



Volatimus
Vocidimus
Vivimus

THE KRIEGIE

NEWS-SHEET OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCES EX-P.O.W. ASSOCIATION

No. 37 AUGUST 1986

Editor: CAL YOUNGER

CANADIAN REUNION 1985

by Dave Bernard

Royal Air Force Kriegies expect a high standard, especially from their Royal Canadian Air Force counterparts, but the "Fortieth Anniversary of Freedom — R.C.A.F. Prisoner of War Association Reunion 1985" exceeded their wildest dreams — it was superb!

About 900 Ex Air Force Kriegies formed one enormous "combine" at Calgary University campus, of which the UK contingent comprised 121 members with their ladies.

One would have thought that the number of Kriegies attending these reunions would have markedly diminished due to reduced financial resources, health and those who have "fallen off their perches": Quite the contrary, the numbers have increased. The bond of friendship formed by Air Force ex POWs is quite remarkable, it would seem that with the passage of time — 40 years — that such friendship would have deteriorated or mellowed but no, it has strengthened; Kriegies who had not seen each other for forty-odd years greeted each other like it was only last month since last they met; there must be some explanation for this phenomenon. Indeed, it is so remarkable that outsiders comment on it; the envious ones liken Kriegies to the "Maffia" in the way they bond together; anyway, they had one hella "Godfathers", meeting in Calgary in August 1985, the Canadian appeal of "Stay alive — 'till Eighty-five" was well heeded.

To offset the after-effects of jet-lag, the main UK contingent arrived a day early for the Reunion, on Wednesday, 21st August, 1985 on an Air Canada flight from Heathrow and were met and welcomed at Calgary Airport by representatives of the R.C.A.F. ExPOW Association Committee and Charles Clarke with his UK advance party. A most efficiently organized team of baggage handlers and transportation was manned by very smart and most courteous Canadian Air Cadets — they were a joy to behold — who cheerfully humped Kriegies' baggage, which in some instances appeared bigger than the cadets themselves, saying they "were proud to serve such war-time heroes!" Their enthusiasm and welcoming attitude typified the Canadians' superb hosting throughout the Reunion and, indeed, wherever one went all over Canada, a helpful, welcome and courteous manner was encountered.



Dave Bernard in Calgary

The University of Calgary, where the Reunion was based, has its Main Campus located on 314 acres in the Stampede City, north west of Calgary itself. It is a modern campus beautifully appointed in well laid out and artistically landscaped grounds. The Kriegies and their ladies were accommodated in the modern multi-story residential blocks which were all interconnected by a system, yes, wait for it — a system of interconnecting tunnels, already constructed and they didn't have to give up any bedboards or even do a penguin stint themselves! Yes, the Canadians had thought of everything. The rooms and flats were new and nicely furnished with an excellent room-cleaning service: The Canadians even laid on a Lady Teachers' Conference to coincide with the Kriegies' Reunion so that the pleasant campus panorama could be enhanced every morning with the ladies' vertical jogging.

Everyone remarked that it was strange that it always rained at night in Calgary, until some bright spark discovered that there was a discreetly built-in automatic campus water-sprinkler system which was timed to operate only in the early hours of the morning, but apart from the first Wednesday, glorious weather was enjoyed throughout the reunion period.

The Reunion programme was well organized with not a moment to spare, although one needed to be very fit to stand the pace. However, members enjoyed themselves so much they didn't have time to get tired. The programme proper ran from Thursday, 22nd August to Monday, 26th August, 1985 inclusive, — but most UK members met at the University a few days early and stayed on in Canada after the Reunion.

Thursday commenced with Registration; everyone was fitted out with a beautiful white (real) steepon-type hat; this was to be their passport to the various functions and, strange to relate, these hats seemed to suit everyone, no matter what their stature or facial shape. Lots of other goodies were issued too, many regalia- badges, name-tags, maps, tourist brochures, souvenirs and even a bottle of "Kriegie" labelled wine each; it was just like Christmas! The rest of that day was taken up with cocktail parties where long-lost combine chums met up and told each other stories of their misdemeanours of the past forty years. Then, in the evening, a Welcoming Dinner and Dance was enjoyed at which the UK members made an informal presentation of a replica of a POWs Blower-Fire device. Fortunately, the college catering arrangements were so good it did not have to go into action; indeed, the food was excellent throughout the reunion and of more-than-adequate proportions.

On Friday everyone dressed up as cowboys, or how they thought cowboys dressed, and all 900 members embussed on a fleet of super air-conditioned coaches and headed for the Rockies to Devil's Head Ranch where an exclusive Rodeo Show was laid on. Despite the altitude, the weather was warm and glorious. The sight of 900 Kriegie "Cowboys and Cowgirls" with their white stetsons gleaming in the sun was quite something to behold. A most impressive feature was young boy cowboys, 9-year-olds, caparing small steers and throwing them to the ground with such expertise; the sight of a large black "ten-gallon" hat with two little legs underneath would have done justice to any hill-billy cartoon.

After the Rodeo show there was a grand Bar-b-que held in large arena-like centerless tents with camp fires in the middle of each. Mansize beef-steaks were cooked in giant charcoal ovens; it is not known how many steers they backed into those ovens to feed the 900! The evening finished up with Ho-down dancing.

