



The newsletter of the 202 Squadron Association



**She flies! On 11th April, XZ597 performed her first flight since restoration.
XZ588 is next in line. We just need to get the right badge on her...**

Number 41

Winter 2020

The President's Piece

Well, what an awful year, not just for the Association, but for us all, with the prospect of it continuing to be bad for some time to come. It has meant that we've had to cancel the Reunion, which Geoff Bakewell had, as usual, meticulously planned, and very regrettably we have been prevented from marching at The Cenotaph in November. The Royal British Legion had accepted our registration of a small contingent, but in the end, we were only allowed to lay a "virtual" wreath.

During the year, we suffered the loss of our oldest member, Norman Hewins, who, on his birthday, had been absolutely delighted with all the cards and good wishes he received from his fellow members. We also lost Mike Lakey GM, our Secretary of some years, who lost his battle with cancer. Sadly, because of Covid, I was the sole representative of the Association at his funeral and was honoured to be asked to give an address.

At the time of writing, I'm looking forward to participating in a Zoom Meeting with fellow members, organised by our Chairman, Steve Garden and Acting Secretary Ian Stephenson.

As we look forward to a potentially gloomy Christmas, I'm reminded of an anecdote from the past. In the mid-60s, I was on the SAR Flight at Acklington, towards the end of summer, when we got a 'phone call from Squadron HQ at Leconfield. The message was that Phred and Phrederica, the Squadron Mallards had had a brood of baby ducklings and would we like to have a couple for the Flight to have as mascots. When we replied that we would love to have some ducklings, but could we leave it until nearer Christmas, the 'phone was quietly put back on its rest.

Stay Safe!

Pete Chadwick

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Update from the Chairman

Hello Association Members, it's fair to say that 2020 has overall been a dreadful year and even with hindsight (sorry), it gets no better. In this update for the Mucky Duck, I'm not going to address the widespread health, economic and social impacts of Coronavirus. Nonetheless, my heart goes out to everyone who has been affected badly. Without trivialising the foregoing, Covid has, of course, disrupted significantly the Association's activities and I'll summarise this below as part of my 'end of year' review.

First, however, a formal welcome to Martin Jarvis, who replaced Ally McDowell as the Officer Commanding Number 202 Squadron on 4 September 2020. Ally was rewarded for her time in command of the Squadron by an all-expenses paid trip to Afghanistan and I'm not yet sure what she'll be doing on her return from Afghanistan. Ally has been a strong supporter of the Association and we were especially grateful to be hosted by her and the Squadron at Valley for our Reunion in 2019. I first met Martin when I was the RAF Search & Rescue (SAR) Force Commander and he was a student on 203 Squadron, the Sea King conversion squadron. I'm therefore delighted that he has assumed command of 'our' Squadron a few years downstream. I wrote to him formally on your behalf when he took up command to wish him well.

We are hoping to hold a Zoom meeting before Christmas with Martin, so that he can introduce himself and give us a quick update about the Squadron's activities. If this Zoom meeting is successful, we also intend to hold an AGM by Zoom early in the New Year. Zoom is one of those words, like 'furlough', about which none of us was truly aware before COVID but is definitely one of the few good things to come out from this crisis.

Ian Stephenson has pioneered the use of Zoom in the Association, setting up a series of Zoom calls with ex-Hastings meteorological Members. So far, three such calls have been held and all the participants agree that it's a great way of keeping in touch – including with people who live overseas. I think even when some form of normality returns, Zoom will continue to be a tool that the Association uses, for example, minimising the need for Committee members to travel to meetings and

expanding the opportunities for Members to participate in AGMs without physically being present.

COVID also disrupted activities to commemorate on 18 November 2020 the 40th anniversary of the deaths of Dave Bullock and Lieutenant Colonel Olsen USAF, who both drowned when Dave could not deflate Olsen's parachute and both men were dragged through the water. Similarly, Covid resulted in the cancellation of the march past the Cenotaph on 8 November by a 202 Squadron Association contingent and others. Of course, Dave and the others who made the ultimate sacrifice remain in our thoughts. My thanks to Pete Chadwick on your behalf for his work organising the Association participation in the Cenotaph Remembrance Service (as well as being our President and managing the Association's stock of memorabilia).

