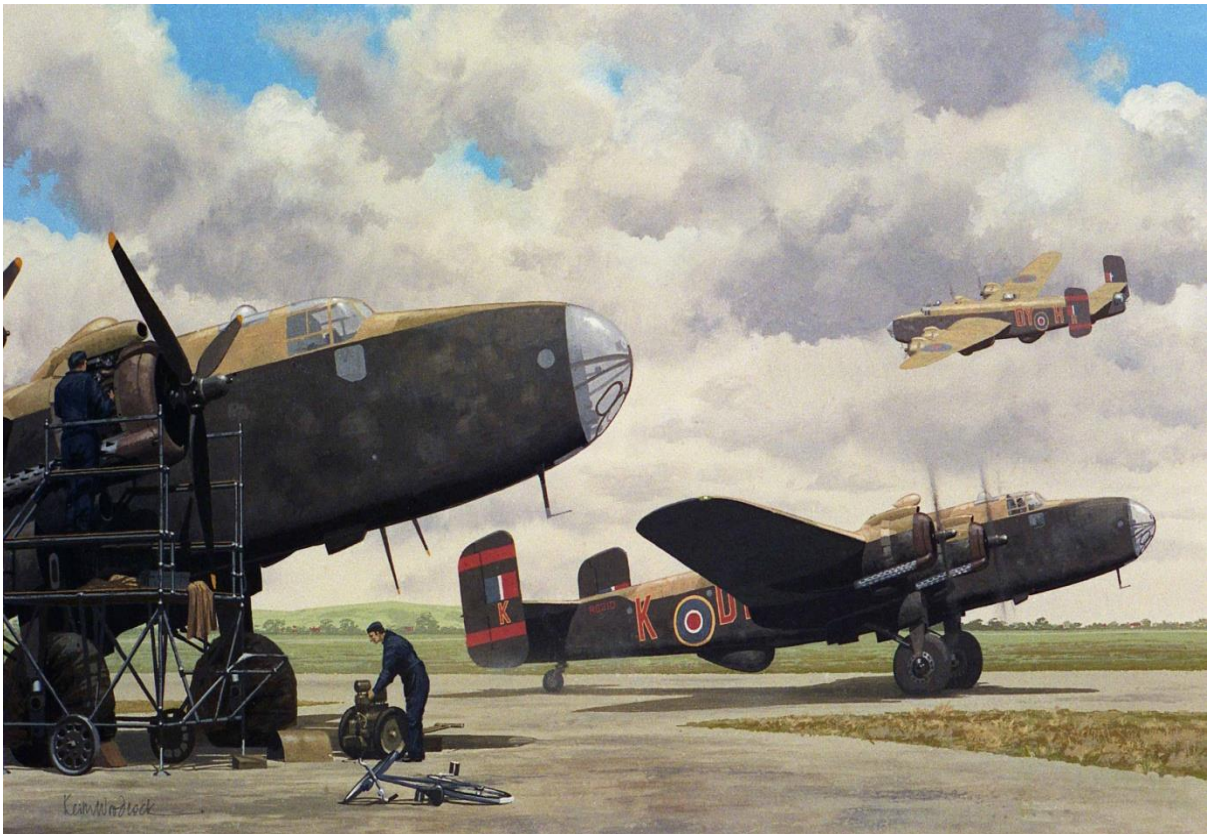




NEWSLETTER WINTER 2024/25

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



Hon. Secretary Harry Bartlett

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Chairman's Meanderings

After wishing you all a very Happy New Year, with a wish for a more Peaceful one than the past couple of years, I must start with an apology!

With the best of intentions, Steve and I set out to provide a pre-Christmas, Winter, Newsletter. It was not to be. Steve's many responsibilities, and my underestimating of how much was needed to be cleared before the arrival of the 'McHooligan' branch of the family, overtook us at pace and resulted in a late edition. Sorry!

Looking back over the last year has, once again, given me optimism for the short-term life of the Association, and hope for the longer term continuation of our duties and responsibilities, to keep alive the memory of the people, their deeds, their work and the places 102 (Ceylon) Squadron affected during both world wars.

