



NEWSLETTER

June 2015

www.olddux.org

Compiled by Alan Garner



Dear Members

What a great month of May it was with VE Day on the 8th May followed by the Dedication of the Old Dux Association Plaque at the NMA on the 9th May (see later), and then on the 16th our own 20th Anniversary Dinner at The Red Lion together with the unveiling of the Old Dux Association Memorial Plaque showing the three emblems of 64 Squadron, 65 Squadron and RAF Duxford. Then there was the AGM on Sunday 17th May. And to round off this busy month of May we had the VE Day Air show on the 23rd & 24th weekend.

VE Day Victory in Europe

The 8th May marked the 70 anniversary of VE Day, (victory in Europe) with the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany. Quiet celebration for victory in Europe and its ensuing peace was the order of the day. Some say that it may be the last time that the generation who fought that conflict will be able to assemble in numbers to provide succeeding generations the opportunity of offering thanks for the courage and sacrifice and the part they played in overcoming a violent enemy. When there is no one left to remember them, is when it can happen all over again.

V-J Day comes soon on 15th Aug, victory over Japan also known as victory in the Pacific, in effect ending the Second World War.

History was made on the 9th May

Our day at The National Memorial Arboretum. (See page 3).

20th Anniversary Dinner

We called it the big one, and it was truly so. After enjoying some Red Lion lunch from the bar and mingling with the many early arrivals some doing the same, your committee became busy making sure ever thing was to plan for the big dinner that evening. The whole place was abuzz with conversations, stories and reunions of old friends. Bob Hope was seen kissing all the ladies, which made me wonder if this was a traditional requirement for all committee members but I forgot to ask.

The evening came soon after with every one properly dressed and suitably peckish. Then some more bar activity for those thirsty before the time

came to find our seats. A whacking 93 were sat at the ten dining tables in The Red Lion but not before the unveiling ceremony of the Old Dux Association Memorial Plaque was made. This duty fell upon our chairman Bob Hope, standing in for our president Sir Richard Johns who was unable to be present due to circumstances beyond his control. His message to Bob and all our members was that we would be very much in his thoughts as we celebrate this truly memorable occasion and to pass on his best wishes to everyone at this special event in preserving the memory of a unique RAF Station. The committee along with all the members do wish Sir Richard a full recovery.

We all praised the quality of the food and agreed that the chef and staff had served us proud. The wine was most enjoyable especially as some on my table were non-drinkers, hic.

Bob Hope gave one of his wonderful speeches that we always enjoy hearing, welcoming ever one to the anniversary dinner. He specially mentioned Barbara Crowther and her party on table 5 and another special welcome to the I.W.M Research and Information Team.

We particularly remember those who travel from afar such as Malcolm and Joanne Niblett from Canada, Bob and Enid Laidlow from Cumbria and Ken Tudball age 93, and all others that made great efforts to be with us.

A minutes silence was observed for all lost partners, friends and all those lost in conflicts past and present.

Les Millgate stood and embarrassed Bob Hope for being such a good hardworking chairman and mentioned nice things about the committee too, then announced that Bob was to receive a small token of our appreciation, it was then that Larry Cross rushed to Bob's side with a bottle of Welsh (Welsh?) whiskey and a bouquet of flowers for Bobbie.

Bob is always thinking about the members but forgot about himself at the end. A bottle of Welsh (Welsh?) whisky sits secured in the safe at the Holiday Inn, now to be collected in October. Watch this space. I bet Bobbie didn't forget her bouquet.

Autumn Meeting

Our next meeting will be 4th October in the Learning Space 1 room, more in the September newsletter.

Jan Dell has delighted us with these wonderful images of our 20th Anniversary & plaque wall position.



Old Dux Assc. Memorial plaque



20th Anniversary Dinner being enjoyed by all



Display of the anniversary cards and messages received

Of course we had even more fun with the after dinner raffle, there were many prizes and therefore many prize winners and much laughter. We do as always appreciate all those who contributed prizes, together with our raffle ticket usherettes Jan and Sarah. The money raised adequately covered the wine bill.

