



# 57 / 630 Squadrons Association

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

*Vice President: Group Captain David Houghton*

**Secretary: Gordon Lodge**



## 'In Memoriam'

Geoff Copeman

John Kimber

Ray Dennis

Bernard Lazenby

Reginald Fletcher

John Matthews

Gwyneth Green

Keith Nelson

Percy ( Dutch ) Holland

Gp. Capt. David Roberts

### Geoff Copeman

His name will forever be associated with 'Silksheen', the war-time history of the 57 / 630 Squadrons. Always smiling even when disabled. It was most moving to see how Roger Bedford and Carol Dutchman-Smith looked after him.

### Gwyneth Green

We shall never forget Gwyneth's gentle welcoming smile. She faded away very quickly in the last two weeks, a shock for Garth.

### Percy (Dutch) Holland

We met Dutch and Queenie at the 57 Sqn. Open Days at Lyneham but regrettably nothing since then. Great friends of Ron and Mavis Legg.

### John Kimber

A survivor of two tours and a stalwart member of every known Association. Gladys looked after him.

### Keith Nelson

Keith's ashes now rest at East Kirkby.

### Gp. Capt. David Roberts

David was resident in Norway and made only a brief contact with me on the occasion of his son's wedding.

### Michael Howley

Michael now has a tree and plaque at East Kirkby.

### Ray Dennis, Reginald Fletcher, Bernard Lazenby and John Matthews.

I must have met them or written to each but the passage of year's leaves many gaps in the memory.

## From the President

In July the Reunion reached another dizzy height with Sir Michael Beetham and Lady Patricia as Guests of Honour.

We are a remarkably confident Association and at East Kirkby we are blessed with a perfect stage and "all the men and women merely players on it", (As You Like It, Scene V). And you will be interested to learn that there is more to come: this will be in the nature of a 'transfusion' which Gordon will describe in our next move up the dreaded technological ladder.

There is no doubt we must move with the times but from choice I intend to remain in the wheel-chair of mental arithmetic albeit with an e-mail address which Helen has organised for me. A notable absence from the festivities of course, was the Lancaster Fly Past, because of the weather. The global warmers must be disenchanted with this summer of low temperatures, low cloud, drizzle and sudden downpours (unkindly drenching us at the Memorial Service). I cannot help but remember as a youngster in the 20's and 30's perpetual sunshine during summer holidays with football, cricket, swimming and camping on Dartmoor. No 'Elf 'n' Safety then. One saving grace for our gathering was Paul Day's classic display of lower-low flying which would have frightened not just the horses, but possibly the Spitfire itself. Thank you Paul.

A while ago I asked our Oldest Member, John Holmes BEM, who enlisted in 1936, to describe what life was like in those pre-historic days. His words can be found in the body of the Newsletter.

Well that is another year gone. With thanks to Gordon we have gone from strength to strength and there are more muscles waiting in the wings. Finally, I must thank John Maunsell who has retired as Treasurer; the post he took over when I became Secretary. Clare Gillard has volunteered to be the new Treasurer.

Helen and I wish to send everyone our Warmest Greetings and if you take care and hold things together, we shall meet again in July 2009.

**Mervyn Davies - President**

## A History of 57 Squadron 1916

57 Squadron, Royal Flying Corp, was formed at Copmanthorpe, Yorkshire on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1916. The Squadron's first aircraft was a BE 2C designed for observation duties. An easy prey for German fighters the aircraft was relegated to a training role.

First operational aircraft was the FE2d fighter in November 1916. On the 16<sup>th</sup> December 1916 the Squadron arrived at St. Andre-aux-Bois to form part of the 9<sup>th</sup> wing RFC. Duties were offensive patrols and reconnaissance.

During January 1917, the Sqn moved to Flenvillers. Due to intense cold it took until February for the Sqn to be ready for action. The FE2d was a 2-seater "pusher" aircraft with a large machine gun in the nose.

