

**Friends of
75 (NZ) SQUADRON RAF
ASSOCIATION
UNITED KINGDOM
JULY 2009**

Chairman

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Welcome to another newsletter, which I hope, you will find interesting.

WINTER REUNION 2010

Our winter reunion is being held at Newmarket again on the Friday 6th & 7th November, we have rooms at the Heathcourt and Rutland Arms Hotels with those needing a lift being in the Heathcourt.

The prices are:

Heathcourt Double £76.99 per person per night and the same for single room

Rutland Arms Double £85 per double room, single £75 per room

We will have meals at the Heathcourt which will be £22 each for Friday and Saturday nights.

Please phone Margaret on 01621-843935 to book. Please bring a prize for the raffle.

I have made enquiries at another Warners for next summer but the one we wanted in Nottinghamshire for perhaps June 2010 would be £243 per person for the 3 nights or £300 single for the weekend, It is really posh and we thought for those who come down from the North it might be nice for them not to have to drive so far. Can anyone think of anywhere else we could go to for an enjoyable summer reunion. Let me know your thoughts.

SUMMER REUNION 2009

What a great weekend we had at Lowestoft for our summer reunion, I know there were some people who were apprehensive about going to a Holiday camp but at the end of the weekend they all said they thoroughly enjoyed their time there. The 1940's weekend was just great with everyone singing all the old songs and the shows were excellent especially the one on the Saturday night and as for the food it was out of this world with me putting on 7lb. We had 27 members there, with David Church & Jean coming for the first time, David's father was killed in 1943 (more about that later) and David said to me Saturday night Margaret you can put in your newsletter what a great time we are having and how friendly everyone was to them, mind you David & Jean are very likable people. Also thanks to Ken & Ann Brown for bringing Esme Burch down, they went thru torrential rain and had a very long journey, Colin & Margaret Gray for bringing John Gray down and once again a bad trip with traffic and yes Colin lost his way, to Ralph Jefferies who took 8 hours in trains to get to us, Mike Maloney who always comes by bus but had to come on

his own as Pam is in hospital well done Mike, Jack Meeham our 88 years old who flew from New Zealand a gruelling flight for anyone let alone an 88 yr old, you deserve a medal Jack too much for me to even anticipate and Glen Turner the new Secretary of the 75 NZ Squadron who also flew in from New Zealand, (must say Glen you were useless at the Welly throwing competition, perhaps its because they didn't say the gumboot tossing competition). Just to type the above makes me really proud of you all for making the effort to come and have a few laughs and of course beers.

Others attending were John & Helen de Hoop, Lou & Phil Parsons, Jack & Glad Richards, Peter & Rita Walker and Pam Wilson who we were so pleased to see as Pam only lost Ted a couple of months ago both of them being great supporters of the 75er's and Kevin & Dawn King, yes we have Kevin's better half with us at last, welcome Dawn. As I have mentioned Pam Moloney was in hospital and Brenda Parker was unable to attend better luck with the winter reunion Brenda.



Sunday we were hosted by voluntaries at the Lowestoft Museum, what an interesting place so much information and well run.

Update on some of our members who always used to attend but because of ill health cannot make it: Len & Pam Coleman, Pam tells me Len has been in hospital for an operation but seems to be on the mend, not bad for a 93 year old, Len Wright also has been in hospital but I spoke to him on the phone and his son is bringing him to the winter reunion. Had an e:mail from George & Dolly Wilks, Dolly is not in good health but George never changes. Bill Glover who has had an eye operation.

I know we are all getting old and to those daughters, sons and families who bring their parents etc along to our reunions we all appreciate your kindness.

Vic Ridgeon died in May, I attended the funeral and Sheila was so pleased to see me and in her grief said to me didn't we have some lovely times at the reunions Margaret and yes we did and still do so please don't leave it too late to come and meet people.

