



WHAT'S ON



VICKY HALL - PROGRAM SECRETARY

- 1 May 98'.....'Decoy Sites- Wartime Deception' - Huby Fairhead
- 5 June 98'.....To be confirmed
- 3 July 98'.....To be Confirmed
- 2 August 98'.....Visit to Old Warden
- 7 August 98'.....Evening Vist to 'Vintage Fabrics' Earls Colne
- 4 September 98'.....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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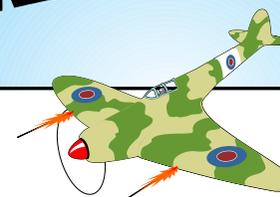
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RUNWAY 22

Volume 1 No.5

May 1998

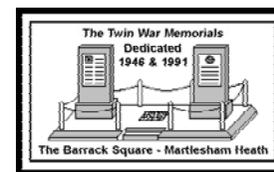


Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

NEWSLETTER



RAF MARTLESHAM HEATH



MARTLESHAM HEATH AVIATION SOCIETY



356TH FIGHTER GROUP

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EDITORIAL

Thanks to all those good folk who have sent me interesting pieces to include in this edition. Lack of space obliges me to edit one or two of the articles down a little but I am sure that those who sent them in will understand.

Many thanks to Vicky, who is allowing me to include a "Holly", Cartoon. Some 50 to 60 RAF Squadrons were based here at one time or another and I know that several of our members are of the opinion that we should make more effort to contact their associations, if only to obtain nostalgic memories of RAF operations from here. Meanwhile we do have another profile of the wartime experiences of one of our American friends. Ed Malo was a pilot with the 356th., and the article is reproduced here. Thanks for that, Ed.

Due to an error, in the January edition of "Runway 22", (and there were one or two!), a short piece requesting information about celebrities at Martlesham between '43 and '45, was omitted. This is now included, with apologies to the gentleman concerned.

A strange story about Luftwaffe biplanes over Felixstowe in 1943. Can anyone throw some light on the mystery?

Finally, Tarkey Barker has received a visit from Special Branch. Read all about it only in "Runway 22"!!

Please keep the stories coming in.

Ed.

PROFILE - ED MALO

I first remembered seeing aeroplanes way back in 1928 when taken to a movie with the family to see "Dawn Patrol", a silent film. When I got home my four wheel cart became a bomber to bomb the Boche. Saved all the chewing gum cards of the famous fliers of the time, collected lead models of all the latest 'planes and built balsa wood gliders with firecrackers attached, which exploded after launching!

My first flight was in a Ford Tri-Motor at Keeley/King airport at #5. I knew then that I had to fly. The Zeppelin Hindenburg flew over on her way to Lakenhurst Naval Air Station with the Swastika insignia on her tail. In a few short years I would be fighting forces that flew the crooked cross! My first look at a military 'plane was in 1941 at Hills Grove Airport,

The minimum requirement for a successful shot of a 'plane in the air is a camera which has aperture and shutter speeds which are adjustable.

At places like Old Warden, (and we are arranging a trip there in August), it is possible to be quite close to the aircraft, which are flying with photographers in mind. Nevertheless, a lens with a capability of zooming to at least 135mm. is desirable. If the side of the aircraft which is presenting itself to you is lit by the sun, then I would suggest that you point your camera at the grass to see what shutter speed and aperture is required. This reading should then be set. The reason for this is that the reflected light from the fuselage of the 'plane is less than the light intensity of the sky. Use the fastest shutter speed possible, which, in turn will give a wide aperture. The shutter speed is clearly more important than the aperture because, after all, the subject is at infinity setting and holding a camera with a "long", lens requires a very fast shutter speed to freeze the action.

If your subject is between you and the sun, (even if it is cloudy), then you should point your camera at a shady patch of grass or the shady side of a car which has a fairly neutral colour, like grey. Then use the resulting reading on your subject.

All this is approximating the reading but remember, your film can cope with over exposure up to about 4 stops. Little can be done to make a good print from an underexposed shot. Slide film is more exposure critical.