Heritage Park was the venue for the day-time activity on the Saturday. This fascinating open-air museum of an old-time small town community was really interesting. We had a paddle steamer trip on the lake and a ride on an old Canadian Pacific Railway train. All the houses, shops and the hotel were furnished just the way they were a century ago and manned by staff dressed in that era's costume. A day was insufficient to take it all in. Once again, an excellent three-course lunch was provided in exclusive marquees.

The Saturday evening started early with cocktails, followed by the main Reunion Dinner and Dance at which the Canadian Air Command Band gave a really polished and enjoyable performance. After-dinner speeches were given by various dignitaries including the Chief of the Air Command, Lieutenant-General D.M. McNaughton. Our own Air Commodore Charles Clarke gave a lively and entertaining speech and presented the Canadian Association with a carved wooden plaque depicting the UK Association's logo together with various air-crew brevets. This exquisitely carved plaque was designed and fashioned by one of our members, Charles Griffin who does similar work for the House of Parliament, Westminster. To add class to the evening, a moving piano solo was given by Dr Mary Munn C.M. a blind pianist. The evening was rounded off with some enthusiastic dancing. Where do these sixty-plus veterans get their energy from? Even a young man would have to be very fit to take part in one of these reunions, but then they don't build them like that any more, do they?

On Sunday morning members were up early and to breakfast before 0730hrs (hang-overs and all), ready for embussing at 0800hrs, to head for the Rockies, the Memorial Service and Chateau Lake Louise. It would have been a soulless fellow who would not have been deeply moved by the Kriegies memorial service, held in the open-air at Hillsdale Meadows of Banff National Park, overlooked by an appropriately named peak — Pilot Mountain (9,690ft). An emotional service was conducted, with due feeling for the occasion, by the Reverend Donald Browne. The Canadian Air Command Band provided music to accompany the lusty singing of hymns by the Kriegies. A poignant aspect of the service was the presentation of wreaths by the wife, son and granddaughter of one of the Great Escape of victims — Pawel Tobolski. The service concluded with a Fly-Past of aircraft of the Canadian Air Command flying low up the valley, dwarfed by Pilot Mountain; an impressive and fitting ending to such a memorable service.

After the Memorial Service, the party embussed and each member was issued with a packed lunch, presented in an authentic Canadian Red Cross POW food carton (someone had found the original die to cut and print the cartons), a thoughtful touch very much appreciated by the veterans. Suitable stops were made at breathtaking scenic spots in the Rockies, culminating at Chateau Lake Louise, a luxury Canadian Pacific Hotel where the party was suitably wine and dined in splendour overlooking the magnificent Lake

Louise, a sight never to be forgotten. Then a delightful journey back to Calgary via Banff, past the hotel where Prince Philip had stayed the night before. The evening was rounded off with a dinner and cabaret back at Calgary University.

On Monday morning a special Tattoo was given exclusively for the Kriegies, with various bands and displays ranging from Musketry, with its old muzzle loaders and billowing smoke, to the impressive Canadian Air Cadets with their smart drill and turn-out.

The final function of the programme proper was the civic luncheon given to the Kriegies by the City of Calgary, in the Alberta Room of Calgary University. Valedictory speeches were made with appreciations of all the splendid hard work put in by the Calgary Reunion Committee. They did us proud and produced an occasion that will never be forgotten. Those attending saw "the tip of the ice-berg" of the effort which produced such a fantastic and enjoyable reunion: We thank our Canadian-Kriegie friends for their magnificent effort!



ANNUAL DINNER

Last year's Annual Dinner was held at Lord's Banqueting Centre on Saturday, 16th November. Over 100 people attended and they all appeared to enjoy themselves; we were particularly pleased to have the opportunity of welcoming Dan and Joyce London on a visit from Australia. An interesting feature was the number of "children" who accompanied their ageing — or aged — parents, it was good to see them there — I hope they were not too bored, they did not appear to be.

We held our usual raffle and through the generosity of members we had 39 prizes on offer, some from people who were not able to be present. The raffle raised £150, a welcome addition to Association funds. Thanks again to the prize donors and to all who bought raffle ticket.

Some members have asked why we continue to hold the Association's annual dinner. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing some of the reasons why the Committee endorse the regular use of this venue.

After the Dinner in 1977, held at the RAF Club, it was decided that we had outgrown the club's capacity — they can only cater for up to about 90 people in comfort. Therefore in 1978 we had a dinner at the Gunner Restaurant in Cannon Street and then, in 1979, the late Ken Bowden got us an introduction to Lord's. Those of you who remember Ken would probably want to preserve the link in memory of such a highly regarded member of the Association.

At Lord's we have the use of a Dining Room which can seat 300 and an adjacent Ballroom which we use as a Lounge, also accommodating 300, plus our own Bar. If members ever wanted it, the Committee could very conveniently arrange a Dinner Dance at Lord's — we should need a minimum of 200 in attendance to make it worthwhile!

Lord's charges are very reasonable — frankly less than the RAF Club for similar meals. Last November we were charged £12-70 per head for, I believe, an excellent three course meal with coffee. We did choose to have a flower arrangement on the tables; these cost £3 each — they later became extra raffle prizes.

