

Newsletter

JULY 2009

www.olddux.org

Edited by LARRY CROSS



Dear Members after all the preparations and planning to ensure that our Annual Dinner was successful, we find that as is usually the case, it is over all too quickly. During lunch at the Red Lion with the usual crowd, it was discovered that our chairman had left his full evening attire hanging on an inconvenient door at home!

The ensuing scenes in the bar were hilarious. In an effort to make sure that Bob would pass muster.... enough to get him into the club house, various shirts and ties were proffered. There were shirts being pulled on and off and cries of, "Definitely not," and "The sleeves are too bloody short," with flashes of bare chests and vests! ..But it was alright on the night!

WELCOME TO



THE OLD DUX ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL DINNER

THIS YEAR WITH SPECIAL THOUGHTS

TO COMMEMORATE THE

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE

D DAY LANDINGS 6TH JUNE 1944



The dinner was attended by 58 guests and the occasion was graced by the presence of Sir Richard and Lady Johns.

Anne Gange had made a supreme effort in liaising with the caterers and creating the table decorations to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings 6th June 1944. The meal was well presented and there was plenty of it.

Once again our Mega Raffle went very well, thanks to Jennie McRae and Ann Brinkley doing a splendid job. Grateful thanks also to Allan for the place cards.

Don Headley gave the Royal Toast and the evening was nicely rounded off by Sir Richard recalling some very amusing incidents during his time at Duxford.

Whilst the weather was very kind to us on the day of the dinner, overnight it rained heavily and continued until late Sunday morning, easing off in time for most members to avoid a wetting on their way to the meeting. We arrived to find that classroom 3 was locked and access was only gained after a heated debate with the guardroom and whilst there were plenty of seats there were no tables! Bob kindly suggested that this could have been due to an oversight on the part of his lady contact.

Oh! Why are we waiting....Could be your local surgery.



L to R Shirley Amos, Doreen Cross, Kate & George Poole & Bill Amos.

The meeting eventually commenced at 13.20 with Bob calling the meeting to order to observe a Two Minutes silence for those who have recently passed away.

Dave (Taff) Wilkins.

Eddie Lowe.

Maurice Wright.

Richie Richardson. (Last year)

Ben Ellis area RAFA Standard Bearer represented the O.D.A. at the funeral of Eddie Lowe.

Peter Taylor, although not a new member, gave a brief account of his time at Duxford, it being his first meeting.

The 18th of October 2009 was decided on a show of hands as the date for our next meeting.

Buffet Lunch

Details of the proposed Buffet Lunch prior to the meeting on Sunday 18th.October, we are offered: 1 serving of Tea/Coffee and biscuits (shortbread, flapjack and brownies). Plus one & half sandwiches Jugs of iced water. Cost £5 p.p. Inc VATS Based upon approximately 35 people

. Additionally, as our meeting is after the October Air Show, we can have the exclusive use of the newly refurbished Marshall Room. A show of hands in favour of the event was asked for and the numbers indicated that it would be viable to proceed providing the numbers are reached

A cut-off booking slip can be seen lower down on this page. Please return with your remittance to the secretary: **Anne Gange**

**4, Benton Drive,
Chinnor,
Oxon
OX39 4DP Tel: 01844 352836**

A proposal to change the 2010 Annual Dinner from May back to October was voted upon and narrowly defeated.

Anne Gange made the point that perhaps the members would reconsider their position if it was just for one year only. She has been working on ideas to combine next years dinner with 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, a worthy sentiment I feel. Perhaps the latter end of September could be considered as an alternative?

Planning permission has now been passed for a hotel in the grounds of the Red Lion and there is now no possibility of a garden there. Come to think of it, there will be no possibility of car parking there if this hotel is built. Perhaps all guests are coming by train?!

Andy Height

Further to Andy's message the news is, that a 70 bedroom hotel with various facilities is to be built in the hotel grounds and is scheduled to be completed in July 2010! The Red Lion itself will then be refurbished,

Plans for a garden of remembrance / Plaques are now of course on hold until all work is completed. Perhaps then we can look at the idea again.

July of this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Daily Mail London to Paris air race, organised to celebrate Lois Bleriot's historic cross channel flight in July 1909 - and there are moves afoot to get this anniversary celebrated in some way.

As you **all** know ! The race was won for the R.A.F. in record time by S/Ldr. Charles Maugham, 65Sqn. C.O. in 40mins.44secs. in which, among various other units Duxford personnel and the R.A.F. Police played a major role.

Tony Harbour and I have been contacting people whom we thought might be interested in promoting the idea and to date only Steve Smethurst, editor of the Royal British Legion Magazine has responded.

He asked me to submit an item in less than a 1000 words which he would include on their Website This I did and await the outcome.

