

1-2015

George Hogarth, Clewiston and Beyond

Jenifer A. Harding
jen@jennyharding.co.uk

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond>

Scholarly Commons Citation

Harding, Jenifer A., "George Hogarth, Clewiston and Beyond" (2015). *Clewiston and Beyond*. 1.
<https://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Books at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Clewiston and Beyond by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.

GEORGE HOGARTH



CLEWISTON AND BEYOND

The story of a young man from Edinburgh who joined the RAF in World War 2 and went out to Florida in 1941 to learn to fly

CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1 Before Clewiston

Chapter 2 Clewiston (October 2, 1941 to March 12, 1942)

Chapter 3 After Clewiston

Chapter 4 5BFTS Association

Epilogue

INTRODUCTION

For as long as I can remember, I have known that my father served with the RAF in World War 2. My brother, sister and I grew up with uniforms to dress up in, Log Books to read, and rescue packs and silk maps (useful when bailing out in enemy territory) to look at. My mother was in the WRENS¹, and my grandparents, uncles and aunts had all been engaged on active service or other war work. We played with gas masks (they made good feeding bags for rocking horses) and as I was born in 1948, I had a National Identity Card and a ration book. Bombsites and camouflaged buildings were a familiar part of early life as was the new world that was rising from the devastated areas. In the West Midlands, the new Coventry Cathedral (consecrated in 1962) was built to complement the ruins of the old Cathedral (destroyed in an air raid in 1940), and remains as a symbol of reconciliation and hope.

So, the fact that the War had happened was real and part of our lives. We knew about Clewiston and kept in contact with the Florida family, who were so kind to four young Scotsmen training to be pilots a long way from home, and later, were equally kind to my parents and sister when they visited Florida. My sister is named after one of the daughters of that family.

We knew something about what happened when my father came back home from Clewiston, where he was stationed and what he did, including how he met and married my mother in 1944. When, much later, the RAF cadets who trained in Clewiston at Number 5, British Flying Training School (5BFTS) decided that they should form an Association, my father became a founder member and was active in the Midland branch.

As I grow older, I become more intrigued to know the story behind the story. What was it really like to go to America in 1941, to learn to fly when you were only 20 years old, to be a pilot in the Second World War and fight for your country? How did it affect the lives of those young men who survived and what influence did those six months spent in Florida have on the lives of the cadets and their future families? As my parents grew older and were unable to drive long distances, I started to take them to 5BFTS Association Annual Reunions and Midland meetings. I talked to many men who also trained in Clewiston and heard about their experiences both during the war and afterwards.

In 2002, my son and I started to piece together the story of my father's (his grandfather's) life during the War, and the more we found out, the more fascinating it became. We read letters that my father had written from Clewiston to an Edinburgh friend and also a number he wrote to his sister back home in Scotland. We listened to tape recordings that my father made in the 1970s for Lamar Philpot, an American photographer from Bradenton in Florida, who was researching what life at 5BFTS was like. We looked at many

¹ Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS known as WRENS, the women's branch of the Royal Navy)

photographs taken by my father while he was in North America, mostly taken in Florida, but a few from Canada and New York, including many that were not in our family photograph albums. We used transcripts of talks given by both my parents to schoolchildren and, of course, we talked to my parents themselves to glean as much information as we could.

One of the richest sources of information was, and still is, George's RAF Log Books. The contemporary detail and the many concise, and often cryptic comments, help the reader to look back over more than 70 years and see for themselves what it was like to be a pilot in World War 2.

George died in August 2011, a few days short of his 90th birthday. This book is dedicated to his memory.

Dr Jenifer A Harding (née Hogarth),

January 2015

The family of George Hogarth owns the copyright of all documents and photographs included in this book unless otherwise indicated.

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

Clewiston Museum: <http://www.clewistonmuseum.org>

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives:
<http://www.alumni.erau.edu/archives>

#5 British Flying Training School: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>

CHAPTER ONE – BEFORE CLEWISTON

George was born in September 1921 and grew up in Edinburgh. He left school in the summer of 1939 and went up to the University of Edinburgh in October 1939 as planned even though the Second World War had just been declared. Having won a History prize (and a Latin verse prize) at school, he chose to read for an Honours Degree in History. He spent two academic years at the University before starting his RAF service in August 1941. After the War, he did not return to complete his studies but those two years were sufficient to enable him to graduate, *in absentia*, with an Ordinary MA Degree in 1946.

In October 1939, George joined the OTC (Officer Training Corps), and then, in about June 1940, joined the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), later called the Home Guard; however, he really wanted to be a pilot! After the Battle of Britain in 1940, George was eager to join the RAF, but at only 19 years old, he was too young to be called up² and his father and mother would not allow him to volunteer.

The RAF started a University Air Squadron at the University of Edinburgh, and George joined in early 1941. This was a way of getting one step nearer to his ambition to be a pilot in the RAF; though, as he said “*it still seemed a long way to September 1941 and my twentieth birthday*”!

University Air Squadrons were voluntary training establishments affiliated to the RAF. George attended two evenings each week and was given instruction in things like radio, navigation, airmanship, theory of flight and so on. This meant that when he did eventually join the RAF, he was able to go directly for flying training rather than first having to spend time doing groundwork. When the calling-up age was reduced to 19, George volunteered straight away and enlisted in March 1941. He was called up in August 1941.



George in 1929 aged about 8 years



George in 1937 (self portrait)

² The Calling Up age was 20 years at this time

CHAPTER TWO – CLEWISTON

OCTOBER 2, 1941 – MARCH 12, 1942



George with his mother, Ella

Once George was called up, things moved very rapidly, and within ten days of leaving a Pre-Deployment Centre (PDC) in West Kirby on September 14, 1941 (which included two days back home as his ship had broken down), George was saying ‘hello’ to Halifax in Canada. George sailed on the SS Capetown Castle, a Union Castle Line passenger liner and mail ship requisitioned for use as a troopship in 1940, in a convoy across the Atlantic. He then boarded a fairly basic Canadian train, which, after a 40-hour trip, deposited the cadets in Toronto. On the journey from Halifax to Toronto, they saw the hills of Eastern Canada covered in autumnal colour - the ‘Fall Foliage’!

The cadets stayed in Toronto for three or four days, and learned that they were in transit for Florida. They were issued with grey flannel suits (the ‘famous’ grey double-breasted suits) and RAF uniform. America had not yet entered the war and their strict neutrality laws meant that the RAF cadets had to enter the country as civilians (hence the grey suits) and were only allowed to wear uniform on the camp.

George has two particular memories of Toronto; seeing bowls of large red juicy apples on the Mess table (something not available in Edinburgh) and a visit to Niagara Falls organised by the Canadians – this included a “*splendid barbecue*” (big juicy steaks done over a charcoal fire). George felt that the Falls were a little disappointing (it was raining when they were there) but that, overall, the trip was “*a very enjoyable outing*”.

George and his fellow cadets left Toronto by train, this time in a beautiful Canadian-Pacific coach and spent two days in this and similar carriages. They had one break at the village of Chattanooga, made famous by the American hit parade song

'Chattanooga Choo-choo'. George remembers standing on the back observation platform and seeing grass growing between the rails, something never seen in Britain.

