

XV

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2016 UPDATE NEWSLETTER

2016 Reunion Dinner

Following the success of the Centenary Reunion in 2015, the 2016 Reunion Dinner will be held once again at RAF Wittering, near Stamford, Lincs PE8 6HB, on 3 June 2016. Timings will be 1900 for 1930. There will be a presentation on current Squadron activities at 1500hrs in the Officers Mess.

Gp Capt Graham Bowerman very kindly offered to organise this event again as he still flies from Wittering. At the time of writing the MT transport to/from the designated local hotel is expected to be free. If this situation changes we may have to make an additional charge to those who wish to use the coach.

Normally, the cost of the evening would be slightly higher than last year,

as we had the luxury of the Centenary event being sponsored by the Service. However, the Committee have decided to subsidise the evening from Association funds to keep the price down.

Whilst we hope to see as many members as possible, numbers are still limited to 120 diners by the capacity of the Officers Mess and all bookings will be taken on a 'first come, first served' basis so please don't delay booking your place at this prestigious occasion!

For this occasion, the cost of the meal has been set at **£45** per person. With this newsletter you will find a booking form for the Reunion. Please note that the booking form will need to be completed with your menu choices (**please do not 'mix & match' the menus!**) and returned with your payment to the nominated address

before **9 May** 2016. This is to ensure that the catering arrangements will run smoothly. Late bookings will be accepted if space is available but are not guaranteed their choice of menu.

As is unfortunately usually the case these days, accommodation is very limited at RAF Wittering, so we have nominated a couple of relatively inexpensive hotels on the A1 road, to the south of Wittering, from where coaches will be organised to transport diners to and from the dinner.

25 rooms have been reserved at the:

Days Inn (primary hotel)
12 miles south from RAF Wittering at Junction 17 (the A1(M)/A605 junction) on the A1(M), Peterborough PE7 3UQ
Tel: 01733 371540

Quote '15Sqn' or Ref: BK66062
£55 including two breakfasts, or £47 room only.

<http://www.daysinn.co.uk/hotels/united-kingdom/peterborough/days-inn-peterborough>

Suggested overspill option:

Travel Lodge 11 miles south from RAF Wittering
On A1(southbound), Alwalton, Peterborough PE7 3UG
0871 984 6003

<http://www.travelodge.co.uk/peterborough>

Please book (and pay for!) your own room requirements direct with the Hotel. Please book the coach transport on the Reunion booking form. As the coach runs are expected to be full, you will need to ensure that you get on the return coach at your nominated time.

RAF Wittering will redirect any accommodation enquires to the Association, so please do not attempt to book on-base accommodation direct with the Officers Mess.

If planning to drive to RAF Wittering, please approach the base from the south. Please do not attempt to cross the northbound A1 carriageway – it is an accident blackspot. Use the junctions north and south of Wittering to reverse direction.

DINNER MENUS

Please annotate on the booking form 1, 2 or 3. Please do not attempt to 'mix and match' different parts of the menus!

MENU 1

Watercress & Celeriac Soup

Served with Goats Cheese, Croutons & Smoked Pepper Oil

*

Seared Fried Fillet of Beef

Served with Crispy Parma Ham
& Served with a Wild Mushroom Jus
Saffron Infused Fondant Potatoes
Sauteed Green Beans, Pak Choi & Petit Pois
Roasted Beetroot, Silver Skin Onions

*

Chocolate & Raspberry Tart

Served with Pistachio Crumb, Espresso Ice Cream

MENU 2

Smoked Barbary Duck

Served with a Red Chard Salad, Sesame & Soy Dressing
Orange Segments & Crispy Leeks

*

Corn Fed Chicken

Stuffed with a Garlic & Thyme Farce
Served with a Wild Mushroom Jus
Saffron Infused Fondant Potatoes
Sauteed Green Beans, Pak Choi & Petit Pois
Roasted Beetroot, Silver Skin Onions

