



# THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

# OPEN AGAIN

# WITH RESTRICTED

The museum was unable to open as intended in April 2020 due to the ongoing Corona virus COVID-19, it was particularly at risk due to the demographics of its volunteer members – mainly age related matters but also including specific health issues.

The work of the museum, the administration of postal deliveries, answering on-line historical questions, offering an on-line shop and designing new displays continued much as before. A limited number of volunteer staff were in the museum and others were working remotely.

In late June the UK Government announced that museums were among premises that could open under certain circumstances in early July. There was much to plan an insufficient time to put the plans in place; the museum was unable to open instantly. The safety of the volunteers remained paramount and might always result in the museum not opening until a safe vaccine had been made available.

The museum is now open but only to those making a pre-paid and time specific appointment on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday [1200-1600hrs] and will meet all Covid-19 Secure Government guidelines.

*THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION*



A strict online pre-booking and pre-payment system is in place. The entrance fee is £5 per person (£2.50 concessions). Museum Members remain free but must also pre-book. The new way of operating was agreed to ensure the safety of public and volunteers alike. The pre-booking system will be employed with pre-payment via PayPal (credit cards can be used without the need to have a PayPal account) or bank transfer. Cheque payments and even written requests to accommodate those without Internet skills can be accepted but this will require a significantly longer time to process.



To satisfy government guidelines on trace and track we will require details of one member of each party (name, address, phone number and email address). All information will be destroyed after 31 days to satisfy GDPR rules. This is part of the on-line booking process.

After each group visit the museum will be sanitised with clinically approved sanitising agents to ensure your safe visit to the museum. A limit of 55 minutes per visit was agreed to allow for the cleaning of multiple visits in a day.

Due to the high costs involved, along with the fact that the museum relies on memberships, donations and entrance fees to survive, a significant rise in the entrance fee was agreed.

The museum usually needs two weeks notice to assign someone to open the museum to persons pre-booking. More on the web-site. [www.nwamuseum.co.uk](http://www.nwamuseum.co.uk) Enquiries to [secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk](mailto:secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk)

If you turn up on the day you will be refused entry.

We were not alone of course, the museum and heritage sector has all been affected.

Just along the road from the museum the heritage railway reopened after closing for four months during the coronavirus pandemic. The Epping Ongar Railway resumed commercial services from August 1 between North Weald and Ongar with trips into Epping Forest.

Initially the special services will be delivered with one train taking passengers between North Weald and Ongar, with an additional excursion to the forest on the return trip from Ongar.

All services will need to be booked in advance so that social distancing can be ensured. Passengers will need to book their outward and return journeys separately which allows for people to take advantage of the numerous local footpaths and book a single journey making their own way back on foot. Alternatively, they can take a self-guided tour of Ongar or North Weald making use of various guides and maps.



Although the airfield had been closed to ordinary private flying for a while the emergency services helicopters and the new fixed wing police aircraft continued in support of the Emergency Services across England and Wales.



Essex and Herts Air Ambulance had started to build a new base earlier this year. That was delayed early in the crisis but soon returned to work leading to the basic structure being in place by the start of July.





North Weald Airfield

As those who have read *The Hurricane* diligently over the years will appreciate, North Weald is well versed in air ambulance operations in that the airfield and St. Margarets Hospital in Epping were the base units of the St. John Air Ambulance voluntary organisation mainly tasked with the transportation of human organs for transplant in a period before air ambulances – private, commercial or charity – were active.

Something similar has sprung up during the COVID-19 emergency. The Civil Air Patrol, a volunteer organisation calling on private pilots giving up their time and their aircraft, have been criss-crossing the country carrying samples and other material for government entities including the NHS under the banner of Pony Express. The service has been run in conjunction with Blood Bikes, charities that normally ferry blood and plasma around the country. The aircraft have items delivered by Blood Bike at one airfield and a different set of Blood Bike volunteers collect the items for onward transmission at a second airfield.

Colin L'anson the Epping Forest District Council Airfield Manager has already reached an agreement with UK Civil Air Patrol to facilitate the use of the airfield in running supplies into London. He agreed to have any aircraft taxi on to one of the Operational Readiness Pans (ORPs) to meet one of the 'Blood Bikes' to expedite any exchange.

North Weald airfield is only able to accept VFR flights and needs prior permission from 8.30 am to 7 pm in summer. There has been no instance where a flight was required outside those hours anyway.



Most readers will be familiar with the Debt of Honour that lists those that have died serving at or from North Weald. When, 20 years ago, the white stone wall was added to the existing Norwegian Stone it was realised that it would be foolish and very expensive to engrave all the names of those who gave their lives whilst at North Weald. Even after decades of research there would be errors, missing names and, worse still names that needed to be removed. As a result the list of those being memorialised was committed to a printed sheet contained in a bronze cabinet set into the wall. That at least remains available to casual visitors throughout the year.

Comparing the first editions of the document with the current one you may be able to spot the alterations but they are so few that pinpointing them is difficult. All credit to the original research.

