



XXIV SQUADRON ASSOCIATION ROYAL AIR FORCE

President: Air Commodore Richard Gould CBE MA BSc FRAeS
Chairman: Group Captain Keith Chapman MPhil BA

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT RAF LYNEHAM 7 OCTOBER 2006

Members attending: Messrs R Gould (President), K Chapman (Chairman), C Harley (Deputy Chair), K Rayner (Treasurer), D Burgin (Secretary).

R Bates, R Brawn, N Cooper, R Dew, F Godwin, K Groves, L Hagon, G Harradine, J Harris, M Hills, M Long, J Martin, I Nelson, G Norton, D Parkinson, T Paterson, R Payne, O Reardon, D Smith, P Tootal, C Townsend, A Turner, L Warrington, S Webb, C Williams, S Wright. [31 in total]

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to those able to attend this year's AGM and Reunion programme, noting that the Association had reverted to holding these events on the traditional first Saturday in October.

Item 1/2006 Apologies for Absence

The Secretary had received various apologies of absence by letter, phone, electronic mail and word of mouth, along with valuable donations to the Association Fund amounting to more than £250. Among the donors, special mention goes to Mrs Betty Archbell, widow of Wg Cdr Tempest Archbell, (ex-South African Air Force and a former OC XXIV Sqn) who made a generous donation towards the cost of the Association's Centenary gift to the Squadron; to Jack McWicker; and to John Richardson who is suffering from polymyositis.

As in previous years, the complete list of notifications and letters was made available for all attending to read. A full list of apologies is as follows:

Mrs B Archbell (+ donation), C Carrington, D Carter, M Chase, T Clack, M Coumbe, G V Donald, H East (+ donation) W Francis (+ donation), V Hemmings, J Ironside (+ donation), T Johnson, G Jones (+ donation), M Lythgoe, D Marney, J McWicker (+ donation) J Mitchell (+ donation), H Nickson, K Reynolds, J Richardson (+ donation), J Smither (+ donation), B Spurway, D Stewart, M Stringer, M Watkins, A Wilson, R Wright.

Present on day but unable to attend AGM: R Hale.

Item 1.1/2006 In Memoriam

Members stood in silence in remembrance of the following comrades:
Flt Lt Percy Wilson, F Sgt Tommy Walker, MALM David Porter, Corporal Maurice Trowell and Mrs Sylvia Adams. [See also Item 10.2]
A more detailed obituary will be published in the 2007 Newsletter.

Item 2/2006 Minutes of the previous AGM

No observations were raised against the accuracy of the 2005 Minutes, which were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by Mike Long, seconded by John Martin, passed unanimously.

Item 3/2006 Matters Arising

The following actions were left outstanding from the 2005 AGM for the Committee to address:

- Item 4/2005 – The Secretary should include “Centenary Fund” as a permanent agenda item each year. **Complete**
- Item 5/2005 – Treasurer and Secretary to publish the Oct 2005 Year End Accounts with 2005 Minutes.

Not completed in time – now included with 2006 Minutes

- Item 8/2005 – Secretary to book Officers’ Mess for Ladies Guest Night. **Complete**
- Item 9/2005 – Secretary to contact Hotel. The Secretary was tasked to make arrangements with Bibury Court Hotel, Glos, in preparation for the Summer Social. **Complete**
- Item 10/2005 – Treasurer to make donation to Burton Hill House School. **Complete**
- Item 11.1/2005 – Treasurer to set up a special “Centenary Fund” **Complete.**
- Item 11.3/2005 – Squadron Ties - Mike Watkins to liaise with Sqn Adj regarding minimum order of Squadron ZIG ZAG ties. The requirement to place a minimum order for £600, plus lack of interest from serving members of XXIV Sqn, mean that this issue remains unresolved. **On-going**

Item 4/2006 Chairman's Report

The Chairman confirmed that, in line with the decision taken at the 2004 AGM, the format for future Reunion weekends would revert to all main events being held on one day, i.e. the first Saturday of October. [See Item 8 for details of 2007 arrangements]

He expressed appreciation to OC XXIV Sqn and the Squadron liaison team, especially Flt Lt Phil Whitworth, for all their hard work in hosting and helping to organise this year’s Reunion under ever more demanding operational pressures.

Item 5/2006 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer distributed a full set of accounts to all present, outlining income and expenditure for the year ending 31 October 2005, balance for the same period and a Bank reconciliation statement. The net surplus of Income over Expenditure for the year ending 31 October 2005 was £468.92, arising mainly from Reunion events. Special thanks are due to Mike Long whose 2005 raffle raised £105. This figure is included in the surplus.

