



XXIV SQUADRON ASSOCIATION ROYAL AIR FORCE

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

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT RAF LYNEHAM 4 OCTOBER 2008

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

R Bates, R Brawn, C Carrington, N Cooper, M Coumbe, R Dew, G Gair, K Groves, C Harley, G Harradine, J Harris, W Holden, A Johnson, G Jones, T Norcross, G Norton, D Parkinson, T Paterson, R Payne, O Reardon, D Stewart, C Townsend, A Turner. (28 in total)

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to those who had travelled from near and far to attend this year's 93rd Anniversary AGM and Reunion programme. He was especially pleased to welcome Graham Donald who had travelled all the way from South Africa to attend yesterday evening's informal get-together in the Swindon Hilton and who would be attending this evening's formal dinner. The Chairman noted that, for the second year running, we were back to the format of holding this event on the first Saturday in October, with a healthy turnout to endorse this choice.

The AGM was held in the Squadron briefing room, while guests were entertained downstairs in the Sqn crew room. Immediately after the AGM the new OC XXIV Sqn, Wg Cdr Andy Bacon, and two members of the Sqn, gave short presentations to members and guests in the Station Briefing Room. Gp Capt Richard Bates then gave a brief but illuminating talk about his tour as OC XXIV Sqn in the 1970s. Finally, the Chairman presented Wg Cdr Bacon with a boomerang donated by a new member of the Association, Air Cdre David Hitchins AFC RAAF Retd, who had been OC XXIV Sqn in the 1950s.

Item 1/2008 Apologies for Absence

The Secretary had received various apologies of absence by letter, phone, electronic mail and word of mouth, along with several generous donations to Association funds amounting to more than £150. We make special mention from the list of AVM John Tetley (previous President) and Mrs Betty Archbell, widow of Wg Cdr Tempest Archbell, OC XXIV Sqn in 1944.

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

B Archbell (+ donation), S Batchelor, J Britten, I Burns (+ donation), J Clark, M C A Davis, G V Donald, N Dower (+ donation), A Foster, W Francis (+ donation), D Goodman (+ donation), V Hemmings (+ donation), G Jones (+ donation), C Joyner, H Luxton, D Marney, J Martin, J McArthur, J Mitchell (+ donation), J Smither, T Southgate, M Stringer, J Tetley (+ donation), P Tootal, L Warrington, C Williams, A Wilson (+ donation) R Wright.

Item 1.1/2008 In Memoriam

It was with great regret that the Secretary had to report that the Association had lost nine Association Members during the past year. Those present stood in silence in remembrance of the following comrades:

Flt Lt Dave Carter – Pilot, WO David Davis – Fitter, Sqn Ldr John Hayley – Sig/AEO, WO William Hobson – Safety Equipment, AC1 Dennis Keogh – Engine Fitter, FSgt Charles Meeks – Fitter 2, Wg Cdr Richard Peach – Pilot, Wg Cdr Alf (Butch) Pugh – Signaller, Sgt Albert Sweeney – AQM.

Details of the events surrounding the loss of some of these comrades were posted on the Association web log and a more detailed obituary will be published in the 2009 Newsletter.

Item 2/2008 Minutes of the previous AGM

No observations were raised against the accuracy of the 2007 Minutes, which were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by Tony Johnson, seconded by Chris Carrington, passed unanimously.

Item 3/2008 Matters Arising

The following actions were left outstanding from the 2007 AGM for the Committee to address:

- Item 8/2007 – Secretary to confirm Summer Social venue and book Sergeants' Mess for Ladies Guest Night.

Complete

- Item 8a/2007 – Nick Yerbury to book Pear Tree at Purton for the late venue change for the Summer Social.

Complete

- Item 8b/2007 – Deputy Chairman to book coach and band for Ladies Guest Night 2008, explore hotel discounts and arrange entry passes for members and guests.

Complete

- Item 9/2007 – Treasurer to send donation of £92 to Shaftsbury Society in lieu of Burton Hill House School.

Complete.

Item 4/2008 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reminded members that 2008 was a very significant year for XXIV Sqn. Not only had the Sqn recently celebrated its 93rd year of unbroken service, but it had also received a new Standard. This had been presented at a special parade and ceremony at RAF Lyneham on 9 May 2008 by the Princess Royal. The Association President, Chairman and a number of previous OCs XXIV Sqn had been privileged to attend this event.

