

80th Anniversary Commemoration

of

‘The Battle of Heligoland Bight’



Runnymede & Brooklands

18th December 2019

**Build-up, Event Programme
& Plans for 2020**

BROOKLANDS DAY PASS

Organised by:

The Heligoland39 Project

2016 – 2020

1 Castelhythe ELY CB7 4BU UK

www.heligoland39.org

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The Full Timetable

- 07:00 H39 Team Coach departs depot:
Grey's of Ely, 41 Common Road, Witchford CB6 2HY
Car Park available
- 10:00 Recommended arrival time at Hox Park Reception
Hox Park Drive, Englefield Green,
Egham TW20 OGP
Toilets and Tea & Coffee Station available from 09:00
PARKING: Public Car Park opposite with toilet nearby
NOTE: Charity Collection for STUDENT MINDS
Also at: Royal Holloway University of London
Kingswood Hall, Cooper's Hill Lane, Englefield Green,
Egham TW20 OLG
- 10:15 Formal Welcome: The Mayor of Runnymede
Briefing - Jack Waterfall – H39 Project Leader
About STUDENT MINDS
Melanie Smart –Hox Park Customer Service Manager
- 10:45 Assemble in the RAF Memorial, Runnymede
Be guided by the stewards
**NOTE: Configuration of event may change to
compensate for prevailing weather conditions**
- 11:00 Commemoration Ceremony begins
- 12:30 Transfer to:
The Vickers Suite, Brooklands Museum,
Brooklands Road, Weybridge, KT13 0SL
- 13:30 Welcome – Tamalie Newbery – Brooklands CEO
Reply – Doug Aylward – H39 Partner
Refreshment available on arrival
Extra food available to purchase in cafeteria
Everyone free to roam the whole museum
- 16:00 Afternoon Tea & Cake
Reflecting on the day. Tim Harris
- 16:30 Departures may start
- 18:00 Final departure - Venue Closes

Heligoland39 Welcome

It is with much pleasure that we welcome everyone linked to The Heligoland39 Project to this 80th Anniversary Commemoration, which has been three years in the making.

We are particularly pleased to have the opportunity to meet so many of the relatives and friends of the airmen who took part in the 1939 action. We also acknowledge those who are unable to be with us and hope that they will nevertheless remain in contact.

With this project it has been you, the relatives, who have motivated us to find out as much as possible about the early days of World War Two. Those of us who suffered similar losses during that same period understand how you feel about those distant events.

By working together to record this history it is hoped that those airmen who braved The Battle of Heligoland Bight 1939 will never be forgotten.

If it were not for the many individuals and organisations that have assisted the project in so many ways we would have been at risk of delivering a non-event. The whole anniversary year, beginning in Ely Cathedral last December and culminating here at Runnymede on the exact 80th Anniversary of the action, has been a fascinating journey and our partners have delivered beyond the call of duty. This whole enterprise would not have been possible without them.

Of course the proceedings are not over yet for we have a book to write and publish in the coming twelve months. This will provide a reason to keep in contact with each other and to meet at various places of interest.

For those diehards with an interest in Wellington N2980 there is a third and final formal ceremony in the offing.

The 31st December 2020 at 15:15 will mark the 80th Anniversary of the ditching of the Loch Ness Wellington. An Act of Remembrance is already set to take place in Inverness Cathedral when the Heligoland39 book will be launched.

This message comes with very Best Wishes for now, the Festive Season and the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Jack Waterfall



Caroline Kessler



Doug Aylward



The Heligoland39 Project

2016 - 2020

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www.heligoland39.org

Hox Park Reception & Charity Collection



When Melanie Smart was approached earlier this year she very generously offered this shelter for our arriving party at Runnymede. Given the time of year it was fully expected there would be 'no room at the Inn'.

Instead of charging a fee for this hospitality it was agreed that a charity collection would be organised for Student Minds.

**student
minds**

www.studentminds.org.uk

Please give generously.....

Royal Holloway University London – Parking



Grateful thanks to the University for providing the FREE use of their Kingshall Car Park for our fleeting visit.

Weather Contingency Plans

- A.** Fine & Chilly – Service in open-air quadrangle
- B.** Dull/Drizzle – H39 Relatives & Dignitaries in Memorial Shrine. Remainder in Quadrangle Cloisters
- C.** Heavy Rain or Blizzard - Hox Park Reception

Transfer & Assembly

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| From | Members of the general public may assemble in the |
| 10:30 | RAF Memorial positioned by the H39 stewards |
| 10:40 | The welcoming party takes up position at the entrance to the RAF Memorial |
| 10:45 | The dignitaries transfer from Hox Park to the RAF Memorial and take up their positions guided by the stewards. They are immediately followed by the H39 relatives |
| 10:50 | The Clergy Column forms up behind the Piper
<i>See page 8</i> |
| 11:00 | The Ceremony begins |

Opening Sequence



Piper

Finlay MacGhee is currently Pipe Major of The RAF Waddington Pipes and Drums, one of the largest pipe band units in the armed services.



The Clergy Procession

The Piper will lead from Hox Park Reception to the entrance of the RAF Memorial.

Escorts:

- An RAF Honington Guard of Honour
- Trumpeter (Silent)
- RBL County Standards from:
Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire,
Hertfordshire & Surrey
- RAFA Ely Standard
- IX Squadron Association Standard
- Wells RNLI Standard



Trumpeter

Corporal Sharon Chinn currently based at SIB, Specialist Police Wing, RAF Halton, and a member of the RAF Halton Voluntary Band.



Order of Service



- 0 **Lament** – Played as the Clergy are escorted to the Memorial
'Lest we Forget' - Captain Stuart Samson MBE
 Pipe Major Finlay MacGhee
SILENCE While clergy take up their positions
- 1 **Trumpet Solo** – Played while the clergy enter
Ich hatt' einen Kameraden - Friedrich Silcher
 Trumpeter Corporal Sharon Chinn
- 2 **Welcome**
The Reverend (Wing Commander) David Norfield,
The College Chaplain, The Royal Air Force College, Cranwell
- 3 **Message**
 From The Bishop of Hannover - *Full text Pages 22-23*
 Pastor Marcus Christ
 Evangelisch-Lutherische
 Kirchengemeinde St. Petri, Cuxhaven
- 4 **Message**
 From The Dean of Ely Cathedral - *Full text Page 21*
 The Reverend Canon Chris Barber
 Priest Vicar, Ely Cathedral
- 5 **'I was there on the day'**
 Richard & Julia & mes & Doug Aylward
The words of the late Derrick Allaway in conversation with the
daughter a IX Squadron airman, a good friend of his
Full script Page 20

6 Bible Reading

John 15: 12-17

Rachel Kellett

Relative of Wing Commander Richard Kellett,
who led the Heligoland raid in 1939

Jesus said:

¹² This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

¹⁶ Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

¹⁷ These things I command you, that ye love one another

7 Address

8 Prayers

Including the Lord's Prayer

The response to 'Lord in your mercy' is 'Hear our prayer'

9 Act of Remembrance

Let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew and whose memory we treasure; and especially this day those who died in the Battle of Heligoland, 80 years ago today

10 The 59 Names

Read alternately by:

Flying Officer Matthew Hay & Hauptmann Mario Liske

Douglas Allison

Thomas Appleby

John Atkinson

Donald Bailey

Maurice Barrington-Taylor

John Barstow

Reginald Black

Alastair Bourne

Michael Briden

John Brister

William Brown

John Challes

Gurth Cox

Alex Dickie

Matthew Drawwater

William Ellis

Thomas English

Alfred Fearnside

Alan Foster

Johann Fuhrmann

George Geddes

Albert Goodenough

Archibald Guthrie

Richard Hammond

Alexander Hill

Thomas Holley

Ian Hue-Williams

Peter Jones

Josias Key

Alfred Lane

Isaac Leighton

Oliver Lewis

Walter Lilley

Eric Lines

Fred Lines

Ernest Lowe

Thomas Marlin

Frank Mason

Alister Norris

Bertie Pickess

Edward Polhill

Michael Radcliffe

Valentine Richardson

Wilson Robinson

Roderick Ross

Leslie Sheppard

John Sinton

James Speirs

Roman Stiegler

Leonard Stock

Frederick Taylor

Alexander Telfer

Arthur Thompson

Alfred Tilley

Joseph Turnbull

Harold Tyrrell

Arthur Vaughan Williams

Clifford Walker

Peter Warren

11 **The Commemoration** – *led by Air Commodore Nick Hay, ISTAR Force Commander, RAF Waddington*

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old: age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

We will remember them.

