

230 Squadron



Association

www.230sqn.co.uk

Newsletter Winter 2007



230 Squadron Association



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Editors Notes

Hi Everyone,

Quite a bit to read in this issue with the AGM minutes, reunion recollections and much more. Don't forget that any memories of your own would almost certainly be of interest to others, so put pen to paper, or email, and get writing.

As I am writing this, the spring sunshine is beaming through the study window urging me into the garden for some long overdue maintenance. Things tend to grow all year round here!

As always, as we near the end of the year, Cathy and I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Warm Regards,

Al Nicholson

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President's Letter

My Dear Members,

It has been an Amazing Summer! Britain has been described as having no climate, only weather.

All this talk about Climate Change seems to have come true with this summer of torrential rain and floods, Such things are not usually associated with a British summer.

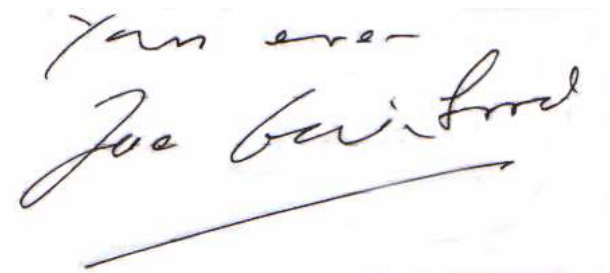
Lady Gainford and I hope that you were not inconvenienced by such happenings. Here in Marlow people living in houses close to the river were warned that they might have to evacuate. It became a very close run thing but the river level stopped rising just before it became really serious.

I was so glad to hear that the Reunion and AGM went well. Sorry I could not make it but better luck next year.

Four days ago was for myself an interesting anniversary: my first solo flight. 25 September 1941, Tiger Moth BB700 at Denton, a satellite airfield to No 6 EFTS at Sywell.

Denton was one of those makeshift wartime aerodromes. Some fields were acquired, the hedges ripped out and the ditches filled in. It made me think of the kind of World War I aerodrome you would find in France. The great delight of that First Solo was the joy of being, at last, able to do something requiring skill and to be able to do it entirely on my own. No one to butt in with criticism or comments!

All the very best to you all,



Yours ever
Joe Gainford

CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

Well another year is drawing to a close and another Newsletter looms. I hope this edition finds you all well and contains some morsels that you find of interest.

REUNION AT ALDERGROVE - AUGUST 2007

I will not say much about the reunion as other people's views and memories appear elsewhere in the issue. Although slightly disappointing from an Association attendance point of view, and I appreciate that many of you were affected by the short notice change of date or the thought of the trip over to Aldergrove, it was nevertheless a most enjoyable weekend. Many thought that the low numbers were in fact an actual advantage as it was possible to get around and chat to virtually all of those Sqn members left on base. We really must record our very sincere gratitude to all those at Aldergrove who put in so much hard work to ensure that we were looked after, entertained, transported and wined and dined in such style throughout the visit. Thank you chaps, you did 230 Squadron proud!

NEXT REUNION – WOODHALL SPA - OCTOBER 2008

You will also see elsewhere that we have also decided to go ahead with next year's reunion will be over the weekend of 3-5 October at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa in accordance with last year's decision on future reunion locations. We discussed at some length during the AGM the fact that the cost was higher than usual (£169 a head for the whole weekend) and that this might put a number of people off. However, this is a Dinner, Bed and Breakfast option and there is the potential for some interesting visits in the area (military, historic and retail). It is a wonderful location so start saving now.

THE ASSOCIATION WEB PAGE

The web site (www.230Sqn.co.UK) is now up and running and I hope that those of you with access to the web have had an opportunity to take a look at it. While by no means a 'finished' article, and any suggestions as to improvements would be most welcome, it has already fulfilled one

of my hopes that it would bring in some more members.

