

## **EDITORIAL**

A very happy New Year to **all**. Let us all hope that the world is learning that differences between nations can be solved in a rather more sophisticated way than the terrible wars that were such a feature of the last century? The Constitution of our Society states that "*The **Martlesham Heath Aviation Society endeavours to retain the heritage of the Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment and to recognise the contribution made by the squadrons of the Royal Air Force, the United States Army Air Force and also the civilian participation both before and after World War Two***". I suggest that the best way to recognise the contribution of all who served at Martlesham is to ensure that future generations never forget our aviation history. The project undertaken by us to have stained glass windows installed in the church of **St Michael's and All Angels** is a duty we owe and certainly fulfils the sentiments of our Constitution. Perhaps the windows will still be seen by people at the time of the next millennium? Certainly much mediaeval glass can be seen in our Suffolk churches today. I wonder what future generations, as yet unborn, **will** make of those strange flying machines !!

The acquisition of the upper floor of the control tower will allow us to fulfil a long standing wish to provide a museum which will be another way to commemorate the past and I have included a report about this from **Bob Dunnett**. It is our wish to retain the use of the waiting room in the doctor's surgery in order to tell the aviation story of the Heath in pictures and captions and as a means of leading people in the direction of the what will be the main museum. We are really grateful to the doctors and staff of the Surgery for their continued support.

**Martyn** Cook has submitted a report on the visit to 356th **FG** Reunion in Maine last September which he and **Sandra** (and Louise, don't forget Louise!) attended with other Society members.

A couple of amusing "Martlesham Memories" articles. One of them from a former Boy Entrant.

A rather long winded report on our visit to **Bletchley** in September, about which I make no apology. I just find the whole story about the breaking of the Enigma code so fascinating.

**Ed.**

### **MHAS CONTROL TOWER MUSEUM**

I was pleased to see so many people at the first Open Morning of our new museum. Many people left constructive ideas as to how they felt we should arrange and run the museum. Many outside the **Martlesham Heath Aviation Society** have also shown an interest in our project.

The museum committee have been busy already, designing the new display units and drawing up plans for static displays as well as getting a team together to give the place a freshen up with paint. I must say that the decorative condition is good. If you would like to help in any way, please do let me know.

Thank you to all of you who donated a draw prize on the 2nd October, especially to our President, **Gordon Kinsey** who kindly created a superb pencil drawing of the control tower as it would have looked in the 40's. We raised £47 for funds towards the Museum.

I will continue to keep you informed of all developments at the Control Tower Museum.

**Bob Dunnett.**

### **STAINED GLASS WINDOWS**

A date of the Dedication Service for the windows has been set for September 23rd 2000. We hope to entertain many ex **Martlesham** veterans from the UK as well as our friends of the 356th Fighter Group. **Martyn** has outlined details of the reunion under the title of 'THE WINDOWS REUNION, SEPTEMBER 2000'.

Meanwhile the layout of the four windows has not been finalised. The inscription which has appeared on the preliminary design and which many people have seen, has not been approved by the Church Parochial Committee because it is not from the Bible. This is a great pity because it was generally acknowledged to be excellent. A new inscription is urgently being sought and we would invite readers to send their own ideas to me. My address and e-mail address appears on the back of the Newsletter. However, an inscription is not obligatory and perhaps we will dispense with one in the final design. We will seek permission to have two plaques installed on the wall beneath the windows. One under the window of the **USAAF** 356th Fighter Group, which will give a brief explanation of the significance of this. A second one under the **RAF** window also with a brief explanation. We have written to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight in the hope that they will be able to give us a fly-past on the 23rd September. This is just the type of occasion that the **BBMF** exists for and we know that they will be in the air on that day. Let us hope that the weather is suitable and that they will be able to include us in their programme.

*Alan Powell.*

## **THE WINDOWS REUNION SEPTEMBER 2000**

Alan has already told you about the Dedication service of the Stain Glass window on Saturday the 23rd of September 2000 in the church of **St. Michael** and All Angels **Martlesham** Heath. To coincide with their dedication **Martlesham** Heath Aviation Society is planning a reunion. We have invited the 356th Fighter Group and the **RAF** personnel who attended the 1999 reunion but extend the invitation to any person who served or worked at **RAF Martlesham Heath** under King or Queen, they will be most welcome.