The Arras was assigned to the Sqn and was directly opposed by Von Richthofen's Jagdestraffeln and considerable losses were experienced. Almost all the flying personnel became casualties. It was at this time the son adopted the "Phoenix" as its emblem. Aircraft were superseded by Sopwith Camels and SE5s. Sqn duties were transferred to bombing duties, a role the Sqn retained until 1965.

In May 1917 the Sqn was re-equipped with Airco DH4 bombers with long range, high altitude bombing, and photographic missions. The Sqn became the acknowledged leader in the field of high level photography and became pioneers in the use of oxygen.

During 20 months in action the Sqn dropped 285 tons of bombs, shot down 166 aircraft, flew 196 successful reconnaissance missions and exposed over 22,000 photographic plates. Alas 104 aircrew were lost.

After the Armistice, the Sqn operated an Army Post service between France, Belgium and Cologne and eventually in May 1919, was re-equipped with DH9A aircraft. At the end of the war the size of the RAF was reduced. The Sqn flew its aircraft to South Carlton near Lincoln and was disbanded on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1919.

### **1931 – 1942**

57 Sqn reformed as a light bomber unit at Netheravon on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1931. Equipped with the Hawker Hart moved to Upper Hayford on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1932. Towards the end of 1932 the Sqn was to form part of the British Expeditionary force should it be needed. During 1934 and 1935 Sqn took a leading part in the Hendon air display in addition to leading the bomber formation in the Duxford fly past in honour of King George V's Silver Jubilee. As the RAF expanded in 1936 the Sqn became equipped with the Hawker Hind and went on to win the RAF Bomber Trophy. This success continued into 1937 the trophy won again with an average 8 ½ yard error.

The mono plain era arrived when in march 1938 the Sqn received its first Bristol Blenheim MK1. Live bombing was practiced on Salisbury on Plain.

The Munich crisis in September 1938 led to an increase in the preparation for war. The Blenheims were altered to provide a turret front gun, and armour plating.

After the outbreak of war on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, 18 and 57 Sqns were formed into no.70 wing and formed part of the air component of the British expeditionary force.

On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1939 the CO.Wg.Cdr.Day lead a flight of 3 Blenheims on Sqn first mission. All 3 aircrafts were lost and Wg.Cdr.Day spent the rest of the war a prisoner.

The Sqn moved to Rosieues-en-Santerre on the 18<sup>th</sup> October. In March 1940 the Sqn re-equipped the Blenheims MK IVs. The Germans marched in to Holland and Belgium on the 10<sup>th</sup> May and Sqn began bombing attacks against the advancing German army but suffered heavy losses. Moving to Crecy-en-

Ponthieu on the 19<sup>th</sup> May the Sqn had been, all but, eliminated and was no longer an effective unit. The ground crew went to Boulogne for evacuation. Unserviceable aircraft were destroyed and the remainder flown to Lympe and then to Wyton, where they arrived on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

During June 1940 the Sqn became part of no.2 group and deployed to Lossiemouth for anti-shipping duties. Again the Sqn suffered heavy casualties. On a strike against Stavanger in Norway, 7 out of 12 lost.

In this period 57 Sqn loss rate was the highest at 17.2%.

November 1940 saw the Sqn reformed as a Wellington bomber Sqn at Wyton as a 3 group unit.

The Sqn then deployed to Feltwell commencing operations on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1941.

The first raid on Berlin by 57 Sqn took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1941. The 4000 lb bomb was first used in the Autumn of 1941 when the Battle Cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were attacked in Brest Harbour.

During its time in 3 group the Sqn carried out 166 bombing raids and 7 mine laying missions. It flew a total 1056 sorties and lost 58 aircraft.

### **1942-1953**

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 1942 the Sqn moved to Scampton to join 5<sup>th</sup> group and converted to the Avro Lancaster, one of the first to do so. Only 6 weeks later Sqn took part in the daring low level dusk raid of 94 aircraft of 5 group against the Schneider armaments factory at Le-Creusot in France. The mission involved a 300 mile flight at tree top level to avoid fighters. In the event, the greatest danger was posed by the threat of bird strikes.

