



# NEWSLETTER

## ACRC Recruits re- visit Lord's Page4

### September Members Meeting

There were only 15 members at the meeting when the Chairman introduced our new membership Secretary to us but then found out Ian had introduced himself just before Geoff arrived!

As we know when somebody new takes over they always try to reinvent the wheel. So now when you turn up at Greenacres, yes 'Sign the Register' but instead of it being passed round it will be on the desk just inside the door - as the meerkats say 'Simples'.

We chatted about why for years after WW2 people never talked about their wartime exploits. Gerry remembers meeting Tom Payne at a Trade Fair in Baghdad, but neither knew the other one was a pilot during the war!

Graham Laurie then did a brief version of the 'History of Royal Flying' which slotted nicely into the time for the raffle and lunch.

### October Meeting - 19 Oct 17 RAF Hendon Past and Present

The Royal Air Force's annual Hendon Air Pageants were held during the inter-war years at the now defunct airfield where today's RAF Museum is situated.

These air shows were the forerunner of the post-war Farnborough Air Shows, and regularly attracted crowds of half a million with over 250 aircraft in the sky. Impressive, even for today!

The first RAF 'Pageant' was held in 1920. In 1925 it became known as the 'Royal Air Force Display' before, in 1938, being known briefly as the 'Empire Air Day'.



Frank Whittle showing off some 'Crazy Flying' at the Hendon Air Pageant

David Keen will take us through the earlier use of RAF Hendon through to the current day where it of course housed the London part of the RAF Museum. But there is so much more, so it should be a fascinating story from start to finish, so please come and join us.



**Remember 19th October 2016**

**Join us for  
"RAF Hendon - Past and Present"  
with David Keen**

**Greenacres 1030 for 1100 am**



## A day out with Classic Wings - Rod Finn reports



Last December I enjoyed a significant milestone in the Birthday calendar., I was handed an envelope by my Linda which turned out to be an invitation to fly with Classic Wings Ltd who own a number of De Havilland 'Tiger Moths' and 'Dragon Rapides plus a Spitfire and who hangar and fly these fleet of lovely nostalgic aeroplanes in and out of Duxford., the first available week-end date for me was Saturday the 3rd of September 2016.

The day dawned, dry but blustery, and the request is that you check by telephone from home with Classic Wings at 8.30.a.m. so as to determine that you'll be flying that day, we were, and off we set and after checking at Duxford's main desk before being directed to the Classic Wings office where you are

offered coffee and biscuits, sign their paperwork.

My first flight is to be in the 'Tiger Moth' and you are then taken to meet your Pilot, a briefing session follows, you are then offered a suitably sized Flying Jacket, your flying helmet plus goggles. Once seated in the front seat., suitably attired my Pilot then obtained 'clearance' from the Tower, into wind and we are up and away and yes you've heard it many times.....this really is proper flying....wind in your face... it really is exhilarating and all but too soon we're again into wind and landing....a fabulous experience. All old hat to our veterans but to us new-bee's it is really exciting!

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**Fancy a day out and flying at Duxford?**



*Rod pictured at the controls of the Tiger Moth*

After lunch and at 2.30.p.m. I was called forward to be a passenger in the 'Dragon Rapide', an Aircraft slightly easier to enter with seven passenger's in all and on this occasion most were taking the opportunity to take photograph's. Once 'seated and belted up' our Pilot was seeking 'clearance' from the Air Traffic, this was obtained, into wind again and up and away to see some more of the Fens and the Cambridgeshire countryside. As before and what feels like a short time you're then coming into land again.

All in all a fabulous day out and in the air. If you get the chance to do this De Havilland 'dual' flights, do so it's magical.....must talk to Linda again and what the chance is there of getting airborne in their Spitfire....!



*Rod with the Dragon Rapide*

Classic Wings have a number of packages available from:

- Dragon Rapide                    from £99
- Tiger Moth                        from £129
- Harvard                            from £179
- Spitfire (2 seater)                from £2995

DH Double:Tiger Moth & Rapide  
from £179

These are midweek prices, if you have to book at weekends the prices are slightly higher.

If you are interested speak to Rod or contact Classic Wings direct:



Classic Wings  
 Imperial War Museum (IWM DUXFORD)  
 Duxford  
 Cambridgeshire  
 CB22 4QR  
 Tel: 01223 837453  
 Email: info@classic-wings.co.uk



### ACRC Re Visited 70+ years on!

On Thursday 22nd September at the kind invitation of Middlesex County Cricket Club and the MCC a party from the Chiltern Aircrew Association visited Lord's 'The Home of Cricket and Middlesex County Cricket Club'. For six members of the party it really was a special day as they had all joined the Royal Air Force during World War 2 via The Aircrew Reception Centre (ACRC) at that very ground.

