



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 BLENHEIM ROOM, OFFICERS MESS, RAF BRIZE NORTON - 5 OCTOBER 2013

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

S Batchelor, R Bates, J Berryman, C Carrington, N Cooper, B Cowin, M Coumbe, G Gair, T Gosling, C Harley, G Harradine, J Harris, P Hoare, T Johnson, W Lowe, S Marston, B Meeten, G Norton, T Paterson, R Payne, Mrs A Porter, L Warrington, S Webb, C Whitaker, A Wilson. (30 in total)

The Chairman opened the AGM by extending a warm welcoming to all Members who had made the journey to this year's Reunion, which coincides with the Squadron's 98th Anniversary. With many items on the Agenda, including three additional topics, the meeting started without delay

Item 1/2013 Apologies for Absence

The Secretary had received 20 apologies for absence by letter, phone, email and word of mouth, along with donations to the Association Fund amounting to £55. There had also been other ad hoc and Standing Order donations during the year. The Secretary made special mention of Dick Brawn for his generous donation. It was with regret that the Secretary had learned that neither John nor Pincher Martin had been able to attend due to family health concerns.

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

P Alway, R Bailey, D Barnes, D Brawn (+ donation), L Carter, G Clarke, C Eames, K Groves, D Hobbs, R Ironside (+ donation), C Joyner, T Le-Count, M Lythgoe, J Martin, P Martin, J McArthur, K Rayner, M Sawbridge, P Tootal, A Turner. (20 in total)

Item 1.1/2013 In Memoriam

It was with regret that the Association had learned that four Members, plus the wife of a former Member and one non-member who had served on XXIV Sqn, had passed away since the 2012 Reunion:

Ralph Barker, Wireless Operator, RAF Hendon; **Peter Dean**, Fitter, RAF Hendon; **Peter Keeble**, C-130 Pilot & Captain, RAF Lyneham (with many glowing tributes from those who flew with him); **Graeme Donald**, Pilot and aircraft captain during the RAF Hendon era who later became an author, businessman and stalwart attendee at Reunions into his 90s, despite living in

Port Elisabeth, South Africa; **Betty Archbell**, also a South African (widow of Wg Cdr Tempest Archbell, a former OC XXIV) and generous supporter of and donor to the Association. Last but not least, non-Association Member **Geoff Skelton** who flew with XXIV during the 60s and 70s. His son Andrew and family were present at this year's Reunion.

Further details can be found on the Association Blog and in our Newsletter. Members stood for a period of reflection and spared a thought for those colleagues or partners who could not be present due to illness.

Item 2/2013 Minutes of the previous AGM

With no observations or comments, the 2012 Minutes were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by Clive Harley; Seconded by Chris Carrington; carried unanimously.

Item 3/2013 Matters Arising

The following actions remained outstanding from the 2012 AGM for the Committee to address:

- Item 4/2012 Volunteers for Talks/Anecdotes – some inputs had been received (eg from Trevor Paterson) and this item would remain open for other volunteers.

REMAINS OPEN for future events.

- Item 5.2/2012 Standing Order Form to be posted on-line along with email link.

Complete

- Item 6/2012 – Treasurer to confirm donation of £97 to Squadron nominated charity CALM.

Complete

- Item 7.1/2012 - All Members to promote Membership - Application forms and details available on line.

Ongoing for future years.

- Item 7.3/2012 – Volunteer wanted as Newsletter Editor, along with articles for publication. No nominations yet received.

Action Still Outstanding

- Item 8/2012 – Changeover to “e-membership” - Reminders sent to non-email members about the changeover and the option to subscribe to a hard copy option. Secretary's Note: we now have only three Members who require this type of membership.