For those who could not make it to the reunion this year, we missed you all, but we do understand the difficulties of distance and health issues and other engagements that stood in your way. We know you would have loved to join us if you could. Perhaps you can next year.

The AGM Meeting

Then came the 17th May, the weather was kind for the AGM as 70 of us crowded into Learning Space1 meeting room, kindly arranged for us by Kay Cooper of IWM. We squeezed in with some standing and after all subs moneys were collected the meeting began.

Bob welcomed us all and reminding us of the 20th anniversary year for this AGM and thanked everyone for the effort to attend. He said how the committee found it rewarding to have a good attendance. Apologies were expressed from Jim Garlinge our Vice Chairman, Don Chappell, Jock Nicol and others who sent cards. Others who sent their apologies and best wishes were; Our President Sir Richard 'Dick' Johns, Mavis Baker, Don Headley, Don Dalton, George & Celia Wall, Geoff & Dot Bennet, John Belcher, Baz & Pat Gowling, Peter & Jean Rogers, Mike & Pat Jenkins, Bob & Jean Hindley, Gil Harding and Terry Crowley.

Bob reminded us of the loss of our 1st WRAF Founder Member Ann Brinkley who passed away 5th Feb. Also, Bill Lancaster, Terry Boothby and our most recent loss ex 19 Sqn Dave Clark on 5th May, 4 days off his 97th birthday. We had a minutes silence for all those absent from past and current conflicts.

On a happier note Barbara Crowther WAAF Duxford 1945, was welcomed to her first AGM. On the subject of the Memorial Plaque Dedication at the NMA, Bob commended both Allan McRae and Kerris Denley for coordinating such a memorable day together with the whole 17 folk that attended.

A résumé of the anniversary dinner highlighting our ODA Treasurer SD for his Stirling effort over many weeks brought a recommendation from our Association Vice Chairman Larry Cross to present a framed painting of 3 miniatures to Stan Dell, (he's mad about miniatures) who would have guessed? Sent in by Jean Beddison all the way from Australia. The committee would also like to thank Anne & Les Gange who very kindly donated the 3 shields which are firmly established over the fireplace at The Red Lion for all to see.

Susan Arnold was the lucky raffle winner of the Spitfire painting donated by Bob Scott 64 & 65 Sqn. 64 Sqn still remain shy at nominating new committee members as they do every year, so it's 65 Sqn again.

Ron Pountain gave us an interesting item beginning in 1939 and Nobby Clark entertained us yet again. **2**

History was made

Dedication of Old Dux Association Plaque at NMA Sat 9th May 2015.

Kerris Denley – Hon Secretary - spoke

“We Old Dux members, families and friends are gathered here at the National Memorial Arboretum to unveil a plaque dedicated to all those who have served at RAF Duxford since its opening in 1917.

The Old Dux Association celebrates its 20th anniversary this month so it seems fitting that Allan McRae, who was the first secretary of the association, and designer of the plaque should be here today in the RAF garden to unveil the plaque.

I now call on Allan to reveal the plaque and say a short verse of dedication in memory of those who are no longer with us.”

Allan McRae – Founding Hon Secretary - spoke

“Ladies and gentlemen, I visited the Arboretum last year and thought it was quite a moving experience to see all the various dedications to the armed forces. It was then I thought there was a place for one dedicated to RAF Duxford, one of the most famous stations in the history of Fighter Command, so here we are today and it is an honour to represent the Old Dux Association on this occasion.”

Do not think of them as spirits dark and cold

Although long gone, they're well and no longer old

Content in that place that's full of care

Known to us all as up there!

Allan McRae



Seventeen witnessed the dedication, most are shown here.

Allan & Jenny McRae, Anne & Les Gange, Alan & Anthea Garner, Chuck & Ann Lilly, Colin & Kerris Denley, Harry & Anita Atkinson, Josie Warwick with Son & Daughter in Law, Del Gates and Susan Arnold.