*

Chocolate & Raspberry Tart

Served with Pistachio Crumb, Espresso Ice Cream

MENU 3 - Vegetarian Option

Watercress & Celeriac Soup

Served with Goats Cheese, Croutons & Smoked Pepper Oil

*

Vegetarian Wellington

Served with a Tomato & Basil Sauce

Saffron Infused Fondant Potatoes

Sauteed Green Beans, Pak Choi & Petit Pois

Roasted Beetroot, Silver Skin Onions

*

Chocolate & Raspberry Tart

Served with Pistachio Crumb, Espresso Ice Cream

**

All three menus include coffee

Wine

Mission Sauvignon Blanc 2014

Alta Vista Malbec 2013

Club Ruby Port

En route to Garvie Island
23 February 2016



XV(R) Squadron Sqn Cdr's Report



The Boss presenting the 'Most Improved Air Mshl' Cup to Sir Michael Simmons in 1990.

I cannot believe that it is already 11 months since I took Command of XV(R) Squadron – where does the time go! Since I wrote my piece for the newsletter at the end of 2015, much has happened in the world! As I put pen to paper in November 2015, we were awaiting the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review which we hoped would shed light on the future of the Squadron. Although the outcome of the Review was very good news for the Royal Air Force, and has to some degree, firmed up the plan for the Tornado GR4 we are still waiting for a formal announcement on the closure of the Squadron and the Tornado GR4 Operational Conversion Unit. I hope I might be able to update you all at the Association Dinner on 3 June.

The Squadron is no less busy than before. We graduated our latest Long Course students at the end of February, shortly before the arrival of 57 Qualified Weapons Instructors Course. Both of them will be joining IX(B) Squadron at

Royal Air Force Marham and be deployed on Operation SHADER in the summer. The Squadron were allocated a number of Paveway IV 500 lb class weapons to drop in the Air-to-Ground Weapon Range at Cape Wrath recently, and all the students on the Long Courses were allocated a minimum of one weapon to drop. I am pleased to say they all successfully achieved this training – a few pictures of the results can be seen throughout this newsletter – which is important as the next time they are releasing live weapons it will be over Iraq or Syria!

You may recall that the Squadron set itself a target of raising £15,000 for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund as part of our Centenary Year. As this newsletter goes to print I can proudly announce that not only have we reached the target but we have probably achieved nearly £18,000 as the final accounting is still in progress. I hope you will all agree that this is an amazing achievement by all of the Squadron. My team have been innovative and completed some amazing feats to raise the money, too many to detail here, but they include completing half-marathons, endurance racing and push bike servicing to name but a few.

We have an intense 12 months ahead of us, but the Squadron is ready for the challenge and proud to be playing such a critical role in supporting the front-line. I look forward to dining with you on 3 June!

Aim Sure

FRIENDSHIP

In comparison to some friendships, thirteen years is not a long time, but thanks to a former officer who served with XV Squadron during World War Two, and one of his sisters, a friendship grew from two families being total strangers in two countries divided by an ocean, to unexpectedly being more of a family relationship.

Leonard O'Hara was posted to XV Squadron, based at RAF Bourn, Cambridgeshire, on 8th August 1942. Just over one month later, on 16th September, Pilot Officer O'Hara failed to return from his thirteenth operational sortie; he is still officially listed as "Missing in Action". Leonard's sister, Harriett Bump (nee O'Hara), never gave up hope of finding out what happened to her younger brother. That dream was realised in 2003, when Harriett's family received a dossier containing details of all Leonard's operational sorties with XV Squadron, together with the known details relating to his aircraft and crew. Later that same year, on 10th November, 90-year-old Harriett joined nine other members of her extended family and flew to England for the sole purpose of attending the Remembrance Service at the RAF Memorial at Runnymede. Refusing to be pushed in her wheelchair, Harriett was adamant she would walk, escorted by the XV Squadron historian, in order to lay her wreath,

A couple of days later, Harriett and her family attended the RAF Club, where, at the request of the XV Squadron historian, Harriett presented a suitably inscribed copy of the Squadron history, in memory of her brother, to the Club, for inclusion in the Club Library.

