



TALLY HO!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 609 (WEST RIDING) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2017 | NUMBER 1

WELCOME...

...to the first edition of our new-look digital newsletter.

We want our news to reach as many of the Squadron family as possible so please send this copy on to someone you know who may be interested in hearing our news or – better still – joining the Association.

Paper copies are still available – please contact our new Secretary who will be very happy to arrange for one to be posted.

609 TRIVIA

(BUT INTERESTING ALL THE SAME!)

2609 Squadron Trophy found at HQ Air Command

No. 2609 (West Riding) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment was a Light Anti-Aircraft unit serving alongside 609 and 3609 from 1947 until the significant disbandment of all RAuxAF squadrons in 1957. Within these last 12 months a solid-silver trophy belonging to 2609 has been found in the back of a cupboard at RAF High Wycombe, in HQ Air Command no less!

The inscription on it states it was presented by Francis Wall Esq for 'The Best All Round Airman'. How it got there and how long it's been there, no one knows! But it is now back 'home' having been recovered by Group Captain Gavin Hellard, the current Inspector of the RAuxAF, who recognised it as a notable piece of memorabilia and has presented to 609 for safekeeping.



NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK, NEW PEOPLE

2017 sees important new changes to the Squadron and the Association.

Squadron Leader Jeff Metcalfe has 'retired' as OC after completing the maximum of eight years in command. He takes up a new part-time role as the RAF Liaison Officer for Yorkshire and The Humber in the rank of Wing Commander, but remains our Chairman.

The Squadron has a new OC, Squadron Leader Mervyn Ashe. See page 3.

SAC Sarah McGhin, who is currently serving as a Human Resources Administrator at RAF Leeming, is our new Secretary.

I am your Newsletter Editor, Adele Hudson. My late father, Paul Hudson, served as 2540637 SAC Hudson PT from 1951 -1953 (National Service). I am very proud to edit the Newsletter in his memory – this one's for you, Dad, with all my love always.

We hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter. It's YOUR newsletter and suggestions, articles, and notices are always welcome – contact details are on page 12. The next edition will be published in Autumn 2017.

80TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS...
see inside...



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

At last year's AGM I was casting a gloomy picture of an uncertain future for the Association based on the fact that the membership was falling, potential new members were not being identified and recruited, and folks were just not turning up for the events, prompting the Committee to question whether to continue with it at all.

Well, we do care about our Association, and it would be a sad day if we just let it wind up without a fight, so various initiatives were suggested, this Newsletter being just one. As I see it the future of the Association lies well and truly with all those currently serving on the Squadron now and with all those who have served on 609 since 1999. Our veterans of the 1930s, 40s and 50s are small in number and, let's be honest, have done their bit in more ways than one. It's time for us to ensure the Association's future, by that I mean those who have been on the present day Squadron since reformation, including me. I was there at the start and I know you all.

I thoroughly understand that views on this will vary widely so if the Association has to change to meet the needs and expectations of current and future members, then so be it. But you need to speak up and let those views be known – all too often in these last few years I've been made aware of a problem after the event and by then it's too late to do anything about it. Sorry to be blunt, you know me well, this is how I operate and for the benefit of the Association things sometimes need to be said in a straightforward and frank manner.

So what are we going to do about the situation?

- New Committee Members have joined: Sarah McGhin and Adele Hudson as Secretary and Newsletter Editor respectively and John Carruthers as the current Squadron Representative. They will bring new perspectives and ideas.
- The Newsletter is relaunched in digital format, this being Issue 1, which will hopefully appeal to a wider audience.
- Alan Hayman has embarked on an update to the Association website.
- I've joined the 609 Facebook Group! Now that was a surprise I know, but it's the only way to contact ex-Squadron members. As far as I'm concerned anyone

who has served on 609 can join this closed group and that also includes their immediate families. I've automatically enrolled all those I've come across online, more than doubling the membership in a fortnight and chat has started on the subject of social functions...

- It is proposed to hold more informal get-togethers, perhaps quarterly or half-yearly. These would be in addition to the AGM and Annual Lunch. They don't have to be in the same place each time, but good transport links would be essential. York has already been suggested due to the good rail links from across the region. If the Association becomes more of a social club, then fantastic! It'll mean we all keep in contact personally, not just online, and by doing that the Association will survive.
- Subsidised trips to say, the IWM Manchester, Duxford, the National Arboretum, a brewery visit? And for the more adventurous, a hop across the Channel to Ypres, the Somme or to Normandy would not be beyond possibility. Suggestions welcome!
- Reviewing terms of membership, the annual subscription and other matters of policy, in order to appeal to a wider audience.

