

No 74 (F) Tiger Squadron Association
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Tiger News No 54

Compiled by Bob Cossey



The 74(F) Tiger Squadron Reunion 12th March 2011

Association President

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FCMI, FRAeS

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AVM B L Robinson FRAeS FCMI

Association Chairman

Gp Capt Dick Northcote OBE BA

Association Treasurer

Rhod Smart

Association Secretary

Bob Cossey BA (Hons)

Reunion 2011.



Held for the first time at the Royal Court Hotel at Keresley near Coventry, guests arriving on the Saturday afternoon must have wondered what they were walking into as the (very large) foyer and (huge) function room just beyond it was host to a Bollywood style wedding with hundreds of guests and raucous music, so loud nobody could hear themselves speak, and that included the receptionists! Add to that the fact Crufts was on (the NEC is just a few miles away from Keresley) and in the late afternoon and evening there were dogs of every size colour and description being walked in the grounds and you get some idea that this was perhaps not going to be the peaceful weekend that we are used to. Fortunately the wedding was over by 7.00pm and the dogs disappeared to their owners' rooms, leaving the hotel quiet again. The AGM was accompanied by the steady thud of an Indian disco but the Dinner was held in peace! And as far as that was concerned the hotel looked after us very well - as the photos show - and thanks to Linda Johnson, Dave Ketcher and John Crow for them.

A new venture this year (and something which we may repeat in the future) was the laying on of a coach to take those who wanted to go into Coventry. And in this respect we have to say thank you to Jerry Murland, who lives locally, for acting as a guide to the city. Jerry's late father Hugh was a Tiger in 1945.

We welcomed several first time attendees - John Loosemore who was a Tiger 1940 and 1941; Ted Edwards who was on the squadron 1952 - 1956 and his wife Ruth; and Tony Ellender from the Tengah days who attended with Patricia Knight. As member's guests we said hello to Philippa Wheeler who came with Dr Ray Racy (a Tiger in 1945); Suzanne Rees who was as a guest of Nadine Jackson-Crocker; And Peter Thompson who was with Josephine Smith this year.



L to R.
John Loosemore,
Ted & Ruth Edwards,
Patricia Knight
& Tony Ellender.

Our special guest was **Squadron Leader Tony Pickering**. During the Battle of Britain Tony flew with 32 and 501 Squadrons and it was whilst with the latter that he flew as part of a Wing with 74 in 1940 and he got to know John Freeborn very well. He attended John's funeral in September and we were delighted he accepted our invitation to join us this evening, especially as he agreed to speak after the Dinner. Tony Dixon jotted down a few of Tony Pickering's reminiscences for us.



"I always wanted to be a pilot and joined as a Volunteer Reservist as soon as I was 18 in 1938. I was warned that the RAF only took on pilots with three important qualifications: [i] your father had to have been in World War One: [ii] you had to have been educated at a Grammar school and [iii] you had to play rugby.

"I was OK for the first two, but lied about the third! Fortunately, no one questioned me further and I was accepted. 'You will be a LAC tonight, but a Sergeant in the morning,' the recruiting Sergeant said – at just 18 years of age! I had left school at 17 when they realised that I was not clever enough to get to university and started an apprenticeship. The pay was 12 shillings a week and my father paid the £1 a week for my digs. I was quite fortunate and was called up almost immediately – a lot of the others did not get called up for 3 or 4 months although they were still paid as a Sergeant in the meantime. I flew about two days a week. The Headquarters of the County VR were actually a stone's throw from where we are tonight and we flew Tiger Moths from nearby Keresley Grove airfield and I also spent some time at Redhill. I finished flying training in 1940 and was posted to No 32 Squadron at Biggin Hill on Hurricanes. I remember it very clearly although I have trouble remembering what I did last week! When I arrived I distinctly remember Squadron Leader Worrell asking me how many hours I had on Hurricanes. 'Never even seen one', I replied having only flown Miles Masters. 'Well, go and do three circuits and bumps this afternoon as you are on Ops tomorrow morning.' I took off at 6am as No 2 to a Flight Lieutenant who had been a Sergeant in France just a few weeks before. 'Sit directly behind me and stay there,' he said. 'But keep your master firing button in the OFF position!'

"I was only with them for two days as the squadron was moving to Acklington in the north-east for a rest. Myself and two other newcomers were told that we were going to 501 Squadron at Gravesend - still part of the Biggin Hill Wing. I was then 19 and it was our job to attack the bombers. Following a sortie, it was always the more experienced pilots who would make the combat claims. We were still unsure of what was going on but I did get a few 'destroyed'. I was eventually transferred to 601 Squadron with the famous pilot Whitney Straight. He always flew with French civilian clothing under his RAF uniform in case he was shot down.

"I became a test pilot at Hawarden (Chester) in 1941. I had by then converted onto Spitfires and taught new pilots there. I did have some problems myself including landing with one

mainwheel retracted – but I didn't damage the prop! One day I was told to go to Wrexham in a Tiger Moth to pick up John Freeborn. On the way back he asked if he could take control to do some aerobatics. He then proceeded to do some very low-level flying. Suddenly 'what are you doing? Trying to kill me!' came through the intercom. Neither of us had been flying the aircraft as he had forgotten to hand control back! That was on June 16th 1941."

Prior to the Dinner we held the AGM.

Apologies were received from Boz Robinson, John and Pat Atkinson, Henry Lether, Nick Spiller, Doreen Haselwood, Sarah Doidge, Derek Morter, Tony Alderton, Russ Allchorne, Bill Mitchell and Ed Durham.