March 21<sup>st</sup> 1942 saw the crews of C flight posted across the station to form the nucleus of 617 Sqn. Sqn.Ldr.HM Young of C flight was a natural choice as deputy to Wg..Cdr.Guy Gibson. There was also a great deal of crew room furniture that mysteriously followed C flight!

Three of the 4 ex 57 Sqn crews took part in the raid on the Ruhr Dams. Sqn Ldr Young and his crew were credited with the breaching of the Mohne Dam, Tragically they were 1 of the 2 ex 57 Sqn. Crews that failed to return.

Raids during July/August 1943 included Hamburg and the rocket establishment at Peenemunde.

August 1943 had all 900 personnel of 57 Sqn moved to new accommodation at East Kirkby. On 15<sup>th</sup> November B flight was formed into 630 Sqn. Both 57 and 630 operated in concert until the end of the war.

57 was disbanded on 27<sup>th</sup> November and reformed at Scampton the next day.

## **1953 – 1986**

In 1953 a start was made on re-equipping the Sqn at Coningsby with the English Electric Canberra B2.

The highlight of the 4 years that 57 Sqn flew the Canberra came in 1954 when 6 aircraft were detached to the Middle East on a goodwill and training tour of the Arab States. During the 10 day tour Sqn aircraft covered 7600 miles. In charge of the Tour was the subsequent Air Vice Marshall Sir Ivor Broom who in later years became President of the 57 / 630 Squadrons Association.

Following bases at Cottesmore and Honington the Sqn returned to Coningsby where it was disbanded on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1957.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1959 the Sqn was reformed at Honington and equipped with Handley Page Victor BMK1 aircraft as part of the V.force. The Sqn was destined to operate the Victor for the next 27 years.

The Sqn main task was the maintenance of the Nuclear Deterrent and experience world wide deployments. In 1961, 57 Sqn won the Sir Phillip Sassoon Trophy for navigation in the Annual Bomber Command competition. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1962 the Queens standard was presented to the Sqn. The standard carried the maximum 8 of 10 Battle Honours won by the Sqn up to that time.

The unexpected demise of the Valliant Force in January 1965 due to fatigue problems left the RAF without an AAR Tanker. Victors were converted to the tanker role and moved to Marham on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1965.

In the late 1960's the Sqn had many long range deployments to the Far East and Australia. Refuelling trials with the VC 10 and Belfast aircraft were carried out and the Sqn pioneered night refuelling techniques. The Sqn who took part in the 1969 Transatlantic Air Race and won the Sir Alan Cobham Trophy as the most effective tanker unit.

The 1970's had the Sqn continuing it's world wide tanker role refuelling various aircrafts, Lightenings, Harriers, Jaguars, Phantoms, Buccaneers and Tornados.

The invasion of the Falkland Islands by Argentina in 1982 marked the beginning of the large post war operation varied out by 57 Sqn. They deployed to Ascension Island on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1982. Throughout crews carried out long range reconnaissance missions, flew in support of the Vulcan raids, refuelled Harriers Nimrod flights and Hercules air bridge flights.

57 Sqn celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1986. After 57 years of operational service the Sqn disbanded at Marham on June 1986.

## **1992**

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 1992 the status of all operational conversion units to that of reserve squadrons was implemented. The 57 Sqn name plate was allocated to no.242 OCU, the Hercules based at Lyneham.

The Sqn was again disbanded in 2003 and the Standard held at RAF Cranwell.

