



NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2011

WWW.OLDDUX.ORG

COMPILED BY LARRY CROSS

DEAR MEMBERS

As I write, the holiday season is in full swing, many of us probably seeking warmer climes. Those of us not able so to do for one reason or another will be hoping to enjoy the intermittent good days that make up our English summer. However, it seems that attendances at the Airshows were not affected judging by the number of new members that have been found by the teams manning the recruitment stand.

And there are two more Airshows to go!

The date for our next meeting is Sunday October 23rd in the AirSpace Hangar, classroom 3, also known as Learning Space 1 and will commence at 13.00 hrs.

As is customary members attending must let Bob know in good time of their car Reg.No. and number of passengers.

Contact: 01554 890520

As per usual entry to the airfield will be through the Guardroom Gate.

Subscriptions

The Committee are pleased to announce that all subscriptions have been paid in record time, a big thank you to everyone for their co-operation.

New Members

- * Ian Harvey Agutter 66Sqn 1939 Eng /Ass
- * Bob Cook 66Sqn 1948 - 49 Armourer
- * Chris Gosbee Ass Mem. First family to move into married quarters
- * Keith Gunnell M.T. Sect. 1957
- * William Long 92 & 66Sqns 1949-50
- * Denis McDonald Driver Fire/ Rescue
- * Above members signed up at 1st Airshow

Ken Berry 64Sqn Photographer 1953 -54
Wayne. Coleman Pilot 82nd FS 78FG.1944-45 USAAC
Mike Hersey 65 Workshops 1956 - 58
Robin (Pud) Holloway 64 Sqn Pilot
Maurice (Mo) Joel Ass.Mem. Ex Ft / Air Arm
Gordon Marsh G/Equip.Section 1958-60
James S.Petersen Pilot 83FS 78FG. 1944 -45 USAAC

Two came from Jim Garlinge's advert in the 'Best of Britain' magazine which was also spotted by Richard Fry in Australia who responded with a nostalgic message. (see 'My Dear Old Dux')

Email Updates

Roger Brooks: roger-brooks2086@hotmail.co.uk

Sylvia Hann : sholder@ntlworld.com

Brian Brittle : brianbrittle@hotmail.com

Obituaries

Air Vice Marshall Derek Hann 65Sqn Sept 2010 in Thailand.

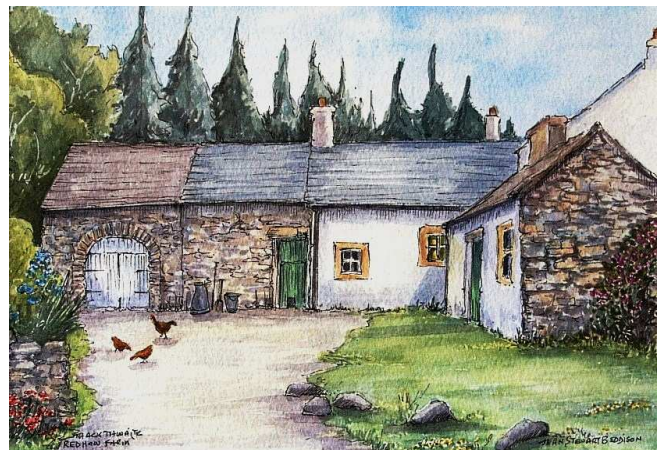
A copy of the RAF Changi Association Newsletter came into my possession recently and I spotted a name known to me - as he happens to be one of our members too. No doubt there could be more as I also noticed 64Sqn's Crest along with others displayed on its front cover. Among the usual regalia offered were car stickers. What a good idea I thought! that would help spread the word a bit and duly contacted the necessary people to get more info.

Some time later, looking through our early newsletters of the Allan McRae era I see that car stickers were thought about from day one. Allan had designed a temporary duck logo to fit a tax disc holder with instructions for colouring it in.

I believe quite a few were produced but over the years petered out. Are there any still out there I wonder ? Further ideas and comments will be welcome when the matter is discussed at the meeting.

