



NEWSLETTER

Book for our Xmas Lunch Weds 17 Dec 14

October Meeting

Where does Bill George find them? We were entertained and I use that word in it's true sense by Colin Oaks with his talk on RAF Chenies and RAF Bovingdon. Without notes Colin spoke for an hour about RAF Bovingdon (known to most of us) and RAF Chenies (known to very few).

Bovingdon was built in 1941/42 as a standard Class A RAF bomber airfield. The main NE/SW runway was 4902 feet long and the two secondary runways had a length of 4299 feet. Over 30 dispersal hard-standings were built. On 15 June 1942, No. 7 Group, RAF Bomber Command took up residence at Bovingdon. Operational missions were flown in June and July by the RAF until the field was turned over to the USAAF in August.

The first USAAF tenant at Bovingdon was the 92nd Bombardment Group (Heavy) The group was known as "Fame's Favourite Few". The 92nd flew a few two combat missions in September and October 1942, then was assigned the role of a B-17 Flying Fortress_Combat Crew Replacement Unit (CCRU). The 326th Bomb Squadron of the 92nd remained at Bovingdon to form the core of 11th Combat Crew

Replacement Unit whilst the rest of the unit moved to RAF Alconbury. The training was performed on the B-17E aircraft, and most combat crews of 8th Air Force bombing units for the balance of the war received their introduction before moving on to their operational bases. Although based at Bovingdon, the 326th remained under the operational control of the 92nd at Alconbury until May 1943.

Along with its training role, Bovingdon housed the Eighth Air Force Headquarters and the Air Technical Section, both equipped with a variety of aircraft types. General Eisenhower's personal B-17 was housed on the base.

In September 1944 the 11th CCRU was disbanded and Bovingdon became the base for the European Air Transport Service. Many thousands of Americans returned to the States via the air terminal.

Post war it was used by civilian airlines for services and maintenance. After use by Communication Squadrons in the 60's Bovingdon finally closed in 1972. Since then it has become famous for it's Saturday Market, as a film set and of course home to 'The Mount' Prison. *(Cont'd on P2)*



LOTTERY FUNDED

Remember 18 November 2014

"Luftwaffe Aircraft of WW2"

Greenacres 11.00a.m..

A presentation by Gp Capt Chris Sprent

(Cont'd from P1)

So what about RAF Chenies? Well firstly it was not in Chenies but in Flaunden. It had been an early radar station. It was part of the RAF Rotor Radar system of the cold war. Although the buildings have all gone there is still a radar station there. It, however, belongs to the Meteorological Office and is used to track rainfall in the area.



Met Office Radar at Chenies

We learnt a little about what went on at Latimer House in the war and other items of interest in the local area. Much of this explained why Bovingdon had so many communications aircraft bringing in passengers, not all of them British or American!

Colin will be back to give us another presentation next year.

Canadian Lancaster back home

The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum's Lancaster bomber is back at its home base in Hamilton, Ontario (about 40 miles west of Toronto) after a triumphant and, at times, dramatic six-week tour of the U.K. The aircraft touched down just after noon on Sunday 28 Sep 14, after a leisurely trip from Lincolnshire, that began on Tuesday 23 Sep 14 and included stops in Iceland, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec. The aircraft left Hamilton in early August on a flight to the U.K. that marked the first trans-Atlantic flight of a Lancaster in more than 50 years. Once there, it was joined by the only other flying Lancaster in the world, the RAF operated Battle of Britain commemorative aircraft, for a

schedule of airshow appearances and flypasts viewed by hundreds of thousands of people.

The tour was marked by drama when an engine failure forced a smoky return to Durham Tees Airport in northern England in late August. The RAF supplied a replacement engine and the tour was back in the air less than a week later. However, the total cost of the repairs and rental of the RAF engine is expected to be at least \$180,000. CWH CEO David Rohrer, who was one of the pilots on the trans-Atlantic flights, said a fundraising campaign has started to recover the cost. "We'll find a way; we always do," He said the tour was a tangible reminder of the Lancaster's and Canada's service in the Second World War. "That act of service and commitment and duty and valour when required is something we should never forget,".