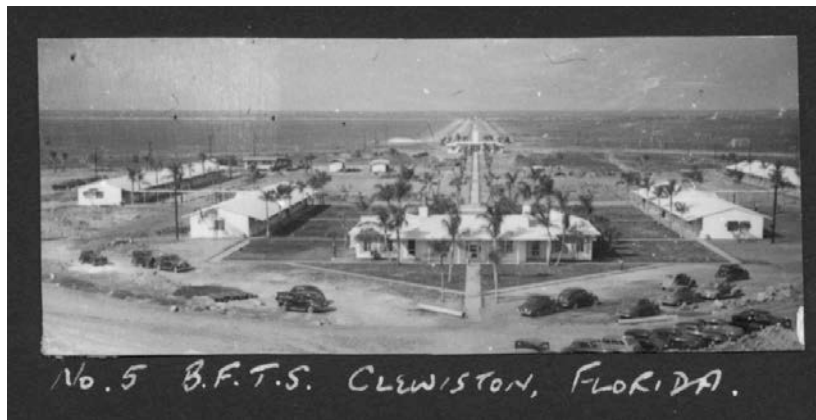


*Fort George, Niagara. September 1941
Left to right: George and fellow cadet Bill Cooper*



*River Niagara. September 1941
Showing Canada and USA*

No. 5 British Flying Training School, Clewiston, Florida



Well before the United States entered the War in December 1941, senior British and American Air Force officers were discussing the possibilities of training RAF pilots in the neutral and friendly American skies. The RAF had recognised that they needed a large number of pilots, but could not provide a training programme in the UK or Europe because of the uncertain weather and risk of enemy action. These discussions in the US were in parallel with others taking place to set up an Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada, Rhodesia and South Africa.

In May 1941, following enactment of the 1941 Lend-Lease Policy, President Roosevelt gave his approval for six British Flying Training Schools (BFTS), which were set up between June and August 1941.

- 1 BFTS Terrell in Texas opened June 9, 1941
- 2 BFTS Lancaster in California opened June 9, 1941, but was only operational until 1942
- 3 BFTS Miami in Oklahoma opened June 16, 1941
- 4 BFTS Mesa in Arizona opened June 16, 1941
- 5 BFTS Clewiston in Florida opened July 17, 1941
- 6 BFTS Ponca City in Oklahoma opened August 23, 1941

A seventh BFTS was set up in May 1942 in Sweetwater, Texas, but was only functional for some three months. Other RAF training took place in the US under the Arnold Scheme (named after General 'Hap' Arnold). The main difference between the two programmes was that a BFTS was a new RAF establishment, subject to RAF Law and British Flying Regulations (except for long distance flights which followed American Law), whereas RAF cadets training under the Arnold Scheme worked alongside USAAC (United States Army Air Corps) cadets in existing US Army schools. Civilians who had been trained to RAF standards instructed the BFTS cadets, who spent their entire stay in the US on one station. In contrast, Arnold cadets had to move to a different station for each phase of their training. The Arnold Scheme proved less successful as a training programme for RAF cadets, as almost 50% of the British cadets were eliminated ('washed out') and did not complete their pilot training.

Each BFTS was built to a general specification. The airfield was to be one-mile square with two runways and a control tower. Hangars and maintenance equipment were provided for the PT-17A (Stearman) and AT-6A (Harvard) aircraft, together with emergency facilities, parachutes, and accommodation for ground instruction, administration, dormitories, dining halls and Link training. The work had to be carried out by the contractors within 60 days of signing the Contract.

British Flying Training Schools were operational from 1941 to 1945 and the Arnold Scheme training from 1941 to 1943. From November 1942, US cadets were admitted to the various BFTS. From then on, about one-fifth of the cadet intake was American and the BFTS personnel establishment included an USAAC officer to look after the American cadets.

In May 1945, when the war in Europe ceased, the Americans promptly discontinued all army air force pilot training at civilian operated schools and were anxious to close the BFTS; however, they agreed that intakes could continue until August 20, 1945, to allow time for the RAF to re-establish the UK training programme. Closure of Riddle Field was announced for November 6, 1945. The subsequent and sudden end to the war in Japan, however, meant the end of the Lend-Lease programme and on August 27, 1945, just over four years after the first British cadets arrived in the US, all flying training in America on behalf of the RAF came to an end. Overall, 6,921 RAF cadets and 558 USAAF (US Army Air Force) cadets received their 'wings' at one of the six

BFTS schools.

Number 5 BFTS at Clewiston, Florida opened on 17 July 1941. The base at Riddle Field was constructed in record time and by mid-August, work had started on almost every building needed for the airfield to be functional. The buildings were in a diamond formation, with the ends of the diamond pointing north to south. All buildings were of concrete block construction on reinforced concrete foundations. The roofs were of heavy slate over felt and all exterior walls were painted white. The barrack block facilities were for cadets only; the 100 or so instructors, mechanics, and other technicians were housed in private facilities away from the airfield.



5BFTS Camp buildings – photographed in 1973

The instructors were American civilians, often young men in their 20s who were not much older than the cadets. There were 4 or 5 RAF officers stationed at Clewiston commanded by a Chief Flying Instructor (CFI). While Course 3 was at 5BFTS, the CFI was Wing Commander Kenneth Rampling. According to Rodney Scrase³, another Course 3 cadet, the Americans labelled Wing Cdr Rampling as a *'regular guy'* and Syd Burrows, the owner of the Colony Hotel in Miami, much frequented by the cadets, refers to the Wing Commander as a *'swell guy'* in a letter published in the newsletter, the Embry-Riddle Fly Paper.

The last course was Course 26. There were 201 RAF cadets on Courses 25 and 26

³ In 'Rodney Scrase DFC, Spitfire Saga' by Angus Mansfield. Spellmont Publishers, 2010

who did not finish their training due to closure of Riddle Field. Over the four years that 5BFTS was operational, there were 1,877 cadets who came to Clewiston for training (1,741 RAF cadets, 125 USAAF cadets and 11 US civilians who joined the RAF). Of these, 1,325 British cadets, and 109 US cadets graduated. Excluding the 201 cadets who were unable to finish the course when 5BFTS closed in August 1945 and 23 cadets who were killed during training, this gives an overall failure rate of about 13% (compared to the Arnold Scheme of nearly 50%). The twenty-three cadets who died are buried in the British Plot (managed by the War Graves Commission) in Arcadia.

A 1989 Clewiston Museum leaflet entitled 'A History of Clewiston' states:

"The 1940s brought a wonderful new dimension of life to us with the establishment of British Flying Training School #5 near Clewiston Riddle Field. Here American civilians under contract to the British government trained young Britons as pilots for the Royal Air Force. A few RAF officers were here to care for the military needs of the cadets. These people were all welcomed into our homes and lives; there were shared social events; deep friendships were formed between the townspeople and RAF people and these have not diminished with the years, fostered by transatlantic visits, reunions of cadets and instructors, and many individual visits amongst friends."

George's arrival in Clewiston

George and his fellow cadets arrived – a bit dusty – on October 2, 1941, at a rather rundown looking station called 'CLEWISTON'. They left the train, climbed into an open truck and were driven to Riddle Field *"standing like so many sheep!"*



Clewiston Station

*(5BFTS Association
Archives, Clewiston
Museum)*

These fifty grey-suited young men were destined to become Course 3 in No. 5 British Flying Training School (5BFTS). Course 3 was known as the ‘University Flight’ because all fifty cadets came from the University Air Squadrons of the Universities of Edinburgh, Oxford, and Cambridge.

