WHAT'S ON

VICKY GUNNELL - PROGRAMME SECRETARY

5 September 08'...........................................Commander Adrian Orchard O.B.E. “The Fleet Air Arm Today - Koria to Afghanistan in 45 Minutes”
14 September 08'........................................Control Tower Fun day “A time to Have Fun With the Family”
3 October 08'................................................Stan Hodgkins “Eject, Eject - My Time with Martin Baker”
7 November 08'..........................................David Lee (Duxford) “Memorable Milestones of a Century of Flight”
5 December 08’...........................................Pip Wright “Silly Songs and Stories” - From Local Papers”
2 January 09’..............................................To be Confirmed

President: Gordon Kinsey

Newsletter Contributions
If you have an article or a story you would like to share with the other members of the Society then please send it to me....

Alan Powell - Newsletter Editor
16 Warren Lane
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich IP5 3SH
Tel: Ipswich 622458
E-Mail Address alanpowel@tiscali.co.uk

Other Committee Contacts...

Chairman Martyn Cook (01473) 614442
Vice Chairman Bob Dunnett (01473) 624510
Secretary Alan Powell (01473) 622458
Treasurer Peter Durrell (01473) 726396
Program Sec. Vicky Gunnell (01473) 720004
Membership Sec. John Bulbeck (01473) 273326
Publicity Sec. Howard King (01473) 274300
Rag Trade David Bloomfield (01473) 686204
Catering Peter Morris (01473) 415787
Society Adviser Tom Scrivener (01473) 684636
Society Advisor Colin Whitmore (01473) 729512
Society Advisor Frank Bright (01473) 623853

JACK RUSSELL DESIGNS
EDITORIAL

Just as I sat down to put together this newsletter I received an email from Bob Dunnett. We have received a most generous donation of $4604.44 from our American friends of the former 356th Fighter Group Association. This converts to more than £2350. I am sure you will all join me in offering our sincere thanks. Bob has also written on our behalf to thank everybody concerned.

I would like to thank all those of you who send articles in for publication in our newsletter. Sometimes I am unable to include them in their entirety due to lack of space and I hope that you understand this.

Our Museum Archivist, Alan Smith can always be relied upon to find an interesting subject. Richard Gregory gave a talk about his RAF career in our July monthly meeting. He mentioned that an aircraft called the Airspeed Ferry had passed its C of A in four days at Martlesham Heath in 1932. I asked Alan Smith about this and he has, of course, supplied the information!

Jork Andrews is another of our enthusiastic members and has submitted an article about the restoration of telephone communications on the Channel Islands following German occupation during WW2.

Wg Cdr (Retd), Ken Wallis has agreed to accept an Honorary Vice Presidency of our Society.

Our Membership Secretary tells me that our membership is currently just in excess of 300. Attendance at our monthly meetings continues to exceed 100 and is often in the region of 150. Extraordinary and most encouraging.

ALAN POWELL

AVIATION OPEN DAY – SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER.

Don’t forget folks. Come and support us. Lots of attractions including a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Dakota, (weather permitting). Bring the children and the grandchildren – lots of attractions for them. A vintage bus will take parties around the village to see the old RAF buildings, including the Barrack Square and existing hangars. A line up of vintage cars and vintage military vehicles. Refreshments available all day. The museum will be open and the Air Raid Shelter. You name it – we have it all there!

Open from 11am to 4pm in the area surrounding the Control Tower museum – off Parkers Place, Eagle Way. Admission is free – donations welcomed.

ED

WING COMMANDER KH (KEN) WALLIS, MBE, DENG(HC), PHD(HC), CENG, FRAE, FSETP, FINSTIA(HC), RAF, (RETD).

We are delighted to report that Ken Wallis has agreed to be our new Honorary

CONTROL TOWER FUN DAY: 14TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Just a reminder of your event, yes that’s right, “it is your event”. If you can come along around 8:30 am we would be very grateful for some help in setting up etc. Its not hard work and you can be sure of a laugh.

