



The 'Never Again' News

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

No 14 – December 2014

A GROVELLING APOLOGY TO START WITH!

I can only apologise for taking a year to get round to this edition of the *Never Again News*. My only excuse is that with my interests in the Great War the past twelve months has been extremely busy with three trips across to France and Belgium, including one which was the culmination of almost a year's planning and research to take a group of 22 people over and co-lead a four-day tour of the 1914 battlefields. I'll try to better next year, although I've still as much Great War related stuff on the go as before – there are now the 1915 battlefields to consider!

VERY SAD NEWS

Those of you on our Facebook group will have already learnt of some very sad news, but for the benefit of the others who may not have heard I have to pass on that Gordon Graham died on 11 January 2014. Gordon had finished his RAF career as a WO at Leuchars and had gone to work for the Post Office in Dundee, where he very much enjoyed the mixture of fresh air, exercise and meeting people. Those of us at the reunion in 2011 will remember him as one of the slimmest and fittest looking of the lot of us, but alas that was to be no indicator of longevity and he suffered a fatal brain hemorrhage. Unfortunately I didn't hear about his death until too late to nip down to Dundee for his funeral but I did, on behalf of the entry, put the following on the Dundee Courier online 'sympathy' pages: 'Please accept sympathies on behalf of all the 'lads' of the 225 Entry at RAF Halton who had the pleasure of spending our two years training with Gordon in 1971 – 1973'. His widow, Trish, emailed me and said that more than 100 attended his funeral service, about half RAF and half Post Office colleagues and friends.

I think I am safe in saying that Gordon was one of the most well-liked members of the entry and it didn't matter which room you were in he mixed easily with everyone - We Will Remember Him.

MALTESE 'HOLIDAY'

Earlier in the year Pete Schneider was working (or so he claims!) in Malta for a few weeks and had the chance to look up Rod 'Swinging Brick' Holding who retired there more than 20 years ago. Well, as you can see in the picture, Brick sends his greetings to us all!



Pete has kindly submitted a few words for our august publication.

Background: - Rod Holding: Born 1940, served in RAF 1958-1980 (first as a telephonist then of course DI). Promoted to Sergeant in 1976 he did a tour as DI to the Queen's Colour Squadron (top job in the world of DIs) and also did another tour at Halton. Rod has been married to his Maltese wife Polly for 53 years, and in 1992 they retired to her homeland.

Pete wrote: 'I recently went on a 3 week business trip to Malta and met Rod for a couple of three-hour sessions and he was a very pleasant host. Rod has a very active mind and he was able to recall many facts of our time together (I met him again when I returned to Halton as an Instructor).

He remembers that our first OC for 6 months was Flt Lt John Anderson, replaced of course by Charles Long for the rest of our time there. Our Sgts were Jim Brennan, Les Latcham and finally Don Cadwallader. Rod was replaced after approximately 18 months by Cpl Lodge.

'Rod is totally deaf in his right ear and has to use a hearing aid in his left one. Due to leg artery problems he can only walk short distances.

'He proved to be a consummate model maker and artist, including his self portrait which most of us will recognise and even remember times on the square.

'I took him a complete set of our newsletters and he could place most of us instantly. I copied some photos he had of our entries activities.

'Rod welcomes contact with the 225 Entry (Dickie and I have full contact details) and if you happen to be in Malta then look him up - please let him know in advance that you are calling and you can agree times and dates'.



Left – Rod and his wife of 53 years, Polly.

Above – A self portrait.

PICTURES FROM THE PAST



Here are a couple of the pictures Pete Schneider copied. The first one is of the route lining (or practice?) we did at Windsor in 1973. I was on the far opposite side and my position was in the middle of the road as it went round the roundabout! As the police didn't close the road until just before the cavalry arrived I had to perform a bit of last-minute impromptu drill to get myself into place. I also remember that when the main body of cavalry came past four (or more?) abreast they were likely to kick your rifle magazines, so it was a case of hold on tight!

A picture of some 'happy campers' - was this on our Summer Camp in Wales, of which I remember almost nothing?



ONE MORE FOUND..... ALMOST

The search for more of the entry has gone pretty cold in the past year, I'm afraid. Charlie Graham did say that he'd been in communication with someone else, whose name escapes me (please remind me Charlie and try to contact him again). There are, however, still more than 30 members of the entry unaccounted for so please try to help find them.

LECKIES ANNUAL REUNION

Once again the leckies are showing the rest of us up and have held another reunion, although as they're now having one annually that shouldn't be a surprise!



The leckies met up in Burton and by the smiles had a jolly good time. Round the table we have L to R:

Martin Daynes
Dennis Kelly
Jim McWilliams
Bob Wilson
Dave Moore
Chris Birch
Colin Murray
Robert Newton

A MINI REUNION

Although there doesn't seem to be any great appetite for regular entry-wide reunions some of the non-leckies do get together now and again. The theme seems to be that a number of individuals get rounded up by Owl Hurst and carted off to a beer festival. This time it was a trip in late October to the Swindon Beer Festival.

In the picture are L to R:

Pat Minister
Owl Hurst
Pete Knowles
Tony Killick
Ivor Linington - who hadn't seen some of them since leaving Halton and was pleased to meet up with some of his old room-mates.



THE THINGS WE GOT UP TO



I know that between us we had a diverse range of interests and many joined the various clubs to pursue them. Having unearthed an album of some photos from our time at Halton I found this one of the Jupiter man-powered aircraft. Although only involved at the extreme periphery of the project (it was almost completed by the time we got there) I do remember sitting in the back of a 3-tonner holding onto various extremely fragile bits as they were taken to Benson for assembly and test flying. The Jupiter had been partially built by a civilian chap called Chris Roper before it was handed over to Flt Lt John Potter at Halton, pictured left, who rounded up a team of apprentices to help complete it. It flew at Benson in early 1972 and on 29 June broke the human-powered aircraft distance record with a flight of 1,171 yards.

AND FINALLY

I would be delighted if you would follow Pete Schneider and Chris Birch's excellent example in giving me pictures etc. for future editions - don't be shy to follow their lead!

Have a good Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Dickie Bird