12 **Last Post**

13 **The Silence**

59 seconds, one second for each life lost at Heligoland

14 **Reveille**

15 **Laying of Wreaths**

Royal Air Force
German Embassy London
From The People of Surrey
149 Squadron - 1939
IX Squadron - 1939
37 Squadron - 1939
RNLI - Wells Lifeboat
The Mildenhall Register



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Air Commodore Nick Hay
Oberst Stephan Breidenbach
Deputy Lieutenant Nick Dow-Wood
Caroline Trotter – H39 Relative
Malcolm Fearnside - H39 Relative
Kate Temple - H39 Relative
Nicky King - Coxswain Engineer
Geoff Reynolds - Secretary
Les Kibble – Regional Manager

Almighty God, we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

16 The Act of Dedication

God, who calls us to be one with himself, through his Son Jesus Christ, tasks us to share in his work of reconciliation. So, let us pledge ourselves anew to be peacemakers in our homes, in our country and throughout the world.

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all your peoples, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.

17 The Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

An invitation to browse the memorial.

Private wreaths may be laid.

18 Recorded Interlude Music

‘Last Post’

Vaughan Williams
Graham De Wilde &
Keith Prowse

‘O Valiant Hearts’

Sir John Stanhope Arkwright
Rev Dr Charles Harris

19 Dispersal

The Runnymede Memorial - HISTORY



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Unveiled by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, on 17 October 1953, the Runnymede Memorial, sometimes called the Air Forces Memorial, was built and is cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

The CWGC was established during the First World War to ensure that those who died in service with what would now be recognised as the Commonwealth's armed forces would never be forgotten.

Today, the CWGC honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars – caring for their graves and memorials at 23,000 locations, in more than 150 countries and territories. Records and archives relating to the commemoration of these men and women are freely available via the CWGC's website at www.cwgc.org

The location for the Runnymede Memorial was carefully chosen.

Standing proudly on Coopers Hill, not far from Heathrow airport and overlooking the fields where Magna Carta was signed in 1215, the memorial is a poignant reminder of the human cost of liberty.

Inscribed upon its walls are the names of more than 20,000 airmen and women from across the British Isles and Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India whose lives were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe who have no known grave.

Created by Sir Edward Maufe, the CWGC's principal architect for the United Kingdom after the Second World War, the memorial is designed to create an atmosphere of quiet and intimacy for those visitors who come to remember the missing.

At the heart of the memorial is the chapel, reminiscent of the control towers that air crews would have seen when returning to base. It is adorned with three stone figures by the Yorkshire-born sculptor and illustrator Vernon Hill, representing Justice, Victory and Courage.

Through the great north windows, designed by the prominent glass engraving artist John Hutton, are spectacular views over the Runnymede plain and far beyond. The windows bear etchings from the 139th Psalm, sometimes called the Airman's Psalm:

If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there;
If I go to Hell, Thou art there also.
If I take the wings of the morning
And remain in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there also shall Thy hand lead me;
And Thy right hand shall hold me.

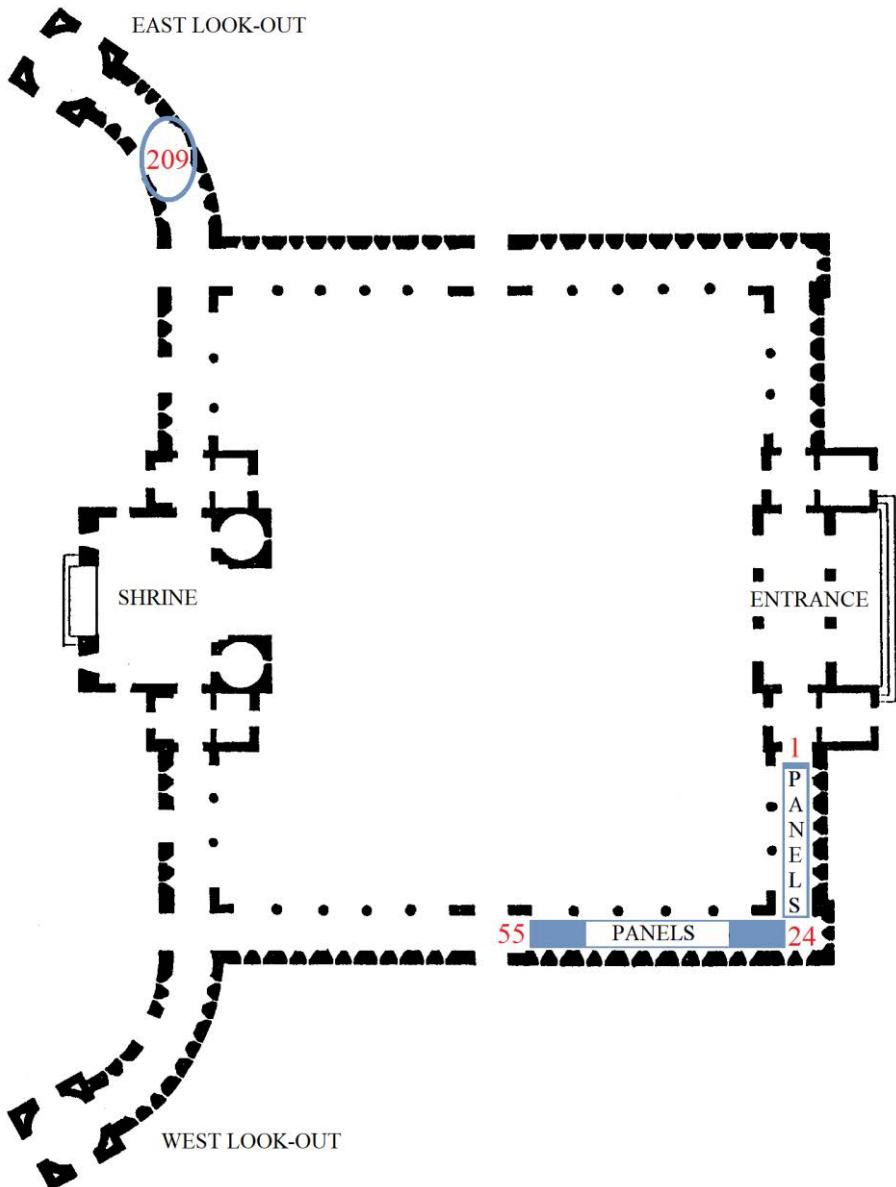
As you leave the memorial look up to read the inscription, painted in sky blue above the doorway. RAF veterans are very familiar with the motto 'Per Ardua ad Astra', but for others it is worth pausing to reflect on its meaning: 'through adversity to the stars'.



The Runnymede Shrine

Peter Francis – Media & PR Executive CWGC

RAF Memorial PLAN



'Missing in Action' – The Runnymede Panel Lists

11

Of the 130 RAF airmen that were sent into the Battle of Heligoland Bight a total of 57 were killed in action. The remains of 11 of the dead were recovered for burial on land.

46

The 46 names that appear in RED below and on Page 18 disappeared into the North Sea and have no known grave.

