

"Never in the field of human conflict was so
much owed by so many to so few"

SCRAMBLE 194



Official Newsletter of the
Battle of Britain Historical Society 2013 Ltd



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SPRING / SUMMER 2024
Issue 169



Message from Your Editor

I hope this finds you all well.

I have had a very stormy, wet winter but Spring is here at last, with the lighter, longer days and warmth.

The Society is embarking on a very busy year, firstly upgrading our website, this has become outdated (see page 11).

We also have two school plaque presentations arranged later in the year for P/O Briggs in Maidenhead, then P/Os Tillet & Allen at Ramsgate, Kent; these events take 3-6 months to organise, they are very high profile, with no room for error (see page 14).

This year's Area Managers' dinner has been arranged for Saturday 14th September at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo, London, when we hope to have another successful evening.

On Sunday morning some of us will be visiting our monument on Westminster Embankment and laying a BoBHS wreath.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank both

Andrea Romp and Peter Taylor who are leaving us, and for their efforts as Area Managers over the last few years and am sure we all wish them well for the future.

Finally, enclosed is your annual Renewal Form, for which amazingly there is no increase – so still £24.00 per annum, donations are always helpful.

Enjoy this issue.

John Pulfer BEM, JP.

Managing Director BoBHS

A special Geoff Nutkins Spring Offer of artwork: 'Scenes of the "Battle of Britain" – signed by four different pilots. These are reduced from £120 each to £75 plus p&p for BoBHS members. Now is your chance to secure a bargain – why not treat yourself.

Tel: 01959 524416. www.aviartnutkins.com



Front page:

Wing Commander George Unwin closes in on a Messerschmitt 109E over the White Cliffs of southern England during the Summer of 1940.

By Geoff Nutkins, Superb Aviation Art, Limited Edition Print, 13 High Street, Shoreham Village, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7TB. Tel: 01959 524416. To view the complete range see the website: www.aviartnutkins.com **See offer above.**



Back page:

From the time that the first metal of the prototype was cut at Woolston in the Spring of 1935, until the

final production Spitfire Mk 24 was rolled out of the South Marston works in February 1948, a total of 20,400 Spitfires of different versions were built (there are some discrepancies in the official records concerning the exact number).



Grave Registrar's Column **Steve Maddock**

Sergeant Pilot Harold Norman Howes DFM

740896 – British 213, 85 and 605 Squadrons

I thought readers might like to know something of this very gallant young man who was buried in St Margaret's Churchyard at Rainham, Kent, just 24 years of age.



Sergeant Harold Norman Howes 740896 was born in Gillingham, Kent, on December 24th 1915. He joined the RAFVR about December 1937 as an Airman u/t Pilot and was called up on September 1st 1939. He joined 213 Squadron, coded AK, on September 7th and was serving with 85 Squadron in France in May 1940. On the 20th he destroyed four Do17s and damaged a fifth but was then shot down in Hurricane B2555 by Bf110s and crash-landed near Abbeville. He was unhurt and the Hurricane was abandoned.

85 Squadron was withdrawn to Debden on May 22nd and on July 13th Howes was posted to PDC RAF Uxbridge for posting to the Near East. The posting did not eventuate, he rejoined 85 on July 24th. On August 18th he destroyed two Bf110s and damaged a Do17 on September 1st he shared another Do17 and damaged another.

Posted to 605 Squadron, coded UP, at Croydon on September 12th, Howes destroyed a Do17 and probably another on the 15th, destroyed a Bf109 on October 12th 1940 the squadron now night flying Hurricanes from RAF Gravesend.

Howes was shot down by a Bf109 on December 1st in Hurricane V6844, he made a crash-landing on Gravesend Aerodrome. He was unhurt and the Hurricane was later repaired.

He took off for a routine night patrol at 17:15 hrs on the night of the December 22nd. He was recalled when the weather began to deteriorate, he was killed when he apparently lost control of Hurricane 1V6679

perhaps due to icing, crashing at Cuxton, Kent.

He was awarded the DFM (Gazette October 25th 1940). Citation: *During the period of intensive operations in France, Sergeant Howes destroyed four enemy aircraft. In August, 1940, he took part in attacks against large enemy formations. He personally destroyed two Messerschmitt 110s and one Dornier 17, and severely damaged several others. Sergeant Howes has proved himself a brave and determined pilot.*

I have been maintaining the grave site on behalf of the Battle of Britain Historical Society for many years and often wonder if there are any of his extended family still living in the area who are probably unaware of this hero. His mother Louisa Howes was buried with him in 1969.

