

Newsletter No. 20 – September 2021

Editor: Dr Jenifer Harding (daughter of George Hogarth, Co 3)

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Reflection

Recently, I visited St Mary’s Church, Fairford, Gloucestershire. Fairford, with buildings in the golden coloured Cotswold stone, has been there since the 9th century, its prosperity built on the wool trade and there is a weekly market in the Market Square which has been running since the 12th century. The current church was consecrated in 1497 and is little changed since then. The complete set of 28 medieval stained-glass windows tell the Christian story using many contemporary buildings, faces and clothes. The church and windows survived the destruction of the Reformation and Civil War – it is the most complete parish church in England.

But Fairford also has a link with more modern times – and the USA! RAF Fairford is a Forward Operating Location made available to the US by the UK Government. With an exceptionally long runway (nearly 10,000 ft), it is the US Air Force’s only European Airfield for heavy bombers and was the only TransOceanic Abort Landing Site for the NASA Space Shuttle programme in the UK with NASA trained fire and medical crews stationed there.

And Concorde, the first and only supersonic commercial airplane, touched down at RAF Fairford on April 9, 1969, after its 22-minute maiden flight from Filton in Bristol where it was made. This British prototype, G-BSST (002) remained at RAF Fairford for testing and development (making use of the long runway) until 1976 when it was ‘retired’ to the Fleet Air Arm Yeovilton Air Museum where it is today.

This, I think, helps to put the pandemic in perspective. For some, it has been incredibly sad and for many, an increasingly inconvenient time which is not over yet – but maybe we can start look forward. The UK vaccine booster programme has started for people over 50 or vulnerable, and those living in the UK may soon be able to visit the US – and the good news is that it looks like my trip to take part in the 80th Celebration of #4BFTS in Arizona in November will now happen!!

July 2021 marked 80 years since the first #5BFTS cadets on Course 1 arrived at Carlstrom in July 1941 to start their training before going over to Clewiston in September 1941. We still have a few who remember Riddle Field as they were there – and many more who are helping to keep the memories alive. The windows in St Mary’s Church in Fairford show us what life was like in medieval England; perhaps one day, people will think back 500 years to Riddle Field and our records will help them discover what happened there between 1941 and 1945.

I hope those of you reading this are safe and, if you have signs and symptoms of Covid-19, are well cared for. If you have lost someone close to Covid, please accept my condolences and sympathy. With my love, prayers and best wishes.

‘Their efforts to preserve the freedom of the world were not in vain and will never be forgotten.’

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



Jenifer Harding

65th Annual British Memorial Day Service May 31, 2021

The 64th Annual British Memorial Day Service may have been cancelled, but the 65th went ahead as normal – normal that is, except for those of us who live in the UK as we were unable to attend because of ongoing travel restrictions; however, we were with you in spirit if not in person! Richard Nestor who lives in Fort Lauderdale sent me photographs and told me about the service – and all I can say is ‘THANK YOU’! Thank you to the Rotary Club of Arcadia, to Paul Bennett Seusy, British Memorial Service Chair, to all those organisations who laid a wreath, and to everyone who attended to remember and honour John Paul Riddle and the 23 cadets who were killed in Florida and are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia.



The service was well attended, and the special guest was David Holloman. As usual, Ross Allen of the Jacobite Pipe and drum band of Sarasota played before the service and the Lament and Taps to end the ceremony. This year, Remembrance was led by Kevin Moors who sounded The Last Post before the Two Minute Silence. After The Ode to Remembrance, Kevin sounded the Reveille. The Jaguar Club of SW Florida and Rotary Club of Bonita Naples called on representatives to lay their wreaths. Susan Sweet Phillips (daughter of Charles A Sweet, USAAF Course 18) laid the 5BFTS Wreath and displayed a wonderful family picture collage.



The Flags →

← Paul Bennett Seusy and Judy Kirkpatrick



Placing the Poppies and Flags led by Lou Towne



Kevin Moors after the service with Ross Allen by the grave of Horace Bowley Booth (died May 4, 1945)



The 5BFTS Wreath by the Rupert Brooke Plaque



*'Team Wales'
Gulf Coast St. David's Welsh Society*

As usual, several people took lunch at **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. I believe it has changed hands and is now owned by DJ and her husband, Sam. Reservations are a good idea – phone 1-863-494-0615. For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please see:

<https://www.facebook.com/MaryMargaretsTeaAndBiscuit/>



Annual British Memorial Service May 30, 2022

Covid permitting, the service will start at 10am

The Service is organized, as it has been for the past 65 years, by Arcadia Rotary Club

Address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492

Telephone for information at 863-444-0664

Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

We owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to the Rotary Club of Arcadia and the many others who contribute.

In Memoriam

**Robert Philip (Phil) Dixon and Richard Antony (Tony) Donell (both Course 10)
Phil died November 13, 1943, and Tony died in 2007**

In June, I heard from Simon Donell who told me about his father, **Richard Antony (Tony) Donell**. Tony died in 2007, and a couple of years later, Simon's mother revealed Tony kept a diary of his time as a bomber pilot in the Far East; a "censored" version is on-line (Life at Salbani by Tony Donell at www.rafb24.com – the website is currently off-line being rebuilt).

Tony was born in Lincolnshire in 1923. His parents were Frank Donell, a headmaster in Long Sutton, Lincolnshire, and Winifred Donell. In addition to keeping a wartime diary, Tony also wrote poems, several about his time in Florida. Like many of those who served in WW2 (and other conflicts), Tony rarely talked about the war; however, the diary clearly shows how stressful he found it as time went on.

He was posted to 356 Squadron, a long-range bomber squadron operational at Salbani, Bengal, India between January 1944 and July 1945 flying the Consolidated Liberator. After 356 Squadron, Tony was a First Pilot flying a Lancaster at RAF North Luffenham, Rutland, having been promoted to Warrant Officer. He left the RAF in mid-1946 having witnessed a crash at the airfield on March 18, 1946, which killed a number of his friends. A Lancaster which

was taking off, failed to gain height, stalled and hit the ground in a huge explosion. All seven crew members were killed. Tony wrote a poem on the fourth anniversary of the crash. Ironically, Tony's last recorded flight was in a Tiger Moth doing aerobatics for 50 mins. Ironic because, the first aircraft he ever flew was, of course, a Tiger Moth!



Tony at Clewiston with a PT-17



Tony by the entrance to Riddle Field



LAC Robert Philip Dixon (LHS) and LAC Richard Antony Donell: August 15, 1942

Simon found an album of photographs taken during WW2. One picture was at Clewiston with Tony's friend 'Phil'. A bit of research found that 'Phil' was **Robert Philip (Phil) Dixon.**

Phil was born in 1923 and came from West Clandon, Surrey. His parents were Robert Stanley Dixon, an architect, and Mary Newton Dixon. He was with 56 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at RAF Tealing at Angus, Scotland, but when this station changed focus in October 1943, he moved to 55 OTU at RAF Annan in SW Scotland. By now a Flying Officer, Phil was killed on November 13, 1943, when his Hurricane plane crashed in the Lake District. He was on a solo low-level training flight with other Hurricanes flying from Annan. Flying very close to the A595 road at Blindcrake, Phil clipped a sycamore tree causing him to lose control. He travelled a few hundred metres in the air and then hit a stone gatepost where his plane broke up.

Phil is buried at St Mary the Virgin Parish Church at Send (also near Guildford). After Phil died, Tony wrote the following poem.



F/O Robert Philip Dixon

To Philip - 1943

(In the belief that I would die before him)

Where the highest clouds of heaven meet the
bluest of the blue,
Where the earth is far away and all is peace,
You will find me waiting, waiting there for you,
With beating wings that nevermore shall cease.
Come then brother up to meet me
As you used to then,
When we flew by side together
Far above our fellow men.
You will find me ever waiting
For the day that soon will be,
When you take your long, last flight from earth
To fly again with me

In this poem, Tony has reflected on the time he was at Clewiston with Phil

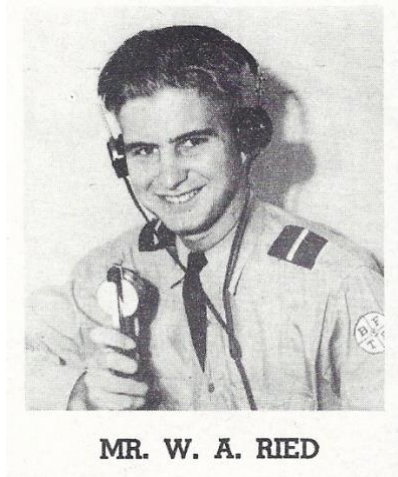
William Arthur Read Jnr (Instructor) died September 29, 2019

William A Read Jnr (known as Bill) was born in Tampa on July 5, 1923. His parents were William, an engineer, and Georgina Read. He attended Plant High School in Tampa and Georgia Tech leaving school early to enroll in the Royal Canadian Air Force when WW2 broke out. He wanted to fly on active service but was underage and returned to Florida.



Bill became an instructor at No 5 BFTS joining the Riddle McKay Aero College at Riddle Field in 1941 when he was 18. He became a Link Instructor – the photograph below, taken from the No 5 BFTS First Anniversary Book (July 1942), shows him at work (his name is spelt incorrectly!).

After the war, he became a land surveyor and in 1949, married Myrtle Jones. They settled in Bartow, Florida, where they founded W A Read Jr & Associates, a land surveying firm. Bill was a long-time member of Bartow Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and it was here that his funeral was held on October 14.



REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)

SERIAL NUMBER N. 75	L. NAME (Print) WILLIAM ARTHUR READ, JR.	ORDER NUMBER 10,569
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) Box 463 CLEWISTON HENDRY FLORIDA		
3. MAILING ADDRESS SAME		
4. TELEPHONE 144	5. AGE IN YEARS 18	6. PLACE OF BIRTH TAMPA FLORIDA
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS MRS. W.A. READ, 2401 GAYSHIRE DR., ST. PETERSBURG, FL.		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS RIDDLE MCKAY AERO COLLEGE		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS CLEWISTON HENDRY FLA.		

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 6-1-42) (over) e10-21030-3 William A. Read Jr. (Registrar's signature)

We remember with thanks these pilots who have handed in their logbooks, and to other pilots, Riddle Field staff and friends known to us who have done so much to keep their memories alive.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE!



Duxford is open again which is great news! Many air shows and flying displays have been cancelled this year, but Duxford will be able to hold their Battle of Britain Air Show 2021 on September 18 and 19. Spitfires and Hurricanes are expected to be flying with so much more including two North American Mustangs.

Just a note to thank Anne Hughes for all her hard work developing the 5BFTS Archive held at the American Air Museum, Duxford.

To read about 5BFTS people on the American Air Museum Internet Archive, please visit <http://www.americanairmuseum.com> and search on 5BFTS, Riddle Field and/or Clewiston.

RIDDLE ROUND-UP

Wing Commander George Greaves AFC

In Newsletter 16 (March 2020), I told you that I had heard from David Sudermann, a retired history and language professor from Northfield, Minnesota, who was researching his relative Wing Commander George Greaves, commanding officer of 5BFTS from January 27, 1943, to November 10, 1943. I wrote about George's early life in Russia, his RAF career before Clewiston, his time at Clewiston and a little of what happened next.

In April 2021, I heard from Wojtek Matusiak, a Polish researcher and author specialising in the WW2 exiled Polish Air Force. Wojtek was working on an article about the training of several notable Polish fighter pilots at No. 6 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at the beginning of the

Battle of Britain in July 1940. He told me that in mid-1940, George Greaves was 'A' Flight Commander at No. 6 OTU, the flight to which the Polish pilots were posted for training and asked permission to use some photographs of George Greaves that I had published in March 2020. The result of this enquiry was a fascinating three way 'conversation' between me, Wojtek and David Sudermann and what follows adds to the story of George Greaves.

George Greaves was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on September 3, 1939. Promotion to Squadron Leader came on March 1, 1941, and he was awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) on September 24, 1941.

On March 29, 1940, while George Greaves was at 504 Squadron, he led a section of three Hurricanes on a training flight. As they landed (one at a time) at RAF Martlesham Heath, Suffolk, one of his wingmen overshot the runway, crashed and was killed. Not an unusual occurrence in those days, but this one made the headlines worldwide from New Zealand to New York, for the pilot was Pilot Officer Prince Aleksandr Obolensky, from a family of Russian princes AND (possibly more importantly!), someone who left Russia in 1917, was educated in England, was a naturalised Briton and was a leading English international rugby player known as 'The Flying Prince', "The Flying Slav" or simply 'Obo"! The day before he died, Obo, aged 24, had been recalled to play for England against Wales!!



In January 1936, Prince Aleksandr Obolensky scored two tries on his England debut in their win over New Zealand; one of these tries is recorded as one of England's greatest tries.

George Greaves was transferred to an instructor post at 6 OTU at RAF Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire, at the beginning of April 1940 - could this have been related to the crash killing P/O Obolensky in March, although the accident investigation ruled that it was an accident caused by pilot error?



Wojtek's article was published in Issue 37 of GAPA, a Polish Historical Aviation Magazine (Lotniczy Magazyn Historyczny) published Luty (February) 2021. The article includes the story of George Greaves as in Newsletter 16 (March 2020), some extra Greaves family information, Polish information and this photo, called "the six from 6 OTU"!

Four would become legendary Polish fighter aces and commanders. *They are from the left: 1st Antoni Głowacki, 3rd Witold Urbanowicz, 5th Stanisław Skalski, 6th Stefan Witorzeńć.*

Also in the picture are F/O Kevin Jackman (2nd from left) and F/Lt George Greaves (4th from left)

There were 9 RAF instructors at 6 OTU at this time, of these only the promoted F/Lt Kevin Jackman died during WW2. This was on November 30, 1941, when he was stationed with the 416 Tactical Fighter Squadron, he was killed on the ground by a stray bullet during a strafing attack by a single German aeroplane on the airfield where Jackman was based at the time.

Should anyone wish to read Wojtek's article, I have a PDF copy – a warning, it's in Polish!

Thank you Wojtek for your research and the information discovered about George Greaves.

Dr Ian (Jock) Alastair Campbell Blue DFC MD: Course 3 (October 1941 to March 1942)

Ian (Jock) Blue and my father, George Hogarth, were two of the 13 cadets on Course 3 who had been members of the Edinburgh University Air Squadron. After WW2, Ian and his wife kept in contact with my parents although they lost touch after the early death of Ian in 1981. In

2018, a chance viewing of a photograph taken by Kyle Blue led me to make contact with Kyle, Ian's son. Around 2000, Kyle met an ex-RAF man, Don McClen, who subsequently wrote a quite detailed history of Ian's wartime RAF career which made up a chapter of a book he published. This takes up Ian's story after he left the RAF.

Ian Blue became a GP in Orton, Cumbria. He married, had two sons but sadly died in 1981. Some years later during a house move, his family caught up with his RAF past. Ian seemed to have kept virtually all his RAF equipment with him upon discharge, including flying jackets, boots, leather helmets, oxygen masks etc. The only thing he didn't have was his Typhoon!!

In the mid 1960s, a group of ex-5BFTS cadets got together to form the 5BFTS Association, and on October 14, 1967, the First Reunion Dinner was held at the Royal Aero Club, London. The two Course 3 representatives there were George Hogarth and Ian Blue. George and Ian, along with 12 other ex-RAF #5BFTS Association members, their wives and other relatives took part in the 1973 5BFTS Reunion which was held in Florida in November 1973. A very full programme included time in Clewiston, when the ex-cadets visited Air Glades or Riddle Field (which then had several buildings and the swimming pool remaining) and gazed upon an AT6.

Air Glades (ex-Riddle Field) – November 8, 1973



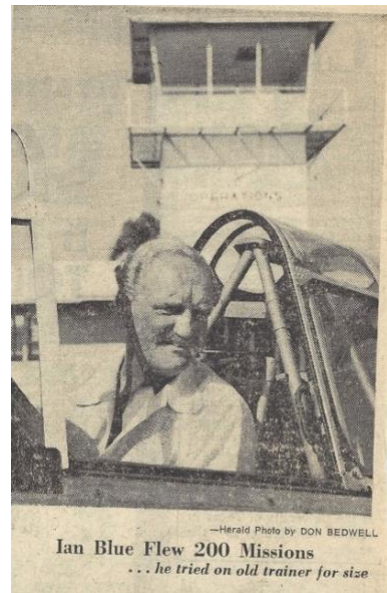
George Hogarth and Ian Blue outside 'their' hut



Ian Blue on the diving board



*Back row: L Moore (Course 17), Unknown, Ian Blue (3), Harry Leeks (5), Gordon Newsham (24), George Hogarth (3), Unknown, Gerry Beardsmore (24)
Front row includes Frank Rees (6), T Clanzy (9), C Fraser (4), Sid Slape (6). Also on photo, but not identified: D Harris (13), L Clarkson (15), C Clarke (17) A Findlay (20).*



*Miami Herald: November 9, 1973
Photo by Don Bedwell*

The Miami Herald of November 9, 1973, featured a photo of Ian sitting in the cockpit of an AT6. Don Bedwell wrote, 'Ian (Jock) Blue, wearing the same sandy moustache and rakish grin he wore as an RAF cadet, slipped into the cockpit of a silvery AT6 trainer Thursday for the first time in more than 30 years. Beaming, the ruddy Englishman (sic) waved to the RAF veterans gathered for a bittersweet reunion at the weedy Clewiston airfield where they had trained

before plunging into the Maelstrom of WW2. “My God”, a graying former instructor muttered, “don’t let him touch the gear controls.” As “WILD MAN” Blue, learning to fly Hurricanes and Typhoon fighters against the Germans besieging his homeland in the early 1940s, Blue twice had landed on Clewiston runways without bothering to lower his landing gear. “One time,” 51-year-old Blue told the assembled RAF men, “it wasn’t my fault.”

The report goes on to note that ‘Blue survived 200 missions over Germany, France, Belgium and Holland. His planes sustained gunfire on 13 consecutive missions, but he nursed the aircraft home each time’.

Don McClen finished his chapter on Ian as follows, “Reading his logbook in conjunction with official history was for me a privilege in its own right, and in my mind, he will always remain larger than life”. I think the 1973 report in the Miami Herald rather proves the point!

With thanks to Kyle Blue for allowing me to tell the story of Ian’s time in the RAF.

Dr Stuart James Cox: Course 11 (September 25, 1942, to April 8, 1943)

Stuart Cox, who died in 2016, wrote a brief history of his life. His son, Bob sent me a copy of the relevant pages about his experiences in WW2 and the RAF. In March 2019, Stuart’s Obituary was Part 1 of an amazing and very interesting RAF life. Part 2 in September 2019 saw his arrival in America. Part 3 told of his journey and introduction to Riddle Field. Part 4 was about time spent in primary training and Part 5 covered advanced training and graduation.

Part 6: Going Home and what happened next! (Part 7 will be in March 2022)

To Moncton again where the newly commissioned Stuart bought his first officer’s uniform – and received his first salute! While waiting for the ship home, the Officers Mess put on a concert which was made exceptionally good by Flying Officer Jimmy Edwards who later became famous on radio, television and films. The newly graduated pilots were given a sum in Canadian Dollars and later, on returning to England, they discovered they had been paid for the same period in ££ directly into their banks. This windfall, Stuart spent on the best greatcoat that money could buy, the best Crombie cloth “and so well-tailored that it did not feel heavy and was beautifully warm”. The Air Ministry soon discovered their mistake and wrote asking for a refund! Stuart offered £5.00 a month which they agreed at once. When Stuart returned to Queen’s [University], he replaced the RAF buttons with leather ones.

The ship bringing Stuart back to England was a French vessel called the *Louis Pasteur*. He (and 25 others!) were in a first-class cabin. As was normal with many liners, there was no convoy as the ship’s superior speed was expected to keep it safe from U-Boats. “When we were a few miles from Liverpool we were greeted by three Spitfires flying low over the ship. Whoever thought to do that was right because it was just what we needed.”

Back in England and on to Harrogate. Entering the dining room at the Queen’s Hotel, “a Group Captain called out me ‘Hello Cox’. It was Miles Delapp who had been CO of the Queen’s University Air Squadron. My friends were impressed.”

At the end of June, it was off to Bournemouth where Stuart had his first taste of command. He was put in charge of an intake of one hundred aircrew from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. “At first, they tried to slope off when they could, and it was difficult to keep track of a hundred officers who were determined to have a good time. Nobody checked on us so one morning I paraded them and told them to disappear for three days but report back to me then or else. I was relieved when they all turned up and said to me that it had been the best decision an officer had made since they joined.”

Peterborough followed on 13 July 1943, and Stuart was promoted to Flying Officer. They flew Miles Masters which “were a pleasure to fly”. In Peterborough, Stuart frequented the local repertory theatre, not for the rather mediocre acting but to see “the same cast taking different parts each week. It must have been difficult to learn a part for next week while playing this week’s part”. RAF Peterborough was about 2 miles NW of the town but when night flying they went to a satellite field in Sibson about 11 miles distant. Stuart experienced two separate weeks of night flying before moving to Walney Island, Barrow in Furness in November.

Editor’s note: RAF Peterborough is now an industrial site, but Sibson Aerodrome is still functional and is the home of Peterborough Flying School and UK Parachuting.

Charles A. Neyhart (known as Chuck): Course 17 (October 1943 to April 1944)

It is always lovely to hear from Shirley Neyhart who was born in the UK and lived in Surrey. Thank you so much Shirley and please continue to keep in touch.

A reminder that should anyone wish to support the **Major Charles A Neyhart No 5 BFTS Memorial Scholarship**, please go to givingto.erau.edu/bfts to make a donation to the scholarship fund.

Charles Harold Stubbs: Course 26 (June 1945 to September 1945)

I am greatly indebted to Alison Pope, (née Stubbs) who has written this article about her father, Charles Harold Stubbs. He was one of 100 RAF cadets on Course 26, the last course at #5BFTS. They started training on June 19, 1945 and their last flying day was on or around August 25, 1945. They returned to Britain in September 1945.

Sentimental Journey: 5BFTS's legacy in my family

My Dad, Charles Harold Stubbs, known to all as Stubby, left Britain for America aged just 19 and was one of the last potential British aircrew to train at 5BFTS in the Summer of 1945. His training was never completed since the overseas aircrew training programme was cancelled once hostilities in the Pacific theatre ceased, following the dropping of the atom bombs in Japan in August of that year. Disappointed not to get his wings but hugely grateful to be spared flying in actual combat, my Dad had been an aviation enthusiast since seeing a red biplane fly over his school playground at the age of 5. He remained one until he died on 6 March 2015.

As his daughter, I naturally learnt the difference between biplanes and monoplanes, the importance of streamlined fuselages and experimental v-shaped wings, the names of various aircraft and their manufacturers. In addition to a dolls' house, he made me a wooden delta plane which was so popular in our street that a squadron had to be made for each child. There were visits to air shows and air museums. When I married, my Dad was relieved to discover that my husband was a fellow aviation enthusiast and so the interest in flying and the legacy of 5BFTS carried on to his grandson.



Mr and Mrs Charles Stubbs - July 1951



"Stubby" and Marjorie with their grandson on Stubby's 75th Birthday – October 2000

Learning to fly and his experiences in 5BFTS were the crown jewels in my Dad's love of aviation. Despite only being stationed in Florida for only 4 months, the time he spent at Riddle Field coloured the rest of his life and featured large in his memories of the time he spent in the RAF. When I was small I gave devoted attention to stories of the men he knew feeding buns to a small alligator called Charlie who lived in the creek near the airfield and laughed at the humour of hundreds of men queuing outside a fruit shop to buy bananas when, since the US had no food rationing at this time, they could have been easily purchased at any grocery store. He never forgot the kindness and hospitality of the Americans he met and tales from his flying training in Florida became a regular feature at almost any family gathering.

All the services are well-known for having had their own jargon during wartime, but Dad seemed to acquire an entire catalogue of turns of phrase while based at Clewiston and, following their repetition, down the years these have been absorbed and adopted by the family. When calling the family to the dinner table he would announce that this was "the first and last call for chow in the troops' mess hall". This being humorous, he explained, because this announcement was made via the loudspeaker in the camp every 30 minutes or so throughout

the entire day. The importance of preparation was emphasised by flying instructors Mr. Mougey and Mr. Coleman's three rules of flying; (1) expect the unexpected, (2) everyone else in the air is a fool and (3) tyres are the only things between the grass and your "ass". These rules transfer surprisingly well to lots of human endeavours but particularly to driving and were drummed into me as a learner driver.

There were stories too. Not just about flying. The breath-taking view of the skyscrapers of North America growing over the horizon as the troop ship sailed into harbour. A visit to Radio City Music Hall when Frank Sinatra was only third on the bill. The shock of the racial segregation on the buses. The endless biting insects which populated the sky in the less gradual and much earlier summer sunsets. Finally, the rough passage home on the troop ship buffeted and bounced in the dreadful Atlantic storm of September 1945. The one which always made my Dad's eyes fill with tears, however, related to his being on flight training with the instructor Mr. Coleman. They had been doing instrument flying with the cockpit cover on when suddenly it flew back. My Dad was wondering if he had made a bad mistake but, no, Mr. Coleman was urgently pointing down, pointing down below the plane where, since they were flying above the cloud base, the Harvard's shadow was centred inside a perfectly circular rainbow or "glory". A meteorological phenomenon. The sight of a lifetime.

Throughout the June, July and August 1945, Doris Day and Les Brown's "Sentimental Journey" was never off the juke box at the camp as my Dad wrote home to his sweetheart - later my Mum, Marjorie. Aerograph and V-mail letters passed between them all that Summer. This nearly didn't happen! On the last day of his embarkation leave they had a disagreement but the next day, my not quite 17-year-old Mum thought better of it and left her desk in the local office of the Ministry of Food and ran to the railway station to say goodbye and wave him off. Dad was wearing his RAF cap with his aircrew "white flash" in it and Mum said she could see the white flash for yards down the track as he waved from the window of the train.



My Mum fell gravely ill late in 2019. A kind friend got to hear of this and, unbeknown to me, got in touch with the Association and hence the Museum in Clewiston and managed to obtain an enlargement, featuring my Dad taken from the group photograph of his flight at 5BFTS. We framed and gave it to Mum. She was delighted. "Stubby with his white flash!" she said as she unwrapped it and smiled.

With the photo at her bedside on 6 March 2020, five years exactly after my Dad had died, my Mum passed away.

Although my Dad never went back to Florida and my Mum never got to see for herself all the places he had depicted so vividly in his tales, 5BFTS never left their hearts. So, whilst it was not "their" song as such, there really were no other lyrics or poems to read at their memorial tree dedication last year but those to "Sentimental Journey".

"Gotta take that sentimental journey,
Sentimental journey home".

The Instructors

If they hadn't been there – would we have been here?

The eighth of a series about the instructors







©David Brannan (Peter Brannan Co 25)

Frederick J Brittain:

Nothing new this month, but a reminder that there is a lot of information about Fred on 'his' website, www.frederickbrittain.com (developed by Fred's daughter, Vicki Brittain)

Albert Mueller: Sadly, I am no further forward in finding any more details of the four Course 23 cadets whose logbooks were found by Albert Mueller's son in his papers after Albert died. Their pictures are below – if anyone recognises them, please get in touch.

			
<i>E D Pett from London</i>	<i>Archie Piercy from Kelso, Roxburghshire</i>	<i>Christopher W Thomas from London</i>	<i>J V Turnock from Glasgow</i>

The Hugo Trotter Archive

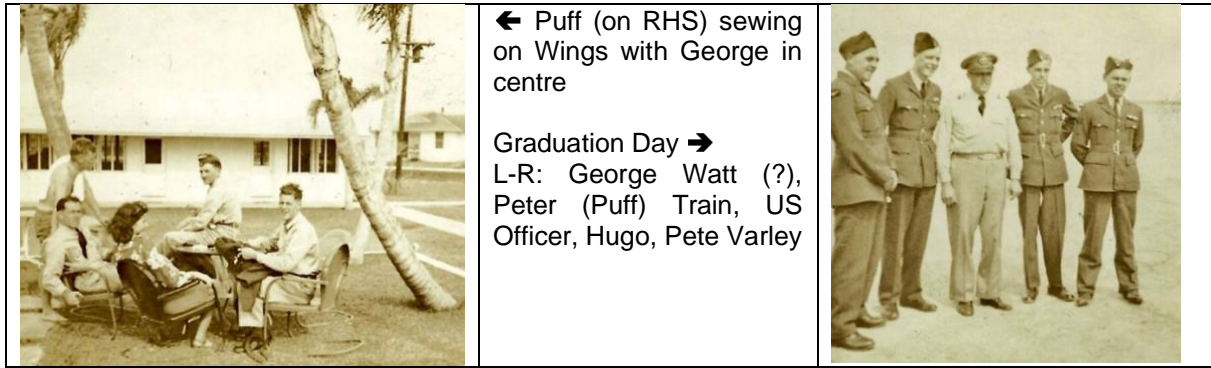
Hugo (Course 11) loaned me his album with photos from when he arrived in Canada to when he went back to Britain. **Thank you, Hugo.** This seventh selection shows Graduation Day

But first, an apology! In the last edition, there was a photo of a chap called 'John' looking like a sailor which I attributed to John Potter dressed up in a sailor's uniform. In fact, it wasn't John Potter in a borrowed uniform, but really was a sailor whom Hugo met at Palm Beach! So, apologies to John Potter and thank you Hugo for putting me straight!

Graduation Day – April 8, 1943



- Back row: Higgins Jay Cheesebrough Edwards Dyson Downs Jack Dukelow Shipton Amos Watt trotter Varley Train
- Middle Row: Thatcher Barrett Magness Bruce Mark Burgess Potter West Hobson Johnstone Kent Tattershall Gaskell Macphie Thomas
- Front row: Curtis-Haywood Carroll Hatchwood Davies Hicks (5 RAF Officers and John Paul Riddle) Jeffries Crook Hanlon Charlesworth Lockwood



There will be a further selection of photos - 'Going Home!' - in March 2022



As always, it is a great pleasure to receive requests from people asking about relatives.

Any photos that are passed to us will, with the owner's permission, be uploaded onto the 5BFTS website and if relevant, to the American Air Museum Archive at Duxford so that we can all share them. The 5BFTS website can be found at www.5bfts.org.uk



Clewiston Update



The Museum website www.clewistonmuseum.com has display information and links, which connect to photographs and other archives on the subject of 5 BFTS.

Jenny Harding writes: *On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick and Leigh Woodham (Director of the Museum) for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum.*

Other news from Clewiston: Jeff wrote this month to say that the Air Glades expansion to a large international airport for imports of fresh vegetables and flowers from South America is still on hold due mainly to complications from COVID; however, the Plan, approved by the Federal Aviation Authority, can proceed as soon as the developers are ready to go. So we are all hoping that they will be able to start soon as this expansion will give such a huge boost to Clewiston.



News from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU)

I heard from William (Bill) Thompson in July. Bill, Executive Director of Alumni Engagement, is a good friend to 5BFTS as is Alan Cesar, who was at the British Memorial Day Service in 2019 and took a lot of very good pictures there. If anyone wishes to donate materials to the archives, please contact Alan.

Alan Marcos Pinto Cesar, Assistant Director of Digital Engagement and Philanthropy Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement. Email: cesara@erau.edu

Bill – I hope you don't mind my quoting from your message in "Lift" Spring-Summer 2021 where you say, *"We have endured a full year of challenge, loss and sometimes heartbreak – but we've also responded with flexibility, creativity and resilience. As Eagles, we've masked up, kept a wingspan apart and against the odds, completed another full academic year."*


The 5BFTS cadets probably didn't realise that they were Eagles too, but they were and a huge 'thank you' to ERAU for remembering them and helping to keep the memories alive.

To read Bill's letter in full, please visit: <https://lift.erau.edu/message-alumni-spring21/>

Editor's note: I like the idea of keeping a Wingspan apart - sounds much friendlier than our '2-metre' (6 foot) rule!

News from No. 1 British Flying Training School Museum in Terrell, Texas

A warm welcome to Patrick Hotard, the new Executive Director of the #1BFTS Museum
The latest BFTS Link newsletter (Summer 2021) be found at:
<https://www.bftsmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/BFTS-Link-Summer-2021-Final-8-13.pdf>

	<p>The Museum is remembering that it is 80 years since 1BFTS opened. Their anniversary is August 23, 2021.</p> <p>It began with the Lend Lease Act of 1941 when America agreed to train British pilots at six civilian-operated air schools in the United States. Thus, the No. 1 British Flying Training School (BFTS) in Terrell was born. Between 1941 and 1945 2,100 RAF cadets and about 138 American cadets trained here</p>
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Sadly, 20 RAF cadets lost their lives during training and are interred in a special section of Terrell's Oakland Memorial Park alongside a monument with the inscription "some corner of a foreign field that is forever England." The Remembrance Day Memorial is held locally on the second Sunday in November with a ceremony at the Oakland Cemetery to honour the 20 cadets killed in accidents in Terrell. This is followed by a tea reception at the Museum.

Then and Now

When the RAF cadets arrived in Terrell in 1941 to begin their pilot training, most had never driven a car, much less flown in an airplane! The early Link trainer helped them experience all sorts of flight complications and emergencies to prepare them to react to real flight situations. The Museum's new Gleim flight simulator, used now by most major airlines and military units, does the same thing but with added video for a more realistic experience.



1941



2021

Peter Taylor wrote to me in July to tell me that the museum had received photos of John Paul Riddle and John McKay from Emery-Riddle Aeronautical University which they have framed and added to the wall in the museum dedicated to 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 BFTS. Peter also gave me news of 3BFTS included below. Thank you 1BFTS Museum for remembering 5BFTS.

If anyone is in Terrell and would like to go and see the Museum, information is on their website: <https://www.bftsmuseum.org>

The Seas Divide Us But the Skies Unite Us – Celebrating Co-operation Between the United States and Great Britain

Linking No 1 and No 3 British Flying Training Schools – The AT6 Monument

The **AT6 Monument** is a granite memorial to No 1 BFTS RAF cadets who were killed in February 1943 while on a formation training flight with 12 AT-6 airplanes between No1 BFTS at Terrel TX and No 3 BFTS at Miami, OK. The aim was a low-level cross-country flight, but the weather was poor with fog and rainy mist. The flight path was close to the Kiamichi Mountains. Some planes arrived in Miami and others returned to Terrell, but three planes failed to make it crashing on Choctaw reservation Land. One crashed on White Rock Mountain, one on Big Mountain (the impact causing a 'natural tombstone' to break away from the mountain) and the third crash landed in Impson Valley in a field close to Jumbo, an isolated mountain community. Sadly, the four cadets in the two planes which crashed on the mountains died, but the two cadets, John Wall and Wilbur Wright who landed in the valley survived. John Wall remembered that he, *"found myself in the classic situation—trapped in a valley with no confident idea of where we were nor where the high ground might be. I decided to make a wheels-down precautionary landing."*

Some students at Rattan, a very small school near the crash site, started to research what had happened, led by their teacher, Beth Lawless, of the Choctaw Nation whose grandfather was a member of the Choctaw Code Talkers (used Native American Languages as military code in WW1). The boys decided to erect a marker at the crash site on Big Mountain, north of Moyers, Oklahoma. They contacted families of those cadets who were killed and were also successful in finding John Wall and Wilbur Wright. They led a fund-raising campaign for a monument, a local craftsman donated his time and labour.



Wilbur Wright (left) and John Wall (the two crash survivors) by the monument which is made of granite and engraved with information.



Wilbur Wright, John Wall and Family Members of the four British fliers killed in the crashes at the Dedication.

On February 20, 2000—the 57th anniversary of the deadly crashes, the AT-6 Monument was dedicated. The marker stands next to the "natural tombstone" in a quiet glade of pine trees.

Small remembrance ceremonies take place at the monument each year since 2000. In 2018, there was a rededication to mark the 75th anniversary of the crashes. Britain's Consul General to the United States, Royal Air Force officers and their families, visitors from England, a group from Terrell, Texas and local residents gathered at the site. The Choctaw Nation assisted with logistics, and its Chief and Assistant Chief hosted the gathering. Its Color Guard and the RAF Detachment presented and retired the colors. School students from Rattan, some of whom are Choctaw Indians, sang "God Save the Queen" and laid roses on the "natural tombstone".

The bodies of the four cadets who lost their lives, cadets Vincent Henry Cockman aged 20, Frank Frostick, aged 21 Maurice Jenson and Mike Hosier both aged 19, are interred in Oakland Memorial Park cemetery, Terrell.

News about No 3 British Flying Training School

I reported in March 2021 that in November 2020, I arrived home from Switzerland to find a parcel of photos from Peter Dowdell whose father, Edward Henry Dowdell, was a cadet at 3BFTS.

The photograph which follows is from Edward Dowdell's collection and shows the funeral of a 3BFTS cadet at Miami, Oklahoma



Remembering cadets from #3 BFTS: Miami, Oklahoma (pronounced Mi-am-a): Beth Lawless (the same Beth Lawless who taught in Rattan, Oklahoma in 2000) is the Director of the Daughters of the Grand Republic Cemetery in Miami where the RAF cadets (from 3BFTS and 6BFTS – in Ponca City, Oklahoma) who lost their lives during training are interned. They remember these cadets the weekend closest to 11 November.

News from No 4 British Flying Training School (Falcon Field)

Kathryn Masters, daughter of pilot Hugh Harrison, Course 27, who lives in Lincolnshire, writes a newsletter to keep all those who are interested in 4BFTS connected with each other. In April 2021, she published newsletter no. 3 and in July 2021, Newsletter no. 4.

To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of 4BFTS, The Wings of Flight Foundation (WoFF) in Mesa, Arizona is planning an 80th Anniversary Gala in one of the remaining 4BFTS hangers on Saturday, November 13, 2021. More about the WoFF and the Gala event at www.wingsofflight.org.

And as I write, the USA is lifting restrictions for travellers from the UK etc. from early November. We hope this will allow us to attend the Anniversary Gala

In April, Kathryn quoted from the autobiography of Ted Pick, Course 25 who said that in 1945, he left Southampton on the Mauretania bound for North America. Ted wrote: “*The ship was very comfortable and the food MARVELLOUS. We had unlimited bacon and eggs for breakfast on the first morning and we were able to buy all the chocolate and sweets that we wanted (remember everything in Britain was severely rationed). We made pigs of ourselves and consequently half of us (including me) were seasick for a while. We docked at Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada.*”

This reminds me of our own **Gordon Newsham (Course 24)** who told me that he had travelled to North America on Queen Mary. Queen Mary also provided lavish food, but the crossing was rough, and the vast majority ended up being sick (maybe a bit of overindulgence as well!!) and confined to quarters. Gordon was fine and didn't feel at all sick for the whole crossing – and so he and a few fortunate others, were able to enjoy ample portions of bacon and eggs etc– as he said, “it would have been a shame to waste it!”

An edited version of Ted's autobiography is at <http://www.americanairmuseum.com/place/213584>

Newsletter 4 includes pictures of a helpful 'signpost' to Phoenix made from whitewashed rocks to help 4BFTS cadets find their way home.



Unfortunately, at the moment, 4BFTS does not have a website but if anybody would like to read the newsletters, please let me know and I will forward a copy.

A 4BFTS archive has been set up on the IWM American Air Museum Website. Similar to the 5BFTS archive, it can found at <https://americanairmuseum.com/unit/4175>

Ron Middleton, Cadet at Carlstrom Field, Arcadia

In January, I heard from John Middleton who lives in Canada. He knew his father, Ron Middleton, was one of the RAF cadets who trained as a pilot in Arcadia, Florida, and while having a basement clean-up found some photographs taken at Carlstrom Field in Arcadia.



Ron at Carlstrom with a Stearman PT-17



Carlstrom – after the rain!



Ron's story continued: Ron Middleton, born and brought up in London, did not return to England after WW2 but stayed in Canada and married Mary Thornton in 1945. They were married for 60 years and had three children (Christine, John and Valerie) and five grandchildren. Ron attended Toronto University and took a degree in Engineering. He retained a love of science for the rest of his life. Over the years, he and Mary lived in several properties in Brantford, Ontario; Ron using his love of gardening to best advantage. Ron visited England many times with Mary and other members of his family, the last time being in 2000. He also took his family on a trip down memory lane to see his old air force base at Calstrom, Florida and was disappointed to find it had been converted into a hospital. It wasn't the same!!

The Sarasota/Gulf Coast Welsh Society remains a good friend of 5BFTS. Many of their normal activities have been cancelled and until they can meet in person at their usual gatherings, the Gulf Coast St. David's Welsh Society committee has been staying in touch with their members through newsletters with Welsh news of interest and contributions of articles, photographs and jokes. They kindly include me in the mailings, and I have found many of their topics very interesting. I can forward the newsletters to anyone interested – just let me know.

Lois Heflin Blount still writes regularly to me, the last time in April 2021. It is wonderful to hear from her.

Featured 5BFTS Reunion: Florida November 1973

Pictures included in Riddle Round-Up – Ian (Jock) Blue (Course 3)

Useful websites:

- Clewiston Museum: <http://www.clewistonmuseum.org>
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives: www.erau.edu/archives
- #5 British Flying Training School: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>
- 'George Hogarth – Clewiston and Beyond'. Memoirs of George Hogarth, Course 3 <http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/>
- Frederick J Brittain Flying was my Life 1918 – 2002 www.frederickjbrittain.com
- Roy Mather DFC (Co 12): "A Pilot's Story – A Chesterfield Hero" www.vickersvaliant.com

The next long newsletter will be published in March 2022 (there will be a short newsletter for Christmas 2021). Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc. by the end of February 2022. 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. And for now.....

"Until we meet again, "good-bye to y'all".