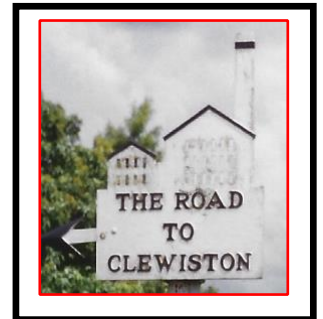
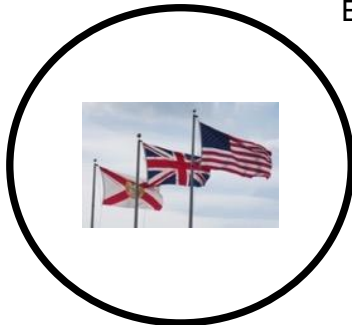


Newsletter No. 23 – September 2022

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

jen@jennyharding.co.uk



Reflection

Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth 1926 - 2022



April 1945
Princess Elizabeth,
pictured in her ATS
uniform



April 23, 1957
Visit to Stourbridge
Far right - The Editor in
Brownie uniform



June 5, 2022
Platinum Jubilee
Buckingham Palace
Balcony



A message of condolence from Chief of the Air Staff
Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston

"It is with overwhelming sadness that the Royal Air Force and Royal Auxiliary Air Force mourn the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. During her long and glorious reign, she has been the embodiment of a life dedicated to the service of the Nation and the Commonwealth, and for that has been admired by millions around the world.

Her Majesty, as Head of the Armed Forces, has been a constant source of inspiration and a pillar of strength to all have been privileged to serve her. Those who had the honour of meeting Her Majesty will never forget their interaction and the deep sense of pride they felt in that moment.

On behalf of everyone in the Royal Air Force, serving, retired and their families, I offer our deepest condolences to His Majesty The King and the Royal Family".

With love, prayers and best wishes to you all.

'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



After two years of enforced absence, it was a privilege to return to Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia on Memorial Day to remember the 23 RAF cadets who “*Crossed the river to rest in the shade of the trees*”. They died during training and never left Florida to return to their homeland. John Paul Riddle’s ashes are buried alongside the cadets. We owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to the Rotary Club of Arcadia and the many others who contribute to the Service.

It was lovely to meet old friends again, and make new friends. Hearing Ross Allen of the Jacobites Pipe and Drum Band of Sarasota play his pipes while we assembled made it easy to forget for a moment, the pandemic that caused the cancellation of the 2020 service and reason I couldn’t attend in 2021. And hearing him play the Lament and Taps so evocatively at the end provided a moment for reflection.

Hon Judy Wertz Strickland, from Arcadia City Council was standing in for Paul Seusy, the British Memorial Service Chair, who was away from Arcadia on family business. The special guest was William Dalgarno. Bill, originally from Scotland wore his kilt as he gave his Memorial Comments which were much appreciated by those present. Bill Thompson, Executive Director Engagement Initiatives & Eagle Heritage Project from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), reminded everybody that the cadets are alumni (or ‘Eagles’) of ERAU and their memory and history will always be honoured and preserved by the University. I thanked the Rotary Club of Arcadia, those who placed a floral tribute and everybody else who was there for continuing to remember the cadets who died in Florida and weren’t able to return home. I also asked people to remember the other 66 young RAF cadets who lost their lives while attending one of the other British Flying Training Schools in America between 1941 and 1945.

Terry Stewart led the singing of “America” and “God Save the Queen” with his wonderful voice resonating round the cemetery. In this, and in every previous British Memorial Day Service, “God save the Queen” has been sung – but this was to be the last time. The cadets at Clewiston between 1941 and 1945 would not have known a time when “God save the Queen” was sung – but their kings were King George V, King Edward VIII and King George VI. And then we did have a Queen again – from February 1952 for more than for 70 years. But now, our monarch is King Charles III and next year, Terry will be singing “God save the King”.

Memorial Day in pictures



Judy Wertz Strickland and Bill Thompson



Floral Tribute from ERAU reminding us that the cadets are ‘Forever an Eagle’



Terry Stewart



Flags at Half Mast



William Dalgarno



Placement of Flags and Poppies



The Editor (on right) chatting with members of the Gulf Coast St David's Welsh Society



Flags and Poppies placed – cadets who were Welsh or Scottish have their nation's flag



*Peace and tranquility.....
The British Plot in the early afternoon*



66th Annual British Memorial Service May 29, 2023

The Service is organized, as it has been for the past 67 years, by Arcadia Rotary Club (No Service in 2020)

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

Telephone for information at 863-444-0664

Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

And for lunch, try **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. Reservations are always a good idea – phone 1-863-494-0615. For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please visit:

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

In Memoriam

Ron Pottinger Course 7. Died in 2021 aged 101

Photographs and information courtesy of Mark Pottinger (Ron's son) and The Hawker Tempest Page:
<https://www.hawker-tempest.se>



Flying Officer Ron Pottinger

Ron began WW2 conscripted as a rifleman in the Royal Fusiliers in October 1939, spending time in the Uckfield area of Sussex, and after Dunkirk, guarding the beaches of East Kent in anticipation of the invasion that never happened. In 1940, amidst pilot shortages due to losses during the Battle of Britain, he transferred to the RAF and in 1942, found himself on his way to Clewiston where he became a cadet on Course 7 (March 14, 1942 to September 23, 1942).



Ron Pottinger in later life

After Clewiston, and further training, he was eventually posted to No 3 Squadron and began flying the Hawker Typhoon fighter. He flew dozens of dangerous ground-attack missions over occupied Europe through bad weather, heavy flak, and enemy fighters before being shot down in January 1945 near Dulmen and ending the war in a German prisoner of war camp, Stalag III-A, Lukenwalde.

Peacetime brought air testing and ferrying planes around the country until he was demobbed. In civilian life, he qualified as an Electrical Engineer at night school and reached the peak of his profession as a Chartered Engineer.

Ron also became an author encouraged by his son to record his memories. His book was originally published by the family in the UK under the title 'A View From the Office', and was later published by Stackpole Books Ltd in 2007 as 'A Soldier in the Cockpit – from Rifles to Typhoons in World War II'. www.stackpolebooks.com.

Charles Holliday Course 18. Died aged (almost) 99 on July 5, 2022.

Charles was on the same course (Course 18) as John Broome, Chairman of the 5BFTS Association when it was disbanded in 2015. He and John became friends and while at 5BFTS stayed with the Feek family in West Palm Beach. After WW2, they lost touch but were reunited in 2000 during a Project Propeller event <http://www.projectpropeller.org/PP/index.asp>. Charles became a member of the 5BFTS Association.

John Broome died in August 2015 (See Obituary, Newsletter 2, September 2015).

Charles Holliday was born in Crouch End on July 6, 1923. He passed the London Matriculation, which was a passport to the University of London, but was unable to go without financial support, so he joined the LNER and started a long career working for Britain's railways.

As the war took hold Charles, aged 19, was called up. On March 29, 1943, he arrived at the Air Crew Reception Centre (ACRC) in London to be 'kitted out'.



John Broome (Left) with Charles Holliday



Charles Holliday in June 2014

Six months later via Aberystwyth and Desford, he arrived at ACDC (Air Crew Distribution Centre) Heaton Park. In Charles' words, *"It seemed to rain every day. Thousands of people waiting for orders to go on ships to Canada, South Africa etc. All we had to keep dry was an oil skin poncho – a waterproof cape that hung around our necks. Kept off most of the rain but some did seep through. Uniform underneath. Boots on feet. All we did there was marching and square bashing. Had edible food. We were not being subjected to normal civilian rationing, unlike rest of population. Given house in Manchester area. Householders would be paid to take in service men ready to be sent off. If it was raining, they told us to go to a hanger used as a seated auditorium. Hundreds in hanger. Officers would enter and address men on various subjects for rest and relaxation, as well as current affairs. One time, a sonnet (poem of 14 lines) was recited, "Much have I travelled in the realms of gold"¹. Penultimate line, "He stared at the Pacific and all his men/Looked at each other in a wild surmise...". The officer asked, "what is the next word in this poem?". Deadly silence descended. I put up my hand as I had read this poem already. "Silent" was the answer. I was correct. The Officer looked at me, astonished and congratulated me!*

Having sailed across the Atlantic, Charles went, via RAF Moncton, to Clewiston, Florida. He was on Course 18 which started on December 7, 1943, graduating with Wings on July 17, 1944. Charles said, *"The 6 months were spent full of activity, interest, laughs, work, seeing new things in the new world. My oppo was John Broome - we did everything together. Stayed with Yanks in West Palm Beach"* [probably the Feek family mentioned earlier].



*Cadet C F E Holliday
December 1943*



In Florida



In Florida: Four cadets and Queenie – the one lying down!

Charles was posted to a Squadron May 16, 1945, and RAF life continued until July 1946, when he was demobbed. After WW2, he re-joined the railways, met his future wife, Kitty, who had recently arrived from Ireland. The couple wed in 1957 and settled in Hockley, Essex.

By 1960 he was a press officer working for Dr Beeching's British Transport Commission. Further promotions saw a move to Paddington HQ in 1970 and, with a burgeoning family of five children, the Holliday family moved to Streatley-on-Thames, Reading. Charles was now Assistant Head of Press and Public Relations for British Rail Western Region and became

¹ John Keats 1795-1821

heavily involved in the launch of the ground-breaking Inter City 125 High Speed Train. He was also the media point of contact for the big railway stories of the day.



Charles and fellow cadet – probably with Mrs Feek (left hand photo) and her daughter (right hand photo) at the house where they stayed in West Palm Beach

Following retirement in 1983 Charles played an active role in the community and worked as head gardener at Waltham Court. He was an exam invigilator, census coordinator and parish clerk. But his real passion was art. At 16, he had been offered a place at art school which he was unable to take up, but after retirement he could indulge his passion to his heart's content. His three-minute portraits using pencil, charcoal and pastels were a common sight at local fetes. He ran an art group at the Community Centre in Goring-on-Thames for a number of years. Always on the lookout for interesting faces to paint, he would sometimes approach strangers in the street and invite them along to sit for the art class!

He helped organise the Goring and Streatley Art Exhibition in the Morrell Rooms for several years. He was also involved with the millennium map of Goring and several of his illustrations appear on the finished work.

His other passion was his garden although he was initially disappointed with the chalky soil in Streatley; however, through careful plant and crop choice together with lots of manure, the garden flourished and he produced onions, sweet corn, potatoes, salad crops, tomatoes, runner beans.....you name it, he'd grow it.

Charles and Kitty were regular churchgoers at Our Lady and St. John in Ferry Lane and back in the day would volunteer their services for gardening duty, artwork, lesson reading and fundraising. They had 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Kitty died in 2020. Charles and Kitty are now reunited in an idyllic spot in St. Mary's churchyard in Streatley.

My thanks to Phil Holliday (Charles' son) for allowing us to share details of Charles' life.

George E W Shaw Course 24. Died April 3, 2021, aged 96



Cadet George Shaw at Clewiston

George Edward Walter Shaw was born in Bermondsey, London, 9th June 1924 and grew up in Mitcham, Surrey. The war came and George joined the RAF. He began training at various airbases in the north of England, but what he didn't plan or expect was to be sent out to America to complete that training. He suddenly found himself on an ocean liner heading for sunny Florida. What a joy! When training, he flew mainly Stearmans and Harvards. Time off

was spent relaxing in Miami and exploring the Everglades. George gained his Wings, but the war ended before he saw active service. He was then torn between the possibility of remaining in the US or returning to England.

He returned to South London and met his wife, Gwennyth Willis in a WAAF canteen at Metheringham, Lincolnshire, while carrying out potato harvesting duties. They married in 1951, moved to Thornton Heath (now in Greater London) and had two sons, Simon and Nigel. In 1962, George and his family moved to Tatsfield, Surrey.

While in Florida, George began his career in horology. Not with watches and clocks but aviation chronographs and commercial timepieces. He began working for himself in a home-based workshop and after moving to Tatsfield, soon became known as the local watch and clock repairer of choice, favoured by high street retailers who sent or delivered work from London, Croydon and other locations. A favourite client would arrive with a box of beautiful antique pieces from India requiring great skill and expertise. George was a true master of his trade.



George had many interests over the years, all of which had one thing in common – they provided a challenge. He didn't simply 'take' photographs; he went to night school, took examinations and converted the garage into a darkroom. He didn't simply turn up for a game of bowls; at home he had a shelf full of trophies and awards. He didn't just go off and fly a model plane; he built and flew a collection of radio-controlled aircraft. He wasn't content with a simple home keyboard; he played a series of whopping great organs, ending up with his beloved Lowry 'Symphony'.

*The photo shows George with his radio-controlled Harvard.
Not as exciting as the real thing, but the provider of much fun during later life!*

George was a member of the 5BFTS Association for several years. Sadly, whilst a patient in the Princess Royal Hospital, George contracted Covid and subsequently died on April 3, 2021.

My thanks to Nigel Shaw (George's son) for allowing us to share details of George's life.

John Anthony Glover Course 26. Died in 2021



We heard from his daughter that John died during 2021. John had been a member of the 5BFTS Association, and she wrote that he, *"very much enjoyed the reunions. He has a print of the airfield which I believe was given to him by the Rotary Club of Arcadia at one of the reunions. I do know that he was hugely appreciative of all that the Club has done in looking after the graves and remembering the young British men who died there in training accidents"*.

← *Cadet J A Glover, Clewiston 1945*

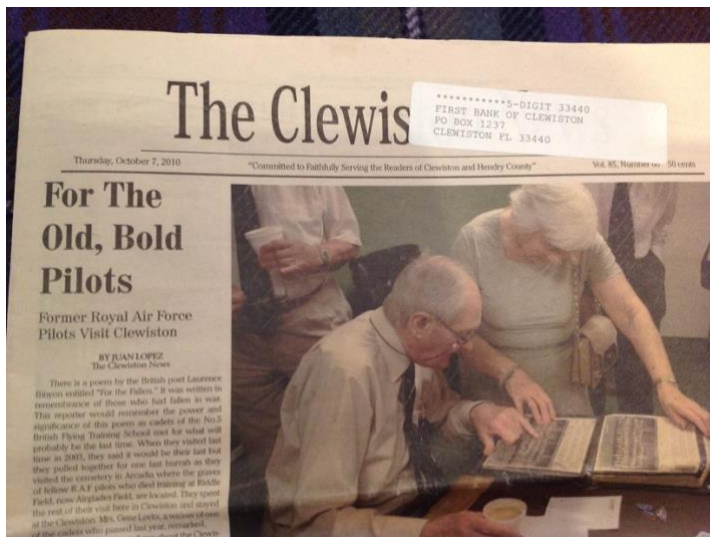
After the war, John went to Queen's University Belfast where he met his future wife. He then joined British Air Transport (BAT), did his training in Brussels and was posted to Nigeria. He moved between there and Ghana before being transferred to Khartoum and then to Hong Kong. He left BAT and joined the Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway (MTR) as their first Administration Director in 1974 when building started on the underground railway. In 1979, he returned to the UK where he became Bursar of Tonbridge School. After retiring, he became the Chairman of the Governors of a prep school.

Recently, we have heard of the deaths of two family members, both well known to members of the 5BFTS Association and regular attendees at reunions.

Winifred (Wyn) Sneezum died April 28, 2022

Winifred Sneezum, known to members of the 5BFTS Association as Wyn, was the widow of Ivan Sneezum (Course 22) who died in October 2018 (Obituary Newsletter 13, March 2009).

Phil Griffin, Wyn's son wrote to let me know that she had died in Gloucester Hospital and asked me to inform others. It is good to know that Wyn died peacefully and without pain following a short but aggressive illness. After Ivan died, Wyn moved to Tewkesbury to live near her son, and I feel privileged to have been able to keep in touch with her.



After Ivan died, Wyn sent me a copy of the front page of the 'Clewiston News' dated October 7, 2010. The photograph shows Wyn and Ivan looking at a photograph of cadets on Course 22 in Clewiston Museum.

Under the headline, it says, *"Despite dwindling numbers and declining health, six British ex-cadets, some spouses and widows were joined in Florida by several American ex-cadets, instructor pilots and other affiliated people who live in the United States".*

This was the 5BFTS Association Reunion in Florida in October 2010. They stayed in the Clewiston Inn and visited Arcadia's Oak Ridge Cemetery. They went to Clewiston Museum and saw film footage from their training days and photographs of cadets and their classmates. The following day, they went to Airglades Airport for a ceremony in honour of 5BFTS and later, on behalf of the 5BFTS Association, Wing Commander Brian Spragg (Course 10) laid a wreath at the 5 BFTS plaque in Clewiston Civic Park.

Separately, Wyn told me that on one visit to Florida, she and Ivan went to Naples Bay where they met a cadet who had been a coffin bearer for Cadet Horace Bowley-Booth (Course 23) who was killed in a crash on May 4, 1945. This was a double fatality as Thomas Calderhead (also Course 23) was also killed. They are both buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery. Wyn said that this cadet they met was a farmer from Yorkshire who had now sadly died. I think this was probably John Stanley Elliott from Course 23. John was born in 1917 and was a farmer from Pickering in Yorkshire. He was a member of the 5BFTS Association and died in 2007 aged 90.



*Horace Bowley-Booth and
Thomas W Calderhead
Course 23 November 1944*



*John Stanley Elliott
Course 23 June 1945*



*Horace
Bowley-Booth
2019*



*Thomas W
Calderhead
2019*

Margaret (Peggy) Charlesworth died May 26, 2022, aged 97 years

Peggy Charlesworth was the widow of Fen Charlesworth (Course 11) who died in 2006.

Their son wrote, "She and dad went to several BFTS reunions over the years, and she continued to receive the 5BFTS newsletter after dad's death. Although her memory became very poor in the last few years, I used to go through them with her whenever they arrived. The last issue in March was very poignant, since she recognised John Potter, who was on dad's course (and who I remember as a family friend), and this provoked some memories of past BFTS reunions she had attended.

I should like to finish 'In Memoriam' with some words written by Wyn Sneezum. She wrote to me in October 2021 and said, "I reckon 5BFTS has enriched my life and understanding of some very good American people". For someone who wasn't at Riddle Field but has got to know very many Americans who were there, or who knew someone who was there, I wholeheartedly agree. Thank you Wyn for expressing it so well!

We remember with thanks all pilots who have handed in their logbooks, instructors, other Riddle Field staff and friends who have done so much to support 5BFTS and make the Association what it was in the past, and are still working to preserve and keep the memories alive for future generations.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE!



This year has seen IWM Duxford's bumper 2022 Flying Season, featuring two air shows, six flying days and two special events. The final air show, Duxford Flying Finale is on October 8. The special exhibition, 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee at IWM Duxford' opened on May 27, 2022. Following the death of Her Majesty, the following statement is on their website:

We at Imperial War Museums are deeply saddened by the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

Throughout her 70-year reign, The Queen lived through times of conflict, maintaining an enduring relationship with the armed forces and honouring those affected by war across the world. This exhibition was produced to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

IWM continues to display it to reflect Her Majesty's extraordinary life and service

Please visit their website for more information. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford>

Meantime, the American Air Museum (AAM) Archive is undergoing redevelopment. They are working on a site-wide upgrade which will be completed during September 2022. To read about 5BFTS people on the Archive, please visit <http://www.americanairmuseum.com> and search on 5BFTS, Riddle Field and/or Clewiston.

The 5BFTS Archive was developed by Anne Hughes. Anne has also developed a similar Archive for 4BFTS (Falcon Field). Recently, she wrote an article describing how she became involved with 5BFTS and subsequently 4BFTS. This can be found at <https://aamb.us/the-autographs-no-5-british-flying-training-school-clewiston>

Thank you, Anne for all your hard work developing the 5BFTS Archive held at the American Air Museum, Duxford and for keeping the memories alive.

RIDDLE ROUND-UP

Wing Commander George Greaves AFC

In April 2022, I was in Grangemouth, Scotland, and noticed a Spitfire by the side of the road. Further investigation showed that this was the site of the Grangemouth Aerodrome, and a granite cairn was erected in 1993 marking the 75th Anniversary of the RAF and remembering those who served there in war and peace. Opened as a civilian airport in May 1939, it became RAF Grangemouth from September 1939. From December 1940, it became day fighter pilot training unit No 58 OTU (Operational Training Unit) to train pilots in gunnery, combat tactics and formation flying. A memorial stone, erected in 2008, remembers 71 pilots from 11 countries who were killed during their training here at Grangemouth. Of these 71 pilots, the majority came from the UK, but 12 came from Poland and 10 from Canada. Many are buried in the nearby Grandsable Cemetery in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Plot.

And the connection with 5BFTS?

I wrote to our good friend, Wojtek Matusiak, the Polish researcher and author specialising in the WW2 exiled Polish Air Force, to ask him if he knew of this site – and he wrote back and told me that not only did he know about the memorial (having contributed to it) but was there when it was unveiled!!

He told me that for a large part of the war, the Polish Fighter School (which was the exiled Polish Air Force's equivalent of the RAF's fighter OTUs) was pooled with 58 OTU, hence Polish pilots trained there. At times when there weren't enough Polish pilots to train, Polish instructors also trained other nationals (including those from the British Commonwealth). And then he told me that George Greaves, who was the Commanding Officer at 5BFTS from January 1943 to November 1943 had been the Assistant Chief Flying Instructor at 58 OTU from June 1941 until his departure to the USA later that year!! Links can be found with 5BFTS in unexpected places!



Granite Cairn erected 1993



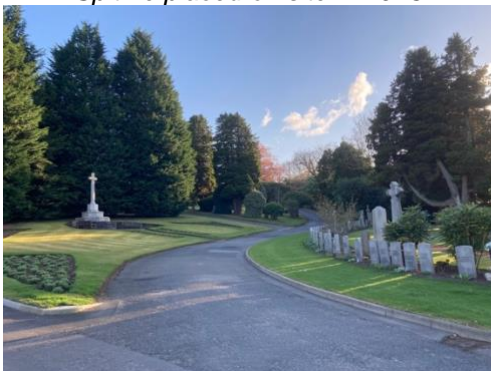
Plaque on the cairn



Spitfire placed on site in 2013



Memorial Wall erected 2008



CWGC Plot – Grandsable Cemetery



Polish headstone at Grandsable

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, Part 5 covered advanced training and graduation, Part 6 was about Going Home and Part 7 is when Stuart was at No 10 Air Gunnery School.

In Part 8, Stuart learnt to fly a Spitfire at a Spitfire Operational Training Unit (OTU) and after two months was posted to an operational squadron. On 9 April 1945 he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant and based at Peterhead in Scotland - to harass the Germans who then occupied Norway. *"To my astonishment I found that they were equipped with the latest Mustang aircraft"*. The squadron then moved to Bentwaters in Suffolk where Stuart's first trip was to Lille in France and back to Chatham escorting bombers. He 'went' to St Omer,

Rotterdam, Wilhelmshaven, Flensburg (Denmark), Eindhoven, Cherbourg, Ostend, Essen, Magdeburg, Dedelsdorff and Berlin.

Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945 ('VE'-Day). After two atom bombs were dropped on Japan, they surrendered on 15 August 'VJ'-Day.

The final part will be in March 2023 when Stuart RAF career comes to an end.

Roy W Lightfoot: Course 26 (Started June 1945 but not completed)



I heard from Roy in August for the first time which was wonderful when he told me a little about himself and some memories of his time at 5BFTS. Roy and his wife live in Bristol, and I am hoping that I shall be able to get down there to meet with them perhaps in November. So, this is just a 'taster' as I hope to be able to tell you more in a future newsletter.

← Cadet R W Lightfoot at Clewiston, June 1945

Meantime, thank you Roy for sharing the following.....

Course 26 crossed the Atlantic in the 4-funnel Aquitania. As they had wounded US troops on board they went into New York and not Moncton. Previously cadets arriving in New York would go up to Moncton and then (for BFTS cadets) down again to their destination. But Roy was sent to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey for three weeks. He told me, *"Most days we would go into New York and were treated there like royalty. Free tickets for all the Broadway shows etc. I remember seeing the big bands Louis Armstrong, Count Basie and Paul Whiteman. Hospitality in local homes was very kind. When being taken into night clubs, I remember we had to say we were 21"*.

Course 26 had only just converted to Harvard Aircraft when peace came on 14/15th August so no graduation or Wings and back to New York again - this time for two weeks in Fort Hamilton in the Brooklyn area of New York City. Once again, they had great hospitality. They marched in a victory parade – where some spectators wondered why *"Germans" in the blue uniforms were there!!*"

Back home on Queen Elizabeth with assurance from an Air Commodore that they would get their "Wings" back in the UK but.....only if signing on for 5 years. After 2 more years, I returned to architectural training and qualified ARIBA in 1950. I retired at the end of 1980.

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.** There will be a ninth selection 'Leaving North America', but this has been deferred to March 2023.

The Instructors

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

The tenth of a series about the instructors



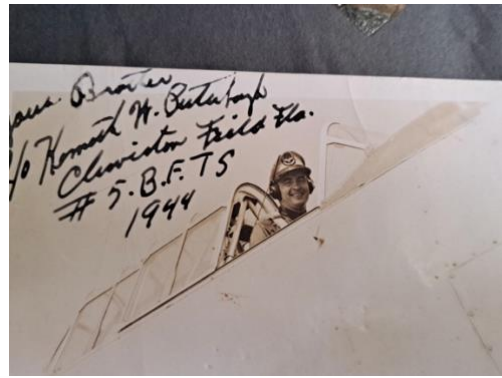
©David Brannan (Peter Brannan Co 25)

Kenneth William Puterbaugh

I just have room this time to tell you about Kenneth. His daughter, Karen, knew her father was a flight instructor and found the photos shown below which suggested that her father was at 5BFTS, but as he had died in 1971, she wasn't able to find out any further information. We could confirm that Kenneth was indeed a Flight Instructor at Clewiston. He is not on an official list of Riddle Field (Clewiston) personnel dated April 1943 nor on another of all flight instructors who were at Riddle Field when it closed in September 1945.



But he was definitely there in 1944. When not at Riddle Field, he may have been at one of the other flying schools operated by Embry-Riddle



 **#5 British Flying Training School, Clewiston, Florida. Website Update** 

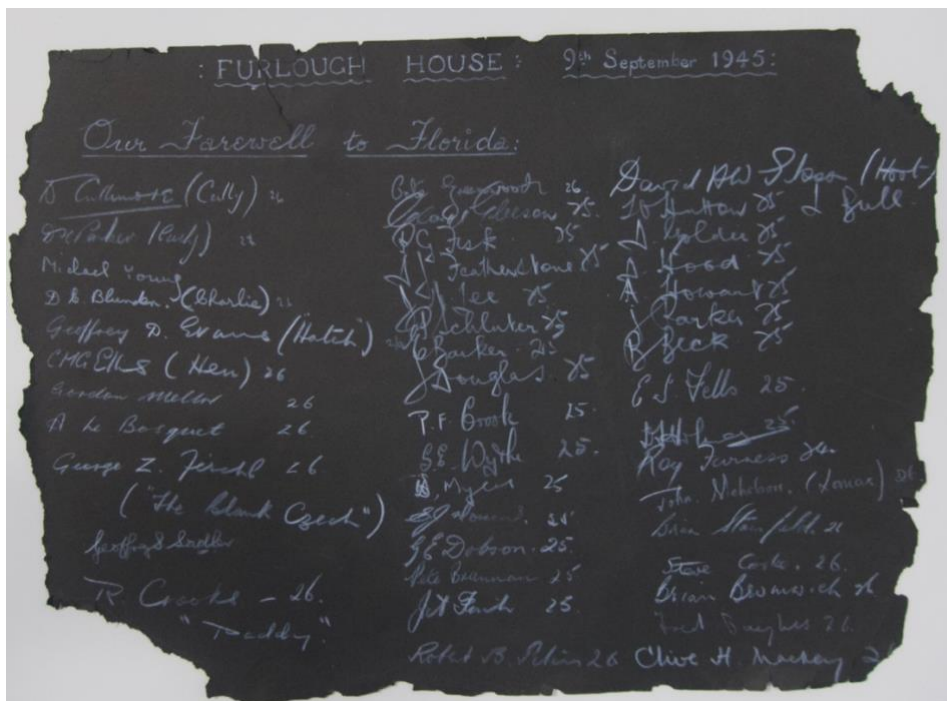
As always, it is a great pleasure to receive requests from people asking about relatives.

Any photos that are passed to us will, with the owner's permission, be uploaded onto the 5BFTS website and the new 5BFTS Archive at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (see below) 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 Final Farewell to Florida!



Seen in the 5BFTS Archive at Clewiston Museum in May 2022



Cadets from Courses 25 and 26 sign in at Furlough House on September 9, 1945.

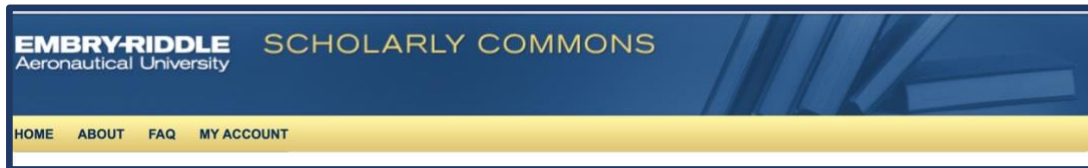
The Museum website displays information and links, which connect to photographs and other archives on the subject of 5 BFTS and now has a new-look website with a new web address: <https://www.theclewistonmuseum.org>. Clicking on the 5BFTS logo takes you to photo archives and clicking on the words, 'Clewiston and beyond' takes you to my book about my father in the ERAU archives. Look in Digital Archives for copies of 'The Clewiston News' published between 1941 and 1945 – a great way to find out what was happening at Riddle Field!

On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Leigh Woodham, Director of the Museum and the Museum Board 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 – THE SUGAR EXPRESS

	<p>The Sugar Express is back in business Historic steam locomotive No. 148 returns with the <i>Lake Placid Limited</i> on October 1st and a series of exclusive rare-mileage trips in January!</p>	
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ERAU HERITAGE PROJECT #5BFTS

This is very exciting news! Coming soon – a new 5BFTS digital archive.

Like many people reading this newsletter, I have a number of items from wartime 5BFTS. These were brought back by our fathers/grandfathers/uncles/great-uncles etc, and in some cases were rediscovered during pandemic lockdowns. After 80 years or so, letters written on thin wartime airmail paper are starting to crumble, ink is fading, and damage has been caused to documents by folding and storing in less-than-ideal conditions. Post war documents such as the early 5BFTS Association newsletters were copied using very thin paper and spirit duplicators such as a Banda machine and these are deteriorating fast. I also have some 8mm movie films, negatives and cassette tapes but have no means of viewing or listening to them.

Reading the letters transports us back to a different life seen through the eyes of young men sent from war torn dour Britain to a land where sunshine abounded, food was plentiful and hospitality wonderful. But there is also the underlying theme that they are there for a purpose – to learn to fly to help protect their country.

We already have our www.5bfts.org.uk website so ably managed by webmaster Eddie Clanzy-Hodge (father-in-law – Keith Clanzy Course 9), but Eddie has limited recourses and capacity to digitalise and manage the volume of archives that are slowly being discovered, and those we already know about (for example, the 5BFTS Association archive that is in Clewiston Museum which has the added disadvantage that it is in another country 3000 miles away!).

After attending the British Memorial Day Service at Oak Ridge Cemetery last May, a few of us went to Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit and over lunch, talked about what we could do to preserve these items for posterity along with the memories they encompass. We were fortunate that Bill Thompson, Executive Director Engagement Initiatives & Eagle Heritage Project from ERAU was there and has three key words in his job title which are 'Eagle Heritage Projects'. ERAU has always recognised pilots from 5BFTS as Eagle Alumni and consequently, digitalising 5BFTS archives from any source has now become a formal ERAU Heritage project.

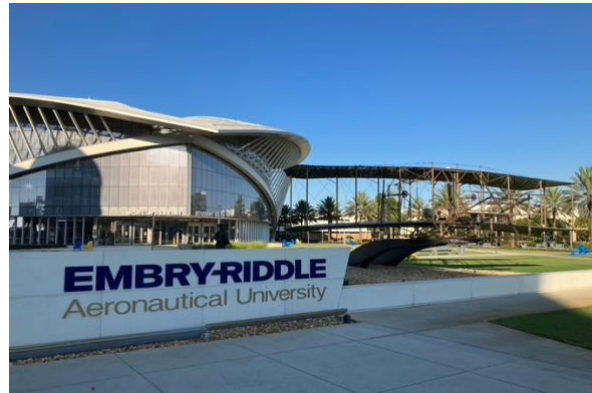
ERAU archives are preserved, and archival work undertaken, in the magnificent Hunt Library inside the iconic Mori Hosseini Student Union.

A brief introduction to the team around Project 5BFTS. As well as Eddie and myself, the team includes Bill, Dr Sally Bloomstrane (ERAU Professor of Communication, Humanities and Communication Department – and Bill's wife), Chip Wolfe (ERAU Scholarly Commons Administrator, Hunt Library), Dr Anne Marie Casey (Hunt Library Director), Kristen Davis (Research Librarian) and students Corey and Sadie who are busy scanning documents and researching specific areas of interest to 5BFTS. Corey has served with the US Air Force and

is especially interested in all things relating to flying and training, Sadie is very interested in social aspects such as the close bond between John Paul Riddle and 5BFTS, differences between the US and UK during WW2 and relationships developed and continued across the Atlantic over the years. **Thank you so much Bill and the 5BFTS Project Team.**

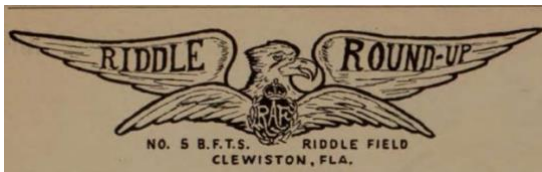


*ERAU Mori Hosseini Student Union
August 2022*



Life size replica of the first airplane and the Wright brothers outside the Mori Hosseini Student Union.

*Heading from Fly Paper in February 1943
showing an eagle within the logo ↓*



Inside the Mori Hosseini Student Union – August 2022 – the eagle is still there! Even if you do have to stand on your head to see it properly →



If you would like to know more about the Hunt Library, please visit:
<https://huntlibrary.erau.edu>

So far.....

- The 5BFTS website is being developed using Scholarly Commons. Just now, we are in the very early stages of creating the collection and there is a long road ahead, but the project will come to life as it progresses. Archives will be sorted into various sections such as '5BFTS History', '5BFTS Association Reunions', there will be an image gallery, audio and video links and links to Related Resources;
- Scanning of documents in the ERAU 5BFTS archive is happening as I write;
- Migrating of 5BFTS content from other places has started;
- In August, I spent a week working in the lovely Hunt Library. Before I arrived, four boxes of 5BFTS archives were discovered in the library, some sorted and catalogued and some not. A number of these papers had been donated by our great friend, Harold Kosola, a 5BFTS Vice President and US contact for many years and they made for fascinating reading. I learnt a lot!

But it wasn't all work – I did have a chance to enjoy the Florida beaches, in particular Atlantic Beach and New Smyrna Beach, and visit Saint Augustine. Founded in 1565 by Spanish explorers, this city is the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in what is now the contiguous United States.

I hope that in the Christmas newsletter, I shall be able to share the link so that everyone can see what we are doing.

Meantime, if anyone has material in any form that they would like to share with others or just make sure that is preserved for the future, please let me know and we will work out the best

way to manage this. If you have documents (letters, photos etc) that you would like to preserve but which may include sensitive details, items can be digitalised to preserve them, but then either kept completely hidden from the public or be made public with some parts redacted. Looking forward to hearing from you!

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

The latest BFTS Link newsletter (Spring 2022) be found at:

<https://www.bftsmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/BFTS-Link-Spring-2022.21.pdf>



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

News from No. 4 BFTS Falcon Field Association: The Next Generation

The Association has evolved from the original Falcon Field Association (1979 to 2009). It continues to include veteran pilots but now also welcomes pilots' descendants. It proposes to recognise and preserve the history, experiences and contribution to WW2 of the cadets of Number 4 BFTS (#4BFTS) at Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona, from 1941–1945.

A small committee has been established led by Kathryn Masters (daughter of Hugh Harrison, Course 27, 4BFTS). They were kind enough to invite me to their recent Falcon Field Day held at the RAF Museum, Hendon. <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk>. More about this in the Christmas Newsletter.

And recently, 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>

But life is full of coincidences and connections! And here is just one example which shows we really are a BFTS Family across the US and the Atlantic.

In January 2022, Kathryn emailed me to tell me she had been watching a video about a 4BFTS pilot Eric Downs, Eric went out to Falcon Field in 1941 aged 18, and in the video, Eric said his younger brother followed him into aircrew training but was at Clewiston. She asked me if I had any records of a Cadet Downs about two years younger than Eric?

I discovered that Aubrey William Downs, known as Bill, was on Course 22 (August 29, 1944, to March 31, 1945). He was a member of the 5BFTS Association and lived in Cornwall where he died in 2003. Bill never married. I spoke to Ron Cox who was also on Course 22 to see if he remembered Bill – and he did!

Ron knew Bill very well! When Course 22 arrived in Clewiston, the cadets were allocated to their huts in alphabetical order. So, for the first 8 weeks, Ron and Bill were together with 6 others in their hut. After 8 weeks they moved around and so Ron and Bill didn't share a hut after that but remained friends. Ron, Bill and 2 other friends spent time at a mansion in Palm Beach at weekends, and in fact, that is where they spent their last night in Florida after graduation.

This mansion may have belonged to Mr and Mrs Ira Lee and Florence NeSmith. Their home was on the exclusive Chilean Avenue, Palm Beach. Palm Beach was and still is basically an enclave for the rich and famous. The driver for development around the turn of the 20th century was Henry Flagler, the Standard Oil tycoon and Palm Beach was developed as winter homes for the (fabulously wealthy) Gilded Age New Yorkers. Ira, a broker in real estate, and Florence NeSmith hosted and entertained groups of 5BFTS cadets throughout the time they were in Clewiston, and Florence also arranged for her friends to host other groups in their homes. The cadets, coming from war torn Britain, must have thought they were in heaven! Flagler's own house is now a museum and the Everglades Club, Worth Avenue and the Breakers Hotel are just a few of the famous places there. 4BFTS had Hollywood, 5BFTS had Palm Beach!



↑ Cadet A W Downs (bottom left) and Cadet R M Cox (top right). Clewiston August 1944

Bill Downs graduated as a sergeant pilot, but Ron was commissioned on graduation, so when they got back to Britain and went to Harrogate for further training, they stayed in different hotels. The officers were not supposed to socialise with the sergeants - although rules were frequently broken and Ron remembers going to the local Harrogate dance hall with some of the sergeants!

When Ron was in his late 30s, he was playing in a cricket match when the umpire from the opposing team, a man with a very heavy beard, asked Ron if he remembered him - Ron didn't until he heard his voice - it was Bill Downs! After WW2, Bill became a trainer on tiger moths. He remained in aviation and when Ron met him at the cricket match, Bill was a civilian link trainer instructor in London. Strangely, Ron never remembers Bill telling him that he had a brother who was a pilot and had trained at a BFTS - but then, as Ron said, he hadn't told Bill about his brother either!

About 20 years ago, Ron went to Falcon Field to see what was there, and at that time, there wasn't very much. He went to the air museum but was rather disappointed as they had hardly any planes (he only remembers seeing one plane) and nothing was mentioned about 4BFTS. But after leaving the museum, he went into a cafe close by and discovered that the owner had, in effect, developed his own 4BFTS museum. Ron bought a copy of the Falcon Field video from the cafe owner and said it is very like the Clewiston video (The Flying Days of Riddle Field) made about the same time.

Having just been to Mesa for the 4BFTS 80th Anniversary Gala, I couldn't remember seeing any café matching Ron's description. Kathryn contacted Jocelyn Condon (from the Wings of Flight Foundation and 4BFTS Association Arizona) who told us, "*It was Anzio's Landing located at the east end of the runway. Sold in the early 2000s, it is currently "Steak and Stone". The owner of Anzio's, Rex Griswold, was the organizer of Falcon Field's 50th anniversary and his restaurant was full of WWII memorabilia (not just specifically 4BFTS). He gave me a copy of the video you spoke of (Joe Wischler's memories of No 4) and I made it into a DVD and we put it online. The memorabilia were sold to his friend and collector.*

ALL-BFTS MEETING and PROJECTS - Update

The joint BFTS Plaque mentioned in March seems to have been donated to IWM Duxford in 1985 and not the RAF Museum at Hendon. Investigations are ongoing.

In 1992, Hendon hosted an exhibition called USAAF92. It is possible that one or more of the BFTS Associations contributed to this exhibition. Investigations are ongoing here too.

Useful websites:

- Clewiston Museum: <https://www.theclewistonmuseum.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/)
<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 2023. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc. by the end of February 2023. 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".