



Newsletter

Happy New Year

As I sit here in my warm study with a cup of coffee I cannot help but think about those of us who are probably not as lucky as most members of The Entry are. How we enjoyed the comradeship of the reunion last July and for those who attended Halton the following month a chance to catch up with friends from other entries. Unfortunately time is taking its toll and for some these events will be the last ones that they can attend, if there is one of the entry or some other friend you haven't heard from for a while why not just give them a call, probably make both of you feel better!

Notes from a Committee Meeting held on Zoom on 2nd December 2022

The Treasurer's report for 2022 had been circulated and was accepted; the accounts had been independently checked and signed as correct by the Chairman. The Bank Account is now on-line. This year's nominated charity is SSAFA. Articles for the Newsletter were few and far between, and it was agreed to reduce the Newsletter to one a year unless anything special came up. The accounts archive would be added to the Members area of the website. The Treasurer holds the Accounts archive which dates back to the founding of the Association. It was agreed that he would hold only 5 years' worth of data and that the rest would be shredded; probably through a secure shredding company.

Barry Neal

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Committee Members:

Les Shardlow, Les Garden,
Chris Wales, Barry Neal
Ken Bannister, Dave Post, Malcolm Watts,
Mick Woodhouse, Brian Lee.

Since we graduated many of our Entry have become Flight Engineers and have gone on to operate a variety of aircraft in many countries. Amongst these is Ken Bannister a regular contributor to this newsletter. With his interests in aircraft, railways and motor cycles you might never guess that he started off as a Rigger. Thanks for your article Ken interesting as usual.

Remembrance Service at the IBCC on 13 November 2022

Opened in 2018, the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) is a memorial and interpretation centre telling the story of the RAF Bomber Command. The centre includes a 31-metre tall spire and memorial walls that feature the names of all those who lost their lives serving or supporting Bomber Command during the Second World War. There are also 2 peace gardens: one Lincolnshire and one International.

The view through the Memorial Spire leads directly to Lincoln Cathedral, reflecting the view that let those of Bomber Command know they were almost home from their missions, and importantly for those who failed to return flying from Lincolnshire, provided their last view of their home.

This year, the Flight Engineers and Air Engineers Association, of which I am a member, was invited to lay a wreath at the Remembrance Service held on Sunday 13th November. As I live close by in Grantham, I put my name forward to attend and represent the Association. Three other members also put forward their names to attend and we met up in the visitor centre prior to the service. The service was held in the open air at the foot of the spire and memorial walls. During the service, wreaths were laid and the photo shows the four of us in front of the spire with our wreath between us which was laid in memory of those flight engineers who lost their lives during the Second World War.



If you are ever in the Lincoln area, the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) is well worth a visit. The IBCC, via its digital archive, delivers the most comprehensive coverage of Bomber Command globally, including the contribution and effect on over 60 nations.

There is an educational interpretation centre which includes a state-of-the-art exhibition telling the project's core themes: Recognition, Remembrance and Reconciliation. The exhibition also includes first-hand testimonies from those who survived.

In addition to being an important learning experience, the IBCC is a great family day out. Children can have a go at dressing up as a WWII airman, explore the interactive galleries, and enjoy family-friendly food in the cafe - including 'ration box' packed lunches.

Ken Bannister

Stop Press

On the way back from a wedding in Penang the Editor and Mrs Editor travelled via Kuala Lumpur and met up at the airport with Joe and Priscilla Surin. It was good to see them again both looking healthy and younger, this must be due to the warm weather and super food in Malaysia.



Sir Michael Armitage, Patron of the RAFHAA

We are sad to report that Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage KCB, CBE, passed away on 25th December 2022, aged 92. He was a great man and set an example to all other Brats of what could be achieved. His funeral will take place on the 18th January.

60th Anniversary

This month marks the 60th Anniversary of the Entry arriving at RAF Halton to become 'Trenchard Brats'. We were attested on 16th January 1963 during one of the worst

winters on record. I recently came across a video of that winter which may bring back some memories.