But all of this depends on more members joining, taking an interest, making their views known, and turning out to support events.

The future is in our hands! Let's do something about it before it's too late?

TALLY-HO!

Jeff Metcalfe



CHANGE OF COMMAND AT 609 SQUADRON



Squadron Leader Mervyn J Ashe MBE GCGI RAF

Sqn Ldr 'Merv' Ashe has now taken command of 609 Sqn at RAF Leeming.

He is a 'career airman' with very nearly 40 year's service completed, having joined the Royal Air Force in July 1977. He rose steadily through the ranks achieving the rank of Warrant Officer in October 2005. In 2008 he was one of a very small number of outstanding Warrant Officers to be specially chosen for Commissioning to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He has left the regular RAF in order to become Full Time Reserve Service having been selected by a Command Promotion Board to fill the post of Officer Commanding 609 Sqn.

He has extensive experience of worldwide RAF operations, serving on 1, 11, 3, 27, 51 and 66 Sqns RAF

Regiment, the Light Armour Training Sqn at Catterick, Ground Defence Training at Wildenrath, Initial Officer Training at Cranwell and the Force Protection Centre/Force Protection HQ at Honington, to name just a few!

These postings have taken him to the far corners of the world – Belize, Ulster, Cyprus, Yemen, Croatia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kenya, Tunisia, Libya, Albania, Germany, USA, Qatar and beyond!

He enjoys several sports, with cycling, skiing, golf and running being the favourites and his hobbies and other interests include Manchester United, shooting and military history. He lives in Billingham with his partner and has a daughter.

Merv is relishing the challenges of commanding 609 and looks forward to leading the Sqn to many future successes.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

We Will Remember Them: 3rd November 2016

Association members gathered at Leeds Bradford Airport on 3 Nov 16 to lay wreaths at the Squadron Memorials in remembrance of those lost during the Second World War and since. Once again, Mr John Parkin, CEO of LBA, supported the event with a Service of Commemoration conducted by the Airport Chaplain.



NEW ROYAL AUXILIARY AIR FORCE MEMORIAL 2014

The Auxiliary Air Force & Royal Auxiliary Air Force Memorial is situated at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire. It was originally created by the Trustees of the RAuxAF Foundation in 2004 and was refurbished during a 2013-14 project managed by Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) Alfie Hall. Squadron and Association members attended the Rededication Ceremony in 2014, the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain event in 2015 and the subsequent annual commemoration event in 2016. Of note are the impressive eagle, the engraved black granite panels, the Memorial Stones, and the benches on the eight sides of the outer perimeter, all of which are wooden except for the solid granite bench dedicated to 609 Sqn (funded by donations from the Association fund, the Sqn Fund and many personal contributions).



80TH ANNIVERSARY 1936 - 2016

Leeds-Bradford Airport 10th February 2016

This took place on the actual day of the 80th Anniversary hosted by Mr John Parkin (CEO) and his staff. Current members of the Sqn attended together with 609 and 3609 veterans from the 1950s. Also attending was the Sqn Honorary Air Commodore, Air Cdre Simon Bostock, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, the Lord Mayors of Leeds and Bradford and the Lib Dem MP for Leeds North West, Mr Greg Mulholland. Following a reception, speeches, a short service of commemoration conducted by the airport chaplain and several interviews for the press, all guests were taken onto the airfield to witness the flypast by Hawk aircraft from 100 Sqn at RAF Leeming. A memorable day to celebrate our 80th Anniversary!



80th Anniversary Dinner 5th March 2016 St George Hotel Tees Valley Airport

A Squadron Formal Dinner to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the formation of 609 was held on 5 March 2016 at the St George Hotel, Tees Valley Airport, a venue used several times in the last few years. Our honoured guests for the evening included the RAF Leeming Station Commander, Group Captain David Bradshaw and our four comrades from Belgium, Boomer, Conrad, Kurt and Philippe, who had flown in specially to be with us on this notable occasion. The evening was a tremendous success and thanks must go to Sgts Ray Fisher and Jenny Jeffels for all their hard work in organising the evening and to the Adjutant's wife, Mandy Barker, who provided all the floral decorations and set up the tables. Thanks to you all!