Holland (July 2024):

During the Summer we were aided in our Remembrance duties by Trevor Taylor, his wife Wendy and Mark Abel, the Chairman and the Standard Bearer from Pocklington & District Royal British Legion. On one of their annual visits to Belgian and Dutch Commonwealth War Graves they visited the CWG cemetery at the Dutch town of Bergen Op Zoom. They had agreed to lay a Squadron Association wreath on our behalf for the seven aircrew buried there:

David Jennings, George Fargher, Garfield Davies, John Brown and Charles Barr David Gough and Thomas Judd.



We thank Trevor, Wendy and Mark for their continued support of our work.

Celebration:

A lovely duty fell to me on the 22nd of October, when I had the privilege of presenting Iris Jeffrey with her 100th birthday card on behalf of the Association. (I usually visit Iris every month.)

Iris, the widow of Squadron veteran Stan Jeffrey, (Flight Mech.) is in a Care Home in the South of Leicestershire. While she has some mobility problems, her intellect and awareness is as sharp as ever! (I hope mine is as good when I'm 80!) Stan, who died in 2018, was the last living witness to the loss of DY-G 'George' on the 29th of March 1943 over West Green Pocklington. The memorial at the Beckside Medical Centre remembers their loss. This was all the more poignant for Stan and Iris because of the Navigator Douglas Harper. Stan and Doug had been at school and in the Cubs and Scouts together in Oadby, Leicestershire, and had only re-acquainted themselves a few months before! The link explains the presence of the brass plaque for Stan attached to the engine block, alongside the crew's family plaques.



(Iris thinks so highly of the Association, she moved the King's Birthday Card from pride of place!)

Pocklington:

A small number of us visited Pocklington in November for our Annual Remembrance Weekend. There is a separate report in the Newsletter on the weekend's events, but I wanted to pay special thanks to our Chaplain, Annie Harrison, so much for her dedication in making our Remembrance Sunday Service such a meaningful occasion.

Association Callendar:

Following our recent Management Group meeting, our Secretary (and Webmaster) John Saville has set up a 'Forthcoming Events Diary in our Website (102ceylonsquadronassociation.org) under the Association tab.

2025:

We are looking forward to the new year with a great deal of hope for another successful Reunion Weekend, visits to France, with a special event in April.

The Reunion Weekend:

We will hold our Reunion Weekend at Pocklington over the weekend of the 23rd to the 25th of May 2025. (*Dinner will be at the Pocklington Rugby Cub on the Saturday, and our traditional Association Memorial Services will be spread over the weekend, culminating on Sunday the 25th at St. Catherine's and the Airfield.*)

France:

April 25th to the 27th we will be representing the Association, at the invitation of the Mayor of Boussieres sur Sambre, at the inauguration of a new memorial to Allied Air Crew who fell over the Avenois region, near Maubeuge during the second world war. It is expected that representatives of Paris Embassy staff from the United Kingdom, all of Commonwealth Countries and the United States, plus French Government and Regional officials and Mayors of the local villages and towns. At the moment, John Williams and I are attending, along with Patrick Dare, The teacher from Pocklington School in charge of the RAF contingent of the school CCF. (Sadly, the Cadets will be undertaking examinations at this particular time, but we hope to further develop the link to some of our memorial events in Europe for the future.)



An artist's impression of the new memorial.

May the 16th to the 18th:

John Williams and I have been invited to attend the annual Memorial Service for our crew buried in the Churchyard in Brissy-Hamegicourt. Always a moving event, with children from the local school and the Village making and laying their own tributes on the five graves. *(see the Autumn 2024 Newsletter)*

September the 5th to the 7th:

John Williams and I will be attending the Lyons la Foret annual Memorial Service for our crew and the members of the Resistance who died helping them.

Note: Over the same weekend the Association has also been formally invited to attend the dedication of a new memorial stone to remember the crew of Flight Lieutenant Silverman in Halifax DY-N JN948, which crashed near Dourlers, Avesnes, on the 28th of April 1944.

We are hoping that some Association members will be able to attend as representatives. *(Please contact me if you think you can help with this.)*

I will end these wandering thoughts by hoping that your coming year will bring you the moments and the expectations you wish for yourselves.