If you cannot help in setting up you may possibly be able to help whilst the event is on. So please make contact with Robert Dunnett or Martyn Cook.
been very unwell. Fred was 81 and leaves a wife, Maureen and eight sons and daughters.

**Roy Harding** was a relatively new member to the society but had been a member of the Ipswich Aviation Society for a number of years prior to the formation of MHAS. He was a character who was always ready to have a laugh but was happy to accept that occasionally the laugh was on him. Roy was very well known to many of our members and will be sadly missed.

**Royal (Jack) Scudder** was with the 356th FG at RAF Martlesham Heath during WW11. Jack was not as well known as some of his war time colleagues. His death was announced by his son who found a letter relating to one of the 356th FG reunions.

Our thoughts, prayers and our sympathy go out to their respective families at their sad loss.

*Ed*

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**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT**

I would like to welcome on behalf of the society the following new members since our last newsletter.

- **Lorna Rumsey**
- **Bernard Dillon**
- **Martyn & Robert Cartwright**
- **Barry Emms**
- **John & Maria Hamblett**

We are very excited and proud to announce that the society has a new Vice President - **Wing Commander Ken Wallis**

Wg.Cdr. Wallis is well known to all of us following his talk earlier in the year and his visit with Little Nellie to the Open Day last year at which he very kindly agreed to open the event. He was presented with his membership card following a private visit to his home in Norfolk.

Should you know of anyone wishing to join the following fees apply:

**Single Membership cost:** £8 on joining, £7 per year thereafter.
**Joint Membership costs:** £13 on joining, £11 per year thereafter.

Should you wish to contact me my details are as follows:

**4 Foxburrow Road, Purdis Farm, Ipswich, Suffolk. IP3 8UR**
**Telephone No: (01473) 273326.**
**John Bulbeck**

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**Vice President.** We all know of his extraordinary inventive skills and of course, he designed and built “Little Nellie”, the unique autogyro that appeared in the James Bond film, “You Only Live Twice”.

The Wallis autogyros have held all 20 of the UK official world records for, autogyro speed, time to climb, altitude, range and duration.

Ken is now 93 and still flies his autogyros, of which he has about 20, at his home at Reymerston Hall in Norfolk.

You will remember that Ken Wallis formerly opened our “Open Day” last September. He mentioned at that time that he had landed at Martlesham Heath in the early days of WW2 piloting a Vickers Armstrong Wellington. At that time he had not looked in his logbook and couldn’t say just when that was.

Well, we have now received some information from Ken and I will quote him, “I see from my No.1 RAF logbook, (I am now on logbook number 7!), that I landed my Wellington, 1c (No. 1452), at Martlesham Heath on 14th April 1942. I also “called in” at Alconbury and Wyton.

April 1942 was quite a busy month, when I was with 103 Squadron at Elsham Wolds.

- **2nd April** – Low level attack on the Matford works at Poissy, near Paris.
- **5th April** – Ops – Cologne.
- **12th April** – Ops - Dortmund.
- **15th April** – Ops – Dortmund.
- **17th April** – Ops – Hamburg.
- **23rd April** – Ops – Rostock.
- **25th April** – Ops – Rostock.

That was the last of my first operational “tour” with Bomber Command.

I don’t see Wellington 1c 1452 on any of my operational flights. I think she was just a “hack”. Probably being used for flying practice and to give crew members a lift home on leave, or some such”.

*(signed), Ken.*

I can report that Ken informs us that he “is honoured” to be an Honorary Vice President of Martlesham Heath Aviation Society. Well, we can tell you Ken that we are most definitely honoured that you have accepted.

