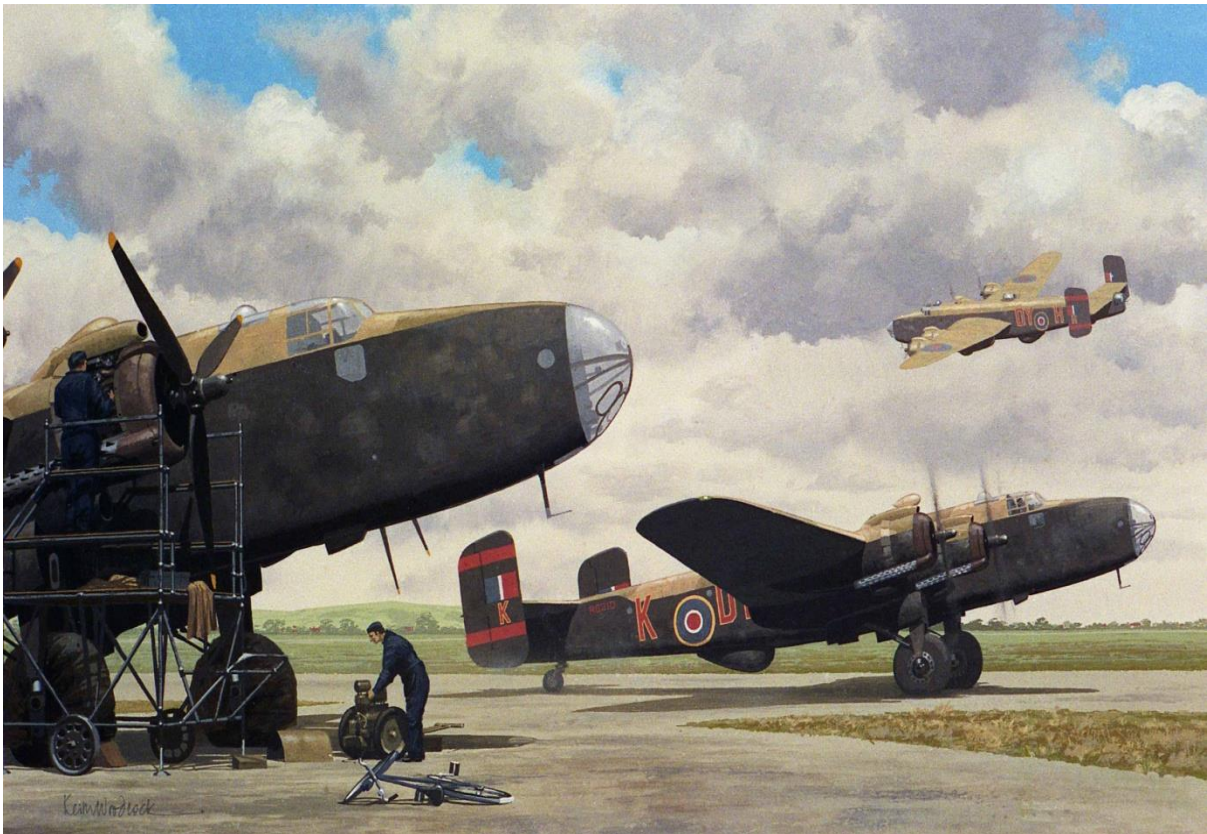




NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2021

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



Hon. Secretary Harry Bartlett

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SECRETARY'S RAMBLINGS AND WELCOME BACK!

As we approach the Christmas festivities, at the end of another difficult year, we can look back, with some satisfaction, that we were able to still carry out our commitments to the remembrance of those who had served with 102 (Ceylon) Squadron and to enjoy our Reunion.

We could also celebrate the holding of our long, long, delayed Annual Reunion Weekend in September and then, with a quick shoe polish, trouser press, and haircut, we could return in November for Remembrance Weekend. There are articles buried within the attached pages about both events.

The Boring Bits!

New Management Group

Following the membership discussions and voting leading up to the 2021 Annual General Meeting, the new Management Group was voted in during this year's Annual General Meeting.

