



## WHAT'S ON



*Vicky Hall - Program Secretary*

- 7 February 97'.....Jim Ferguson - Defenders of Malta
- 7 March 97'.....To be Confirmed
- 4 April 97'.....AGM
- 2 May 97'.....Tony Errington - Royal Naval light coastal Forces
- 6 June 97'.....To be Confirmed

## Newsletter Contributions

If you have an article or a story you would like to share with the other members of the Society then please send it to me....

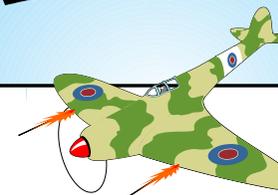
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# RUNWAY 22

Volume 1 No.1



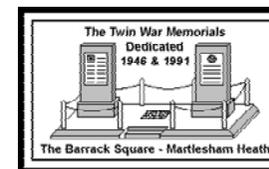
January 1997

*Martlesham Heath Aviation Society*

## NEWSLETTER



RAF MARLESHAM HEATH



MARLESHAM HEATH AVIATION SOCIETY



356TH FIGHTER GROUP

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## OBITUARIES - MARTYN COOK

It is with much sadness that I have to report the death of three of our popular Members, Vice Presidents, Peter Rix and Charles (Holly) Hall and a special Society Member, Jack Grimwood.

Peter Helmut Martin Rix died suddenly in October after a very short illness. Peter was a Luftwaffe pilot flying Focke Wolf 190's during the latter stages of World War 2. The Society contacted Peter and invited him to give a talk on his exploits during his years as a pilot which he did. From that evening on he became a member and later was offered a position as Vice President which he accepted. Peter lived in Sudbury which is some considerable distance from Martlesham Heath but come to our meetings whatever the weather. He was also an enthusiastic volunteer at the Duxford Aviation Museum and worked two days a week maintaining and restoring the aircraft of the fighter squadrons.

Charles (Holly) Hall, Holly as he was known to all died on the 9 December 1996 after a long illness. He was a Vice President of the society since the Society was formed in 1982. However, for several years he has taken on the role of Secretary and Newsletter Editor. He had been interested in aviation since before leaving school, making many cycle journeys to Martlesham Heath to witness many aircraft arrivals and departures which he recorded in his diary. During his lifetime he contributed to many aviation magazines, writing articles on varying aviation subjects and was for many years a cartoonist in our local paper, the Evening Star. Holly was also an artist and was a member of the Guild of Aviation Artists displaying his work at their annual show in London.

Jack Grimwood died on 26 January 1997 after a long illness. Jack was an original member of the Society and always took an active roll in all the Society's activities. The refurbishment of the top floor of the Control Tower was perhaps his greatest achievement and along with Jack Sweetman would have completed the task had not the Society's finance's run out along with the enthusiasm of some of the committee members at that time. Jack however, played a part in many other of the Society's activities and was always there when there was work to

## **BOOKS & VIDEO'S FOR LOAN CONTACT ALAN POWELL**

### **Books Section**

#### **BOMBER COMMAND**

*Air Ministry Account of Bomber Command's  
Offensive - September 1939 to July 1941*

#### **MISSING IN ACTION**

*H Phillip Causer - 356th F.G. 360 Sqd*

#### **MALTA**

*Story of the Defences of Malta*

#### **TARGET BERLIN**

*Mission 6th March 1944 - USAAF*

#### **RAF STRADISHALL**

*1938 to 1970*

#### **MOSQUITO**

*Definitive history of the Mosquito*

#### **MOST SECRET WAR**

*RV Jones - British Scientific Intelligence  
1939 -1940*

### **Video Section**

#### **PERFECT LADY**

*'Going Solo' - Carolyn Grace*

be done. It will seem strange to look down at the two empty places in the front row where Jack always sat alongside Peter Rix yet, despite coming from different backgrounds they shared the same enthusiasm and passion, that of aviation.

Yes, Peter, Holly and Jack will be sadly missed by all the members, they were all regular and popular attendees and our deepest sympathy goes to their respective wives, Joyce Rix, Vicky Hall and Dorothy Grimwood.

### **MUSEUM - BOB DUNNETT**

For those of you who have not seen the Society's museum why not make it your new years resolution (along with attending all the meetings planned for 1997). There have been plans afoot to expand the museum area in order that we may display all of your artefacts that you have given or loaned. The site for the expansion was to have been an area currently owned by BT. Many letters were written but, BT are unable to help us as the area that we had asked for is already earmarked for their own expansion plans.

Should you have any artefact that you would like to contribute or loan, then please contact me, my telephone number is, Ipswich 624510

### **RETURN OF THE 356TH F.G. - MARTYN COOK**

Having been involved with the committee in the planning of this the third official return for the 356th for a whole year it just seems impossible that the visit has come and gone, but it has. There were 50 in the party and of those 21 were veterans.

