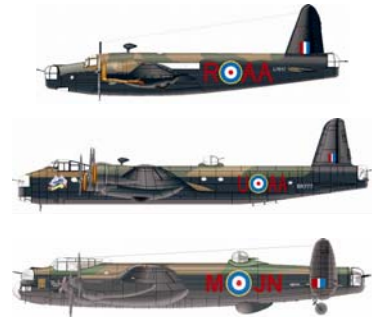


**Friends of
75 (NZ) SQUADRON RAF
ASSOCIATION
UNITED KINGDOM
JANUARY 2010**

Chairman

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Another year has gone and hopefully for those members who haven't been 100% in 2009 lets hope that 2010 will have you all up and running the London Marathon.

SUMMER REUNION 2010

We are having our summer reunion at Thoresby Hall Hotel & Spa in Nottinghamshire from Friday July 2nd to Monday July 5th the price being £240.65 each and this includes dinner, bed and breakfast. Because we don't have a free placement the price is the same price for a single supplement. Thoresby Hall is off the A614 but I have more information if you require. We have to pay up before April 1st and then if we cancel we don't get our money back unfortunately but lets hope this doesn't happen this time. Ring Margaret on 01621 843 935 if you wish to come, and don't forget a raffle prize, just helps the funds.

The winter reunion was a great success with 52 of us having dinner together Saturday made sure that this year we will have our usual room and also we have rooms at the Heathcourt Newmarket for the weekend of November 12th – 14th. Will have to let you know the price later but can't see there being much difference.

I was given two beautifully engraved Irish Crystal whiskey glasses from dear Norm Allen and his family and John & Elsie McFarland Irish Crystal. Thank you so much for the lovely surprise.

MEPAL AND THE MEMORIAL WALL

Sunday was once again a lovely day at the plinth in Mepal, we got there early and Colin & Margaret Gray scattered John's ashes with our own Ernie Barlow doing the service. We are so lucky to have Ernie who just lives over the road from the plinth and if you are a Kiwi going to visit you can be sure that Ernie will come and talk to you, thank you Ernie. It was also nice to see Ron Hunwicks family there as Ron's ashes are scattered at the plinth. We are now getting members who have passed on wanting to do the same and I know that the families who come along feel so happy and sad that they are at rest with the 75 NZ Squadron an their mates and I always find that in the winter the Robins sing and welcome them to Mepal. A wonderful peaceful resting place.

We now have the wall up thanks to Geoff & Jan Davis, Geoff's grand dad flew with the squadron. There are now ten members scattered at the plinth, three have yet to have plaques.



Memorial Garden Remembrance Day 2009



The Memorial Wall

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL

The service at the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey is being held on Sunday 9th May at 10.15 . The service is held each year and is conducted by the RAF. 286 members of the squadron are commemorated here.

INFORMATION

A couple of requests for any information on the following airman...

Harold Kerley, flight engineer, Stirling's 1943. Invalided out.

Goldstraw, flight mech, Stirling's and Lanc's, C flight.

OBITUARIES

We have unfortunately had two very good members die in the past three months.

John Gray who came from Scunthorpe sadly passed away, John did come to our summer reunion but was unwell at the time and had to go home early, and **Ralph Jeffery's** who always came to our summer reunions also passed away. I did speak to Ralph about 3 weeks before he died and he said he had had a small stroke but seemed to be the usual cheerful Ralph so it was a shock when we heard of his passing. I actually rang him to tell him we were having our summer reunion up his way so he didn't have to travel 10 hours by train, bus etc to get to us like he did when we went to Lowestoft, to you both thank you for being such loyal members.

In addition to Ralf Jeffrey and John Gray three other members of the association have also passed away. **William Monk, Gordon Grindlay** and **Prof. Hubert Rees DFC**. William and Gordon served on the same crew. Hubert was shot down on the Homberg raid, 20-11-44, the whole crew being made POW's.

