



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 IN CORAL ROOM, OFFICERS MESS, RAF BRIZE NORTON - 1 OCTOBER 2011

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

R Brawn, Mrs E Carter, N Cooper, C Eames, R Hale, C Harley, G Harradine, J Harris, M Hills, P Hoare, W Holden, A Johnson, G Jones, H Luxton, J Martin, B Meeten, T Norcross, G Norton, T Paterson, R Payne, T Pembrey, Mrs A Porter, K Reynolds, D Stewart, A Turner, L Warrington, S Webb, C Whitaker, A Wilson. (34 in total)

The Chairman opened the AGM by welcoming all who had travelled from near and far to this year's AGM, which coincides with the Squadron's 96th Anniversary. The Sqn's recent re-deployment to RAF Brize Norton meant that the Association was making its debut in a totally new location. The use of the Officers' Mess as the sole venue for this year's AGM, briefings, buffet lunch, dinner and general hosting of Members and Guests was an excellent choice.

Item 1/2011 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 over £150. We make special mention from this list of Brian Baker out in Western Australia, Jack McWicker and Mrs Jenny Mooney in memory of her father the late Air Cdre David Hitchins RAAF.

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

B Baker (+ donation) R Bates, P Blake, C Carrington, J Clark (+ donation), M Coumbe, B Cowin, GV Donald (AGM), M Davis, G Gair, K Groves, V Hemmings (+ donation), Mrs J Mooney (for the late D Hitchins), B Hobbs, R Ironside (+ donation), B Kingscote, W Lowe, D Marney, J McArthur, C McNamara, J McWicker (+ donation), M Sawbridge, J Smither (+ donation), A Stewart. (24 in total)

Item 1.1/2011 In Memoriam

With great regret the Secretary reported that the Association had lost four Association Members during the past year. Those present stood in silence for a short while in remembrance of the following comrades:

Sqn Ldr Alec Wickes, Pilot, Bassingbourn, 1947 -50; Gp Capt John Richardson, Pilot, Bassingbourn, 1946 – 49; Air Cdre David Hitchins, Pilot, OC XXIV, Colerne, 1957 – 58; Flt Lt Wally Makepeace, Pilot, Lyneham, 1974 - 79.

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 2012 Newsletter.

Item 2/2011 Minutes of the previous AGM

No observations were raised against the accuracy of the 2010 Minutes, which were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by Colin Eames, Seconded by Clive Harley, Passed unanimously.

Item 3/2011 Matters Arising

The following actions remained outstanding from the 2009 AGM for the Committee to address:

- Item 6/2010 – Hawker VC Memorial – Secretary to post news and developments on project progress.
Complete (in conjunction with Chas Whitaker)
- Item 7/2010 – Treasurer to confirm donation of £95 to Squadron nominated charity CALM.
Complete
- Item 8/2010 – Volunteer wanted as Newsletter Editor. No nominations.
Action Still Outstanding
- Item 10a/2010 – Summer Social Lunch Venue – Secretary and Deputy Chairman to book Bibury Court Hotel
Complete
- Item 10b/2010 – Secretary and Deputy Chairman to coordinate booking of Officers’ Mess, Brize Norton, Point of Entry, Coach and Music for 2011 Reunion weekend.
Complete

Item 4/2011 Chairman's Report

The Chairman began by expressing his thanks to the President and Committee all of whom had worked extremely hard behind the scenes during the past year to keep the Association in good shape and on the right lines. He also thanked Chas Whitaker for the considerable effort he had put into his role as the Association’s project officer for the Hawker Memorial. [See further remarks at Item 6]

The Chairman congratulated the Secretary on having produced yet another excellent edition of the Newsletter/Magazine. Despite the Secretary’s reluctance to produce another full-scale version, he had once again come up trumps with Issue No.18 which he had fittingly entitled the “Pastures New Edition”. No-one having come forward to take over as Editor, the Secretary’s

decision to continue in this role until such time as a volunteer could be found was greatly appreciated by all. At this point, the Secretary reiterated his appeal for someone to take over (or at least share) the workload entailed in producing this annual publication. Meanwhile, the Chairman noted that the quality and content of the current Newsletter continues to be well received by the membership, citing the article in Issue 18 by Graeme Donald (in which he regaled readers with his wartime exploits on 24 Sqn) as a very good example.