*ED*

Wing Commander Ken Wallis is a member of a family which has been linked with flying since 1909, when his forbears constructed one of the first aeroplanes to be made in the Eastern Counties, the “Wallbro monoplane”. A replica of this early aircraft was made a few years ago.
Ken’s father subsequently turned to airscrew driven hydroplanes, all of which were named “Per Ardua.” Whilst in the Royal Air Force and on an exchange visit to the United States Ken Wallis himself built an airscrew driven hydroplane and won the Missouri Marathon in “Per Ardua V111.”

Learning to fly in 1937 at Marshall’s airfield Cambridge, young Wallis made it after 12 hours and £14 and joined the Civil Air Guard and then, at the outbreak of World War Two, the RAFVR.

Ken Wallis had always been fascinated by rotary winged aircraft and during 1957, when he returned from the exchange visit to the USAF Strategic Air Command he started work on his first ultra-light autogiro. This first attempt, “The Argyle”, first flew in May 1959 and was used mainly in the capacity of a “test hack”. Next followed WA116, which made its debut during August 1961. The A and AEE at Boscombe Down took an interest in the possibilities of this unique aircraft. As a result several WA116.s were constructed by Beagle Aircraft Limited for army trials. However the venture was short lived. The Services at that time were concentrating on helicopters.

After retiring from the Royal Air Force in 1964 Wing Commander Wallis formed Wallis Autogiros Limited with his wife and cousin, Mr GV Wallis as co-directors. Small-scale production of WA116’s was commenced at Cambridge. During 1966 much time was spent in flying the Wallis “gyros” for film work in Brazil, Japan, Italy and Spain. In 1968 the Wallis 116 prototype gained the autogyro altitude record of 15,220ft. The speed record fell to Wing Commander Ken Wallis in 1969 and the closed circuit range record during 1974.

Further development resulted in a series of new designs. The WA117, the WA118 “Meteorite”, the WA120 and the WA121. An unusual assignment during 1970 was when WA117, G-AVJU, specially silenced, was used in Loch Ness investigations!

For his outstanding in the field of autogyro design Wing Commander Ken Wallis was awarded the Alan Marsh Medal in 1963, The Seagrave Trophy in 1969 and the Breguet Trophy five years later.

From this picturesque Norfolk base has sprung technology of a high standard and another approach for man’s safety in the air.

On 28th September, 1975 Wallis WA116/F, G-ATHM was flown by Ken Wallis from Lydd in Kent to Wick in the north of Scotland to set a new endurance world record for autogyros. Average speed was 92 mph, time in the air 6 hours 25 minutes and the fuel consumption was 24 miles per gallon, with a 60 hp Franklin engine.

This cryptic biography of Ken Wallis was taken from the WWW and I regret that I cannot find it again in order to acknowledge the author. No details of his distinguished wartime career, but I guess that is a story on its own.

ALAN POWELL

At around 8:00 pm we boarded the coach to journey to our arranged buffet at the “Three Horseshoes at Helions Bumpstead were our host Sue and family had the most beautifully arranged spread of food that we had ever seen on any of our visits.

Now you may be forgiven for thinking that any public house situated down a very small road would be short on ‘Panache’, not this public house. Once inside it was apparent that it had been restored and maintained to a very high standard. The food was laid out in a very large carpeted room adjoining the bar. The french windows at the back end of the room opened out onto the garden area which was partly covered and which some members took advantage of. The fact that it was on the Stanstead Airport flight path had nothing to do with the booking this establishment.

We arrived home at around 11:30pm, tired but happy.

Obituaries

I’m sad to report the death of three members since the last newsletter and one member of the 356th FG:

Peter Claydon was a long standing member of the society and was well known in the Felixstowe where he worked a Bank Manager.

Fred Eley was also a long standing member. He had received a triple by-pass heart operation some time ago and recovered well from that but had recently died.
his time with the Marine Branch of the RAF.
I am sure the audience wondered how John managed to get himself posted to so many interesting parts of the world!