The list though is an inclusive compromise. It does not focus wholly on service personnel killed in action, as illustrated by the listing of a workman who fell to his death from a hangar, a serviceman killed on a London Underground train crash and a man who took his own life. Among the pilots listed as killed are two Norwegian's who left North Weald on different dates, were shot down and taken Prisoner of War and yet listed in the Debt of Honour as dying on the same date. They were among the 50 escapees in the Great Escape from Stalag Luft III, executed by Hitler's orders in March 1944.



*The bronze door set in the memorial*

## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS HOW TO JOIN

We accept all currencies in welcoming you to museum membership—becoming a Friend of North Weald Airfield Museum as long as it means the same as £12.50p!

You can join through the museum website [www.nwamuseum.co.uk](http://www.nwamuseum.co.uk)

## MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The normal museum season is April until November and we hope to return to that format by April 2021.

When open entry is free for members.

Except on Special Event Days visitors will be charged standard rates for entry:

Adults	£5
Concessions	£2.50

Group rates vary but generally there is a minimum charge of £50 per group.



## NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

Ad Astra House  
Hurricane Way  
North Weald  
Epping  
Essex CM16 6AA

Telephone 01992 523010 [24 hour]  
E-mail [secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk](mailto:secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk)  
Web: [www.nwamuseum.co.uk](http://www.nwamuseum.co.uk)

## CONTACT US

### ADVERTISING AND THE HURRICANE

One way in which the NWAMA can earn income and to finance the production of hard copies of the Newsletter is advertising. Advertisers need circulation beyond the membership and they also need to know who is reading the Newsletter. If you pass this edition on please let us know who to so we can help finance your reading!

*Copyright Notice: The content of this publication includes items that are the copyright of others. The source of words and images will usually be indicated together with the source of additional information that seeks to enhance the original information.*

*The Hurricane includes artwork produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.*



Whilst on the subject of the Great Escape, it is worth noting that of the three who made good their escape from the camp in Sagan (now part of Poland) two had served as pilots at North Weald with the Norwegian squadrons.

A Dutch pilot, Bram van der Stok who had flown with 41 Squadron RAF was the 18<sup>th</sup> escapee that night. The 43<sup>rd</sup> person out of the escape tunnel "Harry" was Jens Muller of 331 Squadron and he was followed by Per Bergsland of 332 Squadron.

It is noteworthy that although the Great Escape was, and remains, a victory tinged with tragedy, for the RAF, those that actually made good their escape were individuals from European nations that had been invaded and subjugated. The two Norwegians actually travelled as Norwegian workmen changing jobs and that greatly assisted their ability to travel across Germany to reach safety in Sweden. They had to have the right papers to undertake the journey but, as members of a conquered nation, they fitted into the storyline where an Englishman on the run would not.

Getting back to the North Weald Debt of Honour I ran across some interesting text in a book called American Eagles. It set out how Flight Lieutenant Dudley Persse-Joynt 90322 was lost flying from North Weald with 609 Squadron on 31 May 1940.

At the end of May ten Spitfires of 609 Squadron operated at least two patrols from North Weald in support of the retreat and evacuations from Dunkirk – "Operation Dynamo" and shot down a couple of enemy aircraft but Dudley was lost. As far as I can tell this is the only reference to North Weald, his obituary on the RAF Aux Net does not mention the start point of his flight.

Technically he might be added to the Debt of Honour but a line has to be drawn somewhere. Although they refueled and waited at readiness at North Weald and the last time Dudley stood on terra-firma was North Weald the Spitfires of 609 were not stationed at the airfield.

This then is at least an acknowledgement that he flew and died whilst at North Weald. There were probably others.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

By e-mail

Dear Bryn - thank you so much for the latest issue of the newsletter - I live with an 86 years old ex Fleet Air Arm aeroplane fanatic. He has just read his Flypast mag from cover to cover, so your newsletter will keep him quiet for the rest of the day - a great plus during these trying times of being "banged up" .....

Thank you again from two ancient old salts - I am an ex-Wren - do hope you keep safe and virus-free.

Best wishes,  
Judy

By e-mail:

Hello, my name is Martin Barry.

I am a PhD student from the University of Bristol researching 'The Materiality, Memories and Material Culture of Princess Mary's 1914 Christmas Gift to Soldiers and Sailors during the First World War'.

These little embossed brass boxes were only given to those 'wearing the King's uniform on Christmas Day 1914' and in all around 2.6 million were issued.



They were packed individually into a cardboard box along with accompanying 'comforts' such as smoking pipes, tobacco, cigarettes, sweets for non-smokers and chocolate for nurses. Nothing was placed inside the brass box except either a flint and tinder cigarette lighter or a pencil made from a rifle bullet.

This object is a powerful example of the material culture of the First World War and carries with it many significant biographies. Biographies that include memory, remembrance and commemoration. Some are empty reminders of a much-loved father or grandfather, now gone but not forgotten. Some are the legacy of an ancestor not personally known by the current custodian of the Gift but still being commemorated today.