The Group consists of, Harry Bartlett (Secretary), John Saville (Website Manager), Clare Wilson (Association and Squadron Archivist), John Williams, Graham Horton (*I would like to quash the rumour that Graham is only in the Management Group because he has an RAF beret!*), Dermot Allen and Stephen Grist (Newsletter).

We can, I believe, look forward to the survival of our Association in future years with this latest move.

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 will, again, fall due at the end of February 2022 and I look forward to seeing our numbers continue to grow.

Reunion 2022

The 2022 Annual Reunion will take place over the weekend of the 10th to the 12th of June 2022.

Banking

All our problems with the Nationwide Banking issues have been dealt with and we now have our shiny new Lloyds Account managing our account.

Annual Reunion Weekend.

We finally managed to hold our Reunion Weekend at Pocklington over the weekend of the 3rd to the 5th of September.

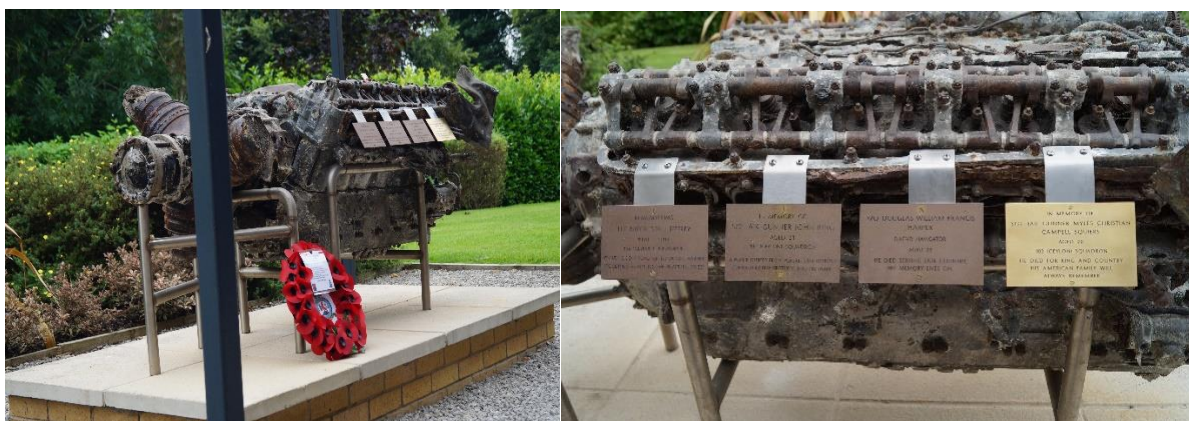
With so many fingers crossed, lucky rabbit's foot charms rubbed and ardent pleas, we would have had to be very unlucky to be postponed again. I was grateful to have fifty-eight booking dinner on the Saturday night at the Wolds Gliding Club, especially as we had considered we would only go ahead if we got twenty five!

Friday the 3rd saw the gathering of the regular team, this time all bar one staying at The Feathers in Pocklington. The final preparations for the weekend being organised, a fine Indian meal and copious amounts of liquid to cool the burning throats were consumed and everyone seemed to be suddenly very tired!

Saturday morning dawned bright and fine, despite a forecast of rain, so we gathered at the Beckside Medical Centre, West Green just before 11 am. where we were able to meet up with Patrick Smart and his team (Tom) to fit the last family dedicated plaque commemorating Sergeant Myles Squiers to the 'G George' Memorial in the grounds of the Beckside Medical Centre at West Green.

Following the plaque fitting we held our informal memorial service, and the Association wreath was laid by Association member Graham Horton. The Secretary said the 'Exhortation' of remembrance.





Following the West Green service, we re-gathered and a short while later set off for the Squadron Memorial at Driffield.



Now, at this point I must comment on the appalling error made by the Association Secretary who, having circulated the time of the service at Driffield as 1245 pm, promptly forgot all about it and arrived at Driffield at 1130 and laid the Association wreath an hour early. Our guests Mary Reilly and her family, having travelled from Scotland in time to attend West Green and Driffield, followed the programme, arrived in Driffield at the correct time only to find we had been and gone! Having given our apologies to Mary, I went back to The Feathers and issued myself a written warning and fined myself £10!