The following year, during May 2004, in memory of his Great Uncle who has never undergone the dignity of a burial, Tom Lowe (Harriett's grandson and Leonard O'Hara's Great Nephew) represented Harriett and his family at a ceremony held in Bergen General Cemetery, the Netherlands, when six former members of XV Squadron aircrew were laid to rest, having been exhumed from the site where their Stirling bomber had crashed in May 1941.

In 2005, the journey being too much for Harriett to consider, Tom and his wife Barbara, flew across from Los Angeles to represent their family at XV Squadron's 90th anniversary celebrations, held at RAF Lossiemouth, in May that year.

In September 2012, Martyn and Valerie were invited to Iowa to attend Harriett's 100th birthday celebrations, an invitation they were pleased and honoured to accept. It was a wonderful occasion with Harriett showing her sense of vitality and humour, both of which belied her advanced age. Sadly, during July this year, Harriett passed away, but she did not go without a fight. This remarkable lady would have been 103 years old next month.

Pilot Officer Leonard O'Hara's death was not in vain, if nothing else it produced a friendship, the bond of which is usually only found between family members. Harriett may have passed on, but her legacy lives on; and the interest in No.XV (R) Squadron, RAF, continues through her family.

Martyn & Valerie Ford-Jones

FIFTY SHADES OF GREEN

By Chick Chandler

On my very first leave after gaining my brevet and tapes, I was proudly marching (even swaggering) down the road leading to my Mother's house when a snotty-nosed little kid came running towards me. When he was quite close he stopped in his tracks and said "Oh no, it's not a real airman, it's only old Pop Chandler" (Pop was my nickname before I joined the RAF). Needless to say I was completely deflated, but it is said that words of wisdom are spoken by babies and sucklings (and snotty-nosed kids).

As the following events unfolded it will be seen young 'Sooty' Wrights (the chimney sweep's son) was not so far from the truth with what he'd said.

To start at the beginning, crews were formed by putting, say, 16 people from each trade (pilots, gunners etc) within a crew in a room together and told to sort themselves out. Eighty individuals went into the room and 16 crews came out. These crews were then posted to an Operational Training Unit for several weeks' training.

On completion of the OTU the crew went to a Heavy Conversion Unit where they gained an additional Gunner and a Flight Engineer. There was no democratic choice for the Flight Engineers, we were allocated to a crew. I was most disappointed to be given a mere Sgt as pilot; being very naïve I thought that a Sqn Ldr would be a better pilot. In fact, Sgt Brook proved to be an outstanding pilot.

The next story might be entitled "Wheels of Fortune" or "49 Shades of Green".

After a couple of days' groundschool our crew assembled under a Stirling preparing for our first take-off. I vividly recall standing under the cockpit of this cumbersome great beast and thinking "My god, am I responsible for this 'thing'?". Whilst the rest of the crew had quite a lot of flying

experience, I had absolutely none. The pilot and myself required a 'Screen' to keep an eye on us, in the pilot's case flying in a different aircraft, so our first hour and a half of 'circuits and bumps' were under supervision. The two 'Screens' then left us.

On our very first circuit the pilot informed us that the undercarriage would not come down. A chance for me to shine perhaps?

On reaching the offending piece of equipment I found to my horror that it was a Mark 1 (Most definitely the course that I attended said that we need not worry about learning this model as we would not encounter one as they were no longer in use. Probably true in operational units but this one was well past its sell by date and did have a Mark 1 undercarriage). Very shamefacedly I had to admit that I didn't know how to get the undercarriage down. We stogged around the circuit whilst instructions were passed from the ground. After some time I was able to wind the undercarriage down by hand. and when the counter indicator was reading '000' and a green light appeared I announced that the undercarriage was down. When on the downwind leg, for some unaccountable reason, I gave the handle just one more turn and most distinctly heard the mechanical lock 'clunk' home. This piece of information I kept to myself.

