



# 57 / 630 Squadrons Association

*President: Squadron Leader Mervyn Davies (RAF ret'd)*

**Secretary: Gordon Lodge**



## **“In Memoriam”**

Chris Allen  
Don Broomhead  
John Chatterton DFC, MSc  
James Elliott  
Lewis Fuller  
Neville Goodship

George Hiller  
Paddy McNamara  
Barbara Meeking  
Eric Raffill  
Leslie Wakerell  
Robert West

### **Chris Allen**

Fought for a long time and spoke calmly and rationally about the inevitable. Supported by Janet and Music.

### **Don Broomhead**

I met in 1997 putting names to faces on Sunday afternoon. A great help; he worked closely with the late Francis Beasley. Margaret remains in touch.

### **John Chatterton D.F.C M.S.c**

Born and bred at East Kirkby. Ex 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron. The name Chatterton will live for evermore in the annals of this Association.

### **Lewis Fuller**

A pillar of the R.A.F.A to which he devoted so much of his life with great support from Jean.

### **Neville Goodship**

Very gentle and of the very old school. We corresponded frequently but never met. The newsletters were his nourishment.

### **George Hillier**

George and Phyllis will always be remembered in their “open”, stately and mature Mercedes.

### **Paddy McNamara**

Patron saint of the “happy hour”. Who will forget that Irish glint in his eyes. Hilda cared for him to the last and laid him to rest at East Kirkby

### **Barbara Meeking**

Barbara became ill prior to the last reunion. On Sunday Ron and Clare sent an encouraging bulletin but, alas.....

### **Eric Raffill**

A couple of years ago Eric's wife died and I, misled, thinking it was he, wrote to the "widow" extolling Eric's virtues. He was most impressed and kept it. I hope he took the letter with him.

### **Leslie Wakerell**

They did not come quieter or more modest. Dined with him once, and never forgot it.

### **James Elliott**

### **Robert West**

Out of touch for three to four years. Unhappily I have no background, but we remember them.

### **President's Comments**

Your President reports that we are indebted to Gordon and Diana for the confident and well organised way in which they stepped into the Secretary-ship and set the Association firmly on course. Naturally I claim no credit for having seen in Gordon one who would mitigate the aging process to which so many Associations are prone.

Other factors which contribute to our well-being include East Kirkby itself which is how virtually, a shrine; the infuse of new faces and the new dining room at the Petwood which seats everyone. This year's fly past was marvellous. The Lancaster made four passes at the ever decreasing heights & Paul Day's Spitfire made our day. Next year we shall welcome our friends from the Netherlands & Denmark and our members from Canada. Next May it is expected that a party will go to Denmark (Skarrild) for the 60<sup>th</sup> commemoration of George Bower's 630 Sqn Crew.

On the domestic front the destruction of our country, particularly England, continues apace, and fox hunting displaces terrorism as a priority. I neither hunt nor shoot and have no wish to interfere with the freedom of those who do, and for that reason I have "signed up" for civil disobedience. Perhaps next years message will be written in a prison cell. Meanwhile I look forward to the counter revolution with a further earnest desire that you all look after yourselves accompanied by affectionate best wishes from Helen and myself.

**Mervyn Davies**

### **Secretary's Comments**

Most of my comments and thoughts will appear under various sections of the newsletter, however I should report on my first year. It really has been amazing, unbelievable, stunning. The welcome from everyone could not be surpassed. Telephones calls, letters, emails from all over the world, a level of involvement which makes my job so enjoyable.

The personal contact and help from our President, the Pantons, Will Chatterton, Dave Houghton, Allen Hudson, coffee with Edna and Harry at Woodbine Cottage is the "cream on the milk". It's a hell of a Association!!

The reunion 2004 and next years event will feature later on, however, it is appropriate to say next year is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW2 and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the association. Early indications show a large turnout – the Petwood is fully booked – so reservations elsewhere are in need of urgent action. Contingents are coming from Denmark, Holland and Canada and I am sure "down under" will be putting in an appearance.