Complete

- Item 9/2012 – Association Necktie Order - Ordered, Delivered and distributed to around 30 satisfied Members.
Complete
- Item 10/2012 – Revise and Publicise up-dated Constitution - issued and posted on line.
Complete
- Item 12a/2012 – Organise Summer Social for 2013 - Venue booked and event well attended as usual.
Complete
- Item 12b/2012 - Organise 2013 Reunion - Venue, coach, band, security, seating and Squadron Liaison all actioned.
Complete
- Item 14.3/2012 - Hawker Memorial – Association re-visit 11 Nov 13. All details and contact point published on-line.
Complete

Item 4/2013 Chairman's Report

The Chairman warmly thanked the Deputy Chairman and Secretary for their hard work and determination in dealing with the many last-minute, bureaucratic problems unexpectedly encountered during the organisation of this year's Reunion. He also put on record his thanks to OC XXIV and the Squadron Liaison team for their outstanding support in helping the Association to resolve these problems.

Referring back to the excellent contributions made by previous speakers at Reunion events, the Chairman was keen to encourage other Members to give short talks before lunch or speeches after dinner. [Post-meeting note: Brian Cowin has volunteered to speak at our Ladies Guest Night in Oct 2014]

The Chairman reminded the AGM that, at this evening's Ladies Guest Night, there would - for the first time – be an external after-dinner speaker. This was AVM Sean Reynolds (AOC 2 Group) who was attending the function as the private guest of his father Keith Reynolds, an Association Member of long standing.

Item 5/2013 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer informed the AGM that refunds from previous events and voluntary donations by Standing Order, along with greatly reduced expenditure on postage and printing, have kept the Association Fund in a healthy condition during the past year. Current assets as at 30 Sep 2013 are **£1,629.49**, which does not include the Centenary Fund, now standing at **£828.96**. (The Six-Monthly Financial Statement for 1 Apr – 30 Sep 2013 is included with the AGM Minutes)

The Constitution currently stipulates an accounting year which runs from 1 April to 31 March. Additionally, the Treasurer is required to produce a six-

monthly statement on 30 Sep each year - an extremely tight deadline, given that the AGM is always held on the first Saturday of October. Having taken a fresh look at these arrangements after a year in post, the Treasurer proposed a simplified and more logical arrangement whereby the Association Fund's financial year would run from 1 Sep to 31 Aug. This would ensure that all major income and expenditure items were captured and finalised approximately one month before the AGM, while still providing an up-to-date snapshot of the Fund to Members attending the AGM. Under this revised arrangement, there would be no requirement for a six-monthly interim statement of account. The Treasurer would simply produce a single annual Statement of Account dated 31 Aug each year.

This proposal had been discussed and agreed by the President and Committee prior to the AGM. After a short discussion, the AGM unanimously approved the Treasurer's proposal. Motion to adopt this measure was proposed by Tony Johnson and seconded by Brian Cowin.

Action on Chairman to amend Constitution in line with above change,

Item 6/2013 Donation of £98 to XXIV Sqn's designated charity (CALM)

The AGM approved a donation of £98 to the [Children's Cancer & Leukaemia Movement](#) (CALM), XXIV Squadron's nominated charity. Proposed by Chris Carrington, Seconded by Lionel Warrington, Passed unanimously.

Action on Treasurer

Item 7/2013 Secretary's Report & Update on Membership

Item7.1 Membership

The Secretary said four new Members had been recruited during the past year, slightly fewer than average and only just sufficient to replace those who had passed on during the last 12 months. Some success had come from promotion of the Association by Members attending local meetings of the Aircrew Association and RAFA and the Secretary hoped these informal efforts would continue. He had also continued to publicise the Association via his usual Service and Aerospace contacts and he informed the AGM that statistical evidence indicated that 'visitors' were regularly accessing the Association Website.

The Secretary reminded the AGM that Membership Application Forms are available for download from the Association Website:

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

Item 7.2 Attendance

The Secretary reported that Reunion attendance figures since XXIV's relocation to RAF Brize Norton have been pretty stable. This year (5 Oct 2013) 57 Members and Guests will attend the day programme (against 53 in 2012) and 47 will attend the Ladies Guest Night (against 52 in 2012). Demand is

expected to be high for the Centenary Dinner in 2015 and the Chairman has already made a strong case with OC XXIV for the Association to be allocated sufficient places.