Our July meeting also feature one of our own members. Richard Gregory lives at Woodbridge. Richard is now 85 and gave us an illustrated talk about his career in the RAF flying early jets.

Richard Gregory gained his wings and was posted to RAF Chivenor in Devon in December, 1948. He was introduced to the Spitfire 16. Richard’s training had followed the conventional route of the time. Tiger Moth’s followed by the Harvard advanced trainer. There were no dual-control Spitfires so it must have been a rather nervous young sergeant pilot who first took to the air in the legendary Spit.

A rather amusing interlude followed Richard’s training course at Chivenor. He was in farming country with a wife and child to support. Pilot’s pay in those days was little enough and during the three week’s leave he decided to apply for a temporary job as a tractor driver at a nearby farm, Steep climbing turns in a Spitfire was one thing but steep climbing turns in the hilly fields of Devon was quite unnerving! The Spitfire had the power and the room to manoeuvre but a tractor could easily turn over and with no protection around you, could prove fatal. The episode clearly left an indelible impression on young Richard Gregory. As also did the pay he received from the farmer. It was slightly more than His Majesty’s Government was paying him as a pilot!

ED

AUDLEY END AIRFIELD VISIT

Our August meeting was as usual an evening visit. Our hosts where Clive and Linda Denny and Peter of Vintage Fabrics who have a hanger on the airfield. Thankfully the evening was cooler than the previous few days and came as a welcome relief as forty seven members and friends boarded the Soames coach. Our driver for the evening was Chris who transported us in fine style.

We arrived at approximately 6:00pm and were warmly met by our hosts who immediately guided us into the hanger were there were approximately nine aeroplanes parked. One of those planes was a Messerschmidt which is one of the plane’s that Clive demonstrates on a regular basis. This was due to fly out on the Saturday to Shuttleworth where, over the weekend Clive would be flying it during the weekend programme. Two of other planes are used for racing, one being painted in Red Bull colours.

After looking around the planes and the fabric shop plus of course all those items waiting to be restored Clive talked us through their return to Audley End Airfield. The hanger was previously home to a company who built chalet type homes. You can imagine the state of the place which was born out by our hosts who had the immediate task of cleaning it as planes and dust have an unfortunate affinity with each other.

An Aircraft mentioned by our speaker at the June meeting was the Airspeed Ferry which was tested at Martlesham in April 1932.

The type was the first powered aircraft built by the new Airspeed Aeroplane Company which was formed by two members of the design team working under Barnes Wallis, of the Airship Development Company, which had built the R100 airship.

When the Government decided to cancel all airship work after the fatal crash of the Government designed R101 at Beauvais, Neville Shute (the author Neville Shute) and Hessel Tiltman decided they would set up their own aircraft company. The Board of Directors composed of Tiltman and Neville Shute, Alan Cobham and Lord Grimthorpe, a Yorkshire landowner who risked large sums of money to ensure the ultimate success of the firm. The firm was set up as a private company on March 13 1931.

Alan Cobham told the firm that he wanted a miniature multi-engined airliner for use by his National Aviation Day Tours. It would have to have an exceptional take-off and landing performance, while carrying a maximum passenger payload out of small fields, to provide local air experience in airline comfort rather than the open cockpits of many of the normal joy riders.

The Ferry was powered by two Gipsy II engines on the lower of the biplane wings and a third Gipsy III inverted in the centre of the top wing. The fuselage was low enough for the passengers to step in without the need for steps and the cabin was uncluttered with a flat floor and the had an unrestricted view of the ground beneath the aircraft.

Cobham ordered two of the aircraft in the middle of July 1931. The first was built in a hired bus garage in York. Design and completion of the first aircraft was made within ten months and, because there was no airfield at York, the aircraft had to be moved to Sherburn-in-Elmet, the home of the Yorkshire Aero Club, by road. This created some difficulty as the wings had to be removed to reduce the width of the load to 16 feet. It was towed, under police escort and met a convoy carrying the rudder of the liner SS Berengaria travelling in the opposite direction. As Middleton says in his book on Airspeed, “Air gave way to the Senior Service, so the Ferry was disconnected and manhandled into a side road whilst the liner less rudder passed by!”

