

*The Association of
No 43
Fighter Squadron
RAF
Newsletter March 2004*



Questionnaire Results: The returns having been analysed Andy Moir (OC Squadron 1989/92) volunteered to summarize the results and present them in an easily read form:

'Just over a quarter of the total Association membership responded to our invitation to air their views on the preferred format for future reunions. As might be expected, there was a wide variety of opinion although some very clear trends emerged. There was overwhelming support for routine reunions to continue to be held at the RAF Club and for notable anniversaries to be marked by special functions such as at Stirling in 2006 when we will commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Squadron. Equally, a significant majority were in favour of some routine reunions being held in the Leuchars area, however there was less support for these reunions taking place in a central location and no consensus where this should be. Opinions on the arrangements at reunions were even more compelling, with less than 5% of members opposed to our established pattern during the evening. Whilst there was a range of opinion on the frequency of accompanied events, there was overwhelming support for accompanied reunions on special occasions. Once again, less than 5% of the membership was opposed to accompanied reunions at any time. Despite the significant support for the current pattern of events being continued at reunions, most members were happy to experiment with a less formal table layout such as round tables although the preference was to retain a pre-arranged seating plan. Finally, the day fighters won and the preference is to party at night. Lunchtime reunions proved to be a less popular option.'

So there we have it; and in deference to the views expressed, it has been decided that as the last four reunions have been accompanied and given that the reunions for 2005 and '06 are 'special occasion' ones – '05 the Association's 60th anniversary and, as stated above, '06 the Squadron's 90th – and therefore will also be accompanied, it was felt that this year's reunion must be, in all fairness, unaccompanied - the only exception being for those ladies who are, or have been members of the squadron.

So for your diary:

Reunion 2004, RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly, Saturday 15th May. Bar 1800

until 2300. Dinner 1900, Dress: lounge suits Cost £29.00.

There are some changes from last years arrangements (necessitated because fewer people are expected to attend due to the absence of lady guests). They are: 1, to avoid unnecessarily depleting Association funds, the cost of dinner has been increased by £1.50 per head. 2, the bar opening extension (which costs £100) will not be available and 3; to compensate for the shortened time for socialising, dinner has been brought forward by half an hour to 1900.

In Memoriam We have been informed of the deaths of the following members: **C.C. 'Harry' Hollingworth**, on Squadron 1944/45, Died April '03; **P.L. 'Peter' Parrot**, commanded the squadron 1943/44, died August '03; and **G.W. Clack**, died November '03, on Squadron 1949/1950.

May they all rest in peace

The Daily Telegraph printed a comprehensive obituary of Peter Parrot on Tuesday 9th September. It was subtitled 'Dashing wartime Hurricane pilot who risked his life testing early jet fighters'. Available space precludes a fuller account in this newsletter, but I'm sure many of you will have already seen the obituary. It included his picture, (see below) which was used in, perhaps the most famous RAF recruiting poster of WW11. I vividly remember seeing it when a very small child. It helped to instil in me a determination to one day, try to join and fly in the RAF.



Our Oldest Member: On 28th June last year the Association's oldest member, **Arthur Fishlock**, celebrated his 100th birthday. To mark the occasion the Committee Chairman Ian McBride, together with several other of it's members visited him at his London home to offer him birthday wishes from all Association members and to present him

with a commemorative 'picture print' (donated by Al Pollock) of three forming Gamecock aircraft (with which 43 was equipped during Arthur's time on the Squadron – 1925/27) and signed by a number of the Association's dignitaries. Although the presentation was a complete surprise to him Arthur responded very well, was pleased to have been remembered by the Association and kept everyone present entertained as he related many of his interesting tales about his time in the aviation industry that ranged from his posting to 43 as an LAC to him becoming an AFRAS, not to mention a medal presented to him by the United States of America in gratitude for the work he was involved in when sent over there during WW11. The reminiscing was eventually cut short because his family was anxious that he should not be late for the surprise they'd arranged for him...a flight for them all, on the London Eye!



Arthur, picture in hand, in conversation with (L to R), Ian McBride, Neil MacIndoe and Len Telling, one of the founder members of the Association.

Golf: Willie Marr is organising a golfing day for Association and Squadron members and he has skilfully managed to negotiated a special low rate with the Dukes Golf Club at St Andrews. The details are as follows: Date: 9th July 2004
Venue: Dukes Golf Club, St Andrews.
Cost: £50.00 (£25.00 deposit required). This will provide apart from the golf, a snack breakfast with beverages and luncheon. If you are interested please contact Willie by phone 01506 510634 or Email: willie.marr@btpenworld.com
Cheques should be made payable to 'The Dukes Golf Course'.

Donations to the Association: Colin Goodley the Associations treasurer wishes to thank those members who have given donations over the past year. As ever the money will go toward providing our more needy members with the ability to attend the annual reunion. So from us all thank you very much indeed.

News from the Squadron: It is amazing that a year has passed since the last newsletter was written for the Association. Last year, when virtually the entire Sqn officers and 2 NCOs attended the last reunion dinner, a most enjoyable evening, the Sqn had just returned from Operation TELIC and our Fighting Cocks were very keen to strut their stuff. Was the routine of peacetime flying going to be an anti-climax? Was the return to normality going to cause our lads to lose their edge? We need not have worried as 43 (F) Sqn has been involved in several major events ranging from Missile Firing Camps in Wales, Exercise NOMAD held at RAF Waddington and involving Mirage 2000D, F-18s and F-16s from NATO nations, Tactical Leadership Programme in Florennes and a Cyprus Armament Practice Camp where all our fledgling Pilots qualified with the F3's Mauser cannon.