Our 'Bomber Boys' in front of the Canadian aircraft (above) and can you spot 'Tom and Roy' in front of 'Just Jane' at East Kirkby (below)



Royal Observer Corps

Dennis Swains writes: Soon after demob from the RAF, I bumped into two friends who were members of The Royal Observer Corps and learned that they were still recruiting personnel. I still had an interest in aircraft, decided to join and subsequently served on 'Nan One' (as it was until NATO changed it to 'November'). Nan One was a brick-built tower some 10 feet high in a field on a hill above Great Missenden. We were part of a 'cluster' of four posts, N2 Beaconsfield, N3 Rickmansworth and N4 Princes Risborough; all connected by phone to Group Headquarters at Watford and to each other.

I learned that in 1925, following the initiation of a far-sighted member of the Defence Committee, an RAF Command was formed for the air defence of Great Britain, and led to the provision of a 'Raid Reporting System' to provide visual detection, identification, tracking and reporting aircraft over Great Britain. The Committee actually got things done; a system was set up and became known as the Observer Corps and was in position before hostilities in 1939.

With effective radar in its infancy, the presence of a nationwide reporting system was a tremendous asset and proved its worth throughout the War years and well beyond with little public recognition. Posts were established to form a web at 10 to 12 mile intervals across the British Isles, manned by civilian volunteers.

Similar to the Home Guard, uniform took a while to appear. Issue to the ROC was RAF battledress with unique badges for Chief and Leading Observers. Officers were commissioned into the RAF and dressed accordingly.

The success of the Corps, particularly in the Battle of Britain earned them the title 'Royal' awarded by King George VI in 1941. They continued to complement the 'Chain Home' Defensive Radar tracking aircraft throughout the War. They also reported and followed friendly aircraft damaged and returning from raids. Posts on

Romney March were the first to report 'Doodlebugs'. The Corps continued for many years after the War as an ancillary to the Defence of the Realm.

Wartime members of Nan One had added a wooden hut and electricity at their expense; a real boon as the majority of posts had just a shelter below the brick tower.

From the centre of the tower floor rose a three inch steel pipe to waist level onto which fitted a plotting table about two feet in diameter. On the table sat the 'Micklethwaite Height Corrector': a device that revolved by hand. It had an elementary sight and when aimed at an aircraft, gave an approximate height by reading the angle while a pointer on the device showed the plane's position on the grid printed on the table – information phoned to Group and corroborated by reports from other posts in the cluster.

Plotters at Group moved blocks bearing the plane or raid number in accordance with our reports, while liaison officers passed information to RAF groups and to Bentley Priory. Posts and Ops Rooms were manned by volunteers day and night continuously throughout the War. Activities continued after 1945 with regular exercises, mostly at weekends, sometimes for 48 hours as required for training purposes by the RAF.

Chief Observers had to ensure posts were manned continuously from their crew, who were either too elderly or unfit for active service. They were still in employment in many cases, and the Chiefy often found himself doing extra shifts. The Leading Observer was responsible for training in aircraft recognition. Posts had a small allowance of tea and sugar, limited expenses for travel and petrol coupons – some posts were pretty remote, operating in all weathers too. I remember when Venoms were 'enemy' aircraft while Meteors were 'friendly' on low level exercises. For a short time we were issued with Very Pistols and single Star Red cartridges to shoot off if we saw a Venom to attract any passing Meteor!

(Cont' P4)

(Cont'd from P3) This did not last long – too many claims for burning crops! Aircraft recognition tests formed a large part of our training sessions held in ‘The Lamb’ at Potter Row. There were group competitions held in cinemas in Watford. Individuals could win the coveted ‘Spitfire’ badge by recognising at least 95% of enemy and friendly planes displayed for a split second on the screen. This continued up to the Cold War period.

By 1965, thanks to advancement in radar technology, most roles and responsibilities relating to aircraft had been withdrawn and the ROC assumed the role of field force for UKWMO (United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation) checking radioactivity. This continued until the 1990’s and the cessation of the Cold War.

Posts went underground, literally, together with landlines to Group. November One went twenty feet down in a hole lined with concrete with a shaft for entry. In due course it was handed over to us. We removed the shaft lid – it was full of water half-way up the shaft. Contractors had to drain it, dry it, reline it. It was always desperately cold – 1 table, 2 chairs and a phone – no comfort whatever.