Article: Philip Cole





Historian's Column Nick Hall

RESTRICTED

Total Aircraft Losses on 13th August, 1940

<u>German:</u>	6 Do 17's. 5 Ju 87's. 5 Ju 88's 1 He 111 6 Me 109's 9 Me 110's 32 aircraft
<u>Enemy:</u>	
In air combat:	70 Spitfires and Hurricanes. 18 Blenheims. 2 aircraft, type not known.
By AA:	1 Blenheim at Aalborg. 1 aircraft, type not known, at Cherbourg. 1 aircraft, type not known, crashed in Holland after being engaged by AA.
Destroyed on Ground:	10 Spitfires at Eastchurch airfield. 20 aircraft, type not known, at Detling airfield. 12 aircraft, type not known, at Andover airfield. 135 aircraft (and 12 barrage balloons)

SUPPLEMENT (Operations during the Night of 12/13 August)

W Hartlepool:	32 50 kg bombs were dropped on industrial installations. Hits were scored in the target area. The effect was not observed.
Off Swansea and Cardiff:	4 250 kg bombs were dropped in an attack on shipping. Hits were scored. Explosions observed.
100 km NW of NW tip of Ireland:	1 merchant ship of 8,000 tons was hit with a 250 kg bomb and badly damaged. The effect of the following attacks was not observed:
W Hartlepool:	4 250 kg bombs were dropped on AA positions.
Ramsgate:	2 500 kg bombs and 2 250 kg bombs were dropped on searchlights and the harbour.
W Hartlepool:	32 50 kg bombs were dropped on an engineering works and shipyards.



Two extracts of captured Luftwaffe documents which have been translated from the Air Historical Branch.

The dates in question are August 13th and 15th 1940. Otherwise known as Aldertag and Black Thursday in the Battle of Britain.

RESTRICTED

Humber, 0040 hours:	Balloons on ships in harbour were not released until aircraft approached (height 600 metres).
Liverpool, 0145 hours:	Balloons at 2,000 metres.
Bristol, 0145 hours:	Balloons at 2,500 metres.
Harwich, 1600 hours:	A large number of balloons on land and ships - height 2,000 metres.
Thames Estuary, 1600 hours:	Balloons at low altitude.
Dover, 1655 hours:	20 balloons.
Southampton, 1730 hours:	A large number of balloons at heights ranging from 200 to 2,000 metres.
Harwich, 2300 hours:	Balloons at 2,000 metres (some of them on ships) over both river estuaries.

NORTH SEA AND BALTIC APPROACHES

Escort operations and reconnaissance over the Skagerrak were uneventful.

Total Aircraft Losses on 15 August, 1940

<u>German:</u>	9 He 111's 7 Ju 87's 3 Do 17's 6 Me 109's 18 Me 110's 12 Ju 88's 1 He 115 56 aircraft
<u>Enemy:</u>	
In air combat:	82 Spitfires and Hurricanes 5 Curtiss 14 unidentified fighters
By AA:	1 unidentified aircraft at Dortmund
Destroyed on ground:	8 unidentified aircraft (at least) at Martlesham
Total at least	110 aircraft
In addition:	10 fighters were probably destroyed and 5 barrage balloons were shot down.

The Battle of Britain Clasp

A new recipient



'The Few' is a term that was immortalised by Winston Churchill in his speech in the House of Commons on August 20th 1940. In fact the term is rather deceptive: the 'Few' now number almost 3,000 men who qualified for the Battle of Britain clasp to the 1939-45 Star, a campaign medal. The clasp is a symbol which denotes that its wearer was a pilot or aircrew member in the Battle of Britain and who served in an eligible squadron or unit of Fighter Command, or were seconded to Fighter Command for periods between July 10th and October 31st 1940. The minimum requirement for the award of the clasp was to have flown at least one authorised operational sortie between these dates, whilst serving with one of the 71 eligible units.

The Air Historical Branch of the RAF has a very strict criteria for who should qualify for the Battle of Britain clasp. Since the original allocation Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Rodney Park was last year added to those honoured.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Rodney Park GCB KBE MC & Bar DFC RAF

Born 15th June 1892 – Died 6 February 1975

HERE IS HIS STORY

On Sir Keith Park's statue at Waterloo Place in the centre of the capital, he is described as "Defender of London, 1940". That is an historic achievement in itself but there was more than that to the tall, blunt speaking and briskly walking New Zealander. He also proved himself an outstanding commander in the Middle East, Malta and south east Asia.

Nevertheless, when Keith Park (1892-1975) is remembered today it is usually and rightly, first and foremost, for his achievements when Britain faced German invasion in 1940. He led 11 Group of Fighter Command in the worst of the fighting against the Luftwaffe and he did more than anybody to ensure that the enemy never gained air superiority over both the Channel and southern England, thus paving the



way for invasion.

Park's removal from office at the end of 1940 was a considerable injustice, but to remember him mainly for that negative event creates a further injustice. He was a great military leader, at Uxbridge, as the Luftwaffe crowded French airfields, he was the right man in place and time.

Now, following the efforts of Dilip Sarkar, MBE, author of many books on the Battle of Britain, Sir Keith has been honoured again, almost half a century after his death.

In the summer of 2023 it was decided by the Air Historical Branch (AHB) of the RAF that he had qualified for the award of the Battle of Britain Clasp which he would have worn on the ribbon of his 1939-1945 Star.

After much deliberation, AHB concluded that Air Vice-Marshal Park, as he was in the Battle of Britain (his final rank was Air Chief Marshal), qualified for the Clasp by flying a Hurricane on a convoy protection sortie on July 10th 1940. His logbook entry reads, "Lympne, Convoy, West Malling".