It would appear that the Millennium fever is to be with us throughout the coming year. **Daphne Taylor** who organised the 1999 **RAF Martlesham Heath** reunion had wanted the same hotel for her British guests but discovered to her amazement that it was already booked for another function as was the **Novotel** where the 356th **FG** normally stay. After a number of visits to various hotels in and around **Ipswich** **Daphne** booked both parties in at the **Post House**. The hotel is situated on the edge of **Ipswich** just off the **A14** ring road and has public transport to **Ipswich** town centre close by. It also boasts an indoor swimming pool and a keep fit area so no reason to add those pounds on while you stay. I visited the hotel with **Daphne** to view the dining area which is large enough to cater for both parties.

Rooms have been reserved for the period of Monday the 18th September to and including Sunday the 24th September 2000 for those wishing to stay the week. **Daphne** will be writing to all the British personnel and I have contacted **Ed Malo** in the USA who will bring the 356th over. Planning is now underway to organise events for the week which I will tell you about as they unfold in the coming newsletters.

**Martyn Cook.**

### **ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE**

The annual Armistice Day Memorial Service, which is organised by our Chairman, **Martyn Cook**, and held on the **Barrack Square** in front of the twin war memorials, took place on Sunday, 14th November. A good attendance despite the weather. Once again the programme was overseen by **Ken Wilding** and the Service conducted by **Brian Lillistone**. Representatives marched on to the parade ground from the **Army Air Corps**, at **Wattisham**, a smart contingent from **Suffolk Army Cadets**, (**Kesgrave**) and **Air Cadets** from **356 Felixstowe**. The **Salvation Army Band** were present to provide the music and other representatives included those from **Ipswich** and **Woodbridge RAFA**, the **British Legion**, **Suffolk Aircrew Association** and a smart turnout from **Martlesham Scouts**.

**Ed.**

### **356TH REUNION PORTLAND MAINE**

**Gatwick** was as usual, full to bursting point with travellers. We had stayed over night in a hotel close by and had left our car in the hotel car park for the duration of our holiday and used the hotel courtesy bus to arrive fresh as the proverbial daisy. It was nice not to have to face the onslaught of circumnavigating the infamous **M25** watching the time slip away whilst stuck in a traffic jam.

The flight was fine, the first time we had flown on a **Jumbo (747)**, in fact it was only our second time of flying, although now I come to think of it, was it the 3rd time? having been over the big pond before, I'll leave you to work it out.

Arrival at **Boston** airport heralded for me the thought of cooler weather, not so, on leaving the airport it was hot and humid. We were transported by bus with all our bags to our car hire terminal. Whilst I was waiting for my turn to sign the forms I turned to see **Sandra** talking to someone, it was **Nancy Hough** who had come to meet **Bob Dunnett** and **Mike Rumsey** who were on the same flight as us. That was the beginning of our reunion.

On the road and with a map that we had put together with help from a computer programme which **Ed Malo** had been kind enough to find for me during the early part of the year, it looked so simple. We only managed to go round in a circle arriving back at the point close to where we started out from, we had to ask our way. Once out and on the **Interstate 95** we cruised along the 100 miles or so admiring on the way the grass verges so beautifully managed unlike ours.

Arriving at the hotel, sorry, motel, remember we are in the states now, we unpacked and explored the swimming pool which at 6.00pm was empty. We used the pool morning and evening. Our morning dip was early and was taken with a mist swirling over the pool due to the warm moist air from the pool meeting the chilly air of early morning, people thought us crazy I'm sure.

We arrived early for the reunion which wasn't due to start until the 11th September so we took advantage of the situation and decided to explore

down town **South Portland**. We very soon discovered some new ways to the waterfront which probably have eluded the local population and should we revisit **Portland** we should know the correct way to the waterfront. This apart we thought it would be nice to view the town from the water and so purchased tickets to see seals

which congregate on a small island off the mainland taking in views of the town as we proceeded. It was on this trip that I lost my **MHAS** hat. Blown off by a gust of wind it landed in the harbour to the amusement of our fellow travellers. Should you visit Portland and find it I don't want it back as the water in the harbour was foul. On our return we felt pangs of hunger so we bought some rolls. Mine was filled with crab although it would be better described as a very large portion of crab with a small roll, the very thought of that roll makes my mouth water.

