

(The New) Newsletter No. 1 - March 2015

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Reflection

On January 30, 2015, I was standing in Wulverghem-Lidenhoek Road Military Cemetery, near Ypres (Ieper), Belgium, looking at the gravestone of William George Nichols who was killed during World War 1, on January 30, 1915. William Nichols was the great grandfather of my daughter-in-law, and we had gone there to remember him 100 years to the day since he died. It was a very sobering moment. As we stood there with bright sunlight reflecting on snow, we were able to gaze on the adjacent fields which, in that cold morning light, looked as they might have looked on the day that William Nichols died while defending his country.

The next day, we went to Tyne Cot, the largest Commonwealth Military Cemetery in the world, where nearly 12,000 men lie. On our final day, we went to St Symphorien Military Cemetery near Mons. Here British and Commonwealth dead lie in the same cemetery as German dead and all are remembered together. A new memorial at the entrance states, 'Lest we Forget – 4 August 2014'.

In 2013, I visited the Normandy Beaches. The beaches looked so peaceful, it was hard to imagine the scene on D-Day June 6, 1944, and the days following. And yet, the evidence is there – remains of the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches, Pegasus Bridge at one end (and the Café Gondrée – still owned by the same family as in 1944 and still serving excellent coffee!) and Sainte-Mère-Église at the other, where the church tower still has a model representing an American paratrooper who landed on the tower. Memorials, museums, and the Commonwealth, American and German cemeteries in Normandy serve to help us remember and be grateful.

As we approach the 70th anniversaries of the end of the War in Europe and Japan, the time for reflection has never been more timely. It is important to remember that so many of those pilots trained at Clewiston didn't make it through to the end of World War 2.

Five 5BFTS Facts

Opened in
July 1941 at
Carlstrom
Field

Moved to
Riddle Field
September
25, 1941

26 Courses

1434
graduates
(1325 RAF
and 109
USAAF)

Closed in
September
1945



At the site of Riddle Field on the wall of the Clewiston Airglades reception building, which is dedicated in honor and in memory of all those who were at 5BFTS, there is a plaque, which ends with these words:

'Their efforts to preserve the freedom of the world were not in vain and will never be forgotten'

When I was asked if I would edit a newsletter to keep the 'Old World' in touch with the "New" and the spirit of 5BFTS alive, I thought of a recent 60 minute flight I took, not in a Harvard AT-6, but in a P-51 Mustang built in 1944. With my very experienced instructor, I did some basic manoeuvring, stalls and simple aerobatics such as aileron and barrel rolls; this helped me to understand some of the joy and excitement experienced by the cadets as they learnt to fly.

The cadets never forgot why they were in Clewiston (*"we were at war and this did provide a constant purpose to a young man's life"*) and they never forgot the people in Florida who treated the cadets like their own sons and brothers. We, who are the cadets' sons and daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren, will never forget the debt we owe to our fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers. For all those who trained in Clewiston at 5BFTS, including those who died in Florida, those who were killed on active service, those who survived World War 2 but have since 'handed in their Log Books' and those who are still alive – and for their instructors, who must have had endless patience - we say 'thank you'. In this newsletter, we remember two more cadets who have recently handed in their Log Books. David Smith (Co 22) and Sir Jack Hayward (Co 17) died in January this year.

Sir Jack said, "I loved the war and getting my Wings was the best day of my life". Other cadets also say that getting their Wings was their best day, their proudest day and the day they will always remember as special.

I hope that this newsletter will be our shared newsletter and will be a small part of our contribution to keeping the memory of 5BFTS alive. Please let me know what you think. All contributions and comments for future newsletters gratefully received – the next one will be published in the autumn around Harvest time.

Jenny Harding



To remember the 23 cadets who died in training and never left Florida: the Annual British Memorial Service will take place on **Memorial Day, May 25, 2015**, at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, Florida, USA at 10am.