The day was organised by the Chairman of Middlesex CCC (Mike O'Farrell) and we are indebted to him, his staff and of course the MCC who supported the visit in no uncertain manner. Ian Mason and Rod Finn were elected drivers for the day and they were accompanied by Graham Laurie who is also a member of Middlesex CCC.



Photo courtesy of the MCC

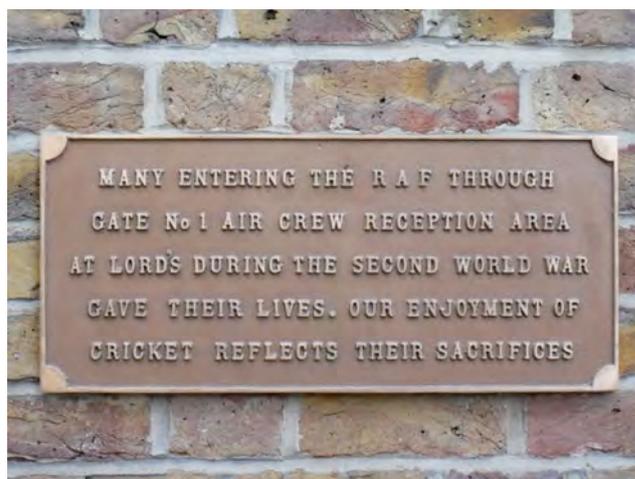
Left to Right: Ian Mason, Geoff Hulett (Spitfire), Roy Briggs (Lancaster), Doug Hadland (Mosquito), Harry Latchman (President Middlesex CCC) Harold Kirby (Lancaster), Tom Payne (Lancaster), Derek Gurney (Halifax), Rod Finn, Graham Laurie and Mike O'Farrell (Chairman Middlesex CCC)

On arrival we were met and escorted to the famous pavilion, up the steps and into the Committee Room. We were all given coffee and a chance to watch some of the 3rd days play in the County Championship decider between Middlesex and Yorkshire. It was not long before we were nearly all in earnest conversation about wartime memories and of course cricket. Present among those in the room were Mike Gatting (England & Middx), John Embury (England & Middx) and Harry Latchman (Middlesex) and John Hampshire (England & Yorkshire) who later became an internationally renowned umpire.



*Our party and the plaque*

As the players left the field at lunchtime we were taken through the Long Room (with memories of medicals flooding back) out of the door and down the famous steps and on to the field of play! The members of the MCC and Middlesex in the pavilion all stood and applauded the veterans. The MCC announcer had, as the players left the field, explained what was about to happen and named the veterans and the aircraft they flew. We then had a photo with the President of Middlesex, before proceeding to the Lord's Tavern for lunch courtesy of Middlesex. During our lunch the play having re started, was curtailed by rain, leaving us to have a leisurely meal. During lunch the Chief Executive of Middlesex Richard Goatley joined us briefly, before we all returned to the committee room to watch more cricket. During this stage it appeared Yorkshire were gaining momentum much to the delight of our Chairman!



*The plaque on the pavilion wall*

The party left, apart from Graham and Geoff who returned to watch the rest of the days play, but all of us had the most wonderful memories of a superb day and our thanks again to Middlesex County Cricket Club and the MCC for making it possible.



*Mike O'Farrell and the Chiltern team*

Before departing we had a photo in front of the memorial plaque on the pavilion wall to all those members who passed through ACRC but gave their lives during the hostilities.



The icing on the cake (for all except Geoff) was that the following day Middlesex completed the win against Yorkshire and were crowned County Champions!

**Gerry Sealy-Bell**



*Gerry awarded his wings 4 Feb 44 (age 20)*

We are indebted to Alison (daughter) and the family for the following info on Gerry. Before that, however, they would like to thank those members of the ACA who attended the funeral and those who wrote messages of condolence. It was very much appreciated as they know Gerry valued the comradeship within the ACA.

Gerry joined the RAF aged 18 in Sep 42 at ACRC Lord's. He flew solo on the Tiger Moth on 11 May 43 at Brough. By the end of July that year he was at No 3 BFTS in Miami, Oklahoma on the Fairchild PT-19



*Fairchild PT 19*

Following this training he flew the Harvard and was awarded his wings in Feb 44 before returning to UK. Eventually he gained a place on 1660 Heavy Bomber Conversion Unit at Swinderby and first flying the Lancaster on 23 Apr 45. He joined No 619 Sqn at RAF Strubby briefly before moving to No 97 Sqn at RAF Conningsby flying Lincolns and Lancasters in June 1945.

He had a 3 engine landing en route from Bari to RAF Tibenham landing at Isere (now Grenoble Airport).

He delivered a Lancaster to RAF Wroughton for disposal in July 1946.

He flew his first flight in a Lincoln in July 1946 and his last in the August prior to demob. In October 1949 he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserves, flying mainly from Panshanger on Chipmunks until July 1953, when he was transferred to Cambridge until 11 Oct 53, when he completed his last flight.

He was a keen cricketer and played for Abbots Langley Cricket Club and even managed to fly a Chipmunk over the ground prior to an all day game!