Finally, there is free reserved parking space for over 100 cars — a very significant consideration near the centre of London.

I really believe this venue has a lot to offer and I would be very sorry to lose our reservation at Lord's. However, if it became apparent that a majority of members would prefer a change, obviously the Committee would respect their wishes. To those who have not been I would say come and see for yourselves. I have provisionally booked this year's Dinner for SATURDAY, 15th NOVEMBER. AT LORD'S.

Batch

RECCO REPORT

by Cal Younger

ROY CHILD is surprised by the immediate success of his "A Wartime Log" which he published at his own expense. A facsimile of the original, it seems to have touched many nostalgic chords and also to have interested the younger generation. He has had many letters from people in the 25-35 age group. From down under he had an order for no less than twenty copies of the book and his stock is now down to ninety.

On my recent visit to Australia I saw another Wartime Log, that of BILL FORDYCE, now Director of the Lord Mayor's Fund in Melbourne. For many years Bill was an airline pilot. A Commercial artist before the war, he always signed his work with a figure 4 and a dice. At Stalg Luft III he did many brilliant caricatures of fellow officers. The original drawings were taken out of the camp, for safety's sake, by a repatriate. Bill never heard from the man again, but a few months ago his drawings arrived in the post. There was no message with them, no indication of who had had them or where they had been during forty odd years. But they were in perfect condition.

Dee and I stayed with RON and MARY DAMMAN at their lovely home right on the harbour at Paradise Point on the Gold Coast of Southern Queensland. Their boat is moored to their own jetty just yards from their back door. Ron is busy arranging a Kriegie reunion at Surfers Paradise in October of this year. It will be part of a big all-p.o.w. reunion organised by the Ex-P.O.W.'s Association of Australia. This will take place from 12th to 19th October. Ron's contribution will be a Special Dinner on 13th October. The cost will be Aus \$25 (£12.50 approx). It is hardly likely that any U.K. members will want to travel to Australia especially for the occasion, but there may be some who plan to visit Australia about that time and would like to attend the dinner. It should be noted that Queensland has many attractions, not least the Great Barrier Reef, and Ron would be happy to help you with holiday plans. If there is any possibility of your attending Ron's dinner, please get in touch with me.

While we were staying with Ron he drove us south to Tweed Heads for a barbecue lunch with GODFREY LODER. Godfrey has aged little in appearance or spirit but he no longer knits his headgear, nor does he bath by plunging into snow drifts, probably only because there are none.

In Melbourne we saw quite a bit of DAVE WARDILL and GEORGE KIRK. Dave is semi-retired but remains a consultant to a firm of stockbrokers. George, whose health is nondescript, retired some years ago.

Another visitor to Australia last year was BILL GOODMAN who, incidentally, attended his first reunion this year, though he has been a member for some years. Bill retired as a Police Superintendent in Manchester five years or so ago following a couple of heart attacks. As a young copper he was on his best late one night when he heard raucous singing and saw "a stocky figure weaving its way, dodging imaginary flak and with bottle clutched in paw." Bill took out his notebook and licked his pencil. But the roisterer turned out to be the late, much missed, Tubby Dixon, so they shared the contents of the bottle and each went happily on his way.

Bill's Australia visit resulted from 7 Squadron's anniversary reunion. Several Aussies turned up including Betty Earney, widow of Ted Earney, the observer in Bill's crew. Ted was one of those caught in the Great Escape tunnel. It was Betty who persuaded Bill to make the trip and in the end he spent six months of last year out there. An advertisement in "Barbed Wire and Bamboo" brought several replies. He called on RON (Buck) BUCHANAN at Bowen in Queensland where Buck is still running his transport business.

He also met KEN GAULTON who retired as a statistician with Shell and is now running "a few head inland as a sideline". Ken also is a Queenslander. Further down the coast GODFREY LODER made him welcome and ALAN SCANLAN travelled from Newcastle to Sydney to see him. Alan, also retired, has a part-time job servicing American Express outlets. In Sydney Bill marched on Anzac Day with the Pathfinders and there met ERROL GREEN, like Bill a 7 Squadron man. They had not met since Errol's commission came through at Sagan and resulted in his elevation to a "higher place".

Bill is a boat enthusiast and when he moored at Great Yarmouth he encountered PETER BUTTIGIEG who has a small sailing boat. Peter was planning a trip through Europe this summer. He intended to sail by way of canals and rivers to the Mediterranean and to return by sea. Unhappily he recently broke a bone or two and the trip is off.

In the mountain of mail awaiting me on my return from Australia was a letter from J.K. WATSON who lives in Quebec. A few years ago Jake saw my "No Flight from the Cage" listed in a bibliography. A long search for a copy ended when he inserted an advertisement in the Royal Canadian Legion Magazine and had replies from "Wilkie" Wanless, Toby Tobias and Percy Venn. Percy was not a kriegie but rated a mention in "No Flight" as he was the first British soldier to enter Staglag 357 Fallingbomel at the liberation. His Regiment was the 8th Kings Royal Irish Hussars. Originally from Taunton, he now lives in Cornwall, Ontario. Percy had a copy but there were pages missing. Jake borrowed Wilkie's copy and Percy was able to photocopy the missing pages. Toby Tobias rang Jake, who then joined the Canadian Association and attended his first ex-Kriegie reunion, the Calgary "do" last year. With his wife Lynne, Jake has recently visited South Africa and is now thinking of a trip to Australia and New Zealand. Canada and Canadians have a special place in this issue as they have in our hearts.