George was one of 13 cadets from Edinburgh; the others were:

- J V Stuart-Duncan
- B A Arterton (the only cadet from Edinburgh not to qualify as a pilot)
- A M Michie
- N D MacKertish
- R D E Richardson
- B B Cooper
- W A Lindsay
- K MacVicar
- J Penman
- I A C Blue (known as ‘Jock Blue’)
- A W Manson (known as ‘Sandy’ Manson)
- D F Wilson

Course 3 was the first course to undertake all their training at Clewiston; Courses 1 and 2 had done their primary training at Carlstrom before coming to Clewiston for their basic training and graduation.

As George and his colleagues arrived in Clewiston, they noticed a newspaper headline which put Clewiston right in the centre of a hurricane named ‘Annie’. They were a bit worried, especially when the cadets found the airfield (Riddle Field) was almost without any aircraft as they had been moved north for safety! The hurricane was predicted to strike on the morning of October 6, 1941.

“Judging by wireless reports, Miami has mobilized her rescue, ambulance and police services as a precaution”⁴.

The cadets only experience of hurricanes was from the cinema, and they were expecting something rather spectacular. Fortunately for Clewiston, the hurricane moved north (slamming into Tallahassee), and all they had in Clewiston was a really bad storm, which did no harm. In fact, the Edinburgh cadets felt they had experienced much stronger winds in Scotland! Some of the aircraft, however, had been flown to Tallahassee, 350 miles away, to avoid ‘Annie’ and ended up in the middle of the hurricane! Fortunately, no damage was done to these aircraft, but it took three days to

⁴ From a letter George wrote to a friend in Edinburgh dated October 5, 1941.

get them back to Riddle Field. This delayed the start of the flying course, which had been due to start on October 6. In the end, George's first flying lesson was on October 9 in a dual control biplane, the Stearman PT-17. He was in the air for 35 minutes learning about the controls and how to fly straight and level!

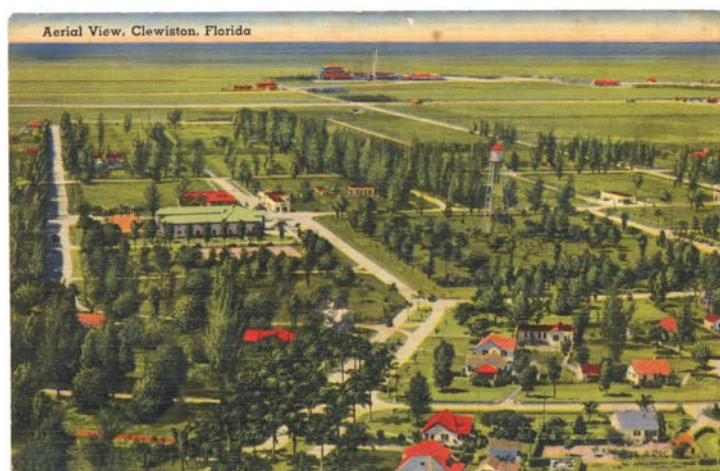
In spite of being a bit disappointed with the 'hurricane', later thunder and lightning storms, especially the lightning, were most impressive and George took many photos. He also remembers very warm nights when they were night flying and sleeping in the open wearing only light flying overalls.



1942

The cadets' arrival was reported by The Clewiston News (Friday, October 3, 1941) under the front-page headline, "*Fifty more cadets arrive at Air School*". The newspaper reported that the cadets were only "*a few days from the convoy which brought them from England*". The same edition reported that a Committee had been "*formed to plan entertainment for Air School cadets*" with the news item reporting that a committee composed of representatives of the various organisations of the community would be planning entertainment and recreation for the British cadets stationed at the Riddle-McKay Aero College. The Baptist minister was planning a fish fry on the Saturday in the church grounds. George wrote to Ian Campbell, his friend from Edinburgh, on October 5, 1941:

"We were entertained last night to a 'Fish-fry' during which one gambolled with, and without, the fair sex and ate fish and drank coffee. Quite a diverting way to pass an evening."



Picture Postcard of Clewiston FL, 1941



Course 3 – George is in the front row, second from left

(5BFTS Archive, Clewiston Museum)

The Clewiston News item about entertainment and recreation also noted that plans were being made to take as many of the ‘boys’ as possible to the [American] football game between Jupiter and the Clewiston Tigers that evening (Friday, October 3, 1941) to which they would be admitted free. The following week (Friday, October 10), the paper noted that Tigers had defeated Jupiter by 53 to 20, and also reported that, “*during the half, the crowd was entertained by a demonstration of English⁵ rugby football by a group of cadets from Riddle-McKay field.*”

George remembered going to this game and in an audiotape made in 1974, recalled that “*it was rather a funny sort of game*”. He also recalled the half time ‘pitch invasion’ when some of the RAF cadets gave a “*rough and ready demonstration, with the accent on rough, of British rugby*”. George comments that he imagines the

⁵ Note the use of the term ‘English’ by The Clewiston News, and George’s description of the game as British. George and another 12 members of Course 3 were Scots!

American public were “*astonished*”! They couldn’t understand why “*we didn’t wear protective clothing and [why we] seemed to sit on each other*”.



Edinburgh University Contingent - First Day of Course

The Camp

When George and the other Course 3 cadets arrived in October 1941, the conditions at the field were rather primitive. There was no swimming pool, no soda fountain or a ground school building. George remembers, “*having navigation lessons in the Mess Hall. During the time we were there, the new Ground School was opened, and it was luxurious in comparison with the room we had used*”.



Camp in October 1941

Swimming pool under construction

Although facilities were still being built when the cadets of Course 3 arrived, George felt that these were the best quarters that he had had up to this point in the RAF. The cadets sat down to meals, the tables had tablecloths and they were waited on.

Alastair Michie, another Edinburgh cadet, described the camp and dining room in 'Wings over Florida'⁶, *"All the billets and the dining room had just been completed and the barren land around us was enhanced by the planting of young palm trees kept in place by stakes and cables. We were fed in the immaculate new dining hall by coloured staff in crisp white cotton jackets. We were introduced to iced lemon tea, hot cakes, and maple syrup jostling on our plates with bacon and eggs"*.

George remembers that food was plentiful with lots of fruit and no rationing, that cornflakes came in individual packets (not available in the UK at this time) and that he acquired a liking for ice-cold tea with ice and lemon. In Miami, they went to seafood restaurants and frequently ate hamburgers (remembered by George, writing in 1976, as *"being very good and better than those currently available in the UK – how ever hard we try!"*)

There were just eight cadets to a room sleeping in bunk beds with reading lamps, a radio and two large desks. George had a top bunk with Bill Cooper underneath. The showers and wash hand basins were separated from the living quarters by a wall forming a 'room within a room'. George remembers that he shared the hut with other Edinburgh cadets including, in addition to Bill, Sandy Manson Johnny Penman and Ken MacVicar. George could recall the thrill they got when they tuned in to London, and the BBC Overseas Service, and heard the strokes of 'Big Ben' (the bell that climes the quarter hours housed in Elizabeth Tower⁷ at the north end of the Palace of Westminster, the home of the UK Parliament). The only domestic type of work they had to do was to clean the billets, which were inspected by the RAF CO (Commanding Officer) once a week.