Generous donations from members continue to give Association funds a welcome (if un-budgeted) boost, for which we are all very grateful. Mrs Archbell's donation of £100 was used to launch the Centenary Fund, which is due to mature in 2015 when XXIV Squadron celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Item 6/2006 Secretary's Report

Item 6.1 Membership

Association numbers have increased with nine additional members joining in the past year, partially offset by the sad loss of the five members mentioned at Item 1. We will continue to advertise our existence in numerous outlets, including the Aircrew Association (who recently gave us two new members), Air Mail, RAFA, BA 25 Year Club, RAF Club, RAF News, Teletext P172 etc.

This advertising is also being undertaken by Internet, e-mails and by our Membership Champion, Mike Long. Individual members are also asked to help by promoting the Association whenever possible. Membership application forms are available from the Secretary or can be downloaded from the Association Web Site.

Item 6.2 Attendance

The 2006 Summer Social at Bibury attracted 17 Association Members and guests, including the new OC XXIV Sqn, Wg Cdr Don Turnbull, and his wife Kirsty. Attendance at daytime reunion events on 7 Oct 06 was 50 vis-à-vis 57 in 2004. About 12 Members met informally at the Hilton Hotel in Swindon the previous evening. This year's dinner in the Officers' Mess attracted 40 members and guests vis-à-vis 30 at our last but one dinner in October 2004. (Last year's figures are not used for comparison because the 2005 90th Anniversary Dinner was a special event organised by XXIV Sqn).

Item 6.3 Newsletter

This year's Newsletter, Summer 2006 (Issue No. 13) ran to 28 pages but was a struggle to produce because, once again, material was pretty scarce. Nevertheless, feedback from readers was complimentary. It is clear that the Newsletter is highly valued as a means of keeping ALL members up to date.

The Secretary repeated his "re-re-request" for a replacement Editor or at the very least for more assistance from members in providing material for the

Newsletter. Such material should ideally be submitted in soft copy - especially photos with brief details. All material will be returned or turned over to the Squadron Historian to add to the comprehensive collection on display at each Reunion. Note also that Issues 5 - 13 are available on the Web Site for reference in **Portable Document File (PDF)** format, which mirrors the look and layout of the original document, showing colour photos where used.

Item 6.4 Summer Social

The Summer 2006 event was held on Wednesday 1 June at the Bibury Court Hotel. (See page 28 of Newsletter Issue 13). This venue once again proved to be more popular than Aviation Sites or Museums, with 17 Association members and guests attending.

Item 6.5 Website

The Association Website is the place to visit to check up on the Diary of Events, Minutes of Meetings, Newsletter articles and links to many other related organisations.

The conflict of priorities between the duties of Newsletter Editor and Website Manager are still holding back efforts to expand and make the Website the focal point and repository for all things connected with XXIV Squadron. The Squadron's ever increasing historical significance should be available both for Members as well as the world at large. This is still the long-term aim.

Our presence is well registered with the most popular search engines on the Internet, and our Website now has a slightly more memorable address www.24sqnassociation.royalairforce.net. The site has expanded thanks to Simon Batchelor (Associate Member) who has provided additional research details of aircraft types flown by XXIV Sqn.

Item 6.6 Sqn Support

The Secretary added his personal thanks for all the support and help received from XXIV Squadron despite so many operational commitments. Special thanks are due to Flt Lt Phil Whitworth and Squadron Execs for organising this year's Reunion events. Mike Long also deserves special mention for his 2006 fund-raising raffle, which raised £160 for Association funds.

Item 7/2006 Annual Election of Officers

With the exception of the Deputy Chairman (Clive Harley) all members of the existing Committee were prepared to serve another term but, as required by the constitution, formally offered themselves for re-election. There were no other candidates for chairman, treasurer and secretary. The sole nomination to take over as Deputy Chairman was Sam Wright, who lives adjacent to the main entrance to the Station and is an active member of the Officers' Mess. Added to his many other qualities, these factors make Sam an ideal choice!

The retiring Deputy Chairman was warmly thanked for his unstinting contribution during his many years on the Committee. Addressing the meeting, he confirmed that he would continue to be an active supporter of the Association.

The above nominations were proposed by Richard Bates, seconded by Clive Harley and unanimously endorsed by the AGM.