We then took a well-earned thirty-minute break and set off to the Wolds Gliding Club to finish setting out the tables for the evening dinner. With help from my brother John and John Williams we made sure that places were marked, and seats allocated, rearranging them to accommodate the extra Dermot Allen family members! A quick chat with our wonderful caterer Anne and it was back to The Feathers for a well-earned drink and a lie down in a darkened room.

Around 6 pm we started to welcome our members, friends, and guests for dinner. Amongst the fifty-seven sitting down to dinner we, again, had the pleasure of the company of the

past Pocklington Mayor and Mayoress, Dean and Ruth Hodgson and the current Mayor and Mayoress, Richard and Margaret Bryon. We also welcomed the Barmby Parish Council Clerk Viv Cox and members of that Council.



Dinner is ready!

With the Secretary succumbing to the pressure of the occasion and initially forgetting to ask our Chaplain, Reverend Jan, to say the Grace, we did, eventually, set to our delicious traditional Yorkshire Roast Dinner. (Still the best Yorkshire puddings anywhere!)

During the course of dinner, we made presentations of a Squadron Crest shield to the Mayor of Pocklington, Richard Bryon and Viv Cox, Clerk to the Barmby Moor Parish Council, as an expression of our thanks for the many years of support and encouragement they have given to our Association. We also gave a Squadron Crest shield to Patrick Smart in appreciation of the work he and his 'Team Smart' have given in the preparation and continued maintenance of the 'G George' Memorial at West Green.



The Mayor receiving the Squadron Crest

Viv Cox receiving the Squadron Crest



Patrick Smart receives the Squadron Crest on behalf of Team Smart

Our Reunion Dinner also fell on the birthday of one of our members. Steph Stowe, whose father served in Ground Crew with the Squadron and survived the bombing of RAF Driffield, who was celebrating her **th birthday. She was presented with a card and a bouquet of flowers by the Secretary and a menu, signed by many of those sitting down to dinner.



After toasting our Absent Friends, our Chairman Harry Hughes and Ken Tinson who are suffering ill health and those we lost over the last eighteen months, Frank Williamson, Jim Ibbotson and our respected late past Chairman, Tom Sayer, we recharged our glasses.

Our guest speaker, Wing Commander (rtd) Chris Goss M.A. presented his talk entitled 'Why 102?'. He gave us an insight into the process he went through to research and write, what is now thought of by many, as the definitive history of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron, 'It's Suicide But It's Fun'. Chris then offered two of his more recent books for auction towards Association funds. The ensuing 'bun fight' resulted in £100 being raised. A very generous gesture that was much appreciated. Chris also signed the copies of his book 'It's Suicide But It's Fun' including a special copy which was presented to our Archivist, Clare Wilson.



And so, the evening followed its traditional course with the bar and wine playing a significant part in the closing process. The nice thing was to see so many smiling faces leaving having, very obviously, enjoyed a very successful Reunion Dinner.

(End Note: Your Secretary Harry, his brother John, and John Williams, along with a number of those attending, had suffered from the effects of a Covid outbreak in the taxi services in Pocklington that evening which resulted in Harry acting as 'Designated Driver'. This was fine and, on return to The Feathers Hotel, Harry was able to enjoy a late evening drink with the evening's survivors. While enjoying this moment of relaxation John Williams and his brother John had been engaged in conversation by a small group of ladies who were enjoying (!) the aftermath of a hen night. They had been attracted to the two Johns by brother John's Mess Dress uniform and John Williams' posh suit. In an attempt to extricate themselves from the fairly boisterous group of ladies, John Williams came up with the wizard idea of saying that he and brother John had been married earlier that day! Contrary to expectations it didn't have the expected result. I believe it took a round of drinks and many 'Best Wishes for the Future' to calm the situation!

And so, to bed.

Sunday dawned clear and dry, and we made our way to St. Catherine's Church at Barmby Moor to commit ourselves to the remembrance of those who were lost in those war years. After a moving memorial service conducted by Lay Reader Annie Harrison, we made our way to the Commonwealth War Graves section of the Churchyard where, following a short dedication by Annie, wreathes were laid by Barmby Moor Parish Council, The Mayor of Pocklington Town Council and the 102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association. Once again, we had the pleasure of Paul Dyson playing the Last Post and Reveille in Church and in the cemetery.