The Service is organised by the Arcadia Rotary Club
Mailing address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492
Telephone for information at 863-444-0664
Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

Useful websites:

Clewiston Museum: <http://www.clewistonmuseum.org>

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives: <http://www.alumni.erau.edu/archives>

#5 British Flying Training School: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>

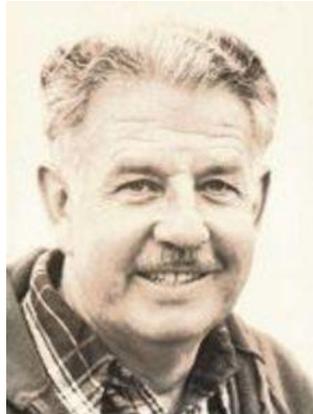
US Contact: Harold Kosola – hkairplane@aol.com

In Memoriam

David J A Smith (Co 22) 1925 - 2015



*Course 22, Clewiston 1944
David is on the left hand side of
the middle row. His good friend,
Ivan Sneezum, is on the right
hand side of the middle row.*



*Obituary photograph published
in RA-AM.com (Republican
American) January 4, 2015*



*David at the ERAU Wings and
Waves Air Show in Daytona
October 9, 2010, after attending
the 5BFTS reunion in Florida.
Photograph by John Hennessy.*

David was born in Shropshire, England, and raised on the Earl of Bradford's estate, where his father was head gardener. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1943, came to Clewiston in August 1944. When he returned to England in April 1945, he discovered that the RAF no longer needed all the pilots they had trained, and so he became a physical fitness officer for the RAF Central Flying School. He left the RAF in 1947. In 1949, he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve and flew a few training missions for the reserve until it was phased out in 1952. Pursuing a love of gardening, David worked for a large English nursery, and in 1954, moved to Connecticut with his wife, Diana to work at the White Flower Farm, Litchfield, CT. He quickly rose to become their Director of Horticulture. He officially retired in 1990 but continued to give lectures and tours of gardens, the passion of his life, until his death.

David was very active in the community. He served seven years as president of the Tri-Town Little League. He was a dedicated member and past president of the Connecticut Horticultural Society, a member of the Litchfield Lions Club, and an active member of St. Michael's Church in Litchfield. His three sons, Robert, Roland and Michael, and five grandchildren survive him.

Wyn Sneezum (wife of Ivan Sneezum, also of Co 22) writes, *"Ivan spoke to David about three weeks before he died. David was especially near to Ivan and his first wife, having been Ivan's best man at their wedding. David had spent Christmas with Robert and his family at their home [in Torrington, CT]. He had been taken into hospital with breathing difficulties, and was discharged into a nursing home after a week in hospital. He died there on January 2, 2015"*.

In a fitting epitaph, Kathleen Hennessy writes, *"It was an honor and privilege to get to know this wonderful man with such a big heart and great love for his family and friends, the 5BFTS, ERAU, and horticulture. He was a true gentleman and will be deeply missed"*.

Sir Jack Arnold Hayward (Co 17) June 14, 1925 – January 13, 2015

Sir Jack Hayward was a philanthropist of uncommon generosity and a British patriot to the point of eccentricity. A modest man with an unruly shock of white hair, Hayward listed his

recreations in Who's Who as "promoting British endeavours, mainly in sport. . . preserving the British landscape, keeping all things bright, beautiful and British". He became known as "Union Jack". Although born in Wolverhampton, Hayward lived for most of his life in the Bahamas, where he flew the union flag on his Rolls Royce, and otherwise drove about in a London black cab. He imported London double-decker buses, red pillar-boxes and red telephone kiosks.



Cadet Jack Hayward at Clewiston – Course 17



Flying Officer Jack Hayward No 671 Squadron RAF, Belgaum, India 1945



*Sir Jack Hayward
Obituary photograph published in The Daily Telegraph January 13, 2015*

In the 1950s, he persuaded his father to put £1 million into the Freeport development and became administrative vice-president of the new Grand Bahama Port Authority, overseeing the development, and then chairman in 1976. Jack Hayward threw himself into the life of island pioneer, working hard to transform the bush around Freeport into a city, in the process becoming very rich. He was both publicly and privately generous, and indeed, of all his pursuits, he seemed to derive most satisfaction from giving his money away.

Projects included buying Lundy Island, a wildlife sanctuary off the north Devon coast, for the National Trust, financing Chay Blyth's Great Britain yachts and funding two tours of the England women's cricket team to the West Indies between 1969 and 1971. Most audaciously, in 1970, he financed a £150,000 expedition to the Falklands to salvage SS Great Britain, the first steam ship to cross the Atlantic. Isambard Kingdom Brunel's ship was towed back to Bristol and Hayward ploughed a further £500,000 into its restoration. He later invited Paul Getty Jnr to match his £500,000 to complete the vessel's restoration. He spent £100,000 on saving the sloop Gannet (the Royal Navy's only survivor of the transition from sail to steam) and contributed another £100,000 to help raise the Mary Rose (a Tudor warship which sank after action against a French invasion fleet in 1545). After the Falklands conflict, he gave £1 million towards the replacement of the fire-damaged hospital in Port Stanley, and a further £1 million to the widows and orphans of those who had died during the fighting. He was also a donor to the Battle of Britain London Monument on The Embankment.