Photograph on www.5bfts.org.uk
Provided by Robert Monk (Co 3)



Inside George's hut

⁶ Largent Willard, "RAF Wings Over Florida: Memories of World War II air cadets" (2000) Purdue University Press e-books, West Lafayette, Indiana.

⁷ The tower housing 'Big Ben' is now officially known as the Elizabeth Tower, renamed to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2012 (prior to this, it was known simply as the Clock Tower).

Two tennis courts, a volleyball court and the swimming pool were completed shortly after George's arrival with the soda fountain and recreation room being finished just before he left. The whole of the camp was surrounded and intersected by palm-lined avenues (the cadets were most impressed by the planting of 'instant' full-sized palm trees). Until the soda fountain and recreation room were ready, a mobile shop visited the camp; the cadets were able to buy fruit, candy, etc. George often bought bananas, a favourite of his, which were completely unobtainable in the UK.

The cadets bought Sunday newspapers "*more for the oddity features than for anything else – it wasn't so much a newspaper but a bundle of journals*" according to George, and probably more akin to our Sunday newspapers today with their many different sections rather than the wartime British newspapers.



Inside George's hut – photograph taken in 1973 by unknown photographer



George by swimming pool



George sitting in a Flying Fortress



Camp 1941



View of swimming pool 1941



L-R: Bill Cooper, Ken MacVicar and George wearing flying overalls

There was virtually no mixing between the Courses although Courses 1, 2 4 and 5 overlapped with Course 3. The base was very rough and ready in those early days with a lack of organisation and social contact. The cadets had to make their own leisure activities and the University groups kept very much to themselves. As far as the Scottish contingent was concerned, they had mostly come from Presbyterian homes with a very strict upbringing. George said in 1976, that, *“by today’s standards, we were astonishingly very immature, and yet with this immaturity, we seemed to have a seriousness which is perhaps lacking today. Of course, we were at war and this did provide a constant purpose to a young man’s life”*.

First Impressions

In a letter to Ian Campbell (George's friend in Edinburgh), written on October 5, 1941, George wrote:

“There is little need to tell you of the differences out here as compared with Britain. Lack of blackout – cars on the right-hand side of the road, no lack of food, plenty of butter, jam and sugar, heaps of fruit, & unprecedented occasions for receiving sunburn. There are also several gallons of sweat per hour, which pours off each one of us.

We are troubled here by mosquitos, but luckily have netting on our windows, so after a mass-extermination of all those who have got in via the door, we can usually get to sleep quite easily. This is necessary, as breakfast is at 5.40am. Think that one over. There are also many snakes round about here, the rattlesnake being the deadliest.

Motoring here is ridiculously cheap as compared with Britain. Petrol is only 1/- [5p] the gallon⁸, while the tax is just over £1 per year. One peculiarity of cars is that number-plates are changed each year.”

In a letter written to his sister, Kathleen, a few days later, George remarks about the radio programmes:

“In the middle of a very serious concert or even in the midst of an important news bulletin, a voice usually pops up advising you to shop at ‘Ponkum’s Shoe Shop’ or to try ‘Shavewell Shaving Soap’. This is quite genuine, and the jokes about it in Britain are not exaggerated. But one thing in this country’s favour re broadcasting, is the variety and amount of different programmes.

And you should see my pyjamas, or ‘pajamas’ as they are spelt here. A very nice light green hue is the colour, with fancy belts and girdles. And my socks. Alternate white, blue and maroon strips make them very dashing”

And later, on December 10, George tells Kathleen; *“The oranges here are now ripening nicely on the trees. Did you know that all the oranges that you eat have colour added to make them look ripe? But this will not be necessary in Florida, as they are colouring themselves very nicely.”*

⁸ There are 1.2 US gallons in a UK gallon

Hospitality and Entertainment

From a Clewiston Inn publicity brochure (1989):

“World War II brought the Inn British guests when Royal Air Force cadets, who were training at nearby Riddle Field, often congregated at the Inn to play piano, sing and socialize with their American hosts.”



Clewiston Inn (Photograph taken in 1989)

George doesn't actually remember a great deal about Clewiston itself. This may be because Course 3 was one of the early courses and outside entertainment wasn't as well organised as it was later on. In spite of the claim in the Clewiston Inn publicity brochure, George had no recollection of ever going inside the Inn! This might be because only officers were allowed in the bar; the cadets therefore didn't qualify for admittance.

George, however, did remember going to a bowling alley, the A and B Bowling Alley, in Clewiston (10-pin and duck pin bowling at 10c a line according to their advert in *The Clewiston News*, October 24, 1941). He also remembered a shop in the centre of the town (which may have been the ice-cream parlor), which was located near the newly built Dixie Crystal Theater where George recalled that he saw the movie, 'The Maltese Falcon'.

George also recalled two ladies from Clewiston, who either came from England or had strong English connections, entertaining the cadets during the evening after a barbeque or picnic. They lived in a lovely house, although the cadets *“were surprised that it was made of wood, something that we were not used to”*.



*Dixie Crystal Theater – Built 1941
Picture in Flypaper, December 25, 1942*

Dixie Crystal Theater (also known as Clewiston Theater) in 2012. Minimally altered since it was built in 1941, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

The first weekend that George was in Clewiston, a motorcade drew up and the cadets were told that anyone who wanted to spend a weekend with a family from Fort Myers should join the queue. Four of the cadets from Edinburgh (Bill Cooper, Sandy Manson, Johnny Penman and George⁹) were picked up by Mr Ed Simpson¹⁰, in what seemed to George to be an enormous car. Ed took them to his home in Stella Street, Fort Myers, to meet his wife, Ruth, and daughters, Laura (then aged 14), Mary-Lou (11) and Marion (7 or 8)¹¹. From then until the end of the course, one or more of these four cadets (and often all four) would spend most weekends, as well as Thanksgiving (with turkey and all the trimmings) and Christmas with the Simpsons. The cadets stayed in a flat above the Simpson's garage, they were fed and entertained – and, as George said, “*nobody could have been kinder*”. George remembered that the Simpson family took them to other parts of Florida, such as Tampa, Sarasota and Bradenville, and he recalled several visits to the beach and shopping in Fort Myers. One day, Ed took them to lunch with one of the Associations, maybe the Elks.

The cadets were very grateful for the hospitality. George wrote to his sister, Kathleen, that they got \$20-\$25 a fortnight which worked out at £2/10/0d a week (£2.50). Although that may seem quite a lot, “*the cost of living is pretty high here, and, for example a hair cut costs the equivalent of 2/6d (12½p) which is scandalous*”. Rodney Scrase, another Course 3 cadet says in his book, *Spitfire Saga*¹², that “*they [the cadets] did not get much money so they were so grateful to the families for their hospitality*”.

⁹ Bill and Sandy were later killed in action. Bill was lost sometime before Christmas 1942 (he went out on a training anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay and did not return)

¹⁰ Ed Simpson was later to become Mayor of the City of Fort Myers (1960-1962)

¹¹ Mary-Lou died during the 1960s. Laura became Laura Anderson and died in 2009. Marion became Marion Simpson Hines.