Not only do I hope to have more photographs (and would still welcome any offerings) but also hope to include the bi-monthly, unclassified, résumé of Sqn activities that is produced by the Squadron to keep the families aware of what is happening to the boys in theatre. Also, as a result of the chatter and reminiscences over the reunion weekend, I am considering including a 'War Stories' page. Many memories, be they of War, Exercise or just routine Squadron life, bring smiles (or grimaces!) to those who remember them and are part of the Sqn's life. Such stories put some flesh on the bones of history and may also help people in the future (if not now) appreciate what makes us 'tick'. I have in mind many of the stories that have already appeared in the Association newsletter and assume that, unless I hear otherwise, original contributors are happy to see their articles reproduced. Any other offerings will be welcome; contributors' names will be acknowledged but third party names may be removed from the article when published to protect the innocent as well as the guilty!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A John Hodkin recently contacted us as follows:

“I'm trying to find out more details about my uncle Flying Officer Joe Sturdy who served with the Squadron on Sunderlands during WWII. He died on 20th August 1943. I know his name is on the Alamein War Memorial but apart from that I don't know too much more. Any guidance on where to follow up would be gratefully received”

There is a reference to it in Guy's History of the Squadron but if anyone has any more information on Joe Sturdy and could pass it to me I will forward it to John.

And Finally.

All our very best wishes to you all from Adrienne and myself for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

Dave Waring

230 Squadron Association Annual General Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting Held on
Saturday 1st September 2007

Royal Air Force Aldergrove Officers Mess

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from committee members: Lord Gainford, President, Wg Cdr Hunter, Vice President and Ian Bell, Secretary. Apologies were also received from members Rob Turner, Nick Laird, Alan Dellar and 'Happy' Adams. In the absence of the Secretary, Rod Goodier took the Minutes. As this is the second meeting that apologies have been received from the Secretary citing pressure of work he would be asked if he felt he was in a position to continue in the post.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2006 Annual General

Meeting Minutes of the AGM held in Stratford-Upon-Avon on October 6th 2006 were read and approved.

Proposed by John Leeks, seconded by Sylvia Collins.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the 2006 AGM minutes.

Membership Secretaries Report

Brian Collins reported that we had 161 Full Members and 40 Associate/Honorary Members, totalling 202. We had 4 new members but 3 subscription-renewal letters returned by the post office – whereabouts unknown. 218 newsletters are posted out to registered members and the difference between that figure and the apparent numbers is due to the extra newsletters sent to widows of former members who continue to receive newsletters unless they request otherwise. The Committee had received no notification of any final postings during the year. The Membership Secretary reminded all membership payments should be sent direct to him and he will bank the money and advise the treasurer accordingly.

Mike Meagre suggested that where someone had shown an initial interest in joining the association but had not actually joined it might be worthwhile getting an existing member, who lives in the same area or may know them, to follow up the enquiry by telephone or letter. Where thought necessary, the Membership Secretary should initiate follow up action. (AP 1)

Action Point (AP) 1 Membership Secretary.

During subsequent discussion on ways of increasing membership, particularly from the current Squadron members, John Leek suggested the application form should include our new web-site address. This was already in hand.

Rod Goodier suggested an attractive recruiting poster be made & laminated for display in 230 Sqn crew-room to attract new members. It was pointed out that most of the interest in the Association comes from ex-aircrew; there was a need to reinforce the fact that this was a Squadron Association and not just an Aircrew one (AP2). Ray Butchard offered to produce another poster for display in the Engineers crew-room(AP3).

AP 2 Chairman Dave Waring to produce poster for aircrew crew-room.

AP 3 Ray Butchard to produce poster for engineers crew-room. Both posters to be sent To Rod Goodier who will put them up when he visits the Sqn in December.

Mike Trace suggested a change of address form be printed on the back of the annual membership renewal form as well as the web site address.

AP 4 Membership Secretary.

Treasurer's Report:

Annual financial report submitted. Treasurer pointed out that the amount of £93.80 as stated on the report that the 2006 AGM raffle raised should have read £129. However, the sum of £35 was taken from the 2006 raffle money as reimbursement for the 230 Sqn Airman of the Year engraved tankard that had been purchased and

also for the cost of a wreath.

Treasurer suggests putting the majority of money in the bank account into a deposit account that will earn interest.

The financial report was accepted & approved. Proposed by Fred Maryon, seconded by John Sayers.

Election of Committee Members:

All current members offered to stand for re-election and were re-elected.

