



NEWSLETTER

Bomber Command Special

Editorial

I have tried to give Bomber Command pride of place this month. Some of our members attended the unveiling by Her Majesty The Queen of the Memorial on 28 June 2012. We have a report from Tom Payne and Gerry Sealy-Bell. I have also included an article by Rod Finn, on his visit with Roy Briggs to the Lancaster 'Just Jane' at East



Kirby.

The BBMF Lancaster dropping Poppies at the Bomber Command Memorial opening

Those attending from The Chiltern ACA included: Jack Baynton-Glen, Roy Briggs, Charlie Flint, Dave Francis, Doug Hadland, Harold Kirby, Tom Payne, Phil Potts, Gerry Sealy-Bell, Reg White and Peter Woodard.

July Meeting

After the usual Parish Notices we settled down to a fascinating lecture on the Rolls Royce Merlin engine by Colin Gent. Familiar to all, it may have been, but by the time he finished we even knew the inner workings! It seemed like 'Ground School' for

a time but Colin kept his audience enthralled with his quiet manner and some excellent OHP's (it's a while since we had seen a presentation using those). At the end of the presentation he played a recording of that famous sound - you could have heard a pin drop! There were many questions afterwards and I am sure these would have continued but we had to call a halt for lunch.

August Meeting

It will be a talk from our very own Roger Miller on his career as an Engineer, entitled 'Halton and beyond' at our meeting on 15th August. I am sure it will be a fascinating insight into the military world of engineering, warts and all. See you there.

Error in Air Mail P40

I know most of you subscribe to RAFA's 'Airmail' but did you notice the error in the reply to Tom Payne's letter on page 40 of the July-September issue.

The reply should have started with "The gratitude of every home in our island, in our **Empire** and indeed throughout the world, except the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen, who undaunted by the odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the war by their prowess and by their devotion".

Somehow the magic 'spell checker' had changed Empire to Europe. Tom has received a letter of apology from the editor and a correction will appear in the next issue, but you heard it first, right here! Well done Tom for raising very valid points in your letter.



The Big Day - at last!

The Chiltern ACA was well represented at the unveiling of the Memorial by Her Majesty The Queen on Thursday 28 June 2012. My thanks to Tom Payne for his write up but our thanks also to all our members who were among the thousands who flocked to Green Park for the ceremony.

The Bomber Command Association and The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund laid on a splendid programme of events, hosted by Carol Vorderman MBE, who has supported the venture from the outset. The crowds were huge but it was one of those events where there was pride in being able to say 'I was there' and the majority of course had the added momentum of 'being there for their mates'!



HM The Queen unveils the Monument with CDS and Controller of the RAF Benevolent Fund looking on

Tom Payne writes:

It was a very hot day, several thousand people attended (it is estimated over 7000 were there!). In addition to veterans there were widows, sons, daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren too. The 'front' area close to the Memorial was under strict security. I noticed in the evening Jack Baynton-Glen was shown. The main larger area further back contained the largest crowd, that is where Gerry, his son Mike plus me and my daughter Jill were seated. The rows of seats were placed in front of a large stage and TV screen.

We were given an Order of Service and The Salute programme. The Salute Programme was based in our area which introduced by Carol Vorderman MBE, including The British Airways Pipe Band, the Capital Children's Choir, Jane McDonald, the Harrow Apollo Male Choir. The show was produced by Tano Rea from the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The speakers, religious and military were very good, hymns sung with gusto. The address by The Chief of the Defence Staff (Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton) was superb, his father was on Halifaxes, so he had some feeling when he spoke, even quoting Winston Churchill's speech when he said 'Bombers will bring us victory'. Couldn't help but notice although CDS was an Air Chief Marshal, he was out-ranked by both HRH Prince Philip and HRH The Prince of Wales, both sporting RAF uniforms as Marshals of the Royal Air Force!

By leaving early Gerry and I and our 'helpers' got a lift on the road train up to the Monument area, then with a police escort of a very attractive young female
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officer, who held up the traffic so we could cross Piccadilly as we headed for the RAF Club. This is almost opposite the Memorial, Her Majesty The Queen and Prince Phillip were being entertained there unknown to us, the front entrance was sealed off but we had an escort from the club to the back door (I know my place, below the salt as usual!). We had a drink and a bite to eat whilst we waited for our taxi to return.

Free water was available all around the area where we sat, everyone was so helpful. I had a moving experience when a complete stranger-about 50+ grabbed my hand and said 'thank you and your mates', helps me to realise that whilst I personally think I did nothing being in Bomber Command, is something I will always consider to be an honour. My cousin, killed in 1940, was the main reason I volunteered-hoping somehow to try and replace him. Serving on XV Squadron myself, without knowing that he was there before me, now fills me with great pride of being related to him.