In 1990, he became owner and chairman of his beloved Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club. As a child in the early 1930s, Jack crawled under the turnstiles to watch 'Wolves' on Saturday afternoons and although he dodged the few pennies admission price then, he more than repaid the debt when he bought the club for £2.1 million in 1990. Although expected to achieve instant success, it then took 13 years for the club to reach the Premier League in 2003 - only to be relegated the next season. He eventually sold control of the club, in 2007.

With his crumpled clothes and pockets stuffed with bits of paper, Hayward looked "more like an absent-minded retired geography teacher than one of the richest men in the world". He relaxed by watching cricket (he was a life member of Surrey CC) and taking part in amateur dramatics — he built an excellent modern theatre at Freeport for the local Players' Guild, of which he was a leading actor. In addition to his home in Freeport, he owned a farm in Sussex and was Laird of Dunmaglass, a 14,000-acre estate near Inverness. He was appointed OBE in 1968 and knighted in 1986. In 1948, he married Jean Forder, with whom he had two sons and a daughter. Jack Hayward died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, aged 91 years.

Jack Hayward, Clewiston and the RAF

In 1941, Jack volunteered for the RAF. He trained as a pilot, first in in Yorkshire and then as part of 5BFTS Course 17. Amongst other postings, he served in 671 Squadron S.E. Asia Command in India, flying Dakota transporters on the hazardous supply route to the 14th Army in Burma. While in India he crashed his Tiger Moth when trying out a “my next trick is impossible!” manoeuvre! All that survived were Hayward and the propeller, which took pride of place in his office in Freeport.

He was demobbed as a Flight Lieutenant in 1946. Many years later, in 2013, he spent his 90th birthday at an RAF-themed party at the Sir Charles Hayward Yacht Club, home of the Grand Bahama Sailing Club, which was named after his father. Sir Jack Hayward was a major sponsor of the restoration of both the C47 Dakota and the Waco CG-4 (Hadrian) assault glider. The glider will be displayed in the markings of one of the aircraft flown by Sir Jack during his World War II service in Burma

Chance meeting revives memories of No. 5 British Flying Training School

The following has been abridged from an article written by Sara Withrow, which was first published two years ago in LIFT. SPRING 2013. ERAUALUMNI.ORG.

David Smith [see ‘In Memoriam’ above] of Litchfield, Conn., and Ronald McDonald of Tampa, Fla., are miles and years apart, literally. David, 87, is a retired horticulturalist. Ronald is 30 years his junior and makes a living as an aircraft mechanic. Before 2012, the two men had never met. But when they came face to face on October 13 at Embry-Riddle’s Alumni Weekend in Daytona Beach, they discovered a common heritage that dates back to the 1940s and Embry-Riddle’s No. 5 British Flying Training School (BFTS).

Ronald’s late-father, Raymond Bankston “Mac” McDonald, came to Riddle Field in the spring of 1943 to train pilots for the war and on June 17, 1943, was officially inducted into the U.S. Army’s Air Corps Enlisted Reserve to be an instructor and squadron commander at No. 5 BFTS. When 5BFTS closed at the end of the war in 1945, Mac was discharged from the Army Air Corps and took a job with National Airlines (acquired by Pan Am in 1980).

David of Co 22, began pilot training in late-August 1944, but does not recall having Mac as an instructor.

The Twist

Unfortunately, Mac never got the chance to share his memories of 5BFTS with his son, Ronald. In 1960, the single-engine Piper Tri-Pacer, in which he was a passenger, disappeared over the jungles of Costa Rica. *“He was missing and presumed dead for 20 years,”* Ronald says. *“We never heard another word from him.”*

In August 1980, Ronald finally learned of his father’s fate. *“I got a call from my brother saying a Pan Am worker had phoned and told him the wreckage had been found.”* Piecing together the details, Ronald found out that Mac, who was a check pilot for National Airlines, had traveled to Costa Rica to pick up a repaired DC-4. *“Dad was waiting for them to fix an oil leak on the plane and had a two-day layover in San Jose [Costa Rica].”* On September 8, 1960, Mac and a co-worker, Leon Blanks, were invited to fly to a plantation on the coast with two American businessmen living in Costa Rica. Signs from the wreckage indicated that the aircraft ran out of fuel before crashing.

