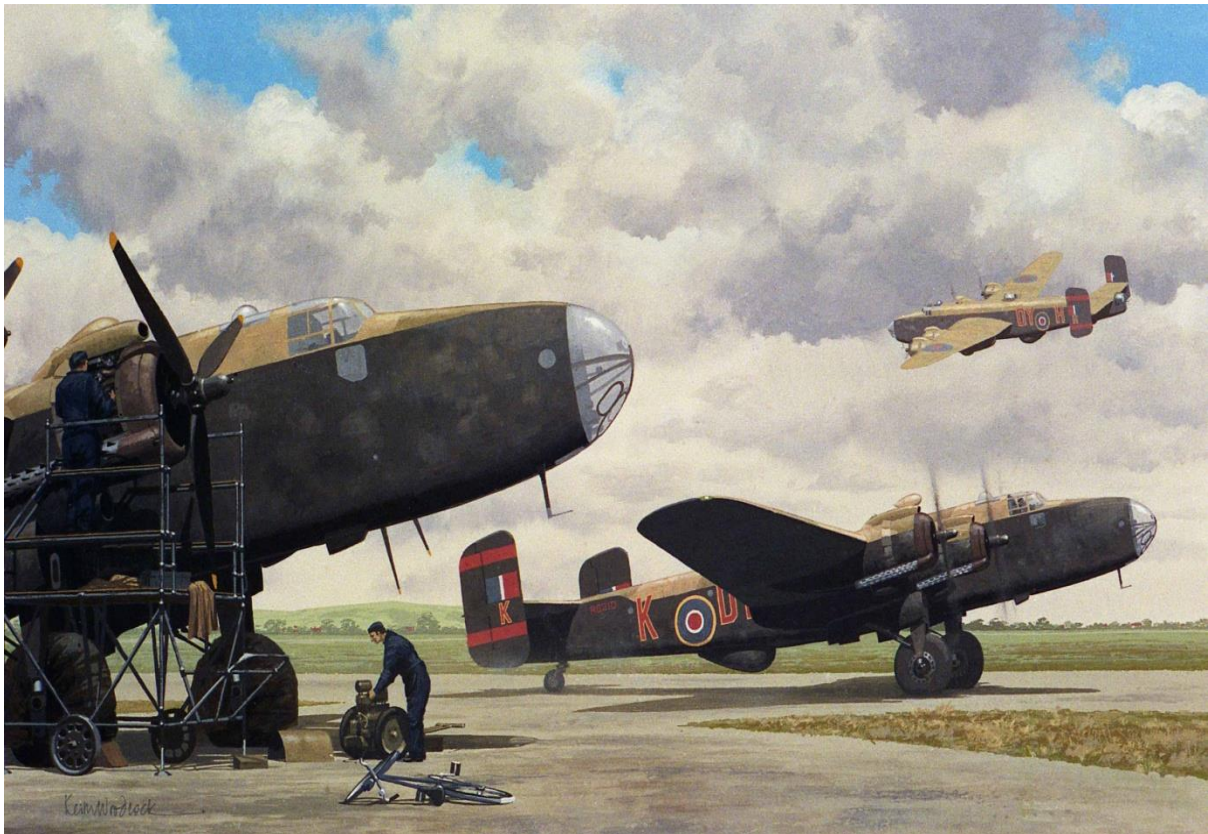




NEWSLETTER SPRING 2022

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



Hon. Secretary Harry Bartlett

Email: 102squadronassociation@gmail.com

Website: 102ceylonsquadronassociation.org

SECRETARY'S RAMBLINGS

Another year begins when we look forward to our annual events. Our Reunion Weekend in June and our memorial visits to France in May and the summer. We are also planning for Remembrance Weekend in November.

After a two year absence, we will, (ferry problems, Covid entry rules and road-works allowing), be visiting Brissey-Hamegicourt over the weekend of the 21st of May, to pay our respects to the crew of DY-R who were lost in 1940. During the weekend we will also be visiting the Central Cemetery in Maubeuge, Northern France, where we have two crews (DY-Q July 1943 and DY-N April 1944) and April 1943, DY-T Graham George Williams GM, buried. We will then be visiting the village of Eppe-Sauvage where our friend Bernard Feutry will show us around some of the sites.