Race in question was the Arch to Arc, 1959

RE: *RAF News 1365, Letters page, 'Let's Savour a Second Bite...'*

The misunderstanding about the identity of the Harrier and the race it was involved in has caused a collective flurry in the minds of members of The Old Dux Association, whose membership all served at RAF Duxford.

Peter Woods was obviously thinking of the *Daily Mail* Arch to Arc Air Race (Marble Arch to Arc de Triomphe) July 1959, when indeed, like many of our members, he was there.

That race was won by Sqn Ldr Maugham, CO 65 Sqn, RAF Duxford, flying a Hunter T7-XL600 (above) in a time of 40 minutes 44 seconds. Flt Lt Williams came 2nd but was disqualified on a technicality and our popular Station Commander, Gp Capt Norman Ryder came 3rd.



Sqn Ldr Maugham with his motorcyclist

The route and method was Marble Arch to the Thames Embankment at Chelsea Bridge by motorcycle, then down a slippery pole to the bed of the Thames (low tide), a quick nip across to a waiting helicopter transiting to Biggin Hill, then a fast transfer in a Hunter T7 to Villacoublay, helicopter transfer to Issy heliport and motorcycle transfer to the Arc de Triomphe. The return in reverse was used as a second attempt.

A large number of our 300-plus members were involved in one way or another, not always legitimately. In those days the traffic lights were operated by pressure pads and timers activated by the passage of traffic over them. A number of smart-looking men and women in civilian clothes always seemed to be hovering around the lights looking for 'our man on the motorbike'.

Once spotted, there was frantic jumping up and down on the pads until the required 'green light' was achieved and a smooth passage was guaranteed. This practice was not 'appreciated' in France and the operation had to be more covert.

This photograph (left) of the slippery pole shows WO Arthur Southgate and Cpl Bill 'Paddy' Roberts in action, the knotted muscles on the WO's arms indicate that a competitor is on his way down.

Many of our members thoroughly enjoy **RAF News** and are constantly amazed at the career, social and sporting opportunities available in today's Royal Air Force.



POLE POSITION: WO Arthur Southgate & Cpl Bill 'Paddy' Roberts hard at work

Memories of the WAAF

by Barbara Crowther (née Haimes)

On joining the WAAF in January 1944, I trained as a Wireless Operator. I was stationed at Bentley Priory sending and receiving coded Morse signals to the troops advancing in Europe. This was no longer necessary after the war ended in 1945.

I was posted to Duxford in November 1945 just as the American Squadrons was leaving and the RAF beginning to move into the camp. Along with about 8 other WAAFs, I was billeted in Whittlesford village – WAAF quarters weren't ready for us on the camp. We manned a D/F Tower 24 hours day and night, two of us on duty together.

A D/F (Direction Finding) Tower was a round brick building with cooking and washing facilities, plus a mattress for sleeping on the floor on night duty. It contained a large, manually operated aerial so that, if an aircraft was lost in our areas, we were asked to get a bearing and phone it through to HQ. Several other Towers would be doing the same thing, and the point where all the bearings crossed gave a fix for the aircraft - hence the nickname of FIXER for the Tower. The Duxford Tower was situated in a field behind the Officers' Quarters quite a long way from the main camp.

I, and the other WAAFs living in the village, moved into the camp in late summer 1946 – it was quite a long walk over the fields behind the Officers' Mess and married quarters to go on duty. There was very little social life – I can't remember a cinema on camp. Food and petrol were rationed and there was hardly any public transport. We used to hitch hike quite a lot. There was a small café not far from the camp entrance called 'Nobby's' where you could get weak tea and, if you were lucky, a cheese roll! We met up to play cards there.

I spent most of my off-duty time with friends I had made whilst billeted in Whittlesford. Norman and Joyce Touborg ran a market garden, and Norman was also the village Fire Chief, so they qualified for petrol rations. It may interest you to know that Norman was involved in setting up the museum at the beginning and became one of the first guides.