The Chairman informed the AGM that MOD had given exceptional approval for the retiring Sqn Standard to be laid up in Italy. This ceremony was to take place on Sunday 9 November 2008 as part of a Service of Commemoration in the Chapel of the 187th Folgore Regiment at their barracks in Livorno. This project had been spearheaded by the previous OC XXIV, Wg Cdr Don Turnbull, who had suggested that it would be highly appropriate - as a symbol of the joint grief that each nation experienced in the aftermath of the tragic accident off Pisa in 1971 (when a Hercules of XXIV Sqn crashed into the sea with 46 Italian paratroops on board) and of the enduring bond between the units involved - for the retiring Standard to rest henceforth in Italy. Gp Capts Richard Bates (OC XXIV Sqn at the time of the accident) and Keith Chapman will represent the Association at the ceremonies and wreath-laying in Livorno. Relatives of the aircrew killed in the accident will also attend. The Chairman said that all members of the Association would also be most welcome to attend, but reminded everyone that all civilian attendees would have to pay their own travel and accommodation expenses.

The Chairman reported that the Sqn had recently inaugurated a new History Room, an event which had made both the local and RAF News. Association members were encouraged to donate any mementoes, documents, photos or indeed any items of memorabilia for inclusion in this important archive.

The Chairman congratulated the Secretary in his secondary role as Editor on the quality of the latest edition of the Association Newsletter. Produced for the first time in a glossy, colour format, this edition had proved a big hit - an achievement entirely due to the inspiration, initiative and sheer hard work of the Editor. These sentiments were warmly endorsed by the meeting.

The Chairman drew attention to an article in the latest Newsletter by Air Cdre David Hitchins AFC RAAF Retd who was OC XXIV Sqn from 1956 to 1958. After reading this fascinating article, the Chairman had written to Air Cdre Hitchins in Australia inviting him to become a member of the Association (which he now is) and reminding him that he would be very welcome to attend our reunions. David is now 85 and says he is not really up to making such a long trip, but he has generously donated one of his "treasures", a **real** boomerang, to be displayed in perpetuity in the Sqn History Room.

Finally, the Chairman expressed appreciation to OC XXIV Sqn and the Squadron liaison team, with a special mention to Flt Lt Paddy McLarnon (who had recently taken over from Flt Lt Phil Whitworth as Association liaison officer) for all their efforts and cooperation to ensure the success of today's Reunion, despite ever more demanding operational constraints. The Chairman also thanked his fellow committee members for their significant contributions to the Association during the past year.

Item 5/2008 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer distributed a full set of accounts outlining Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 October 2007, the Balance as at that date and a Bank reconciliation statement. The net surplus of Income v Expenditure for the year ending 31 Oct 2007 was £2208.01, which in reality is closer to

some £1200 once the costs of additional colour printing, coaches and bands are paid for this year. A copy of the accounts is included with the minutes.

The Centenary Fund, which is due to mature in 2015, is increasing at £100 per annum and remains on course to achieve the target of £1,000 by 2015.

Generous donations from members continue to give Association funds a welcome (if un-budgeted) boost, for which we are all very grateful. These donations amount to more than £150 this year. However, as the Association does not levy either joining or annual subscription fees, the Treasurer put down a marker that it might be necessary to ask members for a modest “top up” contribution two or three years from now.

The Treasurer said that, following the closure of Burton Hill House School, OC XXIV Sqn had selected a new charity for the Sqn to support, namely the [Children's Cancer & Leukaemia Movement](#) (CALM). This charity will receive this year's Association donation of £93.

Action on Treasurer

Item 6/2008 Secretary's Report

Item 6.1 Membership

The Secretary was able to report a good year for recruiting with an increase of 12 new members. This has been achieved by continued advertising, the efforts of our Membership Champion and the waiving of any joining fee. It was agreed that the benefit of free membership should be re-emphasised on the Association website and through the outlets mentioned below.

Action on Secretary

Sadly, the Secretary also had to report the loss of nine existing members (see Item 1/2008). However, the Association will continue to advertise for new members through a variety of outlets, including the Aircrew Association, Air Mail, RAFA, BA 25 Year Club, RAF Club, RAF News, Teletext etc.