At some stage during the Summer we hope to visit Fontaine l'Étalon just north of Abbeville, where the crew of DY-M are buried alongside the crew of 77 Squadron KN-N in the Churchyard. We will also be attending the memorial service at Abbaye de Mortemer, Lyon La Foret to remember Huguette Verhague and those lost from DY-O. This will be our first opportunity to visit the new memorial stone laid in September 2020 which commemorates them.

Fingers crossed !

Management Group

Just a reminder that the Association is now steered, on your behalf, by a member's group consisting of Harry Bartlett (Secretary), John Saville (Website Manager), Clare Wilson (Association and Squadron Archivist), John Williams, Graham Horton, Dermot Allen and Stephen Grist (Newsletter).

We are trying to look after our predecessor's legacy in ensuring the survival of our Association in future years.

Association Chairman Harry Hughes

Just to bring you up to date; Harry has not had the best of health over the last few months but, after a spell in hospital over Christmas, he is now home again. Harry is 99 years old, and although bed-bound, he takes a great interest in our activities. We wish him well and look forward to his 100th birthday.

Chaplain Reverend Jan Hardy, St Catherine's Church, Barmby Moor

Sadly, we recently received an e-mail advising us of the early retirement of our Chaplain, Reverend Jan Hardy, due to ill health. Her support for our work and the care she showed during our memorial services on Reunion and Remembrance Weekends has been appreciated by many of us. We thank her for her service to the Association and wish her well and our hopes for an improvement in her health in the future.

We have yet to make any decisions about an invitation for the post of Association Chaplain at present. It is something our Management Group will consider before the Annual General Meeting in June.

Membership

As we celebrated our Reunion in September we had 50 full Association members, including our four veteran Life Members. That is an increase of 10 from last year.

Our renewals to date on the 29th March stands at 26. I look forward to seeing our numbers continue to grow in the coming year.

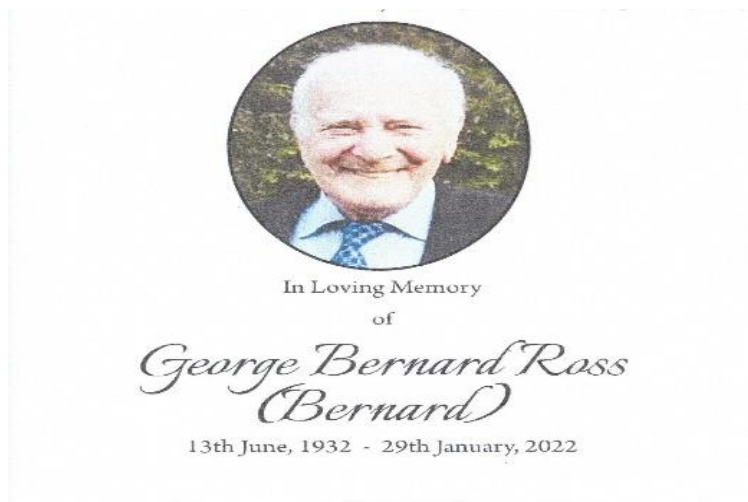
Reunion Weekend 2022

The 2022 Annual Reunion will take place over the weekend of the 10th to 12th of June 2022. A Booking Form is attached to the rear of the Newsletter. Due to changes at the Wolds Gliding Club the meal will cost £25 per person this year. Some wine will be provided by the Association. We are yet to make a decision about an after-dinner speaker but we do have some options which will, hopefully, provide us with an entertaining and informative evening.

FLYING INTO HELL by Mel Rolfe

Clive Farrell e-mailed me to recommend the above book that he has recently read. "Flying into Hell" is a book full of anecdotes from various crew members about which Clive remarks "you can really feel what they went through". The cover describes the book as the Bomber Command offensive in World War Two as witnessed by the crews themselves. The book covers mostly Halifax and Lancaster crews.

If anyone wishes to recommend similar books to Association Members then please contact me .



TO THE PEACEFUL SKIES

It is with great sadness we were informed of the passing of Bernard Ross of Barmby Moor, who was one of life's characters. Some of our Association members will remember him for the display of his remarkable scale model of Pocklington Airfield in 1944, built from scratch using Ministry of Defence scale drawings which he obtained personally.

Bernard's broad Yorkshire accent and dialect is one thing that stays with me. I met him in 2016 when he displayed his model in the Church at Pocklington. His strange turn of phrases from bygone past and his accent certainly left some people confused, including me, which on occasion I think he did on purpose. Almost a "professional Yorkshireman" that was part of Bernard's sense of humour.