PANEL 1

Name:	Sqn:	H39 Plane:	KIA:
DB Allison	IX	N2941	18.12.39
TGW Appleby	37	N2904	18.12.39
JE Atkinson	IX	N2872	18.12.39
DCE Bailey	IX	N2941	18.12.39
MW Barrington-Taylor	37	N2889	18.12.39
AHR Bourne	IX	N2939	18.12.39
MF Briden	149	N2961	18.12.39
JTI Challes	IX	N2939	18.12.39
TH English	IX	N2939	18.12.39
AK Fearnside	IX	N2940	18.12.39
AJ Guthrie	IX	N2872	18.12.39
RR Hammond	149	N2962	18.12.39
IV Hue-Williams	37	N2904	18.12.39
OJT Lewis	37	N2889	18.12.39
EF Lines	IX	N2940	18.12.39
FN Lines	149	N2962	18.12.39
M Radcliffe	37	N2888	18.12.39
RM Ross	37	N2889	18.12.39
JHC Speirs	149	N2962	18.12.39
AT Thompson	37	N2935	18.12.39



CWGC

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

PANEL 2

Name:		Sqn:	H39 Plane:	KIA:
JA	Barstow	37	N2904	18.12.39
RT	Black	IX	N2941	18.12.39
GE	Cox	IX	N2939	18.12.39
AM	Dickie	IX	N2940	18.12.39
JMF	Key	IX	N2872	18.12.39
AWW	Lane	37	N2888	18.12.39
W	Lilley	IX	N2983	18.12.39
E	Lowe	37	N2904	18.12.39
TL	Marlin	IX	N2872	18.12.39
FM	Mason	IX	N2939	18.12.39
AR	Norris	37	N2904	18.12.39
BJ	Pickess	IX	N2872	18.12.39
VHG	Richardson	149	N2961	18.12.39
LA	Sheppard	37	N2888	18.12.39
JH	Sinton	149	N2962	18.12.39
LA	Stock	37	N2935	18.12.39
JBA	Turnbull	IX	N2941	18.12.39
HW	Tyrell	IX	N2872	18.12.39

PANEL 3

Name		Sqn	H39 Plane	KIA
WJ	Ellis	149	N2962	18.12.39
AM	Hill	37	N2888	18.12.39
PT	Jones	37	N2889	18.12.39
ID	Leighton	149	N2961	18.12.39
EMG	Polhill	IX	N2940	18.12.39
A	Telfer	IX	N2939	18.12.39
C	Walker	IX	N2940	18.12.39
PJ	Warren	149	N2961	18.12.39

15

Those names in BLUE below, lived through the battle. 12 were killed in action before the end of the Phoney War in July 1940 and another 3 by the end of the WW2 in 1945.

?

The fate of the remainder of those killed is not yet known. A small number of them survived into old age.

PANELS 5 - 209

Name:	Sqn:	H39 Plane:	KIA:
HL McL Bulloch	149	N2943	02.01.40
PANEL 11			
R Ballantyne	149	N2943	02.01.40
PANEL 13			
EA Downham	37	N2903	01.06.40
PANEL 16			
DJ Kirkness	149	N2943	02.01.40
PANEL 18			
WC Parker	149	N2892	12.04.40
PANEL 20			
HJ Wheller	149	N2892	12.04.40
PANEL 21			
FA Woodcock	149	N2866	12.04.40
PANEL 22			
AA Brown	149	N2943	02.01.40
R Coalter	149	N2892	12.04.40
PANEL 23			
W Greig	149	N2943	02.01.40
PANEL 26			
H Gillott	149	N2960	12.04.40
DH Grove	149	N2943	02.01.40
PANEL 29			
GG Heathcote	IX&15	N2873	18.12.41
PANEL 37			
J Peters	IX&15	N2981	18.12.41
PANEL 209			
G Watson	149	N2980	19.04.44

SCRIPT

'I was there on the day'

The words of the late Derrick Allaway in conversation with the daughter of a IX Squadron airman, a good friend of his

How did you exactly know my dad?

Ronnie used to be a mechanic.

Working where I was

Was he happy?

He was very happy, he was one of us.

I was there on the day when he took-off for Heligoland.

The last time I saw him he was taking stuff from his pockets and giving them to a friend of his.

His personal stuff.

He didn't know if he would be coming back.

It wasn't until the next morning that we found out that Ronnie was in one of the aircraft that ditched in the North Sea.

He had to get the dinghy first.

He made sure the dinghy was out.

He eventually got all the crew out except his friend Lilley, who was dead in the back of the aircraft.

They got him out of the turret, laid him on the floor.

Poor Lilley went down with the aeroplane.

That was it.

Walter Lilley was one of 57 airmen who failed to return from the battle, almost half of those who set out.

The raid was a disaster for the RAF. Of the 24 Wellingtons that took-off that morning 12 were lost in action. And like many survivors of Heligoland, 18 year old Ronnie had not returned unscathed.

Did you see dad again?

No, I never saw him again.

I understood a couple of the crew were in hospital with injuries.

Ronnie was a bit shaken-up.

He had a bit of a problem with his health after that.

That's about all I can tell you really

That's when I last saw Ronnie.

That morning when he took-off on that particular mission.

I have never met anyone in my life that knew my father when he was 18-years old.

And to hear who he really was.

He was a good bloke and a good friend.

That's a really good feeling.

He had this extraordinary experience.

And it almost broke him.

He healed by going back and carrying on.

He healed by continuing, by not being broken.

And I see that's what drove him.

Words taken from 'Who Do You Think You Are'

Wall to Wall Media 2013

Performed by: Julia James, Richard James & Doug Aylward

Message from The Dean of Ely Cathedral



Ely Cathedral with its tower and lantern has been for centuries a familiar landmark for travellers, and never more so than during the Second World War when it proved an invaluable navigation aid to aircraft both Allied and German. Ely was in fact the centre of a landscape carpeted with aerodromes, and is today the home of the Roll of Honour which lists the names of 19,000 RAF airmen who flew from those same airfields and lost their lives.

It is still a sign of the Christian faith as a guiding light to the world of today and a memorial to so many who have given their lives for faith and goodness, justice and peace. May their memory and that witness long continue.

The Very Reverend Mark Bonney

**Message from
The Bishop of Hannover**



**EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHE
LANDESKIRCHE HANNOVERS**



80 years ago on this day the Battle of Heligoland Bight took place. At the end of this cold December day 59 men lost their lives.

The outcome of the battle meant pain and grief for 59 families in the United Kingdom and Germany. In those days the people had no idea that this immense suffering would happen several million times in the following years of the ongoing war.

At the beginning of the war people talked a lot about glory and honour, but in the end war does not say anything about the greatness of man but about his failure.

Many people today still suffer from memories of their war-time experiences. They remember the nightly bombing raids in the cellars, the death of many people and the psychological injuries which still affect them today.

We must all therefore be reminded today of such enmity. But, enemies have become friends, thank God. God is a God of peace and makes reconciliation possible. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2. Corinthians 4,6)

Because we live under the light of God's love and His peace, we can establish Peace and Reconciliation. We acknowledge our guilt and we see our responsibility for Peace before any political and military considerations.

I hope that this gathering is an opportunity to mourn the dead, to think of the victims and that we will all of us stand for Peace in this World.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ralf Meister'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'R' and a long, horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Grußwort des Bischofs Ralf Meister

Message from The Mayor of Runnymede



Heligoland 39 – Runnymede Borough, Surrey

We are privileged to have this commemoration culminating in Runnymede. When commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the first named air battle of World War Two, it is important to look back on what was going on in our community, nearby and the events that took place, to truly and significantly remember those that participated in the RAF operations.

The RAF Memorial on Cooper's Hill in Runnymede overlooks the River Thames. It is sometimes referred to as the Air Forces Memorial. The memorial commemorates more than 20,000 airmen and women who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe who have no known grave. The memorial was unveiled on 17 October 1953 by Queen Elizabeth II and consists of a shrine embraced by a cloister. The shrine is adorned with three stone figures by Vernon Hill representing **Justice, Victory and Courage**.

In Surrey, there were a substantial number of casualties from the Second World War, in total; 20,275.

Heathrow Airport's origins go back to the early days of aviation. West London was the base for military aircraft manufacturers in Kingston and Fairey in Hayes. Such was the craze for aviation in the early decades of the 20th century that airstrips were common in London suburbia, in places such as Hendon, Croydon, Northolt and a hamlet near Hounslow Heath called Heathrow. That now-lost village had existed since medieval times, roughly where Terminal 3 is today.