Some time after the war I obtained a copy of 'Pilots and Flight Engineers Notes' and learned that the information passed from the ground was not too accurate and we could have ended up with one wheel up and one wheel down. The time taken to lower the undercarriage, with two crewmembers winding, was approximately eight and a half minutes. On my own it took 20 minutes. (The correct procedure to wind the undercarriage down by hand was for

the Nav and Wireless operator to do one wheel each whilst I ensured that both wheels went down together. If one stopped for any reason, the other leg stopped). I should mention that all the controls on the Stirling were electrically operated, whilst those on the Lancaster were hydraulic.

This next story might be entitled 'Window of Opportunity' but much more aptly '48 Shades of Green' – I was learning.

Attending my first main target briefing, sitting with my ears cocked to digest every scrap of information the Engineer Leader said "Engineers, Window one a minute, two a minute forty miles from target". This was complete gobbledegook to me since I had no idea what 'Window' was. I whispered to Sgt Brooks, "What's Window?". "I'll tell you outside", he replied.

When the briefing was complete he showed me a strip of Window (most of you will know it as chaff). My next question was "Why was it dropped?". His answer was (and I quote), "It buggers up the enemy RADAR". On receiving this information, I cycled out to the aircraft and sure enough found large packs of window in packets, each bundle containing perhaps 500+ strips.

After take-off and being informed that we were approaching the enemy coastline, I carefully picked out one strip of Window and dispatched same. I continued with this procedure until we reached somewhere near the half-way point of the raid to Mannheim. At this stage I had to inform the pilot that, owing to a loss of oil pressure and excessively high engine temperature we would have to feather the starboard outer engine. Our only course of action was to jettison our bombs and do an early return to base (had we continued we would have been 20 minutes late over the target and down to around 8000ft.

This led to an angry exchange of words, with the pilot saying that we couldn't return

early or we would be accused of being LMF. Fortunately, the bomb-aimer (who was the 'Daddy' of the crew) intervened and the pilot agreed to turn around. On the return journey, I thought I'd really bugger up the enemy RADAR and threw out four of five single strips of Window a minute.

On landing back at base we were met by just about everyone of importance from the Station Commander down. It was with great trepidation that I waited for the Warrant Officer's verdict on my decision and it was great to hear him say that we had suffered a huge oil leak and the engine would probably have caught fire had it not been feathered.

Here I would like to make two observations. Firstly, the pilot had a very difficult decision to make – to press on or to abort. In my opinion, had the decision been the other way it would have been his last. Secondly, my general lack of knowledge could have been a blessing. Very little effect on the outward journey, but on sneaking back in the hope of not being detected, an aircraft throwing out four or five 'RADAR' contacts a minute could have attracted some very unwelcome attention. As it was, just one strip of Window per minute wouldn't have been noticed.

An incident that really 'chuffed' me was as follows:

In the Stirling the Window was dispatched through a hole designed for the trolley-acc to connect to the aircraft batteries. It was more technical in the Lancaster, as a hole was cut somewhere near the Flight Engineer's position and partly covered with a protruding piece of metal which caused a vacuum which literally sucked the Window/chaff out. On going round the aircraft one day, a Corporal was drilling this hole from a ladder by the side of the aircraft. Very guardedly, he asked "Sarge, what's this hole for?"

Equally guardedly I replied "It's a Window shute". His response was, "F*** me, you see much through there can you?".....

I was not the only 'Prawn' on the Squadron. Even though I had not let on about the very late action of 'just one more turn for luck' and the fact that I kept the Window faux pas to myself, my standing with the rest of the crew in general and especially the pilot was not too high. However, on the next Op trip things changed.