The visit was scheduled for seven days and was from the 11 to 18 September 96 with the arrival airport being Gatwick. We arrived at Gatwick with our coach and marched into the airport building carrying the largest sign of all on the day which Jack Sweetman responsible for in his hangar. The day over it was back on the bus and home for tea.

Day four was family day and the majority of the party spent the day

with Society members.

Day five, our penultimate day. This time we headed West to Hadleigh, Long Melford and Lavenham where Peter Durrell met the party and gave them a guided tour around the church where he told them something of the history of the town, the Parish Church and its heraldry. Lunch was taken at the Sue Ryder home at Cavendish followed by a visit around their museum. That evening dinner was served at Martlesham Black Tiles where approximately 80 people including veterans, society members and friends gathered to enjoy good food, conversation and of course the inevitable speeches.

Day six, our final full day with the 356th saw the day start with a walk to the Town Hall to meet the Mayor. This over the party was split into two groups, the majority of the ladies having decided amongst themselves, aided by Sandra Cook and the other society ladies that they had seen enough of aviation and a shopping trip into Ipswich was much more their cup of tea. The rest of the party boarded the bus and headed for the 100th Bombardment Group H.Q. at Thorpe Abbots taking lunch at the Scole Inn on the way. This visit was made even more special by the fact that a Harvard was flown in and with the wind still very strong, landed with great ease. After reacquainting themselves with the Harvard, which many of the 356th veterans trained on, it was off again. It was time once again to board the bus for home and an early night for tomorrow was for some, the beginning of the long trek home.

The next day saw a very early start for a small group who were returning home. As they breakfasted they recounted the happy days they had just spent back in Suffolk, some for the first time since 1944.

Breakfast over it was time to retrace our steps to Gatwick Airport however, for those who had other plans their day had not yet begun we trust that they all had a great time wherever they went and we sincerely hope they all returned home safely.

We certainly enjoyed the company of the 356th and judging by their letters they certainly enjoyed ours and their brief stay in rural Suffolk.

seat. Of course everybody wanted a flight in the Comet but unfortunately it remained strictly off limits and nobody was even allowed on board. I forget how long the Comet was at Khartoum but eventually, whilst I was still there it started weekly proving flights from London to Johannesburg. I was a Wireless Operator, (WT - that is to say morse code) and can well remember the consternation caused in the Signals Office by the revolutionary speed of the Comet. We were receiving ETA's after the arrival of the aircraft. Signals were designated degrees of precedence. Deferred, Routine, Priority, Operation Immediate and Emergency. Normally ETA's and ETD's were "Operation Immediate". Not the Comet. That was designated, 'Emergency' !! Just before I was due to return to the UK and demob, the King died. Readers will remember that Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip were honeymooning in Kenya. The Comet was at Khartoum on it's way home. It hurriedly returned to Eastleigh, Nairobi hoping no doubt, for the kudos it would receive by jetting the Princess back to England. It was not to be. They returned in an Argonaut.

election to the 1997/98 committee. There is a vacant space on the committee which we would like filled. This person doesn't have to be anything other than a General Committee member who supports wherever and whenever he or she feels able. I am however, pleased to report that all the current committee in its entirety are to stand for re-election.

May I wish you all good luck and we look forward to a successful meeting and yet another good year.

We stood around, a small group of National Service lads, in the searing heat of early afternoon on a tropical airfield. The place, Khartoum in the Sudan. We were waiting for a first sighting of the Mk.1 De Havilland Comet. In those days the Sudan was jointly ruled by a condominium, Egypt and Great Britain. Royal Air Force Khartoum was part of the necessary military presence. It was also a staging post on the East African route to Johannesburg and it was the job of the RAF to act as a civil airport and handle all air movements. Khartoum was also the home of "The Tropical Experimental Unit". Possibly an arm of the A&AEE? The TEU was responsible for evaluating and testing both military and civil aircraft. So there we were, hopping from one foot to another as the hot sand made standing still impossible (What was it about mad dogs and Englishmen?). It was all worth while. The Comet suddenly appeared over the aerodrome in a fast, banking, low level circuit. Its swept wings clearly visible to us as it made a high speed pass. The silver body glinted in the sunlight and stood out against the blue sky. I can still remember the distinctive whine of those Ghost engines and the unique whistle that throttled back De Havilland jet engines have, as it came into land. Piloted, so I was told, by John Cunningham himself. At that time chief test pilot for De Havilland. The Comet had arrived at Khartoum for tropical trials and it became a familiar sight. Other air liners undergoing trials at various times when I was there was the Airspeed Ambassador, (later re-named the Elizabethan, by BEA), and the Vickers Armstrong Viscount. When these aircraft were being prepared the form was to approach the pilot and beg a ride. If it was a routine test flight and presumably not hazardous we were often lucky. All that was necessary was to unstrap one of the sandbags which were on every

My sincere thanks to the Committee and all the other members who helped in any way but particularly to, Bob Dunnett, Russell Bailey, Gordon Kinsey and Vicky and Holly Hall.

