



NEWSLETTER

June 2017

www.olddux.org

Compiled by Alan Garner



Dear Members

In 1917, the first spade was shovelled into this green and pleasant land that began the building of what came to be known as RAF Duxford, a unique fighter station. That's one hundred years ago, so this is the centenary year of the existence of Duxford.

We celebrated this year in style on 13th May with our 22nd year's annual dinner. We assembled at the Red Lion with another great crowd for the occasion, where over 60 of us enjoyed not only our very pleasant three course meals, but also, enjoyed some fine company with friends, old and new. We kept the bar busy before the meal as we looked around for familiar faces to greet and talk with. At 1930 hrs we all sat down as we found our places from the well laid out table plan, wondering who we would be sat next to, always a highlight on these occasions.

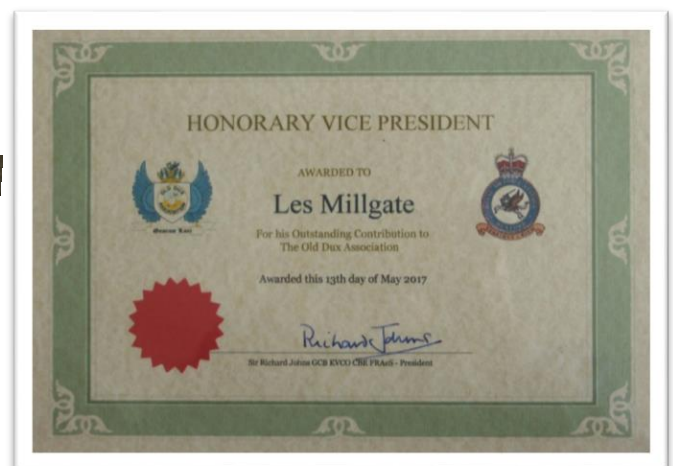
There was Peter Gibbard on my right and Anthea my wife on my left, then Gordon a friend of ours, followed by Donnie from Oz, my old mate from 60 years ago at RAF Seletar, (we first met in 1957). Then came Larry and Doreen Cross opposite with Esther Blaine (IWM) positioned between Doreen and Peter. Peter was without his wife Muriel who was sadly unwell that day. For all those who could not make it to the dinner, you missed a great time. But please remember, next year 2018 is the centenary of the Royal Air Force. Try your best to be there. More important news about this later.

Then our chairman addressed us all as only Bob can do. He stood up with a wide smile and said;

'Welcome to the 22nd Anniversary of the Old Dux Association, with a special welcome to our Association President Sir Richard and Lady Johns, together with all our members, their wives and guests; and our guests from the IWM Duxford; Kay Cooper, Carl Warner, Craig Murray, Esther Blaine and Rebecca Harding.'

Thanks, were given to all who had contributed to the raffle prizes and there were many filling a whole table. Bob also thanked Jan and Stan Dell together with Kerris and Colin Denley for all their hard work in making the evening happen so successfully, which brought high applause. Then our thanks were also directed to the Red Lion Hotel Staff and Management, which was passed on to them later. Sir Richard was in good form when he rose and spoke to the assembly with much wit and good humour before toasting the Queen.

The committee decided months ago to bestow upon Les Millgate the position of Honorary Vice President for all the years of hard work and support he has given to the Old Dux Association. The dinner was earmarked to make this announcement and to present to Les his framed certificate in recognition. Les was unable to attend the dinner at the last moment because of a foot ailment requiring hospitalisation. Fortunately, Les's wife Dorothy was with us at the dinner and Sir Richard was able to present the certificate to her. Hopefully, Les is on the mend.



