



THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

NWAMA

WINTER 2018



In the same year that we are commemorating the end of the Great War, one of the last survivors of the Battle of Britain in the Second World War celebrated his own 100th year.

It has been many years since Flight Lieutenant Maurice Mounsdon has been to North Weald and even longer since he fought dogfights over southern England during the Battle of Britain but he is one of 'ours' and we have a historically important artefact he gifted us in the museum.

Now aged 100, he is one of the last surviving members of The Few and his achievement was marked exclusively by the elite pilots of the RAF Red Arrows – with a spectacular 30 minute long display over the Mediterranean off Menorca, where Mr Mounsdon has lived since his retirement, they carved out "100" in the sky in red, white and blue smoke trails. The display team were in Spain as part of the RAF 100 programme and heard he was nearby.

The former pilot is now frail and unable to walk unaided, he watched the 30-minute show from a friend's apartment on the coast as nine Hawk jets twisted and turned above them at speeds of up to 360mph.



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION



Eighty years ago, just before the Second World War, Maurice joined the RAF and was serving as a Hurricane pilot with 56 Squadron as the Battle of Britain reached its height. Over two months he scored two confirmed kills of German bombers and fighters, two probable kills and damaged two more fighters.

In the battle he was shot down by a Messerschmitt Bf 109 over Colchester on August 31 and, although burned, parachuted to safety. It was that incident that resulted in the museum receiving his flying helmet decades later.

As he left the Hurricane the helmet was ripped from his head by the slipstream and was later found and handed in to Essex Police. They returned the helmet to him and he kept it until it was donated to the museum in 2010 - it has been on display there ever since.



After the parachute descent he spent two years undergoing treatment under the pioneering plastic surgeon Archibald McIndoe and was one of the first members of the so-called Guinea Pig Club for patients. While in hospital he met his future wife, Mary. He was a flight instructor for the rest of the war and left the RAF in 1946.

In addition to the Special Birthday flying display the Defence Attache at the British Embassy in Madrid, Captain Mark Fieldsend, presented him with a replica of the wartime sector clock.

According to The Times, when Maurice Mounsdon celebrated his Centenary there were still six other members of The Few still alive. They included:

Wing Commander John "Tim" Elkington, 97

Wing Commander Paul Caswell Farnes, 100

Flight Lieutenant William Terence Clark, 99

Flight Lieutenant William Hughes, believed to be 97



A recent return visitor to the museum was our President Lord Norman Tebbit. [Baron Tebbit of Chingford].

It has been a while since he was last at the museum but he reportedly had an enjoyable time reacquainting himself with the displays and exhibits accompanied by Alison, his daughter, and shown around by the museum Chairman Peter Gardener and Membership Secretary Mike Batt.

[©MB 21.08.2018]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the wake of the report of the passing of Tom Neil in the last issue...

Thanks Bryn – I was so sorry to hear that Tom Neil had passed away. He was a wing man in Malta with a chap by the name of Ron Rist who passed away some years ago but he had 3 sons, two of whom, Martin & Maurice I go sea fishing with! Maurice is named after Maurice Guest, a fellow Hurricane pilot who flew with Ron and Tom in Malta. Maurice Guest was shot down in the med and has no know grave.

Another great guy gone but an immense privilege to have met Tom on several occasions. 97 - not a bad innings though, eh?

Ron Scott

[See page 13 for a newly published Tom Neil book review](#)



Many thanks for hosting us on Sunday afternoon, we greatly enjoyed having a look round and discovering more about the history to this wonderful historic aerodrome, keep up the good work. Please find the attached picture, feel free to use it in any way you wish. Hope to visit again soon.....



Martin Collins on behalf of the Fairthorpe Sports Car Club.

Ed: This was one of a number of events that used the museum as a backdrop to launch a motor club rally. Once a year they have a Gathering at a museum somewhere in the UK, this year it was North Weald on Sunday August 5. Although the museum is closed from late November until April we do our best to keep up the administration – the visit was arranged in January 2018.

Dear Sir/Madam

We came to the museum a few years ago and I was amazed to see pages of the day book in the war years in my father's hand writing – planes out and returning/or not etc. Since that time I have been doing some research on his wartime activities. I have his records of service from RAF Personnel Management Centre and have tried to decipher them – with some difficulty.

He is Squadron Leader Wilfred Edward Newman (74539). Early records from WWI show that he was a Private, 20th Batt. Royal Fusiliers 1915-16; Sapper R.E. 1916-18, 1st Signals R.E. and Cadet Pilot RAF 1918. After that he was in RAFVR and was called up on 21.09.1939 (Gazette 13.10.39 6662) - granted commission as Pilot Officer Admin & Special Duties RAFVR.

