



NEWSLETTER

A sad day for CACA - 31 Aug 14

A Sad Day - 31 Aug 14

As most of you will have heard, we sadly lost three members, all on the same day. **Harry Purver, Eric Barnard and Frank Barton** all passed away on Sunday 31 Aug 14.

We have been serialising **Harry's** story and this is the concluding edition. It was amazing, although I suppose, not that surprising that some of his family had not heard the full story. This month concludes his graphic account including a visit to Hiroshima. Proof I am sure that you must record your service career for others to enjoy!

Eric Barnard had been a regular attendee until relatively recently but had been unwell for a few months.

Sadly we had not seen much of **Frank Barton** at meetings recently but he did manage to attend Project Propeller 2014.

We send our deepest sympathy to all their families and I am glad to report that we had representation at all three funerals. (See Pages 2 - 6 for obituaries)



LOTTERY FUNDED

September Buffet Lunch

Numbers were a little lower than hoped when we gathered for another excellent Buffet Lunch courtesy of **Stephanie and her team** on Wednesday 17th September.

It was particularly nice to see **Bill Hyland and Ann** there, a brave move in the middle of his latest round of treatment. Proof, if proof were needed, that you cannot keep a good man down! Another visitor was **Stephanie Ball** and it was really nice to catch up with her news.

Aircrew Lunch - Abingdon

A few of our members joined colleagues from Oxford and Woking, plus as usual members of No 46 Squadron aircrew at their old drinking haunt, The Black Horse at Gozards Ford, nr Abingdon. As usual an excellent meal and great camaraderie from all the 34 attendees.

Our next brush with catering is of course our Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 17th December, so how about inviting some guests now!

Remember 15 October 2014

“RAF Chenuis & RAF Bovingdon”

Greenacres 11.00a.m..

A presentation by Colin Oakes

My Memories of WW 2

(Part 7 and final installment of Harry Purver's story)



Ed: *As you know Harry passed away at the end of August. This is the concluding installment of his wartime memories. We send his family our deepest condolences.*

Now every two to three days for almost three months, patriotic work to Saigon, Japan, Singapore via Saigon, Batavia via Singapore all carrying mail and freight and up to fifteen passengers, intending to keep the airlines services open for BOAC. One of the day trips to Singapore called for a four hour flight over the Indian Ocean with fifteen excited Chinese merchants, under the monsoon cloud at 2-4000 feet. When we landed at Changi with fifteen Chinese ex lunches and saki over the floor, we were hardly spoken to, and cost several bottles to be cleaned up! The following day a friendly, though hasty, take off with another eight merchants and baggage, we had a pleasant flight at 8000 feet, without cloud and arrived three and a half hours later at Batavia Airport and, after clearance procedure, booked in at a pleasant hotel in the city with balco-

nies overlooking the canal running beside the main street. After an enjoyable dinner and a couple of beers we retired, bearing in mind we were Airline Representatives now with 'civvie' passengers! The next day we had breakfast on the balcony, enjoying the activities of the natives, swimming, splashing and washing clothes by beating them on cement blocks.

Fortunately as we were finishing the coffee and cigarette stage, someone noticed that upstream, into the canal, a large gentleman was completing his immense toilet, crouched on the bank! Not finishing our coffee we took off for Singapore with more passengers and mail, looking forward to a quality lunch in Singapore, where we left Dakota Mk11 No 213 for dismantling and acquired an altimeter as a keepsake.

Again according to the log book we enjoyed three desolate days at this war torn city, centred on Raffles Hotel which explains why I can only clearly remember the full menu at the local Hairdressing Salon, including all manicures. Refreshed we returned to Karachi via Saigon with freight and mail and enjoyed a comfortable 'airline typee' existence with good weather. After a few days playing Rebecca and VHS Letdowns, during which a newer beacon was re-sited successfully, interest was renewed for our first two day trip to Iwakuni Shanghai with four passengers and freight. This involved a gentle five hour cruise at 8000 feet over the coastal regions on 'George' whilst 1st and 2nd Pilots enjoyed the latest Western and Murder Mystery, while Nav kept an eye on wind direction (Not that there was much of it at 5mph), called on VHF periodically and W/Ops likewise on the increased coverage offered by their MW & LW radios, and with luck pick up Vera Lynn or a Yankee on a service programme.