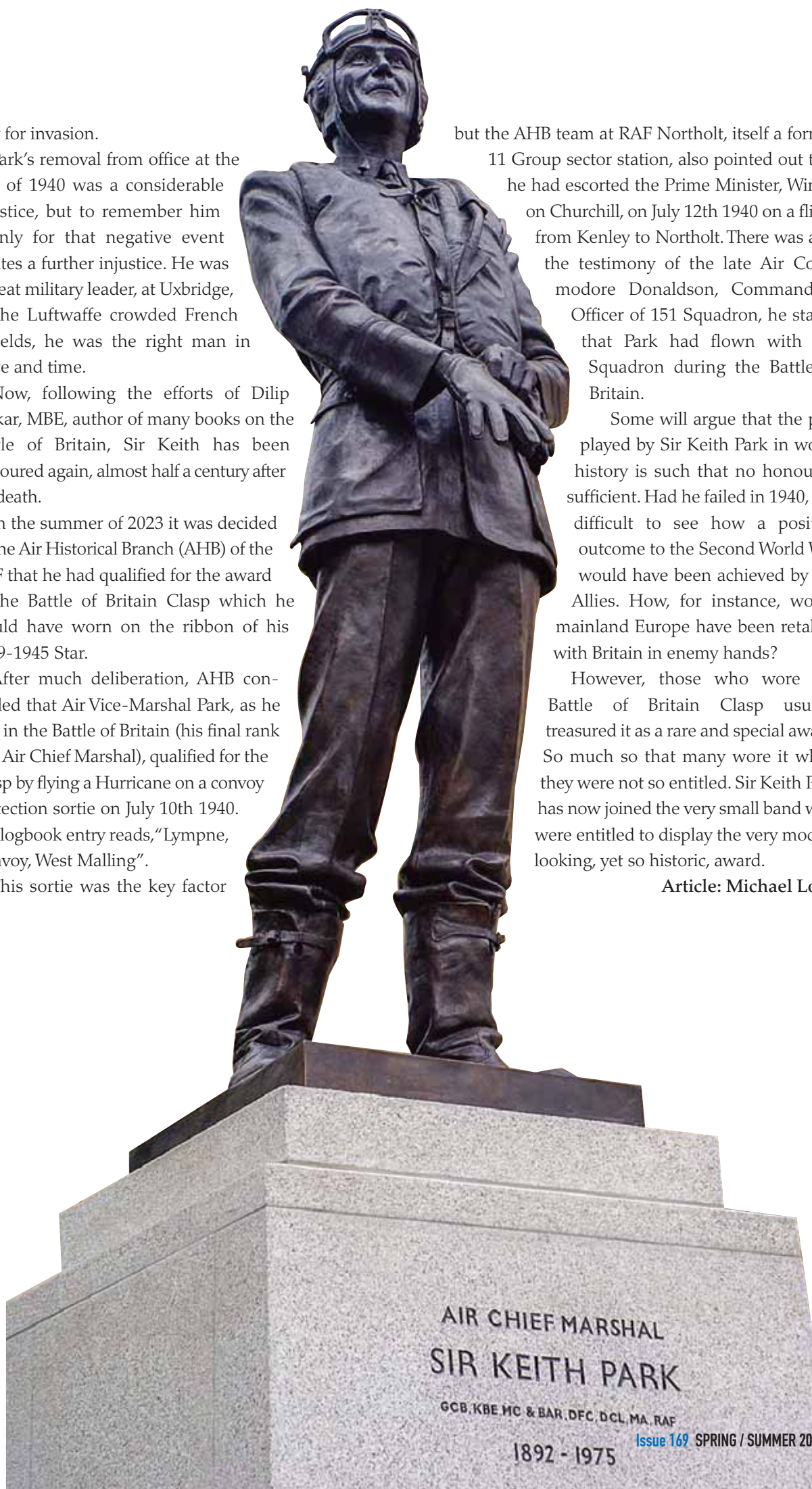
This sortie was the key factor

but the AHB team at RAF Northolt, itself a former 11 Group sector station, also pointed out that he had escorted the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, on July 12th 1940 on a flight from Kenley to Northolt. There was also the testimony of the late Air Commodore Donaldson, Commanding Officer of 151 Squadron, he stated that Park had flown with the Squadron during the Battle of Britain.

Some will argue that the part played by Sir Keith Park in world history is such that no honour is sufficient. Had he failed in 1940, it is difficult to see how a positive outcome to the Second World War would have been achieved by the Allies. How, for instance, would mainland Europe have been retaken with Britain in enemy hands?

However, those who wore the Battle of Britain Clasp usually treasured it as a rare and special award. So much so that many wore it when they were not so entitled. Sir Keith Park has now joined the very small band who were entitled to display the very modest looking, yet so historic, award.

Article: Michael Long





Waterloo Place – Keith Park Statue

Waterloo Place is a grand square the the end of Regent Street and very near to New Zealand House.