The Gift

Jean Beddison has very kindly donated one of her works to the association. It depicts Red How Farm, Thackthwaite which is beautifully mounted and framed. (14"x11") o/all



I tried to contact Jean and husband Frank to see how their plans to move to Oz were going but the number was unobtainable Where are they now ?

The picture will be raffled at the forthcoming meeting, tickets will cost £1 and can also be purchased by post. Contact Stan Dell on : 01494 863428.

Fit/Lt. Jon Egging

The recent tragic loss of Fit/Lt Jon Egging will deeply affect all ex RAF and those connected with flying, indeed the whole nation. The Red Arrows R.A.F. Aerobatic Team are held in the highest esteem throughout the world and are thought of with great affection and admiration here at home.

Our thoughts are with Jon's family and colleagues and all members of the Red Arrows Team.

'My Dear Old Dux' Greetings from "Down Under"!

I was very interested to see your article in the August edition of Best of British magazine. "Old Dux", what a smart name and insignia! I was stationed at Duxford between 1952- 53 as a National Service instrument technician with 64 Squadron, servicing Meteors 7 and 8. I think my service number was 2504287 but, like others in my age group, clear memories are getting more vague as the days go by. There are a few names that come to mind which may be on your list of members such as Sgt Gibson, Flight Sergeant (Chiefy) Message?, Cpl Tester and other ranks, Doyle, "Steve" Stephenson, Horrocks, Bill (taffy) Thomas, and Beardsley, others I'm afraid have faded into the mist of time. Some memories are still pretty clear to me, like sorties to a local Pub called the Brewery Tap.

I was fortunate to represent the Station at cricket during my term at Duxford, this again stirs up the name of another player, F/Lt French, a pretty nifty all-rounder!

The Sgt Gibson I mentioned earlier I recall, was the goal keeper for the Station at soccer at that time.

My wife and I did get back to the UK for a long holiday in 1999 and whilst there, managed to get to the 'old camp' which of course was transformed out of this world by the installation of the Imperial War Museum, of which, of course we were enormously impressed. With so many alterations to the area I was completely overwhelmed! There were so many alterations since my serving days - I believe the only places I could recall were the two main hangars that housed 64 and 65 squadrons. I would liked to have gone across the "little road that was", to locate the "H" block in which I was billeted, but alas did not have a map to go by! The Brewery Tap I mentioned earlier, was another place I wanted to show my wife, but again I was completely lost to the new layout of the countryside. So missed out on another 'jar'!

Sorry if I have waffled on a bit, but it was nice to have an excuse to reminisce on some of my old days, and as an ex resident of Potters Bar, it would be so easy to get to your various functions and dinners. I'm certain they must be great times, picking up old connections etc. It's a pity I sold my old 'Meteor!' (joke...honest)

May you and the Association continue to grow in strength, and that your article is read by many more, thus swelling the ranks of past Duxford dwellers.

Cheers, and "over and out"

Richard Fry

(Note. Richard has since decided to join us.)

Historic Duxford Exhibition

For those able to log on to www.iwmduxford.org.uk click on the Historic Duxford photo. It will reveal lots of very interesting items by Carl and Sarah, not least....." Duxford is very lucky to have an active veterans association. The Old Dux are ex-Duxford personnel of all ranks and trades. They meet twice a year, here at Duxford, and communicate regularly via a newsletter.

I am very pleased to say that the Old Dux has given us permission to put some of their stories here on our blog for everyone to see. Many of them have been included in the newsletter over the years and I have really enjoyed going through them and picking out some extracts to share. The stories of the men and women who served here are vitally important to Historic Duxford and so it's only fair they feature on the bog too!"

The poem chosen "Go pin your medals on" was originally submitted by the late Roy Wicks. There are also some good online videos. First, Capt. Burt Newmark's presentation to an American school group. Burt flew with the 78th Fighter Group from Duxford. The second clip tells the story of a German raid on Duxford's satellite station Fowlmere during WWII. The third link is to a piece filmed by the Museum for the recent Battle of Britain anniversary by Steve Woolford, Project Director for the Historic Duxford project.