If there was one man who seemed to epitomise the Canadian character it was RED GORDON. James Red Gordon, to give him his proper but unfamiliar names, died of cancer in November at the age of 69. It was not his first battle with cancer. Five years before he had had a lung removed, but Red's spirit was never diminished. Many of us remember his light hearted banter with Roy Castle (when Red came off worst) during Vic's concert in Oxford in 1982. In Germany his good humour enlightened many a dreary day and not just for those close to him, for Red knew everyone and everyone knew him. When the Germans decided to give the Canadians preferential treatment, on the grounds that German prisoners were treated better in Canada than elsewhere but really to sow seeds of dissension in the camp, Red took the lead in telling the Germans, not as politely as he might have done, what they could do with their preferential treatment.

Shot down and captured in North Africa in August 1941, Red escaped four times, twice by jumping from trains. On the first occasion he had been a prisoner only a fortnight and was being transported to Stalag VIII B from which he cut his way through the wire. His most sensational escape was from Heydekrug. With another kriegie he stripped to swim the river near the camp and found himself in the middle of a schoolgirls' picnic. Soon the dogs were sent in pursuit. Writing of his experiences a few years ago, Red said, "It was late summer, but with those dogs at my heels I felt like little Eva going across the ice from slavery".

A truly charismatic personality, a man of charm and humour, tough-willed and sometimes stubborn, but always considerate of others, Red Gordon will be sorely missed.

News has just been received of the death of another colourful Canadian, Perry Magwood. A former President of the Canadian Association, Perry attended our UK Reunions and we were looking forward to his lively presence at Southampton.

Inevitably we have suffered casualties too. Sometimes, for all kinds of reasons, we do not hear of them immediately. Allan Fotheringham, for instance, died as long ago as August 1984. Bereaved wives do not always make advice to us their first priority, particularly if they live too far away to have been much involved in the Association. More often than not, it is another old kriegie who lets us know. Our Women's Liaison group respond sensitively and helpfully, as many moving letters from the widows of members testify. So do contact us if you learn that an old kriegie friend has died, whether or not he belonged to the Association.

Al Wright was never a member but many will remember his courage as his legs, injured when he baled out, wasted away. A former Welsh boxing champion, Al refereed bouts at Sagan, though even then he had to use sticks. In the end he lost both his legs but down at Newquay "Dickie" Whittingham saw to it that Al got to his local for a pint. It was Dickie who informed us of Al's death a few months ago.

Paul Hilton attended the funeral of Robin Readhead at Kelsale Church near Saxmundham. A former member, Robin died in March.

We did not learn of the death of J.R. Laborne, which occurred on 29th June 1985, until after the last Kriegie went to press. On 16th August Arthur Boyle died and in September we lost Joe Krawiec on 6th and Sid Whitlock on 25th. Both Joe and Sid were members of long standing. Joe was never without his camera at any kriegie function and he made a significant contribution to our photographic records. He worked very hard for Polish causes, among them a Katyn memorial and "Parcels for Poland". In October Lawrence Reavell Carter died. A regular RAF officer, well known throughout the service, he was a charismatic figure at Sagan. Raymond Wilson died in November and R.W. (Benny) Bence on Christmas Day. In February this year we lost E.W. Kennedy and on 10th April Leslie Hodges. We extend our deepest sympathy to all their loved ones.

Two rather lonely members also died recently. William Wood was brought to our notice some time ago by SSFA's welfare officer in Doncaster. At that time he was living the



Red Gordon in his heyday — Toronto 1955

life of a recluse in a hut near Doncaster. We were able to help him and he became a member of the Association. Of this, we are told, he was extremely proud. Geoff Berger, who suffered appalling ill health for some years, lived alone in a flat in Brighton. He managed to reach the 'phone when he had a severe heart attack and was taken to the Royal Sussex Hospital where our Secretary, John O'Reilly, visited him. Geoff was discharged to a nursing home but did not long survive. We are grateful to local members who visited him from time to time during his last two or three years.

We have just heard from George Atkinson that Peter Broadbent off Pulborough, Sussex, died on 14 July. Another sadness is the death of Dave Young, some month ago. Dave, who was not a member, will be remembered as John Bristow's partner in radio magic at Sagan, Heydekrug and Fallingbowl.

When DOUG FRY and his wife were visiting their daughter and grand-daughter in New Zealand recently, they were surprised to learn from Jack Garrett that Kay Clarke, widow of Vic Clarke who died soon after the war, lived in New Zealand. Kay emigrated with blind daughter, Anne, many years ago and the Kiwis have never let them forget that they are among friends. Despite her handicap, Anne has had a brilliant academic career and still uses a braille typewriter presented by Vic's friends in 1950. Kay visited the Frys and, Doug says, they had a splendid day. Vic was the K Lager leader at Heydekrug and there, and later at Stalag Luft 4, he earned lasting admiration and affection.