GONE AWAY *traditionally blown on a hunting horn at funerals*

Sir Alec 'Joe' Atkinson *born June 9 1919, died August 8 2015*

Sir Alec Atkinson, who has died aged 96, flew Spitfires and Typhoons during the Second World War before embarking on a distinguished career in the Civil Service.

He joined No 609 (West Riding of Yorkshire) Squadron in December 1940 and flew Spitfires. He was soon flying many sweeps over northern France, often escorting light bombers to their targets. On May 17, 1941 a Messerschmitt Bf 109 damaged his aircraft in an engagement near Dover. Barely able to fly the aircraft after its controls had been shot away, he managed to crash land in a ploughed field near Rochester. The farmer was close by, took one look at the crashed aircraft and carried on with his work.

Later in the year Atkinson was shot down again. This time he was over Boulogne when an enemy fighter attacked him at 2,000 feet. He headed for Kent but was forced to bale out in the middle of the English Channel. Fortunately, a lone Spitfire saw him and radioed his position. Some time later he was picked up from his dinghy by a Royal Navy rescue ship and taken to Naval officer's mess at Dover where it was reported he was well looked after.

After the squadron converted to the Typhoon, he flew many sorties over France attacking ground targets and trains. On January 20 1943 the Luftwaffe attempted a hit and run raid against London. Seven Typhoons were scrambled and in the ensuing air battle, six German aircraft were shot down, one by Atkinson. Two weeks later he damaged a Dornier bomber, and on February 26, he shot down a Focke Wulf 190 off Boulogne.

Atkinson left No. 609 in April 1943 having served on the squadron for more than two years, an unusually long period to fly operations without a rest and longer than any other 609 Squadron pilot. When he left the squadron, having flown hundreds of hours in the RAF's latest fighters, he was still unable to drive a car.

In May 1943 he was awarded the DFC for his "keenness and devotion to duty". Sir Alec Atkinson: he was picked up from his dinghy by a Royal Navy rescue ship

He married Marguerite "Peggy" Pearson in December 1945. She died in 2004. Their daughter survives him.

Extract from Daily Telegraph Obituary



GONE AWAY *traditionally blown on a hunting horn at funerals*

Sir Ken Adam born February 5 1921, died March 10 2016

Sir Ken Adam, the Academy Award-winning film designer, who has died aged 95, awed a generation of moviegoers with his larger-than-life sets projecting megalomaniac power; such creations as the "War Room" in *Dr Strangelove* (1964) and

he had also been one of the first British officers into Belsen.

He won his Oscars with more conservative designs: for *Barry Lyndon* (1975) and *The Madness of King George* (1994). He was

one of his store managers, who had become an Obergruppenführer in the SS. The family escaped to Scotland before settling in London, Klaus taking a job as a glove salesman.

He served in the Pioneer Corps until his sheer persistence earned him acceptance for RAF pilot training (one of very few German-born pilots). Adam flew Typhoons in support of advancing Allied troops after D-Day, then braved roaming German deserters to travel overland to Berlin, where he found the family's apartment and store destroyed and their lakeside retreat commandeered by the Russians.

Ken Adam received the Hollywood directors' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002. He was appointed OBE in 1995 and knighted in 2003. He married Maria-Letizia Moauro in 1952; there were no children.

Extract from Daily Telegraph Obituary



Ken Adam in the war room he designed for Dr Strangelove

the hollow volcano from which James Bond's nemesis Ernst Stavro Blofeld launches spacecraft to provoke nuclear warfare in *You Only Live Twice* (1967) had an influence far beyond the world of entertainment.

Stephen Spielberg reckoned the *Strangelove* set Adam devised for Stanley Kubrick "the greatest in the history of movies". Bond aficionados might nominate Blofeld's caldera, *Dr No's* hideout at Crab Key or *Goldfinger's* deadly "Rumpus Room". Adam disliked the last because the script turned it into a gas chamber, reminding him of the fate suffered by many of his family in Auschwitz;

awarded Baftas for edgier work: *Dr Strangelove* and *The Ipcress File* (1965) – Adam's kitchen for *Michael Caine* influencing a generation of bachelors to grind their own coffee.