AGM Meeting

On Sunday 14th May in the AirSpace Classroom Bob our chairman again welcomed those attending. Peter Gipson attending his first AGM stood and introduced himself under the disapproving rumblings of some of those present as he announced, 'Engine Fitter on 65Sqn.' Gordon Allin was also asked to introduced himself saying he is a friend of your editor. Apologies from some who were unable to be present was also mentioned. "Last Postings" (Listed later) were brought to our attention followed by a two-minute silence for all Absent Friends. After the meeting, new'comer Gordon Allin approached the committee and offered himself as a taxi service to anyone living within 100 miles who wishes to attend our annual dinner next year. How about that then!!! Also, for the 2018 dinner, Derek Parks's wife Maureen also kindly offered to provide a celebration cake. On catering, Maureen knows her stuff so don't miss out on this next **special** dinner. Cake for 100, wow Maureen, that's a big cake. But why is our next dinner so special? See later.

Back to the AGM

We were privileged to receive a talk and a movie from Esther Blaine (IWM), Head of Master Planning and Engagement, who gave those attending, a show of filmed interviews taken last December, which was shown on an impressive large screen. The result of this interesting venture which was reported on in the March Newsletter has now been completed, where six of us veterans would become film stars for a day. Larry Cross had done a good job along with Esther together with Barry the camera man in making a little bit of history, where we remembered our time at RAF Duxford over a half century ago.

With nothing further from the floor except to welcome some traditional entertainment from Nobby Clark. Stan took the handles of Nobby's wheel chair and moved him to front and centre as the room fell silent. All present knew this would be worth hearing. Nobby's story centred around his attempt to obtain promotion by taking the appropriate exams. Nobby, of course had an altercation with the examining officer who queried Nobby's correct answers indicating that there was no 'workings out shown' querying how Nobby came to the correct answers? Nobby tapping his finger against his temple a couple of times suggested to the examining officer that the officer himself did not know the answers to the questions. We all had a good laugh. Then a question came from the floor asking if Nobby got his promotion. 'No' said Nobby!!!

Autumn Meeting

The date for our next Autumn meeting is yet to be decided. More information will be in the Sept. newsletter.

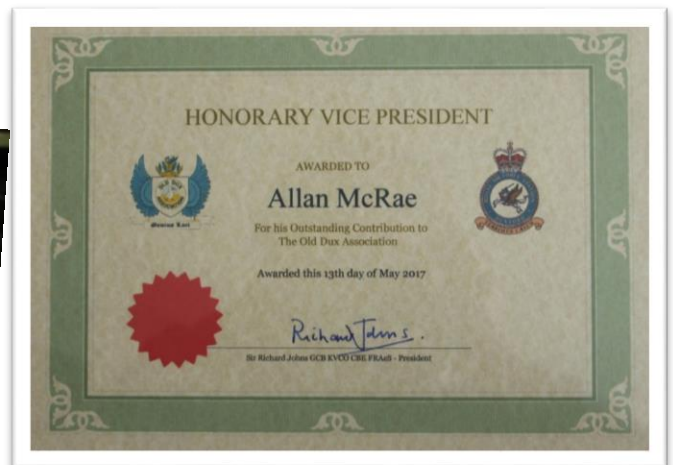
Allan McCrae 1932 to 2017

In March, we lost a great stalwart of the Old Dux Association, Allan had been suffering an illness for some while when after a fall at home he was lifted by air ambulance to hospital. It was to be his final journey, (he would have liked that) which brings a wry smile to all of us as we understand why.

Allan McCrae (Allan with two LLs) was a founder member and our first Secretary, our first Treasurer and our first Newsletter Editor. Offices he held simultaneously for many years! To give some idea of the work load he took on, those jobs are now run by three different people who all find their hands full most of the time.

Allan and Jenny his wife was to move to a new home but Allan left us too soon, leaving Jenny to occupy that future home alone. On the 18th April in the Community Hall associated with their new home, Allan's wake was held. How fortunate we are to have known him, see Newsletter Sept. 2016, 'Allan's own words.'

As with Les Millgate, your committee had also planned to present Allan with the status of Honorary Vice President at the annual dinner and to present him with his framed certificate and an engraved pewter tankard showing the ODA crest along with a citation in recognition of his outstanding service within the association. Both the framed certificate and tankard was presented at the wake to Jenny before her assembled family and friends. Jenny said that Allan would have been so pleased.