Ronald went down to Costa Rica on September 8, 1980, 20 years to the day after Mac went missing. *“We drove up into the mountains and hiked for four hours into the jungle to the wreckage,”* Ronald says. Mac’s shoes, credit cards, dental work and pocket watch were recovered. *“The watch was still in good shape after 20 years in the jungle.”* Longing for the

time with his father that he will never have, Ronald decided to seek out others who may have known him. It was this quest that led him to Embry-Riddle and to David Smith.



Raymond 'Mac' McDonald, center, takes a break with fellow BFTS instructors;



Ronald McDonald, left, and David Smith reminisce at Embry-Riddle's Alumni Weekend with photos of Ronald's father

Notes from the 'Old World'



I am taking a leaf out of John Potter's book here! In the original 5BFTS newsletters, John (5BFTS Association President) used to write a regular column, called 'Notes from the New World', in which he included information sent to him by American friends. I hope our American friends will find it interesting to hear about some things that are happening in the UK in 'Notes from the 'Old World'!

UK National Memorial Arboretum

This is 'the UK's living tribute to the service and sacrifice of so many for our freedom'.

In 2001, the 5BFTS Association was advised about the proposed National Memorial Arboretum that was being created on some 150 acres at Alrewas in Staffordshire. The Association agreed to donate at least £150 for a tree and a donor's plaque to be situated in the proposed RAF Grove. Donations were also invited from members and the final total was £1100. This provided a small grove of three North American birch trees and two English Birch trees (5 for Number 5) and an information board, which stands in the shade of the birch trees and forms an entrance to the RAF Wings site.

On September 22, 2002, the formal planting took place. John Potter did a fine job with a silver spade, which had recently used by Her Majesty the Queen for a similar purpose!

I visited the Arboretum in October 2014 and can confirm that the trees are looking very well indeed and in good condition, but unfortunately noticed that the information board was now in need of some restoration. I am planning to write to the National Arboretum to see how they are proposing to maintain the



various boards around the site and will let you know the outcome in the next newsletter.

Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (RAFBBMF)

This flight has 14 aircraft (6 spitfires and two each of Hurricanes, Lancasters, Dakotas and Chipmunks), which are regularly seen at events commemorating World War II, on British State occasions, notably the Trooping the Colour celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's birthday and at air displays throughout the United Kingdom and Europe.

It is possible to visit the BBMF Visitor Centre at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire. Since opening its doors in 1986, the Visitor Centre has welcomed over 300,000 people, offering them the opportunity to see the Flight's historic aircraft at close quarters and to observe the BBMF technicians working to maintain them in airworthy condition. The Visitor Centre is open Monday to Friday 10.00am - 5.00pm.

For further information, prices and details please check the BBMF Visitor Centre Website www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/bbmf

The Flight commemorates the past of the RAF's Air Combat Power - **Lest We Forget**

Pilots mark wartime bridge raid

On March 4, 2015, one of the BBMF spitfires and an RAF Typhoon flew over the Forth Bridge (which spans the Firth of Forth between Edinburgh and Fife) to mark the 125th anniversary since the bridge was opened on March 4, 1890 and also remember its place in wartime history.



The Forth Bridge Raid in October 1939 was the Luftwaffe's first bombing mission over Britain and the first time that Spitfires engaged the enemy whose target was the naval base at Rosyth, where they hit three ships, killing 16 crew. Three enemy aircraft were shot down.



Clewiston Museum Update

Jeff Barwick writes:

Thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of the No. 5 BFTS Association, we have received their archives. Your newsletter editor, Dr. Jenny Harding, graciously came to Clewiston shortly after receipt of the shipment and assisted in properly documenting the collection for safekeeping and inventory purposes. Also thanks to collaboration between Jenny, Kevin Montgomery at Embry-Riddle, and the Museum, her book on her

father George Hogarth (Course 3) is now published on the ERAU website with links connecting it to the Museum website. Also, the ERAU collection of digitized Flypapers is also being linked to our Museum website.

The Museum continues to receive visitors with interests in those flying days at Riddle Field. The Museum website is www.clewistonmuseum.org. The website also has links to our extensive collection of 5BFTS photos which are stored on the University of Florida's historical archives. The digitization of the Flypapers, the photographs and stories such as the one on George Hogarth ensure that the story of 5BFTS is recorded for eternity.