After reassembly the aircraft was prepared for its first flight which was made by Capt. H.V. Worrall, Chief Pilot of the Yorkshire Flying Club on 5 April 1932, for which he received a payment of £30.

The aircraft was given the registration G-ABSI. It could carry 10 passengers. This caused further difficulties as the Air Ministry ruled that any aircraft with 10 passengers or more must carry a radio. Although it was pointed out that the aircraft would only be operating within a short distance of the field and would not need to use a radio The Air Ministry insisted but eventually common sense prevailed and the aircraft flew with its full compliment of ten passenger seats.
It had been hoped that the Ferry would be ready for the opening of the National Aviation Days at Hanworth on 12 April, 1932 but it was not ready in time. However with the help of the Air Ministry and the Martlesham pilots it got through its C of A in four days, including a delay of three days because of slight trouble with an exhaust manifold and a sheared bolt in the undercarriage, the Ferry, named “Youth of Britain II” joined the Tour at Hanworth on 4th May.

Martlesham performance figures revealed a still air take-off at load of 200 yards, a height at 500 yards from a standing stat of 80 ft, initial rate of climb of 520 ft per minute. Airspeed offered the aircraft at a price of £3,975.

A second Ferry was then under construction and two further aircraft were planned. The second Ferry, G-ABSJ, was delivered to Cobham in June 1932. The Ferry was an immediate success and by the end of the 1935 season it had flown 1,700 hours, made 17,700 landings and carried approximately 159,300 passengers and turn around times were sometimes completed in less that 30 seconds and refuelling in 1½ minutes.

The last two aircraft G-ACBT and G-ACFB were bought by Midland and Scottish Air Ferries and finished up in 1936 with Air Publicity. The following year these were re-engined with three inverted Gipsy Major engines.

Middleton also related that when a Ferry was forced to land on Southport Sands after a failure of one of the outer engines, having survived a row with the Aeronautical Inspection Department (A.I.D.). Capt Orrell went to Southport to fly the aircraft home on two engines. When he arrived he was surprised to find that the recalcitrant engine had disappeared from the wing. The ground engineer explained that to save weight and drag he had carefully stowed the engine in the cabin! There it remained for the flight to Renfrew.” (A.I.D.), were even more incensed.

A further story told by Middleton relates that in conversation with Capt. Orrell when asked how he coped with the small fields, he is said to have replied “Well, I taxi like hell to the corner of the field, turn round quick, hold aileron hard one way, when one wheel lifts I snatch it off while the other is not looking!”

G-ABSI, after being used by Portsmouth, Southsea and the Isle of Wight Aviation Ltd, was impressed and served initially with the Station Flight at Halton from July until November 1940 as AV968 and later ended up with No. 474 ATC Squadron at Long Eaton as 2758M.

G-ABSJ was sold in 1934 to Himalaya Air Transport & Survey Co for use on pilgrimage flights as VT-AFO and is reputed to have been destroyed by white ants.

G-ACBT was withdrawn from use on expiry of its CoA in 1938 at Renfrew and broke up during the war.

G-ACFB was impressed as DJ715 and dismantled at Heston in January 1941 and finished up with No 1037 ATC Squadron at Stoke-on-Trent.

