



The 'Never Again' News

An occasional newsletter for members of 225 Entry, RAF Halton, Nov 1971 – Oct 1973

No 9 – December 2011

THE 40th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

Well, it's all done and dusted! The weekend of 5th – 6th November saw, at various times, 26 of the entry (plus a good number of wives) at our first reunion, 22 of whom were able to partake of both the Saturday and Sunday activities. Tony Killick even managed to track down Doug Goulding as late as the Friday and we were delighted that Doug and his wife were able to join us for most of the Sunday.

For the benefit of those who were not able to attend I'll give a quick resume of the weekend. We assembled at the Holiday Inn, Weston Turville, on the Saturday afternoon / early evening and began to catch up on old times before the evening meal, and Martin Daynes and Bob Couch were also able to join us for a while. Our meal was served in a private room which enabled plenty more talking, before we retired back to the bar for another beer, or several.

On the Sunday morning our coach arrived in good time and we, along with the dozen or so 120s that were joining us for the day, departed for the first stop, Halton House. There we met our guide for the day, Min Larkin (ex 63rd Entry, and retired Group Captain), who told us the history of the house and showed us around. Then we went to St George's Church for the dedication service for our entry window, followed by a photo shoot at the Apprentices' Memorial outside Kermode Hall. Then it was up to the Maitland Mess (3 Wing to us) for an excellent lunch – I certainly don't remember the food being that good in our day! The day was rounded off by a visit to the Trenchard Museum that is housed in the old Boxing Gym at the end of the 1 / 2 Wing parade square. The museum houses a large range of exhibits from the first to the last days of the apprentice scheme and certainly many of the items on display brought back lots of memories.



Group photo at the apprentices' memorial 'The Tribute', with our host, Min Larkin, watching on.

After returning to the hotel and dispersing it was time for me to relax at last and reflect on the success of the weekend, although said success should, perhaps, be judged by others rather than me. Nevertheless from a personal perspective I thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone again and despite having previously uncovered several stories to mention in my address at the church many more emerged – I had thought that we had been a well behaved bunch, however, it appears that may not have been the case!

Several have mentioned a re-run in 2021 and by then the 'pain' of organizing the last one will have faded and I'll no doubt be daft enough to volunteer to sort it all out! It will, however, depend on everyone who has so far made contact maintaining it - so if you move, change email address etc. please remember to let me know. To that end it would be helpful if you let me know your postal addresses and home phone numbers as I only have email addresses for many of you. There is no reason why we cannot have even more members of the entry there in 10 years as it gives us plenty of time to try and trace any that are missing from my list – but I will need your help to track them down. Also we should have all retired by then and will hopefully not



Halton House gets the once over – a first for many but not all as it seems that some made illicit 'visits' during our time at Halton – indeed the bust of Lord Trenchard was apparently 'borrowed' at one point and held to ransom!

have to worry about work getting in the way – even I should have hung up my uniform by then! For those ‘exiled’ abroad now is the time to put November 2021 in your diary for a visit to the UK and start saving your pennies for the trip.

My thoughts are that if we do go for another reunion in 2021 it might be better to hold it over two full days, perhaps assembling on the Friday; having a visit on the Saturday to a place of interest (RAF Museum or the Shuttleworth Collection, for example), and then have a meal together on the Saturday evening and a visit to Halton on the Sunday (presuming that the HAA are still able to arrange that).

It also struck me that there were other opportunities to have smaller events before 2021; for example six of us were at the Triennial reunion (along with about 1,500 from other entries!) in 2010. We could look to have a bit of a get together in conjunction with the next one on 21st September 2013, which is pretty close to the 40th anniversary of passing out. The HAA is also organizing a 90th anniversary of the apprentice scheme celebration at the Halton Grove, within the National Arboretum site in Staffordshire, on 12th May 2012 and I’m looking to try and get to that – is anyone else be interested? Attendance at the Triennial and 90th anniversary event is restricted to HAA members (and non ex-apprentice guests) so join now at only £10 a year or £100 for life membership (go to www.oldhaltonians.co.uk for info).

Let me know what you think of the ideas outlined above.

THE ENTRY STAINED GLASS WINDOW

As you can see from the picture our entry window was fully installed in time for the reunion and as previously mentioned it was dedicated as part of our visit to Halton. Our entry will now be commemorated long after we’ve all received our ‘final postings’! Thanks to the artist producing the window below her original estimate, and the generosity of so many of you, the costs have now been covered.

ANOTHER ONE FOUND

As well as the surprise of Doug Goulding being found just before the reunion I have recently had an email from his old ‘partner in crime’, Charlie Graham, who has tracked me down and now lives in the Greek islands - which has a certain appeal as I look out on a blanket of ice and snow from my study window.

FINALLY

Thanks to those who had cameras at the ready over the reunion weekend I have now have a selection of photographs, so if anyone is interested I’ll put some of the best together on a disc and forward them to you – let me know if you’d like a copy.

I hope you all have a great Christmas; best wishes for 2012, and I hope to see some of you again in the not too distant future – at worst make a note to keep the weekend of 6th – 7th November 2021 free!

Dickie Bird