*N1 Little Hundridge Farm after closure
(Photo Nick Catford)*

What had been enjoyable: spotting aircraft, post and group meetings, visits to RAF stations, flying displays, the smell of sausage, bacon and eggs rising from the hut in the small hours – all gone! For training now we had a paper tape that passed through a crude clockwork mechanism that gave a reading of radioactivity to be reported to Group each five min

utes: cold, damp monotony.

Bomber Command at Naphill now required to know levels of radioactivity from fallout in the event of War so they could move their V Bombers to safe areas. Volunteers were called for, and being among the nearer posts to Naphill, some of us elected to go to serve as plotters in the War Room on special maps beside the RAF Ops Screen itself. We met secrecy with a capital S! Just what enquiries were made about us we never heard, but we were eventually issued with a new ID.

We arrived at Naphill, passed through checkpoints, descended several flights of stairs and entered the underground operations room of Bomber Command. Our map of the UK was beside the RAF Screen. In addition to exercises, the RAF Screen rolled away and the War Map appeared every time a Russian ‘Bear’ headed into the North Sea and a couple of fighters were sent up from Leuchars to persuade him to turn back. Doors were locked and we were there for the duration of the emergency. Was the balloon going up or was this another nuisance incident? Our presence there continued for some time until authorities realised that if atomic warfare came, it was unlikely the reporting system would survive.

The posts were still manned for exercises but the main interest had been the aircraft recognition side; reading fallout levels into a phone every five minutes rather lacked excitement; recruiting dwindled; individual circumstances changed. Eventually I resigned after over twenty-five years in the Corps with a long-service medal to add to my small collection.

Following Government Defence spending review in 1990, the majority of civilian spare-time volunteers were stood down on 30 September 1991. Headquarters ROC closed in 1996 after over seventy years of service. If you visit the RAF Museum at Hendon and visit the minor exhibits in the Gallery, there is a replica ROC Post. How it got there is a mystery but the plotting table has an aiming mark that I recognised – it is from Nan One, Great Missenden!

Virgin gets first ‘Dreamliner’



G-VNEW Virgin’s new Boeing 787-9

Virgin Atlantic Airways celebrated the delivery of the airline’s first Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on Friday 10 October 2014. The airline is the first European airline to use the Boeing 787-9 and initially plans to operate the Dreamliner on its London Heathrow to Boston route.

Virgin Atlantic’s first Boeing 787-9 touched down at London’s Gatwick Airport following a more than 4,000 nautical mile nonstop flight from Paine Field in Everett, Washington State. The aircraft, named ‘Birthday Girl’ in reference to Virgin’s 30th anniversary, is the first of 16 787-9s Virgin Atlantic has ordered from Boeing.

Their 787 Dreamliner, which was due to make its first commercial flight to Boston on Oct. 28, is joining Virgin more than a year after arch-rival British Airways, commenced trans-Atlantic trips using the Airbus A380, which Branson has ordered yet declined to take.

Even as it reins in costs, Virgin is striving to remain on trend, introducing Vivienne Westwood-designed uniforms in June, spending 300 million pounds on enhancing customer experience with perks spanning faster in-flight Wi-Fi to new lounges, and trialling the use of Google Glass computerized eye-wear that enables users to check e-mail or listen to music.

The in-flight bar, so-called upper class seats and premium economy cabin as well as the in-flight entertainment system are all made according to Virgin specifications, with the custom lighting options able

to replicate the ambiance of a restaurant or time of day.

The next planes to be delivered will be used on routes to Washington and New York’s John F. Kennedy airport, as well as to Newark.

Despite the delays in coming into service and the troubles with the aircraft batteries, causing fires on board, to date, nearly 60 customers from around the world have ordered more than 1,000 Dreamliners, approximately 40 percent of which are Boeing 787-9s.

Other carriers using the aircraft into London include Qatar Airways, Royal Brunei and of course more recently British Airways.



Royal Brunei 787-8



Qatar Airways ‘Economy Class’

Have, after all, Boeing got a winner with the Dreamliner? Boeing outsourced more detail on this aircraft that ever before and one wonders if that is why it was late and entered service with a great deal of concern over the battery issue. Only time will tell.