In the last issue of *The Kriege* we mentioned that JACK GARRETT had had to undergo surgery and had been prevented from attending the Calgary Reunion. Jack and Cath are now touring Canada and America. Except for Calgary they are carrying out the itinerary originally planned. It is good to know that the indefatigable Jack is in fine form again.

It takes all sorts to make a world, it is said. Liquorice All Sorts must not make a world but they made the day for Doug Smallbone when his determined search for his crew culminated in the appearance of all seven on the Michael Aspel TV show.

On their 38th op, the Halifax crew from 10 Squadron based at Melbourne, Yorkshire, were shot down by a nightfighter on 12th August 1944. Their target was Brunswick but they had barely crossed the German coast when they were ambushed. The whole crew baled out safely and for them the war was over.

The skipper, Jack Saynor, and Doug (navigator) went to the East Compound of Stalag Luft 3, Stan Jackson to Bellaria, "Jimmy" James to Barth and S. "Joek" Milton, "Joe" Brown and Maurice Gilbert to Stalag Luft 7, Bankau. Doug and Jack Saynor, both members of the Association, have never lost touch, but the rest of the crew had scattered. The formation of 10 Squadron Association a couple of years ago evoked nostalgia, to which many of us are beginning to succumb, and so Doug embarked upon his search.

Mention of Maurice Gilbert in the *Air Crew Association Magazine* set the wires humming and he was soon found. Maurice knew that Joe Brown had worked for Bassetts, the confectioners, Doug's wife Molly, has a penchant for Liquorice Allsorts; a packet was purchased and yielded Bassetts' address. It transpired that Joe had left Bassetts' employ over twenty years ago, but the personnel manager happened to know where he was and Joe was soon on the phone to Doug.

Jack Saynor knew that Stan Jackson had stayed in the RAF. A letter sent care of RAF Records reached Stan. Doug recalled that "Jimmy" James was in some way connected with the Hergest Croft Gardens at Kingston in Herefordshire. A visit to the local reference library produced the address and the owner, a Mr. Banks, remembered Jimmy's father, once head gardener. He had Jimmy's address. Jack Milton was found by the simple means of ringing all the J. Miltons in the Aberdeen telephone directory. All seven of the crew were now in touch and they arranged to meet with their wives at the No. 10 Squadron Association Reunion at the beginning of May.

"How did it go?" Joe Brown's daughter asked afterwards. "It was just as though they were returning from leave", her mother answered, and that, Doug thinks, says it all.

CAN YOU HELP

This is quite a long shot.

Derek Waterman (Ex 158 Squadron but not a kriegie) has written on behalf of Earl Koster, a Canadian shot down in a Lancaster in April 1945. Only one other member of the crew survived, James Chadwick. Earl is trying to trace him. The official list of P.O.W.'s in German hands was made up to 31st March 1945, so neither Koster nor Chadwick is included. We do not know where they spent their brief kriegie lives. Yet, someone may know James Chadwick. If anyone has any idea of his present whereabouts Derek Waterman would be glad to hear from him. His address is 2 Little Walden Hill, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2DJ.

Another even longer shot. Belgian Theo Durrieux is a collector of correspondence from P.O.W. camps. What interests him is the *Geprüft* and *Passed* stamps. Probably many of you have had requests from him, though how he obtains names and addresses is a mystery. It is unlikely that anyone who has kept kriegie correspondence all these years would want to part with it now but if you are clearing out your loft and in magnanimous mood you could pladden Theo's heart by sending him gepuift letters. Just in case, his address is: 84 Rue H Docquere, B4370, Wareme, Belgium.

GIFT OF THE GAB

Some of us have it and others have not. Some use it for endless trivialities, others effortlessly express thoughts in language to which it is a pleasure and an education to listen. Alan Bryett put his gift to good purpose. A former Barclays Bank manager and inspector, Alan became on retirement an Institute of Bankers consultant. For many years he lectured at Barclays Management Training Centre and he has given over 500 lectures to Local Centres of the Institute.

His repertoire extends far beyond banking and one of the subjects on his list is "The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III". He has given lectures to all manner of organisations including Rotary Clubs, Round Tables, Women's Institutes and the Air Crew Association, to name but a few. Alan was one of those fortunate people who was still in the tunnel when the exit was discovered. His talk, lasting an hour, covers all aspects of the Great Escape. What he had not experienced himself he researched thoroughly.

Ken Bowden used sometimes to lecture on kriegie life and any fees he received he made over to the Association. Alan has made the same generous offer, and has already made a handsome donation to our funds. In the past he has lectured for the R.A.F. Escaping Society and received donations on their behalf. He will do the same for us. Do you know of any organisations which would like a first class speaker to tell them about the Great Escape? If you do, please contact Alan E. Bryett, 6 Alpine Copse, Bromley, Kent BRa 2AW (Tel. 01 467 6775) By doing so you will give our own funds a boost.