Many of these 'Gifts from a Princess' were kept and sent home. A significant number remain with the soldier's descendants and it is these people I am seeking to contact.

My goal is to interview people who still have these brass boxes to investigate these 'memory processes' and to see how we link those people from over a hundred years ago to today through these simple objects.

Can you help me?

Before the Covid-19 crisis I would interview face-to-face but am now going to do it either virtually or over the telephone.

All interviews will be recorded (audio only) but ALL results will be made anonymous.

If you would like to take part in my research or would like more detailed information, please email me at; [mb12582@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:mb12582@bristol.ac.uk)

Thank you for your help.



## FUTURE PROOF

"No houses on North Weald" was the battle cry a decade ago and it was perhaps a skirmish won rather than a war ended. The houses are encroaching by stealth but fairly slowly. So we have a new type of North Weald villager that wakes in the morning and complains that North Weald airfield operates aeroplanes and helicopters. Welcome to reality.

For now it seems that one building project that threatened to swamp the airfield has gone away. The projected replacement of Princess Alexander Hospital in Harlow with a new build project based at North Weald airfield. It was not coming any time soon but it was a plan.

On the news and rumour tracks is a story that transport links to the new hospital in Harlow remain

a high concern. Princess Alexandra Hospital was one of the six hospitals to be given the green light for development in an announcement by the Government in January. The funding application that could determine the manner of the new hospital was to have been considered by NHS England in late June.

Rather than the airfield site it seems that the planners have drifted somewhat to the north to a new site. Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust bosses would prefer a new build on fields close to the new M11 junction 7a that could be ready to open by 2025. The existing site could also be redeveloped in a stepped phase development that may not be completed until after 2030.

Concerns raised by groups looking into the future provision at a new hospital near the M11, included those over its access, especially for disabled people, older people, carers and vulnerable groups. The process includes a number of key milestones including the completion of the outline business case in March 2021 and the full business case in February 2022. It may then be that the dropping of the airfield as a site may not be finally confirmed until the end of next year.

# EPPING MARKET

Every Monday

[www.eppingmarket.co.uk](http://www.eppingmarket.co.uk)

Please come along and see us!

Closed or open the work of the museum continued both on and off site. The current redisplay projects are researching the Americans and Norwegians who operated from North Weald. The previous stories mentioning the Great Escape and the Debt of Honour are clearly extracted from that research.

Revamping the Allies Room covers both the Americans and the Norwegians but it limited by clear space limits. The research material on the Norwegians is based around extracting the flavour of the operations of 331 and 332 Squadrons from a myriad of sources. Just what do you use when the main source is a five volume set of books that contain hundreds of images. It is clear that, unlike their British Allies, the Norwegians had access to numerous cameras throughout the war years.

Among the larger objects the museum has had donated are a suitcase and a travel trunk formerly owned by Sergeant pilot Robert Hassel. Like most of his fellow countrymen who had fled Norway to fight for the Allies he was given the two items of luggage when he arrived in America for pilot training. They represented all he had in the world.

By the time he reached England as a fully fledged Spitfire pilot they were less empty!

He flew against the common enemy, one of a growing multitude of pilots in thousands of aircraft that were slowly strangling the Nazi regime by sheer numbers. He was to be remembered not as a famous ace pilot but by the content of his luggage. In the summer of 1944 he married Iris, an English girl in Buckhurst Hill.







A taster for the new displays. Last year it was the 1916-1939 displays that had a makeover, this year it is the Norwegian Room covering 1941-45.

The storyline in this room includes all the units operating alongside the Norwegians

Stopping over with Weald Aviation at North Weald on July 13 for fuel. This Netherland police AW139 helicopter flew straight on to Staverton in Gloucestershire where it is to receive new equipment.







*Country picnic. Robert Hassell with Iris and a colleague. Note the cups and saucers, milk jug, sugar bowl and tea pot.*

In January 1945 he was flying over Europe with his compatriots when he was picked out from the formation and shot down by a jet fighter. He died. All his worldly goods passed to his young widow. She kept many of them, a treasure trove of history, inside the luggage and stored it safely through the rest of her life and a new marriage blessed with children. In 2020 her children brought the artefacts to North Weald Airfield Museum.

All we now have to do is to complete the sympathetic display of one Norwegian and his brief life in war.

One other significant Norwegian artefact has been on display for most of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and it will be incorporated into the new displays.

In September 2004 the museum was represented in the village of Warloy-Baillon Near Albert France as they dedicated memorials to two pilots shot down in the area. Museum member Pierre Ben is also the curator of a large war museum collection and includes within it the wreckage of one of the aircraft shot down by the North Weald Norwegian squadrons.

On September 21, 1943 the Norwegian squadrons assigned to escorting two medium bomber raids over France. The first of the raids crossed the French coast at about 1000 hours. The Luftwaffe Jafu 2 scrambled all four of its fighter units to intercept the intruders.