Ed: Note our presentation in Feb 15 is on 787

Remembrance Day

As the time for reflection comes round again, we will remember those who died in action. This year particularly those who fell in the First World War. Many of you will think of those colleagues who failed to return from Ops in World War 2 but it still goes on, Korea, Suez, The Balkans, Iraq and of course Afghanistan. This poem written in 2009 by a soldier fighting the Taleban is none the less poignant:

Sunset Vigil

The news is spread far and wide
Another comrade has sadly died
A sunset vigil upon the sand
As a soldier leaves this foreign land

We stand alone, and yet as one
In the fading light of a setting sun
We've all gathered to say goodbye
To our fallen comrade who's set to fly

The eulogy's read about their life
Sometimes with words from pals or wife
We all know when the CO's done
What kind of soldier they'd become

The padre then calls us all to pray
The bugler has Last Post to play
The cannon roars and belches flame
We will recall, with pride, their name

A minute's silence stood in place
As tears roll down the hardest face
deafening silence fills the air
With each of us in personal prayer

Reveille sounds and the parade is done
The hero remembered, forgotten by none
They leave to start the journey back
In a coffin draped in the Union Jack

Sgt Andy McFarlane, 2009.

for more info and further wartime poems see:
<http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/RemembranceB.htm>
#Remembrance_Day

For the Spitfire Boys

24 marks of the Spitfire and numerous sub-variants were made until it was finally retired in 1955. Today, there are 235 Spitfires remaining across the world, but only 52 are airworthy.

A company called Avspecs in New Zealand specialises in restoring vintage and wartime aircraft, making each plane as authentic and accurate as possible, so that it will fly and be as good as a brand new plane straight from a factory. Once restored, Spitfires sell for a minimum of £2m each, while wrecks can be obtained for as little as £700.

The photograph below shows their Warbirds Restoration workshop in Auckland, NZ where currently three different Spitfires, ranging from a Mk.5 to a Mk.14 are painstakingly being restored. There will be more news in a future edition.



Post early for Christmas

Sadly the ACA Christmas Cards are no longer available. At the end of this edition you will find an order form for RAF Benevolent Fund Christmas Cards. A mixed group of cards from wartime aircraft to traditional Christmas scenes plus Jo Laurie's Cartoon 'Fuelling around with Santa' and finally a delightful drawing by a 7 year old in Cyprus 'Santa's Red Arrow'. Please order and support this excellent charity.



Chiltern ACA
Christmas Lunch
Green Acres Tavern,
Leys Road, Bennetts End,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP3 9LZ

Wednesday 17th December 2014
1200 Noon for 1230

Traditional Christmas fare

Please reserve me tickets for the Christmas Lunch @ £ 20 per person
Widows @ £ 10 per person

Name

Address
.....

Postcode **Tel No**

Name of Guests
.....

Special Dietary Requirements

I enclose Cheque for £ payable to 'The Chiltern Aircrew Association'

Please Post together with a stamped addressed envelope to:
Gerry Sealy-Bell
31, Hempstead Road,
Kings Langley,
Herts, WD4 8BR

Closing date: 10 Dec 14

Programme 2014

All events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*]

19 Nov	Luftwaffe a/c of WW2,	G/C Chris Sprent
17 Dec	Xmas Lunch 12.00 Noon	
21 Jan	Responsibility and Recognition (Arthur Llewelyn and the Cold War).	Miranda Andrews
18 Feb	The Boeing Dreamliner	Capt Colin Read
18 Mar	Member's Meeting	

Your Committee

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Welfare

As I am away for a couple of weeks 'cruising', my apologies if I have not been able to take your calls.

Ted Matthews is well and tells me his son on a recent

visit to Canada flew in their Lancaster just before it came to UK. **Alan Dicker** has been in hospital but hopefully is home now being looked after by Vi. **Des Richard** continues to get stronger and hopes to be able to rescue Janet from her care home shortly. **Bill Hyland** is staying cheerful despite his ups and downs of treatment, which sadly is affecting his appetite. I am pleased to report that when I last spoke he had really enjoyed tucking into his Sheperds Pie and was off to the RAF Club at the weekend for a Squadron reunion. We wish all of them well.