But, for Kiwis there is a significant statue of Sir Keith Park honoured for his role as the ‘Defender of London’ in the Battle of Britain. Lord Teddar, head of the RAF said, ‘If ever any one man won the Battle of Britain, he did’. Keith Park was a World War I Air Ace having joined the Royal Flying Corps, forerunner of the RAF after serving as an artillery man and being wounded at Gallipoli. He was awarded the Military Cross after being credited with the shooting down of 20 German aircraft. He was shot down twice himself.

During World War II he controlled fighter patrols over France over Dunkirk and in the Battle of Britain his command took the brunt of the Luftwaffe’s air attacks. Flying his personalised Hawker Hurricane around his fighter airfields during the battle, Park gathered a reputation as a shrewd tactician with an astute grasp of strategic issues and as a popular ‘hands-on’ commander.

Jim Shearing Website Manager

Announcing our new website

The Battle of Britain Historical Society is pleased to announce that our brand new website is currently under construction.

Our existing site contains a huge amount of factual content about the battle, however we are very aware that it lacks the visual appeal and functionality of a modern site, so we will be introducing a new website this Spring/Summer. We will bring you a new members' only area, accessed by password and containing news of our forthcoming events as well as other bonus material. If you have any suggestions for things you would like to see, please email bobhswebmanager@hotmail.com with your ideas. We will also have a new online payment system for membership subscriptions, renewals and donations. Although it is not live yet, please make a note of the new website address: www.battleofbritainhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Our current website will continue online for a while alongside the new site, and you will be able to switch between them easily. We intend to transfer the content of the current site to an archive, accessible from the new website, when time and funding allows.

If you haven't already given us your email address, please let our Membership Secretary know so that we



Jim Shearing
Hampshire and West Sussex
Area Manager
BOBHS Webmanager

can advise you when the new website goes live and send your password – please email her at bobhsmemsec@gmail.com. As with all your personal information, it will be used

only for contacting you about Society matters and will be stored in strict accordance with General Data Protection Regulations' law (GDPR).

Our new website represents a significant investment by the Society, one that we think is overdue and will be good value. However, our funding comes entirely from our members' subscriptions and donations – do you know of any companies, associations or individuals who may wish to 'sponsor' our new website, either wholly or in part? Should they do so, their details will be displayed on our website in recognition of their support, ensuring all those who took part in the Battle of Britain are never forgotten.

We look forward to bringing you our website in the next few months and certainly before membership renewals due on August 1st 2024.



www.battleofbritainhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Sergeant Pilot Allan Dredge DSO DFC

School Plaque Presentation September 15th 2023

A plaque unveiling ceremony to the memory of one of our Battle of Britain heroes, Sergeant Pilot Allan Dredge DSO, DFC, later to become Wing Commander, took place on Friday September 15th 2023 at Edgewick Community Primary School in Coventry.

In attendance were the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands Colonel George Marsh MBE, TD, DL; and Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Coventry, Squadron Leader Dave Kerrison (Chief of Staff) RAF Cosford as well as many local dignitaries including the Warwickshire Branch of the Royal British Legion. Also in attendance were members of Allan's family to witness this momentous tribute to Allan.

Allan, born in the Foleshill area of Coventry in 1918 attended Edgewick Primary School and the school still has the record of his name on the school roll which I was privileged to see during this day's events. Allan joined the RAFVR in July 1938. He was called up on September 1939. He completed his training in May 1940 and joined 253 Squadron directly after completion of this training. Allan played a significant part in the Battle of Britain firing at a Bf 109 in a combatant of five which then collided with another Bf 109 when both Bf109s went down. After capture, the two German pilots refused to speak to one another. In September 4th 1940, Allan claimed a Bf109 destroyed,

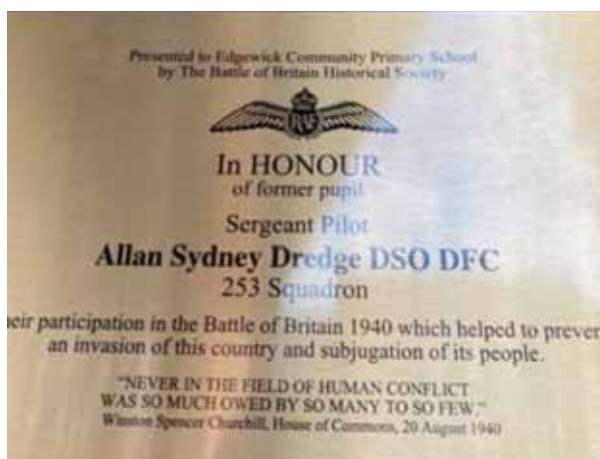


Allan Sydney Dredge

on September 14th, he shot at a Bf 109 which exploded over Beacon Hill and on the September 15th, he probably destroyed a Do17 and damaged another. On November 5th he damaged a Bf 109 and on the November 9th shared in the destruction of a Ju 88 off Beachey Head, Sussex.