Joyce and Norman used to take me to the Red Lion quite a lot. One evening, they introduced me to a rather nice looking Flt Sgt John Crowther. He had been posted to Duxford sometime in 1946 and was a photographer. It was pretty much love at first sight, and we became engaged in October 1946! I was posted to Bletchley in November (not a very nice camp at all!) and remained there until I was demobbed in May 1947. John and I were married in August 1947 and spent part of our honeymoon at the Red Lion.



Bail Out

Submitted by Mike Scrivener

The crash of Avro Vulcan XM610 on Wingate in County Durham by Jim Rutland

On the 7th January 1971 a 44 squadron crew were tasked to fly a Hi-Lo-Hi mission over the border counties of England. Their aircraft was to be Vulcan B2 XM610 of the Waddington wing. The crew was captained by Flt. Lt. Garth Robert Alcock and consisted of F.O. Peter Hoskins as co-pilot, Flt. Lt. Jim Power as A.E.O., Flt. Lt. Jim Vinale as Nav plotter and F.O. Roger Barker as Nav radar.

The mission went well and the Vulcan descended from high level off the Northumberland coast and entered the North of England low flying zone, taking it through the Northern Pennines and Cheviot hills. Half way through the low level mission XM610 was cruising at 300 knots on 75% power at 500 ft over the hills near Kelso. Ahead Bob Alcock could see that the weather was deteriorating rapidly so he decided to abandon the mission and climb back to a safe altitude.

Informing the rest of the crew what he was about to do Alcock increased the power to 85%, raised the nose and started to climb away. A few seconds later there was a loud explosion and the aircraft slewed to the left. Scanning his instruments Alcock noticed the RPM on No.1 engine running down and the jet pipe temperature rising rapidly to its limit then the fire warning light for No.1 engine illuminated. Informing the crew Alcock shut the HP cock and closed the throttle, the fire button was pressed then the engine air switch was closed. While he was doing this Jim Power confirmed that he had alternator failure on No.1 engine and then switched off and isolated the alternator, Scanning the aircraft with the rear facing periscope he informed the captain that he could see damage to the airframe in the area of the rear of No.1 engine.

The fire warning light went out as the captain continued his climb on three engines, and the fire warning system was checked to ensure it was still operating. Running his eyes over the instruments again, Alcock noticed the J.P.T. on No.2 engine now rising too followed by its fire warning light also illuminating. Again he shouted a warning to the crew; he grabbed the Ram Air Turbine release handle to let the turbine swing down into the slipstream, in doing this all none essential electrical loads were shed from the aircraft's electrical bus bars. The cockpit lit up like a Christmas tree as warning lights blinked on all over the instrument panels. No.2 engine was shut down in the same manner as No.1 causing the pilot to use a lot of left foot to keep the aircraft straight. The fire button for No.2 engine was pressed and after a few seconds the light went out.

Taking stock of what had happened the captain asked the A.E.O. to read out the emergency procedures from the flight reference cards, at the same time the A.E.O. again scanned the under surface but everything still looked the same. Alcock reached over to the centre console and pushed the rudder trim switch to take the pressure off his left foot. It was now time to declare an emergency so a Mayday call was transmitted.

The co-pilot was playing tunes on the fuel console as he opened the cross feed cocks and transferred fuel from the port to keep the aircraft C of G within limits. Jim Vinale passed an accurate plot of their position to the pilot to be transmitted with the Mayday call. The A.E.O. had used the cartridge start system to fire up the A.A.P.U. to provide more electrical power, and was in the process of gradually restoring selected aircraft systems back to life. Half the Power Flying Controls had been shed in the emergency and these were restarted apart from the auxiliary rudder P.F.C. Jim Power was very busy running through the reference cards and doing his switching when he noticed a glow in the eye piece of the periscope. A very nasty shock was received when he saw a fire raging in the area of No.1 engine, as he shouted a warning the fire warning light for No.2 engine re-illuminated and remained on for two minutes. The Mayday call was retransmitted and the captain ordered "Put on parachutes and prepare to bail out".

