for which we were duly grateful, my intelligent constitution rebelled and I was admitted to Madras sick quarters for four days with 'Entomic Fever. During which time, as I lay rotting, the rest of the crew enjoyed the delights of Madras, an Indian Ocean resort! But retribution was at hand, the 2nd Pilot, ignoring the best advice, feasted on Ice Cream and finally contracted Dysentery and we used to visit him in the base hospital.

During the monsoon, patients were driven out into the rain to help their inevitable prickly heat. He was even sicker after completing the course of several months, when sulphur lamine would cure it in two weeks.

So the daily flights continued, relieved by shorter training local flights of loaded glider lifts and parachute dropping in sticks of ten Ghurkas, and finally mass formation of parachute dropping with 24 Dakotas, a novelty which the pilot's enjoyed, if not the navs who were re-mustered as Assitant Jumpmasters! One clever nav, early on in training managed to overshoot his string of 10 Ghurkas, five of which partly demolished an Indian village of mud huts, causing a local political outcry and even a sharp word from the CO and several beers in the Bar that night!

More beer was spilt on 1st August 1945 when we picked up our ration of beer in Nagpur and flew to Santa Cruz map reading down the river, bombing the crocodiles with empty bottles! Celebrations must have continued after our arrival at RAF Santa Cruz.

For a rest cure after all the extensive flying, we spent some time at The Himalayan Teaplanter's Hotel after a sobering ride on an ancient rack railway, winding up the Himalayas with the local population hanging on the outside. It was sobering because we had spent several days celebrating at Calcutta's famous hotel, where the lounge of which you could meet any otto posted to SEAC. Mainly because India was known to be the back passage of the world and Calcutta was several miles up.

Established in the luxurious Hillstation Hotel, we lived the life of the teaplanter's leisure. We were teased unmercifully by the lads on holiday at the Donkey Rides and Ice Skating and Lawn Tennis activities. At one tennis afternoon I successfully dated a ravishibg Anglo-Indian lass for the local evening cinema, the programme of which I don't remember. What I do remember is that Mother came too, a Burmeese business woman in traditional dress, with drinks during the interval and a sobering evening stroll along the fashionable Darjeeling promenade with myself in 'Best Blue' of course.

One boring evening after the inevitable a la carte dinner, we sat in the lounge when a languorous Indian woman in traditional dress approached us, and speaking to the pilot of course invited him to this evening soiree, celebrating the end of the monsoons and returning to the normality of their home estates. On the pilot's warm acceptance she said the car would call about 8pm and extended the invitation to me. We were chauffeured sedately a short distance to another chateau, to be individually introduced to our hostess for the evening, complete with the essential aperitif! There followed an evening of Imperial Indian hospitality, including a replacement hostess, after the consumption of more drink needed to enjoy the spicy food. Memories fade but a taxi returned me in the early hours and the pilot appeared refreshed the following day. *(Continued on Page 3)*

*(Continued from Page 2)* As the flying fatigue diminished, boredom was alleviated over a weekend when on Friday a large 'RN Garry' parked outside the hotel a disgorged half a dozen Naval Officers with appropriate luggage and crates. Again details escape me but I clearly remember being comforted by an RN Nurse (female) at a local viewpoint to appreciate the rising sun over Everest Peak at 5am! An experience I shall never forget or repeat no doubt.

Another evening the pilot appeared from the bar with an elderly impressive Madame on his arm,

who turned out to be the widow of a Hoogly River pilot, Calcutta, of great respect, who asked me if I would come to next Sunday's luncheon at her mansion just lower down the mountain - with the pilot of course. A taxi duly called for us to reach the English style house, which enjoyed a bright climate, and we sat down to lunch of roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, with potatoes, carrots, cabbage and sprouts, washed down with appropriate wine etc. This was followed by traditional Victoria plums and thick custard, with Cheddar cheese and biscuits - the best ever!

### **Don Francis**

**Ed:** *I am indebted to Tim Liles (Chairman) & Dick Ward (Secretary) of East Devon ACA for the following:* Born in London in 1919, Don was later employed by Handley Page at Cricklewood, working on Harrow, Hampden and Halifax. He joined No 604 (County of Middlesex Sqn RAuxAF) as an aero-engine fitter. He soon swapped the w/e Air Force for the real thing.