Beyond Bernard's humour was his fond love of history which all started when he was a young boy growing up in the village of Barmby Moor where he used to skip school to visit the airmen on Pocklington Airfield during WW2. He used to bring them apples and hedgerow fruits in exchange for sweets or as Bernard would say "goodies".

It was from these friendships made with the airmen and the regular sightings of Halifax bombers flying over that led to Bernard's love of planes and eventually the digging up of WW2 artifacts in his later years. Bernard knew all the hotspots from seeing many a plane go down and spent much of his retirement in 6 feet deep holes retrieving relics from the past to create his own museum and to remember the lost airmen.

However, Bernard didn't stop there. He went on to create and build a replica of a WW2 RAF base Pocklington as a tribute to the airmen and women who risked their lives. Bernard said "This is my way of saying thank you to the pilots and crews who became my friends, especially the ones that didn't return. (We are currently trying to find a permanent home for this superb example of modelling.)

The six metres by five metres creation took months and months of time, hard work and dedication to complete and is testament to Bernard's character and heartfelt compassion towards the war and the history that made us.



We extend our condolences to Bernard's family and to his many friends.

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT OFFER FROM ALLIED AIR FORCE RESEARCH

As many of you know our Archivist/Historian Clare Wilson works as a Professional Genealogist. Her company Treehouse Genealogy assists clients worldwide to discover more about their Ancestry. More recently she set up the amazing Allied Air Force Research Website.

(www.alliedairforceresearch.com) & Facebook Group
(www.facebook.com/groups/alliedairforceresearch)

We are delighted to announce that Clare is prepared to offer a discount of 20 per cent off her hourly research rate to 102 Squadron Association Members. She also offers a FREE consultation to ensure a search is possible. You can contact Clare via her e-mail address alliedairforceresearch@gmail.com

HAVE YOU SOME SPARE TIME BEFORE WINTER LOOSENS ITS GRIP

The 102 Squadron Archive is expanding nicely, however there are still a wealth of documents waiting to be indexed. If you have some spare time to help index those over the next few months then we would love to hear from you. All you need is access to a computer and most of the indexing is recorded on a spreadsheet (a free spreadsheet is available via Google Docs if you don't have access to this software). Full instructions and assistance are given. Who knows what interesting information you might come across whilst reading through some of these documents. If you have any spare time please contact our Archivist/Historian Clare at archive.102sgn@gmail.com

ALFRED “PADDY” MARTIN

In February Harry received an e-mail from one of our supporters in Northern France Bernard Feutry. Bernard commences his e-mail “Hello from France. I am an amateur historian. I am looking for the family of this airman – crash of his plane on April 17, 1943. You can see my work if you Google FEUTRY BERNARD RAAF. Thank you.”

I set out Bernard’s e-mail verbatim.

Alfred “Paddy” MARTIN / 120240 Sicilly Villa, Balmoral, Belfast, Northern Ireland born in Finaghy, Belfast on May 26, 1920, died on December 20 2017. Flight Officer, RAF Bomber Command 102 Squadron.

Landed 10km from Sivry (Hainaut) Handley Page Halifax Mk111 DY-T serial number HR663. Shot down by an ME-110 fighter piloted by Wilhelm Herget NJG 4/2 on the night of April 17, 1943, after returning from a mission to Pilsen. The aircraft crashed around 5am near Eppe-Sauvage.

Bernard’s account details some of Alfred Martin’s passage of the Pyrenees which was seven weeks in duration. Further information can be obtained in an SPG Escape Report No 3313/1265. Alfred landed in a ploughed field and immediately moved away from the site of the burning plane. He only stopped after having travelled some 10KM only wanting to walk at night. He hid behind some bushes and fell asleep. He was shortly awoken by the noise of a cow and a young boy who recognised Alfred’s battledress. The boy’s name was Andre Leleu de Sivry. Shortly afterwards the family arrived with food and a jacket and he was able to resume his journey at night.

Having been arrested, and released, by two French gendarmes he arrived at Sains-du-Nord at the Coolen Farm guided there by a Mrs Fernande. Contact was made with the French Resistance. He was questioned by an English teacher Rosaline Therier. Eventually he was collected from the farm by Mr Duclos on May 26 the day before a search of the farm was conducted by the police. Alfred was taken to Lille by train and then to Arras where he met Doug Hoehn having probably been guided by Eugene D’Hallendre from Lille. He stayed then with Rosaline Therier at 6 Route de Bapaume in Achicourt (Arras)

Alfred Martin wrote of his experiences in a book called “Bale Out” based upon his time in France. “Bale Out” – Escaping Occupied France with the Resistance – Martin, Alfie – Amazon 9781906578510

GEORGE MULVANEY

Matthew Mulvaney , from Melbourne , recently contacted the Association Facebook page regarding his Grandfather Pilot Officer George Mulvaney who flew with 102 Squadron in 1944.