Arriving late afternoon at RAF Lunghwa and, after the service and civilian procedures were completed over tea and cakes, we were driven to the White House to enjoy the overnight dinner delight of Mr Kadoorli again, this time one member of his staff took us to enjoy a moderate drink at the main 'Longbar' of Shanghai, as our guide and bodyguard.

(Cont'd from P2) Refreshed next morning after an excellent breakfast, we set course for the five hour BOAC airline duties which were uneventful, cruising mostly over the South China Sea, until approaching Japan, RAF Iwakuni answered my call for late afternoon tea for eight people that they would try and rustle up eight lunches, due to time difference! Oh dear!

What appeared to be a large sandy bay from the distance, turned out to be what was left of Hiroshima, but nearer, shells of reinforced concrete buildings appeared, along with thousands of wooden temporary buildings. Leaving our BOAC roll, we flew over to view Nagasaki up a nearby valley with equal devastation and similar temporary accommodation.

All quite awe inspiring and highlighting the inevitable 'line shooting' in the Mess and Bar with the locals that evening, successful in saving thousands of allied lives which would have been needed, fighting the Japanese on Okinawa and all the way up the islands to mainland Tokyo. The following morning, we took off on the return flight and three hours later we landed back at Iwakuni again with the starboard engine and generators u/s! During lunch we were delighted to learn that a special carriage had been added to the local train to Hiroshima that afternoon. So a 'garry' took us to Iwakuni Station as 'Conquering Heroes' and settled down for a tourists view of the Japanese countryside, not dissimilar to Southern England as I remember. The journey was rudely interrupted by a bowing Jap creeping through the companionway door, being approached by our RAF Regiment escort. There followed a one sided discussion in Japanese and exit the Jap! He was complaining that their carriage was overcrowded, could his wife and children have our empty carriage, which would have been an impossible loss of face!

Arriving at Hiroshima Central Station, which had been tidied, if not repaired, and accompanied by our escort, we left the station and stepped out into the broken city, to be accosted by several Japa-

nese guides in impeccable American accents, offering photographic momentous of the ruined city, including some of Nagasaki. As before, a few well chosen Japanese phrases by our escort soon cleared the way to the local tram stop. As we approached the small queue, they dutifully beamed and smiled and fell in behind their conquerors! The tram lines appeared not too affected so after a typically noisy tram ride, we followed our 'escort guide' to explore the city centre of shells of concrete buildings, interspersed with buildings of wood. Approaching one such concrete block with battered windows, the sound of a cinema programme was heard. At the entrance we were ushered in with 'pomp and circumstance' to find the film was about the life of Madame Curie and her work with x-rays, perhaps to emphasize the medicinal work in the West!



Central Hiroshima

Within our radiation dose time we returned to the station and lovely carriage where I finally conceded to buy a packet of 'lurid photographs' of the blighted city, under the watchful eye of our escort. Spares at a premium, we enjoyed a second day at Iwakuni, taking a little steam ferry to a market on a nearby island. On the return ferry, after a cup of tea, I found I had acquired two hand turned wooden fruit bowls, varnished and with a picture of a red enameled shrine with Fujiyama in the background. Also I had two pewter, glass bottomed tankards engraved with Japanese script, which I was assured translated to wishes of long life, good health and many children! No expense spared of course. We took off the following day for more familiar delights of Shanghai.

continued on P4

Continued from P3

After our Japanese shopping we were penniless, appreciating Mr Kadoori's hospitality overnight at the White House.

Returning to Hong Kong and our quarters in the commandeered luxury flats, we had a lovely day of 'R & R', and we were off on a further support for BOAC doing a five day trip to Singapore, Batavia and return to Singapore. This exchanging a newer Dakota for an old one from which I borrowed the altimeter, now residing in my room.

My log book now records the exchange of aircraft in Singapore which took four days which we took off as 'R & R' in return for the previous weeks daily 4 hour flying stints.

After some sixty years later the memories are dimmed, but I am assured frequent sojourns to 'Raffles Hotel' were enjoyed for afternoon teas of cucumber sandwiches and appropriate sweet meats.



Changi Jail

A reverential visit to Changi Jail, the site of the notorious POW camp was in order, also a visit to the local RAF lad's recommended establishments, massage parlours et al. There was no interest in the 'et al' from our point of view, since from talk, there were rumours of peculiar infections left behind by the Japanese! Which leads me to note that aircrew wise, my health was not a problem in SEAC, provided mossie nets were used at night, mepacrine tablets and salt tablets were taken whilst cleaning teeth night and morning. Very few bugs like mossies lived higher than 2,00 feet!