Margaret

ENQUIRIES

Have had an enquiry from Andy Hall whose uncle was Lester Todd, serving as a pilot on 75. Does anyone remember him. If so please contact me.

I often get enquires regarding former members of the squadron. One such enquiry I picked up on the internet. This was in respect of a Sgt. Davinder Singh Sidhu (Flt Eng). The person enquiring was Brigadier Sarao of the Indian army. Davinder was his fathers cousin. Davinder was lost with the rest of the crew on the 28-04-43 during mining operations. On checking the records I found that member David Church's father, also David, was the wireless operator on the crew. I contacted David who was very surprised but pleased to know of Brigadier Saraos' interest. David was able to supply a crew photo and copies of letters written by two of the next of kin of the crew. One of which was by Davinders mother to David's mother.

Copies of these I have passed on to the Brigadier in India. He was very pleased to receive them. All of this happening in less then a week. My contact in NZ is trying to trace the relatives of the three NZ members of crew. I shall be trying to trace the two remaining British members of the crews relatives.



The crew of David Church and Davinder Sidhu. David is first on the left, Davinder is third from the left. The other members of crew were K. Halliburton NZ, P.T. Hunter NZ, L.T. Scarfe, C.H.G. Boxall and A.C. Howell NZ.

They are all on the photo but have yet to identify them.

The crew are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL

In May I attended a service at the Runnymede Memorial. I was joined by Michael Wells and his sister who's husband was killed on 75. The service was organised by the RAF and attended by the Chief of the air staff and other high ranking officers of the RAF. High commissioners from the commonwealth were also present. The service was very moving being held in the quadrangle of the memorial surrounded by all the names of the missing. Over 20,000 names are recorded. At the end of the service I laid a wreath on behalf of the Squadron. 286 members of 75 are commemorated here.

HAROLD SLACK

Jenni Viner contacted me to say that she had found an article in a free newspaper, (Eastend Life), for Tower Hamlets in London, which related to 75. It was about a lady celebrating her 100th birthday, and it mentioned that her husband had been a navigator on 75 (NZ) Squadron during the war. Jenni wrote to the family via the newspaper, and received a very interesting letter back, with a copy of a Christmas menu for 1943, and a lot of info on the husband/dad. His name was Harold Slack and he served in 3 Group, Feltwell with Group Captain Patrick Campbell. He served until 11-02-46. May Slack his wife enlisted in the WAAF in 1942 and was based at Feltwell to. May has a daughter and two sons who are interested in the squadron and its history. Wonderful that so many people are taking an interest in the squadron.

NEW MEMBERS

A serving member of the RAF based at Honington, Cpl. Dee Boneham, found the grave of Sgt. E. Harvey RNZAF (Killed on take off from Newmarket 16-12-42), at Lakenhan, Norfolk. It was in a poor state, so Dee cleaned and tidied it up. Thank you Dee for your kindness. Dee has joined the association and hopes to be with us in November.

A very warm welcome to new member Peter York. Peters father, the late Wing Commander Vincent York DFC, served on 75 in 1943 as an air gunner. He went onto pathfinders with 7 Squadron finishing as gunnery leader. He remained in the RAF until retiring in 1976.

LEW PARSONS

Lew Parsons thought our summer reunion venue was very good. He had been afraid it would be like the last holiday camp he went to, Stalag 1VB in Germany. He found the goons very friendly and no black bread on the menu. I think he brought a spade with him to dig himself out in case his worst fears were realised. He got a bit of ribbing from his daughters because he would not go to a holiday camp when they were young.

COLIN FOWLER

In a previous newsletter was an article about Colin Fowler who evaded capture after being shot down over Denmark in September 1944. Colin has sent me a print of a painting he has done depicting his aircraft being shot down by a night fighter. He has also sent research material which gives the name of the pilot who shot his aircraft down and his photo. In the painting the five members of his crew who died are shown walking away into the clouds. I found it very moving and quite emotional.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible in November.

Kevin King

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