Modern 400 ASA colour negative film will enlarge easily up to A4 size without loss of quality. However on a brightly lit summer day it may be necessary to shoot with 100 ASA film because of the light intensity. Take a 100 ASA and a 400 ASA film with you!!

Finally, you will inevitably freeze the propellers when shoot over about 250th of a second. But there is not much you can do about that since your shutter speed will have to be faster than that to avoid camera shake. Tripods are difficult to handle but a monopod or resting the camera on a car roof will often do the trick. Turn the auto focus off and pre-focus on an infinity object. Good shooting!!

Alan Powell.

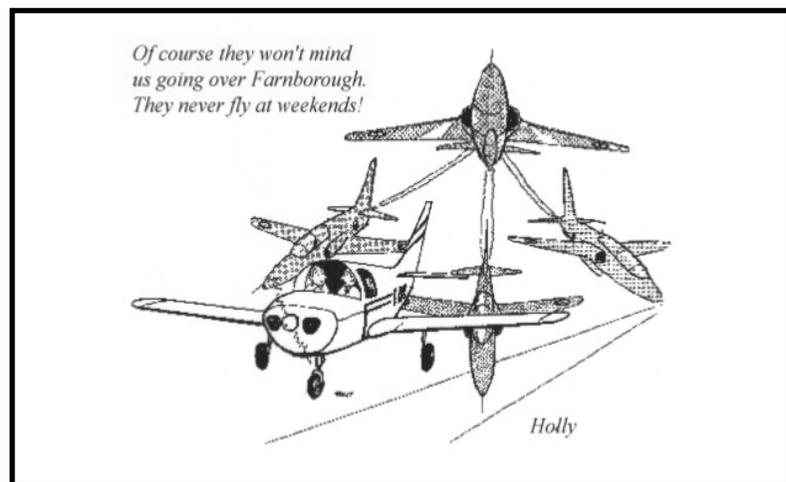
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someone whose work has had an important bearing on the development of this invaluable science.

Alan Powell.

HOLLYWOOD STARS AT MARTLESHAM!

I have been asked by Mr. Chris. Way, who is writing a book about Hollywood stars who performed at bases in England during WW2, if there is any record of notable personalities appearing at Martlesham.



I have not heard of any but perhaps one of our American readers can come up with something.. Copies of photographs, of course, would be

most welcome. **Ed.**

PHOTOGRAPHING 'PLANES IN THE AIR

The better weather is with us and air shows are a popular day out for many of our members. Our photographic competition is an annual event and several of you have cameras with adjustable settings, whether they be single lens reflexes or one of those sophisticated zoom-compacts.

I have been interested in photography for many years and based on my own experience gained from innumerable cock-up's and failures, will now presume to offer you some advice on ground to air photography!!

Providence, R.I. B-17's were on manoeuvres from Langley Army Airfield. On December, 1941, whilst at a football game I heard the announcement that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbour. My opportunity to fly had arrived.

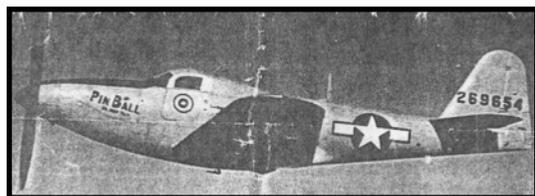
I joined the Army Air Force in September, 1942 and flying training started in July, 1943. Some of my most memorable events happened in England during the summer of 1944. The first was after flight testing a P-57, on June,5th. After landing, my crew chief was most anxious to paint the plane with black and white stripes. About 11pm all pilots were called to the briefing room to be told that the invasion of Europe was on. Up to that time I had only flown five combat missions escorting heavy bombers. It was 6am when I took off on an intercept mission against enemy fighters. After 2 hours without seeing any fighters orders were given to attack ground targets. Several German trucks were spotted in the Beauvais area and I opened up for the first time with eight 50mm machine guns. Two strafing runs were made and spent cartridges were bouncing off my canopy from our element leader. Unfortunately the camera gun was not working and I never knew where my bullets went. Making for home, some heavy flak was encountered over a German airfield and over a German held coastal port. The Channel was crossed at 400ft. In pouring rain, luckily without battle damage.