In another reminder that aviation generally and SAR specifically is dangerous, Friday 20 November marked the 50th anniversary of the only fatal crash involving a Leconfield-based 202 Squadron search and rescue helicopter. The crash occurred at Patrick Brompton near Leyburn, North Yorkshire. A Whirlwind HAR Mk.10, XL112 of 202 Squadron had taken off from Leconfield on routine training flight with Captain John Balser of the Canadian Armed Forces (exchange officer) at the controls, along with Master Navigator Brian Sterland (winch operator), Flight Sergeant Charles Ford (winchman), and Pilot Officer Helen McLaren as a passenger. The accident investigation found that the aircraft was climbed to over 5000 feet and into an ice layer, where there was moderate turbulence. Captain Balser had called air traffic to say he was 'going on top' despite the fact that an RAF Phantom crew had reported cloud from 400 feet to 25,000 feet. After the impact on its return flight to Leconfield, parts of the Whirlwind were found more than two miles away from the main crash site. More details of this tragic accident can be found on the Association's website.

Our planned Reunion at Taunton from 17-18 March 2020 was cancelled due to the virus. This cancellation meant that Members were also unable to see the first public flight by the refurbished yellow Sea King Mk3 XZ597 at Historic Helicopters, Chard. We had also extended an invitation to the other SAR squadron associations for their members to attend our Reunion. Geoff dealt with this disruption to his plans in his usual calm, unflustered manner, perhaps most significantly (and successfully) securing for us a full refund of our deposit. My thanks to Geoff for his ongoing efforts to arrange our reunions. For next year, we

intend to organise and hold a 202 Association-only Reunion but we also have been invited by the 22 Squadron Association to take part in its reunion from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 May 2021, along with members from 84 and 203 Squadron Associations.

One of our Honorary Members, Mr Norman Hewins, turned 92 in May 2020. Norman was a radar technician in Aldergrove in 1946 when 518 Met Squadron was renumbered 202 Squadron flying Halifax aircraft. Norman put his longevity down to the camaraderie and routine of the RAF. Unfortunately, Norman was both too ill and Covid was in full flow, so no one from the Association was able to visit him on his birthday in his care home in Eastbourne. However, many Association Members sent birthday greetings to Norman. All the cards were displayed on the windowsill in Norman's bedroom and he was overjoyed to receive so many cards from members.

Unfortunately, several Association Members and friends of the Association have died since the last *Mucky Duck*. While messages of condolence were sent to families, Coronavirus inevitably caused some disruption to the Association's response to these sad events. My thanks to Derek as Almoner for coordinating the Association's response to the following deaths:

- AVM John Thornett Lawrence, who was a Battle of Britain veteran and served on 202 Sqn during WWII, died on 18th December 2019.
- Imelda Malcolm, the wife of John Malcolm, ex-Hastings and a longtime member of the Association, died in January. Imelda and John until recently were regular attendees at Reunions. I attended Imelda's funeral in Stirling along with some other Association members.
- Jack Read died in April. He was another regular attendee at Reunions. His good humour and sense of mischief will be missed.
- Mike Lakey died on 10th July, with his funeral being held one week later. Numbers at the funeral were limited due to Covid. His family have said that a memorial service will be arranged once a semblance of normality has been resumed. Pete Chadwick was asked by the family to be the sole ex-Service representative at the funeral (apart from Rob, Mike's son) and to deliver a tribute about Mike's life in the RAF, quite a lot of which was involved with 202 Squadron. (Pete first flew with Mike in January 1968 at Acklington, Northumberland) Mike was awarded the George Medal for his

rescue of the crew of the merchant vessel Finneagle in 1980 (for which he was also appointed 'Scot of the Year') and the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air for the rescue from the Alexander Kielland oil rig, also in 1980. A yellow Whirlwind and a yellow Sea King from Historic Helicopters, Chard, did a flypast at Mike's funeral. Mike flew both these aircraft during his time on SAR. In addition to Mike's service career, he was also a diligent Secretary for the Association for many years and was the prime organiser behind the SAR Triptych in the RAF Club. In light of Mike's achievements, the Association Committee decided to donate £500 to Historic Helicopters as a contribution towards the cost of the flypast. Had there been time to do so, we would of course have consulted the wider Membership but this was precluded by the short timeframe for organising the funeral. The Committee deliberated the size of this contribution and decided that the Association's funds were readily able to absorb this unique and unprecedented outgoing. Subsequently, only positive messages of support for the decision have been received.