### **Battle Honours**

- 1 Western Front 1916 – 1917
- 2 Amiens
- 3 France and low Countries 1939 – 1940
- 4 Norway 1940
- 5 Channel and North Sea 1940
- 6 Ruhr 1941 – 1943
- 7 Berlin 1941 – 1943
- 8 France and Germany 1944 – 1945
- 9 Fortress Europe 1941 – 1944
- 10 Walcheren
- 11 South Atlantic 1982

Gordon Lodge

### **Secretary's Comments**

Following last years weather pattern, the attempt to create a monsoon season in East Kirkby, I viewed the weather forecast. This resulted in umbrellas etc being packed, but more later!.

Saturday mornings weather was appalling, to such an extent we nearly had to call of the RAF band. However an amazing transition took place, blue skies and sunshine and, on time, the Band "Shades of Blue" gave a two hour concert. They really are a fantastic band and have been booked for the Saturday next year. Sundays weather was not as kind with heavy showers

The service at the memorial at the airfield suffered from a very heavy shower. Our Chaplain Rev. Richard Benson, carried out the service holding a microphone – very brave. As I moved some yards away I fully expected to see a "blue haze" surrounding him! Saturday evening had members present from Australia, USA and guests from Holland and France. 170 present at the dinner 350 Sunday morning and 90 at Sundays Dinner Dance.

Dates for the 2009 weekend are Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July and for 2010, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July to Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

Pressure on rooms at The Petwood continues with a waiting list for next year already in operation.

Due to the reunion size early bookings at the hotel is recommended.

The Petwood hope to have another 20 rooms available for 2010.

The usual reunion forms are enclosed in the newsletter and it will be appreciated if returns could be made by the end of March. As before a stamped addresses envelope will enable me to confirm receipt and for you to know your 'entry' has been received. There are many people involved with the Association and the East Kirkby area who contribute enormously to the success of the reunion and our thanks go to all.

### **57 Squadron**

We have received notification that 2 Squadron Flight Training School based at RAF Wyton will become 57(R) Squadron.

The 57 Squadron Standard was presented to Squadron Leader Paul Watkins OC 2 Squadron EFTS on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October at RAF Cranwell.

Arrangements are in hand to arrange an Association visit to RAF Wyton for a brief discussion on the operation and for the Association to give a talk on the Squadrons history, which will of course include 630 Squadron.

No doubt they will be represented at the next Reunion.

Once this takes place the Association will become involved and clearly the Squadron will attend the Reunion Weekend. In the past our Vice President David Houghton, when serving in 57 Squadron, gathered many items, articles with a view to developing a website for the Squadron. With the standing down of the Squadron the matter has stood in limbo. The intention now is to develop, with 57 Squadron, a website which the Association will play a part. Both 57 & 630 will have an Association adjunct to the site which we will run alone should 57 disband again. More news will be forthcoming next year.

Gordon Lodge

### **Squadron Leader Eric Dowling**

Died recently at the age of 92 and was one of the last surviving members of the breakout from Stalag Luft III and who's actions were recorded in a book and subsequently into a film. I am referring to the 'Great Escape' with Steve McQueen and Charles Bronson.

He flew 29 missions with 57 Squadron from Feltwell.

### **Monday Outing**

Garth Green's note on the Reunion and Monday outing is attached to the news letter.

### **Reunion Weekend 2008**

#### **Saturday Dinner**

With 160 present at the dinner both bars were in active use!!

Helen, the hotels resident pianist, entertained members leading up to the dinner.

The top table consisted of:

Mervyn & Helen Davies	-	President
Sir Michael and Lady Beetham	-	Marshall of the RAF
Gordon and Diana Lodge	-	Secretary
Sqd. Ldr. Paul & Judith Day	-	8 x BBMF
Rev. Richard & Kate Benson	-	Hon. Chaplain
Group Captain David Houghton	-	O/C RAF Northolt
David & Catherine Seymour	-	Thetford Grammar School

Loyal toast proposed by Tom Lockett.

The formal part commenced with Secretaries notes and speeches from our President and Sir Michael Beetham who covered his time with 57 Squadron and the efforts taking place for a Bomber Command Memorial in London.

Wing Commander Bill McCrea concluded the formal part with Absent Friends.