Proposed by Sylvia Collins, seconded by John Leeks.

Annual Subscription Rate:

Treasurer recommended the current rate remain at £6 per annum, as there was no need to increase due to low expenditure. It was agreed that the subscription rate charged offered good value for money with two newsletters pa, a web site, friendship and a heavily subsidised event at a real RAF station every other year.

Proposed by Mike Trace, seconded by Rod Goodier.

Airman of the Year Award:

Due to increased operational commitments it had not been possible to nominate an Airman of the Year for 2007. However it was noted that all squadron personnel are working just as hard and long if not more, now that "Operation Banner" has been terminated.

Location & Format of 2008/9 Reunions:

For 2008 it was proposed that the reunion be held over the weekend 3 – 5th October at the Petwood Hotel, Woodall Spa, close to RAF Coningsby, home of the Dam Busters and BBMF. There are a number of sites of 'aviation interest' in the area and it was hoped that visits to the BBMF and/or East Kirby could be organised.

Two nights Dinner, B&B works out using 2007 prices at £169pp

and full details will be published in the next newsletter with a note to start saving now!

For 2009 it is hoped we can return to RAF Aldergrove if operational commitments and the new CO permit. It was also suggested RAF Odiham and Benson might be suitable fallbacks.

AOB:

Simon Heighway suggested the Association produces a "Point Brief" as everyone is so busy on squadron the point brief would act as a gentle reminder of items such as the "Airman of the Year Award"(AP5).

Brian Collins requested information on member George Blackie who had expressed interest in joining the Association but had not followed up the initial enquiry(AP6).

Chairman reported that the web site was now on line and had already attracted some new members. It was intended that would soon include two new sections: The "Tigers Roar", extracts from the Squadron's in house newsletter that kept the families at RAF Aldergrove aware of what the Squadron was doing in their operational areas. He was also considering the introduction of a "war stories" page. This would contain short stories or memories from members of their experiences on the Squadron, be they Operational, Exercise or just day-to-day Squadron life. (AP 7)

AP 5 Chairman to follow up the 'Point Brief' for the Squadron.

AP 6 Mike Meagre to follow up, as he knows George.

AP 7 All Association members with any "war stories" are requested to forward them to the Chairman

There being no other business the Chairman thanked 230 Sqn for hosting the 2007 AGM and thanked all members who had made the trip to RAF Aldergrove and hoped that many more would attend the 2008 reunion.

Rod Goodier: Acting AGM Secretary

IN THE 'WINGS'

Very few of us are aware of some of the activity that is going on, 'in the wings' so to speak, to recover items of interest concerning flying boats from locations around UK or even the world. Some of you may be interested to know what one of our members, John Evans, is getting up to down in SW Wales.

The Pembroke Dock Sunderland Trust (in which he is a prominent light) has been busy for some time now attempting to recover as much as possible of a Mark I Sunderland (T9044) which has rested in the Haven since November 1940. This is the same a/c from which a Pegasus engine was recovered during the 'Wreck Detectives' series broadcast on TV in 2004.

The interest level is growing all the time and they are hopeful that the Sunderland will be the catalyst for a major maritime/aviation heritage project for this corner of Wales. This is the place to tell the story of military flying-boats. A considerable amount of the boat is buried in the sand and silt at the bottom of the Haven and the divers report that it is in a remarkable state of preservation. PDST now have a website www.pdst.co.uk which will tell you more.

In a similar vein, there was a story some years ago, which got prominence in some of the papers, of a supposed Sunderland find in Lake Windermere but that has never been substantiated. There was certainly a 'boat factory' at Whitecross Bay on Windermere (northwest of Bowness) during the war so it is not beyond the realms of possibility that one came to grief there. Anyone out there know anything about that?

Honours and Decorations

I recently received an email about the new *The Decorations and Honours Register*. This is a new register that is being developed, partially as a result of the campaign for an Armed Forces Veterans Badge and partially through an awareness that whilst there are numerous books recording recipients of the top-honours, /cont

nowhere is there a definitive record of those, equally deserving, who receive more minor honours and awards. (the London Gazette is, of course, the definitive document but is perhaps not the easiest document to peruse or even search.)

