



# THE HORNET

## The Newsletter of the 100 Squadron Association

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## Newsletter 56 - March 2002

Dear Colleagues,

As this is the first newsletter of 2002, let me begin by wishing you all a belated happy and successful New Year!

In this, my first attempt at publishing anything, I must thank Arthur White for all his efforts over the preceding years and for all his help in getting me started in this venture.

Now for a very brief introduction to myself; I am John Holford. I served on the Squadron from August 1952 until March 1955 as an airframe mechanic, working on Lincolns and Canberras. I joined the Association upon my retirement in 1997 and so far I have attended four reunions in England and one in Canada.

Please send any articles or items of interest to the above address or e-mail me at [hornet100uk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hornet100uk@yahoo.co.uk)

This newsletter comes to you later than usual as I have had to wait for details of this year's 85th reunion at RAF Leeming. The accommodation is being sorted out by [I hope] Alex Wedderburn and John Willis..... it's a hard job but someone's got to do it!

John

# **Newark Air Museum**

## **Tribute To The Lancaster**

### **18th - 19th May 2002**

We have received details of this special weekend event to be held to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the combat debut of the Lancaster from RAF Waddington in 1942. They hope to include a Lancaster Story photographic exhibition, video art and model displays along with the existing Lancaster Corner which features a fuselage section of 9 Squadron Lancaster W4964 WS-J, one of the Lancasters that dropped the "Tallboy bombs".

The NAM is requesting the involvement of any ex-Lancaster air/ground crew members in the planned displays of the aircraft and those who worked with it, and also memories, stories, anecdotes and tales of men and machines. The Museum can be contacted at The Airfield, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts. NG24 2NY. Tel: 01636 707170 or by e-mail: [newarkair@lineone.net](mailto:newarkair@lineone.net)

The above information was relayed to us by Sally Bailey to whom I must give thanks and also add my condolences on the loss of husband Bill of whom I have happy memories, our service with the Squadron coinciding. I have also received letters expressing sadness from two ex colleagues, one from Tony Davey who lives in France and read the sad news on the internet via his doctor's computer, and the other from Brian Meulbrouck who recounts this story so typical of Bill. He recalls how, one very hot afternoon, an airman came into sight, all by himself, pulling a trolley acc. Bill called out of the window for him to take his trousers off....if he was going to work like a horse he may as well look like one! A very surprised airman! (Could this have been me?)

## **Obituaries**

From David Nimmo we learned that Brian Rydal died suddenly at his home in Keelby on Sunday 9th December. Brian was a Driver at Waltham and, we understand, was largely involved with the moving of heavy gear. He was a widower and leaves a son to whom we send our sincere condolences.

We have just learnt from the Canadian Association that Peter Burnett died, after a long and distressing illness, on January 12th. He was bomb aimer in Clare Stuart's (RCAF) crew at Waltham in 1944 and will be remembered by many Association members for his narrow escape when their Lancaster crashed on take off in July 1944. The explosion shattered windows for miles around and even shook the bed of his fiancée in Cleethorpes. His story of "The Boot" is recalled in the supplement to "The Hornet's Nest". Peter was a keen supporter of 100 Squadron Association both here and in Canada where he played a leading role in their reunion last May. Bill Chishom and Bernie Sissons represented the Canadian Association at the funeral on 14th January at Glendale Memorial Gardens, Etobicoke, Ontario. The local branch of the Aircrew Association acted as pall bearers and provided a bugler for the "Last Post". We send our sincere condolences to Mrs Burnett and his family.

This week we have been informed of the death of Geoff Skermer. We send our condolences to the family and gratefully acknowledge the donation of £25.00 to the Association.

## **Change of address**

Peter Spowage  
9 Benenden Rd  
Wainscott  
Rochester Kent ME2 4NU  
01634 730181

Corrections to Membership list:

Stamper Metcalfe. E-mail  
Stamper\_m@yahoo.com

Mr H.J. Taylor  
Tel. 01625 582543

The Association is pleased to welcome new members:  
R J Martin DFM                      S Howard DFC

# **100 Squadron Association Reunion** **To be held at RAF Leeming** **Friday 28th - Saturday 29th June 2002**

The programme is as follows:

Friday: Arrive 10.30 - 12.30 for visit to the Yorkshire Air Museum  
14.00 - 17.00 Arrival at RAF Leeming  
17.00 - 18.00 Happy Hour in the Officers' Mess Bar  
18.45 - 19.10 Guests to be collected from Sundial Hotel  
and Northallerton Lodge, Leeming Bar  
19.30 for 20.00 Anniversary Dinner, Officers' Mess  
(Dress: Jacket and Tie. Squadron Standard to be paraded.)  
23.59 (ish) Transport to hotels.