Forty-four B-26s dropped sixty-five tons of bombs on Beauvais Tille airfield at 1037. In a combat near Amiens the Germans tangled with the Norwegian Spitfire squadrons and Lt Manfred Draheim and Fw Hans Dirksen were shot down and killed. It took some time for historians to decide which Norwegian had shot down which German. The informed guess is the Focke-Wulf Fw190A-5 1345 flown by Fw Dirksen that crashed 10km NW of Albert was shot down by Heglund of 331 Squadron. The Warloy-Baillon collection includes major parts of the engine of 1345 and they donated some small parts to add to the North Weald Collection.



*Focke-Wulf 190A fighter aircraft  
[image representative]*

With only four walls in a room of limited size the scope of images and stories used is limited and as a result the focus is providing words for the artefacts that the museums has on display.

Surprisingly there is a dearth of images relating to the Americans at North Weald. The reasoning behind this may be that they were Americans flying for the RAF and at that time they suffered a lack of cameras too. The British media was provided with access to the newly formed Eagle Squadron but that was early in 1941 and the location was “up North” a location known as RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey. Later, when the US joined the war, more images were produced. By that time the RAF roundels on the aircraft were replaced by a US star. Effectively the forming North Weald exhibition may lose out thanks to history!



1941 'Yankees' three of the first Eagles of 71 Squadron Tobin, Keough and Mamedoff



North Weald was linked to the early efforts of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) in flying or parachuting spies into Europe. To that end secretive aircraft set up base on the edge of the airfield with their aircraft assigned to clandestine operations as No 419 (Special Duties) Flight in August 1940 – the height of the Battle of Britain. The Westland Lysander and the Armstrong Whitworth Whitley [left] were not types considered normal for operating out of North Weald—they were the main equipment used by SOE though.

In the same vein numerous aircraft that you would not readily associate with this part of Essex were to be found operating alongside the single engine fighters from time to time. We have had many arguments about whether bombers and night fighters were actually to be found here. After seven months operating from North Weald No. 419 (Special Duties) Flight moved out to RAF Stradishall and disbanded to form No. 1419 (Special Duties) Flight on 1 March 1941, continuing to fly clandestine operations. The flight was disbanded on 25 August 1941 to form No 138 Squadron which continued flying clandestine support missions for the remainder of World War II from RAF Tempsford in NE Bedfordshire. Under 40 miles to the west was the little known airfield of RAF Harrington.

In late 1944, a curious all-black U.S. Consolidated B-24 Liberator made an unannounced forced landing at a Royal Air Force base in the dead of night. The lone aircraft had minimal markings. The crew's squadron didn't exist, at least not on paper. Nor did its base. Further, it was widely known the 8th Air Force, focused on “pinpoint daylight bombing,” didn't fly night missions. The Brits logically concluded they'd netted themselves 10 Nazi spies and a “stolen” American bomber. Logical, but wrong.

Waltham Abbey

# MARKET

TUESDAY & SATURDAY

WALTHAM ABBEY



"Where the (bleep) is the (bleeping) chow hall?" the aircraft's navigator demanded, pushing his way past the armed guards encircling the crew and the mystery B-24. As one of the British officers would later explain, "that's when we knew they must be Americans ... the Germans would never be so rude."

They were designated the 406th Night Leaflet Squadron. Along with the 856th, 857th, 858th and 859th Bomb Squadrons, they were collectively known as the "Carpetbaggers". The group, in liaison with SOE and the U.S. Special Forces Headquarters in London, dropped spies and supplies to the resistance forces of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. The even more secretive 406th NLS has been described as "a wholly owned subsidiary of the Office of Strategic Services," (OSS) the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was an ever so secret organisation. Decades would pass before the exploits - and even the existence - of the Carpetbaggers and the 406th NLS would be acknowledged. A museum in their honour and their memory has since been established at their base, the former RAF Harrington just off the A14 at Harrington, Northampton



*Pictured, back row left, is the pilot and crew commander of one of those gloss black B-24's that didn't exist. Part of a bomb group that had, according to the military historians, been officially disbanded almost a year earlier. And a squadron that, at least officially, was a fiction.*

They did not fly for the 8th Army Air Force, their masters were the OSS. Unlike their clandestine British counterparts, the 492<sup>nd</sup> Special Operations Wing still exists as the Carpetbaggers operating from Hurlbert Field in Florida. [based on an original text by Gary Dutery – Qora]



## LOCAL HISTORY



North Weald is a survivor airfield, so many have been returned to agriculture; the wartime relics are few and grow fewer as each year passes. Fortunately the historical links remain to prompt us to remember them. Opened in 1941 the airfield at Hunsdon sited north of the A414 near Harlow is barely discernable now but on February 18th 1944, the wartime airfield was the site for the launch of one of the Royal Air Force most audacious raids. The event was more memorable than the base it was launched from.

This was a low level attack on a prison on the outskirts of Amiens in Northern France. At the time it was given an official name of 'RAMROD 564', after the war it became known as 'Operation Jericho'.