Allan was commissioned in March 1941 and went to Malta in April 1941 flying off the HMS Ark Royal on the April 27th joining 261 Squadron. On May 6th he was shot down in flames and made a crash landing on Ta Kali Airfield suffering severe burns. He was posted to the UK in mid-July and was treated at Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead becoming one of Archie McIndoe's Guinea Pigs, the famed New Zealand plastic surgeon.

In 1943. Allan served with 183 Squadron and was awarded the DFC in July of that same year. He later took command of 3 Squadron at Manston in October 1943 until August 1944. During this time he destroyed



The plaque



Left to right: Brendan Greaney, Squadron Leader Dave Kerrison, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Colonel George Marsh, Lord Lieutenant Cadet Warrant Officer Louie Burn

five V1 flying bombs over South East England and was awarded the DSO in December 1944. Tragically, Allan was killed on the May 18th 1945 flying a Meteor 111 EE 238 of 1335 CU which struck the ground at low level and high speed at Farnborough. Sadly, this was only 10 days after Victory had been declared in Europe.

Allan was 27 and had already been promoted to Wing Commander and is buried at Coventry (St Paul's) Cemetery.

Later speaking to a friend of Allan's family who knew Allan when she was a young girl she recalled that following Allan's crash in Malta, on returning home, he would often sit in the darkest corner of the living room in an effort to hide his facial burns, clearly, this injury was something he was very conscious of for the rest of his life.

The event was accompanied by some of the children singing two classic World War II songs, 'We'll meet again' and 'They'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover', which brought a tear to many an eye during this incredible and poignant event. The plaque was unveiled by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Colonel George Marsh it now stands prominently outside the main entrance of the school. Many thanks must go the Head Teacher Mrs Sally Snooks and the committed teaching and service staff of Edgewick Community Primary School who made this wonderful day possible. Particular thanks to the Warwickshire branch of the Royal British Legion who stood in respectful silence throughout the event with their RBL standards, which brought great reverence to this day.

**Article: Brendan Greaney
Area Manager – West Midlands**



Plaque unveiling by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Colonel Marsh MBE TD DL with Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Coventry, a number of children of the school and members of Allan's family



Two members of the Warwickshire Branch RBL stand next to the plaque following the unveiling

Pilot Officer Charles Alexander Ogilvy

Born 30 November 1915 – Died 23 February 1995 – 610 and 622 Squadrons

Charles Alexander Ogilvy (known throughout his life as Alastair) was born in Kelso on November 30th 1915, the eldest of five sons, and educated at Edinburgh Academy. After leaving school he moved to London and worked for the Northern Assurance Company. He played rugby for the London Scottish RFC both before and after WWII, being Captain of the 1st XV in 1946-7. He joined the RAFVR in 1939 and was trained as a pilot at Woodley (Reading). He married in 1939 and two daughters were born, one in 1940 and another two years later. He joined 610 Squadron at Acklington on October 14th 1940 and flew two operational sorties (X-raids) on the 25th of that month, this qualifies him for the Battle of Britain Clasp. He later was posted to RAF

Cranwell as a flying instructor, where he trained more than 120 pilots over a three year period in over 1,000 flights. He was posted to 622 Squadron at Mildenhall in 1945 - flying Lancasters – and took part in 16 bombing raids, as well as Operations Manna, Exodus,

Baedecker and Dodge Bari. After the end of the war he returned to the insurance business, finally retiring in 1985 at which time he was director and secretary of the Reinsurance Offices Association. He enjoyed his golf and garden and was a church warden.

He died on February 23rd 1995 aged 79.

On November 19th 1940 when he had to bale out of his Spitfire (cause unknown) in the vicinity of Acklington, only becoming a member of the Caterpillar Club badge, the badge



Above Ogilvy's medals, with Caterpillar Club badge at the bottom





Ogilvy far right

appearing amongst his medals. The logbook entry for this flight just records 'dog fighting' (ie practice)

and a flight time of 15 minutes and no note of an emergency! Only the aircraft letter Q is recorded and not the serial number.

The Caterpillar Club

Formed in 1922 by the Irvin Airchute Company

The Caterpillar Club is an informal association of people who have successfully used a parachute to bail out of a disabled aircraft.

After authentication by the parachute maker, applicants receive a membership certificate and a distinctive lapel pin. The nationality of the person whose life was saved by the parachute and owners of the aircraft are not factors in determining qualification for membership; anyone whose life was saved by using a

parachute after bailing out of a disabled aircraft is eligible.

The name 'Caterpillar Club' refers to the silk threads that made the original parachutes, thus recognising the debt owed to the silkworm. Other people have taken the metaphor further by comparing the act of bailing out with that of the caterpillar letting itself down to earth by a silken thread. Another metaphor is that caterpillars have to climb out of their cocoons to escape and survive.



