



NEWSLETTER

Visit to deHavilland Museum in September

May Meeting

On 15th May 42 Members and friends sat down to an excellent Buffet Lunch provided by Stephanie and her staff. Drinks beforehand were free and then seated at six tables we were soon chatting and enjoying ourselves. After the meal Rod Finn ran the obligatory Raffle.

Considering the recent poor attendances at our meetings, it was encouraging to see the numbers attending, friends, relatives, widows all helped to bolster our numbers and you were all very welcome.

Our thanks to the staff at Greenacres

Our President and Chairman

We currently have our President and Chairman in hospital.

Geoff is in Bedford Hospital undergoing tests, and sends his regards to all.

Des is having a knee replacement and was due to be operated on on Monday 3rd June. We hope to see him up on his feet soon.

We hope to have updates on both by our June meeting on 19th June, rest assured they are both in good hands and I am sure Des will have the staff, in line and marching about looking after his every whim!

Visit to deHavilland Museum

We plan to visit the deHavilland Museum on the afternoon of Wednesday 18th September. This visit will be instead of our normal meeting, but we plan to meet at Greenacres at Noon for Lunch, before setting off for London Colney.

Full details will be in next month's Newsletter, but please put it in your diary now. There will be a charge for the tour of the Museum but again details will be in the next Newsletter.



The museum from the air



Remember 19th June 2019

More tales from Dennis Swains

Greenacres 1030 for 1100

Burma -The story of Sherry Scott Pt2

Most who meet Sherry are impressed by how she meets challenges, including various cultural differences, and how her ordinary sensibilities see her through. "She's not one of those vice-chairman or colonel's wives. She gets down to the nitty-gritty. She walks into every house barefooted to see my old soldiers there and their families. She sits down with them, holds their hands, comes out and walks barefooted in the village. She arrives by jeep, not a loaner jeep, but a jeep-taxi. There are about eight or 10 other people all hanging on to the jeep, and Sherry's there in between that crowd. She doesn't stand on any ceremony at all. She's absolutely marvellous. I'm from Burma, born in Burma, and hygiene is nil. How they cope with the hygiene—she and Phil (her current partner)—I do not know... Water is so scarce. You can't even wash up. You have to be careful. Don't drink the water. You even have to be careful when you're cleaning your teeth, but Sherry comes through absolutely, both she and Phil."

Sherry has travelled much of Burma, and her team has set up committees in various communities, and identified doctors that can help. But amid the practical work of setting up medical clinics, she remains sensitive to the need for old soldiers to trade stories. "Outside each clinic there is a little 'talking' house, and they have a sort of smouldering log in the middle. Then they have copious cups of different brew and they talk. They are incredible, these old men, absolutely incredible.... We have some amazing film of three old soldiers who lost their uniforms. They had uniforms made out of sack clothing which they kept over the years. And they were wearing this sacking uniform and just their medals (in 2005) when they placed a wreath for their fallen comrades to commemorate 60 years after the war."

Sherry is a pragmatic woman who had a job to do up-country. "We have funny sides," Sherry said. "When we come to a river, we need to wash. I asked my doctor how I was to do this and she said, 'Well, you tie the longy, which is sort of a (Burmese) skirt, you tie it around your chest and then you wade into the water with your soap.' Well, I tie it and then wade into the river. The longy gets wet and falls off. They all had to rush (into the river), not to save me, but to save the soap because it was everybody's soap. So the first thing you need to do is tie a tight knot on your longy...."

"We were in the jungle. We were so far from civilization. When you go to these places you think, well I'm going to manage without a bathroom for a start. I'm going to manage without a mattress, because of course there are no beds, there are no rooms, but there are wells. So we have lovely fresh well water, fresh vegetables. We dine on

things like rat, which isn't as bad as it sounds, because they're vegetarian rats. They're a bit like chicken."

Overall, Sherry and her team were making progress in Burma until Cyclone Nargis hit in May 2008. It was the worst natural disaster in the country's history, killing between 135,000 and 146,000 people. Winds, which exceeded 190 kilometres per hour, smashed through Rangoon and devastated large parts of the Irrawaddy River delta. Compounding the disaster was the Myanmar junta's resistance of outside humanitarian aid. Indeed, the stalling and lack of relief efforts made it impossible to estimate the number who died in the aftermath. Ten days after the cyclone, China was hit by a massive earthquake and the world staggered trying to respond to two disasters. "We dine on things like rat, which isn't as bad as it sounds, because they're vegetarian rats. They're a bit like chicken."