The hand writing is very difficult to decipher but it would seem that he was at North Weald in 27.07.40 as Acting Flight Lieutenant (01.03.42), Acting Squadron Leader (25.07.42). I know he was also at Biggin Hill and Redhill during the war. North Weald was the only location cited on that page of records.

On another page of records there is mention of A.C.R. 23.9.41 and Squadron 56. N. Weald PL 119/40 & 593/40 duty Adj. It then appears he went successively to Gatwick, Debden, Redhill, Gatwick and Biggin Hill until his release in 1.8.45. I'm not sure how long he was at North Weald but do know that my mother and sisters went to Wales in 1939 and were later billeted in Epping and Theydon Bois and eventually settled in Fyfield around 1942. I was born in Ongar Hospital in September 1943.

We stayed on in Fyfield until my father's death in 1955 and then moved to North Weald where my mother stayed until her death in 1976. We used to come to the Catholic Church on the station and my mother called our house in North Weald 'Ad Astra'... So lots of connections!

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Mifflin



NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the
North Weald Airfield Museum Association
will be held on

Sunday 16 December 2018
at 3pm

The meeting will be held in the Conference Room on the first floor of
Ad Astra House, Hurricane Way, North Weald, Epping, Essex CM16 6AA

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 web-site www.nwamuseum.co.uk

MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The museum season is April until November and it is closed for the winter

When open entry is free for members.

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

Adults	£2
Concessions	£1.50
Children [5-15]	50p

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
Web: 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.

HISTORY FILE

John Marlow Thompson was born at Saltford, Somerset on 16th August 1914 and educated at Bristol Grammar School.

His father, a Bristol builder, died when he was 12 and he was brought up by his mother. He was good at sport, particularly rugby for which he would represent the RAF from 1935 to 1938. He joined the RAF on a short service commission in March 1934, was posted to 5 FTS Sealand in early April and after completing his training he joined 29 Squadron at North Weald in March 1935. He was to serve as a pilot with three squadrons at the Essex RAF Station and that may have been a unique achievement.



John Thompson in the cockpit of a Spitfire. (Crown Copyright)

While at North Weald he will have been more familiar with the early Demon, the Gauntlet, Gladiator and the Hurricane. (NWAM)



Thompson left 29 Squadron at North Weald in mid-November 1935 when the squadron was sent to Egypt with its Demon's during the Abyssinian crisis. He joined 56 Squadron at North Weald the next day.

In 1936 Thompson was made 'C' Flight Commander and he took that flight to reform 151 Squadron at North Weald on 4th August 1936. He was then appointed 'A' Flight Commander of 151.

On 11th February 1938 three Gladiator's of 65 squadron were flying in the vicinity of North Weald from their own field at Hornchurch when they came upon P/O John Thompson flying in a locally 151 Squadron machine and decided to "bounce" him with a series of mock attacks. Such manoeuvres near an airfield were supposedly banned.

Three pilots, Acting Flt Lt L C Bicknell flying the eight month old K7942, P/O P R Austin-Sparks in seven month old K8002 and P/O Boyd in another machine, were undertaking formation flying training when K8002 hit the formation leader from behind, it is thought due mainly to obscured vision caused by oil thrown up by the engine coating the windscreen. Bicknell, the senior pilot, managed to get out of his aircraft and parachute to safety. Twenty-one year old Austin-Sparks died in his aircraft. He had served 13 months in the RAF, three of them at Hornchurch.

On 24th January 1940 Thompson took command of 111 Squadron at RAF Drem near Edinburgh and was later awarded the DFC (gazetted 6th September 1940).

Thompson was awarded the Danish Order of Dannebrog in May 1951 and In 1954 was made a CBE and in the November posted as Group Captain Ops at the Central Fighter Establishment. He commanded RAF Leeming from March 1957, was made Director of Air Defence at the Air Ministry in November 1958, went as a student to the Imperial Defence College in January 1961 and from January 1962 he was AOC Military Air Traffic Operations. and retired from the RAF in the late summer of 1966 as an Air Commodore. In retirement he was, for five years, secretary of the Moor Park Golf Club in Hertfordshire before taking over as secretary of Monte Carlo Golf Club in 1973. He spent a happy ten years in Monte Carlo, where he was friendly with Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. He died in Brighton in August 1994.

NEW TO THE MUSEUM

A pair of photo albums that came into the museum on loan were originally owned by Flight Sergeant G W Martin attached to C Flight of 97 Squadron during the short period it was serving in India. Rightly the albums have no place in the NWAMA but they do provide an interesting snapshot of the early post-war years when we used to have an Empire.

The albums are primarily about one squadron and its aircraft in India, but interspersed in the 97 Squadron material are earlier and later images of the RFC, family and friends. Captions are sparse so a lot of guesswork has been involved.

97 Squadron formed as an RFC training unit on 1 December 1917 at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire and subsequently, as an RAF unit, it re-equipped with the Handley Page heavy bomber and flew bombing sorties until the end of the First World War.