GEORGE HOGARTH CLEWISTON AND BEYOND

The memoirs of George Hogarth, a young Royal Air Force (RAF) cadet from Edinburgh who was trained during World War 2 at the No. 5 British Flying Training School at Riddle Field in Clewiston, Florida. No. 5 British Flying Training School (BFTS) was operated by the Riddle-McKay Aero College division of the Embry-Riddle School of Aviation. Compiled by his daughter, Dr. Jenifer A. Harding.

<http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/>

Jenny Harding writes: On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick and Curator, Butch Wilson, for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum. Only the other day, I heard about some people who had just returned to the UK from America. They were overjoyed at the reception they found when they visited the museum, and said how kind, friendly and informative the museum staff were. Thank you and keep up the good work!

Meeting up

It is always great when 'children' of 5BFTS veterans get together, and on December 22, 2014, it was the turn of Tuck Renshaw to meet with William and Ann Coleman at the home of Tuck's cousin, James, in Coolidge, Arizona. Tuck's father, Fred T Renshaw, was an American cadet on Course 12 and William's father was a flight instructor from 1942 to August 1945.

William writes: "Tuck Renshaw and I belong to a speakers group here in Tucson, Arizona. Several years ago at lunch we started talking about flying and lo and behold we discovered both our dads were in Clewiston at the same time. My dad had learned to fly in the 1930's in New York State, after paying \$5 at the county fair and experiencing his first flight in an open cockpit double winger. In the winter of 1942-43 my mom, my two brothers and I joined my dad in Clewiston. John Broom [Last 5BFTS Chairman], who I met in Bedford, England, in 2012 at the 5 BFTS reunion, remembers my dad as his flight instructor. My dad passed away in 1985.

My dad worked for IBM before the war and returned there after the war. He did some private instructions for several years but ceased doing that when the plane he was flying lost power and he did a belly flop on the Susquehanna River in New York. I believe the year was 1947".

Fly Paper¹ of May 28, 1943 describes the graduation of Course 12 cadets. The writer starts

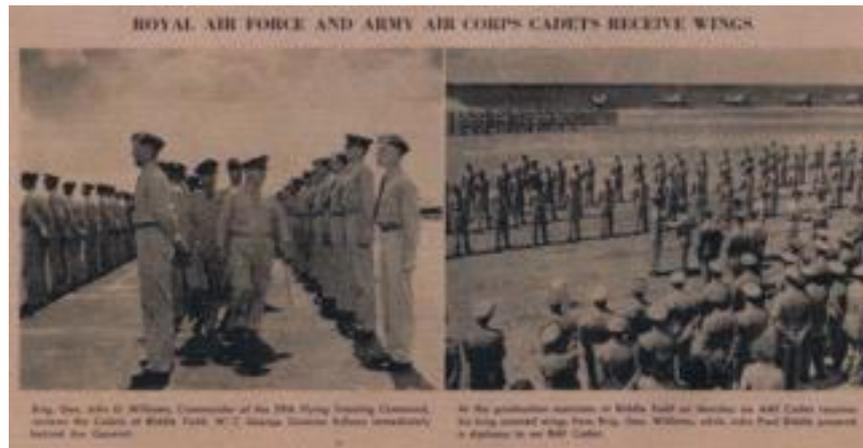
¹ Embry Riddle Flypaper "Stick to it" was the official newsletter of Embry-Riddle from 1940 through 1957. During World War Two the newsletter was published weekly. It included information about Riddle Aeronautical Institute at Carlstrom Field and Dorr Field, Arcadia, and the Riddle-McKay Aero College, Riddle Field, Clewiston.

by saying that “one of the good things that has resulted from this war is the very great improvement in British-American relations”, and goes on to say that “*Right here in Riddle Field we have an excellent example of these fine relations*” and that “*Royal Air Force and Army Air Force cadets are training here side by side and the spirit of comradeship and cooperation is a great thing to see*”. The report continues with a quote from [British] Prime Minister, Winston Churchill who said in his recent address to the Congress, that “*The experience of long life and the promptings of my blood have bought me to a conviction that there is nothing more important for the future of the world than the fraternal association of our two peoples in righteous work both in war and peace*”. And that fraternal association was exemplified by the Cadets graduation on May as both British and American cadets learnt together and received their Wings together at the graduation ceremony the previous week. At the Listening Out party, held at the Sugarland Auditorium that evening, toasts were made to both the President (by the RAF cadets’ Commanding Officer, W/C George Greaves) and the King (by the Riddle Field General manager, Mr Tyson).