1. Chairman Dick Northcote welcomed all attending the AGM and reunion weekend.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. David Jones proposed they be adopted and John Crow seconded the proposal.
3. Matters Arising. Bob has acquired name tags for members although not in time for use at the present reunion! Each attendee will be issued with a tag at the Dinner and asked to write their names on them and wear them at next year's Reunion.
4. The Treasurer's report was presented by Rhod Smart. The accounts show that the Association continues to be in a healthy financial position and the Museum Fund now stands at £6,068.15. Full details are available on application to Rhod. George Woodhall proposed that the accounts be adopted and Dave Roome seconded.
5. The committee offered themselves for re-election, therefore for the year 2011 - 2012 the officers of the Association will continue to be:
Chairman - Dick Northcote
Treasurer - Rhod Smart
Secretary - Bob Cossey
John Crow asked that members endorse his continuing as webmaster. This they did unanimously.
6. Webmaster John Crow thanked Jim Jolly for his assistance with certain aspects of the website then went on to outline his plans for the coming year. These include installing a video link to You Tube. He asked Bob to give a brief outline of requests for assistance generated by the website. These fall into three categories - individuals asking for information about family members who served on 74: historians asking for assistance with their research: and publications asking for similar help with research allied with permission to use photographs in the Association archive.
7. Considerable discussion followed a proposal that our membership be extended to include those from other squadrons who belong to Associations that are declining in numbers. Following concerns about diminishing the value of 74 having its own exclusive Association, the idea was rejected in favour of one whereby members recommend individuals for membership on the basis that they could make a special contribution. For example, Sqn Ldr Tony Pickering who was with 501 Sqn which flew with 74 in the Biggin Hill Wing in 1940.
8. Dave Roome has volunteered to be custodian of the squadron diaries - very appropriately given he was a major contributor and compiler of them during the

Tengah days. Sadly some of the diaries are in poor condition and require rebinding. He has identified an ex-RAF NCO who lives in his locality who as a former Lightning man himself is very keen to see the books restored. His estimate for the five diaries involved is no more than £300. The meeting approved this expenditure (Dennis Caldwell proposing and Nigel Champken-Woods seconding) and thanked Dave for his care of the diaries.

9. The Tiger Squadron Museum. The situation at Norwich is still one of waiting for a decision from Norfolk County Council regarding the proposed new road. The City of Norwich Aviation Museum (CNAM) is trying to set up a further meeting in the Spring in an attempt to resolve the delay - they need to know whether they are going to have to move to the airport side of the road if it is built. It truly is currently an impasse over the bypass. Bob told the meeting that at the Tigers' former base at Wattisham one of 74's old HASs has been appropriated for a museum based on Wattisham's history but that this will not be open to the public in the way that Norwich is and would not therefore be a realistic alternative. CNAM are conscious of the time this is taking and are working to try to resolve the situation although in truth in the current economic climate an aviation museum is low on the Council's list of priorities.
10. Members have all been circulated with details of the 50th Anniversary of Tiger Meets celebrations at Cambrai in May. Full details of the Tiger gathering at Fairford in July, at which the Association expects to have a presence with a sales stand and small display, will be circulated as soon as they are available.
11. Nigel Champken-Woods made a short presentation outlining a classic car run he is making with his wife Alison in July linking all the bases 74 have been stationed at on the UK mainland since their formation in 1917 as a Training Depot Squadron. Members - and members' friends, family and colleagues - will be asked to help raise money for the Museum fund by guessing the total mileage Woody will cover.
12. Any Other Business
 - At the time of the AGM those present had yet to experience the way in which the Royal Court looked after us at the Reunion Dinner - it did so very well - but members did express some concerns over the fact that it was a large and at times noisy building, somewhat shabby in places and the rooms were 'tired'. This was exactly the way we felt about the Falcon prior to its refurbishment. Bob reported that the latter hotel had approached him a few days earlier to enquire as to where our 2011 reunion was being held and that they would be happy to offer their facilities again in 2012. Provided they have overcome the problems we encountered last year, members agreed that a return to Stratford would be welcome over the weekend of the 9th - 11th March 2012. Bob will explore the possibility of doing so.
 - Members sponsored Rhod to the tune of £600 for his successful slim for Help for Heroes. For every £100 raised Rhod has donated an additional 10% to museum funds for which we thank him.

Date of the next AGM. Saturday March 10th 2012.

Membership Matters

We welcome **Roger Pope** as a new member. Roger flew Lightnings at Tengah from 1969 - 1971, having joined the RAF in 1966. With the Tigers he was an IRE. Subsequent to 74 Roger was posted to the CFS at Valley and Kemble and finally to 29 Squadron at Coningsby. He left the service in 1977.

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Farewells

With thanks to his close friend Roy Good for letting me know that **F/Sgt Alex 'Dave' Davidson** died on 3rd January. He almost made it to 90 years. Dave was an ardent amateur radio operator with a call sign of GOUVQ. He was also a member of the RAF Radio Society and as can be seen from his medals was very keen on cricket and hockey. He served on 74 Squadron from January 1940 to November 1943, joining as an AC2 and leaving as a Sergeant. Dave was a Wireless Operator Mechanic (WOM).

He spent a total of fifteen years in the RAF, training at the Electrical and Wireless School at Cranwell prior to joining the Tigers. He was posted out to Aden the after the war and and back in the UK he found himself at Farnborough (RAE) and Boscombe Down (A&AEE) before returning to the Middle East in 1948, serving at 107 MU at Kasfareet in the Canal Zone. His final year in the RAF was spent at Thorney Island.

