



# THE HORNET

## The Newsletter of the 100 Squadron Association

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Situations Vacant  
Volunteers urgently*

Association Website: [www.100squadronassociation.org.uk](http://www.100squadronassociation.org.uk)

## Newsletter 96 - March 2012

Dear Colleagues,

Sorry for the problems with the last issue. For various reasons, I was only able to complete a small part of it; the rest being finished by my good friend Keith Ellis {thanks Keith} whose computer didn't have the Publisher program I use so we lost some of the material that was due to be included. So I will try harder this time! As I write this, on the anniversary of the King's death, I remember 60 years ago, I first heard the sad news seated in the pilot's seat of a 100 Squadron Lincoln while on an after-flight inspection. The radio bod was listening to the BBC when the news was given out!

Enclosed with this newsletter is the booking form for the 95th reunion; please fill it in as soon as soon as possible as I'm looking forward to seeing you all!

John

## **From the Treasurer**

### Donations

We have recently received donations from:

- Norma Collen, who sent us £10:00 wishing the Squadron Association and The Hornet success for the future.
- Bill Chisholm, our Canadian Committee Member, sent us £20:00 as a donation towards our costs.
- Margaret Berry, who has given £200:00 in memory of Jim Berry.
- Mr Geoff Holden from Canada has sent us £15:00. He is not an Association member, but is a good friend of Bill Chisholm. Geoff lived in Liverpool as boy during World War II and has sent this donation as a tribute to all those Commonwealth airmen who volunteered to help the UK fight for freedom.

We offer our grateful thanks to all of you.

N.B. The members of the 100 Squadron Canadian Association receive copies of The Hornet reprinted and distributed by Bill Chisholm, at their expense. Thanks Bill!

## Obituaries

Sent to us by Greg Harrison, our former historian

It is with great sadness that I inform the Association of the death of my grandfather, Alan Frank Smith, on the 3rd of February 2012 just a few days short of his 88th birthday. Granddad, like so many of his generation, "put on" his age by a year to join the RAF in late 1941. After initial training in the UK, he went overseas to Canada (sailing on the Queen Mary, which had been requisitioned as a troopship) and attended Bombing & Gunnery School at Picton, and the Air Navigation School at Hamilton. He qualified as a Bomb Aimer in late 1943. Following the obligatory courses at, OCT, HCU, and No.1 Lancaster Finishing School, Granddad was posted to 100 Squadron in December 1944 as Bomb Aimer in Sgt Freddie Wright's crew, who flew his "second dickie" trip with the experienced crew of F/O Elliff to Bonn on the night of the 21st/22nd of December. Their first trip as a complete crew took place on the evening of 28th of December when they attacked Munchengladbach. A full tour followed, including trips to Nuremburg, Hannover, Frankfurt and Munich. On an op to Kassel on the night of 8th/9th March 1945, their Lancaster was hit by incendiaries from an aircraft above them, causing extensive damage to the fuselage, mainplane, tailplane, both gun turrets and various flying controls of their Lanc. Despite losing several thousand feet in an uncontrolled dive, the skipper regained control whilst the rest of the crew removed several incendiaries that were burning in the aircraft. After the bombing operations, Granddad flew several "Manna" and "Exodus" trips, and on one of the later they stocked up on wine in Italy to bring back home along with the cargo of ex-POWs, stowing the wine out of sight in the undercarriage bays lest it be found by a nosey Officer back at base. Arriving back at Elsham Wolds the following afternoon, with the Squadron and Station Commanders out to greet them, the Skipper executed a perfect landing for his senior officers, and for the sake of the bottles of wine stowed aboard. Taxiing off the main runway they

hit a pothole and every single bottle fell out and smashed on the tarmac!! In 1947, Granddad received a Belgian Croix de Guerre (with Palm) in the post from the Belgian Authorities for service in the war, although he never revealed what it was for. Returning to civvy street, he found he missed service life and rejoined the RAF in 1947, serving with 48 Squadron in Singapore. It was Granddad who first gave me my interest in Bomber Command generally and 100 Squadron specifically. We shared many a whisky whilst he talked of his time with 100, a period he remembered with great fondness and affection. At the Squadron's 90th Birthday reunion in 2007, we took the opportunity, once night had fallen, to go and have a look at the Lanc close up. He turned to me and said, with great pride in his voice, "she got me home, every time."