In 1919 it re-equipped with the Airco DH10 Amiens and was posted to India in the summer, initially providing a mail service within India serving successively in Allahabad, Lahore and Risalpur. It was in Risalpur in the Kyber region of what is now Pakistan until disbanding and reforming as 60 Squadron on 1 April 1920. The albums mainly cover a period immediately prior to that.

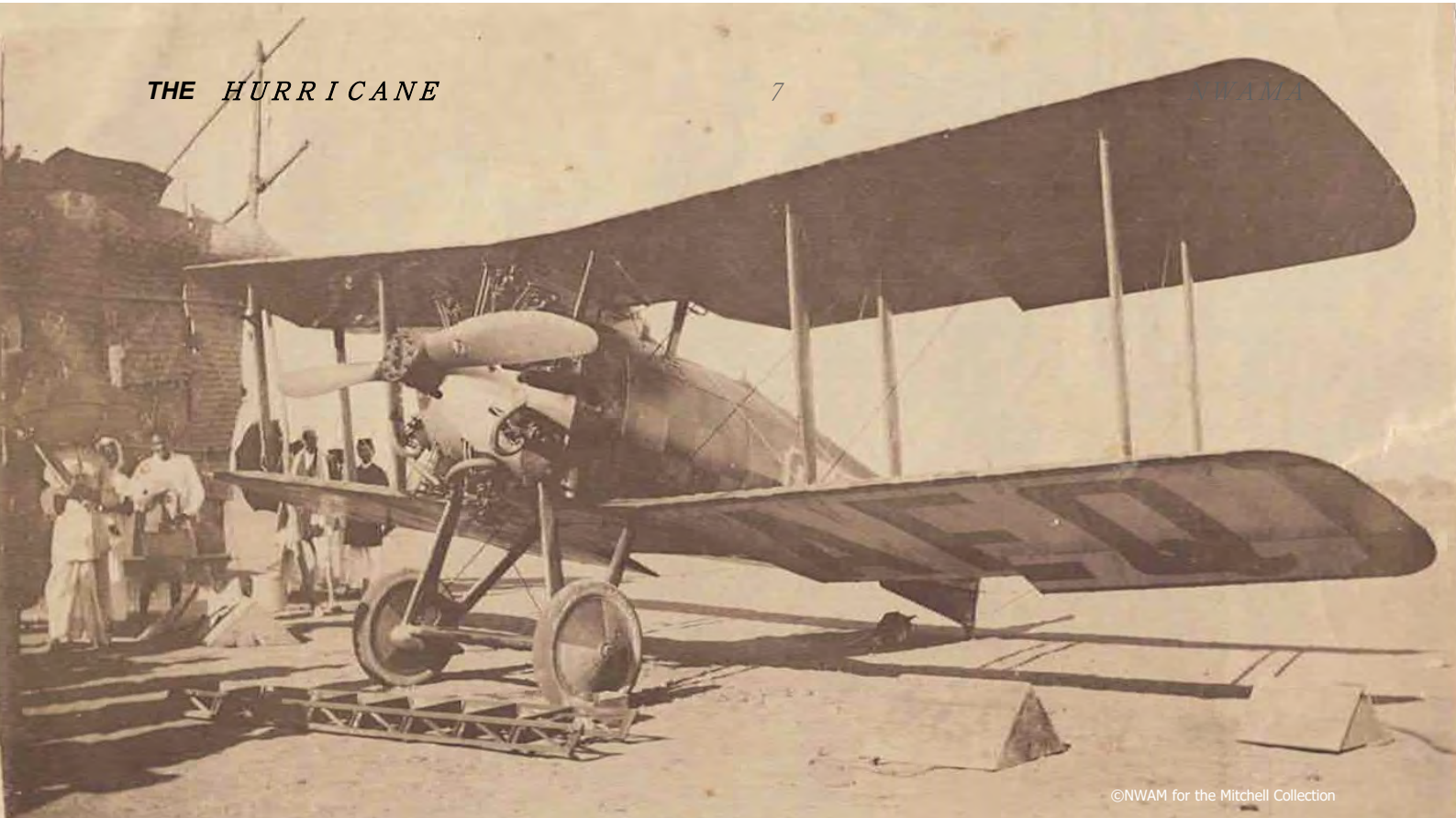


A month after the mail service they managed to prang one of their DH10s [E5484]. It was a simple nose-over that in times of need would have been quickly repaired but the aircraft was dismantled. The DH was late to the war so only around 250 were completed, they soon disappeared from the home inventory post war, lingering on in foreign parts for a few years.



Among the numerous bomber images in the albums was that of a civil Nieuport Nighthawk G-EAEQ that flew out to India in 1920.