School Plaque Presentations September 2024

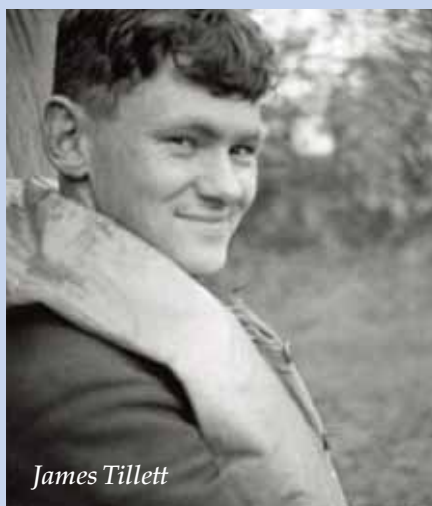
The Society is proud to announce a further two school plaque presentations this September, the names of those being honoured and details of the events are as follows:



Photographs of these events will be in issue 170, the Autumn/Winter 2024 edition

Michael Featherstone Briggs

Location: St Piran's School, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7LZ
Date of Event: 13th September 2024
Time: 14:00 for 14:30 presentation
Area Manager: Stephen Bristowe
Pilot being honoured: Pilot Officer Michael Featherstone Briggs 234 and 41 Squadrons



James Tillett



John Laurence Allen

Location: St Lawrence College, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 7AE
Date of Event: 20th September 2024
Time: 12:30 for 13:00 presentation
Area Manager: Tony Francis
Pilots being honoured: Pilot Officer James Tillett, 238 Squadron
Pilot Officer John Laurence Allen, 54 Squadron

Original Battle of Britain Paintings



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F/Lt. H a'B Russell, 32 Squadron. (Size 20"x16", price £773 incl. UK p&p)

HUMPHREY a'BECKETT RUSSELL DFC



37692 F/L Pilot British
32 Squadron

Born on September 1 1913, Russell was at Marlborough College from 1927 to 1931. He joined the RAF on a short service commission and began his ab initio course on January

27 1936, as a pilot officer.

With training completed he was posted to 9 FTS, Thornaby on April 4th and he joined 32 Squadron at Biggin Hill on July 13 1938. He rejoined 32 Squadron on August 14th 1940 and was appointed 'A' Flight Commander on the 16th.

He destroyed a Bf110 on 18th. During the combat over Biggin Hill, a cannon shell exploded in his cockpit. Russell baled out, seriously wounded in the

leg and was admitted to Edenbridge Hospital. His Hurricane V7363 crashed at Skeynes Park Farm, Edenbridge, Kent.

In April 1941 Russell took command of 32 Squadron. He was posted to 118 Squadron at Ibsley in October 1941, to command, and led it until January 1942. Russell commanded 128 Squadron at Hastings, Sierra Leone from August 1942 to March 8th 1943.

Back in the UK, he took command of 164 Squadron at Fairlop. Russell was shut down on May 28th 1944 over Torcy, France. He baled out and became a PoW, number and camp unknown. He was awarded DFC (19.4.44).

He retired from the RAF on February 17th 1958 as a Wing Commander. Russell died on February 15th 1983.

**APO 23.3.36 PO 27.1.37 FO 27.10.38 FL 10.5.40
SL 1.12.41 WC 5.10.45 WC 1.10.46**

Famous Women of World War II

WAAF Edith Mary Kup

OPS Room Plotter / Intelligence Officer

Born 24.11.1918 – Died 2.5.2020 aged 101

WAAF and WRAF

The Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) was formed in 1939, growing to approximately 180,000 women by 1943, serving duties vital to the war effort in meteorology, transport, telephony and telegraphy, codes and ciphers, intelligence, security and operation rooms. In 1949 it was reformed as the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF).

Edith Kup enlisted in the WAAF in 1939 and trained at RAF Yeadon for two weeks as a Radio Director Finder Plotter. She then served at RAF Debden 1939 to 1941, later becoming an Intelligence Officer with 405 Squadron and HQ 92 Group between 1941 and 1945.



On November 11th 1940 she was performing her normal duties (née Edith Heath aged 21) keeping track of Spitfire and Hurricanes in combat when her fiancée P/O Dennis Wissler in Hurricane V7570 was attacking Ju87s off Burnham, he was shot down in flames; he crashed into the sea and his body was never recovered. Edith was listening to his final words in the plotting room. Such a brave woman.

When her tour of duty expired in 1945, Edith settled down with difficulty to civilian life – she married and became the mother of two daughters.



DENIS HEATHCOTE WISSLER



42665 PO Pilot British
17 Squadron

He joined the RAF on a short service commission in July 1939. He began his ab initio course on July 10th 1939, as a pupil pilot.

With training completed, Wissler went to 6 OTU, Sutton Bridge in late March 1940.

After converting to Hurricanes, he was posted to 85 Squadron in France on April 27. He returned to Debden on May 22nd, when the squadron was withdrawn.

He was posted to 17 Squadron on June 8th and flew out to join it at Le Mans in France the next day. He shared a He111 on the 17th. He flew to Debden

with the squadron on the 19th, when it was withdrawn.

Wissler shared in the destruction of a He111 on July 29th. He probably destroyed a Bf110 and shared in the destruction of another on August 25th and he shared in destroying a Bf110 and a Do17 on September 3rd.

His left arm was wounded during combat with a Bf109 over the Thames Estuary on September 24th, he crash landed at Debden, in Hurricane P3168. Admitted to Saffron Walden Hospital, Essex, returning from sick leave, he was fit for operational flying, on October 9th.