- Norman Hewins died on 19 July and was buried soon afterwards. Covid precluded an Association presence at Norman's funeral but I was personally honoured to be asked by Janet, his daughter, to attend the internment of Norman's ashes at Tunbridge Wells crematorium on 14th September. Janet has mentioned repeatedly that Norman always looked forward to receiving the *Mucky Duck* magazine, so it seems apt to mention this here and to thank Charlie Logan on Norman's (and your) behalf for Charlie's ongoing editing of the *Mucky Duck*.
- Margaret Reeson (John's widow) passed away on 24th September. Margaret, along with John, was a staunch supporter of the Association. Under Covid restrictions only 30 people were allowed to attend, and this number was allocated to direct family and close friends; however, the family 'live-streamed' the ceremony.

We will remember them all.

I will now deliberately, but clumsily, jump from obituaries to discussing the Association's current Membership, which, thanks to much effort in particular by Ian Stephenson, stands around 135. This is an encouraging number but, significantly, despite several initiatives we've only had 3 new members in the last 3 years. One of these initiatives was to write to the companies (Babcock, Airbus and Ascent) that currently provide the staff who support 202 Squadron, to invite

those staff to join the Association free of charge. To date there has been no take up of this offer. More positively, there has been a 100% acceptance of the offer of free Associate Members to partners of Members who have died. The Association Membership will likely be a major topic (again) at the AGM.

On behalf of the whole Association, I'd like to congratulate Group Captain Donal McGurk, who will become Station Commander of RAF Odiham in August 2021. Not only is Donal an ex-member of 202 Squadron (he was OC E Flt 2005-2007) but also he will be the first ex-SAR station commander of RAF Odiham, the home of support helicopters, so we should start preparing our banter now!

My final note of thanks is to the Committee Members who I have not yet mentioned. Their contributions are essential for keeping the Association going: Dave Allen, for maintaining our website; and Brian Tanner for ensuring we've always got sufficient money in the bank.

Covid has dominated 2020. In no way do I want to underplay the seriousness of this pandemic and the misery it has caused. I look forward to a resumption of a 'new normality' at some time in 2021 – hopefully in time not to disrupt tentatively planned events. But I also want to leave you on a lighter note... *A friend of mine bought two corporate tickets at Wembley for the England v Scotland footie game next June. He paid £300 each but didn't realise when he bought them that it was going to be the same day as his Covid-19 postponed wedding. Do you know of anyone who might like to take his place?*

...It's at Hamilton Registry Office, at 2.30pm. The bride's name is Maggie, she's 5ft 4in, about 8 stone, quite pretty, has her own income and is a really good cook.

Yours,

Steve Garden

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News from 202 Squadron

Holiday greetings to you all from Anglesey! What a tough year 2020 has turned out to be for so many people. On 202 Sqn we have had to adapt many procedures to continue to function as a training unit and there has been a lot to learn on the way, but we have continued to output students and train staff and we try to keep a PMA (positive mental attitude) as much as we can!

We literally 'stormed' in to 2020 - poor weather in January and February hampered our flying considerably. The Naval Observers navigation course that started in November 2019 extended through to February 2020. If the gales didn't stop flying, low cloud and fog seemed to descend upon us! So our students took the chance to use their time on the ground to carry out a beach clean behind 202 Sqn. We were very thankful to them for 'volunteering!'



405 Cse beach clean

We said goodbye, good luck and thank you to our Ascent Senior Maritime Instructor, Daz Gorman. He left 202 Sqn for warmer climes following a monumental effort to get the new system under rotary wing MFTS up and running. He handed over to a familiar face, Lee Calderwood, who took the glory

by arriving just as we were starting to test and adjust the maritime syllabus with the Jupiter in February. Therefore the Station had to get used to seeing 202 Sqn once again start to operate by the golf course and out to Holyhead Harbour. This was with the Jupiter, but we continued to operate the Juno through most of 2020.