**Gordon Lodge**

## Holland

Diana and myself attended the Memorial Service on the 4<sup>th</sup> May in Hoogkerk, Groningen for the DX-J NE 127 which as some of you will know was the plane in which my father was navigator. We had our reunion with the Noordohof family, Auke, Henny and Ida and numerous friends we had made over the years.

Shortly before we went to Holland, Auke informed us that BBMF Lancaster was visiting Groningen airfield on an official visit and could we arrange a Fly Past over the cemetery. Thanks to Dave Houghton's efforts the Fly Past took place – somewhat emotional!

The local attendance was substantial plus T.V., newspapers etc. In many ways a thank you to the Dutch people, and in particular Auke, for their care of the “crew”.

Gordon Lodge.

## Reunion Weekend 2004

A report on this year event mainly for the benefit of those who could not attend this year and those who are yet to attend.

Complete change to the venue through the Petwood Hotels development of the Woodland Suite, which can seat upto 200 people. A brand new building with air conditioning, private bar, doors opening onto a patio and the provision of the circular tables. A culture change to previous facilities of the separate rooms, video link and sauna benefits!

The circular tables were a major step forward, seating 8,10 or 12 people; you can actually talk to everyone, as opposed to bench style tables.

A total of 118 attended with a top table of 12 consisting of:

Diana & myself  
Paul & Judith Day – Main speaker BBMF  
Helen & Mervyn Davies  
Stuart & Sue Warriner – 630 Memorial Market Harborough  
Steve & Maureen Stevens – Loyal Toast  
Group Captain Tony Gunby – 2005 Speaker  
Wing Commander Dave Houghton

We also had a table of “East Kirkbians” the Elys, Pantons, Chattertons and the Bensons ( Hon Chaplain) who have and do give the association so much support.

After the speeches I announced we had received support from Thwaites Brewery in Blackburn, who make a beer called “Lancaster Bomber” in the shape of 400 bottles, 80 Lancaster Bomber crew sports shirts and presents for the ladies. Various members could be seen clutching bottles and disappearing to car boots!

Following dinner the raffle took place which this year was extended to include, thanks to the Pantons, a cockpit seat in the Lancaster for the Sunday Taxi Run. At £5 per ticket the association funds reached “take off”! The seat was won by Sue Warriner of the 630 Market Harborough fame.

Sundays Memorial Service followed the usual pattern commencing with the ATC squadron marching to the Marham Le Fen Victory Silver Prize Band. The ATC squadrons represented by Horncastle, Boston, and Warwick & Birmingham Wing were then inspected by Squadron Leader Paul Day. The actual service commenced with a reading by Harold Panton followed by a Walter Scott poem read by Michael Howley and the address by our Hon. Chaplain Richard Benson. Total attendance in the region of 250 people then followed the ATC Squadrons to the 57/630 memorial at the airfield entrance where a further small service took place, the last post, wreaths for the 57 by Harry Archer and 630 by Jim Wright.

On returning to the hanger and runway area the “Just Jane” Lancaster fired up the engines and taxied the runway, an amazing experience every year. We then had the BBMF Lancaster fly past and manoeuvres for about fifteen minutes. During the service at the memorial Paul Day slipped the spitfire out the back of the hanger. What a display – over and around the airfield at times so low it seemed behind the buildings or scaring low flying chickens!!

Throughout the Saturday and Sunday events a professional video has been produced for the association.

The Sunday dinner dance was held in the Petwood Suite with music during dinner by the hotel “resident girls” playing 40’s/50’s music with **NO** amplifiers! – very pleasant. After dinner the dance band arrived with more electronic support and decibel level more than normal people can stand.

It is fair to say it was about this time your secretary lost all vestige of self control! This is bearing in mind they were well aware of our requirements. So the band left rather rapidly and subsequent meetings with the hotel have resulted in them submitting tapes of various bands for me to select next years “noise levels”.

**Gordon Lodge**

### **Lincoln Cathedral/Day Trip**

The “Monday Outing” organised by Garth Green started from the Petwood to the Cathedral Service followed by a boat trip to the Pyewipe Inn for lunch. A number travelled independent of the bus to the Cathedral where the airmen’s chapel was well attended and a wreath laid.