Happy Landings Grandad,

Greg

## **Northern Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Project**

This project commemorates eight airfields including; Waltham, Elsham Wolds, Hibaldstow, Kirmington, Sandcroft, Goxhill, North Killingholme and the current RAF Kirton in Lindsey. Permanent display boards are being installed at each of the sites, local schools are involved in out-reach programmes and oral recordings are to be made by people who served on or lived near the bases.

The launch event will take place in the memorial rooms at the former RAF Elsham Wolds on Wednesday, 9th May 2012 commencing at 6.30 pm. Members of the 100 Squadron Association who served at either Waltham or Elsham Wolds are welcome to attend.

For more information, please call 01724 297536

## **A Brief History of RAF Grimsby/Waltham**

By Air Commodore Norman Bonnor with acknowledgements to the Rev. Chris Wooden, Colin Johnson, The Grimsby Evening Telegraph, Bomber County by Terry Hancock, Lancaster Operations by Ian Reid, and the RAF History website.

A private flying club started by enthusiasts in the Grimsby area during the early 1930s was based on meadowland three miles from the town in the parish of Waltham. The field was selected to be one of a string of municipal airports by Sir Alan Cobham during a visit early in 1933, when the government of the day was promoting air transport as the railway of the future. On the 1st of July 1933, a passenger air service known as the Humber Air Ferry began linking Grimsby, Hull and Cleethorpes. The Lincolnshire Road Car Company operated a bus service between the Old Market Place in Grimsby and the airfield, from which three services a day were operated by the North Sea Aerial and General Transport Limited. The aircraft used was a Blackburn Segrave monoplane G-ABFP, one of two built at Brough, which had been designed by the famous racing driver and record breaker Sir Henry Segrave. The inclusive fare between Grimsby and Hull was 7/- single or 12/- return; the service was not well used and closed after just two years.