The Nieuport Nighthawk was a British fighter aircraft developed for the RAF towards the end of the war. Although ordered into production before the aircraft first flew, it did not enter large scale service with the RAF owing to unreliable engines. Re-engined aircraft did see service in Greece, serving from 1923 to 1938.



©NWAM for the Mitchell Collection

Nieuport built the 2-seat sport aircraft, the L.C.1 (Land Commercial) Nighthawk with the first civil registered aircraft, K-151 appearing on 21 June 1919 at the first postwar Aerial Derby in a striking blue and yellow chequerboard colour scheme – the Nieuport racing colours. This was before 'proper' registrations were developed so the competing aircraft were in military or K markings.

The event was centred on Hendon but did have connections locally in that one of the turning points for the Aerial Derby was Epping. *Flight and Aircraft Engineer* carried a ten-page report on the Derby, the first post-war event of note and no doubt a change from writing on the war. The Nighthawk, configured as a single seat machine for the race, did not finish due to a minor technical fault that brought it down at Thurrock during the second round.



©NWAM for the Mitchell Collection

The Nighthawk K-151 was returned to its two-seat configuration and was sent to India and Malaya in late 1919 for a series of sales-promotion flights. By that time, as the Martin image confirms, it was wearing its new G- registration.

The Nieuport and General Aeroplane Co., sent a mission, Captain R S Carroll and Lt. J H James a test pilot out to market aircraft in India. Carroll requested an aircraft be sent to him. The carefully crated aircraft was shipped on the ss Gandara and arrived at Bombay on December 14, 1919. It was reassembled and in the air again the following day – in time to start a marketing display and local tour. Aeroplanes were rare and the flights brought great crowds out to watch the small biplane, still wearing its checked paint scheme.

A week later, Carroll and James took a supply of the *Advocate of India* from Bombay to Poona, thus completing the first "newspaper" flight on the route and providing another chance to undertake a display in the run up to Christmas. In September 1920 the sales demonstrator was sold to an Indian customer.

Back in England the 4th March 1920 edition of Flight listed aerodromes across Britain that had closed. The Air Ministry issued a Notice to Airmen (number 19) stating which landing grounds were to remain in use and which were to be closed – or at least placed in care and maintenance. There followed a short list of two including Northolt that was to be used as an airport, a list of ten that were shut but possibly usable as emergency landing grounds and another ten that were to be deleted.

The second list included a range of names that have long since passed into history including the former RNAS at Chingford [now completely lost under a Lea Valley reservoir] but the final list of ten included some familiar names that were to again rise from the ashes of the war to end all wars including Driffild, Yorkshire, Scampton and Waddington in Lincolnshire and both Sutton's Farm and **North Weald Bassett**.

LOST IN TRANSIT

Much closer to home, last autumn the museum had an enquiry from former RAF officer John Crawshaw who served as the Junior Accountant Officer at North Weald from 20th December 1956 until 4th January 1959, his departure was an early part of the run-down of the airfield after the squadrons left. Senior Accountant Officers during that period were Sqn Ldr Porter, Sqn Ldr J R Branford-White and Flt Lt L E Tomkins.

During his time there his wife created an Illuminated Manuscript entitled "North Weald at War" and it used to be on display in the Officers Mess on the airfield. When they left North Weald in 1959 it remained on display but only later became a matter of interest.

After several attempts at finding the framed manuscript via the Ministry of Defence John contacted the museum in an effort to get a better image of it. The one they had taken nearly sixty years ago had faded to nothing and all he had was a photocopy. After a bit of a search of heads and drawers we found "we" knew of the item but did not know where it was. Had we had it but lost it? We had our doubts about any of the options.



The latest on the story is that we now know that we knew about it because we too had seen a photocopy in the museum archives. That was a relief but it did not find out where it was. Now, 9 months later, while looking for something else I found a one line reference to the manuscript in the 1964 Station ORB copy we have for the period when the station was being vacated by the RAF.

"The scroll North Weald at War was transferred to HQFC (P1) on 15th July"

So the interesting framed document went to Fighter Command at Bentley Priory in 1964 but that too was disbanded in 1968 – giving way to Strike Command at High Wycombe which itself was brushed away by another reorganization to Air Command in 2007. At least that is still at High Wycombe, but the trail grows cold. The question remains—has anyone seen it?

EPPING MARKET

Every Monday

www.eppingmarket.co.uk

Please come along and see us!

ROLL OF HONOUR

The museum has been attempting to compile a list of all who served at the airfield. Although the task will continue it is clear it can never achieve what it set out to do. The bible of the task is the Station ORB where it appears that personnel arriving and leaving are religiously recorded. Unfortunately it is an illusion, yes names appear regularly but they are little more than a microcosm of the movement of staff. Most movements – including officers – are simply recorded as a number in and a number out. Where 2-3 name, rank and service number are listed the actual monthly movement of staff even in peacetime was in the range of 40-50.