Fairey Aviation, led by Sir Richard Fairey, was evicted from Northolt by the Air Ministry in the late 1920s, and went on to buy land and develop a three-runway aerodrome in the Heathrow area during the 1930s. It was variously known as Harmondsworth Aerodrome, Great West Aerodrome and Heathrow Aerodrome.

But in 1944, under emergency powers, the government once again evicted Fairey Aviation from its home – without compensation. Hard to credit their grim luck. Not knowing what to do with it after the war, the aerodrome was turned over to civilian use. Result: London Airport.

We must continue to remember those that gave their lives for others in the fight for peace and justice with such courage. We pray their memories live on. I am grateful, as Mayor of Runnymede, to represent a borough which gave so much during this war on this important commemoration.

Councillor Parshotam Sohi

Message from The Mayor of the City of Ely



Ely played a significant role on the Home Front in the story of World War 2. We were designated a 'safe area' for evacuation and as a result gave homes to many children and pregnant women just before war was declared. Many of these children from the East End of London were Jewish and welcomed into our homes and enjoyed life in this small market town.

Like many others when war was declared my father enlisted, in his case in the RAF. Ely itself was full of volunteers whether it was the WVS (Women's Voluntary Service), special constables, ARP (Air Raid Patrol), fire service, or Observer Corps. Building work was also proceeding at pace on a new hospital for the Royal Air Force on the northern edge of the city. The hospital opened in 1940, having temporarily opened at the Grange, Littleport. Countless injured aircrew were treated at the RAF Hospital and it continued to serve the community until 1992.

Early in the war it was decided not to try and camouflage the Cathedral and it was a landmark to help in navigation for both allied and German aircrew. During World War 2 this area around Ely was full of airfields large and small, the nearest being less than two miles away at Witchford. The cathedral has a beautiful stained glass window in memory of members of 2, 3, 8 and 100 groups of Bomber Command who are recorded in the books of remembrance.

The former Bishop's Palace was vacated by the Bishop of Ely in 1941 and became a Red Cross convalescent home for wounded servicemen.

Ely continued to be a 'safe haven' for many and raised vast sums of money for War Weapons weeks, including adopting HMS Walpole. Prisoners of War were placed in two camps in Ely, many of them working on the land and forming an orchestra that gave charity concerts. During the 1947 Fen Floods prisoners of war worked side by side with British soldiers to rebuild the banks. After their release some even stayed and settled here.

Sadly Ely and its parish lost too many fighting for freedom, especially with the Cambridgeshire Regiment in the Far East and a further 100 names were added to the Market Place war memorial.

Heligoland '39 symbolises sacrifice and reconciliation and I thank Jack Waterfall and his small team for all their work and dedicated research that has brought many of the families of the former aircrew together for the first time and highlighted the significance of this battle perhaps hitherto unknown to most of us.

I am honoured on behalf of the City of Ely as its Mayor to be part of this important commemoration

Councillor Mike Rouse

Message from German Defence Attaché



On 18th December 1939 the Royal Air Force and the German Luftwaffe engaged in a fierce air battle over the Heligoland Bight. And although the battle lasted only a day, it nevertheless claimed the lives of 57 RAF and two Luftwaffe airmen.

The number of dead in this battle is small compared to the millions who lost their lives during the Second World War. However, the numbers don't tell the whole story.

Every individual who died on that day had his own story to tell. A story of friends and family, of happiness and sadness, of dreaming about the future and making plans together with their loved ones or just for themselves.

All of this was destroyed by the war which ripped these soldiers out of their normal life and for which they made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The memory of the fallen must not be forgotten. From these memories the new generations may learn, and draw strength and purpose. It is our motivation to further support reconciliation and help people to live together in peace. For me, reconciliation means coming together, talking to each other and learning from one another. It is not about right or wrong, good or bad. It is about accepting the past in respectful remembrance.

Many of those who personally had to suffer the horrors of the Second World War have shown that out of sorrow can grow strength for reconciliation, strength for peace, the strength to shape a better future in freedom, without war and violence. Reconciliation, understanding and friendship are the fruit of the endeavors of many, many people of both our countries. They have dedicated themselves to good relations between Britons and Germans and harmonious cooperation in the conviction that this is the best guarantee of a peaceful future.

We share common values and goals and stand side by side when it comes to promoting peace and stability in Europe and in the world.

Commemorating today's event together is just one small part of this process. It shows that former enemies can become friends and partners and that friendship can grow out of hatred and tragedy.

We must not forget or deny but acknowledge responsibility and honour sacrifice and build on these memories in order to forge friendship, partnership and reconciliation between our two nations.

Finally I would like to thank the devoted British citizens who invested so much of their work and time in making the 80th Anniversary Act of Commemoration of the Battle of Heligoland Bight possible. Your efforts are in the true spirit of reconciliation. Let this remembrance be reason enough for us to continue to work hard to promote peace and friendship.

I bow in sorrow and reverence before the dead.

Oberst Stephan Breidenbach
German Embassy London

The Search for the Lost Luftwaffe Pilots

Die Suche nach den verlorenen Luftwaffenpiloten

An approach to the Defence Attaché at the German Embassy in London at the end of April this year, initiated a search for the relatives of the two Luftwaffe pilots who lost their lives over Heligoland Bight on the 18th December 1939.

The trail led to the German National Archive in Berlin, which had very strict ground rules. 'File your enquiry and do not chase us. We will handle your file in rotation and report back to you in due course'. SILENCE.....

With much surprise, which exceeded expectations, the following message arrived from Berlin on the 1st October:

Eine Annäherung an den Verteidigungsattaché in der deutschen Botschaft in London Ende April dieses Jahres leitete die Suche nach den Angehörigen der beiden Luftwaffenpiloten ein, die am 18. Dezember 1939 über Helgoland Bight ihr Leben ließen.

Der Weg führte zum Deutschen Nationalarchiv in Berlin, das sehr strenge Grundregeln hatte. 'Stellen Sie Ihre Anfrage und verfolgen Sie uns nicht. Wir werden Ihre Anliegen nach der Reihe bearbeiten und Ihnen zu gegebener Zeit Bericht erstatten. SCHWEIGEN.....

Mit großer Überraschung, die die Erwartungen übertraf, traf am 1. Oktober die folgende Nachricht aus Berlin ein:

Fuhrmann, Johannes

- *Born on 4th of December 1911 in Potsdam;*
- *Lieutenant and Transport Officer 10 Squadron, Jagdgeschwader 1;*
- *Killed in action on the 18th of December 1939, 20 nautical miles north of the island of Wangerooge;*
- *His body was not recovered;*
- *Registered on the 12th of March 1940 at Registry Office Greifswald under No. 228/40;*
- *Address of descendants unknown.*

Fuhrmann, Johannes

- Geboren am 4. Dezember 1911 in Potsdam;
- Leutnant und Transportoffizier 10 Geschwader, Jagdgeschwader 1;
- Getötet am 18. Dezember 1939, 20 Seemeilen nördlich der Insel Wangerooe;
- Sein Körper wurde nicht geborgen;
- Eingetragen am 12. März 1940 beim Standesamt Greifswald unter Nr. 228/40;
- Adresse der Nachkommen unbekannt.

Stiegler, Roman

- *Born on the 12th of January 1916 in Graz-Wetzelsdorf;*
- *Lieutenant and Transport Officer 6 Squadron, Jagdgeschwader 1;*
- *Deceased in the Military Hospital Wangerooe on the 18th of December 1939;*
- *His body was transferred to Graz; location of grave: Cemetery Graz St. Veit, family grave Ostrand 75+76;*
- *Registered on the 6th of February 1940 at Registry Office Pilsen under No. 22/1940;*
- *Address of descendants unknown.*

Stiegler, Roman

- Geboren am 12. Januar 1916 in Graz-Wetzelsdorf;
- Leutnant und Transportoffizier 6 Geschwader, Jagdgeschwader 1;
- Am 18. Dezember 1939 im Militärkrankenhaus Wangerooe verstorben;
- Sein Körper wurde nach Graz gebracht; Grabstelle: Friedhof Graz St. Veit, Familiengrab Ostrand 75 + 76;
- Eingetragen am 6. Februar 1940 beim Standesamt Pilsen unter der Nummer 22/1940;
- Adresse der Nachkommen unbekannt.