As XM610 was now in cloud Bob Alcock delayed the order to jump until they were into clear air at 6000 ft. The aircraft entered clear skies near Rothbury; the crew had put the I.F.F. to emergency and donned their parachutes. Static lines and emergency oxygen were connected, masks on and goggles down. Life rafts and Personal Survival Packs were connected to their lanyards. Protective helmets were donned and tightened down, the Nav radar was now down by the door and Jim Vinale pulled the cabin depressurisation handle, one by one the crew called "Ready".

It was still only ten minutes since the first explosion in No.1 engine as Bob Alcock gave the order "Static line manual override, Jump, Jump". The three men in the rear cockpit pulled their emergency oxygen knobs; the Nav radar grasped the door opening handle, moving it outboard then straight through to the emergency position. With a very loud roar the door opened and dust flew into the rear cockpit as the slipstream roared by at 200 knots. Roger Baker sat on the sill at the top of the door, pulled his knees up to his chest, put his arms around his knees and clasped his hands together to keep himself in a tight ball. Hitching up his P.S.P. and dingy, from the sill Barker slid down the door. As the underside of the aircraft whipped past him he felt the static line jerk at his parachute, his hand flew to the manual handle and yanked it. With a loud crack the chute opened and he was instantly struck by the sudden silence. Jim Power followed Baker and Jim Vinale was the last to leave the rear cockpit. All three made a safe descent and landed in fields near Rothbury. After landing they all operated their SARBE beacons, within a few minutes a Whirlwind helicopter from 202 Squadron, Boulmer, was homing onto them.

Alcock decide to try to get XM610 back to the master diversion airfield at Leeming helped by his co-pilot Peter Hoskins. The fate of XM610 had however been sealed since the first explosion, therefore everything that the crew did from that moment could not have saved the aircraft. After trying a few handling manoeuvres Alcock tried the low speed

handling of the aircraft but broke off at 185 knots as the aircraft became difficult to control. Ahead was the Tyneside conurbation so Bob Alcock nursed XM610 overhead at 6000 ft, trying to steer clear of the built up area. As Sunderland slipped by on the port side the captain slowly turned the aircraft towards the sea. XM610 was blazing fiercely by now and thousands of people on the ground watched as the crippled Vulcan passed over with pieces now falling from the port wing and engines. Near Easington Bob Alcock ordered "Jettison canopy", he and Hoskins reached for their jettison levers and pulled them back. A loud bang took place just behind their heads as the jettison gun fired and the canopy was whipped away from above their heads. Alcock could now see the full extent of the fire over his left shoulder and he did not like what he could see. XM610 was now heading towards the coast. With the noise in the cockpit making all communication impossible since the canopy had gone Bob jerked his thumb up in a sign to Hoskins to leave the aircraft. Hoskins reached for the seat pan handle, straightened his back, braced himself and yanked the handle. There was a one second delay then with a double bang Hoskins seat tird, his feet were yanked off the rudder pedals as his legs were pulled back and anchored to the seat as it accelerated up the rail reaching a maximum of 60 ft per second.

As the coastline slipped under the nose Alcock took one last look around then he too pulled his seat pan firing handle. One and a half seconds after the seat fired he was 80 ft clear of the aircraft and the drogue gun on the seat tird pulling out the drogue chute to stabilise the seat. One and a half further seconds and the barostat operated releasing the harness and leg restraints allowing him to fall from the seat. The pull of the drogue chute was transferred from the seat to his main parachute pulling it out of his pack and allowing it to open and start a safe descent with Hoskins.

With no one now on board XM610 enters a downward spiral, instead of crashing into the sea XM610 impacts between the main village and the school at Wingate completely destroying itself and causing a large crater. Luckily no one was hurt on the ground, but if it had crashed 100 yards either side a heavy loss of life would have taken place.

The enquiry into the crash of XM610 near Wingate traced the cause to a fatigue failure of a high pressure turbine blade in No.1 engine. The blade became jammed in the periphery of the turbine disc and rotated with it until finally causing the casing to rupture. The turbine then broke up causing high speed debris to pierce the engine casing and engine bay walls, damaging No.2 engine and the outboard No.3 and No.4 fuel tanks. From then on the flames grew out of control fed with fuel, the aircraft was in danger of breaking up when the captain ejected, with pieces breaking away and the flames spreading along the wing.