Pilot Officer Mulvaney was shot down and crashed on the 29 June 1944 whilst flying Halifax DY-NA502 on an operation to Blainville Sur L'Eau. The aircraft came down North East of Onsen-Bray. Pilot Office managed to evade capture but sadly two of the crew were killed. Flight Sergeant James Baird Duell the Bomb Aimer and Sergeant Denis George Brailsford the Flight Engineer. Both are buried in the Marisell Cemetery in Beauvais. We paid our respects in September 2018 and laid Association remembrance crosses on their graves.

The Navigator Sergeant J A Miller also evaded capture along with two Air Gunners Flying Officer G S Heath and Flight Sergeant S E Bastick.. Wireless Operator Flight Sergeant L H Whellum was taken as a Prisoner of War.

Matthew contacted the Facebook page after this submission to inform that he had been informed that Flying Officer G S Heath had passed away on March 18 2022. The last member of the crew of DY-NA502.

TOM WINGHAM

One of the delightful benefits of being "Editor" of the Newsletter is the opportunity to ferret out those pieces that bring back memories and that I hope will be of interest to our members.

Many will remember Tom Wingham as a founder member of the Association and long-time Secretary and Editor of the Newsletter. My father John Grist who flew with the Squadron as a Flight Engineer and Tom were very close friends. Tom helped my father organise a memorial trip to Belgium in 1995 to mark the anniversary of the crash of my father's aircraft in Belgium. There was a Civic Reception in the town of Lommel and the whole event was covered by the Belgian media. I have since returned to lay a wreath at the memorial tree on the site of the aircraft crash and at the grave of Pilot Officer Bill Smith who died in the wreckage of the aircraft.

I remember particularly a visit that Tom paid to my parent's home when the discussion turned to the subject of being "brought down" over enemy territory and the escape and evasion opportunities that were open to you. I listened in and for once kept quiet as both Tom and my father outlined their amazing experiences. I am aware that many of our members will have read Tom's book "Halifax Down – On the run from the Gestapo". It is an essential read. With your forebearance I will present the following extract.

“Monday 19th June dawned and passed like most other days with no indication that it would be any different. Maddy did not come home in the afternoon as she was visiting friends and at about 6.40 in the evening Madame left me in order to get extra food on the black market. The radio stood on a small table between the scullery and front doors and being near to the street it was always advisable to keep the volume as low as possible, particularly when listening to the BBC. I pulled up a chair close to the set and tuned in.

All seemed at peace as I listened to the first few minutes of the programme. Suddenly there was the sound of squealing tyres, slamming car doors and heavy footsteps running. There was a crash on the door only two feet away from me and shouting voices to “open up”. It took a moment for the penny to drop for, to someone brought up in England in the pre-war years the knock at the door was not a thing we were familiar with. Now the shouting and knocking was at the scullery door and also the shuttered windows. I switched off the radio, turned the dial away from the BBC station and tore upstairs to get away through the bedroom window. But there was no shortage of Gestapo officers. As I reached the window to open it so one of them was on the outhouse roof outside battering at the shutters in order to get in. I was trapped.

During the seven weeks I had stayed in the house, although at times alone, I had never ventured into the cellar. Now, if only to put off the evil for a few moments longer I went like a scalded cat back down the stairs. Fortunately, they had still not broken in downstairs although I later understood that there were six of them altogether. I kept moving fast down the cellar stairs which were of solid concrete. It was dark with just a glimmer of daylight coming through a small grating. As my eyes adapted and I heard the smashing of windows upstairs it became obvious that I was still trapped. There was nowhere to hide and no escape. Heavy footsteps were pounding about upstairs and voices were shouting to each other. I went to the darkest corner by the steps and there my luck was in. At the base of the concrete stairway was a cavity about three feet six inches high, twenty inches wide and as it went the full width of the stairs, I had plenty of room to hide. I grabbed some beer crates, made two piles, crawled into my hole and pulled the crates tight against the stairway to cover myself up. Two Gestapo officers came down and ferreted around. Fortunately, it was midsummer and the evenings were light so they had no torches with them. I watched through the beer crates, hardly daring to breathe. My heart was thumping so loudly it seemed they must hear it but as I watched them through the crates as they came up close, to my relief, they decided that the bird must have flown and went back upstairs. After a further half an hour of talking and searching upstairs they at last left and silence once again fell over the house. What to do now ? Had they left someone upstairs? The questions were unanswerable, so I decided to stay in my hide and await the morrow “.