The Charles Mosley Press (who have instigated the register) believe that many members of various Service Associations would deserve an entry we have been asked to draw this to the attention of our members. The email goes on to say:

The Decorations and Honours Register is now accepting registrations for the Commemorative Edition to be published in the spring of 2008.

Registration is free of charge and painless, either via our website www.honoursregister.co.uk or by simply sending in an individual's name, list of medals, decorations and/or honours with dates awarded, to us by post to the address shown below. The closing date for registration is 29 February 2008.

For those with internet access there is press release at: <http://www.honoursregister.co.uk/PROct07.pdf>, which contains all the information members should need to participate in this new reference book.

For snail-mail, or telephone, the address is:

The Decorations & Honours Register
KBC Bournemouth Exchange
23 Hinton Road
Bournemouth
BH1 2EF
Telephone 01202 201405 (also email via:
admin@honoursregister.co.uk)

Dave Waring

2007 REUNION RECALLED

The weekend was excellent; as usual the squadron looked after us very well. Unfortunately due to the date change we were low in numbers about 20 (Bob & Carole Turner missed for the first time).

At present 60% of the aircraft and personnel are in Baghdad, which was fairly obvious looking around the mess. The liaison officer given the task of shepherding us (F/O Jim Mastin) I think had less than a weeks notice but did an excellent job.

John & Maureen Sayers got stuck on the runway at Heathrow for some time and arrived mid afternoon.

We were given evening meal of curry or Chinese etc. in the squadron 'lair', and then back to the mess for a further glass of 'lemonade' or two. Brian & Sylvia Collins were delayed by unserviceability and arrived late evening rather tired & upset.

Saturday we went to the squadron crew room for a briefing by Jim Mastin. He told us of conditions in Baghdad, the squadron are on the US Base which houses 40,000 (in relative comfort with air con etc.) However they have an average of 4 incoming mortar attacks daily, the Yanks have a radar system that warns of incoming attacks & even narrows it down to various sectors of the camp, so you don't panic till you hear your particular areas warning. The squadron had put together a video of a pair of Pumas flying over Baghdad at 100ft. above ground level (it looked quite 'hairy'). He pointed out that all Iraqis love their TV & most have satellite dishes, the higher the better!

We returned to the mess for lunch & then we were taken to 'Long Kesh' (which had been the site of 'The Maze' prison) . Most of it has been demolished but you can tour what is left, (we were unable to because of time constraints, I certainly did not want to anyway). We visited the Ulster Aviation Society which has moved there from Langford Lodge. We met Ernie Cromie (Chairman) and were given a

most interesting guided tour by Ray Hammond.

On return to the mess we put on our 'best bib & tucker' and assembled for pre-prandial drinks at 7.30. The dinner was excellent, it was followed by speeches from 230 'boss' Wg./Cdr Chris Hunter, station boss Grp./Capt. Stubbs & Dave Waring. We were given a presentation on the role of the Sunderlands by Guy Warner. The chef was presented to the station boss he turned out to be an SAC who had taken over as his 'boss' was off (I am not sure why). Following the toasts etc. we retired to the bar. Many stories were swapped, I was last of the Ass'n. to retire (a record for me) at 3.20 a.m.

On Sunday we took breakfast at various hours of the morning, depending I think on a number of factors, the main ones being our physical state and when we had to catch our transport home.

As on previous occasions a number of people had stayed on until Monday, I decided I would do so this year. Big mistake - as I was on my own, my only excitement being a fire alarm at about 4p.m. on Sunday afternoon, too enthusiastic use of a toaster!