He served as an Instrument Fitter with No 32 Sqn (Biggin Hill) during the Battle of Britain but when the chance of re mustering for aircrew came in 1942, he jumped at it! He was awarded his Navigator's brevet in Canada and flew Mosquito's with No 23 Sqn from Little Snoring on low-level (Special Duties). This involved intruder patrols including circling enemy airfields 't 1500 feet before and after the main bomber offensive, thus keeping as far as possible, enemy night-fighters on the ground and minimising Allied bomber losses. If range permitted they would carry a couple of 500 lb bombs to drop on the runways, and of course the statutory cannon fire as they left!

They also acted as high level escort to Lancaster and Halifax squadrons making a raid on U-boat pens at Bergen. It was Oct 44, and the first time Mosquitoes had been used in this role. Don said 'We had problems from the start, our aircraft were low level intruders, our engines were super-

charged for maximum efficiency at 2000 feet and were useless at high altitude. On one occasion they spent a night with the Royal Navy at Elgin when a bombing mission was delayed by bad weather. The RN confined the crew to huts and would not invite them to the Mess as they were in flying suits and not correctly attired. As Don said 'It was if we were fighting a different war!'

After 35 Ops Don became an instructor on Night Fighter techniques. As the war ended Don was invited to take a commission but decided to rejoin Handley Page, later joining deHavilland's. Further progress came when he moved to English Electric, rising to become their Chief Draughtsman. Now mostly working on guided missile projects he rejoined deHavilland to become Chief Draughtsman for their 'Blue Streak' project. In 1981 whilst working for British Aerospace, he took early retirement. He remained registered as a Chartered Engineer and a Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

He moved to the West Country and was a founder member of the East Devon Branch of the Aircrew Association and lived in Exmouth until his passing. A committed member of Chiltern and East Devon, certainly a fine example of those who give to the Association more than they take out. He will be sadly missed by his colleagues both here and in Devon, none more so than our Chairman, Geoff Hulett who visited him many times in Devon and represented us at his funeral.

## Harry Le Marchant



Harry passed away on 23 June 14 aged 92. He was our longest serving member and until a few years ago was a regular attendee at our meetings.

Harry was a pupil at The City of London Freeman's School at Ashted Park, Epsom. He joined the RAF in 1941 and was called for aircrew training in 1943. Trained at Lakeland, Florida and Chatham, Mountain View and Rivers, Canada.

He then trained on Whitley's and was then attached to an anti-submarine unit in St Eval. After an 11 hour flight in Dec 1942, the crew were forced to bale out over Bodmin Moor. Posted to 57 Sqn Scampton on Lancasters, later moving to East Kirkby and completed two tours.

Like many aircrew Harry was superstitious and after the war he put this on the Bomber Command website:

'Rituals, and superstitions. I prayed a lot, I prayed always before I went on operations. We had our talisman. We took all the WAAF parachute packers out for a pie and a pint, and a little WAAF very

kindly and very sweetly got out her purse and gave me a Victorian bun penny, one of the very old coins with Victoria when she was young, with the bun of hair at the back. It had a hole in it. She said, "Here, take this as a lucky charm for the future" which I did, and I always flew with it. My uncle gave me a silver cigarette case, and I never flew without that too. I always kept mine in my breast pocket, over my heart. This was very much a superstition.

I and many of my friends had girlfriends' stockings too. When you flew you had a white pullover, but you were not allowed to wear a collar and tie because the collars in those days were detachable, and if you went in the water the clothing might shrink and suffocate you. So everybody had gay coloured scarves, be they old school scarves, or girlfriends' stockings, which you wore round your neck. There were lots of teddy bears, even teddy bears in flying kit, and things made by wives or girlfriends.'

He, of course had to have an enforced break from operational flying, so Flt Lt Le Marchant became an instructor. He then later joined No 97 Sqn, Coningsby on Pathfinder duties and at the end of the war he was posted to Germany as an Ops Officer at RAF Gatow.

He rejoined in 1950 on a short service commission in the Fighter Control Branch, serving until 1955.