The participants included squadrons forming 140 Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Air Force, these were 21 Squadron RAF, 464 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force and 487 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force. All three squadrons had recently converted to fast de Havilland Mosquitos from the slow Lockheed Ventura light bombers they had previously flown, mainly against targets in the low Countries, while operating from Sculthorpe in Norfolk. The complete Wing of three squadrons were posted to RAF Hunsdon on the 31st December 1943.

The bravery and dedication of the Mosquito aircrews who took off from Hunsdon's main runway led by Group Captain Pickard, and his Navigator Flt Lt Broadley, in Mosquito HX922 F-Freddy, have gone down in the annals of RAF history and are always remembered but not necessarily as a local event by the people living in Essex. Few know of Hunsdon.





The Mosquito fighter-bombers breached the walls, prison buildings and destroyed the guards' barracks. Of the 832 prisoners, 102 were killed by the bombing, 74 were wounded and 258 escaped, including 79 Resistance and political prisoners; two-thirds of the escapers were recaptured. Two Mosquitos and a Typhoon fighter escort were shot down and another Typhoon was lost at sea. The raid is notable for the precision and daring of the attack, which was filmed by a camera on one of the Mosquitos. There is debate as to who requested the attack and whether it was necessary.

During their time at Hunsdon 140 Wing took part in intruder operations against enemy airfields and low level attacks on V1 flying bomb sites in the Pas de Calais. Their aircraft were regularly dispersed to sit on the runway at North Weald in case the enemy attacked Hunsdon. Although most of Hunsdon has now gone – many of the remaining buildings have been declared as too dangerous to visit – the days of action are not forgotten. On 22 May 2005, a memorial was unveiled and dedicated to the groundcrew, aircrew and support staff who were based at RAF Hunsdon from 1941–45. More recently, in June 2012 a new memorial commemorating the 126 air and ground crew who died while flying from or serving at RAF Hunsdon was unveiled by the Hertfordshire Airfield Memorial Group.

## PAULINE PENROSE

The Memories of Corporal Pauline Penrose a WAAF during WW2

We have all too few details of the WAAFs who served at North Weald in the war years and as a result any crumbs that come my way will get space in The Hurricane.

Thanks entirely to NWAM member John Banfield I was able to receive the interesting service details and images from Pauline who is now living in West Wales.

I was a conscript although in hindsight was pleased as I had a very interesting time. I was 20 years old and had to report to Insworth, which was huge, to collect uniforms etc. There we were square bashing in bitterly cold weather and getting very hungry. One day our lunch was a pie and dollop of mashed potato. When I opened the pie all it held was an enormous eye lid with all the black lashes on it. One did not complain.

I was then sent to Hornchurch, Essex a fighter station with Spitfires and Hurricanes.

We were assessed for the work and I was to be a plotter positioning 'friendlys' and 'hostiles' on the table. After a few months, as I had drawing office experience, I was asked if I would be prepared to assist the draughtsman. Apparently, he was hardly ever in his office being keen on table tennis and playing with anyone who was on a break. After a couple of weeks, as I was deemed capable, he was posted overseas.



The plotting table did not cover a sufficient area so a larger one was needed and being supplied with the stencils, I set to work. It covered the whole South East of England from the Wash to and including the Isle of Wight. It was not long before Hornchurch was closed in 1942 and we were all transferred to North Weald.

The ops room was situated in Blake Hall away from the airfield for obvious reasons. We were billeted in huts and from the air it must have looked like a farm with cattle grazing in the fields. My drawing office was in a spacious front bedroom with a sink for washing my instruments. I was kept busy painting the numbers of the squadrons that were constantly being changed these were hung round the ops room, which was on the ground floor. Also, I had to repair the damage to the ops table because of the wear, and as I had to climb on the table, I was given special permission to wear slacks, to preserve my dignity.

# PENROSE MEMORIES

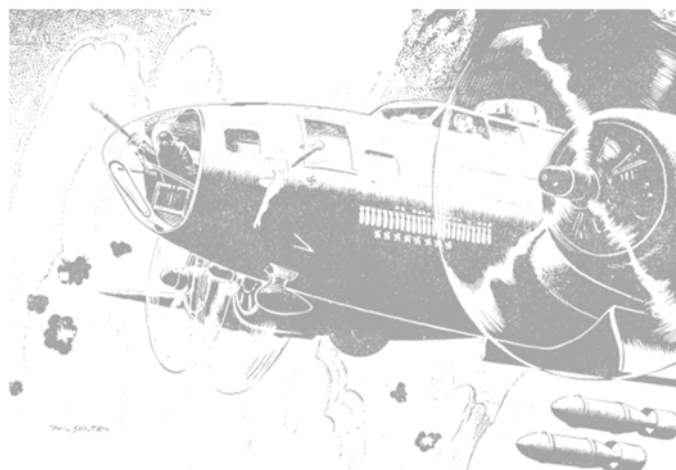
Apparently, the Air Sea Rescue tables also needed updating and I was asked if I could draw and paint two. I was told what was needed. There were four different listening out stations in different colours positioned on the table. Each had to be calibrated in the matching colour and took ages to make. A hole was drilled through each station with a cord threaded through and a metal weight on each end. When a signal was received the position of the downed aircraft was located by triangulation. These tables were taken to the control tower at Swingate near Dover. One table covered the North Sea and the other the Channel. They received plenty of use as I had to return with my pots of paint to repair them.