Our 'rest' in Singapore ended at 8am on 1st August 1946 when we took off in our replacement Dak for

a boring four hour sea flight to Saigon, and the next day a more notorious six hour flight over jungle landed us relieved to be back in our luxury flat in Kowloon. Four days later found us on a round trip to Shanghai and on to Japan. With the mysteries of the Movement Section we were rewarded with a couple more days 'R & R' during which time we had day on the inter island ferry to a Shinto shrine and a busy market

We returned to Shanghai the following day with freight and mail and some of our own, notably a pair of turned wood fruit dishes enameled with a Shinto gate and landscape, plus a couple of cork shaving pictures with a splendid loch side mansion against a background of black volcanic peaks, to hang in my room. The usual evening meal was enjoyed at the White House and Dr Kadoori followed by the return flight home to Hong Kong, to be welcomed with the news that was to be our last operation for SEAC and for my Dak No 48 had been announced. That evening's jollification led to inevitable 'lineshoots', to be enjoyed after four years service in the RAF, including some 500 hours of day flying and a similar number by night. Some 175 hours were taken in 4 Group, 77 Squadron Bomber Command to complete 36 Ops and the remainder taken in 100 (ex 96) Squadron Transport Command, SEAC including an 'R & R' day to Hiroshima by local railway.

We embarked on our way to Blighty, only to find the next stop was Shanghai, not for shore leave, only to embark more lucky 'Demobs'!

Finally demobed at Blackpool and issued with my Autumnal brown, herringbone suit I returned to my 'in absentia' position at the GPO Research Station, Dollis Hill and idly watching a Lancaster take off from Hendon at a flight angle of 45 degrees, with the help of jet engines replacing the two RR Merlin inner engines, a significant take off to complete my narrative of my World War 2 years.

Ed: *Our thanks for this wonderful narrative of Harry's time in the RAF, particularly in the Far East, there were not many who saw Hiroshima at that time. Our best wishes to his daughters.*

Eric Barnard

Ed: *It was Eric's good friend and neighbour Bill George who gave the following eulogy at Eric's Funeral Service at Amersham on Thursday 18 Sep 14.*

This eulogy is based on notes Eric made a few years ago - (He was always a well organized chap)

He was born in 1923 in Barnet and spent his early years in and around there. He attended the Queen Elizabeth School and left there in 1936 when he would have been only 13 years old because, in his own words, he was no good at Maths.

There is bit of a gap here but in 1938 he joined the Cutbush Plant Nursery in Barnet. He doesn't say what as but it could have been book-keeper because they went broke in 1939. From there he worked in the offices of the Architectural Association followed by a spell in the Council offices as a trainee Surveyor.

World War 2 was now under way and wanting to do his bit for the war effort while waiting for his call-up he joined the Air Training Corps, where he was quickly promoted to Sergeant. At the same time he joined the Home Guard and bore witness to a landmine blowing out windows in Elm Road, Barnet

Call-up came in 1942 and he volunteered and was accepted for pilot training in the RAF. 'Square Bashing' was done at ITW Paignton Devon, a place also known to some of his Aircrew Association colleagues. The first step in his training was 'grading' which consisted of 12 hours on Tiger Moths. It was not a requirement to go solo during that time but Eric did, so the RAF were sufficiently confident to send him to Canada on the next stage of the training, which would have been a Basic Flying Training Course.

He was successful in that and moved on to Advanced Training on twin-engined aircraft. He was obviously heading down the route of becoming a bomber pilot but some way into the course disaster struck because he failed to master the intricacies of

instrument flying. This was a common stumbling block for trainee pilots, and still is.

Anxious to remain in aircrew he re-mustered as Air Gunner in 1943 and had to wait 6 weeks for a posting to an Air Gunner Training School. This wait was spent in Toronto 'having a good time'-His notes!! This time he was successful and promoted to Sergeant and because he was the top graduate on his course he was almost immediately given a commission. He virtually embarked on the boat to return to the UK as Sergeant and disembarked as a Pilot Officer.

His Operational training started on twin-engined bombers in Scotland and continued on 4-engined in Yorkshire. During this training he survived a mid-air collision in which 5 people lost their lives. This was the beginning of a spell of extraordinary good luck because between September 1944 and April 1945 he completed 32 missions as a tail gunner on Halifaxes with the famous No. 10 squadron based at Melbourne near York.

Eric revisited Melbourne a few years ago and was brought to tears recalling the many colleagues who failed to return from operations.