Item 7.3 Newsletter/Magazine

Issue 20 (Summer 2013 edition) was a 22-page version, mainly published in its original format of colour and black & white on the Web. The Secretary/Editor said that not having to arrange printing and posting for around 200 copies had afforded a huge reduction in workload. Only three Members still required a hard copy (the £5 per annum subscription option). He noted that it is still a struggle to obtain enough articles to fill the Newsletter each year due to lack of material from all sources.

The mantra is still EDITOR WANTED! to give the Association the mouthpiece to record and re-tell XXIV Squadron's rich history and achievements.

Action STILL on Membership for Volunteer Editor & Submission of Articles

The Secretary/Editor again reminded Members that Newsletter Issues 5-20 are available for reference on the Website in **Portable Document File (PDF)** format for viewing and printing.

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

Item 7.4 Website/Internet

Our use of the Internet and email is now well established and helps keep Members informed and in communication with each, as well as allowing researchers and historians access to quite a large amount of Squadron History.

www.24sqnassociation.royalairforce.net

The Association Blog (see link below) is regularly up-dated and allows Members and non-members to receive automatic updates of news and events as they are posted. It was utilised to good effect this year as the depository of all the "virtual paperwork" needed to organise the Reunion, resulting in a major saving of time, printing and postage costs. It also has a Library page for reference documents such as the Constitution.

Greater reliance on email for all membership contact is working well, allowing the Secretary to confirm Reunion bookings and receipt of cheques, along with the ability to send bulk reminders. **Note to Members** - it is now more important than ever to notify the Secretary of any changes to your email address, to ensure that you remain in touch.

<http://the24sec.wordpress.com/>

Item 7.5 – 2013 Summer Social

Thanks to the slick organisation and generous hospitality of Dick and Jackie Gould, 35 Members and Guests enjoyed an excellent day out at Sunningwell on 5 June 2013. The Summer Social remains an ever popular event, with the prospect of an entirely different format in 2014. (See Item 11a below for details)

Item 7.6 Sqn Support & Reunion Administration

Finally, the Secretary said he was extremely grateful to the Squadron's liaison team headed by Flt Lt Sam Stafford for their huge input into making this years Reunion a reality.

Item 8/2013 Association Necktie

After far too long an absence from the collars of such a distinguished band of aviators, the celebrated black and red zig-zag motif is now being proudly worn once again. The sale of these ties - available for purchase from the Secretary for the knock-down price of only £15 - has proved so popular that only six are currently left in stock. Re-supply will be arranged as and when required.

Item 9/2013 Future Seating arrangements at Ladies Guest Nights

The Chairman said that, following comments received by some Members, the President and Committee had discussed the pros and cons of adopting a different form of seating at future Ladies Guest Nights. The Committee had formed no specific view on this subject beyond agreeing that the matter should be aired at the AGM with a view to seeking Members' views. Two options were under consideration: retention of the traditional top table format with two or more legs; or switching to a format without top table but with five smallish round tables each seating 10 or 12 people.

There was a lively discussion with good feedback from the floor on this topic. Trevor Paterson was able to provide compelling anecdotal evidence that, when the 'individual round table' format was tried at a No.10 Squadron Ladies Guest Night, Members soon voted to revert to the orthodox top table arrangement. No vote was called for at today's AGM but the overwhelming view of Members was that the traditional top table format should be retained.

Outcome – Top Table Format To Continue

Item 10/2013 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, were required to offer themselves for re-election.

It was proposed by Brian Cowin and seconded by Bill Lowe that the existing Committee be re-elected for a further year. This proposal was unanimously endorsed by the AGM.