<https://www.facebook.com/channel5uk/videos/3113887378866793/>

Barry Neal, Chairman

Since the last Newsletter we have unfortunately lost Milton Hey to the disease of time. Milton went on his last posting whilst on holiday in Jersey on the 16th of September 2022. The letters of tribute by his Partner (Sarah) and Daughter (Kirsten) lay testament to him and his character. RIP Milton.

From Sarah

I met Milton in 2012 when he was 66, at a mountain biking weekend arranged by my school friend Mel Abbott.

Milton and I hit it off and started doing Yorkshire rides together as a couple and in groups. He had a very large circle of mountain biking friends who regularly met up for weekends away all year round which always included riding and drinking. Sometime we even ate too. Milton impressed me with his kind heart, his relaxed and happy outlook and his ability to maintain our bikes before a ride and on the move. He could also happily cycle for 8 hours a day, having trained on the hills of Huddersfield. I was nowhere near as fit or strong as him, living in the flats of York.

Milton was a wonderful step dad to my daughter Holly who he met when she was 7 or 8 years old and we tried to teach her to ride on 2 wheels many a time. In the end she settled on a tricycle.

Milton and I travelled widely, to the Canaries 5 times with Holly, and to Croatia, Cyprus, Brugge and more.

He was great at buying cards and presents for people, always remembering birthdays and sending cards. He would always help people, if he had met them or not, and many a time fixed bikes for friends and strangers, and he spent many hours maintaining and fixing the motor-home we bought together. Milton never needed to ask me what he should buy for Holly's birthday or Christmas. He instinctively knew what she would love and often gave Holly her favourite presents.

He was a kind and generous man, giving Mel Abbott and her partner a car once, and giving electronic tablets to a friend's son when one was stolen. In about 2015

or 2016 Milton bought himself a mountain bike with a battery and soon after bought one for me! It was very expensive! But we loved the e-bikes and it helped us enjoy our riding more and more.

Milton already loved opera when he met me and wanted to take me to the Royal Opera House. We never made that trip due to various reasons, however his love of opera grew and grew and he played opera and 60s music a lot when he visited me in York. Holly and I became very familiar with his favourites. The very first dinner dance we went to, Milton took me on the dance floor and taught me to rock n roll. I had never danced rock n roll before and loved it. After that we danced exactly the same dance to different music wherever we went

From 2018 to 2022 Milton had treatment for prostate cancer including drugs, injections and radiotherapy. He calmly got on with all his treatment, with no fear, complaint or worry. During these years he always carried a Tupperware box full of pills and he regularly left these behind at my house and other peoples houses. He completed his treatment in spring 2022, and was fit and well, and even his second knee replacement was finally working well.

Milton often spoke of his time in the RAF and he introduced me to various RAF friends including Rod and Mary, Ian Kennedy, Malcolm and Ingrid and more. He visited air shows and we went to 2 air museums which he loved.

In Milton's last year we travelled to Fueteventura and had a week's holiday with Holly in the sun. He was smiling relaxed and calm all week. One night there was live music in the town square. We went along and had a drink together while Holly danced with all the youngsters. I was worried about Hollys safety but Milton was in his element and relaxed. I looked across at him watching Holly dance, and he was softly crying with joy. I will never forget that.

From Kirsten

Dad was born 1946 in Huddersfield, middle of three brothers. Joined up 1963, met mum (Bev) 1966, married 1967, then went to Bahrain with 208 squadron - I think it was Hunters. All he really said about Bahrain was "oof it was hot."

Singapore with 48 squadron (Hercules) in 1970, I was born in the November and two weeks later he was off round all the South Pacific bases. He loved Singapore, he and mum were gutted when they had to come back in 1971. Then 43 squadron at Leuchars, the Fighting Cocks, Phantoms and Lightnings. Alex was born at Craigtoun Park in 1972.