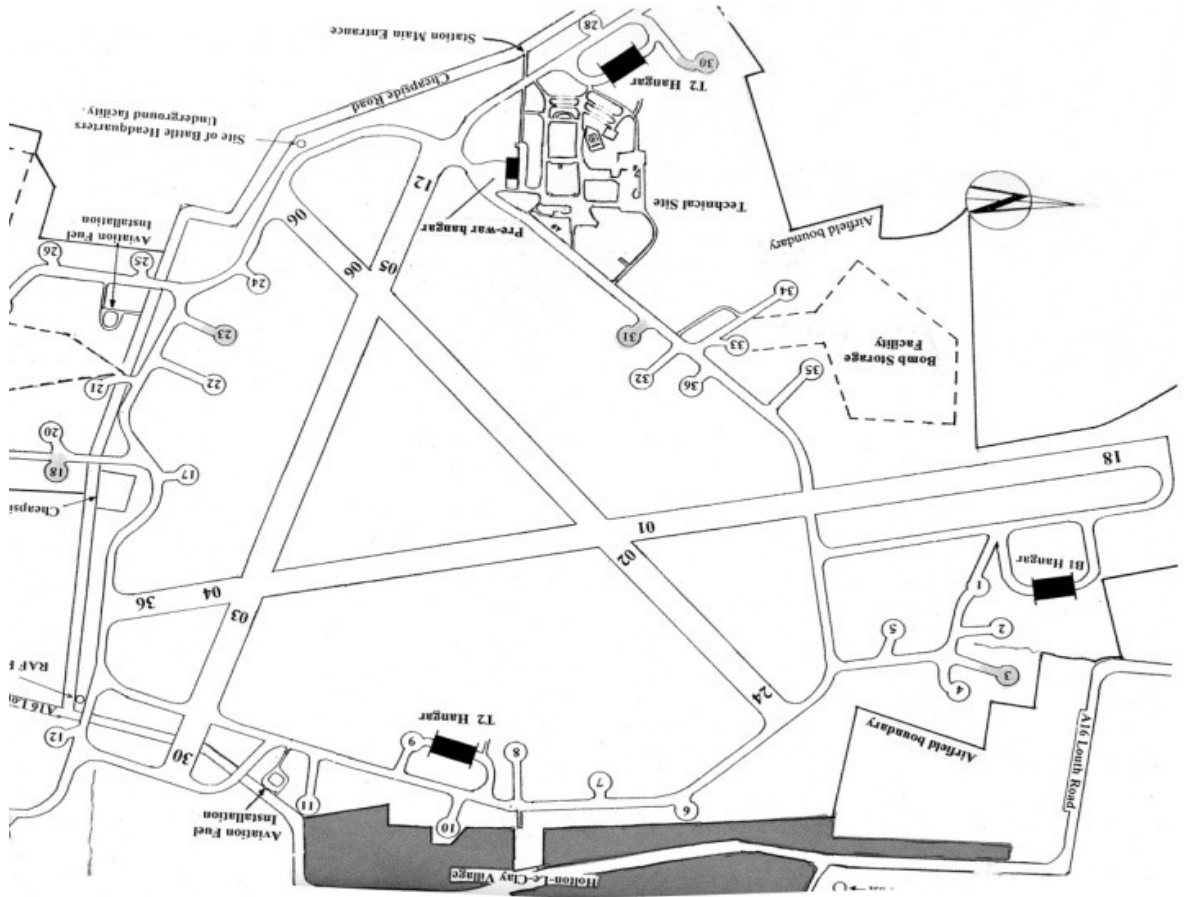
The Blackburn Segrave Monoplane

However, the airfield quickly expanded from 50 to 300 acres, and the Lincolnshire Aero Club moved in and built a clubhouse and two wooden hangars; a larger, more substantial hangar was built in 1937. As the need for RAF expansion became clear, the club reformed as the Civil Air Guard. In 1938, Waltham aerodrome was selected by the Air Ministry for No. 25 Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School to be set up and run under civilian contracts providing instruction for pilots. A variety of aircraft were used by the school during its 14 months of operation, but the principal types were the De Havilland Tiger Moth and Miles Magister. The school disbanded at the start of the war when most elementary training was transferred, for safety reasons, to Commonwealth countries. Apart from an occasional visitor, the airfield was devoid of flying tenants from September 1939, and late the following year was temporarily closed after the site had been surveyed and found suitable to be developed for bomber operations. Work began in the winter of 1940-41 to extend the site into the parish of Holton-le-Clay, taking in part of the A16 Louth to Grimsby road on the Northeast side. Three runways were constructed: 18/36 at 1,200 yards, 06/24 at 1,400 and 12/30 at 1,100 yards. 36 hard standings were built off the encircling perimeter track as well two T2 hangars and one B1 hangar. The materials used were slag from Scunthorpe steel works, chalk from Ravendale quarry, gravel from Louth and tarmac. Initially opened as a satellite for Binbrook in November 1941, the new station was officially named Grimsby although the local name Waltham persisted among locals and servicemen on the station. This led to some confusion as there already was a White Waltham airfield near Maidenhead. The Wellingtons of 142 Squadron arrived from Binbrook and carried out bombing operations from Grimsby until December 1942. With an urgent need for more night bombers to support the Torch invasion, 142 Squadron was split, half going to North Africa and the remainder moving to Kirmington where it was used as the basis to form another squadron. By early 1943, work had started to upgrade the airfield to Class A Standards for heavy bomber operations, including extending

two of the runways 18/36 to 2,000 yards and 12/30 to 1,400 yards across the A16. During this work, some 19 hard standings were lost and replaced with loops. The runways were originally numbered 1 to 6 starting at the one nearest to North and counting clockwise. In October 1943, the runway numbering was changed to adopt the convention of painting the magnetic heading at the threshold. Additional domestic sites gave accommodation for 2,203 males and 254 females. Once the work was completed, Bomber Command allocated the station to No. 1 Group, who issued two Administration Instructions: No. 11 on 23rd December to reform 100 Squadron and No. 16 on 27th January to base the Squadron at RAF Grimsby with 16 Lancasters and two spares. Operations commenced on the night of 8th/9th March 1943.

In November 1943, 100 Squadron's C Flight became 550 Squadron which moved to North Killingholme in mid January 1944. A number of other units were resident or detached to Grimsby/Waltham throughout the war, including a detachment from 776 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm. However, the airfield was primarily the home of 100 Squadron until 2nd April 1945 when, because of deterioration of the runways, the Squadron moved to Elsham Wolds. This marked the end of Bomber Command flying units at the station, but the hangars were used later to store food for Operation Manna, when tons of concentrated rations were dropped for the Dutch. Operations from Grimsby cost 164 bombers missing in action or crashing in the UK, 48 Wellingtons and 116 Lancasters.