Accordingly, the Committee structure for 2006/07 is:

Chairman	Keith Chapman	Deputy Chairman	Sam Wright
Treasurer	Keith Rayner	Secretary	David Burgin

Item 8/2006 Format/Date of Future Association Meetings

The Chairman confirmed that, as agreed at the 2004 AGM, the Association would henceforth revert to the tried and tested format whereby the entire reunion programme takes place on a Saturday. Members will still be able to meet informally in a local pub or hotel on the Friday evening if they so wish.

All Members are asked to get the following dates into their diaries now!

Thursday 7 June 2007 – Summer Social Event [See Item 9]

Friday 5 October 2007 - Evening casual meet and greet at Hilton Hotel, Swindon (venue to be confirmed nearer the time)

Saturday 6 October 2007 - AGM, Reunion lunch, informal afternoon programme, Ladies Guest Night in Service Mess at RAF Lyneham.

Action on Secretary to book Mess¹

Item 8.1 Measures to increase attendance at Association Reunions

In the true spirit of being in the Chair, Keith Chapman had asked for this Agenda item to be included in order to stimulate debate on ways in which more Members could be encouraged to attend Association functions, especially the formal reunion dinner. Introducing this topic, he reminded the AGM that, although numbers attending reunion dinners had improved somewhat since the low point reached in 2004, the Association still needed to consider what additional measures might be taken to encourage even more Members to attend this important feature of the annual reunion. He pointed out that the formal dinner is not only the culmination of the annual reunion but also affords Members the very special privilege of dining in the company of serving Squadron members beneath the XXIV Squadron Standard in the Officers' or Sgts' Mess of an operational Station, whilst enjoying the unique ambience of the traditions and customs of the Service.

¹ Post Meeting note - The Officers' Mess has been selected for the 2007 Reunion due to it having a Minstrel Gallery for the Silver Band.

The Chairman suggested two specific measures that would, in his view, help to encourage greater attendance. First, he thought there would be merit in providing free or heavily subsidised transport between a designated local hotel (eg the Hilton in Swindon) and RAF Lyneham to convey Members staying at that hotel (plus others who would like to be picked up en route - eg at Wootton Bassett) to and from the dinner. This would overcome the problem of drinking and driving, and individuals taking advantage of this facility would not have to pay for expensive taxis. Second, he believed that the re-introduction of a small band at the dinner would greatly add to the atmosphere of what should be a very lively and enjoyable occasion. He acknowledged the financial implications, and recognised that reunion dinners had traditionally been entirely self-financing, albeit whilst offering confidential subsidies to Members whose financial circumstances meant they would otherwise be unable to attend. However, as the Treasurer had noted earlier, the Association Fund was healthy and had sufficient headroom to provide at least some element of subsidy for the formal dinner, eg by funding the two specific measures suggested above. Following an intervention by the President, who strongly supported these measures, many Members offered their own constructive views. The discussion culminated in general agreement that transport should be provided to and from the next two reunion dinners, and that a band should be hired to play at each of those functions. Both measures will be paid for from Association funds. A formal proposal to implement these measures on a trial basis in 2007 and 2008 was made by the President (Dick Gould), seconded by Patrick Tootal and carried unanimously.

Note: Final arrangements have yet to be worked out but full details will be sent to all members in the summer of 2007 in the usual manner and posted on the Diary page of the Association website. To ease the Secretary's workload, Sam Wright (Deputy Chairman) agreed to identify a suitable hotel in Swindon, negotiate rates and coordinate arrangements for provision of transport.

Action on Deputy Chairman and Treasurer

Item 8.2 Association Membership for Serving Members

The President suggested that the Association should consider offering free membership to former members of XXIV Squadron. This point was taken up by Oz Reardon (who left XXIV Squadron in 2005) who agreed that Association membership could be greatly boosted by such a measure. He suggested that **FREE** membership should be offered to all former members of XXIV Sqn either on leaving the service or when posted from the Squadron for duties elsewhere. Following confirmation from the Treasurer that fees received from new members were insignificant, there was general support for the immediate abolition of membership fees and introduction of automatic membership for all former members of XXIV Sqn. Mike Long offered to take on the administrative aspects of implementing this change. He further agreed to devise an application form along with a Letter of Welcome that would be given to every member of XXIV Sqn on departure from the Squadron. Proposed by Mike Long, seconded by Clive Harley, carried unanimously.

Action on Mike Long to generate Application Form and Welcome Pack.