Sherry proved the exception to the rule. "We were there in May. We set off three days after the cyclone, so we were there four days afterwards. It was amazing that we got a visa." The Controller Finance of the RCEL, gave her £42,000 to take with her for the welfare of Commonwealth veteran soldiers that were affected by the cyclone...tablets were donated to her as were a number of water purification kits. She did a fantastic job in getting them (the supplies) all together and also persuading Thai Air to fly a significant amount of freight into Rangoon for free. She took all this stuff plus all the money."

The Benevolent Secretary of The Burma Star Association, Rowena Patrick, said the association was happy to help. "We gave an additional 25,000 pounds towards the problems for our veterans in Burma.... We are all trying to support her as much as we possibly can, because she does such wonderful work." The Burma Star Association was formed in 1951, and it too is dedicated to promoting comradeship and helping veterans from all over the Commonwealth who fought in the bitter campaign. Sherry and her team of nine also approached friends, family and community organizations for contributions of water purification, rehydration and diarrhea tablets. "We booked our flight through Thai Air, and I asked them for support because I said, 'You know we're going into Burma, and we need to take excess luggage.' And they said, 'What sort?' I said, 'Well, cancer research has given us two microscopes. The Oasis is a company that makes water tablets for purifying the water, and they have given us a million. We've got rehydration tablets, we have diarrhea tablets, and we have clothing.' And they said, 'OK, unlimited. This is the first time we've ever given unlimited.'" (Cont'd on P3)

(Burma Cont'd)

"It was clearly very dangerous for them to go. It was dangerous for Phil and Sherry, but how can I tell them don't go? Phil Johnson, has travelled to Burma with her four times and was with her that day.. "We got to Heathrow where we needed five porters with big long trolleys.... (We flew) Thai Air from Heathrow to Bangkok, Bangkok to Burma, and actually the flight into Burma was nearly deserted. When we got to the airport we were very recognizable because we are completely wrong. I am totally the wrong colour, and Phil is too tall. They just asked us one question, which was, 'Are the microscopes staying in Burma?' We said, 'Yes.' Then they looked the other way, and we were waved through."

Among Sherry's extraordinary luggage were invitations to the upcoming Lambeth Palace Conference in London., a gathering of Anglican bishops and part of its purpose is to encourage discussion on the issues of the day and express united Anglican opinions. The invitations in Sherry's luggage were going to be hand delivered to the Burmese bishops and archbishops in Rangoon. She recalled the conversation she had with them. "Look, we need to go up the Irrawaddy. We need to find our soldiers, and they said there was no point in us going at all, because what purpose would there be?" Even with her assurances the leaders insisted the trip was pointless without the necessary supplies. She would need purification tablets, clothing and transportation to bring out the injured and distressed. Even though she told them she had all those things, they didn't seem to hear and answered that even if she did manage to get to the injured she would need cars and petrol to bring them from the river to safety. Again, she assured them she could do it. Suddenly, the Archbishop stopped talking. With a smile, Sherry recalled the words that followed. "He said, 'Are we listening to you? Are you really saying you have these things?' I said, 'You know if I say I'm doing something I will do it.' And he said, 'How many tablets do you have?' I said, 'More than a million.' He then said it would be very dangerous for them, and very dangerous for us." Sherry made another appeal to the young vicars and priests. "I told them that 'I've challenged you before. I challenge you again. Get me up the Irrawaddy.'" They did!

Sherry described coming upon a large lump as they were navigating up the river. It was so large that a boat couldn't pass and it turned out to be a bloated water buffalo. "What we needed to do was have an oar and push it out of the way. As I pushed it out of the way a human heel came up. You just wanted to save them, but what could we do. We could do nothing

there. We've got to carry on, as our patron John Slim always says to me, 'Concentrate on the living.' So that's what we did. "And we opened this route and were able, on the first day, bring 60 people back. The priests had kept saying, 'Why such a big boat?' I said, 'You can't leave them there. When we get there what are we going to do? We can't get food because there's no cooking means. We can give them water because they're dehydrated. But what we really need to do is bring them out.'"