Saturday: 10.00 - Commemoration Service at RAF Leeming Church  
11.00 - Association AGM, Briefing Room.  
11.00 - Presentations for those not attending AGM.  
12.00 - BBQ Lunch and Families Day.  
16.00 - End of proceedings.

Owing to the refurbishment of one wing of the Officers' Mess, it is not possible to provide accommodation for Members. Alex and John have negotiated a special rate at the following hotels at a cost of £40.00 per room for B&B per night. Members are requested to book directly with the hotels, preferably before 19.4.02.

Sundial Hotel  
Darlington Rd  
Northallerton  
N Yorks DL6 2XF  
Tel. 01609 780525  
Fax. 01609 780491

The Lodge at Leeming Bar  
The Great North Rd  
Leeming Bar, Bedale  
N Yorks DL8 1DT  
Tel. 01677 422122  
Fax. 01677 424507  
e-mail; [thelodgeatleemingbar@btinternet.com](mailto:thelodgeatleemingbar@btinternet.com)  
[www.leemingbar.com](http://www.leemingbar.com)

NB Transport has been arranged to and from these two hotels.  
Other accommodation may be available at the White Rose Hotel in Leeming Bar, or by contacting Yorkshire Tourist Board, 312 Tadcaster Rd, York YO 24 1GS. Tel. 01904 707961. [www.yorkshirevisitor.com](http://www.yorkshirevisitor.com)

# **Yorkshire Air Museum**

Members, particularly those coming from some distance, may wish to visit the Museum on Friday morning and have lunch there, continuing on to RAF Leeming in the afternoon. The Group cost of entrance is £3.00 per person. Elvington is about 40 miles from RAF Leeming.

## **Friday Afternoon**

At RAF Leeming, book in at the Guardroom and then go to the 100 Squadron Hangar between 14.00 and 17.00. Happy Hour will commence in the Officers' Mess Bar at 17.00.

## **Dinner**

The dinner of three courses and coffee has been specially arranged by the Squadron and includes pre-dinner drinks, wine and a liqueur afterwards at a cost of £25.00 per person. As seating is limited to 80 members and 40 squadron personnel, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. A barrel of beer will be provided by the Association for after-dinner refreshment.

## **Saturday**

Following the presentation and the AGM, the BBQ lunch and drinks will be available at a cost of £10.00 per person. The Squadron has kindly agreed to provide a barrel of beer! At the Open Day which follows, Members will have the opportunity to meet Squadron Personnel and their families.

N.B. An application form is enclosed. Please return it to Alex as soon as possible and not later than 21st June. Thank you.

As some of our Canadian colleagues hope to attend the Reunion, we would be grateful if "local" members could offer them accommodation in their homes for the weekend.

# **Waltham Extension**

In Newsletter No. 55, Arthur mentioned that he was working with Colin Johnson and John Moore to organise a "Waltham Extension" on the day following the reunion at RAF Leeming, i.e. Sunday 30th June. We are all invited (for a small fee of course) booking forms enclosed elsewhere in this issue.

Meanwhile, here are some Guest houses in Cleethorpes

Argyll Guest House, 25 Clee Road, Cleethorpes  
DN35 8AD Tel: 01472 3217

Brentwood Guest House, 9 Princes Road Cleethorpes  
Tel: 01472 693982

Lindenthorpe Guest House 19 Grant Street, Cleethorpes.  
Tel: 01472 312070 /313005.

Sandside Guest House, 17 Kingsway, Cleethorpes,  
Tel: 01472 6940039.

Shelley's Guest House, 15 Princes Road Cleethorpes.  
Tel: 01427 690153.

White Lodge 11a Albert Road, Cleethorpes.  
Tel: 01472 601102

Addresses supplied by Arthur !

# The Story of ED973:HW-D

Continued from Newsletter No. 55. The following is an edited version of an e-mail from an eyewitness which has reached me (via Arthur).

"As my parents and my brothers and sisters were standing near the entrance to our shelter, we saw a plane on fire in the distance high in the sky, which seemed to be falling towards our house. We could hear the engines roaring as the plane seemed to hang in the air, then all went silent. The stricken aircraft dived straight down, there was an agonising sound, then a thud and rumble while the sky lit up behind the forest. After approximately five minutes, there was a terrible explosion, and although the crash was 2 km from our house the whole area shook, and sand was falling through the roof of the shelter, it was very scary.