Tentate et Perficite

Harry Bartlett

Chairman

2024 Remembrance Weekend

Only a very small number of us were able to get to Pocklington for the Remembrance Weekend event. However, we were well supported by the mayor, Roly Cronshaw and local residents. Our ever present Colin and Judith Stevens, who live in Pocklington were at the fore.

After a long deliberation and much discussion, (approximately 10 minutes), we decided on John Williams' favourite venue to get thrown out of, Pane E Vino. Jenny Wilson and her friend Barbara, Paul Campbell, Steve Grist and I were joined by Ruth and Dean Hodges, former Mayors and Councillors, our weekend started that Friday evening and continued in a very convivial atmosphere. The food must have been good because Paul Campbell only nipped out for a smoke once! *(Now, I've organised some planning meetings, but this has to be the best way!)*

Saturday 9th November:

Following our traditional duty on the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday, we gathered at the 'G George' Memorial, West Green. Following Tom Perrin's work in June, the engine was looking very good. We were joined by the Mayor of Pocklington, Roly Cronshaw and Mark Abel, the Pocklington Royal British Legion Standard Bearer, for this poignant, informal, remembrance event.



The wreath laying party for 'G George'



The Mayor Roly Cronshaw
lays Pocklington TC wreath

Steve Grist lays the Association wreath

Following our duties at the 'G George' Memorial, we moved on to the Pocklington Burial Ground where we have seven Squadron aircrew interred.



The formal party.



The silence.



The Mayor lays our wreath



Individual remembrance crosses are laid on the graves.

Sunday the 10th of November. Remembrance Sunday. Contrary to the dire weather forecast, we assembled at St. Catherine's Church in Barmby Moor for our part in the Remembrance Sunday Service in overcast and damp weather. Assisted by our Chaplain, Annie Harrison, the Service was conducted by the Reverend Mark Poole. Reverend Mark made the service very relevant to our losses and to our duties of remembrance in his theme of 'The Silence'.

Supported magnificently by Standard Bearers and Cadets from Pocklington School CCF, commanded by Patrick Dare, including international students, representatives from Barmby Moor Parish Council, Pocklington Town Council and members of the Parish, St. Catherine's Church was full to bursting. Extra chairs being placed in the foyer and entrance of the Church!

Two of the Cadet Force, Aaliyah Newton and Desire Mustapha, read the poem, "The Crew from 102" by C.K. (Bill) Prime, as part of our Service. The page in the Roll of Honour was turned by Association member Alma Dodd, 93 years, whose brother David was killed in May 1940 and is buried in the Churchyard at Brissy-Hamegicourt, near Saint Quentin, France.

Our stalwart member, Steve Grist, did one of the readings before the 'Last Post', played as last year by Tom Taylor, and the two minute silence. After the Service, we gathered in the Commonwealth War Graves section of the Churchyard where we held our Memorial Service at the Cross of Sacrifice.



The Service.



The Pocklington School CCF Honour Guard.



Barmby Moor PC wreath.



Richard Bryon lays the Pocklington TC wreath.



The District Council wreath.



Paul Campbell lays the Association wreath.

For many reasons we were a very small party of Association members this year, but the support for this special national day of remembrance by the Parishioners and visitors at Barmby Moor made it an emotional and humbling experience.

The Airfield Memorial:

Leaving St. Catherine's Church, many of us made our way to the remains of the airfield at Pocklington for our service at the joint 102 (Ceylon) and 405 (Vancouver) Squadrons Memorial by the Wolds Gliding Club. The wind

reminding us of the well planned location for an airfield, was at least forgiving during the service. (A fitting test for our Chaplain's new cloak!)

Led through this final Remembrance Service by our Chaplain Annie Harrison, we laid our wreaths and family tributes.



Our Chaplain leads our service.



The Honour Guard at the memorial



The Airfield wreath laying party.



Pocklington TC wreath is laid.



Barmby Moor PC wreath is laid. Steve Grist lays the Association wreath.

And so, our weekend ended! After tea and biscuits in the gliding Club we dispersed, to return in 2025 for our Reunion and Remembrance Weekend again.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Recently, Lincoln Wilson, the nephew of our archivist Clare Wilson, began working towards his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award by volunteering with the Squadron Association. Over the next few months, he will focus on indexing historical newspaper articles for our archive.