Klaus Hugo Adam was born in Berlin on February 5 1921 to Jewish parents. Fritz Adam had been a highly decorated cavalry officer in the Kaiser's army and owned a fashionable department store; he had just commissioned Mies van der Rohe to design a modernistic new branch when Hitler came to power.

His father was arrested, and only freed days later through the intervention of



Ken Adam with one of his Oscars

SQUADRON NEWS

Strengthening Squadron Belgian Links

Since the last newsletter, the Sqn has attended another event in Belgium in response to an invitation from our dear friends Conrad Roumieux, Kurt Plyson and Omer van den Bosch, universally known as 'Boomer'.

The contingent was led by Flying Officer Anth Barella ably assisted by Sqn Warrant Officer Kim Ashe (or should that be the other way around?).

The main location was the old wartime airfield B-67 at Ursel, where 609 were based in late 1944. A new memorial to the Typhoon squadrons of the 2nd Tactical Air Force was unveiled, there were receptions, speeches and everything seemed to conclude with another few beers! Again we are most grateful for the hospitality afforded to us by our Belgian comrades and the opportunity to renew and continue the links we have with the Belgian Air Force and the Belgian Branch of the Association.



SQUADRON NEWS

Lest We Forget: The Squadron in Normandy

A Sqn contingent visited Normandy to conduct a field trip and visit various sites. In addition to the usual places like the Landing Beaches, Pegasus Bridge and Museums, particular cemeteries were sought out in order to find the graves of 609 pilots, who were killed during the lead up to and during the Normandy Campaign.

The attrition rate on the Typhoon squadrons was enormous - roaring in at low level at 400mph to attack

ground targets in the face of intense enemy automatic anti-aircraft fire led to only one thing if hit, an immediate impact with the ground and instant death in a fireball of fuel and exploding munitions. 609 in 1944 was a cosmopolitan unit made up of several nationalities, we paid our respects, planted crosses and little national flags. An impressive memorial is the one to the Typhoon Squadrons at Noyers-Bocage - a very fitting and humbling experience.

There is also a unique 609 grave in the large CWGC at Bayeux, that of

Pilot Officer Paul Baillon, who was shot down and killed during the latter stages of the Battle of Britain. His body wasn't recovered from the Channel at the time and he was washed ashore in Normandy in early 1941 and was buried by the Germans at St Marcouf. He was moved to Bayeux during the construction of the new cemetery. We laid a wreath and some flowers on behalf of his daughter Rosemary and made a toast to a long-lost comrade with a resounding 'Tally-Ho'!



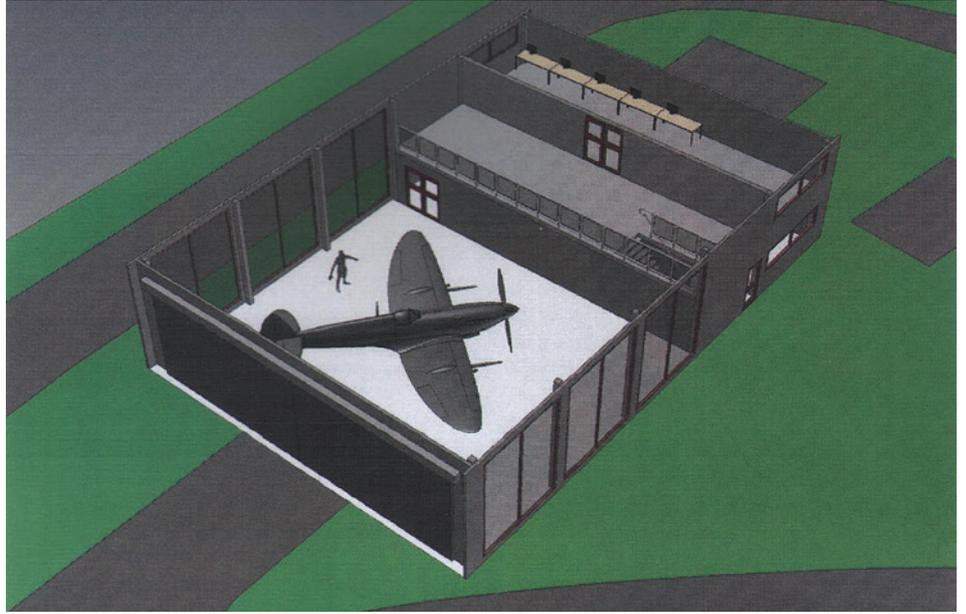
SQUADRON NEWS

Replica 609 Sqn Spitfire

Ratcliffe College is near Leicester and Plt Off Paul Baillon, our Battle of Britain pilot buried in Bayeux in Normandy, was an old boy of the school.