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John Bennett (on the left of this group of Tigers, his flying boot a suitable repository for his maps), who had lived in Canada since the 1950s, died on February 18th. Born in South Wales in 1920, John joined the RAF in 1939 as a W/Op before taking a commission and learning to fly. Training complete he joined 611 Squadron in June 1944 and was posted to the Tigers in January 1945 with whom he stayed until July 1946. Post war he, along with the rest of the squadron, moved from flying the Spitfire to the Meteor. His last 6 years in the RAF were spent with the University of London Air Squadron with whom he flew whilst he was training to be a doctor.

John's neighbour and close friend Howard Leigh remembers 'we had delightful hours talking about 74, Sumburgh, ocean sailing, the Sunderland project at Pembroke Docks, the Withybush Spitfire Restoration Project, Haverfordwest in the early 1900's, Dylan Thomas,the list goes on and on!'

The following obituary appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*:

Dr. John Sutton Bennett MB, BS, FRCSC (C), FACOG, FASAS, LMCC passed away very peacefully at the Queensway Carleton Hospital on February 18th. His wife of 62 years Robina, his daughter, son and grandchildren were at his bedside. John grew up in South Wales and joined the Royal Air Force in 1939. Following the war he attended St. Mary's Medical School in London, earning his degree in 1953. After a

brief practice in England he emigrated to St. John's Newfoundland for four years before relocating to Kelowna, British Columbia in 1959. Ten years later the family moved to Ottawa where Dr. Bennett joined the Canadian Medical Association as Director of Scientific Councils, subsequently retiring in 1991 as Associate General-Secretary. His prolific participation on councils and committees impacted numerous aspects of healthcare across Canada and the Caribbean. John's many hobbies included his 1957 Series 1 Land Rover, sailing, amateur theatre, refereeing soccer games, hand carving Victoria style wooden rocking horses and running marathons.

A man of many parts who will be greatly missed. He was always a great supporter of the Association and although he hasn't been able to attend reunions recently, in the early days of reunions at the RAF Club in the 1990s he attended with his great friend and fellow squadron member Hugh Murland. RIP John.

See the next Tiger News for the full story of John's RAF career.

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Ruby Brook, former wife of the late James Brook, passed away in January. She too was a great supporter of the Association and was always at reunions. We will miss her.

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Derek Morris has been an ever present at squadron reunions and we missed him very much this year as he had died on Saturday 5th March, just a week before this year's gathering. He had led a full and varied life in the RAF, starting as a Halton apprentice in 1937 and serving in England, India and Burma during the war years. Post war he was commissioned and didn't retire until 1977 as a Flight Lieutenant, having given a remarkable forty years to the service he loved. He continued his links with many of the squadrons and units he had served with until the end of his life by attending reunions and anniversary celebrations and by his constant support of all things RAF in a wider context.



Born in 1922 in Gravesend Derek was one of two children and he grew up in the family home in Greenhithe. His father,

Arthur, worked as a foreman in the Empire Paper Mills on the River Thames at Greenhithe and had served in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. This was a major influence in Derek's deciding to join the RAF.

Engineering became an early fascination for Derek. He, with his school friends, built steam engines to play with in their gardens. He did well at school and as a consequence was successful in the highly competitive entry examination for RAF aircraft apprentices and went to RAF Halton in August 1937 as part of the 36th Halton entry. He was just 15. During his time at Halton Derek developed an interest in rocket travel and together with other apprentices built a 'rocket' out of oil drums, packed with explosive, for bonfire night. At the crucial stage after it ignited it toppled over and flew waist height for a quarter of a mile across the station fields before exploding against a tree!

Those of us who have been privileged to know Derek will remember him as a true gentleman with a fund stories about his varied RAF career. He was an historian's dream come true because of the detail with which he answered any question. I know from personal experience (writes Bob Cossey) that as far as research into the early wartime years of 74 was concerned, Derek was the man to ask. He was an armourer on the squadron and recalled Malan, Freeborn, Mungo Park et al with great clarity. And he never forgot them. In 2005 when we as an Association commemorated the life of John Colin Mungo Park at his graveside at Adinkerke in Belgium, Derek was there to pay his respects and to tell us about the man as he remembered him.

Such was Derek's long and interesting career it is worth listing here his service record (as he described it to me) which in itself serves as a fine testimonial and memorial to him.

August 1937	Aircraft Apprentice Halton	
October 1939	74 Squadron Hornchurch (Spitfires)	AC1
Derek rearmed the aircraft assigned to him between operations and was responsible for the maintenance of the munitions.		
March 1940	75 Squadron Feltwell (Wellingtons)	Cpl - then Flt Sgt
75 Squadron took part in early raids on Germany, initially with leaflets and then bombs. Derek's role was re-arming the aircraft and dealing with the fusing devices.		
February 1942	215 Squadron India and Burma (Wellingtons, Liberators, Dakotas)	Flt Sgt

With the fall of Singapore in February 1942 two heavy bomber squadrons were deployed to operate against the Japanese as they advanced towards India. Derek, now aged 19 and a sergeant, was posted to the newly formed 215 Squadron on 19th February and travelled to India with the advance party to set up the infrastructure for the arriving squadron. 215 operated sixteen Wellingtons (and later Liberators and Dakotas) from bases in West Bengal for bombing the Japanese advance through Burma and making supply drops to British troops fighting there. Given his knowledge of fuse devices, explosives and bombs he spent dangerous times on bomb disposal as the need arose. During his time in India, Derek contracted malaria and was in hospital for a month after which he convalesced for a few weeks near Srinagar in a place he described as 'the most beautiful in the world - Kashmir, a green land of mountains and lakes.'