ARCHIVES

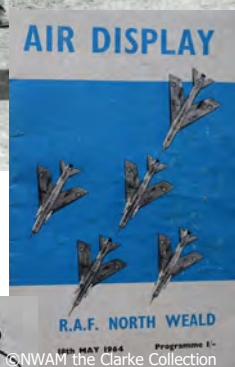
Another new collection – but one with a greater connection with North Weald is that of former Warrant Officer William George Clarke MBE who was based at North Weald 1939-45. He lived 16 Vicarage Road, Coopersale, from the day it was built in the 1930s until his death. The family finally gave up the house in September 2018.

A decade ago the family gave the museum an aircraft clock he had owned, they also maintained membership for many years, but time marches on. The additional collection is a number of framed limited edition prints that have now joined our rotating art displays, books rare and familiar and a number of interesting photographs. The most interesting [so far] has been a snap taken in 1922 of three intrepid explorers in a de Havilland DH-9 G-EBDE.

The former RAF bomber (ex-H5738) was first civil registered as G-EBDE 19.05.22 and was written off (Damaged beyond economical repair) a few days later on 28.05 whilst landing at Parc Borelly, near Marseilles, France, during an attempt to fly around the world



by Major W.T. Blake a man who wanted to be the first to fly around the world but it was too early in the development of aircraft for his dream to be realised.





©NWAM the Clarke Collection

Vickers Wildebeeste K4163 in 1937 when it was reportedly flying with B Flight at Gosport.

I have no idea how this 1925 letter came to be in the Clarke papers but it is the communication to the former aerodrome caretaker and resident of the museum building—then called 'Broseley' to tell him he and his family were being 'regraded' at the start of the building of what became RAF North Weald.

It fits in nicely with the other museum document that the same Mr Monk signed in 1922 on starting his employment and moving into the building where his daughter Mona was born.

-2-

Witness my hand this *14th* day of *December 1921*

Signed. *H. Monk.*

Witness. *V. Army Dept manager.*

To the Disposal & Liquidation Commission.
Caxton House,
Westminster.



Mr. Monk,

For your information.

Resident Engineer.

157/363.

Mr. H. Monk - regrading.

TO:-
Resident Engineer, W. & B.
NORTH WEALD.

The Resident Engineer is informed that the services of a full time Caretaker are now no longer required and should be dispensed with. Mr. Monk may, however, be retained as a General Labourer at the rate of 40/- per week of 48 hours for odd work and to assist the Resident Engineer.

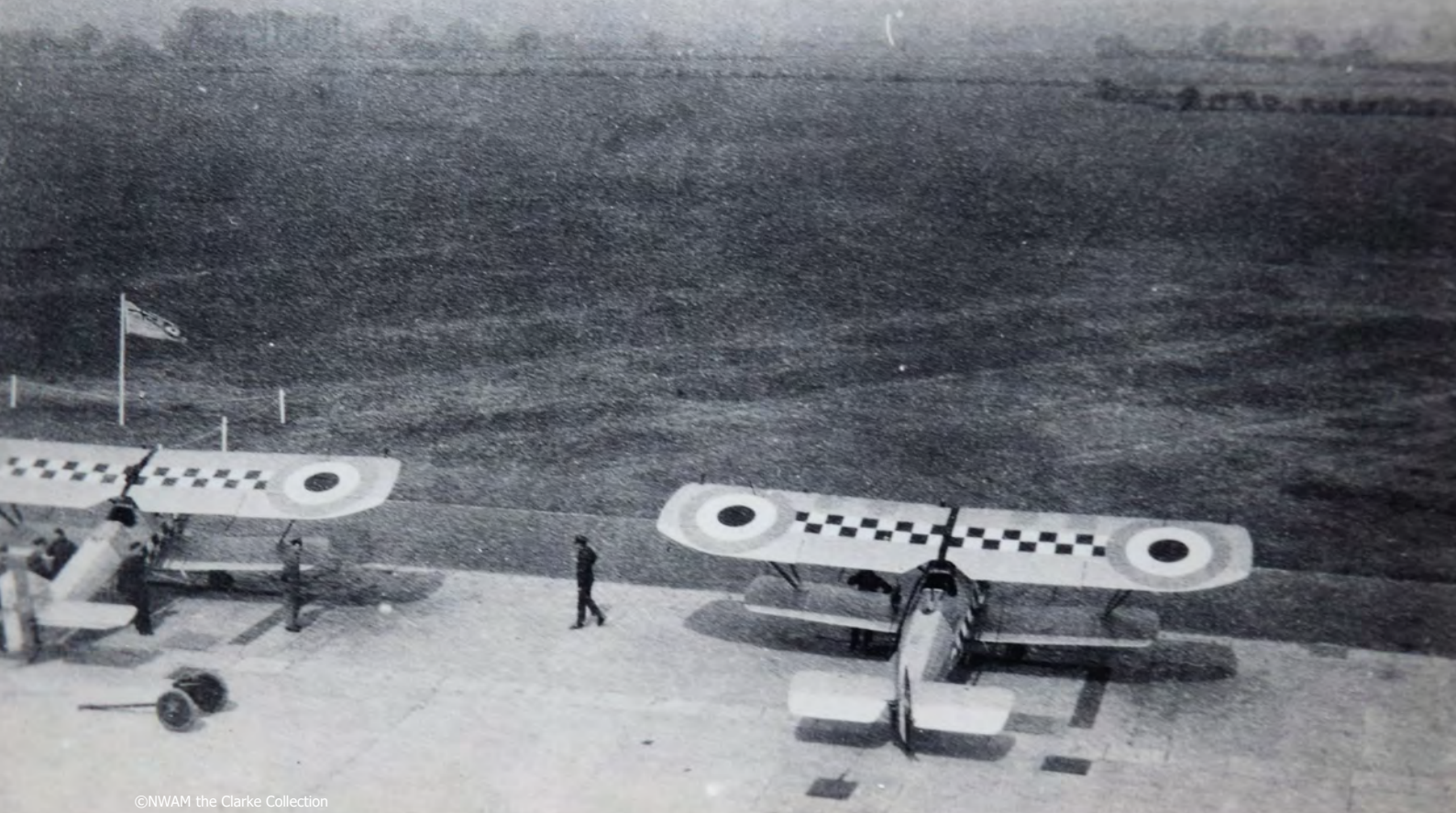
2. In consideration of acting as Caretaker during "silent hours" and week-ends, it is approved that he may be provided with free Quarters in available buildings at the Station. With effect, therefore, from 28. 2. 25., Mr. Monk will be regraded as a General Labourer. His work will end on Tuesday of each week, and a Workman's Time Sheet (Form 653) must be prepared giving full particulars of work done and should be forwarded so as to reach this Office not later than Thursday morning.