A





2007 REUNION RECALLED (2)

From Gütersloh to Aldergrove - a rookies view of our first association meet August 2007

The flight booked and cases packed our journey began with a 03.00 awakening on the Friday morning. Our check-in time at Paderborn airport set for 05.00. Airborne on time with Air Berlin Uta and I were on route to City Airport Belfast via Stansted. Our arrival time of 09.10 had been passed to the squadron beforehand, so once through arrivals we set about looking for the familiar blue uniform and friendly face that would transport us to RAF Aldergrove. After several tours of the arrivals area no familiar blue uniform was seen. "No problem," said I, "let's call Dave Waring on his mobile." Oh dear, hic-up number two. Dave's number was unavailable. "Okay then, option three should work, let's call Aldergrove and get through to the squadron." When the operator informs me after trying five different numbers, "sorry Sir, there is no answer", I began to wonder if it was the first of April!! So on to option four. A fail-safe taxi ride. So with a happy paddy driving we were off on our way to Aldergroveor so we thought! Having seemed what felt like a complete double tour of Ulster paddy informs us he is lost and has no idea where Aldergrove is. Eventually we find a petrol station where paddy refills his almost empty tank and asks directions to our destination. It came as no surprise to learn that we

had long passed Aldergrove and were well on our way to Ballykelly!!! At this point I did not dare to ask Uta if she was enjoying the journey so far, but breathed a huge sigh of relief when we eventually arrived at the station gates. Having bartered with paddy over the fare he was off in a cloud of diesel with at least a weeks worth of my old age pension! Booking in on the base proved to be no easier. Faced with an over efficient female version of paddy our taxi driver the conversation went something like this:

“Names?”..... “Mike and Uta Meager...” “have you been here before”.... “Oh, just a few times, “ I say..... “What unit are you from?” “No unit, we’ve just flown in from Germany”.... “So you’re civilians?”..... “Yes”..... “What’s your business on Aldergrove?”..... “230 Squadron Association meeting, we’re here for three days.”..... “Sorry, but I’ve not been informed about this, who is your sponsor?”.... “230 Squadron”, I say..... “I need a name,” she says..... “Well if you would kindly call the Squadron I should then be able to give you a name”..... A few minutes later she reappears. “Nobody is answering the phone on 230 Squadron “..... so she now ushers us into a corporal policeman’s office who wants to speak to us. Thankfully he is able to resolve the situation and informs us that we will be collected shortly. At last a very enjoyable weekend is underway with the smiling appearance of Fg.of. Jim Mastin the association host for the next three days. Jim apologized for our pick-up problems from City Airport saying that as we were flying in from Germany our arrival time could surely not be 09.10 it must be 19.10 hence the problem. – I can

only blame P.O.Prune for that cock-up!! After dropping us at the officer mess we were met by Mike Trace and Dave Waring. It was great to see them both again after some 25 years since we last flew together on 230. We were taken to our room – the VIP suite.... What



a treat, I have never in my 35 years service enjoyed mess accommodation like this. (Word must have got around that I am the Chairman and founder member of the Trendy Master's Club – recognition at last!!) The remainder of the morning was spent meeting other members of the association and discussing the good old days over coffee. Then it was lunch in the mess over a few beers followed by a welcome siesta to prepare for our evening invitation to the Tiger's Den, and what a superb evening it was. The Squadron put on some free beer and served a very enjoyable curry. It now became apparent why the Squadron telephones were not being answered. Only a handful of aircrew and ground crew remained at the Squadron - the rest were detached to Iraq and other inhospitable places. The curry now demolished and the Squadron running low on beer transport arrived to return us to the mess where the social evening continued well into the small hours.

Saturday started with a full traditional breakfast after which Jim Mastin transported us back to the Squadron for a briefing on the Squadron's tasking role in Iraq and showed a very interesting video of low flying over the Bagdad area. It was then back to the mess for lunch followed by a coach excursion to the old Maze Prison at Long Kesh to visit the Ulster aircraft museum. One interesting feature was a Wessex helicopter which was purchased on the net via Ebay.!



Saturday evening was perhaps the highlight of the weekend with a really superb dining in night attended by the Station Commander and 230 Squadron boss who managed to return in time from some well deserved leave. I know the association members and their ladies thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and needless to say another very late night was spent together in the mess bar. One special point for me was that, when the Station Commander was a young flying officer we flew together in Belize. I would like to think that maybe the old master's guiding hand set him off on the right direction to his now successful air force career. Well done young Sir!