He then joined the Decca Navigation Company, later Thorn EMI working in electronics. Semi retirement saw him setting up his own company concentrating on Aerodrome Systems.

Harry was an accomplished artist and used to spend many hours painting aviation paintings. He was a very proud man on 28 June 2012 when he attended the Unveiling of the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, remembering the 55,573 men who did not survive the War in Bomber Command.

The Chiltern ACA was represented at the funeral by another inaugural member Derek Gurney and Rod Finn, Roy Briggs, Tom Payne and Graham Laurie.

Our condolences to son Charles (a British Airways Boeing 767 pilot) and daughter Phillipa.



**15 Jul 14 - The Boeing 707 @ 60**

The Boeing 367-80 makes its first flight from Renton Field southeast of Seattle. The jet-powered airliner will become the Boeing 707 and usher in the jet age for passenger travel.

Boeing was not the first company to produce a jet-powered airliner. But just as Ford's Model T popularized the automobile despite being a latecomer in the car world, the Boeing 707 would be the airplane to popularize jet travel.

Nearly five years before the prototype of the 707 first flew, the British-made de Havilland Comet completed its first flight. The jet was popular thanks to its high speed, but a string of accidents involving the Comet in 1954 forced the company to take the airliners out of service to fix some design flaws.

By that time, Boeing was already nearly two years into the development of its own jet airliner. The company flew its first large jet-powered aircraft, the B-47 bomber, in 1947. With the success of the speedy bomber, the company started looking into building a passenger aircraft that could take advantage of the quickly evolving jet-engine technology. Boeing engineers started work in 1952 on an airplane that would be jointly developed as both a midair refueler for the Air Force, and a passenger-carrying jet for the airlines. The Air Force was the first customer for the airplane. With the accidents of the de Havilland Comet still fresh in people's minds, commercial airlines continued to rely on piston-powered propeller aircraft such as the Douglas DC-6 and Lockheed Constellation to carry passengers in safe, well-known designs.

The new model 367-80 was simply known as the "Dash 80," and development continued despite the cool reception from the airlines. These days, hundreds of orders were on the books for Boeing's new 787 before the airplane ever flew. But back in the early '50s, Boeing had to continue developing the passenger version of the Dash 80 on its own. The company was confident that an airplane flying twice as fast as the propeller airliners of the time would eventually bring in the business to make the investment worthwhile.

A year into flight-testing, Boeing invited representatives from the airline industry and aviation community to Seattle to attend the annual hydroplane races on Lake Washington during the summer of 1955. The Dash 80 was scheduled to make a simple flyby to impress the crowds.

But a simple flyby apparently wasn't enough for Boeing test pilot Alvin "Tex" Johnson. As he approached the lake-shore crowd at low altitude, Johnson gently pulled up on the controls and performed a graceful roll in the airplane. The crowd was in awe as the four-engine airliner completed the maneuver, something usually only seen in airshows performed by aerobatic pilots.

Boeing president Bill Allen reprimanded Johnson, but the pilot pointed out the roll was a simple 1-g maneuver and the airplane was never pushed beyond its limits. The pilot continued working for Boeing for many more years.

The famous roll in the Dash 80 apparently helped the marketing effort of the new airplane. Pan American World Airways and American Airlines both placed orders for the new 707 by the end of 1955. But Boeing had competition from its old rival Douglas Aircraft, which had introduced a similar-looking jet airliner, the DC-8. Both Pan Am and United Airlines placed orders for the DC-8.

The two manufacturers were locked in a battle to deliver the new jets. In October 1958, Pan Am made its inaugural jet flight from New York to Paris in a Boeing 707. The swept-wing airliner captured the imagination of the flying public.

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It would be nearly a year before the DC-8 would enter service. Boeing won the race to enter service first and, along with Pan Am, became synonymous with the jet age.

The original Dash 80 never flew with paying passengers. Instead the airplane continued to serve as a test aircraft into the 1960s until it was acquired by the Smithsonian Institution. The prototype aircraft can now be seen on display at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport near Washington, D.C.

The Boeing 707 would go on to serve almost all the major airlines of the world, as well as serving numerous roles in the military, including the first purpose-built Air Force One for presidential use. By 1991, when production finally stopped, Boeing had turned out 1,010 of the 707s.