3. Mr. Monk should be informed that he is now eligible for unemployment Insurance and a Card should be obtained and sent here as early as possible, also, that his pay for the current week will be made up to include Tuesday the 3rd instant.

ODQ.

Works & Buildings Area Officer.
(CO-STAL).

©NWAM the Clarke Collection



©NWAM the Clarke Collection



Sticking with the early days theme are these two images of North Weald Siskin fighters shortly after the simple grass 'aerodrome' was built up and turned into RAF North Weald.



Our 1946 postage stamp Norway "Wings for Norway" was originally acquired in 1978. The artwork was based on that produced as a 1943 watercolour poster [23 inches by 17½ inches] by Dorothea M Anderson in Canada for the Royal Norwegian Consulate. Because the only stamps remaining in Norway had been those produced during the war by the Nazis the 1946 run was printed in Canada by the Canadian Bank Note Co.



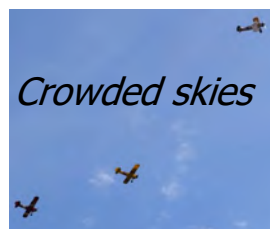
FLIGHT SAFETY

Where the museum seeks to record and recall the past glory of North Weald airfield we must always remember that it continues as a living and thriving modern flying ground looking to a future. An added bonus is that it remains the home for many historic aircraft – Warbirds.

Aviation is serious business and the safety of flying activities remains an important part of day-to-day operations. Accidents happen from time to time and they are part of the lore that the museum preserves, but avoiding them is an important consideration whether in war or peace.

During a BBC television programme early in September it was reported that the number of serious aircraft 'near-misses' had doubled and private pilots were being urged to fit new safety devices to warn of other nearby aircraft. The number of accidents reported to the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) has also risen - up from 654 accidents in 2013 to 708 in 2017. Drones are part of the problem. In 2017 there were 93 near misses reported – there were none in 2013. Hundreds of the more than 2,000 incidents investigated by the UK Airprox Board in the past decade involved military aircraft, including planes, helicopters, gliders, drones and parachutists.

Flying instructor Paul Bazire, based at North Weald in Essex, has been involved in two airprox incidents. He said the relatively high number of accidents and near-misses in the South East reflected the high level of activity there. The skies in the South East are much more compressed than elsewhere, and some of his customers come from as far away as Poland to fly in the South East precisely because the skies are so busy.



Ten years ago, the CAA tried to get private pilots to fit their aircraft with transponders - devices that identify a craft to air traffic control and other aircraft – and sensors to detect the other aircraft a traffic collision avoidance system [TCAS for short]. But the proposals met with strong resistance because the equipment was heavy and costly to buy and fit.

Since the early 1990s transponders and TCAS have worked extremely well in commercial airliners and the numbers of near-misses completely dropped away.

Over time the equipment has become lighter, smaller and more affordable so now the CAA is to re-attempt getting pilots to fit much smaller safety devices, called transceivers, to their aircraft.