Jan 1946	13 MU Henlow	Flt Sgt
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During 1945 Derek had received a two year old letter from Joan Hall (who he had first met whilst he was at RAF Halton) dated in 1942. He left India in October 1945 and met up with Joan in Sussex. They were married on 1st June 1946 at Bury, near Arundel in Sussex, after which he was posted to -

August 1946	32 MU St Athan	Flt Sgt
October 1951	94 MU Wickenby	Flt Sgt
November 1952	RAF Eastleigh Kenya.	Flt Sgt

Derek's stay in Nairobi coincided with the Mau Mau emergency during which scores of people were killed. Derek assisted with RAF air operations as well as (as crew) in police aircraft. For part of this time Joan and their children Richard and Diana lived on a remote farm. When away Derek left his heavy service pistol with Joan, who also had her own .22 Derringer pistol for when Derek was on night duty. Their third child, Timothy, was born whilst the family were in Kenya.

On his return to the UK Derek was promoted to Warrant Officer and was retrained as a Fighter Controller.

February 1955	Fighter Controller Course	WO
April 1955	RAF Wartling (GCI)	WO
August 1956	RAF Sylt (Germany) (GCI)	Flt Off

Sylt was on the Frisian Islands, situated off the North Sea coast of North Germany. Given it had a substantial nudist beach and colony the family holiday photos from this period are colourful...

January 1959	RAF Patrington (GCI)	Flt Lt
July 1961	RAF Aberporth (Range Air Controller)	Flt Lt
July 1964	117 SU Hong Kong (GCI)	Flt Lt
January 1967	RAF Buchan (GCI)	Flt Lt
May 1969	German Air Force Station Brekendorf (GCI)	Flt Lt
May 1972	RAF Fylingdales (E W Station)	Flt Lt
September 1972	RAF Bawdsey (GCI)	Flt Lt
December 1973	Ministry of Defence (Scientific Ops Centre)	Flt Lt
August 1975	RAF West Drayton (E W Reporting Station)	Flt Lt
June 1977	Retired.	

As an armourer in the early part of his career, it perhaps should be no surprise that Derek was a very good rifle and pistol shot and after he left the RAF he continued to shoot with the Folkestone Rifle Club for many years. In the RAF he represented Fighter, Maintenance, Strike, Middle East and Far East Commands as well as RAF Germany. And in 1960, rifle shooting at Bisley, he became Fighter Command's Individual Champion.

After his retirement from the RAF Derek, Joan and the family moved to Lyminge where he became the Part's Manager of the local Lancia garage. He was then appointed vergger of Dover Castle Church until 1987. Derek was always very active in Lyminge with the Village Association and a local hospice for children. He was a stalwart 'behind the scenes' man, supporting local players and amateur choirs by creating and painting scenery. He was at

various times Treasurer and President of the Lyminge Historical Society, often giving lectures and presentations on a multitude of subjects. In addition, he became very involved with the RAF Association in Folkestone, becoming its President for a time as well as editor of the local RAFA publication which he named "The Flypaper." For his own enjoyment he had a keen interest for many years in sketching and painting, at which he was accomplished. He read copiously and was not restricted by the subject matter and was also a lover of music.

Our thoughts and condolences go to his children Diana, Richard and Timothy and their families. My thanks go to Richard for his help with this celebration of Derek's life.

RIP Derek. A fine old Tiger and a true gentleman.

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Help Please.

Edward Giles

'I am writing to enquire about any information you may or may not have on my father, Edward Frederick George Giles, who passed away a short while ago. He was a very secretive man, not telling his family a lot. I do however remember him showing me a badge with a tiger on it and him telling me about serving in the RAF. I also know that he served around the time of 1961 and achieved the rank of Senior Aircraftsman. I remember him telling me about the first plane he went up in, which was the Gloster Meteor, which he called the 'Meatbox.' This is about all I know about his life in the RAF, so any information you can give me will be brilliant.

Pete Giles.'

I have no information about Edward Giles but some of you would have served with him. If you do remember him please contact secretary@74squadron.org.uk.

Horace Moore

'I'm not sure if you can help me as I have very little background information but here goes. My partner's father served with 74 Tiger Squadron during 1941 to 1945. His name was Horace Moore from Ansley near Coventry. Would you have any record of him, i.e. a list of his squadron with his name included, a photo may be? Shaun (his son) will be 50 this year and I would love to give him something associated with his father's past service. His father did once have a pin badge for the Tigers but unfortunately this was stolen just before his death. It would mean so much to him if you were able to just give us some sort of squadron listing or anything similar.

Debbie Ball.'

Again unfortunately I have no information about Horace but if anyone can help please contact secretary@74squadron.org.uk.

Earthquake

Disaster struck Christchurch New Zealand again on February 21st when another earthquake hit the city, this time with even more devastating results and a great loss of life. At times like these our thoughts always turn to those affected and particularly to those we know who live there. In the Association's case this includes Ian and Heather Cadwallader who for the second time in months have had their lives disrupted. Ian's first communication with us, and with all those who had been in touch enquiring after the Cadwallader's well being, painted the picture.