The project now had a positive lead and the next step led to the Bishop's office in Graz, Austria, where the cemetery in which Roman Stiegler was laid to rest was located. Arrangements were made for a H39 Delegation to travel there to attend an Act of Remembrance in St. Viet Parish Church Cemetery on All Saint's, the 1st November.

Das Projekt hatte nun eine positive Richtung und der nächste Schritt führte zum Bischofsbüro in Graz, Österreich, wo sich der Friedhof befindet, auf dem Roman Stielger beigesetzt ist. Es wurden Vorbereitungen getroffen, dass eine H39-Delegation dorthin reist, um am 1. November an einer Gedenkfeier auf dem Kirchhof der St. Veit Pfarrkirche an Allerheiligen teilzunehmen.

Travel arrangements were made and the hope then was that some Stiegler relatives might be present at the ceremony. A special wreath and grave marker were prepared for the day.

A surprise e-mail from Roman's nephew in Munich soon arrived, a phone call followed and a friendship was forged.

Reisevorbereitungen wurden getroffen und man hoffte, dass einige Stiegler-Verwandte bei der Zeremonie anwesend sein könnten.

Ein besonderer Kranz und ein Grabstecker wurden für den Tag vorbereitet.

Eine Überraschungs-E-Mail von Romans Neffe in München traf bald ein, ein Anruf folgte und eine Freundschaft wurde geschlossen.

A painting depicting Wellington N2903 being chased by the Me109 piloted by Roman Stiegler was uncovered in the RAF Club, Piccadilly, in 2018. At high-speed and low altitude Roman's wingtip clipped the wave-tops and he crashed into the sea.

Im Jahr 2018 wurde im RAF-Club Piccadilly ein Gemälde gefunden, das zeigt, wie Wellington N2903 von der von Roman Stiegler gelenkten Me109 gejagt wird. Bei hoher Geschwindigkeit und geringer Höhe stieß Roman mit der Flügelspitze gegen die Wellen und stürzte ins Meer.



Wellington N2903 was the only one of six 37 Squadron bombers to survive the battle, the other five failed to return to their base just as Roman had.

Wellington N2903 war der einzige von sechs Bombern des 37. Geschwaders, der die Schlacht überlebte. Die anderen fünf konnten nicht, wie Roman, zu ihrer Basis zurückkehren.





Meeting in a spirit of friendship at Roman's grave in Graz.
Freundschaftliches Treffen an Romans Grab in Graz



Roman's sister, Gretl, was devastated by his sudden loss as they had been very close siblings.

Romans Schwester Gretl war durch den plötzlichen Verlust am Boden zerstört, da sie sehr enge Geschwister waren.

The family story.....

“As I said during the meeting at the grave of Roman Stiegler, my family is very moved by the gesture of sympathy and reconciliation made by the RAF.

My mother Gretl, the sister of Roman, had lost her father in 1927 and her mother in 1938 and she was therefore very close to her brother. When he died on the 18th of December 1939, shortly before Christmas, it was naturally a terrible situation for her and made worse by having no other relatives.

Years later, when I was of an age to understand, time had somehow faded the terrible incidents of the war, and talking with my mother about Roman she only told me what a wonderful young man he was and how terrible it was that the war had taken his young life of only 24 years. According to my mother, flying was his great passion rather than an enthusiasm for war.

It means a great deal to me that you should include him in your remembrance of the victims of this first battle of the Second World War.”

Roman Stiegler's Nephew – Munich - 18th November 2019



Roman Stiegler's tablet sited at his family's grave

Die Familiengeschichte

„Wie ich während des Treffens am Grab von Roman Stiegler sagte, ist meine Familie sehr bewegt von der Geste des Mitgeföhls und der Versöhnung durch die RAF.

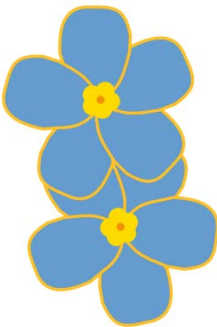
Meine Mutter Gretl, die Schwester von Roman, hatte 1927 ihren Vater und 1938 ihre Mutter verloren und stand daher ihrem Bruder sehr nahe. Als er am 18. Dezember 1939, kurz vor Weihnachten, starb, war es für sie natürlich eine schreckliche Situation, die sich noch verschlimmerte, da sie keine weiteren Verwandten hatte.

Jahre später, als ich alt genug war um zu verstehen, die Zeit hatte die schrecklichen Ereignisse des Krieges irgendwie verblasen lassen, sprach ich mit meiner Mutter über Roman und sie erzählte mir nur, was für ein wundervoller junger Mann er war und wie schrecklich es war, dass der Krieg ihm sein junges Leben von nur 24 Jahren nahm. Nach Aussage meiner Mutter war das Fliegen seine große Leidenschaft und nicht die Begeisterung für den Krieg.

Es bedeutet mir sehr viel, dass Sie ihn in Ihre Erinnerung an die Opfer dieser ersten Schlacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg mit einbeziehen. “

Roman Stieglers Neffe - München - 18. November 2019

A Tribute



Today I pay tribute to both Johann & Roman, thinking of them as adversaries rather than enemies. Young men sent into conflict by their country, just as the many from Great Britain & The British Commonwealth were.

They paid the ultimate price and did not live to benefit from the better times that followed the War during a long period of peace in Europe.

Jack Waterfall – Heligoland39 Project Leader
Wednesday 18th December 2019

COMPARISON
IX(B) Squadron Past & Present
Chairman of the IX (Bomber) Squadron Association



As the current Chairman of the IX (Bomber) Squadron Association, it is a real honour and privilege to be asked to write a few words to support the amazing work being done by all involved with Heligoland 39. Although IX(B), 37 and 149 Squadrons all played their full part and suffered significant losses in the Battle of Heligoland Bight, only IX(B) Squadron remains in active service today and the task that the irrepressible Jack Waterfall gave me was to compare the past with today.



1939 Wellington 1a - IX Squadron flying in formation

Whilst the Wellington crews were ordered to hold 2 hours' readiness from 0730 hrs on the morning of 18 December 1939, our Typhoon pilots hold a few minutes' readiness 24/7 to enable them to respond to any aircraft entering United Kingdom airspace without the requisite permissions.

Modern-day aircrew sit in the shelters with the aircraft 'cocked' and their flying kit already donned. The standard formation is a pair of Typhoons whereas the Wellingtons generally flew in 'Vic' formations of three aircraft as part of a larger diamond bomber formation.

The Typhoon's purpose on these Quick Reaction Alert sorties is to detect, identify and if necessary, escort these aircraft either out of our airspace or to a safe location – ultimately though, the pilots could be called on to destroy incurring aircraft by bringing their sophisticated weaponry to bear. Maintaining operational security remains key and whilst our Wellington predecessors used the Aldis signal lamp to ensure wireless silence in-flight, the Typhoons use a Link 16 DataLink capability to build situational awareness and enable the 'silent' targeting of enemy assets.

As it was during the 'Phoney War' of 1939, the need to minimise collateral damage remains a significant factor in the execution of Typhoon operations, be they flying on QRA or on overseas offensive operations. The 1939 Operation Order stated that the task for the three Squadrons was to 'attack enemy warships in the Schillig Roads or Wilhelmshaven' and that 'great care is to be taken that no bombs fall on shore, and no merchant ships are to be attacked' whilst 'formations shall not loiter in the target area'. It would not be unusual for similar direction to be found in the Special Instructions that articulate today's Rules of Engagement – loitering in a similar high-threat target area today, as posed by the Messerschmitts from Jever, Wangerooge and Nordholz in 1939, would be both dangerous and dare I say it, foolhardy!