Wise Words from the training manual

- 1 'If you see a bomb technician running, try to keep up with him.'
- 2 'You've never been really lost until you've been lost at Mach 3.' (SR71 test pilot)-
- 3 'The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.'
- 4 'If the wings are travelling faster than the fuselage it has to be a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe.' - Fixed Wing Pilot-
- 5 'When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.'
- 6 'Without ammunition, the Air Force is just an expensive flying club.'
- 7 The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in military aviation are:
'Did you feel that?' ... 'What's that noise?'..... and 'Oh S...!'
- 8 'Airspeed, altitude and brains. Two are always needed to successfully complete the flight.'
- 9 'The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you.'

(submitted by Ron Stern)

Len Thorne's memories of AFDU Duxford 1942 - Continued

Around this time and through the winter, that well known athlete, Wing Commander Donald Finlay, briefly took over as AFDU commanding officer. I got on alright with Donald and by coincidence our paths had crossed several times previously.

He wasn't everyone's "cup of tea" being an enthusiastic fitness fanatic and on "duff" weather days he turned us pilots out to do gymnastics or his favourite, "cross country runs", often starting at the crack of dawn. This was not exactly popular with the lads, many of whom had had a tough time on operations. On one occasion our Polish pilot, Teddy Kulczek made the mistake of going sick that morning and appearing, shotgun in hand, from behind a haystack, just as Donald trotted past. Donald said nary a word, but the next week Teddy was posted back to a Sqdn. On another occasion, when the weather was almost impossible Donald decided on a formation cloud climb and I was selected as his victim. We broke out of ten tenths cloud at 22,000 feet and much to his surprise I was still there.

Donald departed in the spring and his place was taken by Wing. Co. Alan Wright, ex Battle of Britain veteran, who proved to be an excellent C/O.

Many of the machines tested were of great interest, none more so than the Mustang. We were not greatly impressed by the Mk.I with the Allison engine and its poor performance at altitude, but when some of our bright boys tried out a Merlin, the transformation was an immediate success. Even the "Yanks" were impressed, so much so that all further Mustangs were made with Merlin engines. As Rolls Royce could not meet this extra demand The Ford Motor Co. and Packard's were licensed to produce Merlins. With typical American enthusiasm they rapidly built up production to meet all demands, in fact the Spitfire Mk. XVI and some Lancasters were equipped with American made engines.

The next improvement to the Mustang was to get rid of the up and over canopy and fit a Spitfire type sliding hood. As time went by the original was superseded by the "teardrop" and the "bubble". The improvement in visibility and surprisingly in performance was amazing. The Mustang was a delight to fly and with its high performance, long range and reliability was certainly one of WW2's best aircraft. From Oct. onwards having completed my month's period of rest from ops. I was asked if I would like to remain at AFDU as an active participant in the experimental programmes. Naturally I jumped at the opportunity and so became a test pilot. Only recently I learned that due to the greatly increased production of aircraft at home and abroad there was an acute shortage of pilots for routine production testing. So, many who had completed at least one tour of ops. were roped into test work. I remained with AFDU until the end of the war becoming flight commander in Aug. '43 when F/Lt. Bert Sewell had to take a rest from flying following our Mosquito crash at White Waltham. The Mossie was a complete "write off", but we were lucky to walk away with only a few scratches and bruises. On the subject of accidents AFDU had an exceptionally good record considering the type of work carried out. I have a vague idea that there had been one fatal crash before my arrival at Duxford, a Polish officer having died after crashing a '109 due to oxygen failure. I bumped the wing of an Oxford when hit by a gust in a cross wind landing, two forced landings in the '190, (one "dead stick"), both without damage to the aircraft, one write off when the undercarriage of another '109 collapsed at the point of take off and the Mosquito crash mentioned above.

Later on F/Lt. Bill Waterton crashed a brand new Tempest when attempting to land following an engine failure. Bill went on after the war to join Gloster Aircraft and first became a member of the high speed flight and later chief test pilot with particular responsibility for the Javelin.