After the war he was sent to India as a Railway Transit Officer organising the return of troops to the UK for 'demob' and his turn came in 1946.

Back in 'Civvy Street' he took a job in a shipping office in the city and from there he began a long career in selling with a number of Personal Care and Food companies commencing as trainee rep. and rising to National Accounts manager with a number of well known companies:-

Maws, Johnson & Johnson, Reckitts, Smith & Nephew, Vick, Jean Sorelle, and Adams Foods

This kept him busy into the 1980's and his last job was as photographer and trainer for a company specializing in child photography. This went broke so he started his own business with a partner photographing children in their own homes until he retired in 1988

For most of this time he lived in Mill Hill but he had always been a Francophile so in about 1994 he decided to move to France. Although he could speak reasonable French he could not settle due to lack of companionship and loneliness so he returned to UK in 1995 and settled in Northchurch.

Eric was a 'ladies man' in the nicest possible sense – 'suave & genial' you could say – so it is surprising to find no mention of relationships in his notes. However he was married in the 1970's when he would have been in his 50's but the marriage failed.

That is not the end of the story because in 2004 he met Pam, and they were married in 2009. The 10 years with Pam were undoubtedly the happiest time of his life.

Eric's wartime career had a profound effect on him. The comradeship among bomber crews is difficult for us ordinary mortals to comprehend. He was a member of the Bomber Command Association, the Aircrew Association and RAFA.

Over the years he maintained contact with Monty, the navigator who guided him safely back from his 32 missions, and they met regularly. Monty is here today to join us in saying a final farewell to his old chum Eric.?

Farewell Eric.

Frank Barton

On leaving school Frank joined Fairey Aviation at Elstree from where he joined the RAF. Frank was a rear gunner on Mitchell aircraft with No 98 Squadron. In August 1943 as part of the 2nd Tactical Air Force, No. 98 moved to Dunsfold, and subsequently took part in pre-invasion attacks on Northern France and on the Noball sites in the Pas de Calais. After D-Day it operated in close support of the advancing Allied armies, and from October 1944, onwards was B25 Mitchell III of 98 Sqn at Dunsfold



98 Sqn B25 Mitchell at Dunsfold

based on the Continent. When VE Day finally came it was stationed at Achmer in Germany.

He and our Derek Gurney met up again out in India and demob came in mid 1946 from where he then joined De Havilland as an Aircraft Engineer, moving later to Handley Page in a similar position.

Socially he enjoyed being a Mason. Frank and Cora kept in touch with Derek, as Cora had met him in their schooldays in Hemel Hempstead.

Frank also flew into Gloucester/Staverton in this years Project Propeller, which he thoroughly enjoyed.

We send our condolences to Cora and to daughter Kim.

Post early for Christmas

Sadly the ACA Christmas Cards are no longer available. At the end of this edition you will find an order form for RAF Benevolent Fund Christmas Cards. A mixed group of cards from wartime aircraft to traditional Christmas scenes plus Jo Laurie's Cartoon 'Fuelling around with Santa' and finally a delightful drawing by a 7 year old in Cyprus 'Santa's Red Arrow'. Please order and support this excellent charity.

Letters to the Editor

Ed: *Our member and former National Chairman Des Richard has had a spell in Luton and Dunstable Hospital. We sent a card from members but I am glad to report he is now out of Hospital:*

Dear Graham and all,

Sad news about three very special veterans,

For myself I survived what was essentially a septic shock and was plugged in for some touch and go days. I didn't feel a thing of course, but was there beautiful to behold. So in hospital from 23 Aug to 12 Sep. I missed the reunion dinner I had arranged for past Council members, but the wine consumption did not appear to suffer judging by the bill.

I am told my recovery has been excellent but I think that is a clinical phrase meaning not dead. Back at home, I can just about walk a few steps but will no doubt improve.

Unfortunately, it has not been good for Janet as she had to go into a nursing home and will have to stay there as long as I cannot support her.

Best wishes,

Des

Ed: *I have also heard from our former Treasurer Ian Nelson:*

Hi Graham,

Many thanks for all your updating emails. I do get, and read, them all even if I do not respond. The latest was very sad, clearly a bad weekend for all concerned.

We are now well settled here in Horsham although I have not found an ACA. Please continue to send me the newsletter by email as we still visit St Albans where our son still lives. We cannot make any of the events you mentioned

but will try to see you at least a couple of times a year.

I now do some work, well sorting the bookshelves, for Cancer research; it is only a few doors away from our flat in East Street so very convenient.