Sunday morning at breakfast we all seemed a little jaded from the previous evening, so it was spent quietly chatting over the newspapers with

plentiful intake of strong coffee. Then it was lunch followed by the Association AGM. It was now time to bid our farewells to our Squadron hosts and association comrades. Both Uta and I had a really great weekend and give our thanks to all the nice folk we met. A special thank you to the Station Commander, the 230 Squadron boss and the Squadron guys that made our stay so enjoyable during a period of extremely heavy work load. Also a special mention to Dave Waring our Chairman, Mike Trace and my old crewman buddy Simon Heighway, it was great to see you all again.

The only sad note is that there were not more of us old Tigers attending. So perhaps I should end by echoing the well known plea by Delia Smith (Chairman of Norwich Union FC) to her supporters during a match on TV "Come on then – where are you – let's be having you ". We both look forward to seeing you all again next year at Petwood in the Lincoln Area. Best wishes to you all and keep your powder dry!

Mike Meager

14 October 2007



Thanks to Clive Simmons and Fred Maryon for the photos, Editor

The Spring 2007 issue of the Newsletter contained an article describing the activities of the Westland Whirlwind HAR Mk 10s of No 230 Squadron in Borneo during the "Confrontation" with Indonesia in the mid-1960s. One of the pilots was Flight Lieutenant Roger Wain, who continued to serve with the Squadron on its return to the UK.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN by Roger Wain (with Guy Warner)

(or how we took our Whirlwind HAR Mk10s to Cyprus and bought them back again).

I was the "A" Flight Commander on No 230 Squadron at RAF Odiham in Hampshire when the Boss (Squadron Leader David Todd) told me that from mid-March 1968 the Squadron would be taking over the UN support commitment in Cyprus. This was the United Nations in Cyprus (UNFICYP) peacekeeping task and was shared in rotation with the Westland Wessex HC Mk2 of No 18 and No 72 Squadrons. 230 Squadron had taken an active part in operations in Cyprus twice before; in 1958-59 when equipped with Scottish Aviation Pioneers and flying the Whirlwind in 1964.

The Squadron had already had the experience of being flown from Borneo in the Short Belfast and our reservation was that the Whirlwind did not respond too well to being taken apart and put together again. The stripping down and rebuilding seemed to produce unwanted vibration, some of which took a long time to fix.

An unsupported ferry was not practical due to the limitations of the VHF radio fit and also the fact that the absence of support had contributed to the failure of previous attempts to ferry helicopters long distances. The distance from Odiham to Cyprus was some 2200 nautical miles (2532.2 miles, 4074.4 km). However, our opinion was that a transit with a support transport aircraft meeting the helicopters at night stops with the detachment groundcrew on board to sort out any snags would be effective.

David Todd was a good arm twister and the plan was approved. Dave delegated the planning of the ferry to me, while most of the navigation

detail was done by the Squadron Navigators, Flight Lieutenants Dennis Brooks and Dave Holes.

There were a few basic rules. Each aircrew member had his own set of maps and an additional set was placed in each aircraft. Everyone had a set of overnight kit but nothing extra, everything else went in the support aircraft. The crew of each helicopter would always be two, as most of the space in the main cabin would be taken up by the long range tank. This was of light alloy structure and sat in the middle of the cabin floor under the rotor gearbox, which was the optimum position as regards centre of gravity considerations. It contained about 100 gallons (800 lbs, 362.9 kg), which at a fuel burn of about 50 gallons (400 lbs, 181.4 kg) gave an extra 180 nautical miles (207.16 miles, 333.36 km) range. The main problem was that this took you very close to the maximum overload all up weight (AUW) of 8000 lbs (3629 kg). Therefore for the first 30 minutes or so you would be restricted to 80 kts (92.06 mph, 148.16 kph).

Of course the long range tanks had to be test flown and I see from my log book that I did a four and a half hour flog to RAF St Eval, refuelling at RAF Chivenor and returning to base. A few of the pilots who had been in Borneo were used to sitting in the Whirlwind for long spells, refuelling with rotors running to maximise payload but for some it was a new experience, with the potential of four hours plus in the cockpit at one go.