David

Membership Secretary

We had the pleasure of welcoming a new member at our October meeting, **John Horne** was introduced by **Peter Bailey** (also visiting for the first time). John has flown a number of light aircraft of the Cessna variety plus the Chipmunk. Having suffered more than one engine failure, he has now given up active flying! There must be a story for the newsletter there:

271 HORNE J (John) 'Swanden' Chiltern Road, Chesham Bois, Amersham, Bucks HP5 5PH Tel: 01494 724066 GL

Please let me have your ticket order for our Christmas lunch ASAP and do not forget the 'Stamped Addressed Envelope'

Gerry

Secretary/Editor

Thank you to those who send me 'stuff' for the Newsletter. It is encouraging that we are still recruiting new members and long may it continue. I received this from Tom Payne. The picture is of his great grandson, Elliot in a Tiger Moth taken at the 2014 Moth International Rally at Woburn. A future member? - **Graham**



Order form

Please complete this order form clearly in **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Please ensure you include an email address or daytime phone number in case we need to contact you about your order. Applewhite Gifts will dispatch your order within 3 working days of receipt of your order. Orders must be received before **Monday 15 December 2014** for all UK deliveries in order to receive your cards in time for Christmas.

Card name	Cards per pack	Price	Code	No. of packs	Total	Postage & Packing UK
1 BMWF over Lincoln Cathedral	10	£4.50	13093			Up to £30: £4.00
2 Spiffies in the Snow	10	£4.50	13804			£30-£44: £7.00
3 Snow King	10	£4.00	14689			£45-£80: £11.00
4 Mistletoe Greetings	10	£4.00	14319			Over £80: £15.00
5 Robin on a Spade	10	£4.00	14250			Up to £30: £6.00
6 Adoration of the Kings	10	£4.00	14368			Over £100: £22.00
7 The Journey	10	£4.00	14369			Over £100: £15.00
8 Fuelling Around with Santa	10	£4.50	14688			
9 Santa's Red Arrow	10	£4.50	14690			
10 Winter Ops	10	£4.50	14687			
					Sub total	
					Postage & packing	
					Donation	
					Total	

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I enclose a cheque for £ payable to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

Please debit my Mastercard/Visa/Maestro (please delete as appropriate)

Expiry date Start date Issue No. Maestro only
Maestro only

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I would prefer not to be sent further information about the work of the RAFBF (Tick box)

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For any queries about your order, please call 01636 636 800 or email: info@applewhites.co.uk

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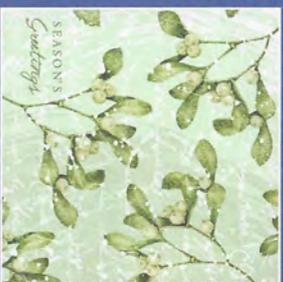
1 *Battle of Britain Memorial Flight over Lincoln Cathedral*
Painted and kindly donated by Denis Blandford.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



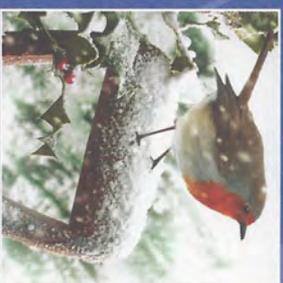
2 *Spitfires in the Snow*
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121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



3 *Snow King*
Painted and kindly donated by Stephen Hopper.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.00**



4 *Mistletoe Greetings*
Courtesy of Advocate Art.
121mm x 121mm. **£4.00**



5 *Robin on a Spade*
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6 *Adoration of the Kings*
Courtesy of Art House.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.00**



7 *The Journey*
Courtesy of MacNeill Studios.
121mm x 121mm. **£4.00**



9 *Santa's Red Arrow* Drawn by Skylar Miller, aged 7, from RAF Akrotiri School, Cyprus, winner of Red White and Blue Day Christmas Card Competition.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



8 *Fuelling Around With Santa*
An exclusive design, drawn and kindly donated by Mrs Jo Laurie.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**



10 *Winter Ops*
Gerald Coulson @The Military Gallery, Wendover, UK.
121mm x 171mm. **£4.50**

The greeting inside all cards reads: **'With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year'**.

Each pack contains 10 cards and envelopes.

Order online at www.rafbf.org/shop

The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is the RAF's leading welfare charity, providing financial, practical and emotional support to all members of the RAF family, from childhood through to old age. Each purchase from our Christmas Collection helps us continue this work all year round.

Happy Christmas!

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