There were so many people there, it was impossible to meet up with others, I know Dave Francis was going with a party of 5 but didn't see him. I assume also that Phil Potts was there. Derek Gurney wanted to go but unfortunately he did not apply for tickets in time. I intend to return to the memorial in early August, to lay a wreath in memory of my cousin. Maybe we could make a trip with the Chiltern ACA?

I have written to Air Commodore White and Doug Ratcliffe expressing my thanks for their and their supporters hard work. What a great pity that Robin Gibb died so tragically, before he could see how well his efforts worked.

On return I watched the BBC 2 programme that evening and on Yesterday TV 'Who Betrayed the Bomber Boys', narrated by Stephen Fry.

Ed: *As usual thanks so much Tom for your comprehensive report. We hope that the Memorial will be a centre for thought of those 55,573 who gave there all. More from Gerry Sealy-Bell on Page 5*

Boys away Days

The article in the June'12 Newsletter regarding the Lincolnshire Lancaster 'Just Jane' was very topical as Roy Briggs and I had set off for a 2 day 'boys away trip' to Coningsby and East Kirkby on Tuesday, 22nd May 2012.

This came about as I had celebrated a birthday ending in a big '0' in December 2010, Linda had treated me to a taxi ride in 'Just Jane' - yes I know it was seventeen months later but they are very busy and this was the earliest date we could agree upon. Part of the package was that I could take along a guest so two or three months back I asked Roy if he would like to be my guest, obviously the answer was a resounding YES.

I decided to try to make it special for Roy as well and unbeknown to him I had telephoned Coningsby days before to let them know I would be bringing a WWII colleague along with me on the 22nd and it was suggested he bring his service record with him as they would like to learn of Roy's history.

After a good trip to Lincolnshire we arrived at Coningsby around 12.30 and were met on arrival by Clive Rowley, their head Tour Guide, who may be known to some branch members as he used to fly the BBMF Spitfires. Whilst not flying Spitfires now he is teaching would be pilots at RAF Cranwell.

Clive took us into the BBMF hangar where we were met with the wonderful sight of the whole of the BBMF aircraft as maintenance work was being carried out on the Lancaster and others. Clive disappeared for a couple of minutes and returned asking Roy if he would like to sit in his old wireless operator's seat. Roy looked at me and asked if I had arranged this. I said 'no', we were just lucky the Lancaster was here today (the impossible I can do straight away, miracles take a little longer!). Roy's face was an absolute picture as it broke out into one big smile. I was very lucky to be invited with Roy to board the Lancaster and not being one to miss such an opportunity I duly followed.

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Roy Briggs at the BBMF

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On board one is instantly reminded of how little room there was for a full 'kitted up' war time crew and whilst Roy had told me previously how cramped the conditions were I could now see for myself that this was indeed no exaggeration. Roy got to sit in his seat and from there we clambered over the main spar. Roy went forward into the pilot and bomb aimer's positions where Clive continued imparting his expert knowledge of everything Lancaster.

After alighting from the Lancaster we were introduced to one or two of the maintenance crew and from there were taken along to the Tour Guides' room where we had coffee and Roy was encouraged to show and discuss his service records. I was told that Roy's records, with others, will be archived for future generations to access in due course. We said our goodbyes and thanked Clive and his colleagues for an interesting and unforgettable time. We made our way to Woodall Spa to view the 617 Squadron Dam Busters Memorial and duly paid our respects.

There is a delightful tea room opposite the memorial where we were able to catch our breath and relax over tea, coffee, sandwiches and some scrummy cakes. Much talking and reminiscing later, another surprise was on its way for Roy as unbeknown to him we were then on our way to the Petwood Hotel for our overnight stay. As many of you may know this was 'home' to 617 Squadron and there is much memorabilia adorning the bar's, walls and corridors.

After grabbing forty winks and 'glamming' ourselves up, we made our way to the garden bar (no surprise there then!) and enjoyed half an hour in the Petwood's delightful garden. By the way, another bar is reputed to be haunted to this day by members of 617 Squadron, coming back no doubt for that last pint. We enjoyed a fine meal, and a glass or two of brandy in the Petwood's restaurant and both agreed a perfect end to a perfect day.

After an excellent breakfast it was time to check out and make our way to East Kirkby, some 30 minutes drive away and on arrival we were warmly welcomed by their staff. We grabbed a coffee prior to being ushered along to their briefing room where I would learn everything about my taxi ride in their Lancaster, Just Jane, which was schedule for late morning.