During the next two days we greeted many friends as the 356th came to town and made many more during the reunion. Hilda and Cliff **Davis** set up their silent auction which raised \$983.50. They also raised a further \$523.50 by way of a raffle, a 50-50 sale and the sale of mittens. All this money was donated to our Museum and Stain Glass window fund for which we thank Hilda and Cliff and all who took part in the proceedings for their generosity. We also contributed to the fund by selling tea shirts ties etc. etc., the residue being auctioned by Bob **Dunnett** to save on transportation costs home. **Vicky** Hall made her own contribution with the sale of Holly's prints which all went into the melting pot. Prior to our visit **Julie** Smith presented me with a list of 356th member who for one reason or another had not renewed their membership. Most of these rejoined as did a number of others.

On the Saturday Bob and I attended the directors meeting where the directors reaffirmed their support for the Museum and the Stain Glass window and Ed **Malo** volunteered to bring back to **Martlesham** Heath another party of 356th veterans in September 2000. At this meeting we met Mark **Copeland**. Mark is to write a book on the 356th **FG** and visited us here in England recently staying at The Bull Hotel in **Woodbridge** where he wine and dined Gordon, Bob and myself before visiting Roger Freeman.

The organising committee had arranged two trips. The first was on the Sunday and was to be a tour of South Portland followed by a ferry trip to House Island where they had arranged a lobster bake. The Island is privately owned. The family who own it arranges the lobster bake and a tour of one of the two forts which are built into the island for groups such as ours. They had a marquee erected which was very welcome as the afternoon was hot. Having never experienced a lobster bake we were interested to see how the lobster was prepared although having watched it I wasn't quite certain how the lobster viewed its cooking arrangements. After the bake we assembled

and set off across the island to the chosen fort. It was from here that cannon would be trained onto the enemy ships to stop them from reaching the mainland. Our guide gave a very graphic account of what life was like living in these forts and used a firecracker to give the audience some idea of what a cannon sounded like when fired but, was quick to add that there would have been more than one cannon firing at the same time. The visit over it was time to say goodbye to our hosts and take the ferry for the return trip to Portland Harbour. On the way back we were treated to a close view of a fortification that looked more like **Alcatraz** and several light houses which, help to give rise to the fact that Maine is known as the lighthouse state. Back on the coach we began our way back but there were more surprises in store for us. Most of you will have been victims at one time or another of road works, well, they have them in the states to. On our way to the Portland Head Light we took a detour to see another light house and encountered yes you've guessed it, **roadwork's**. The buses had to reverse and were unable to stop so we continued onto our original destination, Portland Head Light. Here we were treated to a training exercise that even the 356th **FG** could not have achieved in their hey day, a formation of some 20 or more aircraft flying in formation with just 6 inches between wing tips. These were hand controlled model aircraft, kites to be exact. We eventually left after extracting the last lady from the gift shop and were returned to our motel to mull over an exciting day out.

The second of the two trips was to **Kennebunkport** and was arranged for the Monday. Kennebunkport is a very pretty fishing port from where you can go Whale watching, gather Lobsters or just fish. It also has the distinction of being one of the homes of ex President George Bush. The Bushes we believe were in residence as Mrs Bush had been seen in town buying fish that very day, probably for George's dinner that night. Our own ex Prime Minister John Major was also visiting Kennebunkport staying with Mr and Mrs Bush just prior to our visit there. The numbers visiting Kennebunkport required four buses. We were extremely lucky as our driver who introduced himself as Norman was very knowledgeable on the area and passed that information on to us over the sound system. Unfortunately, the other drivers did not do this which gave vent to some heated words from our fellow travellers on reaching our destination. I began to wonder if we would have to fight for our seats on our bus for the return trip but we didn't. It reminded me of my days as a young lad going on the Sunday school excursion to the sea side and how we all vied for seats on the newest bus.

On Tuesday we attended the membership meeting. Here, I gave an account of our activities back at **Martlesham** Heath particularly the Stain Glass Window and Control Tower Museum projects while Bob used the opportunity to sell off the final items that were left.

This being the last evening it was time for the reunion Banquet. During the evening Ken Male introduced a Major General who's name I am ashamed to say I never made a note of. He was a personal friend of Phil and

Jane Tukey. At breakfast next morning I had the opportunity of talking to him. The result of which, was the presence of Col. Swain and Wing Commander Dyer-Perry from RAF Mildenhall at our Remembrance Service in November.