¹² In Rodney Scrase DFC, *Spitfire Saga* by Angus Mansfield. Spellmont Publishers, 2010



L-R: Johnny Penman, Sandy Manson, Bill Cooper and George

The kindness that Bill, Sandy, Johnny and George received in 1941-1942 was only equalled by the kindness that George, Wendy (his wife) and Louise (his younger daughter) received in 1973 when, with 15 other ex-cadets (from a variety of Courses) and their families, they went on a reunion visit to Florida. The Simpsons would not hear of George, Wendy and Louise staying in an hotel and so they stayed with the Simpsons in Fort Myers, with Laura and her husband, Duane¹³, in Coconut Grove, Miami, and at their holiday home on Captiva Island. George said on his return that, *“It was a wonderful trip”*.

The cadets were free from lunchtime on Saturday and all day Sunday. If George and his friends didn't go to the Simpsons, they visited Miami and West Palm Beach. They often hitchhiked to Fort Myers (although Ed always brought them home) and to and from Miami. Hitchhiking caused no problems, at least for the first few months. America was not in the War, and so, although the cadets could wear any civilian clothes when they left the camp, they often wore their grey suits as these were as recognisable as their uniforms, and everyone in Florida knew they were in the RAF. One lift that George particularly remembered was from some people who lived near Clewiston. The trip seemed to be taking a very long time, and progress towards Clewiston was slow. After a while, the driver apologised for the slow trip but said that he and his wife were so enjoying hearing the cadets' Scottish accents!

The only thing that troubled the British cadets was the way that Negroes were treated. *“The young workers on the airfield were very helpful but poor, and occasionally they would accept tips or items of clothing. The Americans, however, treated them with disdain”*¹⁴. George recalled that the buses were segregated with the black people

¹³ Duane Anderson died in 2002 and his wife, Laura, in 2009.

¹⁴ In Rodney Scrase DFC, *Spitfire Saga* by Angus Mansfield. Spellmont Publishers, 2010

having to sit at the rear. He wrote in 1974, *“We considered ourselves as very liberal people being British and also being students, so we did a very stupid thing which was going to sit with the Blacks. The poor Negroes then had to get up and sit somewhere else which is not what we intended at all so our gesture misfired. We soon realised our mistake, but this was a bit of a shock to 19 and 20 year olds from Britain”*.

In contrast, George wrote that he had seen Ruth Simpson, sitting in the front passenger seat of their car when it was parked in front of the Riddle Field control tower, happily chatting through the open window to the black driver of a bus, which had returned other cadets to the camp. The bus driver was leaning casually on the car. The Simpsons had a black maid at their home in Fort Myers who was well treated, and when he was Mayor of the City of Fort Myers between 1960 and 1962, Ed Simpson was known to be *“good to the blacks”*. Later, Ed was very friendly with his black driver although it is unlikely that he would have been able to show such friendship in 1941.

The change in the way Black people were treated in Florida was one of the biggest changes George noticed when he visited in 1973.

America declares War

In December 1941, the Japanese raided Pearl Harbor and the Americans entered the war.

The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, and George wrote to his sister (Kathleen), *“After ten weeks of training in a land of peace, once again we are in a country that is at war, and, judging by the attitude of the American people, a very serious war it is too. Metal goods and other manufactured goods are likely to become scarce, but food will always be plentiful on this continent.”*

In 1975, George said (in a tape recorded for Lamar Philpot of Bradenton who was writing a history of 5BFTS) that, *“I remember hearing about Pearl Harbor at the Simpsons’ house in Fort Myers so it must have been a week-end [December 7, 1941, was a Sunday]. The entry of the USA into the war had three effects straight away. The first, and most serious, was the sinking of merchant ships off the coast of Florida. It must have been an absolute Godsend for the German submarines to see ships silhouetted against the amazing lights over West Palm Beach, etc. The second was the difficulty we now had in getting lifts (because there was [now] competition from American service men) and the third was that we had parades on the base when uniforms were compulsory and we could now also wear uniform off the base. Air Force Blue was made of thick woollen material and ‘jolly hot’. Tropical kit was not issued to us. We tried to wear uniforms to counteract the difficulties of getting lifts but [with limited] success as our grey suits were already recognised as ‘uniform’, but it was nice being able to show off our uniform in the towns instead of our grey suits”*

In Spitfire Saga, Rodney Scrase says that: *“It was at this time that the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor took place. We had been out for the day, and on returning to camp*

realised that something exceptional was taking place. Armed people, their equivalent of Dad's Army¹⁵, surrounded the camp. We had gone off for the weekend without identity documents and each had to be vetted back into camp by RAF personnel".

In a letter to Ian Campbell (dated December 15), George writes, "*The loss of the 'Prince of Wales' and the 'Repulse' was a bit of a blow which struck this continent pretty hard, and especially us, for we felt quite a brotherly love for the former, as it was in our convoy coming over here.*"

After Pearl Harbor, hitchhiking became harder as the RAF cadets, who could now wear their uniform outside the camp, were competing for lifts with American service personnel. Usually, however, the RAF cadets continued to wear civilian clothes. Lifts did not become impossible just a bit more time consuming. George remembers one lift in particular. One Sunday evening, he and his friends were sitting on the side of a road somewhere along the Tamiami Trail wondering if they would ever get back to Clewiston when a police patrol car pulled up and offered them a lift. When the patrol car reached the end of the beat, the cadets waited in the car until the next police patrol car turned up. They were then handed over and taken to their destination in Fort Myers; as George said, "*a real bit of cooperation which was much appreciated by us*".

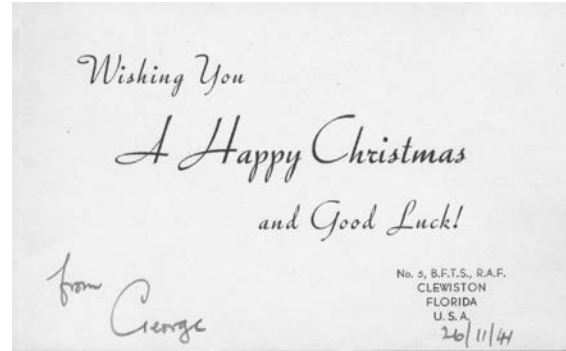


Edinburgh Cadets D F Wilson and B B Cooper waiting for a lift on the Tamiami Trail March 1942

Christmas 1941

George and his friends were in Fort Myers on Christmas Day 1941. George remembered it being very warm with temperatures up to 95°F.

¹⁵ Dad's Army is the name of a BBC television comedy show about the exploits of a Home Guard Unit



George on the beach at Fort Myers: December 1941



*View from the Simpsons' window.
Fort Myers: December 1941*



Near Fort Myers

Visiting Miami Beach

In Miami, George and his fellow cadets invariably stayed at the Colony Hotel in Miami Beach, which was run by a man called Syd Burrows from Yorkshire. He let the cadets have any unreserved rooms for a very small sum (no more than a dollar a night

and possibly a lot less), and in high season, put up camp beds in the basement (or garage) so they had somewhere to stay. George recalled staying in the Bridal Suite one weekend with his friend Bill Cooper and as he said, “*this was, to us, the height of luxury*”. There were many RAF cadets in the early days with cause to be grateful to Syd Burrows and The Colony Hotel.