Waltham Abbey

MARKET

8am to 3pm

TUESDAY & SATURDAY

WALTHAM ABBEY

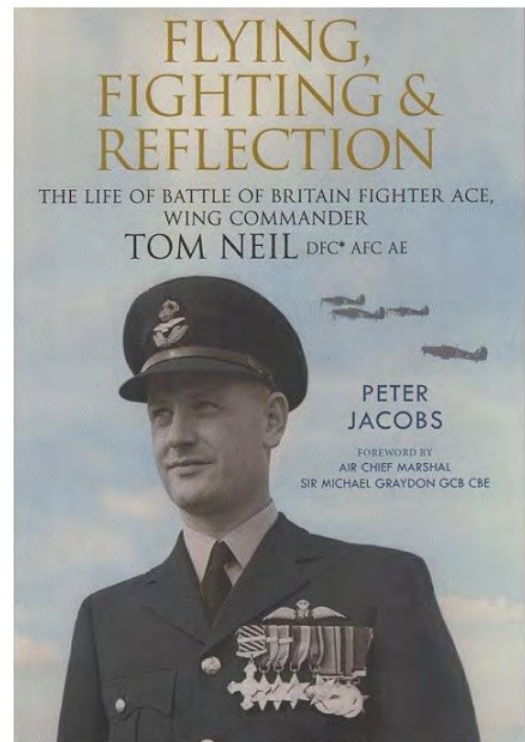
BOOK REVIEW

Museum Trustee Eric Probet has picked Peter Jacobs book on Tom Neil for review:

Flying, Fighting & Reflection -The Life of Battle of Britain Fighter Ace Wing Commander Tom Neil DFC* AFC AE

Tom Neil served with 249 Squadron, RAF at North Weald, when Victor Beamish was Station Commander from September 1940 to May 1941 and died earlier this year at the age of 97 as one of the last surviving Battle of Britain pilots. This book then will be of particular value to those interested in the history of North Weald Airfield. Biographer Peter Jacobs and author of many books on aviation topics with the help and co-operation of Tom Neil and his family has documented his life.

The author initially describes Tom's early days in a Liverpool suburb enjoying the exploits of Biggles and joining the RAF Volunteer Reserve in October 1938, learning to fly in a tiger moth before flying with 603 Squadron in Scotland. His time during WW2 at North Weald flying hurricanes when he became a twice decorated hero and the subject of a recruitment poster is covered in three chapters entitled "Into Battle", "The hardest Month" and "On the offensive". There follows an account of his 89 operational sorties with 249 Squadron defending Malta and then after a rest to become Chief Flying Instructor with No. 56 Operational Training Unit. Command of 41 Squadron flying Spitfires over Northern France is then described. Next in February 1944 he became a liaison officer with the 100th Fighter Wing of the Tactical United States 9th Army Air Force. Then, the author explains, he had the opportunity to fly American Thunderbolt and Mustang fighters around D-day, marrying Flight Officer Eileen Hampson in June 1945 before, after training, becoming a test pilot at Boscombe Down. A successful tour in Egypt in command of 206 Squadron resulted in the award of the Air Force Cross before Tom Neil moved on in 1956 as a Wing Commander to become a senior controller at Essex's own "Secret Nuclear Bunker" at Kelvedon Hatch, flying meteor and hunter jet aircraft from nearby North Weald airfield. In the summer of 1964 Tom Neil retired from the RAF after 25 years service and there is a colour photograph of him at North Weald with former members of 249 Squadron in Sep 1990 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.



A hardback of 300 pages and 92 illustrations - some in colour it is published by Greenhill books and available from Pen & Sword, 47 Church St, Barnsley, SouthYorkshire S70 2AS (Tel: 01226 734555, email: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk) at £25 but it is also published as an ebook for £9.65 and may be obtained at a significant discount (up to 30%) from online booksellers such as Browns Books for Students. The contents and first 73 pages may be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/EDP-TomNeilBiog>.

HURRI CANE

Elsewhere on the airfield the Royal Air Forces Association [RAFA] North Weald & Ongar Branch have launched a new phase of their 1918-19 Wings Appeal by offering up a cute RAFA Teddy Bear for auction.

By the time the auction takes place it is hoped that this humble teddy will be something of an air ace. Already the bear, of no stated gender, has flown far and wide in aircraft that mere humans could but hope for ... a Bristol Blenheim [right] for a start ... and meticulously logged the trip in his log book.

Now his support team—including Bill Lewis of RAFA—are seeking yet more exciting flights to add to the value this once humble bear had as a would be aviator. Can you help?

Call Bill on 07526 650917 now!

<https://www.facebook.com/sgthurricanerafa/>



EPHING FOREST TOURISM

Running a museum either on the front line or in the background can be time consuming and tactically taxing. How to attract the interest of outsiders and to gain and keep either members or repeat visitors by changing the visual displays from time to time takes planning and time.