Between these trips we made forays to the shopping malls, pronounced marls. We picked up a number of bargains and my concern for the overloaded suitcases began as it did on the previous trip. Our breakfasts were purchased next door at the Governor's Restaurant while most of our evening meals were taken at Tony Romas which was across the street from our motel. Here the food was great and presented by jovial waitresses who I'm sure will not forget in a hurry the night when we the Brits went for a meal together. Nancy Hough joined us and we rather took over the restaurant to the astonishment of the other diners.

The only cloud over the reunion or should I say hurricane was, Floyd. Sadly several 356th veterans had to leave because of the expected damage from this hurricane which I believe was reported as being one of the largest to hit the eastern coast line.

Wednesday saw the end of another successful 356th reunion. Our sincere thanks to Ken and Brita Male for all their hard work and to Herb and Margot and Phil and Jane Tukey for a most enjoyable time. After breakfast we took off for North Conway known for its shopping malls and the White Mountains, but for me it was Mount Washington that I had come to see. Stand at any point on the main street of North Conway and look down its length towards the White Mountains and you will see Mount Washington with its top surmounted by snow. It was here that hurricane Floyd again caught up with us producing high winds and copious amounts of rain for two days which delayed our ascent of Mount Washington. It did however produce some very fast flowing rivers which up to that point had been very placid and uninteresting. When the weather cleared we drove the 12 or so miles to the base of the mountain. We had opted to travel to the top by the Cog Railway. There is another way of reaching the summit on the opposite side of the mountain and that's by car but, we had been advised to travel by the Cog Railway. We purchased our tickets and joined the next group waiting to travel to the top of the world. This is a three hour journey which I can assure you, you would never forget. It is very similar in many respects to the Mount Snowdon Railway in Wales. Many of you reading this will have travelled to the top of Mount Snowdon and probably took the advice given about wearing suitable clothing. I chose to disregard the advice given on the display boards at the base station of Mount Washington and it was only Sandra's insistence that made me put on my trousers instead of going in my shorts. We left the base in glorious sunshine which persisted throughout the trip but it was when we reached the summit that my stupidity became obvious. The wind during the night exceeded 130 mph and all the snow and ice was laying horizontal in the direction that the wind had blown and formed it, boy was I cold. The wind was still very strong and the chill factor was such that most people took shelter in the buildings that frequent the summit, what an experience and one that will remain with me for many years.

We travelled on from North Conway staying at various location on our, 'round robin' trip of New England ending up in Marlborough Massachusetts and on the door step of Nancy Hough. We stayed the night with Nancy and her family of cats and out side in the garden, her wild animal friends. Nancy has a variety of wild animals in and around her garden all of which she feeds. We were treated to a visit from a Sloath which took no notice of Nancy's cats which were sitting only a glass panel away. The next day was departure day. With our flight scheduled for 20.20 we had time to view Boston. Nancy very kindly followed us back to the car hire company to dispose of our car or rather I followed Nancy. After picking us up Nancy drove us to various locations so that we wouldn't miss too much of the beauty of this fine city. Then it was time to go. After our goodbye's we boarded our plane for home.

*Martyn Cook.*

### **A MEMORY OF MARTLESHAM**

I was posted to BBU Martlesham Heath in November 1947 as Flight Engineer, after a period of overseas service.

On the 15th August 1949 with Pilot n Jock Kidd and a navigator/bomb-aimer (I don't recall his name ). We were detailed to carry out a night bombing exercise at Orford Ness. As far as I can remember, the bombs we carried, although "dud" did have a magnesium flare set in the tail-fin, and when released, the flare was ignited, so it could be observed from the aircraft and also the people on the ground.

We boarded the Avro Lincoln on a fine dry night at approximately 20-30 Hours and started up all four engines We were just completing our pre-take off checks when suddenly the whole dark area around the aircraft was brilliantly lit up with flames licking up around the undercarriage legs.