Accordingly, the Committee structure for 2013/14 is:

Chairman	Keith Chapman	Deputy Chairman	Sam Wright
Treasurer	Roger Hale	Secretary	David Burgin

Item 11/2013 Future Association Events including Venues & Dates

The Committee saw no reason to alter the traditional arrangement whereby the Association's Summer Social is held on the first Wednesday in June and the Reunion on the first Saturday of October each year. However, the Reunion may have to be advanced by about a month in autumn 2015 because it seems likely that OC XXIV will hold a special Ladies Guest Night on or about 1 Sep 2015 to coincide with the Squadron's 100th Anniversary which occurs on that date. As was the case with the special dinner organised to mark the Squadron's 90th birthday, the Association would probably synchronise its 2015 Reunion with this special Squadron event. The Centenary Dinner will be the responsibility of the Squadron, but the Association has already registered its strong wish to play a full part in this event and expects to be allocated places for all those Association Members and partners who wish to attend.

Meanwhile, looking ahead to 2014, the AGM agreed the following dates and venues:

Item 11a - Summer Social - Wednesday 4 June 2014.

The Chairman said the Association had received an invitation from a former OC XXIV, Group Captain Andy Bacon (now Station Commander of RAF Northolt) to hold our 2014 Summer Social and lunch at Northolt. The meeting unanimously approved the Committee's proposal that we accept this invitation.

Post-AGM Note: The Chairman has written to Gp Capt Andy Bacon to accept this invitation and has received confirmation that this event is now firmly in the RAF Northolt diary. Roger Hale (Treasurer) who formerly served on 32 Sqn at Northolt, has kindly agreed to act as our project officer for the 'Northolt Summer Social' and is already in detailed discussions with the Stn Cdr's PA to arrange an interesting programme. The Secretary will post more details on the Website in due course and will email a reminder to all Members prior to the event.

Members wishing to attend should notify the Secretary no later than 21 May 14

SUMMER SOCIAL INVITATION

Group Captain Andy Bacon, OC RAF Northolt, cordially invites Members and guests of XXIV Squadron Association to join him as Station guests on **Wednesday 4 June 2014** at [RAF Northolt](#), West End Road, Ruislip, London [HA4 6NG](#)

Travel Directions – By Road – Take **A 40** (Western Avenue) and exit at the Polish War Memorial, taking the **A4180** (West End Road) towards Ruislip. At third set of traffic lights, take left hand filter lane for access to RAF Northolt via the White House Gate. To get to the Main Gate entrance, continue along the **A 4180** for approximately 300m and at the next set of traffic lights is the entrance to the Main Gate.

By London Underground – Ruislip Gardens (Central Line) is the nearest tube station. Exit the station, turn left and follow the road (A4180 – West End Road) approximately 200m to the Main Gate entrance. Walk a further 300m to the White House Gate entrance. Ruislip Underground Station (in Ruislip town) is on the Piccadilly and Metropolitan Lines. Ruislip Underground Station can be accessed via bus or is an approximate 20-30 min walk from RAF Northolt.

Parking – to be advised. Anyone with mobility problems - please advise Roger Hale well in advance).

Contact - RAF Northolt telephone switchboard 020 8845 2300

Timings: To be advised. **Programme:** To be confirmed but will probably include optional visit to 11 Gp Bunker at RAF Uxbridge. **Costs:** To be advised. **Post Visit:** Free to hit the London high spots.

Station Overview - One of the key fighter airfields in the defence of London during the Battle of Britain and older than the RAF itself, Northolt became the major airport for London in 1946, until the new site at Heathrow opened. Today, No.32 (The Royal) Squadron continues to provide a major communications and VIP transport role, operating both fixed wing and rotary aircraft namely 6 HS125s, 2 BAe146s and 3 Agusta 109s.

Item 11b - Reunion weekend Saturday 4 October 2014

It was agreed that the Association's annual reunion will be held on Saturday 4 October at RAF Brize Norton in either the Officers or Sgts Mess.