Members are also asked to help by promoting the Association among friends and colleagues whenever possible. Applications forms are available from the Secretary or can be downloaded from the Association Website.

Item 6.2 Attendance

Attendance for the AGM and Reunion Lunch this year was 58 against 66 for the year 2007. The Association Ladies' Guest night in the Sergeants' Mess on 4 Oct 08 has attracted 57 members and guests against 60 at our last event at Lyneham in Oct 07. These attendance figures are encouraging and justify the extra effort and cost involved in providing a band and organising coach transfers. The Secretary was particularly grateful to Sam Wright (Deputy Chairman) for taking on the role of hiring a suitable band, negotiating special rates at hotels and arranging transport between hotels and RAF Lyneham.

Item 6.3 Newsletter

This year's Association Newsletter, Summer 2008 (Issue No. 15) was a first. It is a striking 24-page **COLOUR** edition! The part colour version produced this year cost around £1.50 per copy, with full colour working out at around £2.00 per copy. Whether to continue with part colour or switch to full colour will be kept under review depending on content submitted for final publication.

In his capacity as Editor, the Secretary was pleased to report that he was at last starting to receive some useful contributions from the membership. He asked members to continue submitting articles, stories, anecdotes or photos; they help to maintain a living archive of the Squadron's history. Any material such as photos or original documents could either be passed on to the new History Room or returned to the contributor if so desired.

Feedback from readers continued to be highly complimentary and it is clear that the Newsletter is well regarded as a means of keeping ALL members up to date.

The Secretary repeated his annual "request" for a replacement Editor for the Newsletter, as a change does usually bring a fresh look and feel to any publication. The present editor has now produced 15 consecutive issues of the Association magazine and feels it is time that someone else took on this task.

Members were reminded that Issues 5 - 15 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 all colour photos where used.

Item 6.4 Summer Social

The 2008 Summer Lunch was held on Wednesday 11 June at the Pear Tree Hotel, Purton. It was a great success with 27 Association members and guests attending. Wg Cdr Andy Bacon, the newly-appointed OC XXIV Sqn, and some of his executives took the opportunity to join us, which proved an ideal ice breaker.

The event was organised by Jackie and Nick Yerbury who generously provided pre-lunch drinks at their home in Purton before everyone adjourned to the Pear Tree for a long and convivial lunch. The format proved very popular and is being repeated for Summer 2009. (see Item 8/2008 below).

Item 6.5 Website

The Association website is the place to visit to check the Diary of Events, Minutes of Meetings, Newsletter articles and links to many other related organisations. Suggestions for new LINKS (or information on any that may have ceased) are most welcome. (See email address on website).

The **Blog Book** or on-line diary created in 2007 has yet to be fully utilised by members but still provides an ideal medium in which to post instant news, pictures and comments, aside from the main website. In this way, information, gossip or more serious issues are quickly available to one and all. Any comments or feedback are more than welcome.

A longer term aim is to transfer some of the more suitable material now on display in the Squadron History Room onto the web site. This may take the form of video footage, once the technique is mastered by the Secretary.

Meanwhile, the Association's presence is well registered with the most popular search engines on the Internet and our website has a reasonably memorable address www.24sqnassociation.royalairforce.net.

Item 6.6 Sqn Support

The Secretary added his warmest thanks for all the support and help received from the XXIV Sqn Liaison Team, especially during a year when the Sqn had been so heavily engaged on operations in the Gulf and Afghanistan that few personnel had been available for ancillary tasks. He was particularly grateful to Flt Lts Paddy McLarnon and Phil Whitworth and to Sgt Gavin Livingstone for having given up some of their precious free time to make an invaluable contribution to this year's Reunion events. Mike Phillips also merited a special mention for his fund-raising raffle and auction, which had raised a considerable sum for Association funds.

Item 7/2008 Annual Election of Officers

All members of the existing Committee confirmed that they were willing to serve another term but, as required by the constitution, offered themselves up to the AGM for re-election.

Proposed by Richard Bates and seconded by Kevin Groves, a motion to re-elect the existing Committee for a further year was unanimously endorsed by the AGM.

