



CHEERIOOO



The Newsletter of No 46 Squadron RFC and RAF

Issue No 16

June 2011

MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2011 THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Court & Social

SERVICE DINNERS

The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry

The inaugural South Africa Dinner of The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry Officers' Dinner Club was held on Saturday at Knighton Grange, Knighton, Staffordshire. Maj Gen A.P. Farquhar, Honorary Colonel, presided and Lt Col Francis Acton, Commanding Officer, was among those present.

No 46 Squadron RFC and RAF Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey presided at the 94th consecutive reunion dinner of No 46 Squadron RFC and RAF held at Wolfson College, Oxford, on Saturday. Air Vice-Marshal David Crwys-Williams also spoke.

A WIN FOR OXFORD!

After 25 years at RAF Lyneham, it was with some trepidation that we held our 94th consecutive Reunion Dinner at Wolfson College in Oxford. We need not have worried. It was a picturesque venue, the food and wine were superb and the staff were exceptionally skilled and friendly. The Cholsey Band were pleased to be a little closer to home and their performance drew praise from everybody. Members remarked that it was good to be in the centre of a city and to be able to combine a short break with the Reunion.

Bearing in mind the difficulties some members now have in attending, I was very pleased with the numbers, at 57 just 3 less than last year. An A cat for effort goes to Les and Pam Rockel who timed their visit from NZ to coincide with the Reunion.

The vote for the date of next year's Reunion was for the 26th of May 2012. While many members were keen to return to Wolfson, we are fortunate that the Station Commander and PMC have agreed to host us at RAF Odiham. It might be that we alternate between Odiham and Oxford. Let me have your views.

Photographs of the Reunion are at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/46-squadron/sets/72157627006283870/>

Please add titles, comments tags as you wish.

Dinner:

The following members took dinner:

Andy ADAMS	John AUSTIN	Dougie BARR	John BARTRAM	Derek BENDALL
David BENNETT	Jeff BETHRAY	John BOYD	Dave BRAY	Mike BROOKES
Tim CARTER	Andy CLARK	David CRWYS- WILLIAMS	Bernie DONNERS	Ian DOW
Dick EASTMENT	Bob EVANS	Don GRAHAM	John GREEDY	Chris HOSEA
Eric KING	Derek LIDDELL	Tim LILES	Peter MILES	Denny O'BRIAN
Laurie POULTER	Stuart PRIEST	Bob RICHARDSON	Les ROCKEL	Terry ROURKE
Jeff SAUNDERS	Keith SAUNDERS	Mac SIBBALD	Chris SIERWALD	Paul SNOOK
Freddie SOWREY	Rusty STEELE- MORGAN	Jim TAYLOR	Ken TEAL	Mike TOM
Dick WARD	Tony WARNER	Jim WHITE	Russell WILSON	Keith WILSON

The following guests took dinner:

Giles Bennett	<i>Guest of</i>	David BENNETT
Nick Brookes	<i>Guest of</i>	Mike BROOKES
Stuart Donnors	<i>Guest of</i>	Bernie DONNERS
Wg Cdr David Jones	<i>Guest of</i>	Eric KING
Cary Sand	<i>Guest of</i>	Ian MASON
Lise-Marie Collins	<i>Guest of</i>	Keith SAUNDERS
Jamie Wilson	<i>Guest of</i>	Russell WILSON

Supper:

The following Ladies took supper:

Judy Bartram	Liz Ruane	Pam Rockel	Olga Saunders	Maggie Sibbald
Heather Sierwald	Sylvia Teal	Caroline Wilson		
		<i>Sophie Wilson</i>		

Benefactors:

The following members kindly made donations:

Horst ABROMEIT	Andy ADAMS	David ADAMS	Chris ALCOCK	Dick ARSCOTT
Dougie BARR	John BARTRAM	David BENNETT	John BOYD	Dave BRAY
Chris CARRINGTON	David CARTER	Tim CARTER	Andy CLARK	Dennis CONSTABLE
Bernie DONDERS	Dave DRAKE	Geoff DRYLAND	Colin EDWARDS	Bob EVANS
Alan EVANS	Vic FAULKNER	Mark GILSON	Colin GOWER	Don GRAHAM
John GREEDY	Frank HUDDLESTON	Terry JOHNSON	Eric KING	George KIRK
Ian LASCHKE	Graham LAURIE	Derek LIDDELL	Tim LILES	Derek LONG
Tony MALLETT	Ian MASON	Don MASON	Brian MERRITT	Paul MINDNER
Denny O'BRIAN	Alan PARKER	Stuart PRIEST	Jeff SAUNDERS	John SCAMBLER
Jenny SEDDON	Mac SIBBALD	Graeme SMITH	Freddie SOWREY	Rusty STEELE-
Tony STEPHENS	Ken TEAL	Bill TURNBULL	Roger UNWIN	Tony WARNER
Russell WILLIAMS	Russell WILSON	Keith WILSON		

Regrets:

The following members were unable to attend:

Horst ABROMEIT	David ADAMS	Chris ALCOCK	Dick ARSCOTT	John BRANSBURY
Roy BUTLER	Chris CARRINGTON	David CARTER	Harry CHAMBERS	Keith CHAPMAN
Don CHAPMAN	John CLEMENTS	Dennis CONSTABLE	John DANIELS	Dave DRAKE
Geoff DRYLAND	Colin EDWARDS	Alan EVANS	Vic FAULKNER	Mark GILSON
Colin GOWER	Alan GREEN	Harry GRIFFITHS	Ian HAMPTON	Dave HIGGS
Pete HOOD	Chris HOOPER-SMITH	Frank HUDDLESTON	Terry JOHNSON	Mike KEMP
George KIRK	Ian LASCHKE	Graham LAURIE	Derek LONG	Tony MALLETT
Eric MARSH	Don MASON	Brian MERRITT	Paul MINDNER	Dougie MORGAN
Kenneth NICHOLS	Adrian OBERTELLI	Alan PARKER	Bob PETERS	Steve ROBSON
John SCAMBLER	Jenny SEDDON	Graeme SMITH	Tony STEPHENS	Steve STEVENSON
Chris TAYLOR	Pat THOMAS	Bill TURNBULL	Roger UNWIN	Pete WALLINGTON
Pete WALSH	Bob WARD	Russell WILLIAMS		

Obituaries:

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of:

John TRITTON 54-58
Met Jay

News, Gossip and Scandal:

Members report:

- Chris ALCOCK** Chris never has a dull moment with 12 children (has lost count of the grandchildren). John, 48, the eldest is now nearly 8 years into his post accident coma and the youngest Gina, 28, is getting married next year. The rest are more nuts than their Dad!
- John AUSTIN** John visited Seletar in March - a shadow of its former self. Singapore Defence Force has domestic site and only SHQ remains. Officers' Mess demolished some years ago. Old hangars remain on airfield but is being transformed to take budget airlines only. All OMQs remain including Station Commander's house. Did anyone else take tea with Gp Capt Hutton's wife and daughter, Julia??!!
- John BOYD** Members may have heard on TV or radio that a horse recently found his way into a swimming pool; the horse belongs to my 14 year old daughter and was rescued by Hampshire Fire & Rescue service in a very professional and slick operation. The horse's name is "Mischief"!
- Dave BRAY** Dave recently visited New Zealand and saw XS612 in RNZAF museum in Christchurch before the earthquake! While in Sydney he had lunch with Des Skinner and Dennis Buck
- Andy CLARK** Andy Clark is still serving on 101 Sqn, but only just - exit date from the RAF is August 2011. Retirement to the garden (after 40 years in the RAF) beckons!
- Dennis CONSTABLE** Dennis sends warm wishes to all members.
- David CRWYS-WILLIAMS** David is slowly trimming his trusteeships and so finding time to travel the world even more. Planning to be in Masirah in October for 4 days!
- Bernie DONDERS** Bernie is still soldiering on. He is very much involved with Abergavenny U3A (University of the third age) or the Moonies as my daughter calls it!!
- Mark GILSON** Mark is still in Northumberland and welcomes any passing members for a drink.
- Tim LILES** Tim is still in Budleigh Salterton, Devon. His 4 grandchildren bring much pleasure and he is running with his new hip. If anyone is nearby - welcome to come over.
- Derek LONG** Derek is still flying the Beagle Pup and in reasonable health.
- Tony MALLET** Tony and Fiona visited Thorney Island in February and report there are two R.A. regiments resident now, air defence units with an inert Bloodhound missile on our Squadron lawn! They also visited Chichester Cathedral where the Sqn Standard still proudly flies in St Clements Chapel by the south transept.
- Don MASON** Don was coming but has had a fall and is plastered for the wrong reasons.
- Keith SAUNDERS** Keith reports lambing has gone well and he is getting plenty of walking and he'll be leading walks in Scotland.
One of Keith's guests was Flt Lt Lise-Marie Collins, a navigator on 33 Squadron; "L-M" is the first female to attend our Dinner.
- Paul SNOOK** Paul is still very busy - with a new granddaughter to entertain - another task to add to the list but great fun though. Looking forward to meeting everyone at the reunion.
- Freddie SOWREY** Sir Freddie is still coaxing our 6 hp Danacq from London - Brighton each November and now has younger family members off solo.
- Roger UNWIN** Nasty and Heather are in Maderia to celebrate completion of her cancer treatment. Roger continues to coach football in Cyprus
- Russell WILLIAMS** Russell continues as vice-president of the Old Cranwellian Association and President of the Newark Air Cadets.
- Russell WILSON** Russell is continuing to operate care homes in the UK. He has a development of new properties in Cyprus - a few for sale.