Closest to Sherry's heart were the Second World War veterans. She was desperate to find her old soldiers, but they only found 10 in the wake of the cyclone. It is always the old and young who are most vulnerable in the floods. She carried a toy car given to her by her grandson who wished that it go to a child of three. Unfortunately, Sherry found no toddlers on her journey up the Irrawaddy. "The babies were strapped to their mother, but by the time you're three if a tidal wave comes you stand no chance."

After landing at Heathrow, Sherry went straight to Buckingham Palace to give an immediate report in front of the Duke of Edinburgh and all the Commonwealth members. It was amazing, she was absolutely knackered.... She has a real and genuine commitment to her husband's legacy to care for the soldiers in Burma that he once commanded. It has now expanded. It started off as that, but she is now not just helping old veterans, but has set up through additional fundraising, nothing to do with our money, medical clinics. She has helped with a hydroelectric project and she helps with children. In fact, I think there are a couple of medical clinics actually named after her...because of her numerous visits there she is aware of the dreadful situation, the suffering.... She goes to very remote places and Burma is a very tough country to move around in and live in. She does it and remarkably. She is obviously a very tough and committed lady."

Sherry discounts any comments regarding her personal safety. She shakes her head at the idea of risk. "I come out. I leave them (the veterans) with the dangers." Sherry is everything you first imagine her to be, elegant, articulate and every inch the lady, and she is much more. She is a determined philanthropist who remains devoted to her husband's legacy, and through that resolve has found the ways and means to be of practical help to the welfare of the Burma veterans.

Ed: *It was a pleasure to listen to her excellent presentation, certainly very moving*

**Assembling the Mighty Eighth -
by: Leslie A. Lennox Lt./Col. USAF(ret)**



The combined strength of the fighters and bombers brought the total number of aircraft participating in a mission to approximately two thousand.

A major problem that presented itself, on each mission, was that the bomber stream was getting too stretched out. It was not uncommon for the headlines in stateside newspapers--in trying to show the strength of our Air Force--to state that the first Group of bombers was bombing Berlin, while the last Group was still over the English Channel. It made great headlines but was a very undesirable situation. It meant that the Groups were out of position, and not keeping the proper separation. Furthermore, it was almost impossible for them to catch up and get back into the desired formation. This made the entire bomber stream more vulnerable to fighter attacks.

Finally, our planners figured out what we were doing wrong. When the first Group departed the coast out fix, it started its climb to what would be the bombing altitude. Then, as each succeeding Group departed that fix, it, too, would start climbing. The problem with this procedure was that, as soon as the first Group started its climb, its true airspeed would start to increase, and it would encounter different wind velocities. Now it would start to pull away from the Group in back of it, and the "stretchout" of the bomber stream would begin. By the time the last Group had reached the coast out, to start its climb, the first Group would be leveled off, with a true airspeed approaching 250 miles per hour, and the bomber stream would be really stretching out.

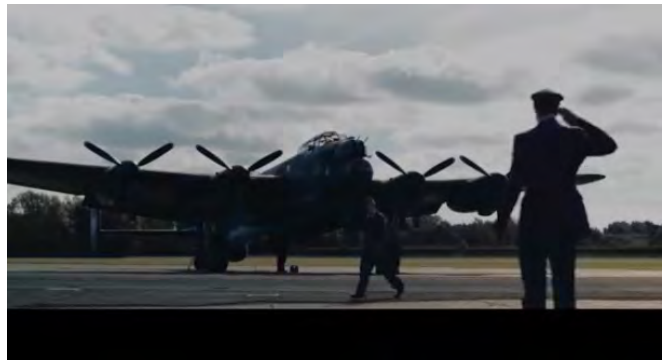
The solution to this problem that had been frustrating the Bomber crews for so long was pretty simple. We would no longer start climbing at the coast out, but instead, at a designated time, all Groups would start climbing, irrespective of position. This meant that we all would have similar true airspeeds and would be influenced by the same winds aloft. That took care of the problem. It was still possible for a Group to be out of position, because of poor timing, but the entire bomber stream wouldn't get all stretched out.