The second memory which comes to mind was in July, 1944 when taking off on a dive bomb mission. Whilst taxiing, the tail wheel tyre blew and I pulled off on to a taxi way. Several maintenance men from another squadron lifted the tail off the ground and changed the tyre. I took off and rejoined my squadron to complete the mission. I then had my butt chewed off for endangering the base if another aircraft had crashed into me. However, this incident was reported in the "Stars and Stripes", as a commendation report. The tyre had been changed so quickly that I had been able to catch up with my squadron before they had made their second orbit of the airfield.

My first mission was a fighter sweep on May, 22nd. 1944 and my last was on bomber escort on the 7th. October, 1944, having flown 75 combat missions, with a total flying time of over 260 hours. Most of the missions were flown after D Day, half of which were bomber support and the rest mainly ground support. Among the honours

received was the U.S. Distinguished Flying Cross. After my combat tour I was stationed at the Indian Springs Army Airfield in Nevada, flying P-39's, P-63's and an RP-63. This aircraft was a P-63 with armour plating and a big light on the nose! The gunners of B-17's and B-24's would fire frangible bullets at the RP-63 and whenever a bullet hit the 'plane the nose would light up. This was known as a flying "Pinball" machine!

Coincidentally, among contributions sent in by Jim Empson and which he had got from his friend in the States, Col. Charles Peterson. Here is a picture and some info. about the flying "Pinball", machine. I



intended to put it in the next Newsletter, but here goes. ED.

In 1943, Bell extensively modified a P-63 King Cobra to serve as a target for bomber gunner training. All weapons and interior armour were removed, thicker metal sheet replaced the skin, the canopy was armoured to protect the pilot and more than 100 microphones were buried in the skin. A light in the propeller hub - and later , additional lights were around the rear fuselage - flashed each time the lead and plastic bullets hit the 'plane. A counter on the instrument panel recorded each hit. These aircraft became known as "Pinball's", and Bell built more than 300 of them.

OK, who said, only in America?!!

THE BIG PINBALL SHOOTDOWN

"I had completed my tour over Germany in a B-24 bomber, April, 1945. My first Stateside assignment was flying B-24 gunner trainees at Buckingham airfield , Ft. Myers, Florida. Our trainee gunners were privileged to have the P-63, "Pinball", as a target! I would normally have about 10 gunner trainees and 2 instructors. The neat part was that the "Pinball" pilots could communicate with our instructors in the B-24 and tell them how many hits a student had got. The "Pinball" had 100 sensors and microphones and lights would flash totalling up the hits. Instant gunnery training resulted.

Ltd., which is based just down the road at Chelmsford. Those of us who went to the talk, which was given in the impressive Great Hall at Bawdsey Manor, were treated to a (relatively!), non technical history of Radar up to the present day.

The Graf Zeppelin visited Bawdsey and other sites along the East Coast in 1939 in an attempt to detect transmissions from our rapidly expanding system of aerals. She returned to Germany convinced that we had no viable radio detection system. Colin Latham explained that the transmitting signal has to be enormously powerful in order to receive back from a distant, tiny target, a signal which is detectable. It is probable that the vast metal framework of the airship so distorted this signal that nothing could be deduced from it. The reflection of radio signals was known to exist from the early days of broadcasting. Indeed, Marconi himself commented on it. So it would not be possible to say that any one person "invented", the concept of radio direction finding. The Germans were well advanced with the development of radar at the outbreak of WW2. Where we differed from the Germans was with our practical application of the science. We had built an early warning system in the shape of an invisible wall 12 miles high and 120 miles thick. A fact consistently under estimated by the enemy and the reason that we were able to so effectively employ our meagre Air Force in the early days of the war.