**ALAN SMITH**
Having seen in their walks that there were a number of training aircraft in the area they proposed to steal one and fly home to Germany! The plan in itself was surprising, that it almost worked was all the more so! Having made uniforms, passes and dummies to take their place at roll-call with the help of other prisoners, they hid in the baskets which were used to take away dirty linen from the hotel. The baskets were placed on the truck by German orderlies so Wappler and Schnabel were able to make their escape from Shap Wells relatively easily. Having got out of the camp, they soon dropped off the truck as it slowed on the climb up to the A6. They then made their way to the main London to Glasgow railway and jumped a goods train as it struggled up the notorious Shap incline, which is only a few hundred yards from the hotel. After a cold but uneventful journey to Carlisle, they spent the night in the town. Much to their surprise, they found that there were a large number of Dutch, Czechs and Poles at the training base they had assumed to be near. After a couple of close shaves in the town where they spent all day Sunday. They made it out to Kingstown Training Aerodrome on a foggy Monday morning. By sheer cheek and good luck they stole a Magister trainer and flew off.

They flew eastward over the moors hoping to find the main line railway from London to Edinburgh. Then follow it south and alter crossing the river Trent turn south-east heading for the North Sea and home. The weather closed in, forcing them to fly above the clouds, they became somewhat lost and running low on fuel had to drop down below the cloud to find a suitable spot to land. Seeing an airfield they landed and pretending to be Dutch, and having got lost needed to refuel to get them back home. They soon had a full tank and off they flew. As night began to fall their fuel was running low again and this time no aerodrome could be seen. A forced landing was essential and that would be better on land than at sea.'

An opportunity soon presented itself and the aircraft was landed safely. When a farmer came to see what had happened, Wappler and Schnabel explained that they were Dutch and had lost their way. He told them that they were a few miles from Great Yarmouth and that he would fetch the police to arrange with the nearest airfield at Horsham St. Faith to bring fuel. It was now late afternoon and by the time a bowser could be filled and sent it would be too late to fly. A car was duly sent to collect them; they were offered dinner in the mess and as two officers based at Horsham were on leave who shared the same room, they could use that to freshen up and have a bath.

In the meantime a signal was received from Carlisle reporting the Magister had been stolen by two Germans. His suspicions aroused, the Commanding Officer quickly discovered that there were a number of peculiarities about the two men. He went, armed with his revolver to the room and found Wappler in his underwear. Schnabel was in the bath, on the bed the uniforms of the two officers away on leave were laid out ready. 'Out you come' the CO ordered! 'I know who you are'—'So you know?' asked Wappler, 'yes. I suppose you do. We are the German prisoners from Shap Wells. And we nearly got away!'
I was given operational control of the enterprise and was to be based at Chaldon. Robert White, with C J Gibbs as his deputy, was to be in control of the Channel Islands end. The standard Post Office vehicles were camouflage painted and we had a complicated set of procedure to ensure that the contingents were appropriately assembled in their proper sequence in the convoy which was to liberate the Channel Islands. If I remember correctly White and Gibbs, together with two or three supporting staff, were in the 5th and 6th LST to go ashore. They were there as civilians and there was no knowing at the time whether the Germans would put up a fight. In the event, although the Germans gave no advance notice of their intention to surrender, the whole operation moved peacefully.

I was, however, not to know this, and we had an exceedingly anxious wait of nearly a week at Chaldon with the receiver on the air awaiting signals from the Channel Islands. At both sites aerials were constructed out of the, by then, fairly standard transportable VHF Rombic aerial. In the event we had no difficulty in establishing radio contact, and contact between the terminals themselves was outstandingly good from the start.

The local line distribution network in Guernsey and the exchange itself was however in a pretty sorry state. The level at the Guernsey switchboard was in fact some 20 - 25 dB down on RTP. We had no means of inserting line amplifiers into the system and test calls into the UK national network were very marginal. The nearest repeater station at that time on the inland network was Bournemouth. If I remember correctly we had a twin feed both to Bournemouth and to Bristol from Chaldon.