After the move to Wittering there was a particularly upsetting fatality. When starting Typhoons and Tempests with the Coffman cartridge starter, it was possible if the engine failed to catch, to experience a fire in the radiator. To prevent this member of the ground crew was always positioned well in front of the machine with a hand held fire extinguisher. In the event of a fire the pilot had to switch off and wait for an all clear before firing another cartridge. On this occasion the ground crew member stepped forward before ensuring that the pilot knew that he was dealing with the fire. A second starting attempt was unfortunately successful and the crewman was sadly struck by the propeller and killed.

Still later in the war "Wimpy" badly damaged a Spit. 21 when he and I were carrying out night flying tests being "blinded" by exhaust sparks while landing. Why there should have been a need to do night flying tests on a Spit. at that stage of the war beats me.

The only flying fatality known to me, occurred in 1426 flight at Colley Weston, when F/Lt. Lewendon, the Flight Comm. had an engine failure when flying the '190 and crashed into a garden on the edge of the airfield.

The Unit also had a succession of S/Ldrs to replace Ted Smith one of whom was S/Ldr. T.S.Wade, known to us all as "Wimpy". Tom made an excellent and popular O/C. Flying, he was one of the best aerobatic pilots I ever met and was sadly killed after the war when flying the Hawker Hunter in course of his career as chief test pilot of Hawkers.

Among the personnel posted to AFDU were such names as W/Co. "Roly" Beaumont. B. of B. "Ace". He achieved further fame as a Typhoon pilot and wing leader and later became Chief Test Pilot at English Electric. Also S/Ldr. Ian McLachlan who was with the Unit only a short time on this occasion. I believe Ian had helped in the defence of Malta and somewhere along the way had lost his right arm. He was fitted with a false flipper with various attachments which allowed him to fly any aircraft. Some years later he, with F/Lt. Geoff Page was again posted to AFDU and performed a spectacular operation.

In two specially prepared P51 Mustangs, they penetrated deep into Germany and shot down 7 aircraft. Attempting to repeat the operation some weeks later Ian was shot down and killed.

(Continued over)

On the social side, when not on detachment we usually took lunch and often stayed for an off duty drink in the Officers mess as well as attending with our ladies and guests the occasional Ladies night. Of course in those days there was no such thing as a five day week, flying went on every day as usual. Duxford mess was always excellent, I seem to remember that it had its own pig and poultry farm, so the food was better than some others as also it was at Wittering.

Some of the all male party's could get out of hand with writing and foot prints on the ceiling, less popular chaps getting debagged but the classic involved Denis "India" Clive's Riley sports car. Denis was one of those who were forcibly stripped one night of his trousers and got very stroppy about it threatening to report those responsible. This made matters worse and at the next party his car became the target. At the front of the mess was a large circular flower bed, newly dug and manured ready for spring planting. So very quietly a group of the junior officers lifted Denis's Riley and deposited it in the centre of the lovely soft soil of the flower bed, where it promptly sank up to the axles. The following morning it took a crane to recover Denis's pride and joy from its resting place.

From the autumn of '42 increasing numbers of American personnel arrived at Duxford and we started to see changes.

.At the dining table we made the first meeting with peanut butter and watched in some amazement it being smeared liberally on almost everything even more surprising was to see the "Jello" going on their plates with the steaks and pork chops which seemed to be their standard diet. But the one habit which defeated all us locals was their ability to eat everything with only a fork, even the jello and peanut butter.

Of course as their numbers grew they tended to take over many things in the area. One particular episode sticks in my memory. One evening my wife and I with a few friends had gone to the Red Lion at Whittlesford for a drink and found a group of 169 Sqn. Mustang pilots enjoying quite a party. They were very reluctant to leave at turning out time and the landlord had to threaten to enlist the assistance of the police. However some of the more responsible boys persuaded the others to leave. However, one little chap about five foot nothing as I remember, got very annoyed, whipped out the revolver, (they all carried side arms) and loosed off a fusillade into the side wall of the Red Lion. This of course was reported, not only to the civil police but also to the Americans. The following morning their C/O, demanded the name of the guilty officer and when he failed to own up, imposed one month's confined to camp on all members of the squadron. The same evening the innocent ones showed their displeasure by taking the guilty one into the mess anteroom and stripping him naked. Now in those pre-war messes there was a large open fire place with a quite high surrounding kerb, the lad who was fairly jabbering with temper, stepped back, tripped on the kern, and fell back naked on to the fire! I believe he spent the next six weeks in hospital having treatment to his vital parts.