Their Final Postings

Allan McCrae 64Sqn Air Frame Fitter 1956 – 59.

Bob Porter 64Sqn Flt/Sgt Navigator 1956 – 61.

John Field 65Sqn Engine Mechanic 1953 – 55.

All three still live in the thoughts of those who knew them.

We wish them a safe journey. R.I.P.

Members Annual Subscriptions

Your £5 subs were due on May 1st. For those who are yet to pay, please make your cheques payable to the Old Dux Association and send your payment to: Stan Dell, 3 John Hampden Way, Prestwood, Bucks, HP16 9DY. A huge thanks to all those who regularly get their subs in on time, it is a great help to Stan and the ODA.



The wake--Bob, Swin, Del, Jenny, Alan and Stan. Kate Poole was also present.

Special Announcement - Next Year 2018 Will Be Our Last Annual Dinner

It is with much regret that your committee has made the decision that next year 2018 will be the occasion for our last Annual Dinner. Due to age-related problems fewer members are able to attend on a regular basis. However, rather than sliding away gently into anonymity and an unnoticed oblivion, we plan to go out with a bang!

So, as this year 2017 sees our beloved Duxford celebrate one hundred years of existence. That first spade that pressed into this green and pleasant land also released the **Genius Loci** 'the spirit of the place' which would set the foundation stone for a future unique association, calling back those who served at Duxford.

Next year 2018 will be the Centenary of the Royal Air Force, an air force that had already proved itself by the time we arrived, but nevertheless was still less than fifty years old. So how fitting is the time now for our last formal gathering, our last dinner. This then is the time for all of you who have promised yourselves that you will attendone day, but never made it, to take up the call. All are welcome to the feast.

This is the time to bring your children, and if they are old enough why not also your grandchildren or your friends to meet and mix with the Old Duxxers who so many of the public show an increasing desire to meet? And show them where we worked, laughed a lot and occasionally cried. So, for the RAF Centenary and the Duxford Centenary we are planning one of our own. How? By gathering at least one hundred of us to come together to celebrate our final fling. Let us achieve a century for this, our final innings.

Get the date, **May 12th 2018** in your minds and in your diaries, start thinking about planning for what will be the last time we get together with our glad rags on. Sound out your family and friends and plan for a great week end. We will give more details as we progress, but make a mental commitment to your Old Dux Association now. There will be no strangers, we all share what has become an exclusive bond. WE SERVED AT DUXFORD. Remember, we together will never pass this way again. For those who really cannot be with us for whatever reason, we will understand, we will raise a glass to you. You will not be forgotten.

Appreciation

The committee would like to draw your attention and appreciation in recognising those unsung members who have contribute extra donations to our slush fund over the years. One recent donation of £200 came from a bequest from the late Terry Crowley through his son Kevin.

My time on 65 Sqn.

By Peter Gipson

I can honestly say that the period I spent on this, my first squadron at RAF Duxford was memorable and quite extraordinary. I arrived as an Engine Mechanic (gas turbines) from RAF West Malling, my first posting, and served on the squadron as a fitter from February 1958. What an outfit! Although we shared the station with other units there was only one premier squadron, 65. Should I tell you some of my memories of my first Squadron?

As a fitter, I worked as required both in the hangar and on the line. The SNCO who ran the line was an ex WW2 Sergeant who hadn't quite mastered the 'new phonetic alphabet' and we were regularly ordered to 'Before Flight both 'Dog and Delta.' The line hut was indeed a hut, well two circular aluminium cabins, known as Al tents, one as a crew room and one the office. I recall the crew room being unheated where a lot of us sat on the floor. There was basic intercom between the hangar and the line hut which required much shouting-at and somehow picked up radio transmissions from elsewhere. Quite often this failed to function correctly.

If in the morning, you were first in you were expected to drag the kites out of the shed and get them neatly on the line. I had an MT vehicle driving licence and was towing aircraft in and out before I passed my civilian driving test! The boss did take exception when two of the lads were considered to be having a race to the line with Hunters in tow behind their Land Rovers.