During the dinner a three minute Annual General Meeting took place:

- 1 The Annual Accounts were approved
  - a. Proposed Buck Buckley
  - b. Second Alex Fraser
- 2 Constitution amended to provide for a Vice President
  - a. Proposed Alan Payne
  - b. Second Steve Stevens
- 3 Appointment of Group Captain David Houghton as Vice President
  - a. Proposed Mervyn Davies
  - b. Second Ron Meeking

More information in the newsletter on Annual Accounts and our vice President.

### **Sunday Service**

Prior to the service two personal services took place attended by family and friends and conducted by our Chaplain Rev. Richard Benson.

The ashes of Keith Nelson were interred in the Memorial Garden near the chapel.

Michael Howley's ashes were interred, and a tree and plaque commemorating his life was placed.

The Service commenced at 11:30 with a march past by 141 Boston ATC Squadron. The Squadron lead by Flt. Lt. Spike Elliott and Flt. Lt. Janine Rennie-Lovely (what a fabulous name) – and she was!



An inspection took place by Sir Michael Beetham and the whole event supported by the Marham Le Fen Silver Prize Band.

Following the Secretaries announcement an introduction by Harold Panton began the service.

After the first hymn 'O Valiant Hearts' Mervyn Davies read the Walt Scott Poem 'Crew Reunion'

### **Crew Reunion**

Now hear, we talk of many things,  
Of joys and hopes, and soaring wings,  
Seven men of different kind,  
Within the ramparts of each mind.

Shadows of the past we see,  
The youthful crew we use to be,  
The sands of time still trickle, slow  
For seven friends of long ago

Fellow creatures of the night,  
There as one, in roaring flight  
Togetherness, the golden spear,  
To turn aside the sword of fear.

Suspended now in time and space,  
Pleasure on each young-old face,  
Voices, laughter, from the past.  
Are reunited here at last.

For photographs, those ghosts of time,  
With smiling wives, we pose in line,  
Mirrored people, who will be,  
Un-ageing to eternity.

Muted farewells, eyes that smart,  
As we met, so we must part,  
The earnest faces we all see,  
Return to vaults of memory.

Walter Scott ex 630 Squadron.

The second hymn 'God is our strength and refuge' to the 'Dambusters' tune preceded the address by our Chaplain Rev. Richard Benson. A congregation of some 350 in the hanger and around the airfield.

The final hymn 'O God our hope ages past' followed by prayers, The Grace and The National Anthem.

Before leaving to the Memorial and laying wreaths and to commemorate Michael Howley a CD was played of Michael reading the Walter Scott poem 'Old Airfield'

## Old Airfield

I lie here still, beside the hill,  
Abandoned long to nature's will,  
My buildings down, my people gone,  
My only sound the wild birds song.

But my mighty birds will rise no more,  
No more I hear the Merlins roar,  
And never now my bosom feels,  
The pounding of their giant wheels.

From the ageless hill their voices cast,  
Thunderous echoes of the past,  
And still in lonely reverie,  
Their great dark wings sweep down to me.

Laughter, sorrow, hope and pain,  
I shall never know the things again,  
Emotions that I came to know,  
Of strange young men so long ago.

Who knows as evening shadows meet,  
Are they with me still, a phantom fleet,  
And do my ghosts still stride unseen,  
Across my face, so wide and green.

And in the future should structures tall,  
Bury me beyond recall,  
I shall still remember them,  
My metal birds, and long dead men.

No weeds grow high, obscure the sky,  
O remember me when you pass by,  
For beneath this tangled leafy screen  
I was your home, your friend, Silksheen

At the memorial, a short service was held, Last Post, Reveille and the laying of wreathes by:

630 Squadron  
57 Squadron  
RAF  
Canada

Alex Fraser  
Ron Meeking  
Sir Michael Beetham  
Diana Lodge for Paul Dalseg

Returning to the hanger and airfield and recovering from the last monsoon at the Memorial we were very fortunate to have Paul Day with the Spitfire display. For the second year the weather had the BBMF fly past cancelled.