Referring to the excellent contributions made at the 2010 Reunion by Clive Harley and Trevor Paterson, the Chairman encouraged other members to “volunteer” to speak at future Reunions, either by way of a short talk at the morning briefing session or by giving an after-dinner speech at the Ladies Guest Night.

Finally, the Chairman reminded the meeting that XXIV Sqn is due to celebrate its Centenary on 1 September 2015. In anticipation of this event, the Association has been setting aside £100 each year for its special Centenary Fund, which is on track to exceed £1000 by the time that the Sqn attains its 100th birthday. With only four years to run before that historic event, the Chairman said it was not too soon to begin thinking about how this Fund should be spent and he encouraged members to give the matter serious consideration and come forward with their thoughts and proposals.

Item 5/2011 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer distributed a full set of accounts outlining Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 Mar 11. A copy is attached to these Minutes.

The general principles voted and approved by the Membership, namely that the Association must be largely self financing, remain valid, e.g. Closing Balance for 2011 of £2,409.24 vis-à-vis a Closing Balance for 2010 of £2,347.10.

A one-off appeal to Members for donations during 2010 (10 years after the previous appeal) had stabilised the Association Fund, as had the adoption of three key financial recommendations: to cease printing hard copies of the Newsletter/Magazine in colour; to introduce a charge of £5 per head for coach travel to and from Dinners; and to hire more affordable musicians at Dinners.

The Treasurer apologised for the confusion that had occurred over the collection of individual payments from members for lunch after the Summer Social at Bibury Court Hotel on 8 Jun 11. He said the problem had arisen because the restaurant manager had insisted that the cost of lunch be settled as one bill. This unified bill was paid by the Treasurer who subsequently had difficulty in reconciling his record of who had actually settled their bills with him, resulting in a shortfall which he was still investigating. Meanwhile, it was agreed that, at future events of this sort, attendees would revert to the well-tried system of settling their own bills individually.

The Treasurer confirmed that the Centenary Fund remains on course to achieve its target of £1,000 by 2015. This Fund, which continues to increase by £100 per annum, currently has a balance of £527.75.

Item 6/2011 Inauguration of Hawker Memorial on 11-11-11 (Chas Whitaker)

Chas began by asking for a show of hands of those planning to attend the event in northern France on 11-11-11. The response was most encouraging. Chas then gave a short up-date on the progress of the project, now entering its final stages. He said that the memorial is due to be erected in the centre of the village of Ligny-Thillois in late October and he outlined the provisional programme of events planned for 11 Nov. A team of about 12 officers and SNCOs from XXIV Sqn would attend the ceremony. The Squadron Standard would be displayed but not paraded. The Association contingent would number about 40 including partners and private guests. The post-ceremony reception (vin d'honneur) which Chas had been tasked to organise in conjunction with Mayor of Ligny-Thillois, was likely to be attended by about 120 people, including a large number of locals, plus OC XXIV's guests from the Richthofen Squadron at GAF Wittmund and from nearby FAF Cambrai.

Further details have been posted on the Association Blog Book

<http://the24sec.wordpress.com/category/wwi-memories/>

Action on Chas & Secretary

Remarks by Chairman for inclusion in the Minutes

“For the record, the Association owes Chas an enormous debt for his personal contribution to the Hawker Project. In his role as our co-ordinator and project officer, he has invested an enormous amount of time and effort as well as his own money in ensuring that the project has been steered along the right lines. He has also worked hard to help raise much-needed funds for the project. It has been a rocky road at times but thanks largely to Chas's perseverance, diplomacy and diligence, we shall finally have a fitting and enduring memorial to Hawker VC. I'm sure members of the Association will wish to join me in expressing our sincere thanks to Chas.”

Item 7/2011 40th Anniversary of Pisa Accident - 9 Nov 2011

In the absence of Richard Bates, who is leading for the Association on this event and who was OC XXIV at the time of the accident off Pisa on 9 Nov 71, the Chairman outlined arrangements for the commemoration of the 40th anniversary. He said there would be two main elements.

A special service will be held in HQ XXIV Sqn at 11.00 on Sun 6 Nov 11. This will incorporate the unveiling of a new Roll of Honour bearing the names of the six RAF crew who died in the accident. After the service, a buffet lunch will be served in the Officers' Mess. All members of the Association were cordially invited to attend but members planning to do so were asked to pass their names either to the Secretary or the Chairman as soon as possible.