Another unusual job was for Squadron Leader Beck who was in charge of the RAF Regiment who were camped round the airfield to protect it if the enemy parachuted in. Because of the constant wet weather his sheets, that had to be filled out with leave, sick etc. were suffering, so after a discussion it was decided to use sheets of celluloid roughened on one side so that I could replicate the desired sheets in ink and then flood with white paint. The main problem for me was that I had to print a mirror image, but it proved highly successful. Squadron Leader Beck told me that although they lived under canvas during a terrible winter his men never caught colds until going on leave.



Close by were American Stations with Flying Fortresses and I had seen the paintings on the planes of scanty clad girls. I am no artist, being more comfortable drawing machinery, but one Christmas I had a go.



Some months before D Day I was asked to draw a map of the Normandy coast and make numerous flags representing brigades and divisions, red English and blue Canadian. It was all very hush hush.



On the morning of D Day, I was woken early and told to go to the hut of the Intelligence Group where Squadron Leader Barton was in charge. It was a hectic day as we were receiving all the information of the landings enabling our fighter planes to engage with the enemy or escort the bombers. I was having to position the flags as they progressed or were beaten back. I remember that the Canadians suffered many losses.

There were camp beds available as we were expected to stay locked in the hut but being the only woman I refused and after having promised to tell no one was allowed to go back to my bed. I was back early the next morning for another busy day. By then the news was out.



There was a plea for training WAAFs to be ferry pilots, so I volunteered. I passed the medical and had to go to Adastral House, the home of the Air Ministry in Kingsway, London, to be interviewed by Squadron Leader Adams. The end of the war was approaching so nothing further was heard. Both my sons said a good thing that I never learned to fly as I have no sense of direction.

In May 2015 there was a story in the Radio Times relating to everyone celebrating VE Day. I sent in an article stating that everyone at North Weald was confined to camp that day in case the Luftwaffe decided to make one last raid to drop bombs on Britain. As my address was attached to the item I received a letter from Georgina Cobb who was also stationed at North Weald and remembered that order. She was in the small ATS detachment at the station. I understand they had to know where we were engaging the enemy in order to make sure that our aircraft were not shot down by "friendly fire."

Pauline Penrose  
July 2020



Unidentified WAAFs November 1941

North Weald Bassett Parish Council is awaiting a response from the leader of Harlow Council and the council's environment portfolio holder after proposals emerged for a tram service linking the Harlow-Gilston development with Harlow town, North Weald and Epping.

Parish council officer Adriana Jones told Monday's parish council meeting that both she and parish clerk Sue De Luca were "very unhappy" that the parish council had not been approached over the proposals.

Harlow Council's environment portfolio holder Danny Purton, in a YouTube video interview with local news outlet 'Your Harlow', said that the Harlow Labour Party idea had been discussed with Epping Forest District Council and Epping Ongar Railway.

A statement on the Harlow Labour Party website stated: "Running on tyres along single track with passing places controlled by GPS, the trams will run mostly off-road but sometimes as through the town centre along existing routes.

"A network will link with Gilston to the north - Enterprise Zone - Churchgate Street - the new hospital to the east and other routes to the west and south and even under a joint project with Epping be extended through North Weald to the Central Line."

The parish council has also approached Epping Ongar Railway general manager Dean Walton for a statement about the situation.

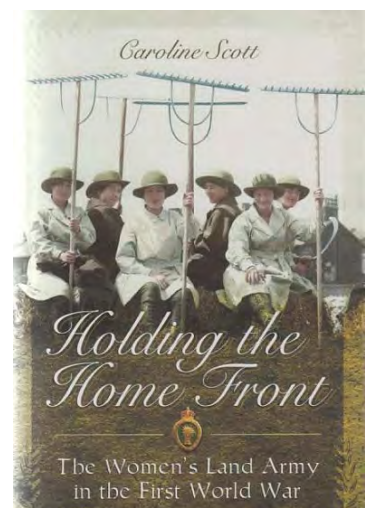
Mrs Jones said any such scheme would have "such an impact on North Weald" that the matter should have been discussed with the parish council before being made public.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Holding the Home Front

This 214 page illustrated hardback is sub-titled "The Women's Land Army in the First World War. The author is Caroline Scott a historian whose family was farming in Lancashire in 1914 and who has a particular interest in the roles of Women in the Great War. The author sets out to give the reader an understanding of how the return of women to the fields and farmyards affected agriculture and also how what these women experienced changed them and their lives. She has drawn on hitherto unpublished accounts, diaries and photographs and interviews as well as official publications, government reports and newspaper articles

The story commences in 1914 setting the scene before March 1917 when British agriculture was in a precarious position with food lost due to the sinking of British merchant ships. Farmers were called upon to increase the amount of land under cultivation and a recruitment drive for a Women's Land Army was mounted when by May over 22,000 had volunteered. The author continues by exploring the activities and sometimes colourful lifestyles of the