The hangar of course, was untouched from WW1 days and the crew room fire was a great iron stove that had to be lit daily. I remember on one occasion while we were having our NAAFI break one of the lads turned to another who was reading a newspaper and asked if he had 'hot news'? He then pointed out that this man's greasy overalls were in fact on fire! There was no heating in the hangar so a spell around this old iron furnace was very welcome.

On another occasion before we were to be detached to RAF Nicosia we were lined up for our TABT jobs. Unfortunately, nobody in higher authority knew if there would be any side effects. There certainly were complications as the next morning we all had swollen and unusable arms and failed to get aircraft ready for flying on time.

Continued.

Of course, Duxford is divided by a main road, the A505, which even in those days was a busy highway. So, for safety's sake we were assembled at the barrack block and marched through the front gate to work and back again at cease of play. I recall on one occasion as we passed the flagpole at Station Headquarters one of the Station Warrant Officer's bicycle was hanging up there where the standard should have been. The culprit(s) were never found. On another occasion, we returned to the Barrack Block to find all our toilet doors had been removed, again the culprit(s) were never found. We assumed this might be some quite unjustified retaliation by the other Squadron based on the unit.

It was an ordinary morning with 65 getting their kites out on the line before the other squadron who must have been somewhat mystified because as they were bringing their aircraft onto the line they were fast disappearing! An unidentified 65 Sqn. towing team had gained the use of a Javelin tow bar and as fast as they could, were dragging 64 Squadron's aircraft away to deposit them between the blast walls to the west of the airfield. Oh dear, again the culprit(s) were never found.

I recall a somewhat strange incident in the NAAFI one lunch time. One of the ground crew had fallen in with one of the WRAF girls. It was decided by his 'mates' that this was a totally unacceptable relationship and he should be Court Martialled by his fellow airman. I seem to recall being 'volunteered' as his attorney for his defence. He was put into the dock, on a chair, and the fun began with us all having pieces of paper describing our positions tucked into our cap badges. Unfortunately, somebody must have tipped a wink at the RAF Police who turned up and spoilt the fun. That evening we all, as was usual, went down to the squadron pub in Duxford village.

Another 'unusual' incident typifies the energy and daring of the airman of the day. Some lads had met some young ladies in that very meeting place. The girls came from a local school for young ladies who dared our lads to 'invade' at night both the school and dormitory. This was a red rag to a bull and a plan was hatched. I recall that as a car owner I was to provide the exercise transport. The boys found a way in and wandered around the dormitories while all slept.

One or two items of clothing being 'borrowed' as proof later of the visit. There was hell next morning as the school staff strongly suspected RAF lads of doing this foul deed! Of course, all the borrowed items were returned next evening in the pub and we all breathed a sigh of relief.

We had good quality SNCOs, Warrant Officer and aircrew. I well remember if the weather was foul the pilots would come into a crowded hangar and help clean the aircraft. Yes, we lost a pilot and aircraft. Thank God, the only one while I served on the squadron. We were off shift at the time when the line Sergeant came to the barrack block to recruit a crash guard party.

Accidents such as this bring a shade of dark gloom to a squadron which never really goes away.

My major detachment was to RAF Nicosia. We flew in a Britannia, the Queen of the Skies. I was sent out to marshal this, to me, large aircraft to its parking slot and had to dive out of the way with the port outer missing me by inches. Of course, the unit had no power sets to get this aircraft started again. But the ground electricians were ready! They assembled a flatbed trolley with enough 12 volt batteries strapped together to produce the voltage and current to get started at least one of the Britannia's engines, and it worked. That detachment was my first chance to drive a fuel tanker around the line--what a handful!

I stopped one aircraft from taxiing out as I noticed some paint bubbling on the upper fuselage. On inspection with the engine out we discovered a fuel tank pressurisation pipe had failed and was melting the paint. Another memory of that trip was the haircuts! There was a natural bond between the bowser drivers and the lads who did the refuelling. We all needed haircuts and one of the drivers agreed to do the deed. What we didn't know was that he didn't have a clue about hairdressing and we ended up looking like plucked chickens!