February 23rd

Hi Folks,

Sorry it has taken a while for us to answer your e mails which we are extremely grateful for - you have no idea how wonderful it is to have such great friends from so long ago, but so far away. Anyway, we are both OK and the little house we were renting in Christchurch seems to be alright, but now that's the second house we cannot live in because there is no water or sewage. Our own house in Kaiapoi doesn't seem to have any more damage, just more horrible liquefaction come up around it. We are currently bunking with daughter Karen and family at Rangiora which is about 30 kms north of Christchurch and far enough away not to have suffered any damage, but we can still feel the aftershocks.

March 18th

We have now completed our fourth move since last September but this should be the last one for some time. We have decided to try and settle in the Nelson area, so have moved all our belongings to a lock-up in Richmond and are renting until such time as we recover the value of our home in Kaiapoi and then we will look to buy a small house in the Nelson region and go back to the quiet retired life we were enjoying up to September 4th 2010 [the date of the first earthquake].

Thank you all very much for your encouraging E mails over the last few months and as we have said before we consider ourselves very lucky to have so many great friends, but we always keep in mind there are many people so much worse off than us.

Ian and Heather.

We have other Association members who also live in New Zealand. Perhaps they could let us know whether the earthquakes have affected them.

St George's Chapel. Biggin Hill

74 is one of thirty two squadrons (of the fifty three which made up 11 Group) which still has a squadron Association and the Friends of St Georges would dearly like to hear from anyone who served at Biggin as part of 11 Group so that individual stories can be entered in their archives. If you can help, you can contact **Geoff Greensmith** of the Friends of St Georges at **Main Road, Biggin Hill, Kent, TN16 3EJ**. Thank you.

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Singers 2009

This is certainly a case of better late than never! 18 months ago **George Woodhall** and his wife Christine together with Big Johnny Johnstone, wife Linda and their daughter Caryn, Pete Johnstone and Carole and Bill Cunningham returned to Singapore to see if it had changed much since their days at Tengah (this was Pete, Johnny and Linda's second such trip). With apologies to George for the considerable delay in publishing his account of their holiday.

Little did I believe that when I departed 74 Squadron and Singapore in 1970 that I would ever return. The distance and cost to undertake such a return journey would, at that time, have put it into the realms of fantasy. How times can change. It was with, I feel sure, eager anticipation that we all looked forward to March 2009 and the Association Reunion at Warwick and a more distant reunion, Singapore 2009. This for me would be a journey back



to my youth. Who said mis-spent? Not that my youth could be regained but there was a good possibility, for those of us who had not returned in recent times, that disappointment may be in store when our memories failed to match the reality of 40 years ago. So folk came from all corners of the globe - well actually Fife, Bedfordshire and Rutland, via London, Dubai and Amsterdam - to join in this walk down memory lane.

21st June 2009 found us established at the Bayview Hotel in Bencoolen Street. This was found to be extremely well located for expeditions for all purposes. Shopping, just walking, feeding, drinking and tourism in general. After what were quite long journeys to this paradise, a minimum of 13 hours direct for some and 16 plus for those having a stop on the way, day one was taken at a leisurely pace and

time spent around the roof-top pool. For those of us who were single 'back in the good old

days' the then downtown Singapore was now a bit of a mystery, even more so in daylight. The Singapore of 2009 is a much changed place from 1967-70 but fortunately only for the better. A walk around Arab Street and Little India gave a sense of what Singapore is really about. Clean and orderly. They are not a reflection of the places they are named after. The people have their culture but they have to do things the Singapore way.

On day two, with energy levels back to normal, we were anxious to see what the leisure resort of Sentosa Island had in store. Something for everybody hopefully. A taxi ride through the rush hour traffic took us to Mount Faber, where those without a head for heights were not particularly looking forward to the cable car ride over to Sentosa. But how could anyone pass up the opportunity to see the main island and the resort island from such a magnificent vantage point? The weather was clear and the horizon was well in the distance. The view shows the amount of building that has gone on and is still going on in Singapore. It is quite amazing that the city still has so much to offer even when they seem to have the builders in everywhere. The expansion on Sentosa Island is incredible. This



resort does not disappoint. Escalators to save you the trouble of steps, free buses to access the different beaches and attractions. A monorail to whisk you off the island if one trip on the cable car was enough. The highlight for some of us had to be an encounter with a Segway. What is that you might ask? It is eco-travel and a whole lot of fun. A two wheeled self-balancing electric vehicle (below left). It takes seconds to master and then the fun begins. A 40-minute

trip along the paths and beach of Sentosa leave you wanting for more. The second most popular ride had to be the luge (below right). A concrete helter-skelter, exciting, but far less dangerous than the real thing. Some people could not hide their joy!



Now one thing that most of us associate with Singapore is the Tiger. So it goes without saying that a return visit the Tiger Balm Gardens was something not to be missed. It is still very memorable, especially in the rain. With the growth of Singapore everything now appears to be in a relatively built up area. Although the facility is a bit rundown efforts are being made to restore the exhibits. It was worth the effort of getting there.

To add a little bit of variation to the holiday some of us travelled to Kuala Lumpur and the Swiss Garden Hotel for a few days whilst the remainder carried on discovering Singapore. Having gone through health screening on arrival in Singapore for the possibility of bringing in H1N1 (swine flu) by walking past a thermal imaging camera and someone monitoring a display, it was a little bit of a surprise to be checked again, the Malaysian way. This involved completing a health declaration and queuing to have a thermometer inserted into your ear. Now this difference in achieving the same result demonstrates the difference between Singapore and Malaysia.