Prior to the ride both Roy and I were invited, yet again, to view internally their Lancaster. This time Roy was able to teach them a thing or two. Again, sitting in his wireless operators seat, he located the Morse code key and opened a small draw to the side, which the East Kirkby staff were totally unaware of.



Rod in 'Just Jane'

At this juncture some people were asked to leave the aircraft in order that those booked for the taxi ride could take their seats and they should remain on board. This for me was the highlight of the two days and I remained in 'Roy's seat' for the taxi ride. The Merlins were then started and, yes, it is quite something to hear four Merlins all purring away, brakes were released and we inched forward. I tried to put myself into the mind of a member of the aircrew and how they must have been feeling as they flew off into

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the unknown on another operation and wondering whether they would be returning.

On disembarking Roy asked me how it went, my reply was 'I now have some knowledge of how you must have felt, albeit for me without the fear'.

Whilst chatting we were invited to their 'NAAFI' for an excellent lunch and again more conversation took place between visitors and engineering staff who knew the absolute ins and outs of Just Jane. There is a hangar museum and Control Tower on the airfield site which we visited and we would encourage anyone if they are looking for an excellent day out to consider East Kirkby.

Afternoon tea was provided before two weary, but thoroughly enthralled 'young men once again' motored back to Hertfordshire. All in all a thoroughly enjoyable and exciting two days away. Roy had not been in a Lancaster for 67 years: I am north London born, Roy south London born, it's a bit like our London buses no Lancasters come along for 67 years and we then get to sit in two in two days!

Rod Finn

Our day at the Unveiling

More memories from Gerry Sealy-Bell

I arranged a taxi to take my son Michael and I, Tom Payne and his daughter to the unveiling ceremony. We arrived at about 11 am and there were already many hundreds seated. Officials soon organised 4 seats for us about halfway back in the Salute area. I got a tap on the shoulder and a lady official offered me a sun shade which I was very glad to accept, as it was very hot indeed.

After the ceremony which was very moving, the veterans were offered the opportunity to talk to

HRH The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall but as it meant queuing, we decided to make for a cooler area and a seat under the trees, where we sat for a while to relax. We then made our way to the RAF Club with the Police stopping the traffic so we could cross the road. We were unable to use the usual front entrance as the Royal Standard was flying and Her Majesty The Queen was lunching at the Club but were directed to a side entrance but eventually found the Running Horse Bar. We had a very welcome drink and a sandwich. After an hour or so my son rang for our taxi and we left the Club at 2.30 pm.

We arrived home at 3.35 pm tired but so glad to have been present at such an outstanding event. There was a wonderful feeling of comradeship, which exists amongst aircrew and this came over very strongly on the day. Also the assistance we received throughout the day was fantastic and it all helped to leave us with very many happy memories of the day.

Postscript



The Memorial a week later

Ed: I visited Green Park just a week after the unveiling and was pleased to see many fresh flowers, wreaths and crosses. Hopefully this remembrance will be a continuous cycle.

Programme**Welfare**

All events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless advised (*)

15 Aug	Roger Miller	Halton and beyond
19 Sept	Guest Lunch*	1200 Noon
29 Sept	Aircrew Lunch*	1200 Noon
13/14 Oct	Moth Club Charity Flying at Old Warden Revised date	
17 Oct	Alan Merriman	Flight Testing
21 Nov	John Hutchinson	Concorde
12 Dec	Xmas Lunch	1200 Noon

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Bill Hyland reports:

Some of you may know that **Jack Easter** is back in Stoke Mandeville Hospital following an accident at home. He is comfortable and getting good treatment at the moment, after indifferent emergency attention and treatment after an ambulance was called.

He has been having good help at home three times a day, but the carers/nurses always seem to be changing so Jack finds it difficult to adjust.

Mavis Dyson has very kindly offered to help us out by taking over the contacts with our Widows. She will be starting a ring round shortly just to keep you all in contact and will hope to find other widows who may not be in direct contact at the moment. So look forward to a chat with Mavis, but if you would like to contact her at any time her number is **01296 485665**.

Thank you very much for that Mavis.

Bill**Membership**

We were very pleased to welcome a new member at our July meeting. His details are as follows:

264 COPUS J (Jim) 7, Wharfe Rd, Boxmoor,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1QA Tel: 01442 243403 SB

Jim served on No 97 (Pathfinder) Squadron at Bourne, Cambs. On his 6th Operation he was shot down and became a POW for 14 months. We hope to hear more about his experiences at one of our future meetings.