A second ceremony will be held in Livorno (near Pisa) on Sat 12 Nov, organised by No 187 Parachute Regiment (“The Folgore”) of the Italian Army. The Chairman said that, as far as he knew, no Association Members were able to attend this ceremony in Italy because it is taking place the day immediately after the Hawker Inauguration Ceremony in France. However, OC XXIV (Wg Cdr Tim Jones) plus two officers and the Squadron Standard will fly to Pisa from Paris on the evening of 11 Nov, immediately after the Hawker ceremony and reception in Ligny-Thilloy.

Item 8/2011 Donation to Squadron Charity

The AGM approved a donation of £96 to the [Children’s Cancer & Leukaemia Movement](#) (CALM), XXIV Squadron’s nominated charity. Proposed by Keith Reynolds, Seconded by John Martin, Passed unanimously.

Action on Treasurer

Item 9/2011 Secretary's Report

Item9.1 Membership

The Secretary reported an average year for recruiting with six new members now on the mailing list. This could not compete with the previous year’s exceptional influx of 15 new members, which had largely been due to the very pro-active promotion of the Association by the then OC XXIV (Wg Cdr Andy Bacon).

Sadly, the Secretary also had to report the loss of four existing members (see Item 1.1/2011). However, the Association will continue to seek new members through word of mouth and by advertising through a variety of outlets, including the Aircrew Association, Air Mail, RAFA, BA 25 Year Club, RAF Club and RAF News. The fact that there are no joining or subscription fees will continue to be emphasised as a selling point.

Feedback from recent application forms suggests that existing members are helping recruitment by promoting the Association among friends and colleagues. Applications forms are available from the Secretary or can be downloaded from the Association Website and emailed direct.

Item 9.2 Attendance

Attendance at the 2011 AGM and Reunion Lunch was 58 members and guests compared with 73 in 2010. The Association’s final Ladies Guest night at RAF Lyneham on 2 Oct 10 (held in the WOs & Sgts Mess) attracted 73 Members and guests which was exceptional set against this year’s total of 55 for our first dinner at Brize Norton. The Secretary was particularly grateful to Sam Wright (Deputy Chairman) for taking on the time-consuming tasks of liaising with the Mess Manager over seating plan and menus, engaging musicians, contacting hotels, arranging evening transport between hotels around RAF Brize Norton and dealing with point of entry issues. The AGM heartily concurred.

Item 9.3 Newsletter/Magazine

The hard copy version of the 24-page Summer 2011 edition of the Association Newsletter (Issue No. 18) has been produced only in Black and White format as part of our cost-savings measures. However, a version in COLOUR format has also been published on-line so as not to lose the impact of some of the excellent photos submitted.

Meanwhile, feedback from readers continues to be highly complimentary. It is clear that the Newsletter/Magazine is highly regarded as a means of keeping ALL members up to date and in touch with the Association.

Unfortunately, despite the Editor giving ample notice of his intention to make Issue 17 (Summer 2010) his last, no volunteer to replace him has yet come forward. Having now produced 18 consecutive issues, the time is still ripe for fresh eyes to this take on this much valued job.

Action STILL on Membership for Volunteer Editor

Members are asked to continue submitting articles, stories, anecdotes or photos because such contributions help maintain a living archive of the Sqn's history. Any material, such as photos or original documents, will either be passed on to the Sqn's History Archive or returned to the contributor if so desired.

The Secretary/Editor again reminded Members that Newsletter Issues 5 - 18 are available for reference on the Website in **Portable Document File (PDF)** format for viewing and printing.

Item 9.4 2011 Summer Social

The 2011 Summer Social & Lunch, held on Wed 8 Jun at Bibury Court Hotel, once again fortuitously caught the best of the weather. These events continue to be very well supported and generally attract around 40 members and guests, which is the maximum number that most venues seem able to accommodate in reasonable comfort. This year's event gave the Association the opportunity to meet the new OC XXIV, Wg Cdr Tim Jones, who was presented with a cheque for £1000 by the Association President as an aggregate donation from individual members towards the Hawker Memorial Fund. Feedback from those attending the summer social was mixed; the venue itself was excellent but the buffet-style lunch was disappointing and expensive, while the price of drinks was exorbitant. Nevertheless, the proverbial good time was had by all.

The tradition of this very popular event will be repeated on 6 Jun next year. (See Item 11a/2011 below for full details).

Item 9.5 Website

The Secretary reminded the AGM that the Association website is the place to visit to check the Diary of Events, Minutes of Meetings, Newsletter articles, Notices and links to many other related organisations. Suggestions for new

LINKS to other similar organisations (or information on any that may have ceased) are most welcome. (See email address on website).