The train journey from Keppel Road Station in Singapore to the Central Kuala Lumpur station only took seven hours and gave us the opportunity to see the countryside. Like any similar train journey taken in the UK and all over the world you usually also see the worst bits such as the mess that is people's back gardens and industrial areas that do not have a tidiness ethic because that would cost both time and money. The train itself did not quite match the images on the internet and the on-board film *Hell Boy* was shown twice on the way up and on the return. Should the passengers have had a whip round to buy KTMB (Malaysia Railways) another DVD! The really good bit though is that a ticket from KL to Singapore only cost about £6.50 for a single in second class with air-con. Bargain!



How can one describe Kuala Lumpur? I think that from a distance it looks just like Singapore but up close it is very much less organised and tidy. The traffic is absolutely manic with thousands of mopeds which feel that they have just as much right on the pavement as on the road. Faced with a red light they just have to find another way to maintain progress. What Kuala Lumpur and Singapore do have in common is a public transport system (rail and underground and monorail too in KL) that is very efficient, clean and cheap. The main reason for visiting KL was the Petronas Towers. They are a fantastic construction and are staggering to look at. If you get up early enough and join the long and somewhat disorganised but friendly queue you can obtain a free ticket for the journey up to the 42nd floor Sky Bridge. You do not have much time to take in the view but then again

There probably never could be. What you need is all day.

One quick way to see everything is to hop on a bus. This we duly did one day and hopped off again, as many times as we liked. The route took in all the major sights - Chinatown, National Museum, Bird Park, National Palace, Petronas Towers and stops for shopping etc. If you time it right for lunch you can enjoy this before a walk in the immaculate gardens at the towers and hop back on the bus. A real highlight of the time spent in KL was a tour which included the Batu Caves. A 400 million year old limestone massif with 272 steps leading up to 113 year old Hindu temple. It was raining, it was hot, it was very humid and it just had to be done. It is amazing how quickly you can get up 272 steps if you want. It was extremely tricky coming down 272 wet steps though!

You really do not want to know about the train journey back to Singapore. We got there. A safe return to the Bayview and those who had remained in Singapore were found to still be in one piece and none the worse for wear.

Various adventures had still to be completed and time was now getting short. Whilst a group went to admire the wildlife at the Jurong Bird Park others went via Changi Ferry in a bum boat (not quite so bad as it sounds!) to an off shore island called Pulau Ubin, a nature reserve, that has seen a large amount of quarrying for granite since the 1800s but which ended in 1999. These quarries have now become lakes and the wildlife and vegetation have



recovered. The outstanding area is Chek Jawa, a wetland reserve. It is mainly made up of mangrove swamp and has a lookout point affording good views of the reserve and a suspended boardwalk around a bay. There is a road system on the island which allows you, having hired a bike in the village, to access most of it. While we were cycling around great crashing sounds had been heard from all directions and one assumes that it must be something to do with what goes on in the jungle.

We came across this couple, a middle-aged woman and man, stood around a pile of durian. A conversation was struck up about this wondrous fruit when there was another almighty crash close by and the man disappeared into the forest. Upon his return (empty handed) he offered a taster from one of the piled up durian. I was now faced with the durian I had tasted when at Tengah 40 years ago. The fruit had that not quite firm appearance that I remembered. This could not have been any fresher and had a more distinct initial taste, slightly cheesy, but then followed that nice creamy flavour. I had to decline the free offer of fruit to take away. The Durian is not acceptable on public transport and we had a bus and MRT to catch.

Most of us at some time have managed a trip, possibly under duress, to a botanic garden, but was not something done 40 years ago because there was no bar. The Singapore Botanic Gardens is, we all agreed, a beautiful place to visit. Unlike most other botanic gardens you might get to see, here everything is outside and not in a hot house. Outside is the hot house. The 'jewel in the crown' as far as the authorities are concerned is the Orchid House. They have over a 1,000 species and 2,100 hybrids.

A trip that we all took together was a cruise with afternoon tea on the *Imperial Cheng Ho*, a modern junk but with the look of an ancient imperial version. The cruise took us from the marina out and around Singapore harbour, past Sentosa Island and to Kusu Island (Turtle Island) with its Chinese temple and turtle sanctuary. If we had not realised before it was now quite obvious to all of us that there were a lot of ships in Singapore harbour and beyond.



And so the time to depart had almost arrived but not without one last treat. Our Tour Manager (Pete) had arranged for us to enjoy a drink or two with some of the staff at the British Embassy. This was a most enjoyable occasion and was a superb way to round off a really good holiday.

As I said before, Singapore is associated with the Tiger and although we did not manage to visit the Tiger brewery we did have quite a few independent tastings which confirmed that it really is a good brew. Unfortunately on this occasion we failed to visit what was RAF Tengah but we were entirely at the mercy of the Singapore Defence Force who were unable to make time for us.

Malan's Lambretta!



Enthusiast Peter Wragg has been restoring a Lambretta scooter in dedication to Sailor Malan as seen on the previous page. All the artwork was airbrushed and no transfers were used. The gold coloured levers and so forth are actually 24 carat gold (Peter admits he did get a bit carried away with it!). Needless to say it has created a bit of a storm in the scooter world!

*

XK142



Ted's workshop!