Ground based radar was based on transmitters using pre-war valve technology. Now, in 1939 from Birmingham University, came the Cavity Magnetron. At which point I am totally out of my depth! Suffice to say that this important invention enabled really effective airborne radar to be developed. This led to air to air interception, the location of shipping by aircraft and the magic H2S, which enabled bombers to "see", targets below them at night and through cloud. This novel technology of 'microwaves', also assisted ground based radar with low-looking capability and permitted the refined OBOE precision bombing system. Please remember Sir John Randall and Dr. Harry Boot, who developed the first successful cavity magnetron when you next use your microwave!

It was a privilege to visit the historic "home", of Radar and listen to

recognition as anyone could be, and is in no doubt he really did see these rare birds. He is 100% positive. While it sounds very surprising, it is true that a few Hs 123s were in use operationally at the time, although mainly on the Eastern Front, and to deliver SD2 'butterfly' bombs none of which fell at Felixstowe on this occasion.

Has anyone else heard tell of these rare birds? Does any reader have personal memories of that FW 190 raid? If so I'd love to hear from you.

I know I'm not a member of your Society, bit far to come to be active although I DO love visiting your area. When I'm there I'm torn between believing I can see a 'Ginny', or a Whitley 1 over Martlesham, or the Knuckle-duster up from the MAEE. Cor, if only...Well, a time machine...wow!, must get one...

Michael J.F.Bowyer.

SAVANNAH REMEMBERS

When Bob Dunnett and Mike Rumsey were in Savannah last autumn they were talking to Ed Malo, who told them of a tragedy involving a B-24 which had crashed on a school in England on 23rd. August, 1944. The school was Freckleton Church of England School and the bomber was flying from nearby Warton. This is in the area between Lytham St.Annes and Preston. 38 pupils and 2 teachers were killed. The photo of the Memorial, which is situated in the grounds of the new Eighth Air Force Museum at Savannah was taken by Ed Malo.

Ed.

BAWDSEY REPORT

The January edition of "Runway 22", contained an article by Gordon Kinsey, entitled Bawdsey Radar Research Group. Gordon, who is the President of this recently formed society mentioned a talk which was to be given by Colin Latham,. Colin retired at the end of 1985 as Chief Engineer, Airspace Control Division of Marconi Radar Systems



The 50 calibre bullets were "frangible". That is they were made mostly of carbon and when they hit they went "poof" and disintegrated harmlessly! Well, the inevitable happened. We shot one down! Apparently a batch of 50 calibres was not so frangible. Seems some metal shavings and bits had gotten into the frangible bullet mixture when they were manufactured. No real harm done. The "Pinball", pilot made a safe emergency landing on a deserted country road. His ego, however, was badly damaged!

That evening at the Officers Club I was a hero. The first crew ever to shoot down a "Pinball". I don't believe the pilot of the P-63 ever lived it down. Any rate, the CO ordered drinks on the house. I got a little shot down myself that night!!"

That amusing piece was by Col. Charles H Peterson who also provided the interesting story about Jimmy Stewart, which appeared in the previous newsletter. Ed.

GOING DUTCH

It was 6.15pm on Thursday 12th. February when the telephone rang. The caller informed me that his name was Geoff Waldorf and that I had been referred to him by Special Branch. As you can imagine, I had all sorts of horrible thoughts going through my head!

Seven days beforehand I had taken my daughter Janice to an interview near Runnymede. On the way home we visited the RAF Memorial and Windsor Castle. As we started for home Janice looked up and asked me if I could see an aeroplane above us? There, in the late afternoon sun, was a Spitfire with D-day markings glistening. It rolled and looped and gave us quite a show.

I could not identify the markings and so wrote to Biggin Hill asking for help. This letter had arrived at the Special Branch at Biggin Hill and they had passed it on to the Chief Engineer of a company based at Biggin Hill called, Nostalgic Restorations, This was my caller. Geoff. Explained that the Mk. 9 LF Spitfire, serial no. MK732/G-HVDM, was owned by the Royal Netherlands Air force and was over here for repair after it had suffered some damage in an accident. I later received a letter from Les Dickson, Security Manager at Biggin Hill, enclosing two 'photos of 732 and offering help in any way concerning Spitfires in general. I had made two good contacts. Aviation buffs are so

helpful!.