The Boeing 707 continues to fly active duty as the KC-135 tanker and the E-3 AWACS in the U.S. Air Force, as well as other air forces around the world. It also serves some smaller cargo airlines around the world and is still flying passengers in Iran. Actor and pilot John Travolta owns a former Qantas Airlines 707 and flies it from his Florida home. The RAF has just received it's first RC135, a derivative of the 707.



*A Rivet Joint RC-135W*

This aircraft is one of 3 that MOD is buying from the US which, as part of the Airseeker

programme, will provide the UK with a world class real-time signals intelligence and surveillance capability for forces in the air and on the ground.

The aircraft not only gathers data and vital intelligence using advanced sensor technology, but it is also able to carry out onboard analysis and distribute the information to be exploited by assets on the ground via its high-tech communications suite.

Since 2011, members of the RAF's No 51 Squadron have been operating United States Air Force Rivet Joint aircraft and ground stations to familiarise themselves with the aircraft and its capability.

### **Message from Ian Nelson**

Many thanks for the continuing regularity of the Chiltern ACA newsletter. You do an excellent job and I enjoy reading it. We are now well settled in Horsham but we still make trips to St Albans and last weekend was one of them. The purpose was to intern John Franklin's ashes with those of his wife which John had previously interned at Walsingham, in North Norfolk. There were 8 of us mainly from the church group which is where Maureen had met John. It was as a result of this that John introduced me to the Chiltern ACA. It was a good trip and the deed was accomplished.

Before the simple service I was given John's ACA Forage cap, (which I cannot recall ever seeing him wear). I am hoping to attach a picture of it as his family do not know what to do with it and I said I would try to pass it on to someone. It is therefore on offer, totally unencumbered, although a donation to a charity might be appropriate (is Chiltern ACA still a charity?). The inside measurement is 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch.

**Ed:** *So would anybody like it, please let Editor know and I will arrange for delivery.*

**GUEST'S BUFFET LUNCH**  
**WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2014**  
**1200 for 1230**  
**GREENACRES TAVERN**

Our September meeting will be at the later time of 12 Noon and will be a Guest's Buffet Lunch. As the name suggests we can bring along 'guests' so please make an effort to bring along in addition to partners, a guest as well. We would love to meet potential new members or anyone who you think would enjoy the company and a meal.

The cost is £8, which I am sure you will agree is great value from our friends at Greenacres. Please let Gerry Sealy Bell know how many you intend to bring and enclose a cheque and Stamped addresses envelope, for the return of your tickets. The closing date is one week before the lunch i.e. 10 Sep 14.

<b>GUEST'S LUNCH</b>	
<b>17 Sep 14</b>	
<b>NAME:</b>	.....
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	..... .....
<b>POSTCODE:</b>	.....
<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	.....
Please send me ..... tickets @ £* per head for the buffet lunch on 17 Sep 14.	
I enclose <b>cheque</b> (Chiltern Aircrew Association) for £..... and a <b>stamped addressed envelope</b>	
Post to:	<b>Gerry Sealy-Bell,</b> <b>31 Hempstead Road,</b> <b>Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8BR</b>
<b>Latest Date for bookings: Weds 10 Sep 14</b>	

**AIRCREW LUNCH**  
**FRIDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 2014**  
**1200 for 1230**  
**BLACK HORSE, GOZZARDS FORD,**  
**ABINGDON OX13 6JH**

After the success of recent years, we plan to repeat the 'Aircrew Lunch', open to Military, Civil (ATPL/PPL) whatever and of course partners. We can seat 60 people, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please select your menu choice and send TO me, together with a cheque for £20 per head

**MAINS**

- A. Locally made Cumberland Sausage, buttered mash potato and red wine gravy with seasonal vegetables.
- B. Hot grilled Fillet of Salmon, on a bed of mixed salad and hot new potatoes.
- C. Gourmet Fish Pie, seasonal white fish, smoked haddock, salmon and prawns, topped with cheesy mash with seasonal vegetables.
- D. Chicken Madras Curry with rice, naan bread, poppadum and mango chutney.
- E. 10oz Gammon Steak, with egg and pineapple, chips and salad.
- F. Pasta of the Day. Tagliatelle entwined with roasted Mediterranean vegetables and a rich tomato, basil and garlic sauce, garden salad and garlic bread.
- G. Steak, Ale (Old Speckled Hen) and Mushroom Pie, topped with a puff pastry lid, chips and seasonal vegetables.