Warm Occasion on a Cold Night

Seventy-six brave souls turned out on a raw night for the AGM and Annual Reunion on Saturday, 1st March. Numbers were down by about twenty on average attendances, but that was not at all bad considering the weather, which deterred many who live some distance from London. Reminders went out unavoidably late, too, which may have reduced the turnout, though details of the occasion were advised by Batch in September last year.

A high proportion of those attending were new members, which was encouraging, and we are pleased to say that the roll overall continues to grow. President Dixie Deans was, unhappily, not well enough to attend but his presence was felt, as it always is, none the less.

Vice President and Chairman, Charles Clarke, presiding, reviewed the Association's activities for the year and outlined plans for the International Reunion in Southampton next year. Tribute was paid to the Canadian organisers of the Calgary Reunion. There was no doubt that it was one of the best of the big reunions yet.

Treasurer Doug Endors reported a healthy financial position but some pertinent questions were asked about investment income, which could be improved upon and, in fact, now has been. (Before the next AGM a detailed analysis of the financial affairs of the Association and its two charitable funds will be sent out so that all members, and not just those who turn up to the AGM, are completely in the picture.)

Officers in post were re-elected and the Committee voted back en bloc, with the addition of John Banfield who has served the Association very well in his quiet way. Including the President and Officers, the Committee now numbers 20, not counting our auditor, Bill Bloxham, who takes the trouble to travel from West Wittering to attend meetings.

Another Book for Collectors

Roger Peacock acquired — and presented to an ATC unit — a Canadian publication, *In the Clutch of Circumstances, Experiences of Canadian Prisoners of War*. The book comes from CAPPS Press, Victoria, British Columbia and is edited by Tony Strachan. There are contributions by Don Morrison and Ray Silver but the most extraordinary stories are those of two women in Japanese hands — Gwen Dopson's 'A Woman in Shanghai' and Muriel Garner's 'Letters of Internment' written to Gwen Dopson. The fact that Muriel was the former wife of Gwen's husband did not prevent the two ladies from becoming fast friends. Both were English — the Canadian domicile came later — and their stories are as inspiring as they are moving. Their sustained bravery is humbling. There are probably not too many copies of the book in this country but no doubt we could obtain them if anyone is interested.

Generous Canadians

The Canadians' generosity is sometimes breathtaking. Their international reunion was well supported by Canadian companies and the upshot was a handsome surplus. They shared their good fortune; we received a cheque for no less than £3,000 and the Kiwis NZ \$3,000. This splendid gift provides us with working capital for the Southampton Reunion in 1987, to which many of our Canadian friends are expected.

This may seem a lot but it does ensure a good turnout at the monthly meetings — usually ten or twelve. It is worth mentioning that regular attenders include Graham Hall from Fordingbridge, Neville Northover from Bristol, Dave Gamble from Nottingham, Dave Bernard from Princes Risborough and Banch Banchelder from Olney near Bedford. Several members make infrequent appearances because of ill-health, but we can still count on their sagacity and interest.

Supper followed the AGM and the RAF Club provided a good hot meal with generous proportions, just right for a cold night and a good foundation for the conversational pints which followed. For the Committee perhaps the most rewarding aspect was the delight of new members rediscovering old friends.

The contribution of Committee wives, especially those of the Officers, to the well-being of the Association is immeasurable. It is not just a matter of support and encouragement, which each gives unstintingly, but of sheer hard work — stuffing hundreds of envelopes, dispensing hospitality at air shows, selling programmes at concerts, dealing with registration at reunions, all done quietly and with no fuss.

Betty Banchelder has made Batch's job possible and for many years has been a very part of our foundation. At the Hendon dinner she was her usual sparkling self and very concerned to see that Batch, with his dicky heart, did not overdo things. Betty had not been well but did not realise that, a day or so earlier, she had had a serious heart attack. She was soon to have another and now, courageously, she has decided on by-pass surgery. We feel sure that she will come through the operation just as bravely, and that Batch will soon have her working hand on Association affairs again.

Several members of the Committee are on the wobbly heart list. Banch himself, Frank Hunt, Alec Fuce and now Cyril Aynsley all have to watch how they go.

Have you signed up for Southampton?

Already nearly 400 people are likely starters for Southampton, over 300 from this country. The reunion promises to bring more old Kriegies together than ever before. The Committee are working hard with the co-operation of the University and the Tourist Board to put together an attractive programme. The details are not yet finalised but certainly Vic will be producing another of his famous concerts and Batch arranging a service in Winchester Cathedral. Batch has an unerring touch and anyone who attended the service at Oxford or the several services in St. Clement Danes will know that, for believer and unbeliever alike, it will be a moving experience.

There is likely to be a visit to an RAF station and a flying display; a garden party with the band of the Marines (who stunned us at Oxford) at Broadlands, home of the Mountbattens; a cruise to Portsmouth and a tour of the Isle of Wight. There are several other options, including a visit to Beaulieu and its motor museum.

Much remains to be settled and there may be changes but this is a fair indication of what you can expect. Come what may, the Reunion will end with a grand formal dinner.

So, again the question — have you signed up for Southampton?