Tarkey Barker.

MONTHLY MEETING ROUNDUP

February and one of our own members, Norman Rose, gave us the story of "Bentwaters, the First 50 Years". Norman was associated with Bentwaters from the time of its construction as one of the last three airfields to be completed before the end of WW2 until it closed in 1993. After the break Norman gave a short talk about FIDO, (Fog Intensive Dispersal Operation). Despite the turbulence caused by so much aviation spirit being burnt each side of the runway, many pilots were grateful of this crude method of landing in fog. The talk, which was illustrated by slides was given a vote of thanks by Gordon Kinsey March and a talk by Mr. Howard Cook from Horringer near Bury. Howard is a member of the "Black Six", team who have been responsible for keeping one of the very few Messerschmitt 109's flying. Video footage was shown of the 109's last flight before being retired to Hendon. It was being piloted by the O/C Strike Command when it started leaving a trail of smoke. There was thought to be a problem and the 'plane made a hasty approach to land. It all went wrong and the 109 was seen to overshoot, hop over the Duxford road and crash in the field opposite. Fortunately the Air Chief Marshall although shaken was relatively unstirred! More video footage from a camera fixed to a Mustang tail plane gave us a graphic feel of flying. A vote of thanks was given by given by Stan Ward.

Our April meeting was, of course, the occasion of our AGM. Like all our meetings this one was also very well attended. Sadly, Jack Sweetman our Membership Secretary and his wife Jean decided not to seek re-election after some 13 years on the committee. They both have accepted an Honorary position so it's not goodbye. I'm sure you join me in thanking them for all their hard work. In Jack's place we welcome Julie Smith a newcomer to the Society. To replace Jean, we welcome to the committee, Daphne Taylor who has been a member of our Society for many years and is well known to our regular attendee's as the, 'lady with the tray'.

The first annual Photographic Competition was judged by the

audience, who voted the best print and the best slide. Plaques were presented to Stuart Mallendine for the best slide and Alan Powell for the best print. Alan Powell also won the Charles (Holly), Hall Cup for the image receiving the most votes. The cup will be presented each year. The Society is grateful to Haverhill Aviation Society for the donation of £100 in memory of our own "Holly" Hall and some of that money was used to purchase the Cup.

Ed.

FELIXSTOWE MYSTERY

I've been having correspondence with Ted Bridger of Felixstowe renown, and with a senior citizen who was in the Army at Brackenburg Fort in June 1943.

Since he wrote I have been flying all sorts of reconnaissance kites hoping to come up with someone else who saw the later described event.

As the presence of such exotica would delight all enthusiasts, and even the thought of it, I wonder if you can find space for an SOS in your magazine?

My soldier friend was on duty at Brackenburg Fort at 05.25 hrs, 2nd. June, 1943 just before official sunrise on the aforementioned day when, to his amazement two biplanes, roared over him flying very, very low. He at once identified them as Henschel HS 123 biplanes. Both had German markings, and he could indeed see each pilot in his open cockpit. They flew lower over the fort than the contingent of FW 190s which within moments came racing in from the sea and passed overhead or close by at about 100 feet. Their arrival was a complete surprise to those on duty. Bombs fell on the Old Ferry area and the 190s headed inland to attack Ipswich before sweeping towards the south-east to make their exit. It is said that the Harwich balloons were flying and that thwarted the attack planned for that area.

The most fascinating item of the event must surely be the Hs123 biplanes. Were they somehow acting as marker aircraft at the Deben estuary? They were not with the 190s, the speed differential would not have allowed that. Did II/SKGI0 which carried out the raid employ 'marker' crews? There is no evidence of 123s taking part in other East Coast raids. My correspondent was as experienced at aircraft