Accordingly, the Committee structure for 2008/09 is:-

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

Item 8/2008 Format/Dates of Future Association Events

The Chairman confirmed that the Association would continue with the tried and tested format whereby the entire reunion programme takes place on the first Saturday in October. Members will still be able to meet informally in a local pub or hotel on the Friday evening, if they so wish.

Looking ahead to 2009, it was put to the AGM to decide whether to return to Bibury Court for the summer lunch or to accept a proposal by the Deputy Chairman to arrange a format along the lines of 2007 and 2008. The consensus view was to accept the Deputy Chairman's kind invitation to host pre-lunch drinks at his house in Lyneham, followed by lunch in the local area.

Item 8a - Summer Social 2009

Wednesday 3 June 2009. Pre-lunch drinks will be hosted by Sue & Sam Wright at their home at No 33 Calne Road, Lyneham Village, SN15 4PT, after

which we will adjourn for lunch at a nearby venue. (Venue to be confirmed but likely to be the La Flambe Restaurant at the Vintage Inn, Seagry Road, Sutton Benger, SN15 4RY).

**Action on Deputy Chairman to confirm & book lunch venue
Members attending to notify Secretary by 20 May 09**

Details and logistics will be posted on the Association website but are repeated below for those without Internet access.

SUMMER SOCIAL INVITATION

Sue and Sam Wright cordially invite members and guests of XXIV Squadron Association to join them for drinks at their home at 33 Calne Road, Lyneham Village, Wilts, SN15 4PT [Telephone 01249 890516] at **1100-1130** on **Wednesday 3 June 2009**

Ample parking is available on the Married Quarters site opposite the main entrance to RAF Lyneham just off the A3102. 33 Calne Road is a private house adjacent to the main entrance to the Station.

Lunch will follow at the [La Flambe](#) Restaurant at the Vintage Inn, Seagry Road, Sutton Benger, Wilts SN15 4RY (Tel 01249 720247).

Sutton Benger is situated on the B4069 about 3 miles from Junction 17 of the M4.

Timings: 11:00 – 11:30 arrive at 33 Calne Road; 12:15 depart for lunch; 12:45 sit down to lunch at La Flambe.

Post Lunch - Free to tour local area.

Item 8b/2008 Reunion weekend 2009

Friday 2 October 2009 - evening casual “meet and greet” at Hilton Hotel, Swindon.

Saturday 3 October 2009 - AGM, Reunion lunch, informal afternoon programme & Ladies’ Guest Night in Officers Mess, RAF Lyneham

Action on Secretary to book Mess

The Deputy Chairman agreed once again to arrange the engagement of a suitable band, coach transfers and hotel discounts and to coordinate with Sqn Liaison regarding Point of Entry and Security Passes.

Action on Deputy Chairman

Special request to Members! Please ensure that the hotel of your choice is clearly annotated on the form confirming your attendance, as this will be your pick up point for the coach transfer to Lyneham.

Item 9/2008 Livorno – Laying up Ceremony

The Chairman briefed the meeting that, as noted at Item 4 above, the retiring Standard of XXIV Sqn will be laid up on Sunday 9 November 2008 in a

military Chapel at the barracks of the 187th Folgore Parachute Regiment in Livorno. This ceremony will form part of a special Service of Commemoration. Additionally, it is anticipated that wreaths will be laid at two locations to commemorate those who lost their lives in the tragic crash off Pisa in 1971. Richard Bates and the Chairman will represent the Association at these events and the latter has offered to submit photos and a short report for the Association Newsletter.

The Chairman said that OC XXIV Sqn had nominated Sqn Ldr Jon Edmondson (Flt Cdr Exec) to be the Sqn's project officer for the events in Livorno. Any Association member planning to attend should get in touch with the Chairman who was acting as POC with Sqn Ldr Edmondson. The event will be entirely voluntary and self-funded for civilian participants, although the Italian military authorities are expected to proffer their customary generous hospitality to all attendees.

Item 10/2008 Any Other Business

Three items were tabled under AOB, with no additional items from the floor.