This Hunter F.6 has been modelled by new member Ted Edwards (above) who has made quite a few such models over the years - including a Dornier Do 335 with its push pull engine installation, a Hawker Hart and a 111 Squadron Spitfire. They are all made from balsa wood kits and are covered with wood sheeting. Next on the 'production line' is an Me109. One aircraft for which Ted didn't use a kit was a Lancaster for which he drew up his own plans.

Luke Barnes

New Zealander Luke Barnes was a Tiger in 1945 and was sadly killed just three weeks before the end of the war. His sister, Grace, is still alive and we have been able to send a photograph of Luke to her to add to the only, one she has otherwise. Luke's grave in Germany is tended by a local German family as this New Zealand news item explains:



Today (22nd November 2009) marks 15 years since the death of our most decorated soldier, Capt Charles Upham, who was twice awarded the Victoria Cross. At his gravestone in Christchurch a memorial has been held in honour of his fellow servicemen who never returned home and lie buried in Germany.

For example, Flying Officer Luke Barnes, a 22-year-old Spitfire pilot shot down three weeks before the end of World War II. One of 13,000 New Zealanders killed in the war, Mr Barnes is buried at Becklingen War Cemetery near

Hannover in Germany, alongside 37 other New Zealand airmen. His grave is tended by Hans-Heinrich Meyer, a local compelled to honour the memory of fallen foreigners, who chose Mr Barnes to represent the New Zealanders buried there.

"I and a comrade looked for one grave for all and we found the grave of Luke Barnes," he says. Every Anzac Day, Mr Meyer raises the New Zealand flag and holds a memorial service at Mr Barnes' grave. Bearing photos of the pilot's tombstone, he has travelled to Christchurch to meet Mr Barnes' 89-year-old sister, who has never seen her brother's grave. "I didn't know there was a service every Anzac Day at Luke's grave," says Grace Brizley. "I thought that was really mighty, you know."

Mr Meyer says he is honoured to give something back to the family of a young Anzac who never made it home.

"I'm very proud - I can't say it in English, I lost my words."

He hopes other families of those buried at Becklingen will also now know their loved ones haven't been forgotten.

*

Tiger Aircraft

Have a look at www.barryweekleyart.com for paintings of *Tiger Hunters* and *Mannock VC* in his SE5A. And at www.collectair.co.uk to see a fine print entitled *The Sharp End* by Michael Rondot of a 74 Squadron F-4J Phantom with a Tornado F3 from 5 Squadron climbing above towering cumulus clouds on an air combat training sortie. Both websites give details of how to purchase the prints

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Charles Skedden

This photograph of Charles Edwin Lloyd Skedden, taken before he joined 74 Squadron, has been sent to me by **Ron Field** in Canada, a relation of Skedden's by marriage.

Lt. Skedden was killed on the 8th May 1918. He was returning from a patrol over Ypres during which he had been involved in heavy fighting and was not aware that his plane, SE 5A C6445, had been hit by enemy fire which had weakened the struts attaching the wings to the plane. On approach to the aerodrome at Clairmarais he did a half loop in celebration of his return but the strain on his aeroplane was too much and the wings collapsed at 1,000 feet and he



crashed onto the airfield and burst into flames. Previously, on 21st April 1918 he was uninjured (despite a bullet passing through his flying helmet and singeing a groove in his hair!) when forced to land due to combat damage while flying SE 5A D269.

Charles Skedden was a close friend of Taffy Jones and Taffy makes reference to their friendship in his book *Tiger Squadron*. He was, he said, one of the bravest fellows he had met, a gentleman and 'a true son of Canada'.

*

School Plaques.

"Hello. My name is **Mark Andrew** and I am a member of the Battle of Britain Historical Society. One of my responsibilities is that of School Plaques Manager

"I have been researching the story of Sydney Carlin, who served with 74 Squadron during World War One. He was born in Hull which is my home city. I have been interested in Sydney for some years but was unable to locate his place of education. Luckily I was contacted by a researcher for the Disabled Flyers website and journal who asked for any information and it took me back to researching and on the Ancestry website I located one of the Carlin family members who had created a 'family tree. '

"The research shows he was one of six boys at a private school in the village at Soulby, Kirkby Stephen in Westmoreland in 1901, so I think his father had means of sending him away to school along with three other Hull boys. We are hoping that Hull City Council will agree to erect some form of memorial plaque to this famous son, who served this country in two world wars.



"I have added Sydney to my listings on the 'Find a Grave website as follows"

Pilot Officer Sydney 'Timbertoes' Carlin

Date of Birth 24th March 1889

Short Service records show that he enlisted with the 18th Hussars for the first time in 1908, but he bought himself out and resigned in December 1909 for the sum of £18. The 1911 census shows him working as a farm Labourer at Fordingham Grange, North Fordingham Yorkshire. His short record then shows that he re-enlisted on 8th August 1915. This is just four days after the start of the war and maybe indicates that he was on the reserve. The army refunded half of the money he had bought himself out with in 1909.

Secondary sources then suggest that he lost his leg at Ypres in 1915. After his recovery he joined 74 Squadron flying SE5As, becoming an ace with five balloon and five aircraft kills. He was shot down over Hantay and made a POW. He was repatriated 13th December 1918 and was admitted to the RAF Central Hospital on Christmas Day. He resigned his commission on 7th June 1919

During the inter-war years he was on the passenger list for the *SS Madura* departing London on 1st October 1924 for Mombassa. Sydney is shown as an agriculturist. There is no wife listed. One report suggests he was working for a German Baron in Kenya.