Following the service at St. Catherine's, we made our way to the Wolds Gliding Club at the airfield. Here we were joined by our Chaplain, Reverend Jan Hardy who conducted our service at the memorial to both 102 (Ceylon) and 405 (Vancouver) Squadrons.

Wreathes were laid by the Mayor of Pocklington, Richard Byron, and Kerry Robinson, a Councillor from Barmby Moor Parish Council, along with the Squadron Association wreath. Colin Stephens laid a wreath on behalf of the Wolds Gliding Club and several families wreathes were placed on the memorial.

Quite poignantly, during the two-minute silence, the Gliding Club towing aircraft lifted a glider over the airfield which provided a very fitting background to that part of our remembrance duties.

Our duties concluded, we retired to the Gliding Club for tea and biscuits provided by Judith Stevens, gratefully received, in advance of our Annual General Meeting.





Remembrance Weekend

Although close to our September Reunion Weekend, we still had a number of members arrive for the Remembrance Weekend at Pocklington and Barmby Moor, most with fingers crossed after a weather forecast of rain.

On Friday John Williams and I delivered the Association wreath and a Remembrance Cross for Marguerite Hudson, (killed in the 1940 bombing raid at Driffield and the first member of the WAAF to be killed in action during the second world war), to be laid at the Driffield War Memorial, on Remembrance Sunday, by a cadet of the Driffield Air Training Corps.

Saturday 13th November.

We gathered at the Becks Medical Centre, West Green, Pocklington, to remember the crew of 'G George' who are remembered with the engine memorial there.



The remembrance group gathered, Jenny Wilson (daughter of our late veteran Joe Wilson) and the Association wreath.

(Note: First right in the group is the Mayor of Pocklington, Richard Bryon, who attended informally. A very nice gesture appreciated by all of us. Thank you Richard.)

Sunday 14th of November.

We gathered at St. Catherine's Church, Barmby Moor, for our Remembrance Sunday service. In the absence of our Chaplain, Reverend Jan Hardy who is not in the best of health, the service was conducted by Annie Harrison who we last saw at our Reunion Service in September.

In Church Jenny Wilson turned the next page in the Squadron Book of Remembrance and read out the late Joe Wilson's poem he wrote while serving in Bomber Command. John Williams, whose Uncle was murdered after safely parachuting out over Germany and would have celebrated his 100th birthday had he survived, said the Exhortation. Following the 'Last Post', the two minute silence and Reveille, Paul Campbell said the Kohima Prayer in memory of his Uncle Ken.

We paid our tributes at the Commonwealth War Grave Cross of Sacrifice in the churchyard, led by Annie Harrison.



The official wreath party, Barmby Moor Parish Councillor Kerry Robinson lays the Parish wreath and the Mayor of Pocklington, Richard Bryon lays the Pocklington Town wreath. Graham Horton laid our Association wreath and our trumpeter Paul Dyson.



Following the service at St. Catherine's, we made our way to the Airfield Memorial at the Wolds Gliding Club where we again took part in our memorial service led by Annie Harrison. Following the service wreaths were laid by:

Barmby Moor Parish Councillor Kerry Robinson

Lord Mayor of Pocklington Town, Richard Bryon

102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association by Graham Horton

The Wolds Gliding Club by Colin Stevens

Family tributes were laid by John Williams, Paul Campbell, Jenny Wilson and Harry Bartlett.



After Judith Stevens' refreshments at the Gliding Club, Secretary Harry Bartlett and Graham Horton attended the Pocklington Town Remembrance Parade.



To the Peaceful Skies

Since last year we have be advised of the passing of our veteran members.

Vale Thomas 'Tom' Sayer DFM.

Tom died on the 4th of August, 2021. He had been suffering from ill health for some time and his family were with him when he left us. His funeral was held on the 31st of August.

Tom was an original Association member from the very early days. An extarordinary pilot, he reached the rank of Flight Lieutenant (much to his chagrin!) having started in the RAF pre-war as an apprentice.

Respected by so many of his contemporaries and our members. His much repeated exhortation to us was, **"We Remember Them All"**.

Tom's DFM citation reads.

"10/12/1943. F/SGT, Thomas Sayer. 102 Sqn.