The time came for the squadron to sadly close, a time of parades and bull. My memory is of parading in London at Clement Danes the RAF church to lay up the squadron standard. (This included parading to the station church at Biggin Hill, I can't remember why?)

Then came the closure of the station with another parade and our postings away. This was my first squadron posting out of five and one I will always remember.

Duxford Air Festival Show - Recruitment Desk 27-28th May Weekend

Volunteers were Alan Garner, and Richard Hambly on Saturday. Sunday, there was Les and Anne Gange assisting Stan Dell. Stan gave his tannoy announcement to the crowd. And a good time was had by all. Volunteers get free passes onto the airfield plus free parking. We start at 9.45am and finish before 3pm with a few breaks between. It is not onerous and we get to see most of the show. Why not volunteer if you can? Please contact Stan Dell by telephoning 01494 863428 or email janstandell1@btinternet.com.

Steve Woolford MBE Retires

Steve Woolford retired from the Imperial War Museum Duxford at the end of March 2017 after an amazing 33 years' experience, including Head of Education and Exhibitions, Head of Interpretation and Collections and Head of Heritage. He was previously a teacher of history.

Our message to Steve from Bob, Larry, Stan, Kerris, Alan and Jim along with Our President Sir Richard Johns. Honorary Vice President Les Millgate and the late Allan McRae, and all Old Dux Members past and present.

Hello Steve as well as farewell, we of the Old Dux Association owe so much to you for all your support that you have given our Association over the past 23 years. For without your interest in us back in 1994/95 and the hours of your own time that you shared with us we would never have got off the ground, even though we are all ex-RAF Duxford Personnel.

Your support and help has been immeasurable to us, so the least we can do as you move on to pastures new is to wish you well and further success in whatever you have chosen for yourself to do. Good luck and good health to you and your Family.

Scam Warning

Ed

One of our members had his computer hacked into recently, resulting in emails being sent to people from his contacts list. Some of us received this begging email explaining that our friend had been mugged and both he and his wife was stranded abroad needed urgent funds/loan to travel home. After enquiring phone calls from committee members all was resolved and the scammer failed to profit. Sadly, this sort of thing has become a way of life, so as a reminder to our members please consider the following:

What should you do if and when you receive a scam email?

- Do not click on any links in the scam email.
- Do not reply to the email or contact the senders in any way.
- If you have clicked on a link in the email, do not supply any information on the website that may open.
- Do not open any attachments that arrive with the email, unless the sender is personally known to you.

Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre. Call 0300 123 2040 or go online to <https://reportlife.actionfraud.police.uk/> to view the **Attempted scams or viruses reporting form**.

Why should you be reporting phishing or malicious software?

A key element to tackling cyber-crime is information – if you can, please take 5 minutes to fill in this report explaining your online fraud experience. Your report will help to build an intelligence picture which can be used by police and other anti-fraud organisations to combat fraudsters.

What are Action Fraud looking for?

Phishing - any email/call/message which has been received claiming to be an official body and asking for personal details, has promised rewards, prizes or shares of fortunes or asking for money from you.

Malware - this is unwanted software which has adversely affected your computer, phone or computer device. It may have been downloaded when you were visiting a website or via an email link.

This reporting tool is only if you have experienced phishing or malware approaches but have NOT lost any money or exposed your personal details. If you have lost money report this crime by clicking [here](#).

A True Story

By Stan Dell

My sister aged 71 was supposed to go to stay with her niece and her toddler aged 4. Sadly because of an acute chest infection my sister collapsed and wasn't able to travel. The disappointed toddler asked why aunty wasn't coming and was told "because she had a blackout". Toddler rushed off and came back clutching her piggy bank and asked mum if she had enough. Enough for what darling? Asked mum. Well if aunty Pat had a blackout I want to buy her a new torch and then she will be able to come, won't she? Was the reply! Out of the mouths.....