**SWEET**

- L. Bailey's Cheesecake.
- M. Apple Crumble with cream.
- N. Hot Sticky Toffee Pudding, caramel sauce and vanilla pod Ice Cream.
- O. Eton Mess with fruits of the forest and whipped double cream and Ice Cream.
- P. Classic Cheeseboard, mature cheddar, stilton, brie with grapes and biscuits.

TEA or COFFEE If you have any special menu requirements please let me know.

Please send your order and **cheque** for **£20 per head**, payable to 'The Black Horse' by **15 Sep 14** to:

**Graham Laurie, 19 High Street, Prestwood, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE** Tel:01494 863492 Mob: 07798 703022  
 Email: [graham@kitty4.co.uk](mailto:graham@kitty4.co.uk)

## Programme 2014

All events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (\*]

- 16/17 Aug deHavilland Intl Moth Club Rally - Woburn**
- 20 Aug Commonwealth War Graves, Roy Rigg**
- 17 Sep Guest's Lunch 12.00 Noon
- 26 Sep Aircrew Lunch, Black Horse, Abingdon\*
- 15 Oct RAF Chenies & Bovington, **Colin Oakes**
- 19 Nov Luftwaffe a/c of WW2, G/C **Chris Sprent**
- 17 Dec Xmas Lunch 12.00 Noon

## Your Committee

**Chairman:** Geoff Hulett

11 Pearsewood Gardens, Stanmore, Middx HA7 1NU. Tel: 0208 952 4092

Email: [banghulett@btinternet.com](mailto:banghulett@btinternet.com)

**Newsletter Editor/Secretary:** Graham Laurie

19 High St, Prestwood, Gt Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE

Tel: 01494 863492

Email: [graham@kitty4.co.uk](mailto:graham@kitty4.co.uk)

**Membership Sec:** Gerry Sealy-Bell

31, Hempstead Rd, Kings Langley, Herts, WD4 8BR  
Tel: 01923 262707

**Treasurer:** Rod Finn

67 Hayfield, Chells Manor Village, Stevenage SG2 7JR Tel: 01438 350115

Email: [rodfinn@btinternet.com](mailto:rodfinn@btinternet.com)

**Welfare:** David Bray

23a Aylesbury Road Wing, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 0PD Tel: 01296 688425

Email: [adbbay@aol.com](mailto:adbbay@aol.com)

**Programme Secretary:** Bill George

Blossom Cottage, 54, Green End Street, Aston Clinton, Bucks, HP22 5EX

Tel: 01296 630998

Email: [bill.bbgi@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.bbgi@btinternet.com)

## Welfare

It was good to hear that **Dave Francis** is keeping well, despite his various problems and thank you to him for putting our editor right on Don Francis's obituary! **Bill Hyland** is now back on his chemo, having got a nasty blood infection which stopped his first dose. He is being well cared for by Nurse Ann! Good to hear you in such good spirits, I am sure this will speed your recovery. **Jack Baynton-Glen** and Bill had quite a chat in late July, according to Bill the 'World was put to rights' and both parties felt better for it. We of course do not see so much of Jack as he is full time carer for his wife. Our best wishes to them and to all those feeling a little under the weather.

**David**

## Membership Secretary

The usual plea to book your tickets for the September Guest's Lunch with me as soon as possible. I will take those booking but the Abingdon Lunch go to Graham Laurie.

**Gerry**

## Canadian Lancaster

**Tom Payne** plus guests have been invited to RAF Coningsby on Friday 8th August to see the Canadian Lancaster arrive. He has to arrive by 12noon. 'High Tea' is being served from 12 noon to 2.30.p.m. when the Lancaster is to arrive.



We will ask Tom to pen a report for our next issue. **It is hoped that the BBMF will display on Sunday 17 August at Woburn, the best local venue to see both Lancasters**