In the immediate post war years, the hangars were used by 35 Maintenance Unit for storage, and the airfield reverted to agricultural use apart from an area used by cadet Gliding Schools. In later years, improvements to the A16, with a bypass for Holton-le-Clay, reclaimed part of the Eastern side of the airfield where the memorial to the men of 100 Squadron now stands.



Waltham/ Grimsby then and now





As sort of a postscript to Norman's article, here is a story of an accident which happened to HW-H (Harry) - LM634 on one of the runways.

Pilot: F/O Stuart, B/Aimer: Peter Burnett

During a long take off, the starboard engine caught fire and the portside undercarriage collapsed; the A/C then swung off the runway and ground looped. The crew scrambled clear; Peter got out of the top hatch, slid down the wing and legged it towards Holton-le-Clay losing a boot in the process. The rear gunner was trapped in his turret when the engine stopped; losing hydraulic power, he managed to turn the 600 lbs of the turret by hand and then worked his way down the fuselage to make sure no one was trapped. He managed to jump clear before the A/C blew up. The explosion that followed blew out a lot of windows in Holton-le-Clay and many in the watch tower.

The runway was not damaged and two aircraft were dispatched straight after the crash, but the last aborted because of the threat of the crashed A/C's bomb load exploding. This did indeed happen, tannoys around the airfield site announced that all personnel should take cover in the nearest shelter. The explosion of 1,300 lbs of high explosives at about 10 mins after the crash completely destroyed LM634 (nothing much left) just a crater 40 feet across and 15 feet deep, some pieces landed in Holton-le-Clay half a mile away!

Roger Stephenson & Ian Reid

On 20th September 2011, Peter Burnett's widow came to visit the Museum in Waltham to see the boot, which Peter presented to the Museum several years ago before he passed away.

## The 95th Anniversary Reunion

Celebrating the 95th Anniversary of the Squadron's formation is a major project, and attendance by the Chief of the Air Staff on Saturday, the 9th June has confirmed that it will be a prestigious event. 2012 also marks the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Association. However, current operational commitments, reduced defence expenditure and cuts in manning are creating very high workloads for the staff of RAF Leeming. The manning requirements for Operation Olympia, which will affect Service catering staff in particular, are as yet unknown. These constraints will clearly affect what can be achieved and what level of support Association members can expect for this year's Reunion.

To ease the load on the Squadron and Station personnel, the Association Day on Friday, 8th June will be held off station at the Solberge Hall Hotel at Newby Wiske off the A684 just to the West of Northallerton. It will involve a "Meet and Greet" at 2pm with tea, coffee, and biscuits, the AGM at 3.30pm and an early evening finger buffet commencing at 5.00 pm. The cost of this event will be partly subsidised from Association funds. The Association raffle, normally held at the Reunion Dinner, will take place during that afternoon so please bring along a **prize or two**.

On Saturday, 9th June, Association members can enjoy the RAF Leeming Families day which starts at 12.30 pm and will be based around the Northumbria University Air Squadron hangar, which is at the South Westerly end of the hangar line. The afternoon's flying display is expected to include: The Phantom of the Ruhr, the Red Arrows, the Tornado GR4 display, Hawk T2s from RAF Valley, a Spitfire, Tutors from NUAS and a roll demo by the Squadron. The static displays will include many of these aircraft and others from UK and overseas and, of course, the usual stalls and attractions of a Families Day. The 100 Squadron Hangar will be out-of-bounds to Association members on that afternoon because of preparations for the evening events.

Entry to the station on Saturday will be from a declared list of attendees held at the Guardroom: passport or photo identification will be required. Parking areas will be well signposted. The events will conclude at approximately 4.30 pm.