The camp newsletter, the ‘Embry-Riddle Fly Paper’, often mentioned events in Miami and cadets visiting the city, such as on November 26, when George, along with Sandy, Johnny and Bill were amongst 19 cadets staying at the Colony with Syd Burrows, and on December 3, when George and about half the Scottish contingent of Course 3 stayed there. On January 29, 1942, it includes a letter from Syd reporting on a long weekend stay at the Colony (Friday afternoon to Sunday evening with a Saturday evening show and dance) enjoyed by about 55 cadets and eight or nine instructors and their families. Syd managed to find everyone accommodation (some in the hotel next door, which he obtained at a ‘good rate’). More than half the cadets attended the Saturday dance, most with beautiful girls on their arms. The weather was glorious and to top it all, a truck was organised to take the cadets back to Clewiston – what smiles! Each cadet contributed 50c to defray expenses. The names of those there that weekend included George and eight of his fellow Scots.

Syd Burrows died in the early 1970s, but the Art Deco hotel is still there and is now recognised as a symbol of South Beach, having set the standard for hospitality and style since 1935. The hotel is set between Collins Avenue and Ocean Drive; in 1941, it was possible to walk out of the hotel, cross Ocean Drive and be on the beach. George suspects that they spent quite a bit of time on the beach as the water “*was beautifully warm and it was a lovely beach*”.

With reference to this beach, George wrote to Ian Campbell on 15 December, 1941, that people were “*quite astonished to see four British cadets making a sandcastle and running a [tennis] ball down a path on it, over bridges and through tunnels!*” In 1974, George reflected that he thinks the cadets made these sandcastles to amaze, and probably amuse, the Americans who were there. He remarked to Ian Campbell that American “*children waste*” the beach as they “*do nothing with the glorious, clean sand*”.

George was in Miami on December 31, 1941, and saw the New Year in at midnight whilst bathing in the Atlantic Ocean on Miami Beach. “*The water was beautifully warm*”.

Apart from the beach, George had few memories of Miami apart from visiting the Post office and some of the main shops, although when he returned in 1973, he was unable to recognise any of the shops!



*Colony Hotel, Miami Beach
March 1942*



*Ocean Drive from Colony Hotel, Miami Beach.
January 1942*

Visiting West Palm Beach and Palm Beach

West Palm Beach and Palm Beach were very pro-British and there were as many Union Jacks in the town as Stars and Stripes. In February 1942, four of the cadets were detailed to attend a charity ball there (expenses paid and overnight accommodation provided). This was organised by the American Red Cross at the luxurious Everglades Club on Palm Beach and the highlight of the evening was when the RAF cadets had to parade across the stage carrying Union Jacks while four American cadets, or service men, carried the Stars and Stripes. George recalls, “*Everyone was most excited about the whole thing*”.



West Palm Beach seen from Palm Beach 1942



*Tennis Courts, Everglades Club
Palm Beach. February 1942*

18th February 1942

TO: THE OFFICER COMMANDING, No 5 BPTS, Clewiston, USA.

From: 1438091 L.A.C. BICKET P.
 1553415 L.A.C. WILSON D.F.
 1554306 L.A.C. COOPER B.B.
 134465 L.A.C. HOGARTH G.

Sir,

We have the honor to report that the expenses for each of the above-mentioned personnel of No 5 BPTS, Clewiston, as a result of the Charity Ball held at the Everglades Club, Palm Beach on the 9th-10th February 1942 amounted to \$2.36 for bus fares and \$0.60 for tips, a total of \$2.96 each.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servants,
 P. M. Bicket L.A.C.
 D. F. Wilson L.A.C.
 George Bicket L.A.C.
 B. B. Cooper L.A.C.

Expense claim for the ball

This claim was written by George and signed by the cadets who attended

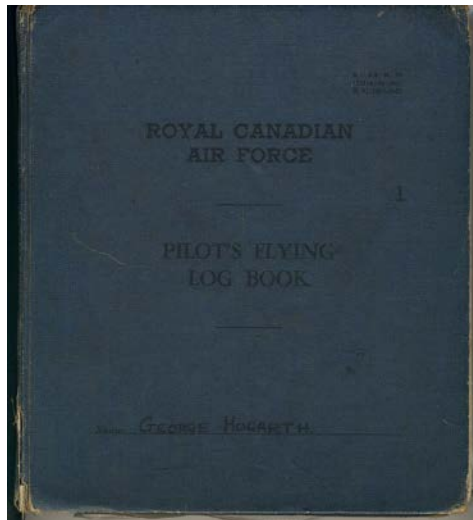
LEARNING TO FLY



George - LAC (Leading Aircraftman) 1941

Of course, the primary reason for being in Florida was to learn to fly!

All flights were recorded in the cadet's personal Log Book. In Clewiston, the cadets used Log Books provided by the Royal Canadian Air Force. George continued to use his until it was full even after returning to the UK.



The cadets were divided into two groups of twenty-five. The first group had flying lessons during the morning, while the second group had lectures. The changeover took place at lunchtime. Ground School initially took place in the canteen, but while Course 3 was at Clewiston, the new Ground School opened which was luxurious by comparison with the canteen.

George (and the other cadets) enjoyed flying in America. George said, *“I don’t think there is any doubt about that. There was no strain and no fear attached to it. There was no danger, except the danger of being up in the air, which was not the element that man was supposed to be in or he would have been given wings!”*

George never had an engine failure in Florida; probably others did although he couldn’t recall any from his time there. George did, however, experience engine failure later whilst flying an Oxford trainer in 1942 when he came down in a cornfield in Roxburghshire in the south of Scotland and *“it wasn’t nice, not nice at all”*. George always had a fear of losing both engines at once; but engine failure happened only twice more in his flying career. On both occasions, he was flying a Mosquito and on the first occasion, he ‘feathered’¹⁶ the engine and nothing serious happened, but the second resulted in a crash landing (more detail in Chapter 3).

The only auxiliary field Course 3 used for flying was Moorhaven Field, which had baby alligators round the field. The cadets used to catch the babies and tickle their tummies and George noted that the baby alligators enjoyed that enormously although he suspected that no cadet would have tickled the tummy of a full sized alligator!

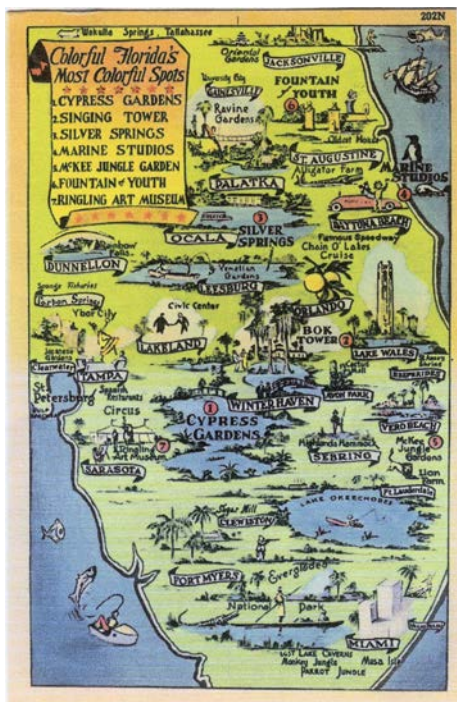
¹⁶ Some aircraft had two ‘feathering’ buttons, one for each engine. One press of the button ‘feathered’ the engine, that is, stopped the engine completely then a second press would start the engine up again. The left hand button would ‘feather’ the port engine and the right hand one, the starboard engine. Pilots always had a fear of stopping one side and pressing the button on the other side by mistake to restart, thus ending up with no engines!