Dorothy Duncombe longtime ACA widow died on Tuesday 26 June 2012. She had been living in Frome but had moved back to Chinnor to be with her daughter who would like to keep in touch. The funeral was on 10th Jul at Garston Crem.

Phil Potts, who was a very good friend and he is writing to Janet. as Dorothy and her husband were very keen members in former years.

Gerry

The Black Horse 'Aircrew Lunch' Menu

Mains

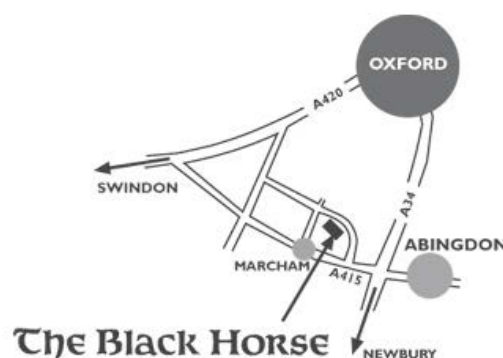
- A. Lamb Shank**
slowly cooked in red wine, rosemary, garlic, redcurrant jelly with buttered mash and seasonal veg
- B. 10oz Oxfordshire Gammon Steak**
with free range fried eggs or pineapple rings, chips and salad
- C. Steak, Ale & Mushroom Pie**
puff pastry lid, chips and seasonal veg
- D. Chicken, Ham & Leek Pie**
in a white wine sauce, puff pastry lid, chips and seasonal veg
- E. Local Sausages**
on buttered mash, caramelised red onion gravy
- F. Traditional Beef Lasagne**
with garlic bread and salad
- G. Gourmet Fish Pie**
seasonal white fish, salmon and prawns topped with cheesy mash and seasonal veg
- H. Fish & Chips**
Morland beer battered fish, mushy peas and homemade tartare sauce
- J. Wholetail Battered Scampi**
with chips, salad and homemade tartare sauce
- K. Grilled Fillet of Salmon**
with hot new potatoes and garden salad
- L. Chicken Caesar Salad**
Cos lettuce, croutons, Parmesan shavings and Cardini Caesar dressing
- M. Prawn & Crayfish Salad**
with hot new potatoes and garden salad
- N. Spinach & Ricotta Pasta**
with a mature cheddar cheese sauce and garlic bread
- O. Pasta of the Day**
with roasted Mediterranean vegetables and a basil pesto sauce and garlic bread
- P. Roasted Red Pepper**
with cherry tomatoes & basil, melted Feta cheese, sweet pepper sauce and salad

Sweets

- Q. Chef's Crumble of the Day**
with cream, custard or vanilla pod ice cream
- R. Bread and Butter Pudding**
with cream, custard or vanilla pod ice cream
- S. Chef's Cheesecake of the Day**
- T. Pavlova**
with summer fruits and fresh whipped double cream
- U. Warm Chocolate Brownies**
with a rich chocolate sauce and vanilla pod ice cream
- V. Classic Hot Sticky Toffee Pudding**
caramel sauce and vanilla pod ice cream
- W. Posh Sherry Trifle**
layered with biscotti biscuits, custard, cream and fruits of the forest
- X. Cheeseboard**
Brie, Stilton, Mature Cheddar with 'biccies', bread and red onion chutney
- Y. Tea**
- Z. Coffee**

TOTAL £20 inc of gratuities

The Black Horse



Gozzards Ford, Abingdon, Oxon,
OX13 6JH
Tel: 01865 390530

Guest's Lunch

Wednesday 19th September 2012

1200 Noon

Greenacres Tavern

Please send me tickets (**£5.00 per person**) for the Guest's Lunch

NAME: ADDRESS.....

TEL NO:

- I enclose:**
- a. Cheque payable to 'The Chiltern Aircrew Association'**
 - b. Stamped addressed envelope.**
 - c. Send to Gerry Sealy-Bell, 31, Hempstead Road, Kings Langley, Herts, WD4 8BR**

Aircrew Lunch

Friday 28th September 2012

1200 Noon

The Black Horse, Gozzards Ford, Abingdon, Oxon OX13 6JH

Please send me tickets (**£20.00 per person**) for the Aircrew Lunch

NAME: ADDRESS.....

TEL NO:

MENU CHOICE: MAIN..... SWEET..... TEA or COFFEE.....

- I enclose:**
- a. Cheque payable to 'The Black Horse'**
 - b. Stamped addressed envelope**
 - c. Send to Graham Laurie, 19 High St, Prestwood, Gt Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE**