

No 74 (F) Tiger Squadron Association

Tiger News No 24

Compiled by Bob Cossey

Association President AVM B L Robinson FRAeS FCMI RAF Ret`d

Association Chairman Dave Roome OBE

Association Treasurer Sqn Ldr Iain Walsh

Association Secretary Bob Cossey

Attendance List 2001 Reunion Weekend

Spitfire Days

Flt Lt and Mrs Arthur Smith

Mr Mrs Eden Webster

Meteor Days

Mr Mrs John Atkinson

Mr Mrs R Lewis

Mr Hugh Rees

Mr Eric Dickens

Mr Mrs Ray Morrell

Mr David Nall

Mr Mrs Gordon Price

Mrs Doreen Haselwood and Miss Nadine Haselwood

Hunter Days

AVM Boz Robinson

Mr David Jones

Gp Capt Peter Clark

Lightning Days

Gp Capt Dave Roome

Mr Mrs Colin Dawson

Mr Mrs Trevor MacDonald Bennett

Mr Mrs John Crow

Mr Mrs Alan McGrath
Mr Mrs Pat Thurlow
Mr Mrs James Brook
Mr Mrs Sid Simpson
Mr Mrs Bill Cunningham
Mr Mrs John Bright
Mr John Yeo
Ms Nadine Jackson- Croker
Ms Jacqueline Parker

Phantom Days

Air Marshal and Mrs Cliff Spink
Wg Cdr and Mrs Russ Allchorne
Wg Cdr Robin Birtwistle
Sqn Ldr Iain Walsh
Sqn Ldr and Mrs Ian Hargreaves
Sqn Ldr and Mrs Bill Medland
Flt Lt Julie Gibson
Mr Rhod Smart
Mr Kevin Wooff
Mr Stan Ralph
Mr Chris Laidlaw Bell
Mr Neil Dedman
Mr George Patterson
Mr Ian Yorston
Mr Mrs Pete Shaw
Mr Steve McLoughlin
Mr Mrs Bob Cossey

Ian and Heather Cadwallader had arranged to travel from New Zealand for the Reunion but just a few weeks before setting off had to change their plans in the light of the need for Heather to urgently enter hospital for tests. All in the Association send their very best wishes to her as indeed they do to Gp Capt and Mrs Graham Clarke, Gp Capt and Mrs Mike Shaw, Mr Fred and Ms Sally Anne Lloyd and Mr Mrs Tony Hilton were forced to cancel as the weekend got underway due to illness or bad weather (eastern counties were hit by a considerable amount of snow).

This was indeed another splendid weekend. We were particularly pleased to see new faces at Stratford - in particular Flt Arthur Smith, Mr Gordon Price and Pete Shaw with their wives and Ian Yorston and Steve McLoughlin. And particular thanks to James Brook for the presentation to the Association of a print of a fine stylised Tiger, drawn by James himself.

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the 74(F) Squadron Association

The Falcon Hotel, Stratford Upon Avon March 3rd 2001 at 1700 hrs

Apologies were received from: Ian Cadwallader, Gp Capt Graham Clarke, Paddy Dalzell, John Gill, Gp Capt Edgar Glennie-Carr, Air Cdre Ken Goodwin, Flt Lt Brian Harris, Tony Hilton, Gp Capt Sammy Hoare, Air Vice Marshal John Howe, Peter Johnstone, Ted Kingston, Henry Lether, Fred Lloyd, Derek Morris, John Murphy, Len Preston, AVM Boz Robinson, Gp Capt Mike Shaw, Gp Capt Nick Spiller, Geoff Steggall and Ian Wright

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the Association and went on to summarise the Minutes of the previous AGM.
2. There were no matters arising not covered in the present agenda.
3. Committee Members. It was agreed that the Committee should continue as previously with the exception of a change in Treasurer. Flt Lt Vinny Brown has moved to Canada as part of the NATO flying training scheme and his place has been taken by Sqn Ldr Iain Walsh. Members were asked to endorse the appointment which was carried unanimously. The Committee for 2001/2002 is therefore:

President - AVM B L Robinson
Chairman - Dave Roome
Treasurer - Sqn Ldr Iain Walsh
Secretary - Bob Cossey

4. Membership currently stands at 194 and is slowly rising. The Chairman reiterated the need to continue to publicise the work of the Association with word of mouth probably being the best means of doing so. All members were asked to involve themselves in this, particularly as the Association Directory is updated with E Mail addresses and telephone numbers.

5. The Treasurer's Report is enclosed with these minutes. Projections for the coming year confirm the current financial viability of the Association at the current subscription level of £5.00. The accounts were adopted by those present. Iain Walsh thanked his predecessor for the smooth hand over to him of the books and was pleased to announce that following last year's check on the means by which members pay their subscriptions, all but 9 now do so by Direct Debit.

7. Any Other Business. [i] David Jones suggested that the creation of a 74 Squadron Association web site would be of great benefit as far as the recruitment of new members was concerned as well as being a ready point of reference for all former Tigers and links with sites of other Tiger Associations and organisations. John Crow volunteered his willingness to be involved in its creation. Other help will be solicited too and it is hoped

that such a site will be up and running in due course. [ii] We are receiving an increasing amount of mail from prospective suppliers of Squadron memorabilia etc and have received samples of a badge blazer, key ring, fridge magnet etc, personalised with the 74 Squadron crest and Association name. Bob will publish details of what is on offer in a future *Tiger News* and solicit any orders from members that can be passed on to suppliers. [iii]. The question of an Association tie was raised. In truth this may be too expensive to pursue with the need of a minimum order meaning that we would have to outlay several hundred pounds at the outset. However, an eye will be kept on the suppliers offering the most favourable terms and if any possibility arises of acquiring ties in the future members will be advised. [iv]. Ian Hargreaves, as the UK liaison officer, presented a pack containing full details of the 2001 Tiger Meet 40th Anniversary celebrations at Kleine Brogel with information for members interested in travelling to Belgium.

8. Date of next AGM. 1700 hrs, Saturday 2nd March 2002. The Falcon Hotel Stratford upon Avon.

Dave Roome OBE - A Service History

Our Chairman has retired from the Royal Air Force after 36 years service and has taken up the Managing Directorship of Deltajets at Kemble. Dave's career has been a most interesting one and is certainly worth reflecting on here...

He joined the RAF at South Cerney on 11th January 1965 and after officer training was sent to Syerston for his Jet Provost wings course. Valley and the Gnat followed before a pre-Lightning course at Chivenor on the Hunter. Dave completed the Lightning OCU at Coltishall from September '67 to February '68 and was delighted to find that, owing to Trevor MacDonald Bennett's injuries in a car crash in Singapore and subsequent casevac to the UK, there was a need for a pilot to join 74 at Tengah. Trevor made a full recovery and subsequently rejoined the Squadron. Dave had in the meantime arrived at Tengah on 14th March 1968, just a week before 74 celebrated its 50th Anniversary and fully expected to complete the normal two and a half year tour. However, Harold Wilson's government announced that the UK was to pull its forces out of the Far East in 1972 and therefore Dave was offered a choice: be short toured to let someone else have a full tour or extend his own tour to see out the withdrawal. It didn't take long for him to decide to stay! During the three and a half years in Singapore Dave took part in the first ever detachment of Lightnings to Australia - to Darwin in fact in June 1969 - and also the only Lightning detachment to Thailand when CO Dennis Caldwell and he took two aircraft to Bangkok in September 1970. There were also many detachment to Butterworth 330 miles north of Tengah in Malaya, where the RAAF had two fighter squadrons. Initially one squadron still flew the Sabre but before long both 3 and 75 Squadrons were equipped with the Mirage 111 and many pleasant exchange visits were made by each squadron to each others bases. These generally took the form of one flight detaching from Tengah to Butterworth and exchanging with a flight from there which joined 74 for a fortnight.

However, all good things come to an end. 74 disbanded in August 1971 and flew the aircraft back to Cyprus in September. From there Dave, Mike Rigg and Roger Pope all went to the CFS at Little Rissington to become instructors and all finished up flying the Gnat at Valley for a QFI tour. Then in 1975 Dave went to Coningsby, converted to the Phantom in the air defence role and joined 23 Squadron when it reformed with that aircraft. In February 1976 the Squadron moved to Wattisham but Dave's QFI qualification made for a short tour and he returned to join the Phantom OCU staff in July 1977. This too was to be a short tour for in early '78 he was promoted to Squadron Leader and was posted to the staff of the CFS as OC Advanced Squadron Examining Wing - the Trappers. A very challenging three and a half years followed flying seven types in the UK - Gnat, Hunter, Hawk, Dominie, Jetstream, Meteor and Vampire. This would have been busy enough but the overseas visits made by the Examining Wing allowed Dave to qualify as first pilot on over sixty more types ranging from the MiG17, F5 and A4 Skyhawk to the HS748, Dakota, F27 Friendship and F28 Fellowship. During that tour he visited countries as far apart as Australia and New Zealand, Ghana, Bangladesh, Italy, Jordan and Singapore.

They say a Trapper has few friends and after getting rid of all his in the training world the RAF posted Dave to the UK Taceval Team to get rid of any remaining ones in the front line! The Tactical Evaluation Team used to visit all front line units to evaluate their preparedness for war, waking them up in the middle of the night and generally spoiling any plans the unit had for the next few days. Dave was the air defence specialist on the team from February 1982 to February 1984 when he went to Bracknell to complete the Advanced Staff Course. At the end of this a newly promoted Wing Commander Roome joined the staff of 11 Group at Bentley Priory where he took the post of Wing Commander Training until mid 1986 when he was selected to take command of 228 OCU, the Phantom conversion unit, then still at Coningsby. Having assumed command at the end of November 1986 it was very nearly taken away again as after only two days in the hot seat one of the junior pilots carried out an extremely low flypast of a graduation ceremony at Cranwell, disobeying all the rules in the book. The Squadron Commander always takes the plaudits and the brickbats and for a while there was the possibility that the example `pour encourager les autres` would be to replace the Boss! Thankfully that did not happen and Dave took the unit north to Leuchars to make room at Coningsby for the arrival of the Tornado.

After the tour at Leuchars he returned, in August 1989, to Bentley Priory - this time as Wing Commander Ops and stayed on for two tours, before leaving in August 1994 for the Personnel and Training Command at Innsworth. Here he was Plans 1 until October '95 and then Command Flight Safety Officer until September '96. He was promoted to Group Captain and detached to Incirlik in Turkey as Commander British Forces on Operation Warden, the maintenance of the northern no-fly zone in Iraq. Coincidentally, at the same time Graham Clarke was commanding the British forces maintaining the southern no-fly zone from Saudi Arabia - so 74 had Saddam covered from both sides!

Returning from Turkey in April `97 Dave found himself running the RAF's Training Group budget for two years before becoming Group Captain Flying Training in charge of the Service's day to day flying training.

Back in 1995, Dave had started to fly Vampires and Venoms for an organisation based at Bournemouth but in `98 was asked if he fancied flying the Hunter from Kemble where there was one based. A round trip from home of half the distance was infinitely preferable and he joined Deltajets there. After a year he became their Chief Pilot and when in mid 2000 he was asked if he would like to join full time as Managing Director he made the decision to leave the RAF. This occurred a short time ago on April 6th 2001 after just over 36 years service.

As is often the case on premature retirement, Dave now finds himself working harder than he did in the Air Force - but when it includes eight Hunters, a Gnat and also the possibility of a flying a Buccaneer it is far from unpleasant work!

We all wish Dave all the very best as he embarks on his second career and look forward to seeing Deltajets in action on the airshow circuit this season. As announced at the Reunion, there is every possibility that a Hunter T7 will be flying in 74 Squadron colours this year. And a Hunter celebration to look out for is 50 years of the type being commemorated at Kemble on July 22nd when there could well be a sixteen ship formation of the type in the air. It's a long time since we have seen anything like that!

Tigers For Sale!

I have a couple of good as new copies of my book *Tigers* available for any member who may be interested. If you are interested perhaps you could drop me a line, send me an E Mail or give me a ring!

Membership Matters

Many thanks to all of you who responded to my request for an updating of the Association database and to the E Mail/Telephone directory enclosed with the last *Tiger News*. This has prompted a revised directory which you will find with this newsletter.

Nick Walsh was a Tiger between July 1989 and January 1992 flying the Phantom at Wattisham. He subsequently moved to the Tornado F3 with 29 Sqn and then enjoyed an exchange posting with the RAAF at Williamtown flying the F18 Hornet.

Peter Holloway joins the ever growing Association ranks of long serving Lighting engineers. He joined 74 in August 1960, three days before the arrival of the first F1 XM139 and was with them through to June 1969 when he moved to something rather larger and rather different - VC10s at Brize Norton!

Gordon Price served with the Squadron 1952 - 1955 having previously been with 29 Squadron at Tangmere.

Derek Brookes was with 74 during a similar period to Gordon - Feb 1952 to August 1954 in his case, once again at Horsham of course, and as an SAC Armourer.

Jim Twitty joined 74 from St Athan 4 SOTT in October 1941. His time as a Tiger ended when he was taken prisoner on Cos in September 1943. Jim spent the remainder of the war as a POW and was finally demobbed in October 1945. Jim ruefully recalls that he didn't particularly like being in the front line with the Durham Light Infantry who were defending Cos as the Germans progressed down the Aegean. In 1998 the Greek government somewhat belatedly awarded all those involved in the campaign in the Aegean a diploma and medal for `services rendered` but HM Government has decreed that the medal cannot be worn on parade in this country. Jim has donated it therefore to the Association for its archive for which we thank him - it will be at Stratford for all to see next year.

Reach for the Sky

Brunel Promotions of Hope Road, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 3NZ (Tel No 0117 963 6161) have for many years produced a superlative calendar featuring the work of Robert Taylor, arguably the foremost aviation artist of today. This year's calendar includes Height of the Battle, showing Sailor Malan leading 74 in an attack on Heinkel 111s over London. Unfortunately Brunel have no copies of this calendar left but have already planned 2002s which will again include Robert Taylor paintings. Reproduction is of high quality and they would grace any study or office (or if you are very lucky lounge!!). If you are interested in buying such a calendar Pat Dennis at Brunel is the lady to speak to. Thanks to Association member Pat Thurlow for putting me on to this.

Sgt Cyril Gower.

In the last *Tiger News* we featured the story of Sgt Pilot Cyril Gower whose Spitfire crashed into a school at Grays in Essex on August 30th 1939 following a mid air collision. **Tony Philpot** of the Essex Airfields Historical Group has pointed out that the reference to his Group in relation to the plaque erected to the memory of Cyril Gower at the school is incorrect and it was in fact the **Essex Historical Aircraft Society** who were the instigators of this.

Roy Barnard

It is with regret that I have to record the death of Association Member Roy Barnard who suffered a heart attack and died on the day we had gathered at Stratford for this year's Reunion. I had spoken to him just a few weeks beforehand when he told me he was not sure whether he would be able to attend as he would be preparing for a forthcoming trip to South Africa to shoot for his country, an opportunity of which he was rightly very proud. Roy has always been a keen marksman and from the days he was with 74 at Horsham St Faith on Meteors (1952 -1953) he actively pursued his hobby. He worked for Dunlop, largely on the development of brakes and tyres for aircraft. He was always proud of his association with 74 and attended the disbandment at Valley last year. One of the

key moments of the past few years for him was his being reunited with Fred Lloyd at our last RAF Club Reunion - Roy looked after Fred's Meteor and they hadn't met for over forty years. It was a moment to savour.

Celebrations at Valley

There are three significant milestones being celebrated at RAF Valley this year - 60 years of the station itself, 80 years of No 4 Flying Training School and 25 years of the BAe Hawk in use by the School. The Station Commander has agreed to hold an airshow as part of the celebration and this will take place on Saturday 18th July. The Valley Aviation Society (VAS) is planning a commemorative booklet which will be on sale at the airshow with proceeds going in part to the RAF Valley Station Charities Committee and in part towards the refurbishment and updating of the Valley History Room. **Dennis Pritchard**, Secretary of the VAS, would like to hear any anecdotal experiences that ex Tigers may have had in respect of time spent at Valley during their careers, together with photographs if possible.

Tiger Meet Genesis

In 1960 Sqn Ldr John Howe took command of 74 Squadron and it was he who undertook the difficult induction of the Lightning, in its F1 form, into RAF service. John is a South African by birth and indeed had served in the South African Air Force in Korea flying Mustangs with 2 Sqn SAF. This particular squadron was teamed with the American 12th, 39th and 67th Fighter Bomber Squadrons and together the four squadrons made up the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing. It was here that John met and befriended a certain Ed Rackham who at the time was serving with the 67th FBS.

After Korea John resigned his commission in the SAAF and joined the RAF. When in Norfolk ten years later, after taking command of 74, he became aware of the fact that the Americans had a Tiger Squadron based nearby - the 79th Tactical Fighter Squadron based at RAF Woodbridge. It seemed a good idea to make contact with fellow Tigers and he put through a call to the 79th to speak to their CO - only to find it was Ed Rackham. John suggested a get together, a suggestion seized upon by the 79th who organised a memorable Dining In night at Woodbridge for 74 - and an even more memorable hooley afterwards. It was during the course of this that a particular USAF 2nd Lieutenant Mike Dugan began to make himself heard - Ed Rackham introduced John to him and between them they cooked up the idea of a regular get together of NATO Tiger Squadrons, the initial suggestion coming from the American 2nd Lieutenant. Amazingly, clear details of the conversation were remembered the following morning! John was already in contact with the Canadian Tigers (then based in France) and the Belgians. And there were other nations who would be only too willing to participate too. Ed Rackham contacted General Moore, Commander of the 3rd Air Force to put the idea past him of regular Tiger Meets - and the General agreed that it was a fine idea. Thus the movement in its present form was born. There had been Tiger get togethers previously but these were essentially in social guise - Boz Robinson will tell you he participated in one such get together at RAF Sculthorpe with the Americans in 1958. This new arrangement would be the first time

there would be a *flying* component to the Meets. The first was organised for July 1961 - the RAF, USAF and French Air Force participated. The following year eight Tiger squadrons participated. The Meet has continued to the present day - not without its vicissitudes such as suspension during the `70s oil crisis for example. 74 has been a regular participant. It hosted the event when based at Leuchars and ten years ago, before disbandment on the Phantom when at Wattisham, Graham Clarke led a four ship of FGR2s when 74 hosted the Meet as part of the International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford.

The point of this story is that the American 2nd Lieutenant at the hooley at Woodbridge in 1960 was to become the USAF Chief of Staff - Brigadier General Mike Dugan will be Guest of Honour at the 40th Anniversary celebrations of the Tiger Meet movement at Kleine Brogel in June.

John Howe and Mike Dugan lost touch many years ago - as indeed did John and Ed Rackham, last seen at Albuquerque in the late 1960s. It would, I think you would agree, be quite something if John Howe and Mike Dugan were to get the opportunity to reminisce about those early days again.....

Telling Poles Apart

In *Tiger News No 22* we asked for any information about the printed photograph of Polish airman Jan Rogowski - whether he was in fact 74's Rogowski or the Rogowski who served with 315 Sqn. Association member Colin Hales was pretty sure the photo we featured was not 74's man. **Franek Grabowski**, who initiated the investigation, has since come up with further information which tells us that `our` Jan Rogowski served with 74 prior to the Battle of Britain, during which he fought with 303 Sqn, then returned to 74 before moving on to 306 Sqn in between times on OTU flying. By the war's end his tally was 2 Me109s shot down and 3 V-1s plus two shared. Jan died at Ipswich in August 1997. The `other` Jan Rogowski - the one featured pictorially - served briefly with 315 Sqn before his death in 1943.

Franek is interested in any accounts, data and photographs relating to all Polish pilots and their aircraft as part of a project which is researching the history of the Polish Air Force in World War II. Any member who can shed further light on 74's Sneezy (Szczesny), Breezy (Brzezina) or Rogowski are asked to contact him. Forward your info to me and I'll pass it on.

Memories of a Conscript

Dave Cullen was very interested in David Nall's account of his time as a National Serviceman with 74 at Horsham St Faith. `I don't remember David N.,` writes David C. `But I recall most of the incidents related. With regard to the flying accident to the 245 Sqn Meteor and the resultant Court Martial, I knew the airman concerned. I was on Station Flight at Horsham at the time. I was tasked with seeing in the President of the Court Martial's aircraft. I was to refuel it, do a pre flight and stand by until he left and was only to be relieved for lunch. The President was actually our then AOC 12 Group

AVM R L R Atcherley. I duly saw him off at the end of the day and was told by my Chief Tech that the airman concerned was given 6 months or so in Colchester. He was a boy entrant, not a conscript. After a short while (not the full sentence) he was released and promoted to Corporal, a promotion which was due before the accident. It seems his release was ordered by our newly promoted CinC Fighter Command, ACM Sir Basil Embry. Like others before, he reviewed such cases upon taking up his new appointment. It was said by some that much of the evidence in the case was circumstantial. Incidentally, as far as I am aware no Chief Tech was reduced in rank as a result of the accident.`

Dave concludes with a recollection about the Horsham St Faith Station Flight. `We had two Meteor F8s, two T7s, two Airspeed Oxfords, two Tiger Moths and an Auster Mk6. The Tiger Moths were written off after colliding when landing and were sold for scrap! I saw the accident happen out of my Chiefy`s office window. Nobody was badly hurt.`

Trinidad Squadron

For a while in its career 74 was known as Trinidad Squadron. This came about during the war when money was raised in the West Indies for the purchase of Spitfires for the Squadron. However, once hostilities were over the Ministry of Defence became increasingly reluctant to allow the link to continue and they wanted the title 74 `Trinidad` Squadron dropped. Despite this, the latter lingered on for some years, partly because the West India Committee continued to send an annual gift of a keg of Trinidadian rum with which the celebrated Tigers Blood cocktail was made and partly because the Tigers felt a sense of obligation and made the effort themselves to maintain the link. This they were successful in doing until the early 1960s and the advent of the Lightning when the title finally disappeared. Contact with the West Indies became an occasional thing thereafter, the most recent being in 1991 at the time of 74`s 74th Anniversary.

The Future of 74

From our President, Air Vice Marshal Boz Robinson.

'The response of you all to my request in the last *Tiger News* to write to Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire regarding our dismay at the prospect of the Royal Air Force being without a Tiger Squadron and to press for the reformation of 74 on Eurofighter has been first class. So much so that I have now received a communication from Sir Peter acknowledging the fact and seeking to explain the rationale behind the decision to stand 74 down and the prospects for the future.'