### **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE - MARTYN COOK**

As usual a small but an enthusiastic band turned up to sweep and place flowers and foliage in the small garden between the two Memorials despite the weather being somewhat cold windy and very wet. Unfortunately the afternoon saw no great change except that the rain eased allowing the parade to go ahead.

There was no shortage of participants to march on to the Barrack Square and at 3.00pm precisely the band of the Felixstowe Salvation Army began the service by marching onto the square. The service was as always marshalled by Ken Wilding representing the Kesgrave Royal British Legion. He very quickly introduced the other participants, who in turn marched on to their own music. The first of these was the 356Sqd. ATC from Felixstowe followed by the Suffolk Army Cadet Force and 663Sqd. from the Army Air Corp from Wattisham. Of course there were quite a number of other groups involved who didn't march on, these included the Martlesham Scouts, Air Crew Association, Ipswich and Woodbridge RAFA and of course members of our society.

Gordon Kinsey our President made the first address followed by Major Mike Madrid from USAF Mildenhall and Captain Facer from 663Sqd Army Air Corp. Wattisham. We were also pleased that the US Army was represented, based now at Ipswich Docks.

The service over it was time for tea and biscuits in the Church Hall. This is always a popular venue and our sincere thanks to the ladies of the Parish for their generosity in preparing the refreshments.

I would also like to thank the members and wives who turned up to support the parade and who helped on the day, hopefully next year

may be warmer.

### **CHRISTMAS DANCE & BUFFET - MARTYN COOK**

Earlier in the year Terry Smith, a society member suggested to me that a band called Rhythm 'N' Reeds might fit the bill for our Christmas social, so we booked them despite the additional cost involved in booking a six piece band as opposed to a single musician.

We printed 80 tickets and fixed the cost at £6.00 each. We then booked our caterer Pat Winter. Pat had carried out the catering for the passed 2-3 years so apart from agreeing a price there were no more to be done in that department. Russell Bailey took on the task of selling the tickets and with this done we were set for a good night.

The morning of the event was definitely off putting with a heavy frost and freezing fog, 'not a good start' I thought however, the fog eventually lifted and surprisingly the weather improved along with my spirits.

The night was in the words of the majority of attendees, brilliant and I was asked on more than one occasion, 'are we booking the band again for next year'? By the time you read this a letter requesting the band for 1997 will have gone out so, keep the shoes shined.

Although all the members enjoyed themselves they never forgot the fact that four special people could not be there with us. Holly had deteriorated to such an extent that Vicky was virtually living for the majority of her time at the Hospice. I will always remember and hope that Vicky will forgive me for printing this, the very first musical Christmas dance that we held. This was in the Richard's room and I had booked a man who called himself, Harvest Gold. He was a one man band who played quite a variety of music albeit most from the sixties. For me this was just the ticket but to Holly and it has to

said, several other members this was not quite the music that

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society represented. However, Holly came along probably with a tug or two from Vicky and as the night

progressed was persuaded to join in the dancing and although he would never admit to it, I think he enjoyed himself, happy memories.

The other missing couple were Peter and Joyce Rix. Peter was a regular at all the society's meetings and events and although we only saw Joyce two or three times a year she is a very warm and genuine person who further endeared herself to all who attended Peters funeral.

We will never forget them even though the years may come and go, they both made their mark on all of us at some point or other.

### **NEWSLETTER - MARTYN COOK**

Holly would be the first to say, 'the show must go on', or in this case the newsletter. Sadly his death leaves a gapping hole but, there is a need to produce a newsletter. I have after speaking to Vicky asked Alan Powell to fill in as temporary Editor until the AGM. If you look on the back of this newsletter you will see his name and address where you can contact him.

My apologies for having my name on so many of the articles but at the time of writing I had nothing else to include, this is where you can help. For future editions we need your contributions so please send them to Alan.

Although it may look difficult to produce it is in fact quite easy with the use of a computer, a scanner and a desktop package. One thing that undoubtedly would make the task easy is that your contributions be typed. However, I do realise that this may not be possible for many of you who would like to contribute so please, do not worry if you haven't access to a typewriter or word processor then just write it as clearly as possible in order that it can be typed.

### **A.G.M. - MARTYN COOK - CHAIRMAN**

This will be the last newsletter before April. The AGM (4 April) will have been and just gone therefore, as I have always done I have

included a chance for you to nominate a member to stand for