After the service we went with Mervyn Davies, Steve Stevens and wives to the Dambusters Pub in Scampton for lunch. There is so much memorabilia in the pub you could spend all day. As it was Steve found a Lancaster Cockpit – he was lost for several hours!.

**Gordon Lodge**

### **Reunion 2005**

As I mentioned earlier in the newsletter because of the “anniversaries” next year we are anticipating a large turnout. Some members will have family along which is all-conducive to the ongoing strength of the Association. When returning the reservation forms it would be useful to know if members want to sit with their “cronies”, with younger family elements joining similar tables, or all families together.

### **Petwood Hotel**

Dinner will be held in the Woodland suite which is a superb extension to the hotel and again using circular tables, I have also reserved this suite for the dinner dance on the Sunday, far better facilities and acoustics. On this latter point I have selected a band from hotel supplied tapes which ensures quality of music and noise levels.

### **Flypast**

Planned for 13:30 to 14:00 hours on the Sunday

### **Just Jane**

Taxiing of the Lancaster will take place on the Sunday. The Pantons have very kindly agreed to a cockpit place available to the raffle winner from Saturday night.

## Programme 2005

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July

19:30 Reunion Dinner  
Dress: Lounge Suit or Blazer

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July

11:30 Secretary reads the notices – March past and inspection by  
Group Captain A.D.Gunby

11:45 Remembrance Service – Medals  
Conducted by the Rev. Richard Benson – Hon.Chaplain  
At the Memorial:  
Last post, silence, laying of wreaths  
Music: Marham Le Fen Victory Silver Prize Band  
Air Training Corps. 141,1265,2266 Squadrons

13:30/14:00 Fly Past – Lancaster BBMF.  
19:00/19:30 Informal Dinner Dance – Petwood Hotel

### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July

Garth Green's Tour (see attached details)  
Service at Lincoln Cathedral

### Costs

#### Petwood Hotel

4 Nights	£200 p.p
3 Nights	£180 p.p
B&B 1 or 2 Nights	£43 p.p Per Night
<u>Reunion Dinner</u>	£23 p.p
<u>Dinner Dance</u>	£20 p.p

For Guests at the Petwood 3-4 nights, no extra charge, dinner and dinner dance included, just indicate numbers/names attending.

For B&B guests at the Petwood and non-residents, please send cost of dinner(s) and numbers/names attending. All cheques payable to 57/630 Squadron Association.

#### Flight Lieutenant Walter (Wally) T.Upton D.F.M

Continuing the “series” of wartime stories, I have been in contact with Walter Upton in Australia. He has sent me details on the last trip of the crew of Wing Commander W.I.(Bill) Deas – A Good read.

Gordon Lodge

#### John Chatterton D.F.C. MSc

A Biography by Richard W.Underwood on the life of John Chatterton - “Ploughshare and Shining Sword” has been written and published.

Gordon Lodge

**Information Officer – Allen Hudson**

Attached to the newsletter is Allen’s report of the years activities.

It’s an amazing coincidence that Allen comments on Wing Commander Deas crew when at the same time I have included Walter Uptons story of the “crews last trip”

**Gordon Lodge**

**Squadron Car Window Stickers**

I have been in contact with the company that produces the Squadron Coasters with a view to acquiring stickers for the inside of windows.

They have sent me “test” examples, which so far appear to have resolved all fading quality issues. Could members advise me if they require one so I have some idea of quantities to order.

Individual stickers for 57/630 squadrons. Send prepaid envelope and specify 57 or 630, I propose they will be free to members.

Bear in mind there will be a gap before you receive your sticker – I will have to collate numbers and order.

**Gordon Lodge**

**Membership Secretary**

Garth Green has produced a report on membership and the “Monday Outing”. The report is attached to the newsletter. Please give some thought to ideas to Monday 2005, Garth will contact all those attending the re-union nearer the time.

**Gordon Lodge**

**Flight Sergeant William Fraser Sutherland RAAF no. 428623**

I have received an enquiry from a cousin of the above requesting information. He has been in touch with various sources but to no avail.