To Jock and I in the cockpit it appeared that the aircraft was on fire somewhere in the region of the bomb-bay, and the cockpit was not a good place to be with several hundred gallons of high octane fuel in the tanks. Jock took the situation in hand immediately and like the good skipper he was made an instant decision - "Get the hell

out of here" (or words to that effect!) The quickest way to leave the aircraft was via the escape hatch in the bomb-aimer's compartment and needless to say the hatch was quickly jettisoned and Jock and I jumped down to join the ground crew below, leaving all four engines running.

We soon realised that one of the bombs had fallen off, igniting the flare in the tail. The corporal in charge of the ground crew, to his credit, had waived the wheel chocks away, intending to get the aircraft taxied forward away from the bomb. To achieve this he indicated to the cockpit for the aircraft to be taxied forward, not realising that Jock and I had left the aircraft, and in fact were standing behind him.

Jock quickly saw what had to be done, ran around to the entrance door at the rear of the aircraft, climbed in up to the cockpit and opened up all four engines to full power. The aircraft shot forward scattering ground crew right left and centre, fortunately there were no casualties, the aircraft wasn't damaged, and everything returned to normal.

As far as I can remember we completed our bombing detail. What caused The bomb to fall off I never did find out. Happy days !!

**Trevor Jenkins.**

## **BLETCHLEY PARK**

It was a glorious early autumn morning and the coach was full as we made our way to BP. On arrival we were ushered into one of the ornate larger rooms of the elegant Victorian mansion to hear a briefing from one of the knowledgeable volunteer guides. We joined other visitors and were split into groups to tour the grounds and hear about some of the history of the home of Britain's best kept secret, the breaking of the German Enigma cipher. It is an amazing story and extraordinary because although the Germans sometimes suspected, they never knew for certain that we were reading their signals and consequently used the same system throughout WW2.

We called it "the Ultra Secret" and it was about this that General Dwight D Eisenhower wrote, in July 1945. ***"The intelligence which has emanated from you has been of priceless value to me. It has simplified my task as a commander enormously. It has saved thousands of British and American lives and, in no small way contributed to the speed with which the enemy was routed and eventually forced to surrender"***.

There were many successes and many failures. We failed to crack the German naval version of the Enigma cipher for the first two years of the war. Consequently U-boat packs played havoc with the convoys. It has been said of the work of Bletchley Park that it shortened the war by two years. Our guide said that it might be more realistic to say that it had lengthened the war by two years. His reason for passing this remark was because we were very nearly defeated by lack of supplies in those early war years. On the other side of the coin our mastery of the military and Luftwaffe cipher existed from 1940. This was partly due to work which the Poles had done to crack the code. Indeed, we owe much to the Poles for their early analytical work and for obtaining an original Enigma machine in the first place. An agreement has only very recently been announced that a trust has been formed to preserve Bletchley Park and its history. It is quite impossible to see all that is on display in one day. Our guide was with us during the morning and we toured round most of the huts where the secret work had taken place. I have read about the successes and failures of Bletchley Park and therefore some of the names are familiar to me. We saw an Enigma machine which produced the cipher that the Germans were convinced was unbreakable. We saw the Turing "Bombe", which the brilliant young graduate, Alan Turing had devised to speed up the analysing of messages. There were 200 of these built. With the entry of the USA into the war they, of course, greatly expanded their own intelligence service and "Turing Bombes" were manufactured over there by the National Cash Register Co., We saw the amazing computer, "Colossus" which was also so important. This is a rebuilt replica of the original analytical computer which was devised and built by engineers from the GPO at Dollis Hill, London. It is viewed through a glass partition and takes up the space of a large room. It lays claim to being the first programmable computer and, of course, uses thermionic valves. The era of the silicon chip had yet to arrive. There seemed to be hundreds of valves in banks. This was a dual purpose machine because it gave out so much heat that the girls who worked here were able to hang their underwear up to dry in the room! Some wag had put a notice above Colossus. "This computer is year 2000 compliant"!

Our guide left us at the door of Faulkner House. This is a large building and contains many rooms. Various interesting subjects are displayed. A manned amateur radio post, Aircraft recovery exhibition, cinema projector museum, cryptology trail, diplomatic wireless exhibition, German command post, radar and electronics museum. Others too numerous to mention.