The site at Chaldon was in many ways an exotic one. It was approached by a farm track from an unclassified road in the village of Chaldon Herring some four miles south east of Owermoigne. The track from Chaldon village ran over the chalk downs, to the edge of the Dorset chalk cliffs and was a mile or more in length rising from a height of a few hundred feet above sea level at the village to a height of some six or seven hundred feet at the cliff edge. The state of the track made access difficult in rainy weather and was at all times a little alarming since the area had only just been vacated by the Canadians who had used it as a battle proving ground. There was plenty of evidence of spent (and perhaps only half spent!) ammunition around the place.

In the summer of 1944 days spent listening on watch on this remote part of the Dorset countryside remain as an anxious but curious interlude in the memories of those of us who played a small part in restoring civil communications in the aftermath of war. For the first few hours of the circuit’s life, we were concerned with the nuts and bolts of engineering and setting the system up. Once this was done we then found ourselves making contact with some of those who had remained in Guernsey throughout the War. Many of them were anxious to inform relatives, whom they had last seen in 1940, of the fact they were alive. I shall always remember, eavesdropping on one or two of the calls and finding, in
PHIL SHEAF.

Douglas Bader was well known for being irascible with a filthy temper and language from time to time. Now the story goes that after the war he was invited to present the prizes at Roedean, the famous girl's public school. He was in full flow explaining a particular aerial combat to the enthralled girls and got a bit carried away, "There was one of the F*ckers above me and one of the F*ckers below me and a third F*cker behind me..." the Headmistress leapt to her feet and said 'Girls I should explain that Group Captain Bader is referring to the German fighters made by the Fokker company."

Bader replies "Well I don't know about that but these F*ckers were Messersh-mids."

Sorry – can't vouch for the authenticity of this one! ED

I always enjoy the occasional Sunday afternoons I spend on duty at the Control Tower Museum. It’s surprising how many interesting folk one meets. Often someone will come in and say, “I was posted here in the 50’s” or “my Father was here in the 30’s”. A few weeks ago I was present when a smart gentleman arrived with members of his family. He had on his jacket the RAF crest for 249(Gold Coast) Squadron. His name is Jack Paternoster and he is in his 80's. His story was so interesting that I have included a piece about his achievements.

AN "ERK" ON MALTA

The title is taken from a little book written by Jack Paternoster of his time at Royal Air Force, Ta-Qali, Malta, from May 1941 until March 1944. Everyone must be aware of the siege of Malta and the bravery of the inhabitants and British servicemen who endured all the hardships and dangers on that tiny beleaguered island.

The whole experience quite understandably had a life-long effect on Jack and I can do no better than tell his story through the following article that appeared in the East Anglian Daily Times, dated July 20th 2005.

and did it a power of no good.

He went round and apologised to the people concerned and the cottage was rebuilt. Blow me down, they had only just got it rebuilt when he came round again on the same mission and the thing fell out once more and knocked the cottage down again.

I think it's a wonderful example of British phlegm that this poor woman who had had her cottage knocked over twice - when Shorty went round the second time to go and see how they were doing and to apologise, when he came round the corner, all she could say was "Oh no, not you again!"

notes from Jork Andrews who first published this tale in 1992.

To fully appreciate this tale one needs to turn the calendar back more than 60 years to the wartime experience which some of us were privileged to endure. "Privileged" is an odd word to use but most who were around at that time will remember it that way although those of younger vintage will barely comprehend those feelings. The hardships and adversity of the times only served to bind us more strongly together under inspired leadership of those such as Winston Churchill.

One particular feature of such times is the way that opportunities are presented to people - often very junior people - to make decisions and to seize opportunities and do things which are quite outside the "rulebook". Perhaps it is one of the better British characteristics that we seem to be able to "rise to the occasion". In war there
sometimes arises a need to make decisions - and to get on and do things - without any stimulus from "above".
The Channel Isles tale disguises all of the technical achievement landing on enemy-held beaches and assembling radio equipment prominently on coastal cliffs. It makes light of doing work, "over and above the call of duty". Some quiet consideration will remind readers that all of these characteristics were built into the old government services such as the GPO. Easily maligned today and all replaced with organizations which are more customer-responsive and, maybe, more cost-effective. But how will things look in another decade or two? Will we need this sort of public service again and would we get it from private companies pared down to give "customer choice" and "city profit" and, possibly, "let someone else worry about standards"?