I know I always say this but thank you to those families who being their Dad's or Mum's, we had the pleasure of meeting Len Wrights son Nigel and of course Colin & Margaret Gray always bought John down, and Ken & Ann Brown bringing Esme Burch to us, and also Norman Allen's sons and daughters who bring him over from Northern Ireland, long may it continue.

I speak to members who can't come now to the reunions and can tell you that Phil Parsons is a lot better after medical attention, also I rang Betty Holden's daughter and Betty is well, Len Coleman at 93 is still going strong, Connie Rattle broke her hip and is in Banbury hospital, George & Dolly Wilks, I keep in touch with George thru email but Dolly is not well. If you know of any members who are not in good health perhaps we may be able to send them some joy germs as we say in NZ.

Margaret

As Margaret has said, what a great reunion weekend we had. I was so pleased to see so many of you there. Veterans attending were Norman Allen, John MacFarland, Mike Molony, Len Wright, Norman Didwell, John de Hoop, Jack Richards and Derek Morris.

I have received an email from Glen Turner with regard to Flt.Sgt. Henry Hiscox, whose grave is in Beesel, Holland. A local lady, Mrs Tiny Claessen, has tended the grave for over 40 years. She has just been given a letter of thanks from the RAF, and not before time. It is my intention to present her with a squadron plaque with a letter of gratitude on behalf of the association for the years in which she has looked after Henry's grave.

GENERAL

Ernie Barlow has become the association's chaplain. As you know Ernie has conducted the services for the scattering of ashes at the plinth. Ernie is undergoing hospital treatment at the moment. Best wishes from everyone in the association Ernie.

A big thank you to all the villagers of Mepal who look after the Memorial Garden. No matter what time of year we go there it always looks immaculate.

Thank you to Margaret for all her hard work. What would we do without you?

Congratulations to Jack Richards on becoming president of the Fakenham Royal British Legion.

JOHN GRAY

Colin Gray, John Gray's son, sent me a copy of John's account of being shot down and being taken POW. It makes very interesting reading...

20-11-44

Was on a daylight bombing operation detailed to attack the oil refinery at Mors-Homberg near Duisberg. At 15.00hrs the starboard outer motor packed up and was forced to leave the G-H formation at 15.15hrs. We bombed the target 2 minutes later, we got a direct hit by flak and burst into flames, the tanks exploded and the aircraft broke up in mid air.

I bailed out at about 17000ft, on reaching the ground I was captured by a German soldier who was as a small blessing could speak English, who ordered me to come with him to his H Q. After a long and painful journey to the H Q, which turned out to be the flak battery which claimed to have shot us down. Here I was brought up before a German officer.

I was interrogated for about 2hrs and was finally taken to the guardhouse, which I spent half the night, the other in a dugout.

21-11-44

At about 06.30hrs a German air force airman came for me and I was taken to a German air force fighter airfield near Orsay. I was again interrogated and again sent to the guardhouse. Here treatment was better than I had expected. I remained there for seven days, most of the time in the shelters, the USAAF were always bombing and straffing the airfield by day and by night our own boys were up to their tricks in the Rhur, so I lacked no exercise during my stay. John was the only survivor of his crew. He spent the remainder of the war in a POW camp.

A quiet man of courage. He will be sadly missed.



EXACTLY ten weeks from the day, November 20, when he was reported missing, word was received by his parents, Mr and Mrs J. F. Gray, Tweed Street, Berwick, on Monday, to the effect that their son, Sgt.-A.G. J. (Ian) Gray, R.A.F., is now a prisoner of war in Germany. This glad news was conveyed to them on a card from himself, in which he says "he is in quite good health."

Prior to his enlistment approximately two years ago, he was employed with Messrs William Elder & Sons, agricultural engineers, Berwick. Sgt. Gray was also a prominent member of the 5th Berwick Troop Boy Scouts, and latterly was a member of the 1016 A.T.C. town squadron.

A native of Berwick, he received his education at the Bell Tower School.

Looking forward to seeing or hearing from you.

Kevin King

Ake Ake Kia Kaha