Boys and Their Granddad

Little boy. Granddad, can you make a noise like a frog?

Granddad. Of course I can son, but why do you ask?

Little boy. Because dad says, when you croak we can all go to Disney land in America.

The Importance of Walking

Anonymous

Walking can add 2.5 days to your life for every year you live. This enables you at 73 years of age to spend an additional 6 months in a nursing home at £3000 per month...

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. He's now 97 and we don't know where he is. I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain kicks-in and figures out what I'm doing...

I joined a health club last year, cost me 400 quid. I haven't lost an ounce. Apparently, you have to attend.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, she looks good doesn't she?'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

We get heavier with age, as there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

If I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine.

Newly married

Newly married couple are getting ready for bed.

As she undresses she says 'I've got something to confess, before we met I was a hooker, are you sure you're ok with that?' He replies 'Of course darling that was before we met, and to be honest, it turns me on a little, tell me more.' 'Well' she answered 'my name was Eric, and I played for St Helens.'

Old Means Well Thought Out

An elderly man in Florida had a large pond in the back yard. It was properly shaped for swimming, so he fixed it up nice with picnic tables, horseshoe courts, and some orange and lime trees. One evening the old man decided to go down to the pond, as he hadn't been there for a while, and look it over. He grabbed a bucket to bring back some fruit. As he neared the pond, he heard voices shouting and laughing.

As he came closer, he saw it was a bunch of young women from the local college skinny-dipping in his pond. He said "hi" so as to make them aware of his presence and not to scare them; they all swam over to the deep end. One of the women shouted to him, "We're not coming out of this pond until after you leave." The old man frowned, 'I didn't come to watch you ladies swim naked or make you get out of the pond.' Holding the bucket up he said, 'I'm only here to feed the alligators.'

Scouse Humour

Liverpudlian

A scouser is on holiday in Arizona USA. He's staying in a remote frontier type town and walks into a bar. He orders his drink and sits down at the bar and notices a native American Indian, dressed in full regalia, feathered head dress, tomahawk, the lot, sitting in the corner under a sign saying 'Ask me anything.' The scouser is intrigued and asks the barman about him. 'Oh, we call him the memory man, he knows everything.' says the barman. He knows every fact there is to know and he never, ever forgets a thing' 'Yeah right' says the scouser. 'If you don't believe me, ask him anything and he'll know the answer' 'Alright' says the Scouser and walks over to the memory man.

'Where am I from?' 'Knotty Ash, Liverpool, England' says the Red Indian. And he was right. 'Alright' says the scouser, 'so you recognised my accent. Who won the 1965 FA Cup?' 'Liverpool' says the memory man quick as a flash. 'Yes, and who did they play?' 'Leeds United' again without blinking. 'And the score?' '2-1' says the memory man without hesitation. 'O.K. but I bet you don't know who scored the winning goal?' The Indian immediately said 'Ian St John.'

Flabbergasted the tourist continues his holiday and on his return to Birkenhead tells all and sundry about the amazing Memory Man. He just can't get him of his mind, so he vows to return and find him again and pay him his due respect. He saves his dole money for years then twelve years later he has saved enough and returns to the states. He looks high and low for him. Trying virtually every bar and town in Arizona, then finds him sitting in a cave in the mountains. Older, greyer and more wrinkled than before but still resplendent in his war paint and full regalia. The scouser, duly humbled, approaches him and decides to greet him in the traditional manner and says.... 'How.' 'Flying header in the six-yard box.'

Yiddish Humour

Jewish comedian

Car hits elderly Jewish man. The paramedic says, "Are you comfortable?" He replied, "I make a good living." Doctor called Mrs. Cohen saying, "Mrs. Cohen, your cheque came back." She replied, "So did my arthritis!!" Doctor says: "You'll live to be 60!" Patient: "I AM 60!" Doctor: "See! What did I tell you?"
I just got back from a pleasure trip. I took my mother-in-law to the airport.