Gerry worked in civilian life as an Auditor and Accountant in London and took on private account work for clients in the evenings. he married Margaret in 1954 and in retirement they travelled widely to USA, the Far East and Thailand.

It was during retirement that Gerry joined the Chiltern ACA and used his accounting skills as Membership Secretary for many years. Sadly after a fall when he broke his thigh bone, life changed dramatically as he was left disabled. he battled hard and was even swimming 16 lengths every week until he was 91. He lost Margaret 4 years ago and this coupled with his disability made his final years even harder but he battled on.

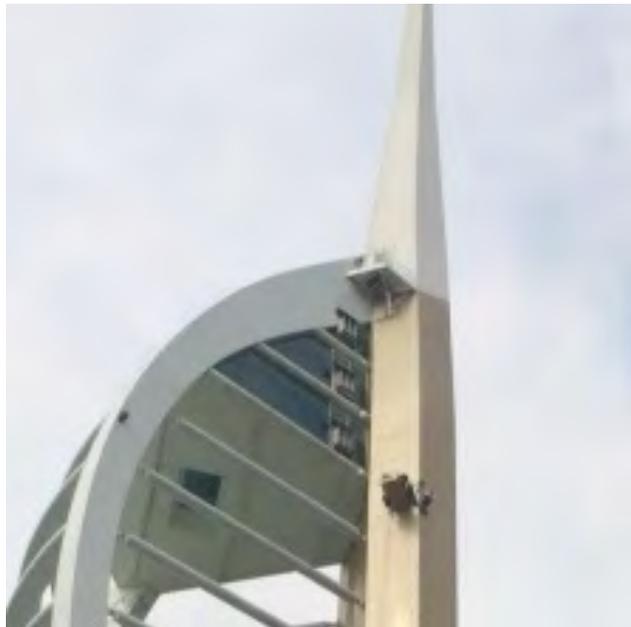
As his family summed him up: "Throughout his life, Gerry lived by his 97 Squadron motto 'Achieve your Aim' which summed him up the strength and determination of his character in a nut shell"



**Ed:** Our thanks to Gerry's daughter Alison Cole, son Mike and the 4 grandchildren for these memories of a fine gentleman.

**Ian Mason**

We promised you proof of Ian's abseiling exploits which we are pleased to say raised about £1300 for Hearing Dogs for the deaf. So here he is during and after!



Worth paying up to avoid that!!



Ian at the bottom sporting some very 'doggy' headphones!

**Spot Tom**

Somewhere in this photo is a young (in fact under-age) Tom Payne. The photo taken while at ACRC and he thinks it might be in Regent's Park?



Where is Tom?



**Christmas Cards**

This fun drawing of an elf having a flying lesson with Father Christmas is from an original watercolour designed by Jo Laurie (Chiltern ACA's resident cartoonist). The pack contains 10 cards and envelopes and includes the greeting: "With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year".

All proceeds go directly to RAFBF charitable work.

Size: 171mm x 121mm

Orders must be received before Friday 16 December 2016 for all UK deliveries in order to receive your cards in time for Christmas.

£4.50 per pack + £3.90 pp

Order on line:

<https://shop.rafbf.org/products/student-pilots>

A full order form will appear in next month's Newsletter

**Programme 2016**

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (\*)

**2016**

19 Oct 16 RAF Hendon past & present-David Keen  
 16 Nov 16 The role of the Czechs locally in WW  
 Neil Rees  
 14 Dec 16 Xmas Lunch\* 1200 Noon

**Your Committee****Chairman:**

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**Welfare**

Have been in touch with Ron Doble who is recovering from a fall, which 'I am ooh alright' - but did sound better than my previous call a few weeks before his fall.

Quite a few other calls, except for Norma Hagan, have brought no answers! Norma is progressing and can now go out and about with sticks and sounds very upbeat about being more mobile. We talked about holidays - hers not mine!!

Other than that nothing further to report.

**David**

**Membership Secretary**

Please note when you arrive at meetings to 'Sign the Register' which is now positioned just inside the door on your right. This will avoid passing the book round and should ensure any late comers also sign in. Thank you.

**Ian**

**Secretary/Editor**

Thank you for articles for the Newsletter please keep them coming. Thank you also to those who supported the Aircrew Lunch which was a great success. Reg Croot and Hugh Parry from Oxford and John Austin Woking send their best wishes to all at Chiltern.

**Graham**

**Programme Secretary**

I am finalising the programme for next year but please if you hear of any likely speakers do let me know.

**Bill**

**Treasurer**

The accounts are still in good fettle and we recently received a donation from the estate of the late Ron Rosie. The committee are hoping to come up with a plan to use the money for something special.

**Rod**

**Chairman**

Our numbers at meetings have been on the decline and some members have not been seen for some time. We are still here! and would love to see you at Greenacres for our meetings.

**Geoff**