Tony travelled to Henlow in high hopes, to see Sqn.Leader G. Brooks, R.A.F.Police and after a very lengthy discussion, left him with all the griff and photographs of the Air Race.

.....Nothing as yet.

Allan McRae serialised the full account of the event in the newsletters of 2000. If anyone would like a copy, (there could be six or seven pages in all) please let me know. **email as Website. Tel: 01903 207056 L.C.**

Bob Hope would like to be informed by members attending the meeting on **18th October** of their Car Reg. No and the number of occupants.

Tel: 01554 890520

DUXFORD – 1953 by Peter Gornall

The item by Terry Crowley in the Spring edition of the newsletter is the first time I have recognised a period when I was stationed at Duxford. I was a National Service man and was posted to Duxford in March 1953 at the tender age of 19 before being moved on to Colerne the following year and demobbed in January 1955.

My memory is not all that great with the passage of time but I do remember some of the characters. I think the O/C flying was W/Cmdr Pete Wallace who sported a crimson tail plane on his F8 with his initials PW boldly painted on the side. I believe S/Ldr (red) Evans led 65 squadron. The call signs were Nourish (64) and Placid (65) with a wing call sign of Mansard. The reason for being so familiar with call signs was because of my job in the control tower.

I remember when the combined wing made the Coronation fly-past in June 1953 with the take off being led by Pete Wallace with the words "Mansard Wing Rolling". He was an amazing aerobatic pilot and one late summer evening when all flying had stopped we were waiting in the Control Tower for just one aircraft. It was W/Cmdr Pete Wallace who had been to a conference somewhere. He suddenly appeared at high speed just above the hedge rows and immediately went into a vertical climb and followed that with an amazing display. When he got back to the dispersal area and was being helped out of the cockpit it was suggested he had been indulging himself rather well. Long before all the rules of 24 hours between bottle and throttle.

Terry also recalled the Cold War period when both 64 and 65 were on standby from dawn to dusk fully armed. They were given the call sign "Fabulous". The whole operation was supposed to be secret and there was a hue and cry at the Air Ministry after a foursome of either 64 or 65 had given an aerobatic display (the forerunners of the Red Arrows) and had been described in at least one newspaper as "The Fabulous Four". They finally decided it was an innocent description and not the call sign of the readiness squadron.

. **The T.4.T.C. Appeal** in the Spring edition had rather an unexpected outcome. The idea was that perhaps someone might discover a dusty and unloved typewriter buried in their attic and donate it to the cause!

At the meeting I approached Terry cautiously, but he appeared to be not the least bit put out by my niggle. He told me that had another story for me then quickly added that he had decided to march down to his local library, weigh up the options and acquaint himself with the workings of a modern machine. I don't know how many visits it took, but he looked well on it and produced the item which now appears on page four. A round of applause for Terry! 10 out of 10 for effort.

This Item has been included at least once before and hope that it will still raise a chuckle!

After every Qantas flight, pilots fill out a form called a "gripe sheet," which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never, ever, had an accident.

Pilot: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

Solution: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what friction locks are for.

P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: No. 3 engine missing.

S: No. 3 Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny. (I love this one!)

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget

pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget.

ARMED FORCES PENSION GROUP

Did you leave The Armed Forces before 1975? If you did, but had less than 22 years service (16 years for officers), then you will not be receiving any Forces Pension.

The "Armed Forces Pension Group" is campaigning against this and demanding that the Government enter into a dialogue over the issue.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Our aim is to secure pensions, or compensation in lieu, for former regular members of the armed forces who served for fewer than 22 years at any time from 1949 to April 1975 and who were discharged before 5th April 1975. We ask Her Majesty's Government for pension rights, or compensation, based on years of service and related, pro rata, to pensions received by contemporaries who completed 22 years of service.

"MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Armed Forces Pension Group is open to all ex-servicemen and women who served for three years or more, but less than 22 years, and were discharged prior to 5th April 1975. To apply, forward your full name and address for receipt of a membership application form.

Visit www.afpg.info or contact Tony Harbour.
Tel: 01273 302860

The Australian Poetry Competition came down to two finalists; a university graduate and an old aboriginal. They were given a word then allowed two minutes to study the word and come up with a poem that contained the word. The word they were given was 'TIMBUKTU'

First to recite his poem was the university graduate.



**Slowly across the desert sand,
Trekking a lonely caravan
Men on camels two by two
Destination — Timbuktu.**

Polite applause followed.

The old aboriginal calmly made his way to the microphone and recited;

**Me and Tim a huntin' went
Met three girls in a pop up tent
They were three, and we was two
So I bucked one, and timbuktu**



Guess who won.?

I / We
Wish to attend the Buffet Lunch
on Sunday 18th. October at 12.15p.m.
in the Marshall Rooms. Price £5.00p.p.
and enclose cheque for £.