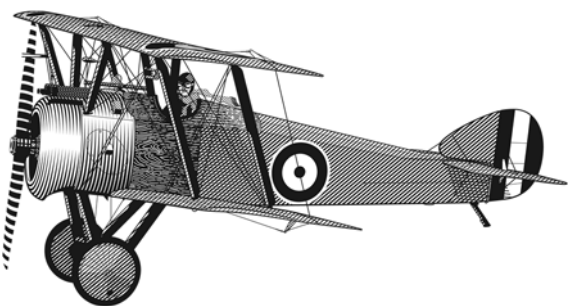
Land Girls, for whom accommodation was sometimes unsatisfactory. For instance we learn that 12 girls were housed in cubicles built for a single quarryman. We also learn that at the beginning of 1918 there were 260,000 women working on the land of whom 7,000 were on farms. In the final chapter of the book Caroline Scott explores the legacy after the demobilisation of the Land army and considers the new opportunities available to women with newly acquired skills, experience and additional strength. There are 34 black and white enlightening illustrations, comprehensive notes to the text with details of source material and an index.

### War Amongst the Clouds

Air Vice Marshall Hugh Granville- White narrates his flying experiences during the Great War and also includes his subsequent RAF career in this 239 page illustrated hardback. The author was an FE 2d Scout pusher biplane pilot flying reconnaissance patrols before becoming a Flight Commander in 29 Squadron piloting the superior SE5a fighter and becoming an ace, having shot down 9 enemy aircraft.

The book is in two parts, the first, of 60 pages concerns the author's Great War days whilst the second, and in fact the major part of the book of 150 pages is written by Hugh's son, Chris, covers his subsequent career in the RAF from 1920 to 1983. In the first part the author initially describes learning to fly before achieving combat status with 20 Squadron in July 1916 aged just over 18 years with only 33 hours flying experience. There follows a description of his time instructing flying training before returning to the Acton on the Western Front in 1918

with 29 Squadron when he duelled with a Fokker triplane and suffered the misfortune of a mid-air collision. The second part of the book describes Hugh's time in the RAF which involved flying fast jet fighter aircraft in various theatres of war and becoming CO of a Jaguar squadron. Documented is his time as C.O. of 501 Squadron flying from RAF Filton, 3 years in Singapore, at RAF Halton during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in a Technical training group and in the post war occupation of Germany. Finally, before retirement, in senior posts in RAF Maintenance Command. The book is complete with appendices of relevant information, brief notes for each of the chapters, a bibliography and an index which is helpfully split into categories of people, places, airfields and aircraft.



An interesting personal account of a young RFC pilot during the Great War who survived against all the odds, displaying courage by using skill and innovation but also enjoying luck.

### Sagittarius Rising

This is a 332 page paperback with no illustrations or index. The title, I guess, is based on the mythical figure of the archer taking to the skies to fight. Cecil Lewis is the author who at the age of just 17 was sent into combat in France where, with many other pioneering pilots like him, over the smoking battlefields of the Somme. With 56 Squadron RFC he became an ace being credited with shooting down 8 enemy aircraft and was awarded a Military Cross. He was subsequently to enjoy a career as a writer. The book was first published in 1936 and is the author's enthralling account of the love of flying against a backdrop of the bitter experience of War. It is too of outstanding young men who continually risked their lives in aerial combat. First published in 1936, this edition has a new Forward written by Cecil Lewis in 1993.

The author initially considers his flying training at Brooklands in 1916 before describing in depth his experience in the air over the battlefields of the Somme during which time he was Awarded the Military Cross. There follows a period of testing aircraft before Cecil Lewis considers aerial combat in detail. A period in home defence when he was stationed at Hainault Farm in Essex with 44 and 51 Squadrons is described before he returns to the Western Front. The final part of the book covers his career as a civil pilot including 10 years spent in China teaching the Chinese to fly.

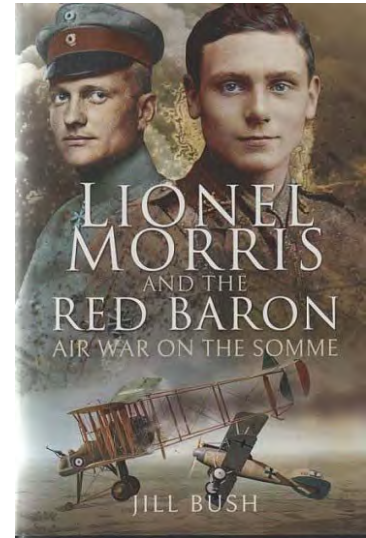


This is a splendid autobiography of a charismatic character which is considered to be a classic and is a moving account of early aerial warfare and a fitting tribute to those intrepid pioneering aviators of the Great War. At a cost of £14.99 and with an ISBN of 978-1-84832-5197 it is published by Frontline books and available from Pen & Sword Books (Tel: 01225 734222, Email: [enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk), Web: [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)).