*5BFTS Course 12:
USAAF Cadet F T Renshaw*

Note the different headgear worn by the American cadets



During the day, Tuck, James, William and his wife, Ann, met Harold Kosola at a Greek restaurant in Florence, Arizona.



From L-R: William, Tuck, James, Ann and Harold

Tuck S - If you read this, perhaps you can let us know what Fred did after 5BFTS.....

From the Archives for March.....

On March 12, 1942 Course 3 graduated

On Friday March 13, 1942, The Clewiston News reported that Air Marshall DCS Evill of Washington presented Wings to 46 graduating RAF cadets. Afterwards, for the entertainment of more than 200 people attending the ceremony, nine of the class piloted an advanced

training plane in formation led by Flight Commander K Rampling, and two others put their planes through stunts normally taught during the course. Only four cadets from Course 3 failed to graduate and the names of the 46 graduating cadets are listed in the newspaper; one is my father, George Hogarth.

Course 3 was known as the 'University Flight' because all fifty cadets came from the University Air Squadrons of the Universities of Edinburgh, Oxford, and Cambridge. Because of this, all 46 cadets who graduated were commissioned on March 14, 1942, and returned to the UK as Pilot Officers (normally only about 10% of cadets were commissioned from each course). The front of Course 3's 'Listening Out' includes the mysterious letters, CUAS, EUAS and OUAS – not a secret language known only to these RAF cadets, but simply the abbreviations of the Cambridge University Air Squadron, Edinburgh University Air Squadron and Oxford University Air Squadron - as was clarified in Flypaper of March 19 (where it was explained that the *"boys came from these famous English Universities"* – Edinburgh is, of course, in Scotland!!)

On March 19, Fly Paper also included a letter from Syd Burrows (owner of the Colony Hotel, Miami Beach, who hailed from Yorkshire and was very generous to the cadets, offering them accommodation at his hotel at rock bottom prices). Syd wrote, *"Never in my life have I enjoyed such a day as I did on March 12"* when he attended the presentation of Wings *"to my friends in No. 3 Course at Clewiston"*.

On March 5, 1943, Riddle Field had the first fatality in Primary Training

On Friday March 12, 1942, The Clewiston News reported that A B Thompson, 37, a primary instructor, was killed when the Stearman he was in crashed three miles North and two miles West of Riddle Field. The cadet with him was seriously injured but was rapidly recovering. No cause for the crash had then been identified.

On the March 31, 1944, Flypaper devotes page 3 to 'Letters from England'

Mr Thomas Ridd wrote about his son, Sgt Pilot T John Ridd. John Ridd was not at 5BFST but trained at Carlstrom Field in Class 42-F; however, Mr Ridd's sentiments are so similar to those expressed by 5BFST cadets and families that I have included them here. Mr Ridd's letter is dated February 14, 1944, and explains that John flew a Wellington and then a Lancaster on operations over Germany and occupied countries. He died in April 1943 and was buried in Germany.

The point of his letter is to *"express the deepest and grateful thanks of my dear wife and self to all those very kind and thoughtful people in the USA who made my boy's life so happy while he was with you in training. Words cannot express our gratefulness for all they did, but the wealth of their generosity will ever be a fragrance in our memory of our only gallant son who sallied forth on operational duties with equally gallant and heroic men of the country in which he received his training"*.



Another letter from Flying Officer, Albert E Sloman (Co 3), described service in the Mediterranean and North Africa and continued, *"Like other fellows who were first introduced to flying at Riddle Field, I have many happy memories both of the life in the school and the experiences of our "time off"*.

This picture of Cadet Albert Sloman (Co 3) receiving his Wings was published in Flypaper, March 19, 1942

RIDDLE ROUND-UP in this same edition notes that:

'Swot Week' was upon Course 17 who was due to graduate on April 15.

Course 18 recorded a 5 points to nothing victory over Course 19 at rigger thanks to 'Crasher' White doing the honours with a converted touchdown.

Course 19 remarked that once again, Course 18 were "*shooting the line' about their indomitable Rugby XV and doubt whether they will be able to keep up this 'All Black²' record.* If they are not too fatigued after gaining their latest overpowering victory, we, the defeated, are willing to accept a further game with our superior brothers.