The primary Reunion event will be in the evening with a hangar dinner-dance. It is hoped that the Phantom of the Ruhr will be inside the hangar together with a Spitfire, and a Hawk painted in Phantom artwork. If this is not possible, the Lancaster will be floodlit outside the open doors. The Station is supporting the Squadron's anniversary with catering, buffet-style for 250-300 people. The RAF Regiment swing band "Shades of Blue" will play during dinner and for the dancing later. The evening will start at 7.00 pm with a fizz reception and canapés on the new patio outside the Squadron crewroom. A Spitfire, and possibly the Lancaster, will display at 7.30pm before guests will be invited to take their seats at 8.00 pm. For dinner, tables will be called forward in turn to three buffet lines each serving three main course selections.

Cost for Association members will be subsidised at £20 per head. Dress for serving personnel will be No. 5 Mess Dress, and the preferred dress for Association members is Dinner Jacket and black tie; however it is accepted that those not owning or willing to hire a DJ may wear a dark suit. The theme for the evening is the 1940s, so ladies are encouraged to dress accordingly. Private coaches will be provided to collect Association members from The Lodge at Leeming Bar, and other local hotels where a reasonable number of members are staying, from 6.30pm and return leaving Leeming at 11.30pm; the cost of this transport will be subsidised from Association funds. Again, Passports or photo-identification will be required for entry. It is very unlikely that Association members will be able to stay on the station as accommodation is limited, and priority will be given to visiting aircrew for the air and static displays.

A list of local Hotels, B&B and Pubs is enclosed; this list is a reprint of that provided for 2010, so changes may have occurred. An application form for the reunion is also enclosed; please return with a cheque made out to "100 Squadron Association" by 28th May 2012 at the very latest.

## **Committee News**

Because of increased workload on other projects, our Secretary - Mrs Jinny White - feels she cannot devote sufficient time to Association affairs and has, sadly, tendered her resignation.

Our Treasurer - Dr Keith Ellis - has suffered a medical problem requiring urgent surgery and needs to concentrate on regaining his health, so Keith has also resigned from the Committee. On behalf of the members, I thank Keith for his devoted efforts as Secretary and Treasurer over many years and also for his work in producing the History DVD in time for the 90th Anniversary Reunion.

At the AGM in June, I shall be seeking volunteers to join the Committee as Secretary and Treasurer.

Air Commodore Norman Bonnor

President

## **Remembrance Day in The Netherlands**

We have learned from the BBMF that "The Phantom" will be supporting the Remembrance Day services in The Netherlands again this year on Friday, 4th May 2012 and, amongst the many requests, are planning flypasts at both the 100 Squadron memorials at Eelde and Twello.

At last! I have promised to include this article in the last three issues of the N/L, but never had space, so here we go! (Part 1)

## **My time with 100 Squadron - as I remember it**

by Don Crossley

### **Airmanship**

This is a short story in which I try to present a picture of my experiences during World War Two firstly with 100 Squadron and then 582 Pathfinder Squadron. During training, and indeed afterwards, we were subjected to the importance of 'Airmanship', a term used to refer to an individual's or a crew's way of doing the job. For instance, if you study the action shots of the way Americans operate, there is a lot of cross talk between members of the crew. This becomes more obvious when under attack by enemy fighters, when it seemed that everyone was talking all at once.

The RAF training, under the heading of 'Airmanship' was aimed at minimising the talking to such an extent that in a similar situation, almost all the commentary would be between one or both of the gunners and the pilot. For example, the Rear Gunner would best be able to deal with a direct attack from astern, and he would call out the speed, angle of attack, and when best to 'corkscrew', so most of the dialogue would be between himself and the pilot. The Mid-Upper Gunner would also join in as appropriate, as would the Bomb Aimer who, in the front turret, would look for the fighter passing under the bomber and coming out of the other side of the attack. Keeping the intercom chat to a minimum gave the main participants in the combat, a clearer understanding of what was needed.

The same discipline, though not so stringent, was observed throughout any trip. Sometimes Ken the navigator would switch his microphone on to give an alteration of the course. Often he would forget to switch it off, and everyone else could hear his breathing. It sounded like

someone on his deathbed and eventually our Pilot Aggie would say 'Microphone please'. Strange how agonising it sounded to everyone except the man making the noise!

Now for some details of my 'ops' with 100 Squadron.