When you consider the way our Air Traffic Control system operates today, and all the facilities at their disposal to guide each individual airplane through the sky to ensure its safety, it's almost unbelievable that we were able to do what we did. To think of launching hundreds of airplanes, in a small airspace, many times in total darkness, loaded with bombs, with complete radio silence, and no control from the ground, and do it successfully day after day, with young air crews, with minimum experience, is absolutely mind boggling.

The accomplishments of the Eighth Air Force have been and will be reviewed by historians from World War II on. There never will be another air armada to compare to it. I feel confident that they will never cease to be amazed by our ability to assemble hundreds of heavy Bombers, under the conditions we were confronting, into the devastating strike force we now fondly refer to as, "The Mighty Eighth."

Lancaster Skies - New Film

The trailer has been released for the film 'Lancaster Skies'. From what little is known a former Spitfire pilot is given a Captains post on a Lancaster Squadron. There appear to be quite a lot of WAAF's in the trailer so it may not be all blood and thunder but keep your eye out for it's release but look on U Tube for the trailer.



Why the B-52 bomber will fly for 100 years

The US Air Force just can't let go of the B-52. In the world of heavy bombers, none has prevailed as long as the B-52 Stratofortress. The Cold Warrior joined the U.S. arsenal in 1954, eventually becoming part of a nuclear triad that, along with strategic missiles and submarines, was aimed at giving the Soviet Union pause. After the Berlin Wall fell, it slowly became an aerial jack-of-all-trades. With its long range, minimal operating cost and ability to handle a wider array of weapons than any other aircraft, it just didn't make sense to get rid of it.

Under the Air Force's current bomber plans, the B-52 will fly until 2050 — just shy of its 100th birthday. While this prospective centenary has been cause for some breathless coverage, little has been said about how a complex piece of machinery built during the Korean War is still useful in 2018, let alone 2050. What is the B-52's secret?

That secret is flexibility. Boeing Co. produced more than 740 B-52s since the first one rolled out. It's had many nicknames — the most apt at this moment being "Stratosaurus." Like any other well-regarded employee who manages to survive, and even thrive, in a constantly changing organisation, the B-52 has always found an important role.

Originally deployed as a long-range, high-altitude nuclear bomber, it became a carpet-bombing specialist in Vietnam, a fixture in the skies over Iraq during the first Gulf War and, shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, a fearsome sight above the mountains of eastern Afghanistan.

These days, it's routinely used as air support for U.S. ground troops in the Middle East, often deploying precision-guided missiles. Though retrofitted repeatedly over the decades to meet its ever-changing mandate, the B-52 retains its original mission: delivering nuclear weapons to target. Last month, the Pentagon deployed six B-52s to Guam, along with three B-2 stealth bombers, amid heightened tensions with North Korea. The B-52 is the only heavy bomber in the U.S. fleet that can carry both conventional and thermonuclear bombs.

The average age of the 75 B-52s currently in service is 55 years old — as in, they first took flight when President John F. Kennedy occupied the Oval Office. Compared with modern aircraft, the B-52 is neither particularly fast nor stealthy. But that doesn't really matter, given its current uses. "We have few adversaries that can challenge our air superiority," said George Ferguson, a senior aerospace and defence analyst with Bloomberg

Intelligence. "So a lot of B-52s work as the large ordnance carriers, with no stealth or speed characteristics." Flying the B-52 for almost a century makes sense because of its "total cost perspectives," plus its mission capability, supply and maintenance needs relative to flying hours, the Air Force said in a Feb. 12 statement.

At the pricier end of the spectrum, the Pentagon is budgeting almost \$17 billion over the next five years to develop the new B-21 Raider from Northrop Grumman Corp., which will replace the current fleet of B-1B Lancer and B-2 Spirit bombers. The B-21, which may fly as a "crew-optional" aircraft, is expected to join the Air Force fleet in the mid-2020s. The Pentagon plans to buy at least 100 B-21s, spending about \$97 billion.

Backing it up will be the Stratosaurus. At the Cold War's peak in the 1960s, the Strategic Air Command kept as many as a dozen nuclear-armed B-52s aloft continuously to provide an airborne deterrent against the Soviet Union. Operation Chrome Dome, as the aerial mission was dubbed, aimed to assure the U.S. a strike capability even if a Soviet nuclear attack were to disable ground-based American missiles. The advent of nuclear missile-armed submarines diminished the importance of the other legs of the triad, but the B-52 endured. The heavy bomber also played a role in President Richard Nixon's "madman theory" to persuade the Russians that he was irrational and unstable, willing to launch a nuclear war to force peace talks to end the Vietnam conflict. In October 1969, Nixon dispatched 18 B-52s toward Russia, where they flew for three days, poking at Soviet air defences in an exercise dubbed Giant Lance.