Soon after the crash of XM610 all Vulcans were modified and titanium armour plates were fitted in the engine bays in the area of the high pressure turbines and also the roof of the bay. This plating was designed to prevent debris from any exploding engine damaging the next engine or entering the bomb bay or rupturing the fuel tanks and causing the loss of the aircraft.

For his attempt to save his aircraft Bob Alcock was awarded the Air Force Cross and the rest of the crew each received the Queens Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air. Bob was also R.A.F. man of the year for 1971. Unlucky for Bob he was involved in another Vulcan crash on the 14th October 1975. Whilst landing XM645 of 9 squadron the aircraft touched down short of the runway at Luqa, Malta, forcing the port undercarriage leg through the wing and rupturing the fuel tanks. Bob hauled XM645 back off the ground and climbed to try to gain enough altitude so that the rear crew members could bail out. Unfortunately the aircraft blew up in mid air, Bob and the co-pilot ejected safely but the five rear crew members all perished. A woman was killed on the ground when the wreckage fell near the village of Zabbar.

The hunt is still on

Take your minds back to the November 2014 Newsletter and the article entitled 'Confessions of a bygone era'. You will recall that those of 64 Sqn. were asked to accept the mission of hunting down the fugitive Taffy-boy, he being the instigator of the flagpole incident that placed a smear upon the good name of 64 Sqn.



As there has been no reports of any success in this endeavour it is time to provide the following help in the form of a further clue to his identity. See photo of Taffy himself taken in 1960. Should anyone who served at Duxford around the years 1959/61 be able to put a name to the photograph (please inform the editor), they would be doing a great service to the boys and girls of 64. Of course being handsome, naturally he was on 65 Sqn. So who knows him?

I no come work today!!!

Hung Chow calls into work and says, 'Hey, I no come work today, I really sick. Got headache, stomach ache and legs hurt, I no come work.'

The boss John says, 'you know something Hung Chow, I really need you today. When I feel sick like you do, I go to my wife and tell her to give me sex. That makes everything better and I come to work. You try that.'

Two hours later Hung Chow calls again... 'I do what you say, I feel great. I be at work soon...You got nice house'.



The Old Dux Association Plaque now hanging over the fireplace at the Red Lion Wittleford Cambridgeshire



TO COMMEMORATE THE 20TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMING OF THE
OLD DUX ASSOCIATION

MAY 1995

THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE OLD
DUX ASSOCIATION TOOK PLACE AT THE
I.W.M. DUXFORD IN MAY 1995, THIRTY TWO
EX PERSONNEL ATTENDED WITH THEIR
WIVES AND FRIENDS, A TOTAL OF FIFTY

ONE

VERRIMUS CÆLUM



INSCRIPTION

THIS PLAQUE IS A MEMORIAL TO THOSE MEN AND
WOMEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES WHO SERVED AT
R.A.F. DUXFORD BETWEEN 1917 AND 1961, ESPECIALLY
THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES WHILE SERVING
THEIR COUNTRY.

THE BADGES REPRESENT RAF DUXFORD FLANKED
BY THOSE OF 64 AND 65 SQUADRONS, THE LAST
OPERATIONAL SQUADRONS TO SERVE AT
DUXFORD AT THE TIME OF ITS CLOSURE
THIS MEMORIAL WAS PRESENTED TO THE RED LION
IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ITS HISTORICAL AND
ON GOING RELATIONSHIP, IN TIMES OF PEACE AND
WAR, WITH RAF DUXFORD BY THE OLD DUX
ASSOCIATION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 20TH
ANNIVERSARY DINNER, HELD HERE ON MAY 16TH
2015.

PRESIDENT
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR RICHARD JOHNS (ret'd.) GCB, KCVO, CBE, FRAeS

The Red Lion is a 13th century coaching inn with 800 years of history which includes 98 years of Duxford association encompassing the first 44 years as

ROYAL AIR FORCE STATION DUXFORD