Information known; *57 Squadron – East Kirkby*

Crew.	F/S W.E Brunton	Pilot
	Sgt W.Dyson	Engineer
	Sgt H.H.Harris	Navigator
	Sgt F.H.Evans	W/op
	Sgt M.J.Meehan	A/G
	F/S J.Hobbs	A/G

They were shot down on 19-10-44 near Stuttgart and Sutherland was interned in Stalag Luft V11 in Poland. Around January 1945 they were forced marched towards Germany. Sutherland and one other escaped and reached Odessa three months later and was subsequently returned to Australia. Unfortunately seven years later he was killed in a factory accident.

The family would like to know:

1. Does anyone remember Sutherland or the crew.
2. Any information on Stalag Luft VII or the march to Germany – any photos of Stalag Luft VII.
3. Any other prisoners who escaped to Odessa.

**Gordon Lodge**

### **Tipperary Remembrance Trust**

In the absence of a Memorial in Ireland specifically dedicated to the memory of all the Irishmen and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of Peace and Freedom worldwide, Tipperary Remembrance trust was formed. This Trust consists of the coming together of Irish servicemen and women, and groupings dedicated to Remembrance and Peace.

On the site of the former Military Barracks stands the only remaining entrance arch, a protected structure.

The Trust will renovate the arch and provide a peace garden on each side. When completed it will be called ;

“Tipperary Remembrance Arch”

It is intended to have the names of all those who have died during and since WWII on a database at the Excel Heritage Centre in Tipperary.

The Association has sent a donation to the Trust in memory of those who served with 57/630 Squadrons, particularly with the recent passing of Paddy McNamara.

### **Gordon Lodge**

#### **The East Kirkby Project**

##### **The Background**

If you were at the 2004 re-union you may have heard the announcement made in the hanger prior to the Service about a project to “re-create” RAF East Kirkby airfield using computer graphics. This is not a commercial project although, if the finished product is good enough, it may be made available for sale.

The aim is to use computer generated images to show the airfield with it’s runways, perimeter track, main buildings (not the dispersal site at present) and Lancasters at their dispersal’s. We already have a computer generated Lancaster and this will not only allow us to place Lancasters at their dispersals but also to have the correct identification letters on the fuselage. If you remember which was your regular dispersal and/or the identification letter(s) of any of the planes you flew in (or maintained) please let us know and we will ensure that “your Lanc” is on the correct dispersal.

We are currently researching the main buildings, the Watch Office/Control Tower is the first we will “build” using the computer followed by the hangers. These buildings are the ones where it is easy to find examples still remaining today, for example the Watch Office still at East Kirkby and a hanger at RAF Spilsby. We already have information for the Dinghy Store and many other buildings although we lack photographs which are important, and sometimes vital, to ensure an authentic recreation.

If you have any photographs that show buildings, even parts of buildings, please let us know.

##### **Your Memories**

As part of the project we would also like to record the stories and anecdotes of people that served at RAF East Kirkby both aircrew **and** ground crew. These do not have to be what you might call “dramatic” ones such as being coned, attacked by fighters etc but could also be everyday occurrences which all help to give a picture of “service life” both on the ground and in the air.

We would like to record these on video but if you prefer not to be “seen” we can record them as voice only. Alternatively, we could narrate your story or anecdote for you.

If you have anything that you would like to record then please let us know. We may be able to visit you to make the recording but most likely we would do this at either the Petwood Hotel or East Kirkby at the 2005 re-union. We may well be able to organise a room at the Petwood for you to visit with your photographs etc.

We really do want to hear from you whatever you have to say.

**Closing Thoughts**

My Grandfather, a few years ago, well perhaps slightly more than a few said the older you get the faster time goes! I must confess there is a possibility this could be true.

It does not seem any time since the last re-union and now we are finalising 2005, could be he was right.

It would be superb if 2005 could create the largest re-union and for those who have not been it really is a fantastic weekend and you would be most welcome.

If you want to talk about it, give me a ring.

In the meantime Diana and I wish you all a sybaritic Christmas and a great new year (just been reading the dictionary)

Regards

Gordon.