JORK ANDREWS

Hitler was obsessed with German occupation of the Channel Islands. This was the first British territory to fall to the German army and throughout the occupation Hitler took an intense interest in the administration of the islands.

In fact the occupation was nothing but a millstone around the necks of the Nazis. A whole reinforced infantry Division was tied up there for the duration of hostilities and saw no fighting. Enormous efforts were made to build defences against a British attempt to re-take the islands. Forced labour was brought in and thousands of tons of imported materials were used that could have been employed in the building of the much vaunted “Atlantic Wall” on the mainland of Europe.

In the event, the Channel Islands were simply by-passed when the invasion took place in Normandy.

Even the German generals were afraid to put their reservations of such a use of resources for fear of upsetting Heir Hitler. Nice one Adolph!

ED.

ROYAL AIR FORCE MARTLESHAM HEATH

In 1917 Martlesham Heath as an airfield we first saw a time of conflict, we were fighting a bloody war. Aircraft in those days were small with wire ties

Potter, Noakes, Jones-Williams, Jenkins, Webster stood here. Bader, Stanford-Tuck, Townsend, on Station records appear all well known for the deeds they have done. Names that made Martlesham Heath second to none.

Beardmore, Vimy, Lysander, from here did fly. Spitfire, Thunderbolt, Mustang, Hurricane, ruled the sky. Mosquito, Devon, Lincoln, Canberra, to name a few. All long ago made obsolete by aircraft new.

356th. Fighter Group Martlesham Heath in 1943 did see. To give us a hand from the land of the free. P47 Thunderbolts, P51 Mustangs, our American Allies flew “the best” for the 356th Fighter Group. Nothing else would do.

No big hangar now, known to us as the BBU. No aircraft down the runway to take off in the blue. No big jet four Nene’s, the Ashton we all knew. No Lincoln, two Pythons, two Merlins, long bid adieu.

No longer see the airmen marching to and fro, returning to their barracks, or off to work do go. Or do we see an airman standing in the fading light with flying suit and goggles on, all prepared for a flight.

Two Memorials on the square stand proudly together harking in the sunshine and battered by stormy weather. Proof that side by side we fought, in the battle thunder, America and England, no man, no war could split asunder.

I was only one that on Martlesham Heath did serve. To say that I was important, I would not have the nerve. Many brave men served here and there glory will not fade. The history of the nation by such men was made.

All that remains, the Guardroom, SHQ, and the Square. Demolish them and build – I hope they will not dare. For airmen of Martlesham Heath the memories will never die. May they stand as a memorial, when we all, with our comrades lie.

RAF Martlesham Heath your glory will not wain. Airfields such as these will never rise again. But if, in many years to come, once again you ghosts of many nations, will all be there for you.

WL Ball.

I reported that I did not know the author of the little poem, “Lie in the Dark and Listen”, that appeared in the May issue of “Runway 22”.

Well, our member Martin Rose has written and informed me that the author was Noel Coward. So now you know! Thanks Martin.

ED

The following was submitted by our long-distance member, Phil Sheaf. It concerns “Highball”, as used by the RAF in WW2 and is from a book about Barnes Wallis’s bombs, in which Sir George Edwards later records:

There was the famous story of Shorty Longbottom, who was unfortunately killed in a Warwick aircraft – one of the test pilots.

“We had a bit of trouble loading Highball into Mosquitoes. With a bit of “G” the jaws holding Highball used to come open and the thing fall out. At the end of the runway at Wisley there was a cottage and Shorty was coming into land one day when he pulled out – to flare out and land – the damn thing (Highball), came unhooked. Although it was inert there was a lot of it and it landed on the cottage