This brings in the question of what we now call "comfort stops". There were no special arrangements but it was one of the reasons for having two pilots (others included the extra weight of the fuel and consequent lack of cabin space. However, it did take two so that you could eat the packed ration in comfort or scratch wherever. But there always had to be a hand or both knees on the stick. There was an effective friction lock for the collective lever but the cyclic frictions required very accurate adjustment so that the stick did not "fall over" if released.) There was one occasion when I had a flight of four going somewhere in the UK for an exercise when we had to allow one of the helicopters to land in a field for urgent "call of nature" purposes, while the other three "circled the wagons" aloft.

You could, if you were very careful, put the seat base up and climb down into the cabin. This was not recommended as any inadvertent contact with

the cyclic could be disastrous, nor was sitting on the collective on the way down a good idea, especially if you were in the hover – not, to be honest, that there was a convenience in the cabin anyway.

At the planning stage some bright spark realised that a substantial part of the trip would be over water and decreed that all the aircrew should go to Portsmouth and visit the Royal Navy's ditching trainer. I did plead previous experience (for real!) but was not excused. It was worse than the



actual ditching I had experienced some two years earlier, in September 1965, when I was on No 22 (Search and Rescue) Squadron at Chivenor.

We were on the airfield for some continuation flying at dusk when there was a call out. We flew into a power cable and in the time it takes to clap your hands the Whirlwind yawed right and rolled upside down into the River Torridge, just upstream from Bideford. The first breath of water

was a nasty shock. There were no injuries to any of the four of us, except to our pride.

The Westland Whirlwind HAR Mk 10 was developed from the original Sikorsky S-55, the prototype of which had first flown in 1949. The early Whirlwinds were powered by piston engines, whereas the Mk 10 benefited from a Bristol Siddeley Gnome turboshaft. The engine incorporated an electronic control system which considerably reduced the pilot's workload. It was faster, had a longer range and could carry a greater payload than earlier versions. The fuselage was basically a large box mounted on four landing wheels, with a slender tail boom attached. The engine was in the nose and connected to the rotor head by a drive shaft which ran diagonally between the two pilots, who sat above the cabin and the engine. This design was revolutionary for its time and solved centre of gravity problems which had plagued previous early helicopters. Many consider that the S-55/Whirlwind was the first truly practical operational helicopter. However, just a reminder for those who never flew the Whirlwind HAR Mk10 – it had no autopilot and was not stable, it had to be hand flown all the time.

WANTED TO BUY:

**A COPY OF THE 230 SQN PRINT
“TIGER PATROL”
BY MICHAEL RONDOT.**

**Anyone who can help, please contact the
editor, Al Nicholson. Contact details on back**

BLACK PETER by Alan Deller



I remember Black Peter very well. Wing Commander Bednall, who was the 230 Squadron CO at the time, mid 1944 I think, was apt to produce original and startling ideas, one of which was to use a black-painted “invisible” Sunderland to simulate night attacks on U-boats.

We had not revealed his plan to Group for their approval, or not: this was to be a “private venture” and aircraft P for Peter, in overall black, was to be kept secret and not, I repeat not to be used on normal Squadron business.

Came the day, when the CO was away from the Station, that an aircraft was required for one of the periodic trips to the forward bases in the Maldives. I was acting Flight Commander at the time and, as sadly was the case all too often, no aircraft was serviceable except - you guessed it - Black Peter, secret and to be kept under wraps, a circumstance I gave a low priority. I sent the aircraft round the islands and not a peep was heard then or after, save from the outraged inventor.

Whether aircraft P reverted to lily-white or even off-lily-white I have no idea, but at least I survived!

Never believe the Boss when he says “It’s only for five days!”

It was a Wednesday afternoon I think. I was relaxing at home, about two weeks into my four weeks leave having just returned from 4 months in the Falklands. I answered the ringing phone to be greeted by my Squadron WO “How’s your leave going?” he asked, “Great thanks, still 2 weeks to go” I replied hopefully. “Actually it finishes this Friday; you’re off to Cyprus for 5 days on Saturday morning”.