We sat on the lawn in front of the big house in the sunshine to eat our lunch and I couldn't help but remember the time in 1941 that Winston Churchill visited Bletchley Park and spoke to some of the staff on these very lawns. Churchill was aware of the advantage the British had in the Great War, when we had broken the German naval code and always appreciated the enormous importance of the work at Bletchley Park. In fact he had a

daily delivery of Enigma messages. He spoke to the assembled staff and praised them as "the geese that laid the golden eggs, and never cackled"!!

A great day out and our thanks to Russell Bailey for organising it.

*Alan Powell.*

### **MORE MARTLESHAM MEMORIES**

I arrived at **Martlesham** in November 1952 having passed out with the 13th at **Cosford**. This was the real Air force!

There were a number of the 13th there and I don't think they had seen Boy Entrants before and did not really know what to do with us. We were all installed in a wooden hut about as far from the main barrack block as possible. Don't think they wanted us corrupted by the 'rough' airmen. It was a bit cold as there was no central heating like **Cosford**. All went well until there was an influx of ex pats from Germany. There was a lack of space on camp so they put them in with the lads. That was the start of a very good apprenticeship of booze and birds, in my case the former as the pubs in the surrounding area became my second home.

I was posted to the Electrical Section as I was not yet old enough to sign the F.700. I was still 2 months short of my 17th birthday.

The **Fit/Sgt** in charge of the electrical section was a **Fit/Sgt Hilsden B.E.M.** Rumour had it that the award was for singing the National Anthem at an **RAF** boxing match at the top of his voice when the record player broke down!

I was allowed to work on some of the aircraft on A Flight, which was in the same hanger. There were of a couple of Devon's, a Dakota and a turbo-prop with 4 engines, called Apollo. It was, I believe, the only one I ever saw. They also had, I believe, a prototype Canberra, a very nice blue colour with a yellow **P** on the side. At a later date it made a very large hole in the ground out **Woodbridge** way when it fell out of the sky - crew OK. I was eventually sent down to **R.L.** flight. It was equipped with 3 Meteor **N.F.** 11's and an old **Anson**. The **Anson** on the **airframe** side was looked after by a civvy, which I thought strange. He was a chap called Jimmy Sales and I eventually got to know him quite well.

The chap in charge of the aircraft was a **Fit Sgt Ratcliffe**. They were very much his aeroplanes. He retired while I was there - Friday he was demobbed and Monday he was working in the Barrack stores. Two of the pilots I remember were "Red" Slater who was the **Fit/Commander**. I think he was the son of **RF Slater**, the World War One Ace. The other was Sailor Ramsay who was reputed to have been an Officer on one of the "Queens", doing the Atlantic run. During this period of my time at the Heath, I was taken across the other side of the airfield to a small hanger and shown a small aircraft called the **Zonkoni? (Zaukoenig- Ed)** The person who took me was the said Jimmy Sails who was something to do with the Ipswich Ultra Light Aircraft Association. It was their baby. It had both flaps and slats, was **single-engined** and was reputed to be able to fly at about 35 **mph**. I never ever saw it airborne. Rumour had it that it had been liberated from Germany after the war. It had been built by their aeronautical students as a project.

Just down from us was **C** flight they flew the big aeroplanes, two **Lincolns**. One with two standard engines inboard and two jets outboard and the other similar but with two turbo props outboard. They also flew an aircraft called the SA4. It had 4 jet engines with the engines on top of each other in each wing. A strange looking thing but it was Irish! Short Brothers, I believe.

**R L** Flight was originally equipped with Mosquitoes and was known locally as **Radcliffe's** Flying Circus.

During my stay there, in 1953, we had a great storm which caused the East Coast floods. The roof of **R L** flight was blown off, carried across the road and dumped in the **MT** yard. From memory, a few odd pieces of wood dropped on the **Anson** but no real damage done. After the storm little octagonal tin huts appeared all over the place to house the personnel from **RAF Felixstowe** whose buildings had been badly damaged in the flood. Truck loads of the boys were shipped off down to the coast filling sandbags to reinforce the East Coast sea defences. A buddy I went through **Cosford** with was on the detail and caught pleurisy and was invalided out of the air force.

A couple of people who were on the base at the same time was "Flash" **Pearce**, an athlete, who was at that time the Suffolk Senior Cross Country champion He was National Service. Another was Johnny **Gorham** who was well known in model aircraft circles. Maybe they could be contacted through the **AAA** or the Model Aircraft Associations ?