Madame Coomans , with whom Tom was staying survived the war. Tom said of her “she was a true Belgian whose pride could not be ground down by the invader. For three years or more she had sheltered RAF aircrew on the run”.

Air 81 Files at the National Archives by Sarah Minney

The best series of records at the National Archives for finding information on a downed WW2 aircraft is the AIR 81 series. These records, for reasons of sensitivity, are only now being made available to the public. Many contain sensitive information on the crew and the circumstances of their crash and where applicable, their deaths. Some even contain photographs. This sort of thing would have caused great distress to immediate family.

As soon as it was known that an aircraft was missing or had crashed, a file was opened by the Casualty Department of the RAF. There is an excellent book "RAF WWII, Operational And Flying Accident Casualty Files in the National Archives – exploring the contents" by Mary Hudson which gives great detail of how the information was received and what happened next. It explains very clearly how different departments got involved and therefore what type of papers one can expect to find in the files.

The AIR 81 series is catalogued on the National Archives catalogue "Discovery" with a great deal of information. Here is an example of a recently opened file:

Reference:	AIR 81/17486
Description:	Sergeant R Levente: injured; Sergeant W Storey: died of injuries; Halifax W7712, 102 Squadron, engaged by the enemy aircraft over the French coast, 29 August 1942
Date:	1942 Jan 1 - 1944 Dec 31
Held by:	The National Archives, Kew
Former reference in its original department:	P372878/42
Legal status:	Public Record(s)
Closure status:	Open Document, Open Description
Access conditions:	Open on Transfer
Record opening date:	30 September 2021

This shows that you can search by Aircraft, crew names or date.

This is an on-going project and only files up to early 1942 are open so far. Of course, Covid has delayed opening of these files, but they now seem to be back on track and being released in batches every couple of months or so.

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Harry Bartlett
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Wigston
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LE18 1DP

**102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association.
Reunion - Pocklington
SAT/SUN 11th / 12th JUNE 2022**

	Please print all details
Your Name	
Address:	
Post Code	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Please list all members and guests with Christian names.	
Indicate if you wish to be seated with any other member/s	
Number of guests requiring a vegetarian or alternate option .	

I enclose £..... for.....places at the Reunion Dinner **at £25** per place.

Please make cheques out to 102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association.

Payment by bank transfer: Lloyds Bank Sort Code 30 90 09 Acc. No. 58698560

(Reference is your name)

Signed..... Date.....

**102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association Reunion
Saturday/Sunday 11th and 12th 2022**



In 2022 we will again be holding the reunion The format will be as in previous years:

Friday 10th June Local events in and around Pocklington.

Saturday 11th June

- Informal memorial service at the G George Memorial at the Beckside Centre, West Green, Pocklington. **1000 am**

- Wreath laying Driffeld Memorial **1130 am**

- Dinner at the Wolds Gliding Club at **6.30 pm for 7.00pm.**

- **Speaker: T.B.A**

- **Sunday 12th June**

- Service at St Catherine's Church Barmby Moor at 10.45am; followed by Association wreath laying at CWGC Memorial

- Wreath laying at the airfield memorial next to the Wolds Gliding Club followed by light refreshments in the clubhouse at **12 Noon.**

- Association AGM in the clubhouse at approx. **1300 hours.**

Please contact me on the above email address if you have any questions at all about the weekend or need help making arrangements for travel or accommodation.

Please return to Harry Bartlett. Secretary 25, Horndean Avenue, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 1DP

Tel 0116 2129996 Email: 102squadronassociation@gmail.com



“And when you come to 102

*And think that you will get
through*

*There's many a fool who
thought like you*

It's suicide but it's fun”.

Anonymous 102 Squadron member, 1941



Royal Air Force - Pocklington Airfield

The home of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron RAF and 405 (Vancouver) Squadron RCAF No 4 Group Bomber Command during World War II from where so many gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

This memorial was raised by Old Comrades in gratitude to all those men and women who served in both squadrons in War and Peace.

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