A significant difference between the Wellington and Typhoon is that the latter has very impressive on board radar and the missiles

to 'outstick' many of the adversaries we might encounter today – the Wellington's .303 inch Brownings did not have any such advantage over the very capable Messerschmitts they faced in the clear blue skies over Heligoland Bight. Also, Bomber Command squadrons had few opportunities to train against Fighter Command squadrons, thereby enabling them to test their formation tactics against an aircraft type similar to a potential adversary. The loss of 57 RAF airmen as a consequence of this Battle underpins the current RAF mantra to 'train as we might fight'. It is therefore perhaps ironic that 80 years on from losing seven of the nine aircraft that took off from Honington on 18 December 1939, today's IX(B) Squadron has been nominated as the RAF's first ever Aggressor Squadron, tasked to replicate the tactics and firepower of those we need to be prepared to deter today and if necessary, defeat tomorrow. '***Lest we forget***'

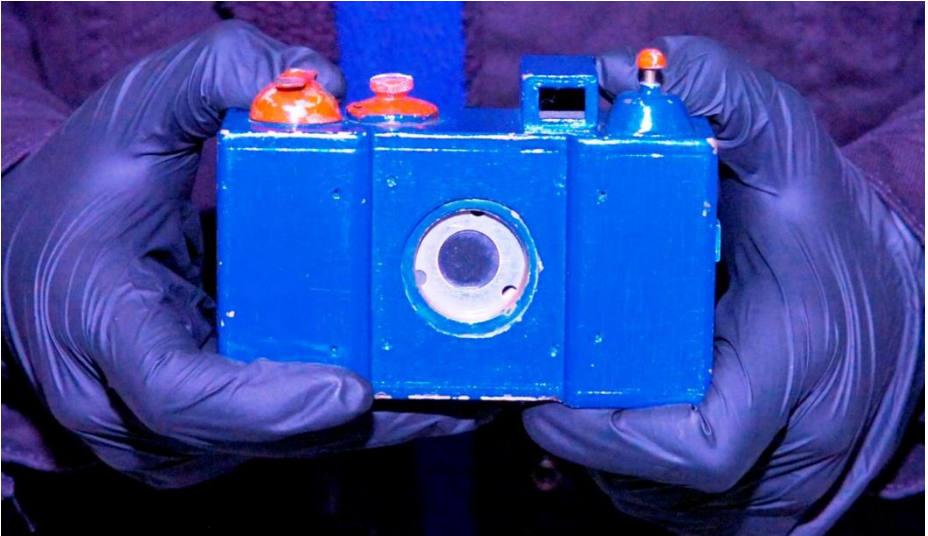


Eighty years on, the modern day RAF and German Air Force train together on the Eurofighter Typhoon jet.

Air Commodore Nick Hay OBE MA RAF
RAF Waddington

Great Uncle Herbert's P o W Camera

In November, my son Charlie and I travelled to Hendon RAF museum in London to see an exhibit that has been spoken about in our family over the years, but never seen.



My Great Uncle Herbert took part in the raid over Germany on the 18th December 1939. During that fateful day he was captured by the German army after his plane crash landed, following a heavy bombardment of bullets from German aircraft. He went on to spend the rest of the war in no less than four prisoner of war camps. During his time at the camp he made a camera that we were lucky enough to see at the museum. My father, Henry Ruse, a keen historian, documented what happened in a book about our family.

On Sunday 17th December 1939, Herbert was on leave, at home in Long Melford when he received a telephone call to return to Feltwell, at once. His squadron, No 37, was ordered to fly to Wilhelmshaven, in Germany to bomb shipping in the Kiel Canal. They would have no fighter escort; it was thought that the bombers could look after themselves. This was to be one of the

earliest bomber raids of the War, and was in essence an experiment. It was to prove to be a costly one.

The formation of aircraft, were decimated by German fighters, their guns froze and would not fire, and Herbert's aircraft was riddled with bullets. Herbert managed to crash land his stricken bomber on the island of Borkum. Two of his crew were already dead. Herbert's co-pilot Tom May jumped clear of the wreckage, but his rear gunner Harry Jones, had had his ankle shattered by a bullet, and couldn't get out. Herbert managed to half drag and half carry him from the plane, and the 3 surviving members laid exhausted and in pain in the frozen sand dunes, whilst beside them their plane burned. The full story of the raid is written in the prologue of Max Hasting's book 'Bomber Command'.



On our visit to Hendon we were amazed how well the camera was made and how Herbert had managed to collect all the parts. There are no surviving photographs but we said we'd love to know if it was used and how he managed to keep it hidden! It was wonderful to finally get so see it.

Kate & Charlie - 18th November 2019

Relatives of the late Sgt Herbert Ruse - N2936

Wells Lifeboat Coxswain's Report – 19th December 1939

Wells Coastguard phoned me at 10.24pm 18/12/39 informing me that an aircraft was in the sea between Cromer and Holkham Bay. The Hon Sec not being available for phone between 5pm and 9am I decided (in accordance with our present arrangement) to act immediately as the Coastguard suggested I search in an Easterly direction. I called the Engineer via phone and proceeded to messenger house directing C Stevenson to summon crew and helpers. I then went to lifeboat house, launched and proceeded to search easterly. Spoke to Sheringham lifeboat about 1am 19/12/39 and to Cromer lifeboat at 2am approx. Cromer coxswain asked me to stand by as he was seeking further information by wireless. Bircham RAF command via Cromer suggested the search be continued at daylight. I agreed with Cromer coxswain to proceed westward and continue search from west end of Wells area. We came in to refuel petrol tanks at 9am 19/12/39. Phoned Wells Coastguard. They had no further information on this matter from either the air ministry or RAF Fighter Command. I therefore proceeded to sea and made further search westward of Wells harbour in likely places and in our part of the area from (Holkham Bay to Cromer). I decided to give up the search as no results were forthcoming and it would have meant a repetition over the sea area. Arrived back and housed lifeboat at 2.35pm on 19/12/39.

Names of crew

T Neilsen	Coxswain
W R Cox	2 nd Cox
J R Cox	Mechanic
C M Cox	2 nd Mechanic
R J Grimes	Bowman
W G Cooper	Crew
Jack Cox	Crew.

Note: Kent Cooper (Right) is a member of the 2019 Wells Lifeboat crew and the grandson of W. G. Cooper above.



Hon Sec Remarks 19/12/39

For Hon Sec's information Wells CG reported to the Hon Sec that the officer in charge of Bomber Command thanked "the Wells Lifeboat for its services"

A 1939 Wells Lifeboat Crew



Photographed on the 13th July 1939

Note: Shaun Peel will be broadcasting interviews with both Nicky King from Wells Lifeboat House and Jack Waterfall from the Bomber Command Memorial at Ely Cathedral on Tuesday the 17th December 2019, the eve of the Runnymede Ceremony.



Brooklands' special place in British aviation history.

Many of the early developments of flight were pioneered here in the 1910s as the site provided a safe and open space to do so. The motor racing circuit, the world's first purpose-built track which opened in 1907, was the backdrop to this hub of aviation development. Engineers often worked across both car and aircraft developments, sharing innovations and pushing the boundaries of going faster, further and higher.

It was in this unique setting that Vickers established a foothold on the site. In time, the factory became a central landmark to Brooklands. After the First World War, the development of aviation progressed rapidly.

The arrival of Barnes Wallis post war saw a significant step-change in aircraft design. His experience in airship design allowed him to create structures that were lightweight but strong. His geodetic 'basket-weave' structural design revolutionised Vickers aircraft and resulted in the birth of the Wellington Bomber – designed and developed here at Brooklands.



An advance party on a visit in October 2018

Production of the Wellington Bomber by Vickers at Brooklands and across its factories during 1930s and early 1940s led it to become a mainstay of the Royal Air Force at the outbreak of the Second World War. A total of 11,461 Wellingtons were built with 2,500 manufactured at Brooklands alone. It was only when the Avro Lancaster was introduced in 1942 that the role of the Wellington bomber receded.