Item 9/2006 Summer Social Event 2007

Item 9.1 Summer Social

Richard Bates suggested that, as a change from our usual venue at Bibury, next year's summer social event should take the form of pre-lunch drinks at his house in Blockley followed by an informal meal at the **Crown Inn, Blockley**, near Moreton in Marsh. This suggestion was unanimously and gratefully accepted!

This event is **NOW** planned for **Thursday 7th June 2007**². Details will be posted on the Association website but are repeated here for those without web access.

SUMMER SOCIAL 2007- INVITATION

Heather and Richard Bates cordially invite members and guests of XXIV Squadron Association to join them for drinks at their home at Milton House, High Street, Blockley, Gloucestershire at **12 noon** on **Thursday 7 June 2007** prior to lunch at The Crown Inn, Blockley, near Moreton in Marsh. Lunch will commence about 1300 hours.

Please park at The Crown, a short stroll from Milton House.

Members are free to tour the local area or visit the nearby Wellington Air Museum either before or after lunch.

Action on Richard Bates to contact The Crown re date & approx numbers

Members attending to notify Secretary by 16 May 07

Item 9.2 RAF Lyneham Families Day

John Martin asked whether arrangements could be made for Association Members to attend the annual RAF Lyneham Families Day, normally held in September. The Chairman offered to seek clarification from RAF Lyneham.

Action on Chairman to write to OC Admin Wing, RAF Lyneham

Item 10/2006 Any Other Business

Item 10.1 Pisa Memorial

The Italian Air Force has advised Richard Bates (OC XXIV at the time of the Pisa incident) that a 35th Anniversary Memorial Service will take place at Pisa

² Due to conflict of Committee Members' commitments, the Summer Social has slipped by one day to Thursday 7 June 2007

on 12 November 2006. This is intended primarily for family members and personnel directly involved in the tragedy. It is anticipated that those travelling to the Service will use commercial airlines. However, it is possible that a Squadron aircraft can be tasked to fly to/from or via Pisa on 12 November.

Item 10.2 Additional In-Memoriam

Keith Rayner informed the AGM that John Waterfall, a pilot who had previously served on the Squadron although not an Association Member, had passed away earlier this year after a battle with diabetes and related illnesses.

Item 10.3 Donation to Burton Hill

It was proposed by Patrick Tootal and seconded by Dick Gould that the Association should make its customary annual donation to Burton Hill House at Malmesbury, the Squadron's nominated charity. It was unanimously agreed that the amount donated this year should be £91, equating to the number of years that the Squadron has been in existence.

Action on Treasurer

Item 10.4 Presentation

As a token of the Association's thanks to Wg Cdr Kevin Groves (previous OC XXIV Sqn) our President, Air Commodore Dick Gould, presented him with a framed First Day Cover letter depicting the Hercules and wished him all the best in his new career at British Airways. We are delighted that Kevin is now an active Member of our Association.

Item 10.5 Reunion Raffle

Following the success and popularity of similar raffles in previous years, Mike Long announced details of this year's prizes, including various bottles of liquor, a Sqn T Shirt and a £25 voucher for use at Premier Travel establishments. The raffle raised £160 for Association funds [see Item 6.6]

Item 10.63 Alternative AGM start time

The AGM heard that the Squadron Liaison team had suggested that if Association Members found an 1100hrs start time for the AGM too tight, it could be switched to take place after lunch. There was no support for such a change, which could jeopardise the content of the current afternoon programme. Timings for future reunions will be left unchanged.

Secretary's Note: Would any Member with an e-mail address who has not already notified it to the Secretary, or who has **changed his or her e-mail address**, please send a brief message to:

the24secretary at royalairforce dot net (see also web site).

Bookmark this site; it's the Association Web Page on the Internet

<http://www.24sqnassociation.royalairforce.net>

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS !!

PLEASE GET THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY NOW !!

**SUMMER SOCIAL (DRINKS & LUNCH AT BLOCKLEY) THURSDAY 7
JUNE 2007**

**INFORMAL EVE-OF-REUNION DRINKS (SWINDON HOTEL) FRIDAY 5
OCTOBER 2007**

**AGM & 92nd ANNIVERSARY REUNION (RAF LYNEHAM) SATURDAY 6
OCTOBER 2007.**

The 2007 Reunion Ladies Guest Night Dinner in the Officers' Mess at RAF Lyneham will be a GREAT occasion, featuring music throughout the meal (until the Loyal Toast), plus FREE return transport between the nominated hotel in Swindon and Lyneham. We look forward to seeing you there!