In March 2020 we sadly saw the Covid-19 wave building. We had a few Sqn members isolate with symptoms (including myself!), but fortunately no-one seriously ill to date. Although I personally lost my sense of smell and haven't regained that much of it – which means I'm on duty at home to clear up after the dogs in the garden forevermore unfortunately! Like the rest of the station, our way of life and work was immediately affected whilst the UK and Armed Forces reacted to this wide reaching threat. It has resulted in new and changeable policies to try to keep us safer while allowing life to continue as best we can.

Our job of getting aircrew to the front line under 1 FTS (formerly DHFS) is considered an essential task, as directed by 22 Gp. So, at 202 Sqn we have worked from home where possible and flew to maintain essential currencies on the Juno and Jupiter in April and May. We are also continued with Test & Adjustment of the Maritime syllabus as we finally received the lateral C of G clearance we'd been anticipating for winching on the Jupiter!

Our students are returned to us at the end of May. This was a course of Naval Observers who were cut short by the pandemic in March. They continued with us, completing sorties covering disciplines including Voice Marshalling, Navigation and Confined Areas.

The summer months saw a high staff turnover at 202 Sqn whilst adapting to the coronavirus lockdown measures. We completed the Naval Observer/Crewman 405-007 Course in July and commenced with the 405-008 Course in August. Underslung load training was added to their syllabus at Valley, so locals may have seen some Junos flying slowly around the golf course with strange items dangling underneath. We also began having to make much more use of RAF Mona than previously in order to achieve our syllabus circuits sorties. We continued to practice medium and low-level navigation in and around Snowdonia where we

often catch sight of our Hawk and Texan brethren from Valley, de-conflicting well on the radio.



OC 202 Sqn handover - Sqn Ldr Ally McDowell to Sqn Ldr Martin Jarvis

The end of August brought the handover of command of 202 Sqn from Sqn Ldr Ally McDowell to Sqn Ldr Martin Jarvis. Sqn Ldr McDowell departed us for the other side of the airfield to take over as SLOps (so she can still keep an eye on us!) having fought hard to kick-start 202 Sqn under MFTS. Sqn Ldr Jarvis (Jarvo) is no stranger to Valley and many of us, with previous SAR experience and a recent Loan Service tour with the Royal Brunei Air Force under his belt.

Four new Jupiter HT1s were purchased for 1 FTS and we took delivery of 2 of these at the end of August. A third arrived the following month. This allows us to focus on the maritime training which is the primary reason for our existence. Test and adjust of the new pilot maritime syllabus was completed in September, so we have been able to begin cascade training to the aircrew at 202 Sqn in the 4th quarter of 2020 – we are all looking forward to squeezing in to our immersion suits again!

As we near the end of 2020 all of us are accepting that our way of life has changed dramatically this year and that it is uncertain when and how things will return to normal. However, we have to persevere with finding a path forward and that includes continuing to work and provide trained aircrew to the front line. 202 Sqn has risen to this challenge whilst dealing with the added obstacles of contract challenges and flying 2 aircraft types. As of October 2020, all Juno HT1s were returned to RAF Shawbury and 202 Sqn is currently operating 3 brand new Jupiter HT1s. We are looking forward to receiving RAF and RN trainee pilots, observers and rear crew in 2021 to instruct them in the over water skills required in their varied future roles on Chinook, Puma, Merlin and Wildcat.



AOC 22 Gp conducting live winching from the skid

We were fortunate to host and fly the incoming AOC 22 Gp, AVM Rich Maddison, on the occasion of his first Annual Formal Visit to RAF Valley in September. He was given the chance to act as a winch operator student, experiencing the position of standing on the skid to live winch over at the Golf Course adjacent to RAF Valley. He also had a familiarisation sortie in the front seat where he handled

the Jupiter HT1 himself. It was a great opportunity for the senior leadership to see first-hand the challenges we've been facing and the equipment at our disposal.