The Missile Practice Camp used the Air-to-Air Range at Aberporth and involved the firing of several Skyflash missiles. The firings were all successful. This is a necessary part of modern Air Defence operations as it expands our knowledge of the missile and lets the crew experience what actually happens when the trigger is pressed. Suffice it to say that as it was the first time for some of the front-seaters and their comments recorded on tape were priceless!

Exercise NOMAD is a multi-nation exercise featuring complex sorties flown on the North Sea Air Combat Instrumentation Range. This year the Fighting Cocks were invited to try our luck against Swiss and Spanish F-18s, Belgian F-16s and French Mirage 2000. All our adversaries sported longer-range active missiles but thanks to our superior tactics and the mighty ASRAAM we more than held our own, although it has to be said that we were often helped out by the Spanish who shot at friend and foe alike.

The Tactical Leadership Programme was also just as successful with the Sqn detachment of 2 aircraft flying 95% of planned missions with zero blue losses. The ASRAAM also proved its worth again with a recorded 100% assessed kill rate. However, the crews were more unfortunate at the weekend when one of our most experienced navigators getting lost in Leurven for 3 hours (trying to locate hotel) and the specialist air combat pilot becoming disorientated and falling off his bar stool in Antwerp. The busy schedule did not prevent the Fighting Cocks from emulating their illustrious forebears in the

1930s, in particular the Gamecocks who thrilled the public at air shows such as the Henlow Air Pageant. This year the Sqn flew 2 Diamond Nine formations, firstly in Cyprus to mark the end of a successful detachment and then 2 days before Christmas as a seasonal greeting to the local population of St Andrews and area. The Sqn Esprit de Corps was noted by OC 111 Sqn as the perfect Diamond Nine flew directly overhead 111 Sqn HQ as he was crewing out of one of only 2 serviceable jets (see photo).



This year the Sqn expanded from 15 crews to 22, which inevitably meant that some of the new pilots were mere hatchlings direct from the OCU. It is to the credit of the teaching staff both on the OCU and 43 Sqn's own Training Flt that these new crews are achieving good results and display the verve and enthusiasm that we have come to expect from the Fighting Cocks.

Some of the Association Members may have seen the article in one of the national newspapers with Fg Off Jody McMeeking pictured as OC the Fighting Cocks; the magnificent English Game Cocks are now housed outside the Sqn HQ in splendid new accommodation. The Cock and his Hen are in fine health thanks to Jody's care and I thought I would like to share with you an extract from the Terms of Reference written by Jody for his successor as OC Hens....

"For Vermin control on the base contact Ian, Les or Duncan. They should be able to provide traps, or just advice. They will probably say 'the best protection is to have a coop that is strong enough to stop things getting in', but I think if you get rid of the ferrets etc it can only help"

The big news from the Sqn is the recent introduction of the Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile, (AMRAAM) or AIM-120. This missile has been flown on US and some other NATO nations aircraft for sometime and it will equip the Typhoon when it comes into service. Its introduction gives a massive capability boost to the F3 and together with the ASRAAM infrared missile makes the

Tornado F3 a formidable weapons platform, well able to meet the needs of the UK Air Defence requirement until Typhoon comes into service.

Unfortunately, the Sqn will be deployed to Ex MAPLE FLAG in Canada on 15 May and it is with much regret that we will be unable to participate in this year's reunion dinner. This is a particular disappointment for us as we are only to aware that the theme will be the Tornado F3, and it will be would have been Wg Cdr Powell's last opportunity to attend as OC 43(F) Sqn. Nevertheless, we hope you have a splendid evening, and we wish you health and prosperity for the forthcoming year. **Finally, a farewell note from OC 43(F) Squadron:** As the end of my tour draws increasingly nearer, I would like to thank all those within the 43 Association for their help, support and friendship over the last 2.5 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to command the 'Fighting Cocks' with its long, distinguished and proud history. Despite the changes in the world at large, society and the RAF, the ethos, camaraderie and *esprit de corps* of 43(F) Squadron aircrew and groundcrew remain as strong as ever due in no small part to the efforts of those within the Association at maintaining the close ties with the Squadron. It is with much sadness that I will not be able to say farewell to you personally owing to the Squadron's deployment to Exercise Maple Flag in Canada over the Reunion weekend but I very much look forward to attending future occasions whenever my commitments allow. In the meantime, my sincere thanks to everybody in the Association for their continued interest and enthusiasm in the best fighter squadron in the Royal Air Force. I wish you all the very best for the future'. **Gloria Finis...**

Thank you **Wg Cdr Powell** for your kind words. The Association wishes you well for your future career and looks forward to meeting you again at some future date.

Richard's replacement is to be **Wg Cdr Phil Beach**, a fighting cock of old, having left the squadron only two years ago. He was then OC Weapons Flt. Since leaving he has been busy attending two staff officer courses and has had two separate Out of Area appointments – one in Oman and more recently, in Baghdad. Welcome back Wg Cdr, we look forward to meeting you.