Part of that strategy can be trying to fit in with like minded organisations in the locality to bring in visitors to the area and then to offer them engaging 'entertainment' that injects income into the individual attraction and thereby the local economy. By such means we can all give mutual support and ensure that each attraction remains viable in the long term.

To that end there is an annual tourism conference operated, in effect, by Epping Forest District Council, to bring together all these interested groups and parties from outer London, Hertfordshire and eastern Essex. Although there as 'Secretary NWAM' I had other declared historical and business promotion interests of a Waltham Abbey nature.

It was a relatively high profile event and a chance to put out some museum leaflets, lots were picked up by individual delegates. Clearly this was a wide ranging event and NW Airfield 'destinations' that included the museum generally lost out to such as the White Water Centre, Broxbourne Wild Life Park, Ongar Railway and many others in sheer public profile. On the positive side it might be surmised that EFDC are now happier that the immediate threats of housing spread on the airfield have subsided. For the moment it is a battle won.

Its all about exposure and money and NWAMA has unsuspected friends out there despite the receding monetary support. But of course we are talking about the cash support – the building NWAM occupies and EFDC supports are expensive commodities in themselves.

I am not so sure it was a ground breaking event overall, lots of fine words and intentions about connectivity between the locations and events but little sign there was any way that the disparate organisations would ever talk turkey to each other often enough to make a difference. But as ever we will try!

Some local groups complain about the event being in Waltham Abbey but the fact of the matter is that there are few top notch hotels in EFDC area and the Marriott is virtually the only quality venue that offering enthusiasm and logistic support to this event.

All power to them!

The Epping Forest Tourism and Visitor Conference was held on 26 October 2018 at the Waltham Abbey Marriott



Post war de Havilland Vampire jets in the blast pens at North Weald.

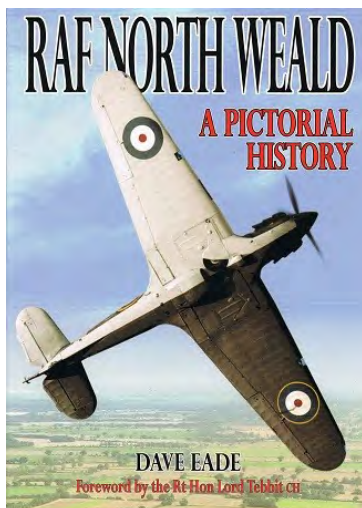
These single-seat fighters were flown by 72 Squadron



In a few days from the publication of this edition of *The Hurricane* the doors will again close on the museum for the winter. This does not mean that visits will not be possible but it does mean that parts of the museum will be inaccessible due to work being done—and of course visitors will have to arrange for one of the Trustees with keys to be at the museum to allow you access.



Works this year include the long overdue revamp of the Wulstan Tempest Room covering The Great War and the period up to the start of the Battle of Britain. This work has been largely financed by the **Stansted Airport Community Trust** and was due to start last spring but the museum was open again before it could be put in place. <https://www.stanstedacn.com/>



Christmas is coming and now is the time to consider meeting the needs of the historian or aircraft enthusiast in your life!

North Weald Airfield Museum has a great selection of badges, mugs, pictures and books that may meet a need. Many of them are illustrated on our website.

As ever we have our exclusive book on the history of the airfield **NORTH WEALD—a pictorial history** written by Dave Eade and considered the ultimate book on the airfield at just £10 a copy at the museum or we can usually get it and any other purchases to you within 7 days if you order it on-line even when the museum closes for the winter.

The museum website is www.nwamuseum.co.uk

North Weald is an active base for many aircraft, trainers, private transport and warbirds. One of the major attractions on summer weekends is the helicopter rides. From time to time the museum finds itself the impotent recipient of an enquiry from people who have just got off the bus from Epping and are booked on a helicopter ride in fifteen minutes!



Unfortunately when the museum is open there is no way we can help by driving the enquirers to their helicopter, at the shortest point it is a two mile walk to the helicopter. Interesting on a warm summers days when you have plenty of time but a bit of a problem when you are in a hurry and have a scrambling baby in a pram!

North Weald Airfield is open every day and offers you some great opportunities to see a working airfield from its café premises: **Wings** and **The Squadron**. If the weather is good take the opportunity to watch the aircraft fly or perhaps book yourself a helicopter ride and find yourself joining the jet set by flying over the fields of Essex in arguably the greatest way to fly [barring perhaps in a two-seat Spitfire!]



North Weald Airfield's



OPEN EVERY DAY - 930am to 5pm



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MUSEUM OPEN DAY



Thank you to all our supporters who helped us run the very successful day in September and to all our many visitors who made it such a success.

There will be another one in September 2019—please join us!