Those of you with diminished musical taste but long memories might like to listen to the Squadron's unofficial pop song "Little Arrows". Ctrl click here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvXDxobNteA>. Leapy Lee now owns and runs "Leapy's Bar" in Sanat Ponsa, Mallorca. Lee is also a regular columnist with the Euro Weekly News, an English newspaper in the Costa del Sol, Spain.

I received this interesting and touching note from Don Mason



Photo enclosed is of a visit to "46" at Thorney Island, mid 70's, shortly before Squadron was disbanded – pictured with John Bartram the then Liaison Officer and from left, my late wife, myself, Mrs Olive Cox, my skipper Flt Lt Frank Cox RNZAF. This was Frank's first visit to UK after leaving in October 46; I crewed up with him for my second tour in April 43, we served with 214/620 Squadrons, 3 Group Bomber Command, 620/38 Group, Airborne Support and finally "46" Dec/Jan 44/45-Sept 46.

Frank became Regional Director of the CAA New Zealand, was largely responsible for the development of Christchurch International Airport and in the hot seat when a Civilian Airlines crashed, Mount Erebus, Antarctica, he had to organise rescue services etc.

A great guy, his daughter Lois rang me 10 Jan 96 to say he was terminally ill with bowel cancer, he had expressed a desire regretting we were not to meet again; I hopped on a plane and was with him when he died 7th Feb, such is the bond that aircrews developed during their time together, his family are like my own albeit separated by half a world.

See following page for

David Crwys-Williams's Speech

Speeches.

We had some great speeches and quite a few members have suggested that those who were not present might like to read David C-W's toast to the Squadron; his thoughtful and topical speech is copied below:

Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey, Guests, members of 46 Squadron.

In 1974 – the then Adjutant General in charge of all Army personnel – one General Sir John Mogg – an ebullient, genial man – was passing an Army recruiting office in Birmingham whilst on leave – and thought he would just pop in and do a quick evaluation of their hopefully persuasive and courteous recruitment style.

As he entered he noticed a sergeant behind the desk engrossed in the Racing Times who didn't even look up. "I am here" said the general in his civilian clothes "because I thought I might join the Army". The sergeant slowly raised his head, took one quick look and said "Piss off you jerk, you're too bloody old"

Well, all of us who served on 46 Sqn. are now getting a bit bloody old, but even though we have had temporarily to forgo the luxury of an officer's mess for our reunion, we have struck very lucky in being able to be here at Wolfson College tonight, and it is great to again be amongst such friends.

Each year we say this, and each year - for over 20 years it has been so true: that we are blessed indeed that Dougie Barr puts in so much meticulous work and organisation to arrange these occasions. I personally am delighted that he gave me a whole two weeks warning that I would be speaking tonight rather than the usual 24 hours. But yet again, we again owe him a huge debt and are really most grateful - and relieved – Dougie that you continue to do it at all, and that you do it so well.