This was when the nav had his 'Fifty Shades of Green' event making the cardinal error of arriving early over the target. As we were straining our eyes looking for something to bomb, our rear gunner informed us that there were Target Indicators dropping behind us – we had overshot the target. This meant we had to fly a very elongated 360° turn to regain the bomber stream. On our reciprocal leg we saw four Pathfinder Force planes blow up. (Again, showing

our inexperience, at the debriefing we reported them as 'Scarecrows', a myth (not discouraged by the powers that be) that they were shells fired into the bomber stream to simulate aircraft blowing up. More experienced crews soon put us right). At this stage the crew warmed towards me, realising that my insistence that we abort our first mission was correct. The act of orbiting Berlin in a Stirling at 13,000ft in the middle of a big raid had a very sobering effect.

In conclusion, it is my intention to attend the reunion in June. You will be pleased to hear that the French Government have awarded me the rank of "Chevalier" in the Order National de la Legion d'Honneur. The award came through the post, but arrangements are in hand for it to be presented by (hopefully) a member of the French Embassy, or the High Sherriff of Hampshire, at our local Assembly Rooms in Alton.



Garvie Island 23 February 2016. A Paveway 4 drop.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A NAV PLOTTER

By Alan Coles

(Victors 1962-1964)

Here are some of my memories of Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) at Cottesmore. Holding QRA was a regular event throughout my time on the Squadron as Nav Plotter with Murphy's crew.

We were crewed up while undergoing conversion training at 232 OCU at Gaydon on the Victor Mk1. after an initial period in groundschool we were assembled in the briefing room and told to make up as crews of captain, co-pilot, nav plotter, nav radar and AEO. A weird moment! After wandering around for a while I found myself with Murphy as captain – a good choice! Diz as AEO (unforgettable as our 'ladies man'), and a good, serious nav radar whose name now escapes me. The majority of my flights would now be with this crew, particularly QRA and overseas flights.

QRA was a regular event as one or more crews were on QRA at any time, day and night, throughout the year. The aircraft were nuclear armed and on a dispersal with four engine simultaneous start facility. QRA for a crew came round fairly frequently and lasted one or two days at a time as best I can recall.

On QRA the alert times were for the crew to be 15 minutes from start engines status, throughout the day and night, reduced to 4 minutes at the whim of the Bomber Controller from his underground bunker at High Wycombe. QRA crews had to be together in a location that met the 15 minute rule and would be alerted by Klaxon or Tannoy to go to four-minute readiness. Normal places would be the Officers Mess, briefing room or squadron offices – definitely not in married quarters!

The time would be used in routine flight and target preparation; each crew had

several allocated targets with prepared flight plans, mapping, target recognition packs, radar offsets, weather systems and defences intelligence, the 'go-line' for the final decision to proceed to target, and many other factors to consider, particularly complicated by changes to low level flight, weapon strategies etc.

Crews dealt with this as a team recognising the pilot's responsibility to get the aircraft off the ground and deal with any flight emergency, engine and fuel problems, etc. The nav plotter would command the routing, climbs and descents, the tactical navigation to reach the multiple target areas, working with the nav radar to recognise target and weapon releases, the tactical navigation to avoid defence systems, and hopefully recovering to a friendly landing place. The AEO handled communications, missile defence systems and electrical problems. The aircraft was 'blind' when in the final stage of the attacks as the metal anti-flash screens were dropped to cover all the windows.

That was the serious stuff! We never knew much about the weapons we were dropping – as I recall the early one was a very large dustbin shape – the nav radar had the pre-flight job to remove the last safety device which involved putting his hand and arm up into the bomb to unscrew a safety plug – the butt of many jokes!

There were many comic and light-hearted events during QRA; we were attending an annual Officers Mess Ball, full Mess Kit, wives in their best formal dresses. Our crew was on QRA but still attended the ball as it was a duty! The Bomber Controller decided on Alert four-minute readiness, the klaxon sounded in the ballroom (remember this could be real or exercise) followed by hasty farewells to wives from husbands. Dash to the car and to dispersal, into the aircraft in full Mess Kit much to the amusement of the crew chief

and his gang, into our seats and strapped in, informed the Bomber Controller of our readiness state. We reckoned we were the best dressed crew ever to go to war!