The majority of sorties undertaken by this airman as Captain of aircraft have been directed against strongly defended objectives in Germany.

In May, 1943, while on a sortie against Wuppertal, his skilful handling of his aircraft enabled his gunner to shoot down an attacking enemy fighter.

On another occasion, his aircraft was damaged in combat with a fighter before reaching the target.

Despite this, F/S Sayer continued his flight and bombed the objective."

He is a very reliable and capable Captain who has invariably displayed great courage and determination."

There is a two and a half hour interview about Tom's service and life available through the International Bomber Command Centre, (Digital Archive), at Lincoln, along with photographs and copies of his Log Books. The link to this is:

<https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/3630>

Squadron Leader Frank Williamson DFC AFC

Frank died on the 11th of May 2021 having reached the age of 100. His funeral took place at Amersham on the 21st of April, 2021.

Frank was a pilot with 102 Squadron at Pocklington in 1943, flying twenty-three operations. He was transferred to 10 Squadron at Melbourne where he completed over thirty operations.

James Varley 'Jim' Ibbotson

Jim died on the 5th of December 2020 at the age of ninety-five. His funeral took place on the 26th of January 2021.

Jim served in 102 Squadron in 1944 as a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner and completed a full tour of operations. He continued in Transport Command, being posted out to the Far East and was only de-mobbed in 1947.

A stalwart of the Association, sadly Jim's wife's illness and subsequent death had kept him away from our Reunion and Remembrance event for several years. He had contacted us in early 2020 and was looking forward to attending Pocklington in the November. Sadly, this was not to be.

*Secretary's Note:

In usual circumstances where the death of a veteran is notified to the Association a member would have attended. We always send a Squadron wreath in any case.

Flight Lieutenant Lincoln Orville Lynch D.F.M



Lincoln Orville Lynch (1920 - 22 October 2011) was a Jamaican born-American civil rights activist and Royal Air Force veteran.

Three Jamaican friends decided to join the RAF to fight against the oppression of the Nazis. They realised even though there was prejudice against black people by white people in general it was nothing like the problems they would have if Germany won the war. Initially at the beginning of the war there was a colour bar in the RAF and only white men could become aircrew and officers.

Britain enforced a colour bar in the British armed forces, which restricted serving to men of 'pure European descent' only. The same rules applied to the RAF and Royal Navy. There were some exceptions for the RAF but promotion to officer rank was not allowed. The bar was relaxed, but to protect Britain's reputation from accusations of hypocrisy – fighting fascism in Germany and Italy whilst upholding segregation at home was not a good look.

This accounted for these Jamaican friends joining the RAF later in the War than they would have if the initial colour bar policy was not in force. His two Jamaican friends were John Blair who served as a Navigator with 102 Squadron and Arthur Wint who became a Spitfire Pilot. All of them were commissioned in the RAF.

Lincoln Lynch joined the RAF in 1942 as a volunteer and the three friends did their initial RAF training in Canada and after their initial training they sailed from Halifax Nova Scotia to Glasgow

Lincoln Lynch received the Air Gunner's Trophy as the highest scoring cadet on his training course in Canada.

After his training he became a Sgt Air Gunner 605520 on 4 May 1943.

He joined Bomber Command and was posted to 102 Squadron in October 1943 and on his first operational flight he shot down a German Junkers Ju 88. (However, on his first operation with 102 to Ludwigshaven on 18 November 1943 no mention in the Squadron Operational Record Books is made of this action.) The historian Mark Johnson described this incident:

He was a gentleman. He shot the night fighter's engine with his machine guns, then he realised it was on fire and he then held fire while the German pilot and his crewmen climbed out and jumped off the back of the aeroplane and then he resumed firing and shot the rest of the aeroplane out of the sky.

In June 1944 he was promoted to Flight Sergeant, a rare promotion for a gunner. On 5th September 1944 he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal. The citation noted his "high standard of determination and devotion to duty", exemplary conduct and declared him "a worthy member of a fine crew" who had "defended his aircraft with great skill on several occasions against enemy fighters" On his 4th operation on 22 December 1943 to Frankfurt there are reports in the Operational Record Books of many fighter attacks on the bombers of 102. So, this may have been the occasion of his victory.