- 34,333 days ago today on the Messines Ridge in France General Hubert Plummer ordered a massive bombardment of the German lines using 2,300 pieces of artillery and over 300 heavy mortars whilst at 3.10 pm over 600 tons of high explosive that had been buried in tunnels under the German positions were detonated. Some 10,000 German soldiers were killed and the bombardment and blast could be heard in London.
- On that same day in June 1917 the SS Southland was torpedoed en route from Liverpool to Philadelphia by the German submarine U-70 with the loss of 498 lives.
- On 4 June also The London Gazette announce that in just the 7 months from December 1916 to June 1917, under delegated authority from HM the King, General Officers Commanding had awarded 202 DSOs, 381 Meritorious Service Medals, 1,014 Distinguished Conduct Medals, 2,272 Military Crosses and 10,644 Military Medals. And I doubt not that in that hell of the trenches they were all thoroughly deserved
- That month too one Major Frederick Sowrey DSO MC AFC, part of an extraordinary air force dynasty, having shot down the Zeppelin L32 over Billericay some 9 months earlier, was posted on combat duties with 19 Squadron in France.
- And about 34,333 days ago today, in a German prisoner of war camp, some members of 46 Squadron decided to hold the very first squadron reunion and mixed whatever remnants of the bottles of alcohol they had stashed away with some raw eggs and nutmeg and so toasted in the very first Health and Strength.

So for the 94th consecutive time since then we meet, again to tell each other how we haven't changed one little bit, to reminisce and perhaps say that ...” .the RAF can't be what is was like in our day” – and:..” My God! We were lucky!”

Well, of course we were lucky but the Service changes – it has always done so. When the RAF was formed on 1 April 1918 we were an amalgamation of the RFC and RNAS. Since then we have developed our own style as one of the three services – to my mind we have been more of a meritocracy than the other two.

Perhaps this is because those who run a service from the very top are always drawn from those that actually apply force to the enemy: the infantry, gunners and so on in the Army, the officer sea branch in the Royal Navy and the aircrew in the RAF. And of course for us the aircraft is the great leveller -you need some kind of aptitude: if you can't fly an aircraft you probably won't get to be a C in C or on the AFB; the A/C doesn't care a tinker's toss if your father was a senior officer or a miner, what school you went to or if you have a plummy accent like me or one like Dougie's.

Each Service does have its priorities though: when I was CBFFI I once asked some of my senior officers what was the best bit of advice they had ever received. The Army officer, from the cavalry, said “Never hunt if you are south of the River Thames”. My nice sociable Royal Navy captain told me that you “should never drink champagne after port”. It seemed to me that the RAF officer hit the right note when he said “Never make love to your partner in the morning in case something better comes along later in the day”.

Times – and needs – do of course change, and we just have to accept it and adapt. In 1918 the RAF had 291,000 officers, NCOs and airmen, 200 operational squadrons, 190 training squadrons and – wait for it – 22,647 aircraft.

By 1935 manned strength was just 32,145. In 1944: 1,183,000. When I joined in 1958 there were 191,000 regulars and the same number of Reservists, and when I left in 1993 it was a quarter of this at 92,000 overall.

Today the RAF is 42,750 strong, but by 2015 it will be just 33,000 – back to the same as in 1935.

So we gather tonight at yet another time when the RAF must be so unsettled and in the midst of yet more changes: more contractorisation and civilianisation, more rationalisation, reorganisation, rustication and redundancy. And our Servicemen and women have to do this in the midst of vital operations in Afghanistan and now Libya.

You, like me will be extremely proud of their courage, adaptability, reliability and sheer professionalism and I for one am delighted that now – perhaps rather late in the day – they are getting the kind of public support and recognition they so richly deserve. And I hope too that their military masters are heeding the wise advice of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Trust people and they will be true to you; Treat them greatly, and they will be great”

Fine words indeed, but difficult to put into practice when your bloody navigator has got you lost in a violent thunderstorm, at night, somewhere in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea and won't admit it: eh Terry? I suppose however that I draw some comfort from knowing that instead of training a navigator for two years at a cost of millions so he can tell you where you are within roughly three miles, the RAF can now go to Halfords and buy a TOM TOM for 80 quid and it is always accurate to within three yards!