At dawn my older brother, Piet said "Leo, come with me to see if any of the crew are alive. I am in the underground movement and know where to take the English to get them home, but I don't speak English, so you must do the talking!" This sounded interesting to me, "We must go now before the Germans get there".

Off we went through the heather and the bushes in the direction we thought the plane had fallen down. To our surprise we saw the Germans had beaten us to it, so we returned home as quick as possible. We were very disappointed; however, later in the day, I went to see what had happened. The German guard told me they had found six dead, the bodies had been covered with sawdust.

The guard let me look at the crater which was 30 feet in diameter and 8 feet deep, with bits of twisted wreckage all over the place. It was a sad day for my family as we had hoped to find some of the crew alive.

Although this tragedy happened almost sixty years ago I still vividly remember all the details. I want to express my condolences to all the families who lost their fathers and sons. I hope this Memorial and commemoration will ease the pain and will comfort you."

Yours very sincerely,  
Leo Van Ophoven  
New Zealand.

As you may remember from your last newsletter, the above mentioned Memorial (pictured below and on the next page) will be dedicated on the 15th of June 2002 near the village of Grashoek on the 59th anniversary of the crash. The Squadron and Association members are invited to attend. Grashoek is about two hours by road from Rotterdam; nearest airports are Eindhoven in Holland and Dusseldorf in Germany. Anyone interested in going please contact Arthur White, 46 Stockhill Street, Dewsbury, West Yorks WF13 2JD (or phone 01924-465040) who has details of local accommodation. The Squadron is looking at the possibility of sending over an aircraft.



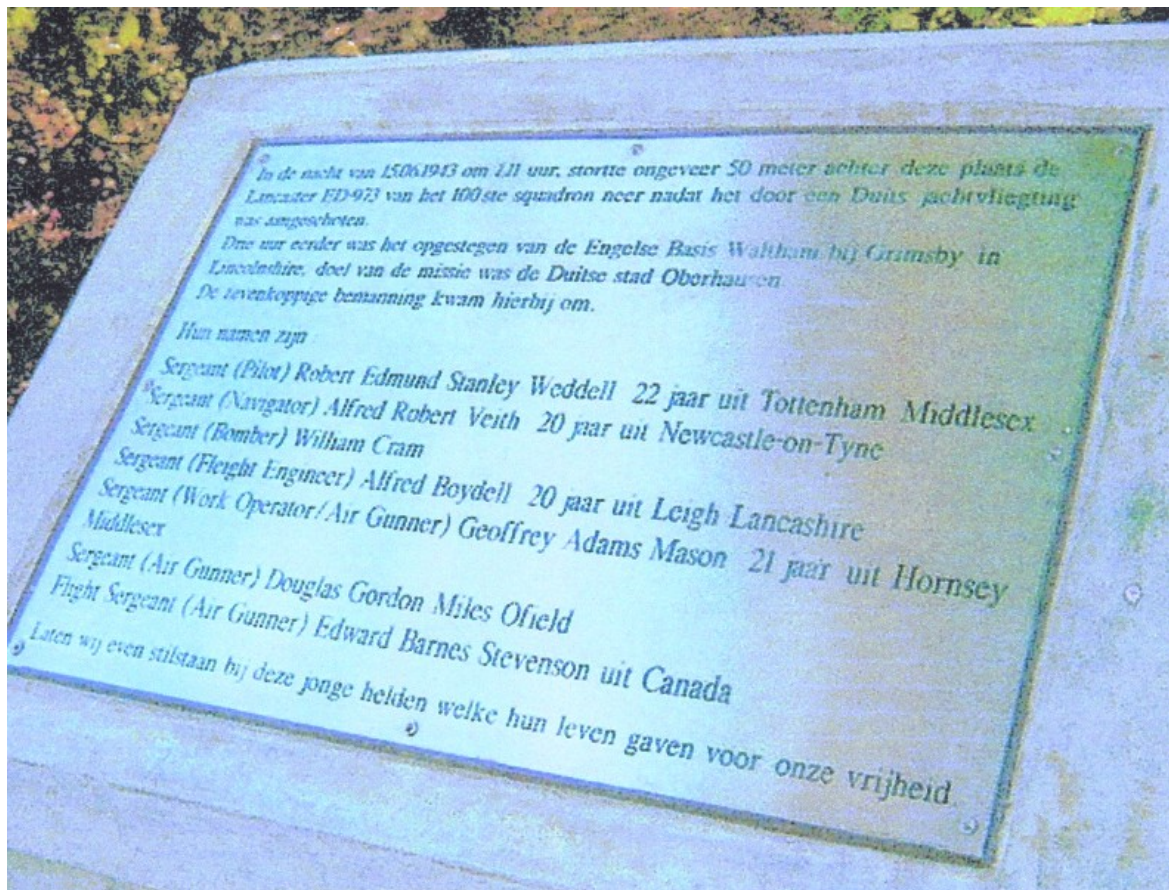
The translation of the inscription over the names is as follows:

“On the night of 15th June 1943 at 01.11 hours, a Lancaster from 100 Squadron crashed about 50 metres from this spot. It was hit by a German hunter (night fighter). Three hours earlier (actually 1 & 1/2 hours), it had left its base at Waltham near Grimsby in Lincolnshire”

Below the crew’s names it reads;

“Please stay for a moment and let go your mind to remember these young heroes, who gave their lives for our freedom”.





## **TV Programme on Channel Four** **Battle Stations — Lancaster Bomber**

We hope that many members watched the programme in January. Arthur White, Stamper Metcalfe, Ginger Stevens, Bill Banks and Bob Pierson came over so well that they must surely now be considering new careers in television. We have been asked to pass on congratulations from the Squadron personnel to all those involved in an excellent programme.

Thanks are also due to Stamper for producing the 2002 Membership List.

# Telegram to The Queen

At a Committee meeting held on 17th December 2001 at RAF Wittering, it was decided to send a telegram to Her Majesty the Queen to mark the Squadron's continuing loyalty to the crown in this, the Squadron's 85th Anniversary year.

At the same meeting it was agreed to define the following categories of Membership:

Full Membership - Present and former members of 100 Squadron who are up to date with their subscriptions.

Associate Membership - Widows of Association members or other relatives who demonstrate a continuing interest in the Association. Widows will not pay a subscription, but will receive the newsletter free. Others pay £6.00 p.a. Additionally, deserving cases as determined by the Committee may be offered Associate Membership. In these cases, the eligibility decision may be devolved to the Secretary.

Honorary Membership - Such membership may be granted to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the Association. The decision to award such membership may only be by the unanimous resolution of those members attending the AGM.

## **Have you ever thought:-**

Women speak two languages, only one of which is verbal.

Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else have your own way.

Reality: nine tenths illusion and one tenth confusion.

Modesty is the art of encouraging people to find out for themselves how wonderful you are.

Your O.G. Philosopher.

## **Overheard in the Bar**

A Roman centurion walks into the bar, throws down a couple of coins and says "give me a Martinus please."

Barman replies "don't you mean a Martini?"

Centurion: "No, if I'd wanted a double I'd ask for it."

O'Reilly, in the newsagents, early in the evening asked for a couple of Newspapers. Unfortunately they were sold out but the newsagent said "Never mind there's always the Teletext". To which O'Reilly replied "How many does it take to light the fire, then?"

Barman to customer "If we are ever under air attack the best place to shelter is under one of our ashtrays, no one's ever hit one yet!"

## **Happy Birthday**

By the time this newsletter reaches you, it should be appropriate to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY to my predecessor ARTHUR WHITE. I'm not saying how many candles are on the cake, but the fire brigade are on standby! Here's Arthur (courtesy of Cyber-Hornet) in the Canadian Lancaster: at Hamilton Warplane Museum.



Finally, my wife and I would like to thank everyone at the Canadian Reunion for their friendliness and hospitality last May.

## **Memorabilia Etc.**

Squadron ties, blue or maroon: £12.50 inc p&p

Blazer Badges. (Specify King's or Queen's crown): £12.50 inc p&p

"The Hornet's Nest" – History of 100 Squadron: £12.00 inc p&p

Supplement to "The Hornet's Nest": £4.50 inc p&p

All the above are available from the Treasurer. Cheques payable to 100 Squadron Association please.

Black Baseball caps: £7.00 inc p&p

From Flt Lt Percival or Flt Lt R Simpson. 100 Squadron. Leeming.  
Cheques payable to 100 Squadron Aircrew Fund please.

"Bread and Butter Bomber Boys": £8.00 inc p&p  
from Arthur White. Cheques payable to Arthur White please.