Starting with newspapers from 1939, Lincoln has been downloading articles related to 102 Squadron using newspaper archive access provided by Clare's business. He is indexing names, dates, and other details into the archive spreadsheet, showcasing his technical expertise.

Interestingly, Lincoln has discovered that modern school pupils are less familiar with newspapers, making this aspect of the task particularly fascinating. His contributions are invaluable in preserving the squadron's history for future generations.

His efforts not only support the squadron's legacy but also demonstrate how new generations can engage with and preserve historical records.

R.A.F. SPORTS AT DRIFFIELD

The Driffield R.A.F. held their first annual Athletic Sports on the Drome grounds on Wednesday afternoon by kind permission of the Commanding Officer, Group Captain A. Lees, D.S.O., A.F.C. The prizes were presented by Mrs Lees who was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Sonja Nichol. Flying Officer McKinlay proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Lees for presenting the prizes and the officials and others for their help. The Commanding Officer's Cup for Inter Squadron sports was won by 102 Squadron with 112 points, Station Headquarters and 77 Squadron were equal second with 77 points. The Victor Ludorum Cup, presented by Wing Commander C. F. Toogood for the individual scoring the great number of point in several events was won by Pilot Officer Long with 28 points, the runners up were Flying Officer Hullock (26), Pilot Officer Luckman (23), Cpl. Thompson (19) Flying Officer McKinlay (18) and L.A.C. Holgate (16). The Wing Commander J. Bradbury trophy for the inter flight relay was won by 102 A. flight the team being Pilot Officers Long, Poulson, Luckman and Horrigan.

The officials were: Referee: Group Captain A. Lees, D.S.O., A.F.C.; Chief Judges: Track Events—Wing Commander C. F. Toogood, Field Events—Wing Commander J. Bradbury, D.F.C.; Judges, Track Events—Squadron Ldr. S. S. Murray, Squadron Ldr. B. Nicholl, S/Ldr. J. B. Begg, S/Ldr. E. T. Howell, Flight Lieut. M. Hallam, P/O Street, P/O Vidgeon. Field Events—Major W. E. B. Dowling, Flight Lieut. Hornibrook, Flight Lieut. Cannell, Flying Officer Williams, Pilot Officer Sloan; Officer i/c Athletics, Flying Officer McKinlay; Starter, Mr H. V. James, B.S.C.; Announcers: Pilot Officer W. P. Copinger, Warrant Officer Bryne; Time keepers: Squadron Ldr. Firth, F/O Owen, W/O Jones; Clerk of Course: W/O Sgt. Tonn; Chief Steward, W/O Hill; Stewards: F/Sgts. Lane, Baxter, Wade, Dunn, Wescot, Vивиach, Booth, Molyneux, Carter, Shaw, Herbert; N.C.O. i/c Equipment, Cpl. Prime; Team Captains, 77th squadron, F/O Boardman; 102 Squadron F/O McKinlay; S.H.Q. Cpl. Thompson.

DRIFFIELD TIMES 5th AUGUST 1939

Corporal Park of the 102 Squadron (Bomber), stationed at Driffield sustained a fracture of the left thigh when he collided on his motor cycle with a telegraph pole at Pottery Corner, Nafferton on Wednesday evening. He received treatment at the Alfred Bean Hospital and was later conveyed to the York Military Hospital. Park was goalkeeper for the R.A.F. team playing in the Driffield and district league and gained the reputation of being one of the best in the district.

OUR ARCHIVE IS NOW ONLINE !

We are excited to announce that the first catalogue of our archive holdings is now available online! Members can search the catalogue to check for relevant items before contacting the archivist, completing a request form, and obtaining a copy.

Please note that some items may have copyright restrictions. If you plan to use these for a publication, you may need permission from the original contributor. However, there are no restrictions for private family history projects not intended for sale.

This is a work in progress, with more items to be indexed. We encourage you to check back regularly and contribute materials to help expand the archive. Visit our website for more details, including a new section highlighting 102 Squadron memorials worldwide: <https://102ceylonsquadronassociation.org/>



“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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