The linked “**BLog Book**”, in effect an on-line diary and bulletin board created in 2007, has been ever more utilised by the Committee and members this year due to the dynamic situation entailed in finalising arrangements at Brize and the surrounding area re Hotels and coach pick-up points etc. The ability to post instant news, pictures and comments, which are quickly available to one and all, proved its worth again and again. Members with an email address are strongly encouraged to sign up for the automatic **Subscription** service which will notify new web postings straight to an inbox without having to check the site itself.

A longer-term aim is to transfer some of the material now on display in the Sqn History Room onto the Association website as a joint effort with the Sqn.

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

Item 9.6 Sqn Support & Reunion Administration

The Secretary added his personal thanks for all the support and help received from the XXIV Sqn Liaison Team during the past year, especially at a time when the Sqn has had to contend with simultaneous commitments to two operational theatres (Afghanistan and Libya), a change of role and redeployment from Lyneham to Brize Norton. The Secretary recorded his particular thanks to Flt Lt Rob Platt and the other Squadron personnel who had given up their precious free time to make an invaluable contribution to this year’s Reunion events.

The early visit to Brize by the Deputy Chairman and Secretary for preliminary discussions with the Manager of the Officers’ Mess, just a few weeks after the 2010 Reunion, appeared to have paid dividends.

Item 10/2011 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.

It was proposed by John Martin and seconded by Tom Norcross that the existing Committee be re-elected for a further year. This proposal was unanimously endorsed by the AGM.

Accordingly, the Committee structure for 2011/12 is:-

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

Item 11/2011 Future Association Events including Venues & Dates

The Chairman confirmed that the Association would continue with the tried and tested format whereby the reunion programme takes place on the first Saturday in October, subject to availability of the Officers' Mess. Members would continue to meet informally, if they so wished, in a local pub or hotel on the Friday evening of the reunion weekend.

Looking ahead to 2012, the AGM agreed the following:-

Item 11a/2011 - Summer Social & Lunch 2012

Wednesday 6 June 2012. Pre-lunch meet and greet at the home of Richard and Heather Bate in Blockley (Cotswolds) with drinks provided by Keith Chapman and Peggy, followed by lunch at **The Crown High Street Blockley near Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 9EX.**

**Action on Richard Bates to confirm & book lunch venue
Members attending to notify Secretary by 30 May 12**

Full details and logistics will be posted on the Association website but are summarised below for those without Internet access.

SUMMER SOCIAL INVITATION

Heather & Richard Bates and Peggy & Keith Chapman cordially invite members and guests of XXIV Squadron Association to join them for informal drinks at Heather & Richard's home at Milton House, High Street, Blockley, Gloucestershire GL56 9ET at 12 noon on **Wednesday 6 June 2012** prior to lunch at The Crown Inn, High St. Blockley, near Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 9EX.

A menu for lunch will be circulated in advance so that attendees can choose their meals before the day. Lunch will begin about 1300 hours. Please park at or near The Crown, which is only a short stroll along the village High Street from Milton House.

Travel Directions – Blockley is on the B4479 about 3 miles west of Moreton-in-Marsh, off the A44.

Timings: Arrival Milton House from 12:00 onwards for pre-lunch drinks.

Finances: The meal is expected to cost around £15 per head. There will be a cash bar at lunch for personal drinks. Association Members should pay The Crown individually by cash, cheque or plastic prior to departure.

Post Lunch - Free to tour local area.

Item 11b/2011 - Reunion weekend 2012

Friday 5 October 2012 - Evening casual “meet and greet” at the Bay Tree Inn in Sheep Street, Burford, OX18 4QA. There is plenty of space in The Woolsack Bar.

Saturday 6 October 2012 - AGM, Reunion lunch, informal afternoon programme & Ladies’ Guest Night in Officers’ Mess, RAF Brize Norton

Action on Secretary to book Mess

The Deputy Chairman kindly agreed once again to liaise with the Mess Manager, arrange suitable and affordable music for the dinner, organise coach transfers and hotel discounts and coordinate with Sqn Liaison regarding Point of Entry and Security Passes. **After note:** the Deputy Chairman has made a firm booking for the Officers’ Mess for our Ladies Guest Night on 6 Oct 12.

