

Number 16
Spring 2005



202 Squadron Association

The Mucky Duck

Reunion 2005

Pete Chadwick will be writing to those who have booked with full details of the reunion on 22/23rd April at Park House Hotel, Shifnal, Telford and also details of the visit to Royal Air Force Museum Cosford on the Saturday. At the time of writing, there are still a few rooms available. Please contact Pete Chadwick as soon as possible if you wish to add your name.

A couple of postcards have been received. Someone is looking forward to our visit!



ARMISTICE SUNDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2004

Up at 7:00am., breakfast at 7:30am, and then down in the foyer of the Travel Inn Hotel at the County Hall. Peter Cousins brought the wheelchair and the Wreath I was taking on behalf of **202 Squadron Association**, down from my room and sharp at 8:30am Peter Girling, a part time London Black Cab Driver, picked Peter and me up and drove us to Horseguards Parade, where we assembled ready for the March Past. Thanks for the free ride Peter!



Whilst waiting for "Fall In" we had the opportunity to chat to other waiting Vets. One gentleman I was talking to was actually stationed at Gibraltar in the equipment section sometime after the time we, (202 Squadron) left Gib for Castle Archdale! I was able to offer to send him picture of a Catalina in the Slipway at Gibraltar taken August the 3rd 1944 and although I am unrecognizable, I can be seen in charge of the beaching operation. I am sure it was me as I supervised the majority of Beaching/Launching Operation at that time.

10:20am we started to move off and we marched through Horseguards Arch on to Whitehall where we stood with the other "9,999 Vets" waiting for the Queen. Sharp on 11:00 as Big Ben struck the first chime of the hour the Gun was Fired to mark the beginning of the 2 minutes Silence. I was amazed at how loud it was; it actually set the alarm off in a car! Then followed the laying of the wreaths and the short service conducted by the Bishop of London. While we were waiting I noticed St.Dunstons was to our left, The Chelsea Pensioners to our right and following us were the RAF Police (The "Snowdrops").

Following the laying of the wreaths by the "Royals" and Dignitaries followed by the Religious Service (during which "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past! was sung. This Hymn I always find so touching in such circumstances). The National Anthem was sung. The Queen and dignitaries departed and the March Past was started.



I was amazed how many spectators were there. They lined the whole mile plus Route, down Whitehall, along Parliament Square and up Horseguards Road. They were applauding all the way. Even the Metropolitan Police on crowd control were applauding. I felt very honoured and humble.

(I am in the wheelchair with the white panel)

At the end of Horseguards Road the Princess Royal and her supporters took the Salute as we marched past on to Horseguards Parade where we fell out. On Horseguards Parade was a St.John's Ambulance Van and a Salvation Army Van serving us a free cup of tea and a biscuit which as very welcome on the chilly day but blessed with bright sunshine making it very pleasant.



After enjoying our cup of tea we made our way back to Whitehall through Horseguards Arch where we walked down as far as Downing Street where the Pavement was barred. Evidently they were moving the barriers. After about 5 minutes the pavement was opened and we were able to get to the Cenotaph to view the wreaths. They were about six deep and a lady appeared and said "Do you want to get to the front" and we replied "yes" and she pushed her way through to a Policeman and pointed to us and he called "Make Way please and the crowd parted for us like the Parting of the Red Sea! Here we took photos of the Royal wreaths. (see Photograph below) We then carried on to the other side of the

Cenotaph where the same lady again appeared with the same actions! We took a picture of the association wreaths.



I said to the policeman there "You are all doing a wonderful job" and he replied "we all think it is an Honour for us to be here sir". It almost brought a lump to my throat!

We then made our way to The Central Hall of the Methodist Chapel where we met Peter's Wife, Ann, who organized everything and had a soup and a roll, before proceeding to view the Fields of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. I was particularly touched by the amount of crosses on the Field for the Bomber Crews.

There will be a more Photographs on

www.localdial.com/users/airforce/london.html

Before finishing I must voice my grateful thanks to Peter Cousins for providing me with the human motive power for my wheelchair and for his wife Ann for her wonderful efforts of organizing the whole trip, The British Red Cross Society for the loan of the wheelchair. Also complement the British Legion for their superb arrangement of the whole Parade. The whole thing went off so smoothly without the slightest hitch.

George Smith

The (Brief) Jet Age on 202 Squadron

Back in the mid-1950s 202 Squadron had a brief flirtation with the jet age probably giving Coastal Command its only experience of operational pure jet flying prior to the arrival of the Nimrods.