Dad came out in 1976 owing to an admin error (really!) and we moved to Huddersfield, bought a house, I started school. He struggled to find work for a while, then joined Reliance Mercury in Halifax building tractors and tugs for airports. He was there until the mid 80s then joined Schwitzer turbo-chargers as a sales engineer, which involved more travelling, including New Zealand. He

did an overnight at Changi airport on the way to NZ one time and couldn't believe how much it had changed. Schwitzer were bought by Borg Warner and I don't think he was very impressed by them. He was then semi-retired and doing some work looking at energy efficiency in public sector buildings. He did quite a few site visits to Scottish sites, which was great because he'd stop off to see me, complain if I didn't have enough wine and take me out for dinner, and often added a mountain biking stop too.

He never lost his love of tinkering with engines and when my parents needed to buy a new (to us) car, they'd just look for one at a reasonable price with decent bodywork and not worry about the engine, because dad would fix it. He could have done the bodywork too, he just didn't like doing it. My memory of weekends when I was a kid is dad outside with his head under the car bonnet, then coming in covered in oil and washing it off with the Swarfega.

He firmly believed that it's not a proper dinner without gravy and it's not a proper pudding without custard. And he taught me that when you're buying a hammer, buy the biggest one you can afford because you can hit gently with a big hammer but you can't hit hard with a little one. And to always lift the floor mats up if you're buying a car to check there's actually a floor there.

(Editors Note. Great specification for Dinner and Pudding Milton.)

Association Reunions

At our December 2022 meeting we (the Committee) discussed future Reunions and what we could/should/couldn't do! The outcome of that debate was a proposal to ask you all what you think. The last time we did this was in 2005 and obviously a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. Mick Woodhouse is our newly 'appointed' Reunion Co-ordinator and his thoughts are below, together with links to a survey on Survey Planet which we would like you all to complete. It will only take a few minutes of that wildly retired life that you all lead! Look forward to your comments.

Barry Neal

After twenty years as the Treasurer of our Association I (*Mick W*) have passed the hat to Malcolm and at last week's committee meeting volunteered to research a future reunion and now have a new hat! I very much enjoyed the work I put into our last gathering at Bedford and in helping Ken at Lincoln (and we didn't get any complaints) so this was an obvious post for me. I enjoy phoning you all from time to time and hearing of your fortunes and our reunions are very important to me. I got quite emotional in seeing some of my room mates happily together again after nearly sixty years.

Our homes are widespread, even in this country, let alone those abroad, which makes having a General Meeting quite impossible which is why I am sending out a questionnaire to try to get a

feeling of your attitudes to future reunions. Some of you have asked for another next year (2023) which is not viable after the expense of Bedford. The summer of 2024 is possible, celebrating sixty years since Summer Camp, the following year we could celebrate sixty years since Graduation. We don't know how long we will be able to continue reuniting so getting the best attendance while we still can is paramount. We had thirty members at Bedford and I have just counted forty-five who could, all things being equal, attend the next.

In the past, the Committee has asked for ideas and suggestions on a number of subjects but in general have had little response and now we are running out of our own and feeling a little stale; after all, this committee has been together for a long time now. As most of you will have realised, I am a dinosaur regarding social media and its gadgets so I have asked Brian and Chris to try to find a way to make it very easy for you all to reply to me via email, WhatsApp or phone if necessary.

The major considerations at this early stage of planning a reunion are travel, venue and cost. The venue should be able to accommodate fifty-plus people and be near major travel routes, either road, rail and possibly the airport. Cost is an individual consideration so your views are important to getting a good result. What to do and the following day are also important so please do reply to me and let's see what we can do. At this point I am reminded of Flt Sgt Bettell in 3 Wing bawling at one of us "SAY, SOMETHING MAN, EVEN THOUGH IT IS ONLY BOLLOCKS, FLT SGT".

Our next Committee Meeting is scheduled for 1st July at my home in Oxfordshire and any of you who wish to join us are welcome, let me know as I will be cooking. I hope to be able by then to present a proposal for our next event so that the real work can begin, so please let me have your views as soon as you can. I use this cold dark, damp time of the year to do my annual planning as I get busy in the Spring with gardening, sailing, etc.

Best Wishes, stay warm, stay safe, Mick
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<https://s.surveypal.com/son604yr>

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