Today, out of the 11,461 Wellingtons built, only two survive and one is on display at Brooklands Museum – N2980 ‘R for Robert’. N2980 was built at Brooklands and was first flown on 16 November 1939 before being assigned to 149 Squadron at RAF Mildenhall. Little over a month later, N2980 took part in the infamous battle of Heligoland Bight and was one of the fortunate few to return. However, N2980’s safe return did not last for long.

On 31 December 1940, N2980 was undertaking a training flight out of RAF Lossiemouth as part of the 20 Operational Training Unit. During this flight, N2980 developed engine problems and unable to rectify the issue, the pilot ordered all eight crew to evacuate, leaving the aircraft to ditch into Loch Ness. While all men escaped, the rear gunner unfortunately perished when his parachute failed to open.

N2980 lay hidden at the bottom of Loch Ness until it was discovered in 1976 by a team of American Loch Ness monster hunters. It was successfully lifted nine years later in 1985 by the Loch Ness Wellington Association and transferred to Brooklands Museum, which was just being established at the time. The restoration of N2980 was then taken on by a dedicated team of Museum volunteers – all of whom had a passion for bringing this significant aircraft back to life. The time, effort and dedication has been worth it as N2980 sits proudly within the new Brooklands Aircraft Factory exhibition – a testament and tribute to all those who flew in Wellingtons, risking their lives for the nation.

Alex Patterson

Director of Collections, Interpretation & Heritage

The Brooklands Visit – 18th December 2019

The Heligoland39 Project would like to thank Brooklands Museum for accommodating this visit, which follows the Heligoland 80th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony at Runnymede.

Our party has been generously allocated the exclusive use of the Vickers Suite for the afternoon and everyone in our gathering is also free to roam the whole museum as they wish.

The visit programme includes tea, coffee and snacks on arrival and afternoon tea and cake will be served later. If additional food if required it is available to purchase in the museum's cafeteria.



Now fully restored, 'R for Robert' is proudly displayed in the brand new 'Factory' exhibition hangar 24 years after recovery from the depths of Loch Ness in September 1985.

A 40-minute BBC Scotland film presentation, 'One of Our Bombers is No Longer Missing', will be screened continuously during the afternoon near to the Wellington and members of the team who worked tirelessly for many years to achieve such a splendid restoration will be present.

Brooklands Timetable

- 12^{noon} Tea, coffee and snacks on arrival
- 13:30 Formal Welcome:
Tamalie Newbury – Chief Executive Brooklands Museum.
Reply:
Doug Aylward – H39 Partner & Family Researcher

View Heligoland39 Exhibitors in The Vickers Suite:

- H39 Project Information & Display
- IBCC Digital Archive - SCANNING
- March Veteran & Vintage Cycle Club
 - 1939 Period Paraphernalia
- The Wellington R3236 Memorial Exhibit
- Tim Huff - 1/10 Scale models of Wellington Turrets
- City of Ely Mayor's Charity Collection

Free to roam Brooklands Museum:

Highlight – Wellington N2980 'R' for Robert
Flown into the Battle of Heligoland Bight by Squadron
Leader P.I. Harris DFC in December 1939. Ditched into
Loch Ness while on a training mission in December 1940.
Now here fully restored after being recovered in 1985.

The Heligoland 39 Exhibition – Brooklands Art Gallery

This is located near to the cafeteria and will take up
residence. 17th December 2019 to the 31st January 2020.

Photographs, documents, artwork and artefacts revealing
the detailed history of this 1939 action, and a collection of
archive and modern film footage on show courtesy of:



- 16:00 Afternoon Tea & Cake.
Tim Harris & Air Commodore Nick Hay reflect.....
- 16:30 Dispersal: Those wishing to stay may do so until 18:00

International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive
Riseholme Hall, University of Lincoln, Lincoln LN6 7TS UK
++44 01522 837712 - ibccarchive@lincoln.ac.uk



The International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) Digital Archive is managed and staffed by the University of Lincoln, which is a partner in the delivery of the IBCC in Lincoln. The Archive was established in 2015 to collect eyewitness testimonies and personal memorabilia relating to the bombing war in Europe, 1939-1945, and to share these online. To date we have collected over 1100 interviews and scanned some 1500 collections of memorabilia: everything from logbooks, letters and diaries to photographs and lucky charms (we scan paper items and photograph 3D objects). You can find this extensive resource at <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk>.

In association with H39, the Digital Archive staff and equipment will be present at Brooklands Museum on 18 December. If you are able to bring along any family memorabilia that you are willing to have scanned/photographed and shared, especially in relation to the early years of the war, we would be very grateful.

If you do have any such items, it would help us greatly if you could email us a brief description beforehand. Send this to either of the emails below; you can direct any queries to these as well.

Heather Hughes

Professor of Cultural Heritage Studies
Head, IBCC Digital Archive
hhughes@lincoln.ac.uk
ibccarchive@lincoln.ac.uk

Charity Collection at Brooklands

The Heligoland39 Project is supporting three chosen charities via The City of Ely Mayor's Charity Collection 2018 - 2020.



Collection buckets will be in position in the Vickers Suite to gather your contributions. The total sum collected will be divided equally between the three charities above.

NOTE: It is also possible to donate to RBL & RAFA via:

JustGiving

Direct donations can be made to the IBCC on the web via:

<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/supporting-ibcc/donate>

The funds raised at Ely Cathedral last year and various Film Shows that followed have been distributed.



*Councillor Mike Rouse presents cheques to IBCC, RAFA & RBL.
Thanks to all those who gave.....*

The Book



Carte blanche

The Heligoland39 Book

The book in the photograph is marked “PROVISIONAL”. If you were able to open it you would find 200 absolutely BLANK pages. At this stage every aspect of the ultimate publication is ‘up’ for discussion.

Relatives and friends of the airmen who took part in the 1939 battle are invited to contribute in some way. It may be recollecting what they know or what they have been told about those events of 80 years ago.

The wider Heligoland39 Network may be able to offer technical information, stories about the places linked to the history or other interesting information.

The intention of the three authors, Doug Aylward, Caroline Kessler and Jack Waterfall, is to avoid repeating what has already been written in other texts. Instead, their aim is to include previously generally unknown information gleaned from their research over the past three years and which they hope will make for very interesting reading.

Collectively we have the potential to produce a very special volume.



Book Sales

Given the specialised nature of the publication, the intention is to print it efficiently in modest numbers.

At present it is envisaged that copies will become available for purchase by subscription from October 2020 and physical copies will be available for delivery before Christmas 2020

Book Launch

16:00 Thursday 31st December 2020

Inverness Cathedral, Ardross St, Inverness IV3 5NN

Visit www.heligoland39.org for updates.

‘My father seldom talked about the War’



Tim Harris adorning his father's 1939 headgear

Squadron Leader P.I. Harris DFC (1939)

Like so many of his contemporaries, my father seldom talked about the War. He never even spoke to me about his activities on the night of 18 December 1939, even when I once asked him about his DFC. Mother was a little more forthcoming by saying that he ‘tried to rescue some airmen in the sea’. And so it rested and we just got on with our farming until one day Robin Holmes turned up at the farm gate asking if my father had ever flown the Wellington 'R for Robert'. Not only had he flown it, he also produced the log book. This identified the night of the battle and his forced landing at RAF Coltishall. The log book is now on display in Brooklands Museum.

The whole story then began to emerge. After Robin Holmes found the Wellington in the bottom of Loch Ness, he contacted the Air Ministry asking for names of all the crews who had flown in it. This is how he found my father. From this sprang a strong friendship and a determination to raise the Wellington from its watery grave. The first step was to raise money. This started by publishing 'The Story of 'Another' Loch Ness Monster' which describes the battle in detail. Although there had been a few early skirmishes during the phoney war, this became the first named decisive battle - which we lost. Father always put it down to two things, lack of training in formation flying, in particular assembling groups of crews who had never flown together before, and not having self-sealing fuel tanks.