Now, in addition to the plans for its extended lifespan, the military has announced yet another bit of elective surgery for the ancient planes, currently based at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. The Air Force will seek funds to replace the engines on its 75 B-52s, each of which has eight Pratt & Whitney power plants. Replacing all eight engines on all 75 planes is likely to cost several billion dollars, Ferguson said.

The decisions were detailed recently as part of the Trump administration's budget request to Congress. The 1980s-era supersonic B-1 and the radar-evading B-2 fielded a decade later will be phased out gradually as new B-21s enter service, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said. The B-21 will offer the U.S. the ability to strike with speed and stealth, "but once we own the skies, the B-52 can drop ordnance better than most others," Ferguson said. "And hey," she added, "it's paid for."

What happens if a B52 is lost or damaged beyond repair?

In 2016 for the very first time, a Boeing B-52 Stratofortress was moved from the boneyard back into the sky again. The veteran bomber took off from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona for the first time following its restoration. Technicians at the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, otherwise known as AMARG, pulled the BUFF from the massive storage yard beside Davis-Monthan during 2014 to replace a damaged aircraft in the active fleet which the Air Force deemed beyond economic repair.

The newly restored Stratofortress, serial number 61-0007, had been in 1000-level storage at AMARG alongside twelve other B-52Hs, far away from the ragged, chopped up Stratofortress carcasses on the other side of the boneyard. Unlike other 1000-level aircraft, or inviolate storage where an airframe is made safe and preserved without losing any parts to salvage, these bombers are looked after in a far more detailed and careful fashion at AMARG. Each Stratofortress in this small group has its own plane captain at the base whose primary responsibility is to monitor its health regularly and quickly intercede when maintenance is necessary. This practice has clearly shown it's worth, judging by the mere months it took to return the aircraft to flight following years of storage.

Nicknamed "Ghost Rider", '007 last served with the 5th Bomb Wing from Minot AFB before going into storage in the mid-2000s. The AMARG team selected her for regeneration because, of the thirteen B-52Hs in storage, she was in the best condition and had the lowest airframe hours. In fact she is in such good shape that members of her maintenance team felt 'Ghost Rider' was better off than several active airframes currently serving.

'Ghost Rider' was present at AMARG in March, 2014 when WarbirdsNews paid the facility a visit, and we have included an image above to show what she looked like then. Technicians from the 309th alongside those from Tinker AFB (responsible for B-52 depot-level maintenance) swiftly returned the bomber back into flying trim. She departed Davis-Monthan yesterday for Barksdale AFB near Bossier City, Louisiana. Colonel Keith Schultz, CO of the 307th Operations Group, 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB commanded the flight. He has been flying BUFFs since 1980, and is the "last of the Tall-Tail" pilots still actively flying the Stratofortress; "Tall-Tail" being the nickname for early-model B-52s which had much taller tail fins than the G and H models. Schultz has more than 7,000 hours in

B-52s. In an article [HERE](#), Colonel Schultz said "After delivering eighteen B-52D and G models to the "Boneyard" over the years, it is about time I get to take one out."



Ghost Rider takes off for Barksdale

While at Barksdale AFB, members of the 76th AMXG from Tinker AFB will remove modifications from the damaged B-52 that '007 is replacing and transfer them to the freshly restored airframe. At the same time, local Barksdale maintenance teams will inspect the airframe and repair as necessary. Once these details are complete sometime in late 2015, 'Ghost Rider' will fly to Tinker AFB in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for Program Depot Maintenance to bring her in line with the rest of the fleet. The fifty year old bomber was back operational in 2016.

Welcome No 276 Mark Gilson



We look forward to seeing Mark at our meetings in the future. He is another of the Andover Mafia who seem to be taking over from the Sheffield Mafia nowadays. More on Mark next month.