- The swimming pool was open again (Editor's query: why was it closed?);
- The Aircraft Recognition examination proved a little difficult for a few members, but the majority attained the required standard;
- Course members reaching the ocean this weekend appeared to have had a good time. Flight Commander Peter Norman King apparently had a wizard time in Palm Beach!

On March 31,1945, Course 22 graduated

On Friday April 6, 1945, the Clewiston News reported that Air Commodore H E Nowell, OBE, presented Wings to the graduating cadets from Course 22. He told them that they would be arriving back in England "*in time for the final rush*". John G McKay presented the diplomas.

And in March 15, 1945, there are more letters from the UK in Flypaper...

LE Wheble wrote that his son, F/Lt L J Wheble (Co 7) had been awarded the DFC but so far was unable to accept it as he was in a prisoner of war camp in Germany. To his surprise, F/Lt Wheble met Douglas Truscott (also from Co 7) in the camp.

Bob Lasham (Co 4) wrote that he was now a staff pilot flying Hurricanes having survived two tours as a "*bomber boy*" and was getting used to flying with one engine again rather than 4! Also with him as staff pilots were W/O 'Nobby' Clarke (Co 6) and F/O Roy Mather (Co 12), the latter having completed a tour flying Lancasters. Bob mentions Bomber Boys, F/O Tony Malliason, Co 4, (just completed his first Tour) and F/O Harry Forrest, Co 5, (just been awarded the DFC). W/O Arthur Bryant, (Co 4), still flying fighters somewhere on the Continent of Europe, was getting married. Bob himself was married October 1944.



5 BFTS - Course 4

Arthur Bryant (back row LHS), Bob Latham (Middle row RHS) and Tony Malliason (front row RHS)

Round Riddle in that month of March 1945 recorded that while winter still holds on throughout most of the United States, "*we, who dwell in the Everglades, are enjoying*

² 'All Blacks' is the official nickname of the New Zealand national rugby union team. They are the leading Test match points scorers of all time. They are the only international side with a winning record against every country they have played, and since their international debut in 1903 only five nations have defeated New Zealand in Test matches.

Florida's typical sunshine and good weather. Day in and day out our training flights take off on schedule and each hour marks the rapid transition from raw recruit to the seasoned pilot. Our Instructors seem at last to have relaxed after the strain of our first solos and now indulgently smile at our efforts to get them down in three points [perfect landing], although from appearances some cadets still are under the impression that any landing that you can walk away from is a good one".

On March 15, 1974, George Hogarth (5BFTS archivist) wrote to ERAU as follows:

No 5 British Flying Training School, Clewiston, Florida.

Reunion Visit by ex-cadets, November 1973

The harsh roar of the AT6, better known to the RAF as the Harvard, was suddenly heard over an almost derelict airfield in Southern Florida. It was a lovely November day with the temperature well into the 80s, and 38 pairs of eyes looked skywards to try and identify the sources of the noise. Soon the aircraft landed, and for 16 of the people present, there was only one place to go, and go they went – to clamber all over the aircraft, to sit in the cockpit, even to try – somewhat gingerly – the controls.

This was an RAF reunion; and a rather special reunion. For 15 of the pilots who had trained at this airfield – Clewiston – in the years 1941 to 1945, had come back from Scotland, England and Wales to relive their memories, to sample yet again, the wonderful American hospitality, and to have a holiday far away from the problems at home. And they were joined in Florida by one of their number who, after the War had decided that Miami was the only sensible place to live – and has lived there ever since.



16 ex-cadets at Riddle Field in 1973 (Course number in brackets)

L-R: Back row: L Moore (17), Mick Cooper, Ian (Jock) Blue (3), Harry Leeks (5), Gordon Newsham (24), George (3), unknown, Gerry Beardsmore (24)

Front row includes: Frank Rees (6), T Clanzy (9), C Fraser (4), Sid Slape (6)

In photograph but not identified: D Harris (13), L Clarkson (15), C Clarke (17) A Findlay (20)

All are members of the No. 5 BFTS Association, which flourishes on this side of the Atlantic having as its members, ex-cadets who trained at Clewiston; and in Florida, where the ex-instructors, many of whom are now airline pilots, keep together and form the American branch of the Association. The Harvard was a real surprise; unknown even to most of the Americans present, it had been flown in by the son of one of the instructors, and was the highlight of the return to Clewiston.