The first error resulted in aircraft getting separated from each other and thus easy targets for the *Messerschmitts*. A bullet through the fuel tank simply meant that you could not get home. Father had spent a lot of time practicing formation flying with his crews which allowed them to widen their field of fire and defend themselves.

So, eventually, the Wellington was raised and you can read all about it in 'One of Our Aircraft'. At the lifting party I met his navigator Bunny Austin who described to me the situation over Wilhelmshaven harbour. He reported, "Sir I can see a pocket battleship!" Father, ever cautious, asked "Can you see any civilians?" "No sir". "Then drop the bloody things". They managed to get one hit on a ship before flogging homeward through the flak and the fighters.

Tim Harris – December 2019

Loch Ness Ditching Commemoration 2020

Provisional Timetable – Confirmed to follow

Inverness Museum Exhibition

30th November 2020 to 1st March 2021

Unveiling of Renovated 'R for Robert' Plaque

The east bank of Loch Ness

11:00 31st December 2020

80th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony

Inverness Cathedral

15:00 31st December 2020

80th Anniversary Hogmanay Party

The Palace Hotel, Inverness

From 19:30 31st December 2020

'Daylight into Darkness over Heligoland Bight'

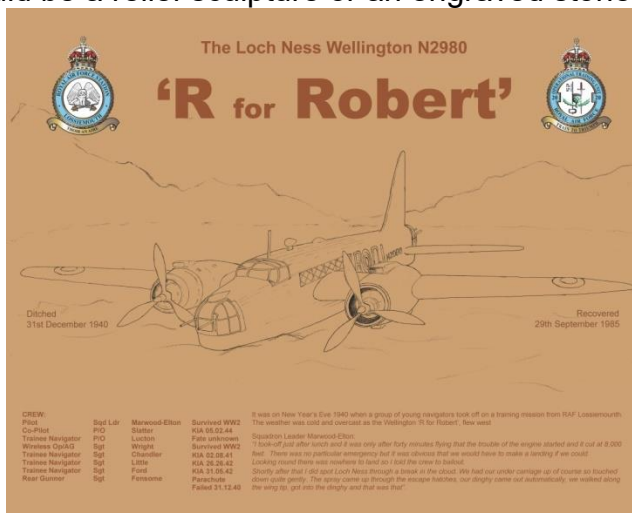
Book Launch 31st December 2020

During Hogmanay Party

PLAQUE Work in progress – An early CONCEPT

Line drawing unfinished, emulating an engraved brass plate

It could be a relief sculpture or an engraved stone tablet



INSPIRATION WELCOME

Profiles



The Royal British Legion (RBL) has been at the heart of a national network that provides lifelong support to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families, the beneficiaries, in our Armed Forces community since 1921 and will be there as long as they need us. The Legion is the country's largest Armed Forces charity, with 235,000 members, 110,000 volunteers and a network of partners and charities; helping us give support wherever and whenever it's needed.



We're the charity that supports the RAF family

We believe every generation owes a debt of gratitude to the RAF and their families. To protect the peace and safety we enjoy every day, they sacrifice the normal way of life most people take for granted. When someone in the RAF family needs help, the charity they turn to is the Royal Air Forces Association.

Behind the scenes help.....

People: Aileen Sharp; Alastair Noble; Andy Ward; Ann Powell; Anne-Marie Byrne; Arron Loxley-Black; Adrian Wilkinson; Ady Hargreaves; Alan Canham; Alan Fraser; Alex Paterson; Amanda Squires; Andrew Lewis; Andy Dicks; Angela Norrie; Angela & Derek Pickersgill; Anne-Marie Byrne; Ashley Dickenson; Ben Mayfield; Bill Welbourne; Billy McCranor; Bob Collis; Brian Sadler; Brian Stafford; Bryan Ledgate; Camilla Wilkinson; Chris & Mary Barber; Chris Cock; Chris Flatman; Chris Grandison; Colin Bedford; Bernie How; Carol Fisher-Bailey; Caroline Trotter; Cathie Hewitt; Charlie Temple; Charlotte Cresswell; Charley Pfeifer; Chris Anderson; Chris Cock; Chris Guest; Chris Samuels; Ciaron Forrow; Csilla Waterfall; Daniele Roa; Dave Gilbert; Dave Richardson; David – Bishop's Office, Graz; David Denton; David Greaves; David Griffen; David Jackson; David Martin; David Norfield; David & Beryl Smith; Dawn Pillans; Debbie Walker; Deborah Douglas; Dee Boneham; Deirdre Todd; Denis Corley; Ed Kelly; Ed Stanley; Elizabeth Robinson; Enid Dickenson; Eryl Williams; Evan King; Farquhar Laing; Finlay MacGhee; Flanders Hopkin; Frank Pfeifer; Geoff Reynolds; Geoff Waterfall; George & Rachel Peacock; Grahame Hoskin; Hannah Booth; Hans & Rosemarie Gaffal; Heather Hughes; Helen Taylor; Helen Upcraft; Huby Fairhead; Ian Keeling; Ian Thirsk; Isabella Langmann; Jacqueline Page; Jacqui Palmer; James Milner; Jennie Cartwright; Jo Godfrey; Joe Bridge; Joe Kozia; John Davies; John Rosling; Jim Gerrard; Joseph Zarzynski; Jude Price; Kari Moodie; Kate Temple; Katie Edmonds; Katie Porter; Ken Howard; Kent Cooper; Lee Barton; Leo Whisstock; Leon Duncan; Les Kibble; Lloyd Hughes; Mac MacDonald; Malcolm Fearnside; Marcus Christ; Mark Fixter; Mark Hart; Mark Jarman; Mark Macey; Margaret Roberts; Markus Graw; Marta Lotysz-Veiga; Martin Faulkner; Martin Skilbeck; Matthew Hay; Matthew Ibbotson; Matthew Kent; Matthias Schmidt; Marty Klein; Melanie Smart; Michael & June Massey; Mike Inder; Mike Rouse; Mike Stuart; Nadine Potts; Natalie Murphy; Nick Hay; Nick & Maggie Pollington; Nick Torry; Nicky Barr; Nicky King; Nina Nustede; Pat Leckonby; Paul Butcher; Paul Emeny; Paul Gannon; Paul Garland; Paul Graham; Paul Harding; Peter Francis; Phil & Laurene Green; Polly Freeman; Rachel Kellett; Ray West; Richard & Julia James; Robert Barnes; Robin Holmes; Roger Rudderham; Sharon Chinn; Sharron Pearson; Shaun Peel; Shirley Jolly; Simon Davis; Sophia Mika; Stella Ruse; Stephan Briedenbach; Steven Cowie; Stuart Samuels; Tamalie Newbery; Tim Harris; Tim Huff; Tom Russell; Tony Gimbert; Vic Attwood; Will MackMersh.

Painters - Front Cover: A reproduction of this 1940 painting by Willy Müller once hung in the Officers' Club at Jever Airfield, Northern Germany. A copy was presented to the families linked to Wellington R3236 in June 2016.

P33 - 'Sole Survivor' courtesy of the RAF Club Piccadilly; London.

Photographs: P8 RAF Waddington & RAF Halton; P15 CWGC; P34 Hans Gaffal, Graz; P37 IX Squadron Archive; P39 & Back Cover SAC Ben Mayfield, RAF Coningsby; P40 RAF Museum, Hendon; P41 Grub Street Publishing Ltd; P42&43 Wells RNLI; P44&46 Booklands Museum; P49 City of Ely Mayor; P51 Marta Lotysz-Veiga; P52 JW

Archive film footage being screened at Brooklands Museum courtesy of:

The BBC; British Pathé; Imperial War Museum & Wall to Wall Media.

The Heligoland39 Project wishes to thank all those who have supported its work in so many ways in 2018 and 2019 as we go forward into the last year of the project. I do apologise to anyone who has been missed but I can assure them that their input is valued. *Thank you JW*

BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

HOW TO FIND US





*Eighty years on, the modern day RAF and German Air Force
train together on the Eurofighter Typhoon jet.*

Photograph courtesy of SAC Ben Mayfield, RAF Coningsby © MOD Crown Copyright 2019