During one early flight with Mr Toughton (George's first instructor), Mr Toughton's helmet flew off and George was asked to land so that it could be retrieved. There is no official note of this in George's Log Book and so the landing field is unknown, but is likely to have been close to Clewiston as this was during the first 10 days of flying.



George studying navigation at Clewiston

They learnt to navigate by roads and waterways, and, of course, Lake Okeechobee, which was very useful and helped the cadets find their way back to Clewiston. After returning to the UK, George had to learn to navigate again; in the UK, navigation wasn't done by using roads at all, but almost exclusively by railways as British roads bend and twist. In Europe, however, navigation used roads again, as roads in Europe tended to be like American ones – dead straight for many miles. European canals were also very good to follow.



Florida postcard – bought by George in 1941

The Cadets' training started with Primary Training using a PT-17 Stearman. Cadets in early courses then had a period on a Basic Trainer BT-13A (the Vultee) followed by Advanced Training on an AT-6A (Harvard). From Course 10 onwards, the Vultee was dropped.

In another letter to Ian Campbell, written on 15 December, 1941, George writes:

“After ten weeks of primary flying in biplanes we have now passed into larger, more powerful monoplanes ...they have such things as flaps and tabs to play with, as well as a plentiful supply of interesting instruments.

...the primary trainers are Stearmans, with a cruising speed of 90 mph. They are very safe planes to fly, and, if left alone, will soon come out of any unnatural position. The Basic Trainer monoplanes are Vultee Yales with a cruising speed of about 135mph. They are reputed to be the most dangerous training aeroplanes in the world.

After five weeks, or forty hours, on the Yales, we go on to the Advanced Trainers – the Harvard, cruising speed of 150 mph, and retractable undercarriage and so on. They are much easier to fly than the Yales, and the training time, also of forty hours, is mainly spent in formation flying and in navigational cross-country flights. After which comes, we hope, Britain.”



Primary Training

The Primary trainer was the PT-17 (Stearman) biplane, with one instructor and four cadets assigned to each aircraft. It was very simple to fly and was good for aerobatics and spinning, and according to George, “a delight to fly”. It was virtually indestructible – unless someone landed one on top of another one - as one of George’s fellow cadets did!



Stearman Primary Training Aircraft - George is standing on the left with J Penman on the right

The flying instructors were American civilians, always addressed as 'Mr'. George's first instructor for the PT-17 was Mr J H Toughton (October 9 to October 18) who was *"very good fun to fly with and a good instructor"*. Then came Mr W K (Keene) Langhorne (October 20 to November 1), Mr H Carruthers (November 5 to November 28) and finally, Mr L E (Lou) Place. Two Progress Checks took place, the first on November 10 with Mr Fred S Perry and the second on December 7 with Mr T Teate.

When asked how he felt when taking his first trip in the PT-17, George recalled, *"I suppose I was a bit frightened when taking my first trip in the PT-17; frightened that it would be difficult to fly and that I would never become a pilot. In the end, the landing was more difficult than the take-off. The take-off was tricky because of the swing and the immediate result from touching the rudder controls which could make you take off in a serious spin, but on the whole, the landing was more difficult because of the problem of drift which was one of the most difficult things to understand and correct. Fortunately, having understood it, it then became automatic for the rest of my flying career"*.

George's first flight was on October 9, when he was in the air for 35 minutes practising the effects of controls and how to fly straight and level. After 2 hours 10 minutes instruction, he was able to climb, glide, turn, spin, stall and taxi and after a further hour, learnt to take-off and land.

George did his first solo flight, lasting 23 minutes, on October 27 after nine hours dual instruction. This was about average; the quickest time taken was about eight hours, and the longest about eleven hours. He did Slow Rolls (the first aerobatic) after twenty-nine hours, which was followed by Spins, Loops, Stalls, and the advanced coordination exercises of Lazy 8's and Chandelles (which was the first part of a roll and then, when upside down, the pilot made the plane turn over). He took off and landed into the wind, and practised forced landings. George recalled that the cadets got a great kick out of aerobatics, particularly, although it wasn't strictly an aerobatic manoeuvre, spinning the PT, which was absolutely marvellous. *"The sensation of going into a spin and the ease of getting out of it was absolutely out of this world!"*

In November, George started to do practical navigation exercises. With Mr Carruthers as his instructor, he flew over La Belle and Lakeport on November 20, Palmdale and

Brighton on November 21, and solo, he flew over Fort Myers the following day. This flight took one hour and ten minutes.

On December 2, George undertook night flying for the first time. He spent 55 minutes with his instructor (Mr Place) and practised six landings. On the following night, he flew solo for three-quarters of an hour and successfully achieved four landings. Night flying was to become a very important part of his RAF career. Just over two months after his first night flight, on February 16, George flew an AT-6 at night for the first time accompanied by his instructor Mr H J Lehman. George did some very good dual landings, and just before Mr Lehman allowed George to go solo later than night, he remarked that George's landing was good and asked George if he had thought of becoming a night fighter. George hadn't, but quickly decided that it would be a good idea and asked to train as a night fighter when he left Clewiston. He never regretted that decision.

YEAR		AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT			
1941		Type	No.				DAY		NIGHT	
MONTH	DATE					DUAL (1)	PILOT (2)	DUAL (3)	PILOT (4)	
						TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD				
12	1	STEARMAN PT-17	25	SELF		29.30	20.46			
12	2	PT-17	34	MR PLACE, L.E.	SELF		1.46			
					24. NAVIGATION					
					25. NIGHT FLYING (6 LANDINGS)			.55		
12	2	PT-17	34	SELF						
					25. NIGHT FLYING (4 LANDINGS)				.45	
12	3	PT-17	17	SELF			1.01			
12	3	PT-17	30	SELF						
					18. ACROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, ROLL-OFFS)					
					7. COORDINATION EX. (S-TURNS, 8'S)					
					8. STALLS					
					9. SPINS					
					17. ADVANCED COORDINATION (LAZY 8'S, CHANDELLES)			1.02		
12	3	PT-17	30	SELF						
					8. STALLS					
					17. ADVANCED COORDINATION (LAZY 8'S, CHANDELLES)					
					18. ACROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, ROLL-OFFS)			1.02		
12	4	PT-17	34	MR PLACE, L.E.	SELF					
					13. FORCED LANDING					
					18. ACROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, HALF ROLLS, ROLL-OFFS)					
					22. INSTRUMENT FLYING		1.10			
12	4	PT-17	5	SELF					.35	
					18. ACROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, ROLL-OFFS)					
12	5	PT-17	19	SELF			2.31			
					24. NAVIGATION					
12	6	PT-17	30	SELF					.59	
					9. SPINS					
					18. ACROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, HALF ROLLS)					
GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)]						30.40	29.42	.55	.45	
61 Hrs. 22 Mins.						TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD				

Page from George's Log Book showing Primary Training record from December 1 to 6, 1941

1941		AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	DAY		NIGHT	
MONTH	DATE	Type	No.				DUAL (1)	PILOT (2)	DUAL (3)	PILOT (4)
12	8									
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD							34-06	34-17	.55	.45
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD							34-06	34-17	.55	.45

PRIMARY TRAINING

SUMMARY FOR
UNIT No. 6, 875 CLEWISTON
DATE December 8th 1941
SIGNATURE George Hogarth, L.A.C.