Post-Meeting Note: The Deputy Chairman and Secretary have visited Brize Norton to meet the Manager of the Sgts Mess, who has offered an attractive package for the Association Reunion. Accordingly, the President and Committee have agreed the recommendation made by the Deputy Chairman and Secretary that the 2014 Reunion and Ladies Guest Night be held in the Sgts Mess.

Friday 3 October 2014 - 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 4 October 2014 - AGM, Reunion lunch, informal afternoon programme & Ladies Guest Night (19.00 for 19.30 hrs) in Sgts Mess, RAF Brize Norton.

Action on Deputy Chairman & Secretary to liaise with XXIV Sqn and confirm all arrangements

The Deputy Chairman kindly agreed to liaise with the Sgts Mess Manager, finalise menus, produce a seating plan, arrange suitable and affordable music for the dinner, organise coach transfers and coordinate with the XXIV Sqn Liaison Officer regarding Point of Entry and Security Passes.

Action on Deputy Chairman

Special request to Members! Please ensure that your **place names are filled in correctly** and your chosen hotel clearly annotated on the Attendance Form, as this will be your pick-up point if you are using the coach transfer service. The plan is for one coach to pick up Members and Guests in Witney, Burford and Brize Norton village as per 2013. At the end of the evening, the coach will follow the same route in reverse, departing the Mess at midnight. Full details will be published in the Reunion pack, which will be distributed either electronically or in hard copy by the Secretary in July 2014.

Item 12/2013 Squadron Centenary - 1 September 2015

The Chairman said OC XXIV had set up a working party to start preliminary planning for the Squadron Centenary. Initial contact has been made between the Association and the Squadron but no provisional plan has yet evolved. Having attended the 90th Anniversary at the De Vere Hotel, Swindon, the Chairman had drawn on his experience of that occasion to offer some advice to the Sqn Project Officer about how that event had been organised.

About 250 people had attended that event and guests had included representatives of various organisations with whom XXIV had established links over the years. Yet even with that number of covers, the Association's allocation of places had been strictly rationed, something the Committee was determined to redress at the Centenary dinner. Possible venues were briefly discussed. OC XXIV was assuming there would be fewer attendees for the Centenary dinner than at the 90th, because the Squadron was nowadays much reduced in strength, in which case it was quite possible that the Officers Mess at Brize would be able to host the function. If not, alternative venues might include the Mansion House in London, if that could be sponsored by the Carmen Livery Company, or the Victory Club in London, which 47 Squadron was planning to use for its own Centenary function. The Association would have to wait to see what OC XXIV had in mind but in any event, the Chairman said he would press for the Association to be fully involved and to have an adequate allocation of places. The AGM took note.

The Chairman also reminded the AGM that the Association had still to consider suggestions for the spending of the £1000 that will have accrued by Sep 2015 to fund the Association's Centenary gift to the Squadron. Roger Hale suggested we might commission a lasting memorial bearing the Squadron crest to be placed at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire along the lines of a similar dedication to 30 Squadron. In slower time, he offered to get more details, including estimated cost. He also suggested the Association might arrange for some form of memento to be provided for each Member attending the Centenary dinner, such as a modest, crystal paperweight bearing the Sqn crest. These ideas were received with interest but the AGM merely took note at this stage.

Action – Committee to appoint an Association Centenary project officer in due course to liaise with the Squadron’s Centenary project officer.

Treasurer to obtain details of costings from 30 Sqn and report back to Committee and Membership in due course.

Item 13/2013 Somme & Hawker Centenary 2016

The Chairman said it was not too soon to be looking ahead to the Centenary of Major Hawker VC’s death, which would occur on 23 Nov 2016. Having developed a strong link with the Mayor and villagers of Ligny-Thillois, where Hawker’s memorial is located, the Association was expecting to play a leading role in the planning and execution of the ceremony that would be held to mark that occasion. The extent of XXIV Sqn’s involvement in the Hawker ceremony had yet to be determined but it was unlikely that there would be any specific event to mark the Sqn’s involvement in the Battle of Somme which had taken place from July to November 1916. In due course, the Committee planned to appoint an Association Member to act as project officer for the Hawker Centenary event. The AGM took note.