In 1956 the Air Ministry came up with a requirement to extend the vertical ascents on BISMUTH meteorological reconnaissance flights up to 100 millibars [about FL 540]. Because there was no aircraft type then available with the range and altitude performance to carry out such a flight profile, consideration was given to the possibility of using two different types of aircraft. The idea was to use the newly introduced Hastings to carry out low-level reconnaissance and climbs from Sea Level to 500 MB [about FL 180]; and to use a second aircraft type for climbs from 500 MB up to the greatest possible height. By mid-1956 the Canberra had been identified as a candidate for the high-level task.

To prove the new concept a trial was arranged, to be carried out by 202 Squadron, using a Canberra on loan from Bomber Command. It was agreed that the Canberra should have an enhanced navigation fit of LORAN Mk.2 and Marconi Radio Compass, and should carry various instruments for meteorological measurements.

Accordingly conversion training for the AMOs was carried out and Canberra B.2 WK 111 was delivered to 202 Squadron in early September 1956. Unfortunately the Canberra was delivered to Aldergrove without the navigation and meteorological equipment. For some reason it turned out to be easier to replace the aircraft than to install the missing equipment. As a result WK 111 left Aldergrove shortly afterwards with its replacement, B.2 WK 1872 arriving at the end of February 1957. The crew for the trial comprised Flying Officer Nunez (pilot) and Flying Officer Jackson (navigator), both provided by Bomber Command, with three AMOs: Sergeants Hunt, Gringood and Walton, provided by the squadron.

Flying on Phase 1 began in March with a series of ascents over Lough Neagh in conjunction with a radio-sonde balloon release. Measurements were taken from the Canberra at 50 MB intervals from lough level to the greatest possible height [48,500 feet was achieved], these later being compared with measurements from the radio-sonde. Analysis of the results showed that the observations from the Canberra were consistent and remarkably close to those obtained by radio-sonde. The trial then moved on to Phase 2 in April with a series of co-ordinated ascents by a

Hastings and the Canberra over Lough Neagh, the Hastings taking measurements up to 18,000 ft and the Canberra from 18,000 ft up to around 45,000 ft. Again, both sets of measurements were compared with a radio-sonde ascent. This phase of the trial also called for observations from the Hastings and Canberra flown in close proximity

over the same height range. Phase 3 entailed a series of descents by the Canberra over Weather Ship India [about 59N 20W]. The descents went all the way down to sea-level, Brian Hunt recalling that, "In the weather ship phase we used to liven up the crews of the ships by almost removing their masts on occasion!" As in previous phases, the Canberra observations were compared with those taken by radio-sonde.

The fourth, and final, phase was a number of co-ordinated sorties by a Hastings and the Canberra over BISMUTH tracks. This began in September when, after a Navex to Weather Ship India, flying began on Phase 4. Because of the lack of HF, and its limited fuel capacity, a modified, shortened, BISMUTH track was flown by the Canberra.

The Phase 4 sortie required the Canberra to fly the same track as the Hastings but at a height of around 250 millibars [about FL350], performing descents at the designated points on the track. As described by Brian Hunt: "We gave the Hastings a good long start and then cruise-climbed after it. The Hastings reached the first turning point of the triangle where it made a vertical sounding from sea level to 400 MB [about FL240], extending the ascent about 6000 feet beyond the usual 500 MB. The second leg of the triangle was then flown by the Hastings at 400 MB before carrying out a descent from 400 MB to sea level at the second turning point, then returning home at the usual 1500 feet.

The Canberra meantime aimed to arrive at the first turning point just after the Hastings had left it – for collision avoidance purposes – and then carried out a spiral descent from maximum height to 550 MB, thus giving a 150 MB overlap with the Hastings sounding. We then cruise-climbed along the second leg and carried out another descent to 550 MB at the second turning point, having beaten the Hastings to it."

The Canberra trial was successful, with the meteorological requirements being met and the pilot and navigator both submitting “generally favourable” reports, although the lack of HF, extra fuel and improved navigation equipment were problems to be addressed. The original plan back in 1956 had been to establish a flight of two Canberras as part of 202 Squadron if the trial proved successful. This never came to pass.

Another anecdote tells that not much has changed. Around that time it became known that there was a risk of flame-out with the Canberra B2 engines at extremes of height and outside air temperature; it was necessary to descend to much lower levels in order to re-ignite and, had this happened, our Canberra would have been hard pushed to climb again and get back to Aldergrove. So they fitted a newer type of engine which could relight at a higher level – but only on one side!