We were allocated a vehicle from the motor pool for the period of QRA. Once, the only available vehicle was the Station Commander's state car – his pride and joy. Our AEO always fancied himself as the best driver and was usually first into the driver's seat. The Klaxon sounded, off we went at high speed in the Group Captain's car; at dispersal, Diz unfortunately parked behind the aircraft. We crewed quickly into the aircraft, at which point the Bomber Controller called for engine start – the simultaneous four-engine start proceeded to blast the CO's car, rolling it over and leaving upside down against a wall! Not a happy day.

Another QRA on a very cold winter's night; this time the Bomber controller went to start and taxi to a simulated take-off down the runway.

Unfortunately, there was a coating of ice on the runway and we pirouetted gracefully down the runway, fortunately avoiding going onto the grass (which would have been fun with a fully laden aircraft). Without using the brakes, Murph managed to stop the aircraft sideways on the runway. Well done! QRA abandoned for the night.

We were often sent to satellite airfields as an exercise in dispersing the V-Force if Cold War tensions escalated – as happened during the Cuban crisis; our satellite was St Mawgan. Memories of a very cold winter period (we were billeted in Nissan huts close by the dispersal), one coal burner to heat the whole hut. We were on four-minute readiness, playing football in the snow against a background of three Victors, reminiscent of the Battle of Britain's Spitfire readiness films, waiting for the klaxon to sound to take them into the Battle of Britain!!



The following email was received by the Secretary last year, which just goes to show the value of having a website these days:

My name is Ken Skuse, I served on XV Sqn A Flight, A/Fit./Weapons, K4243210, from 1958 until 1963, on Victor Mk.1 aircraft. Group Captain Johnnie Johnson was our commanding officer at RAF Cottesmore. I left the service in 1980 after 22 years service.

It is a long story, but I have lived in Roumania since 1993 where I have worked with humanitarian aid and where I acquired one hundred orphans. We are still together, though some are now scattered across the world. I love them all, they are my family, and I will never leave.

Two years ago, nostalgic for aircraft, I attended a flying show in Kecskemet in Hungary, a long journey for me, where to my amazement unexpectedly there was an RAF Tornado on display. Excitedly I waved to one of the RAF personnel in attendance, my first Englishman here in twenty years. I told him my story, that I had joined the RAF in 1958 on Fifteen Squadron Victors at RAF Cottesmore.

"This is a XV Sqn aircraft" he informed me with a smile, pointing to the badge, I could hardly believe it, absolutely amazing. It was a great morale booster. They were all very kind to me, giving me a Coca Cola, XV stickers and some other things which I still have.

I live in Blidar, in the Carpathian mountains, sixty kilometres from the border with the Ukraine. Here the villagers are dug in with gas masks, and Palinka, in case Putin's lot arrive, pitch forks at the ready. We have several Antonov biplanes, great ground attack hedge hoppers, on battle flight. Grandma Grylls is our CO after winning the wrist wrestling contest.



Ken in front of the Blidar 'battle flight'.

Ken also tells of his first day at RAF Cottesmore when he arrived on XV Squadron:

I received my first posting, RAF Station Cottesmore in Rutland in 1958. Arriving there I asked how do I get to XV Sqn A Flight ? Walk was the blunt reply, so I set off round the peri track; it was a long way.

Unexpectedly, I came across a set of traffic lights at the end of the runway; strange I thought, they were at red and it seemed to me I should stop. Then to my horror a staff car drew up alongside me wearing the Station Commander's flag, an AC's nightmare on his first day. I froze rigidly and saluted filled with dread. The window wound down and and a voice asked, "Where are you going airman?"

"Fifteen Sqn A Flight, Sir"

"Then you had better jump in"

"Yes Sir".