The Sunday evening Dinner Dance, a more casual affair, had 90 members present with the usual band and the cabaret from Roy Nash.

### **Lincoln Cathedral and Monday Outing**

Our usual visit to the Cathedral and the airman's chapel for the service and wreath laying was well supported.

Garth Green has produced a note of the day which is attached to the news letter.

### **Reunion 2009**

#### **Petwood hotel**

The dinner and dinner dance will be held in the Woodland Suite in the usual format. The RAF "Shades of Blue" Band will play in the grounds on the Saturday afternoon from 3.00pm. With the imminent "standing up" of 57 Squadron we will have members of the Squadron at the dinner. Raffle for a cockpit seat on the "Just Jane" taxi run will take place at the dinner.

#### **Chief Guest and Speaker**

Air commodore Tony Gunby, who served on 57 Squadron will, I'm sure, take us through his recent experiences in Australia and the Far East. The quarterly news letters he sends me are at times hilarious.

Gordon Lodge

### **Programme 2009**

#### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July**

15:00	RAF Shades of Blue Band
19:30	Reunion Dinner Dress, lounge suit or blazer Speaker Air Commodore Tony Gunby

#### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

11:30	Secretary reads the notices March past and inspection
11:45	Remembrance Service – Medals Conducted by Rev. Richard Benson – Hon Chaplain At the Memorial: Last post – laying of wreathes Music: Marham Le Fen Victory Silver Prize Band Air Training Corps: 141 Boston Squadron 57 Squadron Standard Royal British Legion

13:30 Spitfire display – Sqn. Ldr Paul Day  
15:00 BBMF Fly past  
57 Squadron to be arranged  
19:00 – 19:30 Informal Dinner Dance

### **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

Lincoln Cathedral and Garth Green tour.

Garth will send details nearer the time.

### **Cost Petwood Hotel**

4 Nights:	£245pp
3 Nights:	£225pp
B&B 1 or 2 Nights	£47pppn

Reunion Dinner	£27pp
Dinner Dance	£23.50pp

Those on 3 or 4 nights have the Dinner and Dinner Dance already in the price. For B&B at the Petwood or staying elsewhere please send cost of Dinner and Dinner Dance for the numbers attending. All cheques payable to 57/630 Squadron Association. Please note any dietary requirements on the Reunion Form. For all Reunion Forms, whether cheques included or not, please send stamped addressed envelope so I can both acknowledge receipt and you know your form has been received.

The reunion form is enclosed in the newsletter.

Gordon Lodge

### **Constitution**

Following the changes made at the AGM an amended version is attached. The principal change being provision of a Vice President.

Gordon Lodge

### **Vice President**

#### **Group Captain David Houghton PhD MSC BA RAF**

David was born and raised in Manchester. After a period spent in the financial industry as a computer programmer, he joined the RAF in 1984. Following Navigator Training, David completed his first operational tour at

RAF Lyneham flying C-130K aircraft. After a short tour as a simulator and ground school instructor on the Tornado F3OCU he completed a tour as a navigator instructor on HS125 Dominie aircraft before returning to the Hercules force in 1983. Following tours on 24 and 57 Squadrons, the latter as a Flight Instructor, David was promoted Squadron Leader in 1998 and completed a Flight Commander Tour on 57 Squadron at RAF Lyneham. Posted to the Directorate of Air Operations in the MOD in 2001, David acted as a member of the air team providing operational advice to CDS and Ministers during operation in Afghanistan and Iraq and also provided operational input to the Tactical Air Transport Force, Communication Fleet and the A400M programme. Promoted to Wing Commander in 2003, he moved to HQ2 group where he was responsible for developing the operational capabilities of the BAe147, HS125, C-17, C-130J, C-130K, Tri Star and VC10 forces. The next move was to RAF Northolt in December 2005 where he was OC Operations and flew Islanders. Sent kicking and screaming to Cranfield University in September 2007, David is due to complete his studies in September 2008. Promoted to Group Captain he is awaiting his next posting with baited breath!