I passed **Martlesham** about 4 years back. **C** flight hanger was a Great Mills store and the huge **BT** Research **Laborities** are built on the site of the Officers Mess. The barrack blocks had been turned into offices.

I mentioned the prototype Canberra - we also had the prototype toy-boy as well! A young Scot of 20 married a woman twice his age from Ipswich and then applied to keep an SS Jaguar, a Triumph Mayflower and a Scot Flying Squirrel on camp!

Pefe Collett

### MONTHLY MEETINGS ROUNDUP

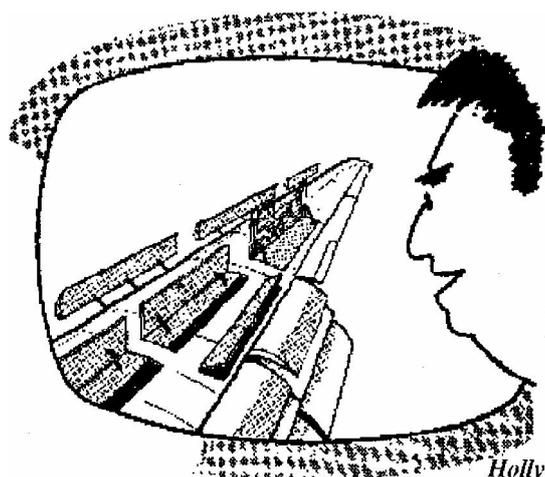
We continue to have good attendances at our monthly meetings and the September meeting was no exception. George Paul, who we have heard speak at a previous meeting, was unable to attend and one of our own members, Tony Errington, stepped into the breach. The talk he gave was about the Home Guard. Tony, who later became a member at the age of 16, spoke about the formation of what was originally known as the LDV (Local Volunteer Defence Force). Or as Tony said, also known as the Look, Duck and Vanish Brigade! Tony went on to describe some of his own experiences firstly in the Infantry section and later volunteering for work with ack-ack guns. Question time was also interesting when several members related some of their own experiences of the Home Guard. A vote of thanks was given by Joe Cox.

October and "The Story of The Zaukoenig". Our speaker was Ian Girling and the "Zaukoenig" referred to was a small German high wing monoplane that was bought by him for £150 and kept at Martlesham and Ipswich airport in the early 50's. Ian, who spent some of WW2 in the Western Desert where he was attached to a squadron flying tank-busting Hurricanes, was clearly impressed by the Zaukoenig, which was designed in 1942. The Germans had a reputation for designing light aircraft with exceptional aerodynamic qualities and the Zaukoenig had an advanced wing profile which enabled it to take off in about 165ft and land in as little as 86ft. It had a 52hp engine, weighed 5cwt and cruised at 60mph. It was practically impossible to stall it and it would not spin! Only about four were produced as the Luftwaffe had no use for it. Ian expressed a belief that Australian farmers could do with an aircraft with these capabilities rather than the expensive helicopters that they currently use. A vote of thanks was given by Gordon Kinsey.

The November meeting was enjoyed by another large audience who came to listen to Mr. John Mason, a retired Fleet Air Arm lieutenant. John joined the Navy in 1948 as a boy sailor and was firstly at HMS Ganges, the local shore based training centre. After a while he applied to become a pilot and trained on Harvard's. He later converted to jets at Lossiemouth and said that the jet, though much faster than piston engined aircraft, was easier to land on the deck of a carrier. Several improvements were adopted over the years, including the angled deck and a system of three lights which the pilot lines up with on approach. The introduction of the steam catapult, which accelerates the take off speed to around 108 knots in three times the aircraft's length certainly eliminates that sinking feeling which previously sometimes happened when the aircraft dipped below the carrier deck immediately after take off! John flew mostly Sea Hawks and spent some time in the Mediterranean area before being based in the Hong Kong and Singapore areas of the far-east. A vote of thanks was given by Alan Smith and in reply John Mason said that he was most impressed at not only the size of the audience but also the knowledgeable numerous questions fired at him!

Our annual Christmas Social was held on the 3rd December and the music was provided by "Rhythm 'N Reeds" and the catering by Helena Jane Catering. A good time was had by all and an enormous raffle raised £113 towards the "Stained Glass Windows" fund.

Ed.



"So what happened to our beautiful super-critical wing"?