In the Spring of '55, 64 Squadron was instructed to fly to Belgium under the auspices of NATO for a week's stay. Whilst a reciprocal visit entailed a visit by a Belgium Air Force squadron, with the same aircraft [Gloster Meteor Aircraft], residing at Duxford. The purpose of this exercise was to allow 64 squadron ground staff to service and operate the Belgian aircraft whilst the same thing was to happen in Belgium, plus European flying familiarization by the pilots.

The S.N.C.O 's, fearing that their aircraft would be put at risk, objected so strongly to the C.O. that the Air Ministry relented and allowed four S.N.C.O 's to accompany their aircraft. The day dawned and the squadron aircraft flew off to their temporary home whilst we, complete with our tool boxes, climbed aboard our aircraft, an Avro Anson, to lumber across the briny.

A Liaison Officer [L.O.] greeted us and we were shown the hangar assigned for maintenance.

We promptly set to work ensuring that the Belgium mechanics were carrying out their duties to our satisfaction. A Mini-Bus and driver was assigned to us as the living quarters and Mess were a considerable distance away. During the first afternoon the L.O. looking pleased with himself, directed us to a table laid out with mugs, kettle and coffee. We inspected his gifts and then as if in chorus, said, "Where is the tea and milk?" His smile vanished. He then assured us tea and coffee would be forthcoming. Prior to departing he said, "I have a further surprise for you later in the afternoon".

The tea makings appeared later and at 1600 hours the Tannoys burst into life with a very British female voice announcing, "I'm very worried about Jim?"..... in chorus we shouted, "Turn that bl- - dy thing off!" There stood the L.O. with a downcast look on his face saying, "But gentlemen, I thought that the whole of the British nation listened to Mrs Dales Diary". We could not stop laughing, whilst spluttering our thanks for his thoughtfulness. He went on his way, shaking his head and possibly muttering,....."Those mad R.A.F types?"

Each of us was allocated a room in the Sergeants Mess and was surprised to get a first sighting of a duvet on the bed. The airfield seemed to have been constructed to encompass a village, which boasted shops and café/bars. Breakfast the following morning provided more surprises. Each table setting comprised of a wooden platter, plus bread roll and butter. No tea, just black coffee. One of us approached the Mess Caterer asking where the cooked breakfast and tea was. The chef smacked his forehead saying "Oui' English breakfast". We all nodded. After much haggling via the language problem and cost? He indicated that the next morning would be 'Superb'. We duly handed over the cash which appeared to be acceptable

. For the remaining four mornings an excellent breakfast was served whilst the Belgian S.N.C.O.'s looked on with awe amidst mutterings about the 'Crazy British'.

Staying on the subject of food. We all tucked into a roast beef dinner one night. And after we had finished, I remarked, "Did you enjoy the beef?". They nodded. " Well gentlemen", I announced, "it was Rote' de Cheval, in other words roast horse!" the expressions on their faces said it all.

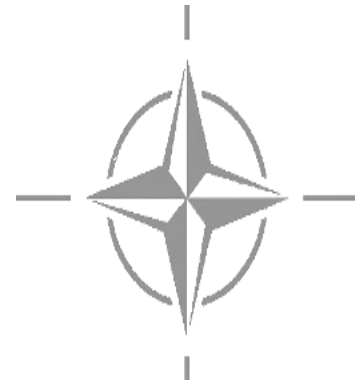
All of our aircraft performed well. The C.O. announced that the exercise was completed well within the time allowed and that if we cared to don our civilian attire we were to be the guests of the Belgium Air Force. This entailed coaching to Brussels for a night out at the 'Moulin Rouge' night club.

At a convenient bar next door we consumed a couple of drinks? and were joined by the scantily clad eye-popping dancers, who escorted us back to the Club and were greeted by a standing ovation. "Vive' le Royal Air Force". It was quite a night!!

Our coach was waiting in the 'Grande Platz' amidst the dazzling array of the flower market which filled the air with a heavy scent, a great cure for quite a few heads at four o'clock in the morning.

The following day, fortunately in the early afternoon, the aircraft were flown back to Duxford and we later climbed aboard the Avro Anson. Approaching Duxford the pilot was given permission to land, however, on our approach a Meteor aircraft, which we later discovered had also mistakenly 'Let Down' on those instructions. The result was that the Meteor skimmed over the top of the Anson and landed. Our Pilot immediately took evasive action by 'pulling up' and going round again. Needless To say the air was blue over the radio to the Control Tower. We landed on the next approach and taxied up to the '64' Hangar, Terra Firma was very welcome.

Footnote. I penned this tale in the year of 2009. The year the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ~NATO celebrated it's sixtieth birthday.



"Some people ask the secret of our long marriage. We take time to go to a restaurant two times a week, A little candlelight, dinner, soft music and dancing..... She goes Tuesdays, I go Fridays." (Anon)