We are off on a walking holiday next week, in Brittany, with our daughter. We do quite a bit of walking with local groups which keeps us fit and helps to get to know people.

In November we are cruising to Australia to see our son before flying back for Christmas when we expect to be in St Albans.

I trust you and your family are keeping well. Please pass my greetings to the branch and I hope to see you all in the not too distant future.

Kind regards and many thanks for keeping in touch.

Yours sincerely

Ian



Chiltern ACA Christmas Lunch

Wednesday 17th December 2014
Greenacres - 1200 Noon for 1230

Traditional Christmas fare

Please start making arrangements to bring a party along, the more the merrier. Do not forget your ticket automatically enters you for the raffle. Let's see if we can keep the whisky away from Geoff and Tom!

(How's that for Christmas Spirit!)

Programme 2014

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

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

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Welfare

I have been away for the best part of a month, so was saddened like us all to hear of the events of 31 August. I am glad that we were represented at all

three funerals. Thank you to those who attended to say farewell to their comrades, I am sure it was much appreciated by their relatives.

Ron Doble has kept me in touch with a few of the far flung members that he manages to call. George Biggs would always like a call as of course, he is now pretty well housebound.

It was good to hear that Bill Hyland was able to attend the lunch in September, despite being on his hefty treatment programme. We send Bill and Ann our very best wishes and hope we can see you both again soon.

David

Membership Secretary

Thank you to those who booked tickets at the Buffet Lunch, so please make a note in your diaries of our Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 17th December, an order form will appear in the November edition. Try to bring a guest along, as our membership numbers have decreased, it would be nice to get a bumper attendance, at what is always an excellent Lunch.

Gerry

Secretary/Editor

Now I have finished the late Harry Purver's story of WW2, I am sure there are more out there. Even stories of where you were when war ended and how long it took to be demobbed. Please let me have them as I know they will reach an ever ready audience.

Thank you to those who supported the Aircrew Lunch at Abingdon, a real cross section of wartime and post war aviators. Even the young lads at Abingdon on 46 Sqn are or are approaching 70 already!

Graham

Treasurer

Just to let you know the accounts are doing well and that in spite of the very low price of tickets, we managed to make a small profit on the Buffet Lunch and thank you also for the £100 made by the raffle.

Rod

Order form

Please complete this order form clearly in **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Please ensure you include an email address or daytime phone number in case we need to contact you about your order. Appplewhite Gifts will dispatch your order within 3 working days of receipt of your order. Orders must be received before **Monday 15 December 2014** for all UK deliveries in order to receive your cards in time for Christmas.

Card name	Cards per pack	Price	Code	No. of packs	Total	Postage & Packing UK
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2 Spiffies in the Snow	10	£4.50	13804			£30-£44: £7.00
3 Snow King	10	£4.00	14689			£45-£80: £11.00
4 Mistletoe Greetings	10	£4.00	14319			Over £80: £15.00
5 Robin on a Spade	10	£4.00	14250			Up to £30: £6.00
6 Adoration of the Kings	10	£4.00	14368			£30-£100: £12.00
7 The Journey	10	£4.00	14369			Over £100: £15.00
8 Fuelling Around with Santa	10	£4.50	14688			
9 Santa's Red Arrow	10	£4.50	14690			
10 Winter Ops	10	£4.50	14687			
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Daytime number					Postage & packing	
Email address					Donation	
					Total	

Payment

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3 *Snow King*
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5 *Robin on a Spade*
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6 *Adoration of the Kings*
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Painted and kindly donated by Robin Smith Fine Art.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



7 *The Journey*
Courtesy of MacNeill Studios.
121mm x 121mm. **£4.00**



9 *Santa's Red Arrow* Drawn by Skylar Miller, aged 7, from RAF Akrotiri School, Cyprus, winner of Red White and Blue Day Christmas Card Competition.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



8 *Fuelling Around With Santa*
An exclusive design, drawn and kindly donated by Mrs Jo Laurie.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



10 *Winter Ops*
Gerald Coulson ©The Military Gallery, Wendover, UK.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**

The greeting inside all cards reads: **'With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year'**.

Each pack contains 10 cards and envelopes.

Order online at www.rafbf.org/shop

The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is the RAF's leading welfare charity, providing financial, practical and emotional support to all members of the RAF family, from childhood through to old age. Each purchase from our Christmas Collection helps us continue this work all year round.

Happy Christmas!

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