## **LUTZKENDORFE RAID SQUADRON RECORDS**

### **AGGETS CREW**

Operation No. 11 4/4/45, Target Lutzkendorfe, 18 Aircraft despatched. Our aircraft, Lancaster NF9789 (HW-Q), took off at 2057hrs. 10/10ths cloud between 5,000 and 7,000 feet over England clearing at the south coast and remaining clear over the channel. Clouds built up rapidly 0500hrs East onwards to 8/10ths Strata Cumulus up to 12,000 feet. This persisted to 11,000 feet East. However, the target was cloud free, and only a slight haze marring the visibility. Slight to moderate flak was experienced between 4,000 and 8,000 feet, 20 searchlights operated from North East of the target but were ineffective. Some fighters were active over target and 100-Squadron 'N2' and 'W2' opened fire on unidentified aircraft; no return fire was forthcoming. These sightings were on the run up to the target and on the homeward journey respectively. Bombing throughout the raid was concentrated. Two sets of fires were seen, one to the East and one to the West of aiming point. Black smoke was observed together with several explosions their orange flames rising well above the target.

A raid on Nordhausen was also in progress and crews who could see this target said that it appeared to be receiving a good share of punishment. On several occasions the Master Bomber's instructions were lost in a background of radio interference. In spite of this, the target was well and truly bombed even though bombing appeared a little scattered at the start of the attack. The general opinion was that the results justified the effort. Seventy-two tons of HE were dropped; 258 Lancasters and 14 Mosquitoes attacked the oil refinery and 6 Lancasters were lost.

## LUTZKENDORFE RAID CREW NOTES

Take off 2057hrs.

Bombed Primary Target at 0131hrs from 12,000 feet. Bombed centre of a big cluster of green T.I's on Master Bomber's orders. Landed at 0552hrs. Flying time; 8hrs 55mins.

Think that it was on this trip that we almost came unstuck!

Nearing the bombing run and flying straight and level (or bumping along as near straight and level as conditions allowed) the intercom patter was as normal between Ken, Aggie and Gerry. Listening out on the wireless, I wasn't on the intercom at the time. Suddenly the aircraft took a steep nosedive, and I sailed upwards out of my seat. My parachute, logbook and everything that wasn't tied down started floating up into the roof. First thing; get your 'chute on Crossley - this is for real! Pulling out of the dive and with me now on the intercom, I learned that we had almost run up the tail of another bomber. Gerry had seen it bang in front of our nose section and had shouted "Dive Aggie". A split second later, Les saw it, pulled back on the throttles and shoved the undercarriage lever down to increase the drag. Gerry couldn't find his 'chute as it to had floated off somewhere and was anxiously asking me for the spare, which caused me a moment of panic. It was my job to make sure that it was available (sorry Gerry - I'm alright Jack!). I found it behind the main spar and passed it up to Gerry. Harry in the rear turret reported that he was watching the other aircraft that we had almost hit, which was now behind us, twisting and turning and probably wondering what was happening. Harry thought it was a Halifax. I wonder if he was one of those missing!

To be continued in the next N/L.

## **ASSOCIATION MEMORABILIA**

Squadron Association Ties, blue and maroon	£12.50
Blazer Badges (specify King's or Queen's crown)	£12.50
"The Hornets Nest" History of 100 Squadron	£12.00
Supplement to above	£4.50
"Aircraft of 100 Squadron" Montage	£5.50
DVD "100 at 90"	£15.00

Postage and Packaging is included in all of the above. Please make cheques payable to "100 Squadron Association".

## **100 SQUADRON MEMORABILIA**

Cloth 100 Squadron crest badge	£5.00
Cloth skull and bones badge	£3.00
Cloth name badge	£6.50
100 Squadron crest zap	£1.00
Skull and bones zap	£1.00
100 Squadron print (blank)	£5.00
100 Squadron print (signed)	£8.00
100 Squadron shield (wooden)	£30.00
Framed embroidered crest	£25.00
Mini hip flask	£5.00
100 Squadron T-shirt Skull or Hawk (state size)	£10.00
100 Squadron polo shirt (medium only)	£15.00
100 Squadron cummerbund (blue-yellow check other side Skull and Bones white on black) (state waist size)	£33.00
100 Squadron bow tie (blue-yellow check) s, m, l	£15.00
100 Squadron engraved tankard	price on application

Please make cheques payable to "RAF Leeming Service Fund".

To order any of the above please contact:

Air Cdre N. Bonnor

Knob Hall, Mill Lane, Barrowden, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 8EH