On November 11th 1940 Wissler was shot down during an attack on Ju87s off Burnham. He crashed into the sea in Hurricane V7570 and was reported 'missing'. He is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial, Panel 10. **APO 2.9.39 PO 28.2.40**

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Please only contact our managers between the hours of 10.00 and 18.00 – email at any time.

Volunteer Vacancies – Area Managers

Why not join us 'NOW'. Give me a call!

Positions still to be filled by volunteers:-

AREA MANAGERS The main function of Area Managers is to highlight the work of the Society in your county with the aim of increasing membership, making contact with service associations RAFA, The Royal British Legion, Air Cadet Organization, etc, etc.. **YOU CAN DO IT!** Ring John for further

information on 01424 814866. Why not become a volunteer for the county where you live?

Area Managers are required for the following: East Anglia, Buckinghamshire, Devon, Dorset, Hertfordshire, London, North Wales, Surrey, Wiltshire, Yorkshire.

Full support is always on hand.

Advertising

Size Dimensions	B&W	Colour
1/8 Page H 63.5mm x W 89.5mm	£40	£50
1/4 Page – Landscape H 63.5mm x W 184mm	£65	£80
1/4 Page – Portrait H 134mm x W 89.5mm	£65	£80
1/2 Page H 130mm x W 184mm	£85	£100
Full Page		
H 297mm x W 210mm plus bleed or	£150	£200
H 269mm x W 184mm (13mm border)		

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The Royal Society of St. George

Incorporated by Royal Charter
Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
125th Anniversary Year 1894 – 2019



Are you proud of England and Englishness?

The English have always been reticent about being proud of our country, who we are and what we stand for – and far too few of our fellow countrymen remember that 23rd April is St. George's Day!

As a Society, we aim to change that by commemorating and celebrating our history and achievements and looking positively towards the future.

Since the Country's founding under Alfred the Great in the late 9th Century, England has had a proud history. The English have led the way in fields such as literature, music, art, poetry, medicine, science, theatre, inventions, education, sport, architecture, exploration, legal systems and democracy, to name a few – things that we believe need to be remembered and celebrated.

We are an inclusive Society, welcoming anyone who believes in our aims, objectives and charitable endeavours and shares our pride in England, our heritage and our future.

If you agree, then join us today!

For more information about the Society, our branch network and how to become a member
visit our web site or contact our office:

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F/O Arthur Vincent Gowers DFC and F/O John Allman Hemingway DFC

A Battle of Britain Friendship: two young 'lads' become Distinguished Flying Cross holders



An extraordinary friendship during the most difficult of times – not to be forgotten.

In January Dad was visited by Andy Turner the grandson of 'Gus' Gowers, one of his greatest friends and fellow pilot from 85 Squadron of 1938.

Gus had a great zest for life and Dad spent many hours working with him restoring old cars. Dad recalls "I remember more than once travelling in a rather splendid Lagonda, but most of all, I remember a Jaguar which Gus had camouflaged and adorned with the coat of arms of the Leveson-Gower family at Tan Yard in Steeple Bumpstead, Essex.

They joined 85 Squadron, about the same time fighting in France and the Battle of Britain. Dad remembers he was a very brave man and an irresistible force.

Gus was the reason for Dad having a moustache.

Dad recalls, "Pat 'Woody' Woods-Scawen, Gus Gowers and Dad had a bet to grow the best moustache. We all shaved first – I think I won as I outgrew Gus's 'Hitlerian model' in a month or so. I have kept my moustache ever since."

Joan, his wife, said, "He was a free spirit and a charismatic character who lived life to the full".

They both saw themselves as just ordinary men, called upon to do extraordinary things, living life as they did in extraordinary times.

Both Gus and Dad were awarded their DFCs at the same time – July 1st 1941.

By this time Gus had been shot down and badly burnt, and having parachuted out, was nursed back to health at Caterham, Surrey and East Grinstead, Sussex. Classically, he showed his character when he was visited by Squadron Leader Peter Townsend of 85 Squadron who recounted that Gus, almost apologised and made light of the fact that he could not shake hands as his hands looked like claws. Incidentally, both Gus and Dad were ushers at Peter Townsend's first marriage.

Despite all this he returned to 85 Squadron on December 28 1940 for active duty, still a skillful pilot.

Sadly he was killed in action on October 24 1943 flying a Typhoon for 183 Squadron over France.

Gus' family showed Dad great kindness whenever he visited and their friendship, which was formed during these times, had a profound influence on Dad, making meeting his grandson Andy of great importance to him.

Dad's final comment of the visit was they enjoyed each other's company and had a lot of fun together and that the Battle of Britain Historical Society was more than just defeating the German attacks, there were life-enriching personal stories of life-changing



A splendid car: left "Gus" Gowers DFC and right John Hemingway DFC

importance. One should not forget Dad was just 19 when they met. Something that Dad rarely talked about until this recent visit.