Just as I clambered in a huge Victor bomber, crashed down onto the runway just yards away from me, deploying a massive brake parachute, pure Star Trek, and the best bomber in the world.

Arriving at A Flight, I thanked the station commander who wished me good luck and told me to get 'Stuck in'.

Moments later new friends rushed up and asked me if I knew who that was?

I replied that it was the C.O.

Yes, but it is Group Captain Johnnie Johnson, the top scoring RAF fighter ace in the second world war. Wow, what a start to my new career.

They took me into the crew room, bought me a coffee and a roll, I sat in an armchair, and there was music from a radio, it was warm and full of new friends. What more could I have asked. Not long afterwards I thought this is the life for me and extended my service. For the first time in my life I was not hungry or cold, had a decent wage, clothes, friends, respect, an exciting job, adventure, sport, and the chance to travel. I went on to circumnavigate the world.

When I left the RAF after twenty two years I returned to art.

This week (15 Sep 15) it is the seventy fifth anniversary of the Battle of Britain. I remember the Tiger Moths that flew above my head everyday as a child, of course now I know why. I wonder how many of those pilots under training then survived until the end of the war, and how many gave their lives. I am forever grateful.

There have been some tough moments in my life, but I always remember what Johnnie Johnson said, 'Get stuck in.' Fight for democracy.

The RAF has been my family, if I lived my life again I would do the same.



The opportunity was taken on 29 February to have an informal photo taken in front of ZG750/128, the Op GRANBY 25th Anniversary jet, the day after it had flown past the unveiling of the Op GRANBY memorial at the National Arboretum, in Staffordshire.



SAC Middle, Flt Lt Chris Whitehair and SAC Eggleston visited the Cape Wrath Air Weapons Range to observe the live Paveway 4 bomb drops in February. The target, Garvie Island can be seen in the background.



TORNADO GR 25 YEARS ON OPERATIONS



OP GRANBY 25th Anniversary paint scheme. The names of all the operations RAF Tornados have taken part in are listed on the rudder.



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Flt Lt Bill Read

Dear Bill & Martyn,

For myself & Tony Sievers (son of Bill Sievers) please accept our thanks for the tribute paid to Bill Sievers in the newsletter. The tribute paid to Donald Inglis in the same newsletter brings up quite a coincidence as both spent some hours flying on Ops out of Mildenhall in 1944-45 in the Centurian Lancaster LL806 (LS-J). Donald Inglis was R/Gunner in Richard Hopper-Cuthbert's crew which took it on 15/16 of its sorties including its 99th trip. Bill Sievers took it on 5 sorties, possibly the last one (133rd or 134th) to Bremen on 22/04/1944' and then a couple of Manna & Exodus trips.

Bob Smith. Ex XV Sqn who flew in LL806 to Essen on 23/10/1944-its 70th Op.

Book Review by the Secretary

Aim Sure – Father and Son in the Royal Air Force

by J Brian Payne

A5 paperback, 175 pages

The Squadron has been sent a copy of this book by ex-XV Sqn navigator Brian Payne. Whilst much of the book concentrates on family history, large sections describe the Royal Air Force of the end of the First World War and during the 1950s. Brian's father was undergoing pilot training at Old Sarum in November 1918 and was demobilised two months later. Brian himself joined up, initially for National Service, in September 1951 hoping to become a pilot, but had to settle on becoming a Navigator. Less than two years later Brian arrived on XV Sqn to fly Canberras. He left the RAF in 1959.

I found the book to be a pleasant read, describing life in the RAF in the 1950s, both in terms of the role of a navigator and family life.

Brian has copies of his book for sale at £7.00 +£1.95 P&P (UK), of which he will very kindly donate £3.00 per copy to the Squadron's charity fund. Copies will be available at the 2016 reunion or by post from Brian direct at 30 Cavendish Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S11 9BH. Tel: 0114 281 9369. Email: brianpayne30@hotmail.com