

## **HANDLEY PAGE HAMPDEN BOMBER X3023**

Templewood is a grade II listed building located near Northrepps in Norfolk. It was built as a shooting box in 1938/39 for senior conservative politician Sir Samuel Hoare, Lord Templewood, who served in several cabinet posts including that of Secretary of State for Air in the 1920's. The calm of the countryside was shattered when at 06.20hrs on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1940 whilst still dark and in severe weather Hampden Bomber X3023 of No 44 Squadron based at RAF Waddington crashed about 200 yards from Templewood and caught fire. The aircraft was returning from a bombing mission in central Germany. Suffering severe damage and flying on one engine in atrocious weather, the pilot Sergeant Jack Ottaway displayed supreme airmanship in flying the aircraft over the North Sea and reaching the coast. However he finally lost control and crashed in a wooded area and was killed along with the navigator Pilot Officer Archie Kerr and wireless operator/air gunner Sergeant Stanley Elliott. A further air gunner Sergeant Stanley Hird survived the crash and served to the end of the war as a Flying Officer having been awarded the DFC.



*The Memorial*

Following a well researched paper on the detail of the crash written by James Mindham a local historian who had discovered the site of the crash and evidence from the aircraft wreckage, the current owner of Templewood, Eddie Anderson a Film Producer, decided to erect on the spot a memorial to X3023 and its crew in the form of a tree stump and commemorative plate. On the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014, relatives of the aircrew and representatives of the RBL, Cromer Council and the local Royal Air Forces Association together with standard bearers gathered in heavy rain to commemorate the memorial.



*Jack Broughton RAFA*



*James Mindham with (from left) Dave Le-Ray, Patricia Le-Ray (Stan Elliott's sister) & Haydn Maude*

Earlier this year, Sergeant Bullen who is serving in the Air Traffic Control at RAF Marham contacted the Sheringham & District Branch of the RAFA to find if the crash of Hampden X3023 was known locally because his friend Haydn Maude's mother who was living in East Yorkshire was the sister of Sergeant Stan Elliott. She was 18 months old at the time of Stan's death in 1940 but she had tended his grave in York over the years and had expressed a desire to visit the site of her brother's demise. The report of the crash by James Mindham was forwarded to Haydn Maude for his mother Patricia Le-Ray to read. The family of Sergeant Stan Elliott who died in the crash: Patricia Le-Ray, her husband Dave and her son Haydn Maude decided they would visit the crash site to pay their respects on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The property owner Eddie Anderson, James Mindham, Rachel Elkin granddaughter of the Hampden pilot Jack Ottaway and her partner Simon, David Russell a Cromer Town Councillor, John Hampson, Ken Macnish and Jack Broughton of the RAFA gathered to join the family at the crash site early in the afternoon after they had travelled from east Yorkshire. A short Service of Remembrance was held where the family were warmly welcomed and the circumstances of the crash revealed to those gathered at the memorial. The proceedings concluded with the traditional oration.



*Patricia & Rachel Elkin with Eddie Anderson (background Haydn Maude)*



*Jack Broughton, David Russell (Cromer Town Councillor) and John Hampson RAFA*

It was a lovely service in a glorious setting. The weather was kind with sun shining through the wooded area. Those gathered spent time chatting and exploring more details of the circumstances of the crash. Finally James Mindham the historian presented Patricia Le-Ray with a metal engine mount and a frequency reference plate from her brother's wireless receiver from the crash as a memento.



**Sergeant Stanley Elliott RAFVR**