An Old Boy from Northern Ireland

We have received an email from Ian Bennett:

My dad served in 202 Squadron in Northern Ireland at the end of the war. I think he was a Flight Engineer on the PBYs so was never particularly attached (as he put it) to an individual plan [plane?]. He will be 80 later this year and I am trying to gather some information about the planes he served in so a friend who specialises in these matters can “personalise” a scale print he has drawn of a Catalina to define it as a relevant aircraft of the time and location etc

Can you tell me how I could for instance, find a call sign and markings of any of the Catalinas that were on Lough Erne at that time.

My Dad’s name is Richard William Bennett and whilst we have never heard very much of his service career (you will appreciate that at 79 he only saw service during the last couple of years of hostilities), I know it is now a time he harks back to in his mind.

Any help or contacts you could put me in touch with would really help

Many thanks

Ian Bennett.

Ian’s email address is
fran_and_ian@blueyonder.co.uk.

[If you can help with any of these queries, but don’t have email access, feel free to pass it through me]

Secretary’s Spiel

Membership is increasing slightly to 136 Current Members. A few new members joined – welcome to them.

Attached to this newsletter is the new list of members, if any of your details are incorrect, let me know?

Tim has been working hard on getting current members into the Association – they are starting to trickle through.

If anyone knows of anyone that wants to be a member, please get them to drop me a line.

See you next year at the reunion.

££££££ FINANCE CORNER ££££££

The 202 Squadron Association's Bank Accounts have the following balances--as at 21st February 2005 :

Lloyds TSB 30-day Notice Account-----£3537
"Working Account"-----£433

Note, The above amounts do not include the deposits paid by Members attending the 2005 Reunion.

Brian Tanner

Fred Ray

We are sad to learn of the death in September of Fred Ray, winchman and later pilot.

Does anyone know of any survivors of the battle of the Bismark?

tim@sparling.info

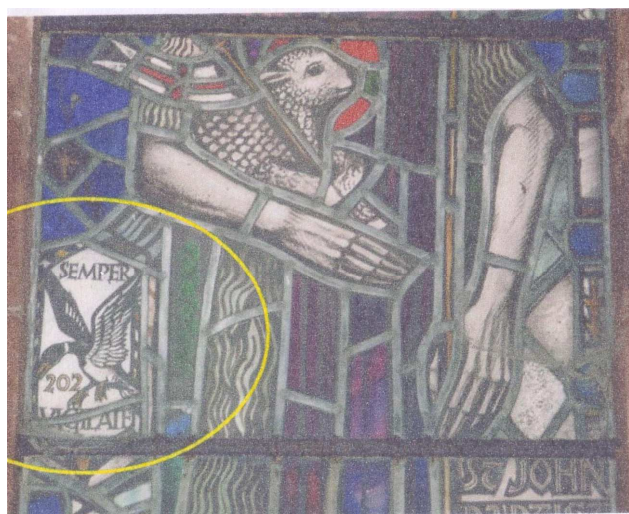


Culled from the Daily Telegraph just for Tim.
Congratulations.

The Elvanfoot Window

You will recall that in Tim's news from the Squadron in the last issue, he mentioned a memorial window to 202 Squadron in a deconsecrated church in Elvanfoot. In fact there was a request for financial support for the window.

John Prince has visited the site and the owner – not as easy as it sounds, ask him – and reported to the Chairman. In reality the “window” is only one small section of a larger window [see below] and assistance with its upkeep is not being recommended.



The reference to 202 Sqn.

The Flight Shop

The A Flight Shop has a lot of very attractive items of Squadron Memorabilia that are available to Association members.

202 Squadron Plaque	£24.00 *
202 Squadron Embroidered Badge	£4.00
Sea King Enamel Badge	£3.00
Large Sea King Print	£2.00
Sea King Mountains Print	£1.00
Sea King Postcard Print	£0.25
Tankard	£15.00*
Pen	£0.40
Key Ring	£1.00
202 Squadron Sticker	£0.50
RAF Crest – Enamel Badge	£3.00
Bookmark	£1.00
202 Squadron Crest Enamel Badge	£3.00
Sea King Sticker	£0.50
Sea King Embroidered Badge	£4.00
T Shirt (all sizes)	£8.50
Polo Shirt (all sizes)	£14.00
Tie	£7.50
Cummerbund	£20.00

This newsletter is published twice a year in spring and autumn. Please sent any contributions to the Editor.