How Low can you go



For those of you like me who grew up post war will remember the Roger Bacon column in Flight and a regular series of 'How Low can you go'. I even managed to get a picture published of a Freighter DC8 at Khartoum that had somehow been misloaded and tipped up on it's tail. I even got paid for sending it in. Roger Bacon was in fact a column given to the editor to have some fun. Last year I had the pleasure of meeting former editor Mike Ramsden at Hatfield Royal Aeronautical Society.

All this came back on the last Bank Holiday when I visited a National Trust property of Croome Park, just west of Pershore. Part of the estate was taken over during the war and the airfield that was known as RAF Defford was built. Defford became in September 1941 a satellite airfield for RAF Pershore a Bomber OTU, where 50 Wellingtons were based.

There is now a lovely little Museum there explaining the work on radar completed during and after the war. On the site of the former hospital ward is a 1940's style restaurant and in the former Ambulance Station there is another display including a cockpit of a Canberra.

A major change at Defford was the 'civilianisation' of the station from 1947 onwards as RAF numbers dwindled further. Many of the civilians were employed by The Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE), which was merged with the Radar Research and Development Establishment (RRDE) in 1953. The Telecommunications Flying Unit (TFU) finally became the Radar Research Flying Unit (RRFU) before finally disbanding at Pershore in 1957.

In 1957 the Radar Research Establishment at Pershore was given a Royal Charter and became The Royal Radar Establishment.

So many aircraft types have been used in the development of airborne radar from 2nd WW aircraft through the post war jets including the Meteor and Hunter and even a very unusual aircraft from the late 50's a unique Tay engined Viscount and of course the Canberra



The Twin Tay powered Viscount

The Canberra and Viscount were operated by Boulton Paul Aircraft Ltd who had flown from Defford since 1952. The Viscount was used for testing electrically-signalled flying controls, later known as 'fly by wire'.

The new V Force were forming and as the Valiant was arriving at Gaydon for radar bombing trials Defford's days as an active airfield were numbered. It closed officially on 13 September 1957. The RRFU moved just down the road to Pershore.

On my way back from Defford I passed the Mosquito Museum (open on Sundays) in Moreton in Marsh and then a mile further on the former RAF Moreton in Marsh, where I know Ron Doble flew from during WW2. Later we passed through Wescott and Halton, completing a fascinating visit.

Now back to the photo at the top of the page, it is Avro Lincoln RE346 doing a single engine flypast at Defford on 19 September 1950. The Lincoln had a fast start facility and thus this exercise became a regular feature at air displays. Just cannot see their 'Airships' letting this happen now, let alone the Civil Aviation Authority after the Shoreham Hunter accident!

Graham

Programme 2019

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

- 19 Jun More tales from Dennis Swains
- 17 Jul A new slant on Shakleton's Endurance Expedition - John Dudenay
- 21 Aug Luftwaffe in WW2 - Ian Thomson
- 18 Sep Visit to deHavilland Museum * 12 Noon @ Greenacres
- 16 Oct The Tragically Short War of a Topping Fellow - David Hearn
- 20 Nov Visit TBA*
- 18 Dec Christmas Lunch*

Your 2019 Committee

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Chairman

Instead of a speaker this month, we held a Buffet Lunch with many guests, which by all accounts was enjoyed by all. Again, all our thanks to members of the Committee who did the organising (Not me!). What a team!

Des

Welfare

Back from Elutian Island cruise with nothing to report except body in UK and brain in Greenland. Best wishes to our Chairman for a successful knee replacement. He will not be able to drive for 6 weeks but we are ready to pick him up for meetings.

David

Membership Secretary

I am very pleased to welcome another member of the growing 'Andover Clan' to CACA. Mark is a good friend of a number of us and will be welcome at our meetings. Bill G please note he once ventured to do a talk on his career in the RAF - book him!

276 GILSON M.Q.. (Mark)* 41 Oxford St, Finedon, Wellingborough, Northants NN9 5EZ, 01933 386059

Ian

Secretary/Editor

Good to see Mark Gilson has joined us and our membership is now up to 37 but please keep that search going on, we could do with a few more regulars at our meetings.

Graham

Treasurer

All well on the accounts front after our Buffet Lunch

Rod

President

Looking forward to the newsletter, currently in Bedford Hospital, Russell Ward, undergoing treatment. Will update you later in the week. Hope to hear that Des is fit and well.

Geoff