

Newsletter No. 6 – Christmas 2016

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Reflection for the Season

I have just been to my grandchildren's school Carol Service held in Romsey Abbey, Hampshire. The Abbey dates back to the first century AD and is a good place to reflect on the year past and think about the year ahead.

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."*

And he replied:

*"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."*

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

These words, written by Minnie Louise Haskins in 1908, are known as 'The Gate of the Year', and were used by King George VI in 1939 in his first WW2 Christmas broadcast to the British Empire. King George died in 1952 but the words comforted his wife, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, for the rest of her long life (she died in 2002 aged 101).

In June 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union and in November 2016, the US chose a new President-Elect. For both our nations there will be change, and with this comes uncertainty. For me, 2017 will be a time of personal change – my son and his family will be moving to Switzerland in March. Hence my time of reflection in the Abbey during the last UK school Carol Service I shall share with my grandchildren.

The focus of this short newsletter is to share season's greetings with everyone in our rapidly growing 5BFTS family. Whether you celebrate Christmas or whether you don't, I hope you all get to enjoy some time with your family and friends and use the holiday to stop, unwind, reflect on the old year and look forward to the new one. Change is inevitable and your families, like ours, may be experiencing personal change as well as national change. We are all standing at the 'Gate of the Year' – I hope that the words of Minnie Louise Haskins will help and support you wherever you are.

As Gerry Beardsmore, 5BFTS Chairman from 1998 to 2005, wrote:

"From me and mine to you and yours
Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and
Health and Happiness and Peace in the New Year"

Jenifer Harding



Five 5BFTS Facts

Opened in
July 1941 at
Carlstrom
Field

Moved to
Riddle Field
September
25, 1941

26 Courses

1434
graduates
(1325 RAF
and 109
USAAF)

Closed in
September
1945



5BFTS in 2016 –The Highlights

In January – The uniform of my father Flt Lt George Hogarth (Course 3) was put on permanent display at the RAF Defford Museum in Worcestershire.



The photograph shows my mother (Wren Petty Officer Wendy Hogarth née Jones) looking at 'herself' in the costume case as 'she' stands alongside 'George'

For more details about the RAF Defford Museum and Croome Court (National Trust), please visit <https://deffordairfieldheritagegroup.wordpress.com> or <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome>

In March - The City of Clewiston updated the Garden of Remembrance area in Civic Center Park with an expanded area, an impressive archway and cleaned and remounted the two 5 BFTS plaques. The plaques are now mounted on lower structures, which allows for younger citizens to easily read the information. Floral arrangements are being planted and eventually the entire area will be a lush garden of color and peaceful solitude. Local Dentists bought the Dixie Crystal Theater, where many Cadets have fond memories of viewing movies while training in Clewiston.



5BFTS Plaques: Garden of Remembrance June 1, 2016



Lawrence Moore (Co 17)'s Flying Jacket

Also in March - Dina Moore (5BFTS Family Association) donated the flying jacket, which her husband Lawrence Moore (Course 17) was wearing when he crashed in his Lancaster in 1946 to Clewiston Museum.

In April - we said 'Hello' to Duxford - Following an initial contact from In Anne Hughes, a volunteer researcher at Imperial War Museum, Duxford, England, we have become involved with the American Air Museum at Duxford and 5BFTS information is slowly appearing on their website. Researchers have spoken with two ex-cadets (Rodney Scrase – Course 3 and Eric Denham – Course 13) and you can see more about Eric on the IWM/AAM website. <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/person/241503>

In May – Memorial Day was a special and memorable day; the 60th time that a British Memorial Service has been held to remember the 23 RAF Cadets who “*Crossed the river to rest in the shade of the trees*”. There were more than 200 people at the British Plot on May 30. Afterwards, 33 of us went to Mary Margaret’s Tea and Biscuit in Arcadia for an excellent lunch. We were also joined by Harold Kosola, who distributes this newsletter in the US, and Nick Jordan whose father was John Jordan (Course 13) and who made a special journey from his home in British Columbia to attend the British Memorial Day Service. Nick wrote: “It was a tremendously moving experience, and I for one was humbled by the show of community support that was shown by the local residents”



In May – we were very sad to hear that Gordon Newsham had died. Gordon was a long-standing, active 5BFTS Association member. Latterly he was the Archivist and organised Midland Meetings, which ended up at his house for drinks and cakes baked by his lovely wife, Alma. We shall miss him and all those who ‘handed in their log books’ during 2016.



In August - the new 5BFTS Plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) was installed in the 5BFTS grove of three North American birch trees and two English Birch trees (5 for Number 5). This is at the entrance of the RAF Wing and has been funded by the NMA.



NMA – the new 5BFTS plaque August 2016



NCH Tufnell's Watch inscription © Michael Altucinni

In October – the family of NCH Tufnell was found. Mike Altucinni had asked us for help to identify the original owner of a watch he had, inscribed “Riddle McKay Aero College N.C.TUFNELL. Best Overall Cadet Course 6”. It was dated 8.5.42. After some research, help from Eton College and his family, we know that Nevill Charles Hilder Tufnell was born in 1922 and attended Eton College. During WW2 he was awarded a DFC and afterwards married Elizabeth and had four children. Nevill died in September 1995.

The year has seen our 5BFTS family slowly growing. In addition to ex-cadets mentioned above, we have heard about or from the following Riddle Field people: Duncan Wilson (Course 3), Alan Bruce (Course 11), Roy Mather (Course 12), John Jordan and Cyril Oettinger (Course 13), William J Hastings (Course 24), Jean Reahard (Instructor), Don Mangold (Mechanic) and Lois Heflin Blount (Secretary). We have also made contact with the 1BFTS Museum in Texas and have learnt a little about Bert Allam (1 BFTS Course 4) and co-operation between the UK BFTS Associations (more in the next newsletter).

A history lesson from the 5BFTS Newsletter Archive:

The years 1973 – 1976 were not good ones for the UK!

In 1973 - there were two coal mining disasters, the IRA continued their active bombing campaign on the UK mainland, there were several strikes against the government's pay restraints and in November, the Middle East oil crisis meant that petrol rationing was considered and the motorway speed limit was reduced from 70mph to 50mph.

In 1974 - A good start! New Year's Day was celebrated as a public holiday for the first time in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (it was already a public holiday in Scotland).

But 1974 was marked by the Three-Day Week (introduced to conserve electricity during the coal miners strike), a state of emergency in Northern Ireland, extensive IRA bombing on the British mainland, several large company collapses and major local government reorganization. We had two general elections (In February, the UK had the first hung parliament since 1929) and inflation soared to a 34-year high of 17.2%.

But not all was ‘doom and gloom’ - in October, the first UK McDonalds opened in London!!

In 1975 - Margaret Thatcher became the first female leader of the conservative party. The IRA continued their mainland bombing campaign, unemployment rose, in February the Moorgate Tube (Subway) Train disaster killed 43 people and in May, a tour coach ran away and fell off a bridge in Yorkshire killing the driver and 31 women pensioners on board. Football hooliganism resulted in a British Club being banned from Europe and 70 arrests in a home game at the start of the season.

In 1976 – there was a prolonged drought (worst since the 1720s) and subsequent heat wave. There were large Peace demonstrations in Northern Ireland and two Northern Irish women won the Nobel Peace Prize. Inflation stood at 16.5% - lower than last year, but still one of the highest since records began in 1750 (it did reach 24% at one stage). In August, a more severe one-year limit on pay rises was agreed.

On a lighter note, in January, commercial Concorde flights started with the first London/US (Washington Dulles) flight in May 1976.

It is against this background that the Christmas and New Year wishes in the 5BFTS Association newsletters must be read. The three brief greetings recorded below speak volumes when set against the political and economic turmoil of these years!



In January 1974: John Potter (Chairman), on behalf of the 5BFTS Association Committee, wished all members 'a very happy and uncomplicated New Year'.

In December 1974: The 5BFTS Association Committee wished all members 'a very Happy Christmas and a not too difficult New Year'.

In the Winter Newsletter 1975/76: John Potter hoped that all members would have 'Peace and security in the New Year' – but noted that for 'Prosperity we will have to wait'.

Finally, to finish almost where we started – on January 1, 1973, the United Kingdom (and the Republic of Ireland and Denmark) entered the European Economic Community (EEC - the forerunner of the EU - European Union of today). In June 1975, in a Referendum, 67% of UK voters supported continued membership of the EEC. But in June 2016, 52% of the UK voted to leave the EU. The comfort of Minnie Louise Haskins 'The Gate of the Year' poem may well be needed!

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The next newsletter will be published in March 2017. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of February. The more you tell me, the more interesting the newsletter will be – and I would especially like to hear if anyone worked with, or knows, any of the people mentioned in this newsletter. Anecdotes, stories and pictures would be great. So - over to you!

#### **Useful websites:**

Clewiston Museum: <http://www.clewistonmuseum.org>

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives: <http://www.alumni.erau.edu/archives>

#5 British Flying Training School: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>

'George Hogarth – Clewiston and Beyond'. Memoires of George Hogarth, 5BFTS Course 3  
<http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/>

US Contact: Harold Kosola – [hkairplane@aol.com](mailto:hkairplane@aol.com)



#### **The last words for 2016**

Frank Veltri was an Instructor at Riddle Field and organised the US #5BFTS Group. He wrote a periodic newsletter; in December 1978 (Issue 9) he wrote:

**A healthy, happy and prosperous New Year to each of you and yours, and last, but not least, 'Let's All Keep Flying' and 'Happy Landings'. Bless you all.**

***Until we meet again, good-bye to y'all and may one and all have a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year***