Well I could think of worse things that could have cancelled my leave. So on Saturday morning I joined the rest of the 240 OCU detachment team and left Odiham for Lyneham to catch the Hercules airliner! The job, it was explained, was simply to put the rotor blades on six Chinooks and come home. The aircraft in question were on-route home by boat (ship?) having done their bit in “Desert Storm”. The vessel was being diverted into Limassol where we would do our bit and the Wokka’s would then depart for Turkey to assist in Operation “Provide Comfort”

On arrival at Akrotiri we were rapidly bussed down to Limassol docks to begin work. The first shock was seeing 11 Chinooks and not 6. Apparently OC Eng Wing was unable to ascertain which were the most serviceable from the paperwork and so off-loaded them all. The second shock was the various states of disrepair we found the aircraft in. Five days indeed!

The troops were split into two teams and the race was on. In addition to blade installations we also replaced engines and conducted sufficient scheduled maintenance to enable the aircrew to get the aircraft off Greek soil and up to the Sovereign base territory. The local political scene was getting a mite touchy in the knowledge that the aircraft were bound for Turkish airspace. Whilst on the docks we were ably supported by a very fine Army field kitchen that laid on the most excellent meals. Sadly we were let down by the RAF Supply branch who were unable to help with

our pleas for some KD uniforms. Apparently we couldn't have the ones in stock in case somebody needed them! We had arrived in full DP's in the knowledge that we only to be in the heat for a few days and spent the next three weeks perspiring profusely.

Once all men and equipment were safely on camp, the atmosphere relaxed a little. We still worked twelve hour shifts to get the aircraft up and running. But also we were allowed a little free time to enjoy the locale. One memorable moment was my foolish phone call home to wish Cathy "Happy Anniversary". Apparently, I should have picked a better moment than having just come off the beach at Larnaca after a spot of sunbathing!

Once the first few Chinooks had departed for their business we thought the work would ease, but it transpired that the Chinooks that were already in theatre needed some TLC and so they duly arrived with us. The vicious circle had begun! Anyway, after three weeks in five days clothes the bosses realised that the troops might need to go home. My journey was relatively straightforward, although somewhat longer than hoped for; you see I had the pleasure of flying form Cyprus to Odiham by Chinook in three and a half days !! But that, as they say, is another story.

Al Nicholson



Hello Alan,

Greeting from South Wales.

My Father was a member of 230 Squadron during WW2, and collected an album of photographs during his travels, especially in Burma and Ceylon. He died many years ago, 1975 to be exact, but I was able to find 230 Association some years ago and joined. I gave a copy of his album to the Squadron historian at RAF Aldergrove, and also sponsored (in his name) the painting of the Squadron badge within the RAF Heraldry project.

I have the copy photographs scanned to my disc, and enclose a couple for your perusal. There are some of the Sunderlands, the SS Manilla, the ships in harbour at that time, Jimmy the Lemur and lots more.

There is also an itinerary of places visited.

I look forward to hearing from you if you require more, or anything specific.

Andrew Rees



Ron flies squadron crest again

Former Sunderlander Ron Boreham has filled a significant gap in Pembroke Dock's aviation history.

Earlier this year. When Ron joined the volunteer team which runs the town's Gun Tower Museum, he realised that an important squadron crest was missing from the RAF Room.

Said Ron: "I flew with 230 Squadron on Sunderlands between 1952 and 1954. This was the famous Tiger Squadron which became the longest serving squadron at PD. The Museum has an impressive collection of squadron crests but 230's was not among them so I decided to obtain one."

Ron commissioned a copy of the 230 crest - which incorporates a tiger and a palm tree - and presented this to the Museum where it has gone on display.

This year the Gun Tower Museum extended its season to include October and the extra month has proved popular with visitors and local residents. The Museum closes on October 28th and reopens at Easter 2008. Special arrangements can be made for group visits out of season by contacting Curator Ron Watts on 01646 681446.



*Sunderlander Ron Boreham (right) shows the 230 Squadron crest to fellow volunteers Allan Ross (left) and Mike Hurley.
PICTURE: Martin Cavaney Photography.*

IMPORTANT

All enquiries regarding **Memberships, Subscriptions, Resignations, Deceased, or Gone Away** and **Changes of Address**, to be sent promptly to the **Registrar** by letter please.

All items for inclusion in the next issue of the Newsletter should be sent directly to the editor by no later than **1 May 2008**.

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(in MSWord format if possible please)