As was to be expected, there was a lot of nostalgia around. It might be tales of daring flying exploits over the Everglade swamps; it might be Jock Blue, once a Typhoon pilot and now a doctor in the Lake District, who mourned that he just 'couldn't find Miami Beach' because of the concrete buildings now lining the waterfront; it might be George Hogarth, an ex-night fighter pilot now living in peaceful Worcestershire, who spent most of the holiday with the family who entertained him, and his friends, in 1941 – 'we got exactly the same hospitality we received 30 years ago; it was terrific'; perhaps more sadly, Alex Findlay, a welfare officer in Aberdeen, had hoped to visit just such a family, but he found that the elders had died, and their children grown and scattered.

A visit, on behalf of the Association, was made to the cemetery in Arcadia, 130 or so miles to the north, where 23 of the wartime trainees, mainly from Clewiston, lie buried beneath the lime trees, their graves beautifully tended by the Rotary Club of Arcadia and their friends.

But it wasn't all reliving the past; during the fourteen days, a lightening tour was made of Cape Canaveral and the Space Centre, Disneyworld was visited, and the visitors became children again, at least in spirit; and at Cypress Gardens, flying of a different kind – kite flying with a water skier reaching a height of 300ft propelled by motor boat and gliding down to land on water skis – was seen and voted 'much more dicey than our type of flying'.

The American branch of the Association, as was to be expected, enjoyed the reunion activities as much as anyone. On the first day, a welcoming party was held at the home of ex-instructor, Jim Cousins, when over 70 people were present and the old days of Clewiston were remembered and discussed for hours. The visit to Clewiston itself came a day or two later, and the last night was enlivened (and considerably lengthened) by a dinner given in honour of the visitors, when toasts were drunk, mementoes exchanged, and friendships re-cemented.

The No. 5 BFTS Association is flourishing; but more members are wanted. And there must be plenty of them about – so far, only about 10% of the total potential membership has been contacted. The Secretary of the Association is Tony Linfield; he lives at Roundabout Cottage, West Chiltington, Pulborough, Sussex. If anyone reading this was trained at Clewiston, or knows of anyone who was, please get in touch with him: he'll be delighted to hear from you.

George Hogarth (Co 3)

Editor's note: George Hogarth is my late father. In a personal record of this time in Florida, he recalls that for part of this trip, he stayed with the family in Fort Myers who looked after him, and his three Edinburgh friends, so well thirty years ago. They were still living in the same house where George and his friends had spent so many happy weekends. The house had changed very little and the apartment over the garage where the cadets used to sleep was just the same. George and Wendy, his wife, slept there again.

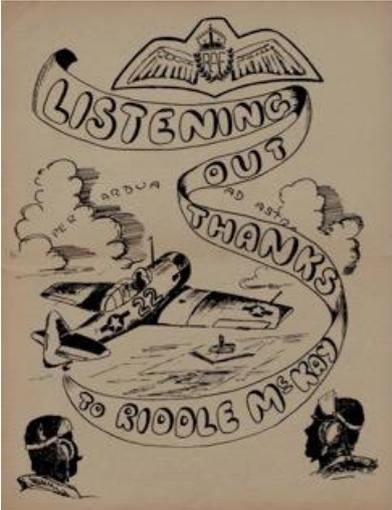
And finally – from Spring 2013

John Broome, Chairman, reminded 5BFTS Association members that they had agreed that reunions should continue until finances were exhausted or until their 50th Anniversary. With much regret, John said that the upcoming reunion in September coincided with both criteria and would be the last. He continued by saying that there were too many people to mention who had contributed to the association which had given pleasure and friendship to so many, and that, "sadly, so many are no longer here to receive our thanks and appreciative congratulations. Many have welcomed us into their homes. We will not forget those happy occasions and our memories of a happy shared friendship will warm our hearts in future years".

Jenny Harding writes: On behalf of the families of 5BFTS veterans, please can I thank all those who contributed to organising the 5BFTS Association over their 50 years. In a future edition, I will include a little about the history of the Association as a tribute to all those who took part in Association events – the Chairmen, the Committee and the members, all of whom had a part to play. Thank you to you all.

The next newsletter will be published in September or October 2015. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of August. The more you tell me, the more interesting the newsletter will be – and I would especially like to hear if anyone worked with, or knows, any of the people mentioned in this newsletter. Anecdotes, stories and pictures would be great. So - over to you!

Course 3 Listening Out “Thanks for the Memory” ends with a *“thank you to all the friends they made and until we meet again, “good-bye to y’all”*. So ‘Good-bye from me to y’all as well - until the next newsletter!



Listening Out – Course 22