Earlier I started by reminding us of when the squadron was formed, 95 years ago. At other dinners we have often centred our thoughts on those heroic days and deeds of our squadron in 1940 in Norway or the Battle of Britain. But perhaps tonight our thoughts should go to all those in the Armed Forces, whatever service or squadron, ship or regiment. For as Father Dennis O'Brian wrote:

**It is the serviceman, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press.
It is the serviceman, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the serviceman, not the student activist, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.**

**It is the Serviceman, not the lawyer, who had given us the right to a fair trial.
It is the serviceman, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag,
And whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protestor to burn the flag.**

We here tonight may not be just the same in all ways as our predecessors who fought over the trenches in France, the fjords of Norway, a London ablaze in 1940, the Pyramids or dunes of Mersa Matruh. This squadron, has been born, reborn, disbanded and reformed so many times in its history, but one thing never changes: the indefinable Spirit of 46, just as that indefinable spirit of the British serviceman. But perhaps if indefinable, it is at least demonstrable:

Some will know that for 12 years after I left the RAF I ran the entertainment charity, SSVC, and also BFBS, CSE and so on. We broadcast worldwide, as they do now, and gave away money and amenities through a welfare fund. At the height of the troubles in the former Yugoslavia an RAF Regiment airman on duty at Pristina airport which, I think sums up the steadfastness, acute observation humour and sense of fair play of all servicemen and women:

“To the BFBS Radio editor or whoever it may concern.

**Could you please answer us one question: Why the hell do you play so much shit between midnight and 0700 hours?
We the poor sods on night guard are subjected to this crap for 7 long hours. Play something decent please.**

Signed: Paveway Lines Night Guard.

P.S. Ta very much for the free radio.

As ever, if anybody should ask you “Whatever happened to 46 – where is it now?” It is here in this room, in the spirit of 46 that brings us together each year, in the memories of those who have gone before us and in the example of those who serve today. To honour all of this I ask you to rise and join with me in a toast to:

“Number 46 Squadron”.



Keith SAUNDERS Tim CARTER Rusty Steele-Morgan Tony WARNER Freddie SOWREY David CW David JONES Eric KING Dougie BARR

Lise-Marie COLLINS	Chris SAUNDERS	Tim LILES	Chris SIERWALD	Keith WILSON	Dai BENNETT
Andy CLARK	John GREEDY	Dick WARD	Bernie DONNERS	Dick EASTMENT	Giles BENNETT
Andy ADAMS	Mac SIBBALD	Mike BROOKES	Stuart DONNERS	Stu PRIEST	John AUSTIN
Ken TEAL	Denny O'BRIAN	Nick BROOKES	Jamie WILSON	Peter MILES	Jim WHITE
Don GRAHAM	John BARTRAM	Timothy WILSON	Russell WILSON	Les ROCKEL	Jim TAYLOR
John BOYD	Jeff BETHRAY	Cary SAND	Kevin PADRON	Derek LIDDELL	Terry ROURKE
Paul SNOOK	Jeff SAUNDERS	Bob RICHARDSON	Ian MASON	Chris HOSEA	Mike TOM
		Derek BENDALL	Laurie POULTER	Ian DOW	Bob EVANS

The 94th Reunion Dinner of No 46 Squadron, Wolfson College Oxford 4 June 2011

Spirit of 46.

The histories and scrapbooks have been combined into one volume which appears on the Squadron website (46squadron.info). I have now reformatted the website into landscape and with the generosity of Bob Richardson which we have printed it on top quality paper and bound in a very smart binder. I have made a PDF version of the "Spirit of 46" which together with JPEG copies of all the photographs in it, are on a CD. If you would like a CD it will cost you £5 (to Sqn funds) plus P&P (about £1 for the UK). The binder is loose-leaf and therefore much easier to update than before. Please let me have copies of your photographs and memorabilia for inclusion. If necessary send me the originals and I will scan and return them.

Website

We now have 3 addresses for the website:

www.46squadron.net

www.46squadron.info

www.46squadron.org

Request for Information and other stuff:

By email from Vic Nugent

I am writing to let you and the members of the 46 SQUADRON RFC & RAF association know that there will be a reunion of ALL RANKS, TRADES and SERVICES who served on **RAF Masirah** at any time between mid 1971 to mid 1972 in the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate on 7th./8th./9th. October 2011 and to invite your members to join us there, should they wish to do so. Further information about the reunion to contact either Colin Blakelock at cblakelock@rogers.com or myself, Vic Nugent at jvnugent@gmail.com and we will send them all information.