### Lionel Morris and the Red Baron

A 247 page hardback illustrated with 20 black and white photographs and indexed is sub-titled "The Air War on the Somme". It is the story of an outstanding pilot whose death at the hands of Manfred von Richthofen was to give this lethally skilful German killer a lasting place in the history of air warfare. The author Jill Bush is a historian who has researched the Royal Flying Corps and is a relative of Lionel Morris who was the first cousin of her grand-father. Her information sources include the personal diary of Lionel Morris, previously unpublished archive material, memoirs of RFC aircrew and official records all of which are referenced in detail in notes to the text in an extensive 32 page section. The story commences with Lionel Morris becoming a combat pilot with 11 Squadron RFC with illustrious airmen such as Albert Ball as his fellow combatants and concludes with his death on the Western Front on 19th September 1916, aged just 19. The author initially describes the early years of Lionel and his time in the Lancers before considering how he learnt to fly before launching into his time in France waiting for combat, visiting Paris and participating in aerial combat. There follows an account of his and his observer's fighting in the air and his death following being shot down and crash landing behind enemy lines in his FE 2b biplane. The author concludes the book by considering the exploits of the unsung heroic airmen of the RFC who are not so well known as the likes of Albert Ball.



A well researched account of air warfare on the Western Front of the Great War which paints a vivid picture of what life in an RFC squadron was like at the sharp end. It also highlights the spirit and courage of the young aircrew in this early aerial conflict. Priced at £25 as amd ISBN 9781526742223 is available from Pen & Sword Books (Tel: 01226 734222, email: [info@frontline-books.com](mailto:info@frontline-books.com) and Web: [www.frontline-books.com](http://www.frontline-books.com)).

*All of these reviews were written by  
museum member Eric D Probert*

**North Weald Airfield's**

**WINGS CAFE**

**OPEN EVERY DAY - 930am to 5pm**

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION**



The museum may be open at the moment but we do not know what the near future has in store for us. Plans for our Open Day in September have been sadly set aside as beyond our capability in a COVID-19 scenario. Even cancellations across the sector have been a feature of this summer. Please watch out for the website announcements regarding museum support of such a Battle of Britain Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Meanwhile the museum has the shop. With limited opening the sales will be low but we continue to sell books and memorabilia on line throughout the year through our website.

We may have stock today but we cannot be sure that we can replace it tomorrow. Many of the factories have ceased manufacturing while the museums sector was on lock-down so nothing is certain!

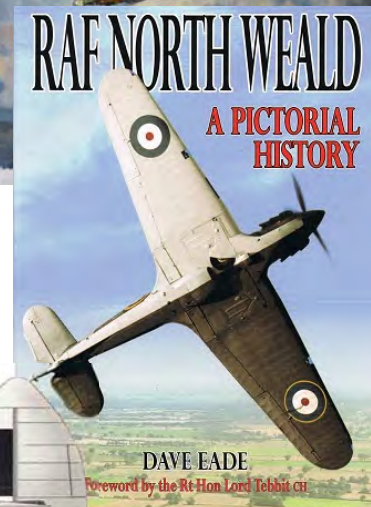
We have a selection of books, unique mugs, collectable plates, rare plastic kits and paintings on offer on the website that real or virtual visitors may be interested in. There are images on the website.



We do have the excellent book **RAF**



**North Weald—A pictorial history** by Dave Eade still in stock. It is a book of which we are the sole supplier (wholesale and retail) after the publishers ceased trading some years ago. The book contains some magnificent art work. There are plenty of them still in stock at just £10 each, plus postage, an absolute bargain in any market.



*We may have difficulties with items from other sources but a number of Museum badges remain available as they were produced for us.*

*In 2016 we produced the Centenary Badge based on the aircraft in service during the Great War. The four designs on the left were rejected but the selected design remains in the shop.*





Elsewhere on the airfield we have news that the Hurricane Gate Guardian is due to return to its plinth at the entrance to the airfield imminently. The replica was taken down for refurbishment and renovated by Weald Aviation in the same colours as it wore originally. The delay surrounding its return to public view was due to the Coronavirus.

The replica first came to North Weald in May 2008 and was placed on its plinth shortly afterwards.



**May 1950**





*Spitfire aircraft of 331 Squadron operated from the same area as now occupied by the Squadron*

It has been a year since The Squadron we knew shut down and moved towards a future offering flights in classic aircraft including the Supermarine Spitfire. The area of the airfield that once reverberated to the sound of Norwegian Spitfire aircraft is about to again focus on those classic aircraft.

Building works started last year but naturally slowed in the winter and then halted by the Coronavirus. After a short break in work the builders returned to continue their work on the refurbishment of The Squadron in late July. Work at The Squadron is moving at a pace. The dispersal hut is taking shape and they hope to create a first class customer facility for the flight experiences.

Aero Legends are now offering 'Trial Lesson' flights in Tiger Moth and Harvard aircraft..



*Tiger Moth (Aero Legends)*