A MOVING HISTORY LESSON

Recently a small grant was made from The Larry Slattery Memorial Fund to a County Primary School band in a small Cheshire mining village. The band has been in being for three years and children and parents run jumble sales and other events to raise money for instruments. Now the band raise funds for charities and give concerts for old people. They also play at major events such as the Liverpool Garden Festival. This summer they have been invited to tour the Isle of Man and will play in Peel Cathedral.

Few of the parents could afford to meet the cost and despite many fund-raising events, there was still a shortfall. Hence the donation from the Larry Fund. As always, we explained why the fund was established and an enlightened headmistress read our letter at "a very moving assembly" and the children, "to whom the 1939 War is just an historical fact, learned a lot from the discussion which followed. They decided that Larry Slattery's imprisonment was God's way of using his gifts in the very best way".



Some of the band

Merida goes to Texas

Merida is another recipient of a grant from the Larry Fund. A Whitshire girl aged 17, she is the daughter of a medical practitioner now dead and has studied singing for nearly five years. She hopes for an operatic career. American concert pianist, James Dick, has invited her to sing at the Roundtop (Texas) Festival in July. Founded and directed by Dick, the Festival offers talented young musicians first class tuition and some concert experience. Merida, too, gives concerts for charity and in Texas she will be presenting English music at concerts in aid of a local home for handicapped children. The Larry Fund is contributing towards her fare which was too much for her widowed mother. Merida hopes that her experience will benefit not only herself but also her school.

A Happy Evening at Hendon

So much of Britain's aviation history was made at Hendon that it was a great privilege for some of the Committee and other members of the Association to dine in the Officers' Mess, RAF Station, Hendon, on the evening of 9th May. Among our guests were the Station Commander, Wing Commander Bill Simpson and his charming wife, Wendy; our very good Air Crew Association friends, Danny and Cynthia Boon, Ron Goodwin, composer of our own Kriege March, and his wife Heather; Dennis and Elsie Roberts representing the Royal Star and Carter Home; and the Welfare Officer of the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society Squadron Leader Joe Coles and his wife Maureen.

Vic and Sylvia Gannon presented cheques, each of £1,250 to these two great service charities who benefitted, with our own Charitable Fund, from Vic's Barbican concert last year. The surplus on the concert account was an astonishing £4542.

Ron Goodwin was made an Honorary Member of the Association, joining that select band which includes the Duke of Edinburgh; and Air Commodore Charles Clarke presented an Association shield to Wing Commander Simpson for the Officers' Mess. Among members present Charles Griffin, accompanied by his wife Anne, was especially welcome. Charles carved the Association's logo in wood as our gift to our Canadian hosts in Calgary. It was an exquisite piece of craftsmanship.

RAF Hendon may not exist for much longer; the site is too valuable it seems. Most of us who attended the dinner had had some connection with the station and reminiscences were thick in the air. Hendon belonged to our era and it seems somehow that as our generation passes so, too do the places and things that were ours.

Man on the Move

Recently Dixie Deans lent me his inscribed copy of *The Untravelled World, A Memoir*, by Michael Adams. I wish I had found it earlier. Published by Quartet Books at £11.95 in 1984, this is a delightful book, worth reading as much for the felicitous use of language as for its fascinating content. It covers the period from Munich to Suez and draws extensively on diaries the author kept as Oxford undergraduate, kriegie, traveller and foreign correspondent (for the Manchester Guardian).

Mike's library in Germany was famous and he shared his love of books, through lectures, with many of us. My own reading took new directions as a result. I discover now that I owe less to Mike than to his very wise father, who had a very strong, but never overt, influence on his son's thinking. Though Mike devotes but a few pages to kriegie life, it had a tremendous impact on his later career.

We are promised a sequel and I look forward to it. Meanwhile beg, borrow or steal *The Untravelled World* if you can.

C.V.

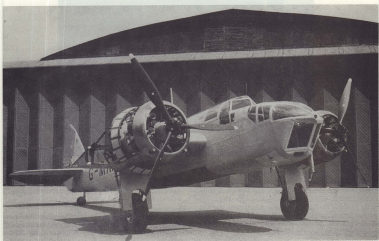


Photo by courtesy of FLYPAG

This Blenheim, obtained by Graham Warner from Canada, is being reassembled at Duxford. It will be the only air-borne Blenheim in the country and it had been planned that, on September 3rd, Roger Peacock and Phil Steele would fly in it to Wyton to report in - forty-six years late. The occasion will celebrate the first "top" of World War II and the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the prototype, "Britain First", but the Blenheim won't be there after all — it won't be finished in time. No doubt Roger and Phil will report back eventually.

History in the Making

In historical terms seventy years hardly counts. That is the age, of the Royal Air Force. Yet, saving perhaps the life of Christ, has there ever been so short a period in which so much history has been made? We have lived through all or most of those seventy years and we have all been connected with flying and with the RAF. In seventy years flying has progressed from the Sopwith Pup to spacecraft and the jumbo jet, the RAF from a tiny support force to the paramount arm of this country's defence.

The story of the RAF is a fascinating one and we all had a part in it. Now a Royal Air Force Historical Society has been formed and its inaugural meeting is to take place at the RAF Club at 6 p.m. on Monday, 20th October, 1986. Following the formal constitution of the Society, the meeting will be addressed by Professor R.V. Jones whose subject will be "The Intelligence War and the Royal Air Force".