We are looking forward to a Christmas break with the opportunity to spend time with extended family. The decorations have gone up a bit earlier this year and if possible, we hope that a festive drink or two can be shared amongst friends and colleagues, in accordance with government guidelines of course. Our thoughts are with those we have lost.

From all at 202 Sqn, we wish you a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year!

Nadolig Llawen & Semper Vigilate!

Flt Lt Josh Ryznar



Final week of flying in 2020 at 202 Sqn – an optimistic sign?!



Announcement: Zoom meetings

Ex-members of the Hastings era have held 3 Zoom meetings. We have about 8 members participating from UK, South Africa and Australia reminiscing and talking about aches and pains. These meetings are very enjoyable and we are hoping to extend Zoom meetings to all members in December 2020.

To participate in a Zoom meeting costs nothing, but you need access to a microphone, speaker and camera. These are found on modern mobile phones or tablets as well as on PC or Apple computers, so if you have one or more of these devices you are ready to participate.

Ian Stephenson



Phoenixes reborn: yellow Sea Kings resurgent!



As well as Historic Helicopters in Somerset, several other individuals have been busy restoring Sea King HAR3s (albeit not to airworthy condition). Pictured on the previous page is XZ598, which along with an HU5 has found a new home near Myjava in Slovakia; a sympathetic conversion to a glamping pod is under way.



Meanwhile, HeliOps have amassed five HAR3s at their reserve base in Somerset, seen above. The future of these airframes is unclear but they are largely intact at present. Elsewhere, XZ589 has recently been bought from a scrap dealer, with the intention of being converted into a café.



Master Pilot František (Frank) Radina



Frank was a Czech pilot who served with 202 as a Hastings pilot during his long career. His medals recently came up at auction. His career is detailed in the auctioneer's notes, as reproduced below.

An interesting Czech Pilot's long service group of five awarded to Master Pilot F. Radina, Czechoslovak Air Force, later No. 311 and 202 Squadrons, Royal Air Force, who completed a tour over occupied North-West Europe and later became a key Pilot for the Meteorological Flight



1939-45 Star; Air Crew Europe Star; War Medal 1939-45; Coronation 1953; Royal Air Force L.S. & G.C., E.II.R., with oak leaf (M.Pl. F. Radina (788991) R.A.F.).

František Radina was born on 4 October 1915 in Hostivice, Czechoslovakia, the son of Josef Radina. He undertook pilot training in the late 1930s and served in the skies above Poland before escaping to Britain at the fall of France in June 1940. Admitted to the RAF in August 1940, he witnessed extensive operational night raids with 311 Squadron, flying the Wellington bomber over occupied Europe. Radina completed his first operational tour of 33 missions in mid-September 1941 and was transferred to ferrying duties between Canada and the United Kingdom. In 1943 he returned to 311 Squadron, and later served as an instructor on the B-24 Liberator from September 1943 to September 1944 at 111 OTU based at Nassau in the Bahamas.

Returning to England at the end of the war, Radina retrained as a military transport pilot and was transferred to 202 Squadron. He was awarded his British Naturalisation Certificate on 8 August 1951 whilst serving at RAF Lindholme.

Promoted Master Pilot on 4 July 1955, he later received a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air (*London Gazette* 1 January 1960).



Frank Radina is at the controls of this 202 Sqn Hastings

An article from the *Belfast Telegraph*, dated 31 July 1964, offers further detail regarding the career of Radina:

Met Squadron makes last trip over Atlantic

From "Belfast Telegraph" reporter, Des Morrow, 1 p.m. Friday - 600 miles west of Ireland.

We have reached the half-way stage of this historic flight in a Hastings aircraft of 202 Squadron RAF - and for the last four hours we have been heading for the "worst weather possible."

Over the past 18 years, 202 Squadron, stationed at Aldergrove, has helped inform the people of the United Kingdom and Western Europe of the weather prospects by taking meteorological measurements out in the Atlantic in the centre of deep depressions and sometimes hurricanes.