He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer 148235 on 17 June 1944, and he became a gunnery instructor in May 1947, Lincoln was promoted to Flight Lieutenant. He served throughout his time in 102 with the same crew as follows:

W/O D. W. Moore pilot (later commissioned and promoted to Flying Officer and acting Flight Lieutenant)

Sgt E Medley navigator, Sgt R. Cottrell Wireless operator

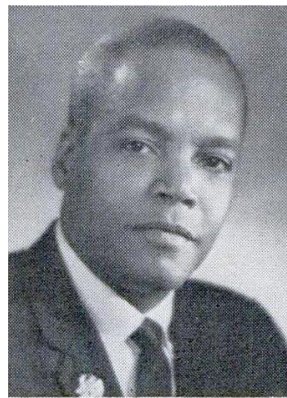
Sgt C. Wilson Air Gunner, Sgt M.S. Mackenzie Flight Engineer

Sgt H. Harris Air Bomber (however in February 1944 Sgt Harris was replaced by a Canadian Flying Officer M. I. Brownoff as Air Bomber)

Lincoln flew 33 operations with 102, mainly in Halifax Mk II's, changing to Mk IIIs in mid May 1944. 14 of the operations were 'Gardening' (minelaying) I presume to hamper German shipping on the lead to the Invasion on D Day. From March 1944 onwards many of the targets were in France and he flew on 10 operations to French targets as part of Bomber Harris's Transport Plan to interfere with the Germans ability to reinforce their troops during operation Overlord

Civil rights activism

In 1951, Lincoln left the RAF and emigrated to the United States, taking up a role as Airline Flight Operation Officer at Kennedy International Airport and settling on Long Island. But in 1962, when his children were denied access to a largely white Long Island elementary school, he took the school district to court. The failure of the case inspired Lincoln to become "one of Long Island's most ardent and audacious civil rights activists".



Lincoln Lynch when he was Chairman of CORE

He became Chairman of the Long Island branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (LI CORE), organising protests against discriminatory housing practices and filing complaints with the State Commission for Human Rights. By 1963, LI CORE was engaged in boycotts, sit ins, demonstrations and pickets and Lincoln and other members were frequently arrested. Lincoln was one of the first civil rights leaders to speak against US involvement in the Vietnam War.



This is a photo of Lincoln Lynch being arrested at the duck farm protest in Riverhead in 1964

In the summer of 1964, Lincoln was arrested for dumping a truckload of garbage at Riverhead town hall in protest at irregular refuse collection from immigrant housing. The same year, Lincoln was part of a group showing the poor quality of local housing to the Executive Director of President Johnson's anti-poverty campaign. Lincoln was arrested the following day and ultimately convicted of disorderly conduct. Lincoln jumped in front of a fire truck at a demonstration calling for the integration of Long Island Fire Services and put heavy pressure on Grumman, then Long Island's largest employer, to employ more African-American workers. In 1966 Lincoln became Associate Director and Vice Chairman of CORE's national leadership, working alongside Floyd McKissick.

In 1967, Lincoln resigned from CORE and joined the New York Urban Coalition, as Vice President, and formed the Alliance of Minority Group Leaders. In the 1970s he taught community organisation and activism at Stony Brook University and testified before Congress.

Lincoln remained politically active and was one of many hundreds of people arrested during protests in Manhattan following the 1999 shooting of Amadou Diallo.

Lincoln died of cancer in 2011.

Popular culture

Lincoln Lynch was stationed at Pocklington and billeted with a family in a village outside York. They all featured on a BBC TV programme (around 2005) called "We'll Meet Again". The three daughters of this family (who had been children at the time) wanted to be reunited with Lincoln. He was brought over here, and they all met up on the programme which featured Vera Lynn.

(*We are grateful to Geoff King, of the 102 (Ceylon Squadron Association Facebook Group for writing up this article.)

2022 Diary Dates

20th – 23rd May. Association members attending memorial services in Brissy-Hamegicourt and Maubeuge, Northern France.

10th – 12th June. Annual Reunion at Pocklington

4th September. Association members attending memorial service at L'Abbaye de Mortemer, Lyon La Foret.



“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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