Item 14/2013 President’s Remarks

The President expressed special thanks to those Members who have made long term commitments to the Association Fund via voluntary Standing Order donations. He also thanked the Committee for their collective efforts behind the scenes to deal with unforeseen bureaucratic obstacles and keep the Association on an even keel during the past year. He was particularly grateful to the Treasurer for the effective way in which he had handled the Fund and rationalised the Association’s accounting procedures during his first full year in post.

Item 15/2013 Any Other Business

Item 15.1 – The Deputy Chairman reminded Members attending Ladies Guest Nights to ensure that full names and styles of address are entered in the space provided on the application form, which he uses to produce seating place names. He also asked Members to specify the hotel or other accommodation in which they would be staying so that he can produce an itinerary for the coach firm. In future, he would email details of the coach itinerary (including names, pick-up points and timings) in advance to those using the coach.

Action - Secretary to supply Deputy Chairman with email address book.

Item 15.2 – The Deputy Chairman noted that donations of prizes and sales of Reunion raffle tickets had exceeded expectations, for which he was very grateful. (Post-meeting note: the raffle run by the Deputy Chairman raised £202 for the Association Fund)

Item 15.3 – (Post-Meeting Item) Subsequent to the AGM, it was announced that a “C130-K Out-of-Service” party would take place on 8 Nov 2013 at RAF Brize Norton, organised by 47 Sqn. Members of XXIV Sqn Association were welcome to attend.. Details were placed on the Association Blog.

The meeting closed at 12.05 hrs. Our guests then re-joined Members for an excellent briefing by OC XXIV (Wg Cdr Doz James) on Current Ops, after which an informal buffet lunch was served in the dining room.

Secretary's Note: Any Member 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** (also see website) to enable me to keep membership details up to date.

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

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

AND this site; it's the Association Blog Book <http://the24sec.wordpress.com/>

PLEASE NOTE! DATE OF NEXT AGM & 99th ANNIVERSARY REUNION:

SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER 2014.

THIS IS CERTAIN TO BE ANOTHER HIGHLY ENJOYABLE OCCASION, WITH COACH TRANSPORT PROVIDED IN THE EVENING BETWEEN THE "FOUR PILLARS" AT WITNEY (AND OTHER LOCAL HOTELS AND B&BS) AND THE SGTS MESS AT RAF BRIZE NORTON.

THERE WILL AGAIN BE LIVE MUSIC DURING THE MEAL. DRESS CODE FOR LADIES GUEST NIGHT: DJ OR MESS KIT, WITH FORMAL EQUIVALENT FOR LADIES.

YOUR COMMITTEE AND COLLEAGUES LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE FOR OUR FOURTH REUNION AT RAF BRIZE NORTON. PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

6 Monthly Financial Statement 1 April 2013 - 30 September 2013

Income	£
Balance C/F 1 Apr 13	£ 468.71
Lunch	£ 915.00
Raffle at Lunch	£ 120.00
Donations	£ 20.00
Ties	£ 75.00
Total	£ 1,598.71

Expenditure	
Refunds and payment for Lunch	£ 915.00
Transfer to C and G	£ 300.00
Rebound Coaches Reunion	£ 270.00
Total	£ 1,485.00

Assets	
Cash in Bank	£ 113.71
Chelt and Glouc	£ 1,515.78
	£ 1,629.49

Centenary Fund	
Balance	£ 828.96

Cheltenham and Gloucester

Income	
Balance C/F 1 April 2013	£ 1,206.86
Transfer	£ 300.00
Interest	£ 8.92
Balance	£ 1,515.78