In World War Two as a Pilot Officer he flew as a gunner in Defiants with 264 Squadron and later 151 Squadron. This would suggest he was at Wittering when he died. His death was registered on the 9th May 1941. The official History of Wittering reports enemy raids on the 7th and 8th May but not the 9th, which may put a question mark on reports that he died scrambling to get into the turret of his aircraft. Maybe he died from injuries 24 hours later or it was simply a mistake on the certificate.

Sidney Carlin was awarded the DCM, DFC and MC during his flying career.

Mark continues:

"On 74's website I found a reference to the school plaque I organised for Sgt Brian Kirk which was presented by the Right Honourable William Hague.



Sgt Clive Hilken is also mentioned and I include a picture of him (left) when he presented a plaque at Aysgarth Preparatory School in Bedale, Yorkshire, along with the OC of RAF Leeming.

We have also arranged school plaques for Tigers Sqn Ldr Brian Vincent Draper DFC at Whitgift School,

Croydon and Wg Cdr William E G Measures AFC at Dulwich College

In hand is one for Liverpool College which will include Sqn Ldr John Mungo Park and five other former pupils. "



Couldn't get one of these into a fast jet cockpit! Could you?

The day eight bombs went off one at a time

A HULL man has been recalling his wartime service with the RAF in Snaith and giving an insight into the vital but demanding day-to-day duties carried out by the ground crews.

Arthur Westerhoff, now 89, also endured a brush with officialdom after eight bombs exploded during a fire aboard a bomber prior to take-off.

The Halifax planes at Snaith with 51 Squadron played a major part in 1,000-bomber raids carried out over Germany during the Second World War.

Arthur, of Beverley Road, said: "Snaith was the station I was posted to during 1943 after spending about nine months at RAF Harwell, where pilots and crew trained before their first bombing mission."

As an armourer, Arthur's main job was "bombing up" the aircraft and servicing the turrets ahead of evening take off for targets somewhere in Germany.

He said: "This would take the whole day, beginning about 9am to 5pm or 6pm and we were always under pressure to get fully bombed-up before take-off."

"In fact, we were usually doing the last-minute checks when the crew were climbing aboard the aircraft half-an-hour before take off."

"One particular incident always stands out in my mind, and it was when the Air Officer Commanding 12 Bomber Group (AOC) was visiting us to see the take off of 51 Halifax Squadron on their way to knock hell out of some German city, with eight 1,000lb bombs in the fuselage and two containers of incendiaries in each wing, which was the maximum load.

"The crew had boarded the aircraft and one had checked it was fully and correctly bombed-up.

"This was done by pressing down each switch on the pre-selector board, which was a unit for distributing the bombs evenly, and if each unit was correct a white light would appear.

"The eight bombs in the fuselage checked ok, but when the first switch for the incendiaries was pressed it released the bombs from one of the containers, which immediately caught fire.

"The fire tender was brought into immediate action but was unable to contain the fire before the wing caught alight.

"We informed the fire chiefs of the bomb load and as they were unable to contain the fire they had to withdraw with the possibility of the high explosives going off.

"The crew, in the meantime, had vacated the aircraft and everyone had taken refuge at a safe distance in the aircraft bays.

"It was a frightening experience listening to the high explosive 1,000lb bombs going off one at a time - eight in all."

Arthur said they were not in any danger, but wondered whether they might be held responsible.

With the AOC paying a visit to RAF Snaith it was intended to get as many aircraft as possible into the air. But due to this fire the operation was cancelled.

With the armament officer rendered speechless, Arthur and a

THIS DAY IN ...

»1866

■ Cases of the dreaded cholera were reported in Hull at Roper Street, Lumley Court and Myton Street.

»1934

■ The famous Bertram Mills Circus entertained crowds during a visit to Hull.

»1972

■ The House of Lords debated plans to reform local government and create the new county of Humberside.

colleague were bundled into a van and driven over to see the AOC.

When they entered the office, the Air Vice-Marshal was sitting in a chair with his feet on the table. He demanded to know what the hell was going on.

"It looks like an electrical fault, sir," they said, hoping that was indeed the cause and they hadn't "boobed somewhere".

Arthur said: "As the weeks went by it turned out it was an electrical fault and we were let off the hook once again."

■ If you have any information or photos for this column, write to Nigel Fisher, Flashback, Blundell's Corner, Beverley Road, Hull, HU3 1XS, or e-mail scoopfisher@aol.com



MEMORIES: Arthur Westerhoff in 1941 and, right, more recently.



Association member Arthur Westerhoff recalls for his local newspaper an incident whilst he was with 51 Squadron. It's always interesting to see what Tigers did once they were posted out.

*

Can you spell?

The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid! Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihis is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig? And I awlyas thought slpeling was ipmorantt.

Chocks away!

HE KNOWS THE ADVENTURE OF FLYING IN TODAY'S R.A.F.

The young men who fly in the R.A.F. would not change places with anybody. They have all the adventure of youth and, at the same time, the responsibility of men.

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If you are between 17½–25 and hold G.C.E. (or equivalent) at 'O' level in English language, mathematics and 3 other subjects, you may be offered one of the finest careers a young man can have.

If you are under 17½, the Air Training Corps will give you valuable training which will help you if you join the Royal Air Force.

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Group Captain J. N. Ogle, A.F.C., A.F.M.,

Air Ministry (GR 102), Adastral House, London, W.C.1.

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The
Royal
Air Force



The pilot is 74's Jerry Cohu
and the advertisement
appeared in Air Pictorial,
September 1960.