Article: Brian Hemingway

ARTHUR VINCENT GOWERS DFC

40166 FO Pilot British
85 Squadron

Gowers was born at Chelmsford on June 18 1913 and educated at the Royal Grammar School, Colchester from 1923 to 1928. After leaving school, he worked briefly at the Marconi Wireless and Telegraph Works at Chelmsford.

After a spell as a clerk with the Clacton Urban District Council, Gowers worked at Kalamzoo from 1932 to 1934.

In June 1932 Gowers had joined the Honourable Artillery Company (founded August 25th 1537) as an infantry private.

He was discharged at his own request in June 1933, when he joined the RASC (TA). He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in March 1934 but resigned in March 1936.

Gowers joined the RAFVR on July 5th 1937 as an Airman u/t Pilot (740431). He applied for a short service commission in the RAF, was provisionally accepted and began his ab initio course on August 23th 1937 at 13 E&RFTS, White Waltham, as a pilot pupil, which he completed successfully.

On October 24th 1937 Gowers went to No 1 RAF Depot, Uxbridge, where he was commissioned and put through a short induction course. He was posted to 5 FTS, Sealand on November 6th and gained his ▼



flying badge on February 18th 1938. At the end of the course he went to MU, Cardington on June 4th for flying duties.

Gowers joined 85 Squadron at Debden on August 10th 1938. The Squadron went to France at the outbreak of war. Gowers returned to England in April 1940, after an attack of jaundice. He rejoined the Squadron between May 10th and 20th but had not fully recovered and was taken off flying and sent back to hospital. He returned again to England and then rejoined 85 at Debden from hospital on June 21st 1940.

On August 18th Gowers destroyed a Ju87 off Foulness Island. The next day 85 moved to Croydon, to relieve 111 Squadron. On the 28th Gowers damaged a Bf110, on the 30th he destroyed a Bf110 and on the 31st he destroyed a Bf109 and probably another.

In combat with Bf109s over Oxted on September 1st, Gowers' Hurricane, V7343, was badly damaged and he baled out, with badly-burned hands and slight other wounds to a hand and a foot. He was taken to the LCC Mental Hospital at Caterham for treatment.

When Gowers rejoined 85 Squadron on December 28th 1940 it had gone over to night

patrols. In March 1941 he went to Watchfield for a Blind Approach course. At the end of his tour Gowers was awarded the DFC (1.7.41) and attached to RAF Kenley on July 25th for Control Room duties. He received a Mention in Despatches (24.9.41).

The attachment ceased on October 21st 1941, Gowers went to 56 OTU, Sutton Bridge for a refresher course on November 14th and then joined 504 Squadron at Ballyhalbert, as a Flight Commander.

On February 16th 1942 he was posted to Air HQ Far East but, after a short time there his burned hands were badly affected by the hot climate and he was admitted to hospital in Delhi on April 1st 1942.

After being discharged on May 7th, Gowers returned to the UK and went to 53 OTU, Llandow, to convert to Typhoons, after which he joined 56 Squadron at Snailwell on August 8th, 1942, as a supernumerary.

On 27th he had a crash, writing off a Typhoon and was admitted to Norwich Hospital, leaving there on the 29th for Station Sick Quarters at Coltishall. Gowers was posted to Church Fenton on November 20th 1942, as an acting Squadron Leader, to take command of 183 Squadron, formed there with Typhoons.

On April 19 1943 he led the squadron on its first operation, a bombing attack on the power station at Yainville, France, escorted by the Kenley Wing. The next operation did not take place until May 14th, when eight Typhoons were escorted by 486 (NZ) Squadron to bomb Triqueville aerodrome.

On June 4th 1943, 183 Squadron moved to Harrowbeer and later in the month Gowers did a Combined Operations Course. The Squadron moved to Perdannack on October 13th.

In the early evening of October 24th 1943 Gowers led an attack on a 6,000 ton motor vessel in Cherbourg Harbour. Heavy flak was encountered and Gower's Typhoon was seen to go down in flames just outside the mole. Two other 183 Typhoons were also shot down.

Gowers is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial, Panel 118.

APO 24.10.37 PO 19.2.39 FO 3.9.40 FL 3.9.41

F/O John Allman Hemingway DFC

40702 FO Pilot Irish 85 Squadron



Update: 24th February 2024

Even at 104 years old Dad continues to be very well with all his faculties in good order. A special note of the nursing home in Dublin, it should be recognised for his continued good health and praised for their medical care and empathy.

Brian Hemingway



Always Remembered . . . Never Forgotten

The last known survivor of the 'Few'

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few". From almost 3,000 Battle of Britain aircrew known as 'The Few', F/O Hemingway is the last known remaining. He was 104 years old on 17 July 2023.

The Spitfire was powered by Rolls Royce Merlin and Griffon engines.



SPITFIRE

*aircraft
of Britain*

Reginald Joseph Mitchell was just eight years old when the Wright Brothers made the first powered flight in America in 1903. Now he is known as the creator of the most famous aircraft in history.



Inside the cockpit

Spitfires flew for many years with a great many squadrons in the RAF and allied units, and later with a wider range of air forces throughout the world.