Item 10.1 After Dinner Speech and Protocol

- The Deputy Chairman emphasised the need for everyone attending Association Ladies' Guest Nights (including guests of members) to observe the traditions, customs and protocol that govern formal dinners in the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes of the Royal Air Force. In particular, he reminded the AGM that it was the responsibility of members to ensure that their guests conformed with the required dress code and protocols to be observed at a formal RAF dinner. Anyone who was unsure on any of these points could always approach him or any other member of the Committee for advice. These remarks were strongly endorsed by the AGM.
- The Deputy Chairman went on to assure members that he would always do his best to fulfil as far as possible all seating placement requests and dietary requirements, most of which have been met in previous years. However, such requests needed to be made well in advance, using the attendance confirmation form to indicate preferences.
- The President briefed the AGM that he had received a request from OC XXIV Sqn for an Association Member to deliver a cameo after dinner speech recalling personal experiences on the Sqn in times gone by. This would be delivered as part of the round of after dinner speeches at Reunion Guest Nights. The President considered that this could be a highly worthwhile exercise. This view was endorsed by the meeting and it was agreed that a volunteer should be sought to speak at next year's dinner.

Item 10.2 Nominated Charity

Following the closure of Burton Hill House School in Malmesbury, OC XXIV Sqn has selected a new charity for the Sqn to support, namely the [Children's Cancer & Leukaemia Movement](#) (CALM). It was unanimously agreed that the Association would henceforth also support this charity. As a result, it was agreed that CALM should receive this year's Association donation of £93. (see also Item 5/2008)

Proposed by Clive Harley, seconded by Mike Coumbe, adopted unanimously.

Item 10.3 Clash of Dates

The Secretary said he felt obliged to mention that, within the letters of apology received each year, various members had mentioned other associations that hold reunions on the same date as ours. A specific example this year was the ALM/AQM Association, a relatively new organisation. The Secretary said he would contact the ALM/AQM Association to see if they would be willing in future to de-conflict their date from ours with a view to both associations gaining a few more attendees.

Action on Secretary

Finally the President, Air Cdre Richard Gould, expressed his thanks for all the hard work that the Committee and Sqn Liaison team had put into making this Reunion weekend such a great success.

The meeting closed at 1155 hrs, in time for guests to join members for a series of briefings by Wg Cdr Andy Bacon, Flt Lt Steve Galley-Tonks, Sgt Gavin Livingstone (all of XXIV Sqn) and Gp Capt Richard Bates of the Association.

Secretary's Note: - Would anybody with an e-mail address who has not already notified us or who has **changed address** please send a brief message to:-

the24secretary@at royalairforce.net (see also web site) to keep membership details up to date.

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

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

PLEASE NOTE! DATE OF NEXT AGM & 94th ANNIVERSARY REUNION: SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2009. THIS WILL BE ANOTHER HIGHLY ENJOYABLE OCCASION, WITH FREE EVENING TRANSPORT BETWEEN SWINDON HOTELS AND THE OFFICERS' MESS & LIVE MUSIC THROUGHOUT THE DINNER. DRESS CODE: DJ OR MESS KIT. YOUR COMMITTEE LOOKS FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

No. 24 Squadron Association
Balance Sheet Year ended 31st October 2007

	2007	2006
Assets	£	£
Barclays Bank	3,068.38	886.34
Cheltenham & Gloucester	1,943.98	1,918.01
Barclays Centenary Fund	0.00	201.33
Total	5,012.36	2,804.35
Members Funds		
Opening balance	2,804.35	2,952.58
Surplus/deficit for the year	2,208.01	148.23
Closing Balance	5,012.36	2,804.35

Bank statement reconciliation

Bank statement balance		3,068.38
Less outstanding cheques		0.00
Reconciled balance		3,068.38
Cheltenham & Gloucester account		1,943.98
Barclays Centenary Fund	205.92 inc interest	
Closing balance		5,012.36
Balance b/d	2,804.35	Payments 1,114.96
+ receipts	3,322.97	Balance 5,012.36
	6,127.32	6,127.32

Income & Expenditure

	2007	2006
Income	£	£
Reunion	3,127.00	2,051.00
Membership	-	80.00
Interest	25.97	24.78
Donations	-	305.00
Lunch	-	14.00
Raffle	170.00	165.00
	3,322.97	2,639.78

Expenditure

Reunion	495.00	Coach & Band 1,620.00
Donations	50.00	200.00
Lunch		269.66
Printing & Postage	519.96	499.74
Administration	50.00	198.61
	1,114.96	2,788.01
Net surplus/deficit for the year	2,208.01	(148.23)