### **Treasurer**

During the last year Clare Gillard, Ron Meeking's daughter, has been Assistant Treasurer to John Maunsell.

John has held the role for many years but has decided Clare should adopt the full role of Treasurer.

The Association owes its thanks to John for many years he has been Treasurer. He will remain a cheque signatory and will be available to help Clare when Necessary.

Gordon Lodge

### **Bomber Command Campaign Medal**

I have received from Sir Martin Gilbert a booklet on 'Churchill and British Bombing Policy' an extract of which I have attached to the newsletter what I found particularly interesting is the fact that Clement Attlee, as Deputy Prime Minister, was the Chairman of the committee that approved the Dresden raid while Churchill was attending the Yalta Conference.

It was also Attlee that would not sanction that Harris should receive a peerage nor a Campaign Medal awarded after he became Prime Minister.

Gordon Lodge

### **A Chequer-Board of Nights**

I have enclosed a leaflet on the above book written by Wing Commander Bill McCrea covering operations with 57 Squadron. The sale of this book benefits the Association and to date we have gained some £150 in donations: I can only support the reviews in the leaflet and thank Bill for the support to the Association.

### **Bourg Leopold Raid May 1944**

I have attached a letter from Jack Porter and an account of the raid by Don Mallinson. Jack's Uncle Bob Jackson was a pilot on the raid. Another amazing account of the extreme events and dangers experienced by some if not all crews.

Gordon Lodge

### **Captain Ronald Victor Munday DFC**

Stand Bradford has sent me details of his late pilot's life and the eulogy given by his Air Marshal Sir Christopher Colville.

Full details are attached.

Gordon Lodge

### **Revisiting Germany**

Frank Whitby, a member of the Association, has compiled a report about his Uncle. The type of history many families may have experienced.

There is, in the report a query from Frank which some gunners may be able to answer. If so contact Frank, details shown on his letter.

Gordon Lodge

### **Second Dickie**

Eric Blanchard has sent a note for the Newsletter which also mentions a Sgt S.Stevens!!

Note attached to the Newsletter.

Gordon Lodge

### **John Richard Banbury**

I have attached an email on the above. The sons are requesting information from any members who may have known him. Contact through me.

Gordon Lodge

### **Archivist / Historian**

As many of you will know Allen Hudson holds this role within the Association and a copy of his 2008 report is attached.

There is contact from all over the world and I cannot thank him too much for the support he gives in this role.

Gordon Lodge

### **Romance**

This is not an advert!, Nor a request!, but a fascinating story.

A Lancaster of 630 Squadron had a rear gunner, Harry Davies, and an engineer, Lou Fuller whose wife was in the WAAF and worked in the Control Tower at East Kirkby.

The families have maintained contact and have attended the reunion for number of years. Ros Davies with her father and mother Roger Fuller son of Lou and Jean Fuller.

Romance followed and last October became engaged and plan to marry in East Kirkby in the near future.

I am sure all will wish them both a very happy future and will look forward to seeing the 'Fullers' next year

Gordon Lodge

### **Noordhof Family – Holland**

Many of you will know Auke, Ida and Hennie from the reunions. Ide & Hennie have written a note for the Newsletter and this is included.

Gordon Lodge

### **Closing thoughts**

Having now been Secretary for some 4/5 years it is wonderful to experience the camaraderie that exists, not only with the reunion, but with members all over the world, this extends to the contact we have with many of the nationalities who create Memorials and/or tend Squadron graves in their locality. A pleasure to see them wanting to attend the Reunions.

We are having success in attracting those of 57 who served post war and, of course, with the prospect of 57 'standing up' again in the next few months, the future of the Association bodes well.

Both Diana and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and 2009.

Gordon Lodge