Something else which the Americans brought with them was gambling on a large scale. We had all indulged in the odd game of pontoon and even bridge but usually well within our limited means. With their very much higher rates of pay the Americans played, usually poker for much higher stakes than we could afford and it was a most unwise Englishman who joined in their schools. It became so bad, seriously affecting some of their own chaps that the Station Commander had to bar all gambling. But by and large we got on well with the Americans and made many friends.

Because I did not get to know them very well I have not made mention of the Naval AFDU, although they were with us during all my time at AFDU. At Duxford their C/O was Lt. Comm. Brian Kendal (there were two Kendals in the Unit Brian and Hugh and I cannot remember which was which), the Flt. Comm. was Lt. the Hon. Giles Guthrie, he and his wife, the lovely Rona, were often visitors to College farm where we lived and stayed there when attending messing in nights. After the war Giles became Chairman of British Overseas Airways and in the late 70's we met at a B'ham Chamber of Commerce luncheon. To my surprise he recognised me at the length of a table and walked round for a few words. We never met again and wondered at times what happened to him?

Lastly F/Lt. 'Fifi' Fifiield took over from me as Flt. comm. of AFDU when it became part of CFE. in 1945.

Footnote Len Thorne was a keen member of the Old Dux Ass. who passed away in June 2008 (R.I.P. LEN)



DO YOU NEED AN EYETEST?

Study the picture shown, did you notice the girl at the back?.....So did I !

If you take a closer look you will see that you are looking at the shoulder of the girl in front of her...

My Appointment is next Monday at 1p.m.

FACULTY TEST

How quickly can you guess these words?

1. BOO_S
2. -_ _NDOM
3. F_ _K
4. P_ _N_ _S
5. PU_ S_ _
6. S_ _X

Answers on page 6

Submitted by Ian Swindale

DAVID BLYTH : HIS STORY

I contacted David hoping to get the story of his service life and his time at Duxford for the newsletter, the story that emerged was totally unexpected.

He had recently been asked to contribute to "Foundling Voices" which can be found on <http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk> The following are extracts from the interview, I found the story that emerged so moving that I had to include it all. The interview can be heard on <http://foundlingvoices.foundlingmuseum.org.uk/themes/films/57/>

David was born in Bristol in Nov 24th 1919. His mother was single, putting David into care after twelve months.

He was fostered by a Miss Mathews and remembers her as a very nice lady, but upon reaching the age of five he was institutionalized at Redhill, David was one of many children taken by bus on that day and remembers it vividly.

On arrival he was stripped of his clothes which were returned to his foster mother, medically examined and given a severe haircut. The boys of his age were on the girls side of the school until the age of seven he was then transferred to the boys school and life changed dramatically, that's when the bullying started. They were made to pay up by the bigger boys, like handing over cakes one might get for tea, who could they talk to - no one. Mr Holgate, the boys headmaster was a bully himself David recalls, and so it was tolerated throughout the school, it kept the boys in order and made his life a little easier. He also had a bamboo cane which was used often for the smallest misdemeanour, however, as time went by David was able to stick up for himself and being the man he is did not bully anyone else.

He was taught how to tie his shoelaces, darn socks and make his bed. He was not entirely happy as he remembers but learned to accept and adapt. Older boys were allocated jobs like cleaning the passages, assembly room and generally keeping the place clean. This was of course at the time of the depression, meals were adequate and if you knew what day it was, you knew what the menu would be - David hated Mondays for that reason. They was never really enough to eat, most suffering all the childhood sicknesses, measles, mumps, chickenpox, cold sores - probably due to lack of vitamins.