We are on the last flight in the capable hands of 49-year old "Master Pilot"

František Radina. He's known as "The Master" for he has taken these Hastings aircraft more than half-a-million miles in search of "trouble". When I say trouble I really mean it. For this is the squadron looking for the worst possible weather. That's where the "met" boys want their readings to help make their forecasts.

The men of this Coastal Command squadron will, within the next few weeks, be split, most of them going to Air Transport Command. No. 202 - one of the oldest squadrons in the RAF will, however live on as a helicopter squadron. The code word for these Met flights is "Bismuth". The squadron has completed 4,150 of them, covering 40,000 flying hours. The Officer Commanding the squadron, Squadron Leader B. A. Spry, told me:

"We have never failed to make a flight, although there have been a few delays. We can justly claim we are the all-weather squadron".

Radina, a Czech who joined the R.A.F. with the fall of France in 1940, is completing his 443rd flight.

"I will probably be taking up a ground staff job," he told me.

He has completed some 4,000 flying hours in the Hastings aircraft used by the squadron. There was only one occasion that his Hastings did not take off. That was when the runway was like a skating rink:

"It was going down the runway broadside," he said.

Yes - this is the last one. But for the men of No. 202, their experiences out over the wide wastes of the Atlantic will never be forgotten. They weren't heading for the calm weather after all.

Orders were: "Head for the rough stuff."

František Radina died on 28th March 1968, having returned to his homeland in retirement. On 1st June 2006, he was appointed an Honorary Citizen of Hostivice by the City Council, for his 'active participation in the fight for freedom'.

A colleague offered the following recollection of serving with Frank:

"I am sure that we all have fond memories of Frank, so I started to investigate some of his background.

{Isn't it strange we only find out about someone once they have died?}

To me, Frank was always a gentleman and a very confident pilot, who often had some advice for us youngsters.

I remember one night getting ready to go to a formal in Belfast with Brian Ayton in the Mess bar, and Frank came up to me and said 'you scrub up well Stevie'.

Great start to the evening but I wondered about the rest of my time how I looked!

As you all may know, Frank was short and used to pilot the Hastings with a cigarette holder in his mouth complete with favourite Woodbine smoking away, occasionally using glasses. He always made a very smooth landing compared with most. I was intrigued, so one day I asked him how he managed such smooth landings.

"Well" he said, "When we get near to the airfield, I straighten up, keep an eye on the young Co-pilot on my right. When I see he suddenly clutches his seat and jerks his head back, that is the time to pull the stick back. It works every time".

Details of Frank's career also featured in a post on the well-known aviation website PPrune.org, along with Flt Lt Ignatowski whose career was covered in previous editions of the Mucky Duck:

'I had the honour to fly in Flt Lt Ignatowski's Hastings when my late father's 202 squadron disbanded in 1964 after years of met reconnaissance from RAF Aldergrove. We were one of three escorts and I can still see him working hard to hold formation on the lead aircraft which continued with the squadron standard to Leconfield, I think it was. One could almost count the rivets on the leader's tailplane ...

F/Lt Ignatowski, known as Iggy to everyone, and a colleague had stolen a light aircraft when the Germans invaded Poland. They managed quite a long distance across Europe until they could no longer obtain fuel, and by devious

means they reached England where Iggy continued his flying career.

Another vastly experienced pilot was Master Pilot František Radina (1915-1968) who escaped from Czechoslovakia to join 311 Sqn on Wellingtons. In 1943 he was posted to the Bahamas as an instructor on Liberators, ending up with 202 Sqn first on Halifax and later on Hastings. The air and ground crews had an impressive reliability record built up over many years, each Bismuth flight taking off at 0800 and lasting between eight and ten hours despite the Atlantic weather.'

A Youtube video covers Frank's career. Use this link, or search 'František Radina'. [plk. František Radina - YouTube](#)



Editor's End

As always I have been blessed with substantial and interesting contributions to include in this issue; thank you to you all, but Ian Stephenson deserves a special mention (not for the first time!) for his remarkable efforts to find material. I had feared that this issue would be rather sparse, but this has not proved to be the case. Here is the end of a somewhat dismal year, but let's hope for a return to form – in all respects! – in 2021.

Charlie Logan

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