The Art and Design Department, lead by Mr Dominic Berry, is constructing a full-size replica of the Spitfire flown by Plt Off Baillon. Pupils are undertaking this mammoth project in their spare time so as not to interfere with their lessons. The replica will be mainly of wood with some sheet metal and also some actual parts of a real Spitfire. Some commercial assistance and sponsorship has been gladly received, for instance, Dunlop have donated three actual Spitfire tyres. Once completed, the Spitfire will form part of a larger heritage and history centre.

For more information refer to the website: www.ratcliffespitfire.com



RECRUITING NOW!

YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS NEW MEMBERS...

COME AND JOIN US...

(or pass this to a friend)!



- Meet like-minded friends and colleagues
- Share camaraderie
- Receive regular newsletter updates on Association and Squadron news and events
- Discounts off Annual Reunion Lunch
- Social Events



ONLY £15 PER YEAR

e-mail Sarah McGhin - sarahmcghin@gmail.com for membership forms today!

DIARY OF EVENTS 2017

Friday 12 May	Freedom of Richmond Parade by No 2 FP Wing – of interest to current and ex-RAF Regt members.
Saturday 13 May	Service and Rededication of the RAF Regt Chapel in St Anne's Church, Catterick Village – as above.
Friday 23 June	AGM Social Dinner, The Parsonage, Escrick - Details to follow.
Saturday 24 June	AGM and Lunch, Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington 1030hrs - Bookings to Sarah McGhin no later than 20th May.
Wednesday 16 August	Annual Battle of Britain commemoration by 501, 504, 600,602, 603, 605, 607, 609 and 611 Sqns at National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire – details to follow.
Visits (TBC)	IWM Manchester, Royal Armouries, RAF Duxford, National Memorial Arboretum – details to follow but will only take place if we can fill a minibus!
Socials (TBC)	Interest has been shown in more frequent informal social gatherings, perhaps quarterly, with first one in April or early May. - Join this conversation on the 609 Association Facebook page!

THE SAGA OF THE SQUADRON MASCOT

When 609 reformed in 1999 a replica of the wartime mascot William de Goat was created which travelled everywhere with the Sqn as had his real-life predecessor. A few years later an opportunity arose to formally adopt, as Sqn Mascot, a real goat living at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Murton Park, York. This was Jeffers, who joined 609 as an Officer Cadet working his way up to Flight Lieutenant despite various misdemeanours along the way - tearing down and eating one of the Station Commander's prize saplings at Leeming, butting the lady Mayor of Northallerton up her posterior, relieving himself on Air Cdre Bostock's shoes, leaving several 'deposits' and wrecking the studios of Minster FM in York, killing the Bavarian goat at Murton Park (as usual a fight over women) and many other minor incidents.



He certainly was a character and needed a 'special person' to control him. No, not Jose Mourinho, but none other than Cpl Keith 'Woody' Wood, the 'Goat-Meister' who formed a relationship of sorts with Jeffers where each party knew how far they could go and what the consequences would be if that line was breached.

Unfortunately Flt Lt Jeffers de Goat had to be put down in late 2014 after an illness but he was a fighter to the end - the vet needing to give him as many injections as a rhino before he finally passed away! The King was dead, long live the King, or so we thought, as the understudy now stepped into the limelight. Roger, unfortunately, has not lived up to expectations and has developed into an uncontrollable adolescent, mainly because he was growing up without the guiding hand of Cpl Wood to train and keep him in check, the latter having taken up a new post at RAF Halton. So Roger has had to go and 609 is currently without a mascot although anticipation is growing that Murton Park will acquire a new youngster who will grow into the role with Cpl Wood, now back from Halton, overseeing the training.

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609(WR) Squadron Association
or 609 Squadron (Spitfires)