It is planned to hold three lectures or seminars each year, two in London and one elsewhere in the country. They will have as their main objective "bringing together those involved in Royal Air Force activity in the past and those concerned now to learn more of its history". The Society will have official backing but will be independent and self-supporting, so a subscription of £10 per year will be asked of members.

Application forms for membership may be obtained from the Editor of *The Kite*, from our Secretary, or direct from the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Air Force Historical Society: Group Captain H Neubroch, OBE, FBIM, 19 Ivinghoe Road, Bushey Heath, Watford, WD2 3SW.

A MOVIE
Recently a small group
of us went to see the
movie 'The Long Walk Home'



John Hands leads the way

The National Connection

The anniversary of our liberation was particularly marked this year by the Dedication Parade and Service at Holy Trinity Church, Windsor on Sunday May 11th. Organised by the National Ex-Prisoners of War Association, this was the first national gathering of former prisoners of war from all services and all theatres of war, and delegates and contingents came from far and near.

The forests of banners were evidence of the wide appeal and, although the RAF were small in number, three of our members played key roles in the success of the day.

Vice-President Charles Clarke was on the saluting base and earlier read the second lesson during the Service of Dedication of the National Standard. John Hands from High Wycombe organised and arranged the refreshments after the activities, and behind all the event was the driving force and guiding hand of Vic Gammon, our Maestro-deviser of the Programme.

Goldfish President, Jim Bartt-Smith, and our Secretary, John O'Reilly, marched with the experience gained together on the Warriors Day Parade at Toronto during the 1980 reunion.

Granhall kept us in order when the band went round a corner, Graham off, and Alfie Fripp soldiered on, as ever open to an opportunity to enhance the day.

Maurice Batt

BEWARE OF YOUR PAST.

In the Christmas 1985 edition of "Intercom" (the Aircrew Association magazine) there was a report of last September's 4 Group Reunion in York which some of you may have read.

The writer referred to "a beautiful young lady from Brazil" — (I would not argue with that!) and her comments concerning the Service in the Minster on the Sunday morning.

I had the pleasure of talking with the lady before the Dinner on the Saturday evening and was fascinated to discover that originally she came from Heydekrug. Her father was then a very substantial landowner and farmer and although she was only a young girl at the time she knew quite a lot of detail of the Prison Camp. When the Russians advanced and we were evacuated, Lise and her family were also forced to move deeper into Germany. After a very difficult time, which continued after the war and included physical abuse, she eventually found her way to Brazil where she was able to build a new — and happier — life.

She was at the Reunion escorted by an Australian pilot, I think from 10 Squadron, who had met her in Brazil. He is still flying and had some very interesting stories to tell. The twist to the story is the when Lise learnt what I had been in Luft 6 she became very demonstrative, I was embraced and treated like a long lost brother — or something! Her escort understood but his Cobbers did not! I had a lot of explaining to do — I never realised that Aussies were so positive about their women!!

"Batch".

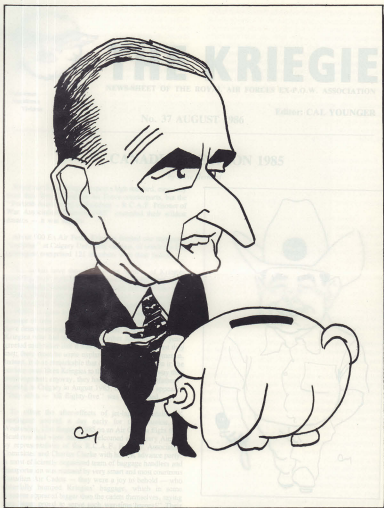
What's in Your Loft?

Granada TV are researching for a new TV series "PLANES AT WAR". If any of our members have photos, logs, material, e.g. makers' manuals, or stories that may be used as background material, please write in the first instance to:

Tony Wall — John Sealy
Arcan Productions
3-5 Soho Street
London W1

Any such material will be treated with respect and returned as directed.

Peter Skinner



"Come on folks! let's have your subs." says Doug Ensor

The National Connection

The writer story of our 10-minute newspaper is inspired this week by the Education Periodic and Journal in their Friday, March 5, 1964, issue. The issue is dedicated to the National Education Association of the United States, the first national gathering of 10,000 teachers and school administrators, and all teachers of war, and the first of its kind in a new format and style.

The theme of the week was the theme of the week, and the theme of the week was the theme of the week, and the theme of the week was the theme of the week.

Vice-President Charles Clark was on the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject.

Clark said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject.

Clark said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject, and he said that the subject was the subject.

REWARD ON

In the Chicago 1964 edition of the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

The writer referred to the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune, and the Chicago Tribune is the Chicago Tribune.

What's in Your Loft?

Chicago TV is now searching for a new TV series, "FLAMES AT WAR", if any of our readers have photos, tapes, or stories that may be used as background material, please write to the Chicago Tribune, 435 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60610.

Tom Wall - John Seely

Chicago Tribune

"Come on folks! let's have your subs." says Doug Enzor. (Enzor is a writer and producer who has been in the business for many years.)

Peter H. H. H.