David was a cornet player in the school band and at fifteen, not having been streamed for life in the outside world his options were very limited but remembers that older boys used to visit the school in their uniforms and from them gleaned information about the wider world. He left the school to joined the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and in 1935 was on a boat bound for India, landing at Karachi, then spending about a week on the train en route to Rawalpindi, now Pakistan.

Much to his dismay he found he was surplus to requirements as there was already too many cornet players and was offered the chance to be a Piccolo Player! David did definitely not want to become one of them! and so joined the Pipe Band as a drummer.

He came into service with the army at eighteen was given a rifle, put through basic training and taught to shoot. When the war started his regiment were posted to Singapore, the Argyles and two Indian Regiments. David considers they were well trained, probably the best of a poor bunch, but had no tanks or aircraft and were eventually overrun by the Japanese. He was captured after the fall of Singapore.

They were all put to work and sadly recalls that men were dropping like flies, they had quinine but that was about all, it was a starvation diet, just enough to enable them to work. He was later sent to Thailand to work on 'that bridge,' and remembers that it was nothing like the film! "No one came to blow it up ! " Escape was impossible - in a foreign country, a hostile climate and nothing but jungle surrounding them. They were given a postcard and David remembers writing to his mother, "I'm Alive" and that was about all.

When the war ended they were taken to Saigon, there British Officers took their details and then Dakotas flew them to Rangoon, finishing his service with the army in Germany, Arriving back in the UK David was demobilized at York and decided to settle in Aberdeen with a friend, there he met and married a girl - sadly the happiness did not last as she died six months later with a brain tumour. David later went to Glasgow to obtain a passport and from there joined the RAF as an armourer, he trained at Bridgnorth before being posted to RAF Leuchars. Unbelievably - but then perhaps not - David applied for an overseas posting, via Stanmore Park he arrived in Iraq in 1950. He finally made it to Duxford in 1954, posted to 65sqn and was there until the closure, reaching the rank of corporal. From Duxford David went to Singapore, what were his thoughts and feelings I wonder, returning to what in his earlier life must have been very traumatic.



David in his Glengarry © Gina Turner 2010

(Continued over)

David was later posted to Coltishall from where he was eventually demobilized

He has always kept himself fit, started running seriously when in Gibraltar, and estimates that during his service life and since has covered 63,000 miles, running in 32 marathons - Ben Nevis, Bruges, the first London marathon, Snowdon and many more. The decision to settle in Cambridge was made during a 10 Km run there whilst he was at Coltishall. He became a member of the Coleridge AC and for his achievements and long service was made an Honorary President.

David recalls that he met his mother in 1945 after returning from the far east and was not acknowledged by her as her son.



David (Centre) at Bridgenorth wearing his colours



Even in her will she didn't acknowledge him as her son. His biggest regret is that he never knew or felt the warmth and happiness of a normal family life - his philosophy in life has always been take life as it comes - accept and adapt.

Amazingly David considers that he has a lot to be grateful for, especially his health, he is not on any medication and feels he must have inherited good genes from his mother as she also lived to a good age. He still runs every day and believes that keeping the body fit as it helps to fight off illnesses and aids recovery.' Accept and Adapt' has served him well.

So too the experiences of his early life.

Having a Larf!

Buying a large bag of Purina dog food for my loyal pet and was in the checkout queue when a woman behind me asked if I had a dog - what did she think I had, an elephant?

So, since I'm retired and have little to do, on impulse I told her that, I didn't have a dog - I was starting the Purina Diet again and added that I probably shouldn't, because I ended up in hospital last time, but also that I'd lost 2 stone, before I woke up in intensive care with tubes coming out of everywhere.

I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that the way that it works is to load your pockets with Purina nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry.

(I have to mention here that practically everyone in the queue was now enthralled with my story.)

Horrified, she asked me if I ended up in intensive care because of food poisoning.

I told her no, I had stepped off the curb to sniff a Poodle's backside and a car hit us both, I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack..... he was laughing so hard.

I'm now banned from the store.



Answers:1. BOOKS 2.RANDOM 3. FORK 4. PANTS 5. PULSE 6. SIX

(You got all six wrong didn't you ?Me too !)