Action on Deputy Chairman

Special request to Members! Please ensure that your chosen hotel is clearly annotated on the Attendance Form, as this will be your pick up point for the coach transfer to Brize. The plan is for one coach to pick up members and Guests in Witney and Burford as per 2011. At the end of the evening, the coach will follow the same route in reverse, departing the Officers’ Mess at midnight. Full details will be finalised and published in the Reunion pack, which will be sent out by the Secretary in July 2012.

Item 12/2011 President’s Remarks

Our President, Air Cdre Richard Gould, congratulated and thanked the Committee for successfully meeting the extra challenge presented this year in organising our first Reunion at RAF Brize Norton. He also thanked Chas Whitaker for his work on the Hawker Memorial project and expressed his appreciation to the membership for their continued support of Association events, especially the Summer Social and Annual Reunion.

Item 13/2011 Any Other Business

Item 13.1 – Security at Brize Norton - Main Gate. The Deputy Chairman emphasised that Control of Entry will continue to be a key issue in making Reunions run as smoothly as possible. He thanked members for their forbearance and asked for their continued cooperation in helping him find the optimum way of managing future Control of Entry requirements.

Item 13.2 – Accommodation. Roger Hale & Colin Eames said that a wider range of affordable and quality accommodation is available in the Burford & Witney area than that currently promoted on Internet sites. With that in mind, members’ recommendations will be posted on the Blog or included with next year’s Reunion pack to alert people to this additional accommodation. Please submit any details to the Secretary at any time before June 2012.

Action on Sec (& Members)

The meeting closed at 11:55 hrs, in time for guests to re-join members for a series of excellent briefings by Wg Cdr Tim Jones on Current Ops and by Flt Lt Phil Mobbs who provided a further up-date on the Hawker Memorial Project.

Secretary's Note: - Anybody with an e-mail address who has not already notified me of that address or who has **changed address** please send a brief message to:-
the24secretary@royalairforce.net (see also website) 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 & 97th ANNIVERSARY REUNION: SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012. THIS IS CERTAIN TO BE ANOTHER HIGHLY ENJOYABLE OCCASION, WITH COACH TRANSPORT PROVIDED BETWEEN WITNEY & BURFORD HOTELS AND THE MESS, AND LIVE MUSIC. DRESS CODE FOR DINNER: DJ OR MESS KIT. YOUR COMMITTEE AND COLLEAGUES LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE FOR OUR SECOND REUNION AT RAF BRIZE NORTON. PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

No. 24 Squadron Association
Balance Sheet Year ended 31st Mar 2011

	2011	2010
Assets		£
Barclays Bank	1321.98	2,260.85
Cheltenham & Gloucester	1087.26	86.25
Total	<u>2,409.24</u>	<u>2,347.10</u>
Members Funds		
Opening balance	2,347.10	1,159.90
Surplus/deficit for the year	62.14	1,187.20
Closing Balance	<u>2,409.24</u>	<u>2,347.10</u>
 <u>Bank statement reconciliation</u>		
Bank statement balance		1,321.98
Less outstanding cheques		0.00
Reconciled balance		<u>1,321.98</u>
Cheltenham & Gloucester account		1,087.26
Barclays Centenary Fund	527.75 (£527.47 in 2010)	
Closing balance		<u>2,409.24</u>
Balance b/d	2,347.10	Payments 6,232.87
+ receipts	<u>6,295.01</u>	Balance <u>2,409.24</u>
	<u>8,642.11</u>	<u>8,642.11</u>
 <u>Income & Expenditure</u>		
	2011	2010
Income	£	£
Reunion	4,130.00	2,628.00
Membership	-	10.00
Interest	1.01	8.90
Donations	615.00	2,776.91
Raffle	104.00	42.00
From C & G acct	<u>1,000.00</u>	900.00
Hawker Fund	445.00	-
	<u>6,295.01</u>	<u>6,365.81</u>
Expenditure		
Reunion	3,614.25	2,236.85
Printing & Postage	519.20	1,094.08
Secretarial Expenses	97.66	55.18
Book Keeping Expenses	50.00	50.00
Centenary Fund	-	100.00
Lunch	429.76	261.50
Coaches	212.00	277.00
Band	150.00	100.00
Misc	-	-
Beer & AGM	-	-
Bibury Deposit	50.00	-
Refund to Mrs Heaney	110.00	-
CALM Donation	-	104.00
From C & G Acct	<u>1,000.00</u>	900.00
	<u>6,232.87</u>	<u>5,178.61</u>
Net surplus/deficit for the year	<u>62.14</u>	<u>1,187.20</u>