1 STEARNS

W/CDR
C.F.I. No. 5 B.F.T.S.

Summary of Primary Training

All fifty of the cadets successfully completed their Primary work and moved on to begin their Basic Training. This was something of a record and was reported in The Clewiston News on Friday, December 12, 1941.



This class of fifty cadets now beginning their basic training have established a record for RAF training in the United States. While the percentage has been consistently high for numbers completing courses, most of those who are rejected fail during the primary work. So far as is known this is the first class which has completed primary work with all fifty members still on hand to begin basic training. The cadets are proud of this record and are striving now to complete their basic and advanced work and all receive their wings without a single rejection.

“This class of fifty cadets now beginning their basic training have established a record for RAF training in the United States. While the percentage has been consistently high for numbers completing courses, most of those who are rejected fail during the primary work. So far as is known, this is the first class which has completed primary work with all fifty members still on hand to begin basic training. The cadets are proud of this record and are striving now to complete their basic and advanced work and all receive their wings without a single rejection”.

Basic Training

On December 12, George had his first flight in a BT-13A Vultee accompanied by his instructor, Mr J F Reahard (“...a real gentleman. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed learning under him”), who remained as his instructor for the entire period spent flying the Vultee. George described Mr Reahard as a “real Southern gentleman, very nice, very polite, very quiet and a very cool and calm young man”. The Vultee, nicknamed the Yale by some cadets to match the name the RAF cadets used for the AT-6 (the Harvard), was a single winged aircraft, which could be was fearsome to fly. It had a reputation for turning over on the stall particularly near the ground so that, on landing, the pilot had to be very careful that their height was right, or the aircraft would drop a wing very suddenly. This aircraft did teach the cadets to be accurate pilots and George used it for aerobatics, cross-country, etc. He recalled that he didn’t worry about flying it at all.

Cross country flying took him, once again, over La Belle and Palmdale (for his first Instrument Flying Cross Country flying test on December 27) and on December 29, he flew over Fort Myers again, but this time included Punta Gorda in a flight lasting one hour and 25 minutes (his second Instrument Flying Cross Country flying test). The next day, a navigation exercise took him over Kenansville and Okeechobee. Later he flew over Dunnellon, Immokalee and Fort Myers again. George also practised night flying again and achieved 26 landings between January 16 and January 21.

YEAR		AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT				
MONTH	DATE	Type	No.				DAY	PILOT	NIGHT	PILOT	
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD							(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
							55.05	50.50	.65	.45	
1	8	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.35				
1	12	BT-13A	104	SELF		24. NAVIGATION (CLEWISTON - DUNNELLON)		2.10			
1	12	BT-13A	104	SELF		24. NAVIGATION (DUNNELLON - CLEWISTON)		1.30			
1	13	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.30				
1	13	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.32				
1	13	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.35				
						LINK TRAINING					
1	14	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.30				
1	14	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	23. INSTRUMENT FLYING (TAKEOFFS)	.23				
1	14	BT-13A	312	MR. R. MOEDERS	SELF	PROGRESS CHECK	.55				
1	15	BT-13A	312	SELF		24. CROSS-COUNTRY - NAVIGATION (CLEWISTON - IMMOKALEE)		.26			
1	15	BT-13A	312	SELF		24. NAVIGATION (IMMOKALEE - FORT MYERS - CLEWISTON)		.52			
1	15	BT-13A	369	SELF		16. STEEP TURNS					
						17. ADVANCED COORDINATION (LAZY 8's, CHANDELLES)					
						18. AEROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, LOOPS)	1.05				
1	16	BT-13A	119	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	25. NIGHT FLYING (4 LANDINGS)		.30			
1	16	BT-13A	119	SELF		25. NIGHT FLYING (3 LANDINGS)			.40		
						LINK TRAINER					
1	17	BT-13A	312	MR. J. F. REINHARD	SELF	25. NIGHT FLYING (3 LANDINGS)		.30			
1	17	BT-13A	312	SELF		25. NIGHT FLYING (5 LANDINGS)				1.00	
GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)]											
120 Hrs. 18 Mins.							TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD	59.05	56.53	1.55	2.25
							(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	

Page from George's Log Book showing Basic Training record from January 8 to 17, 1941

Basic SUMMARY FOR TRAINING - 1941		1	VULTURE BT-13A	24.59	22.36	1.50	5.15
UNIT	No. 5 B.F.S. Clewiston	AIRCRAFT	2				
DATE	22nd January 1941	TYPES	3				
SIGNATURE	George Hoagart		4				

George Hoagart / CDR
C.F.I. No 5 B.F.T.S.

Summary of Basic Training

- **Death of Roger Crosskey**

On January 20, 1942, one member of Course 3, Roger Crosskey, had a fatal crash during night flying training. This was the first fatal accident on Riddle Field. Roger is buried in the British Plot at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia.

Course 3 was coming to the end of their Basic Training when in the early hours of January 20, 1942, a group of students was practising circuits and bumps...landings and take offs. Others were having their final dual control exercises with instructors prior to flying solo. George had spent 20 minutes flying dual with Mr Reahard (undertaking one landing) and then flew solo for one hour 35 minutes (undertaking his second landing).

According to the Instructor, Charles W Bing, *“It was a beautiful night for flying. The weather was quite cool and it was as clear as a bell. The humidity was quite high which made it feel colder than it really was. [This meant that there was] the possibility of dangerous ground fog [which] would build up and settle in almost immediately”*. The Basic Flight Commander, Forrest H Jones, later explained that, *“At night, particularly in winter, there’s often a good chance for fog to develop quite suddenly”*, and it seems that this is what happened that morning.

At around 3am, the last few students were still practising night take-offs and landings and there were two in the air ready to land. One pilot was S R James, who had made his first landing under ideal conditions with excellent visibility and a light wind from the south. When he made his second take off, the conditions still seemed good, however, after take off, he *“looked back and saw the flare path disappearing as low fog rolled in”*. He landed safely, and later reported that he *“couldn’t see anything in the dense fog that rolled in out of nowhere. It formed a complete blanket over Riddle Field in just minutes”*.

The other pilot was Roger Crosskey. He was flying solo and it seems that he landed his Vultee on top of the bank of fog as he may have mistaken the fog for the ground. His aircraft stalled, his port (left) wing dropped and his engine cowling hit the ground. His landing gear was forced through the wings rupturing the fuel tanks. The aircraft then burst into flames. Roger died in his aircraft. Reflecting on the accident some thirty years later, George said that, *“what we didn’t like about the BT as I recall was the vicious ‘flick’ at the point of the stall. It was perfectly all right providing you had height, but absolutely negative when you were coming into land”*.¹⁷

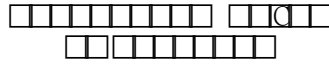
From late 1942, the Vultee was dropped from the training programme.

¹⁷ Accident Report. Available at www.5bfts.org.uk



Roger Crosskey

Course 3 photograph
October 1941



Advanced Training

After their spell flying the Vultee, the cadets moved on to their final aircraft - the AT-6A known as the Harvard¹⁸. This had more power than the primary trainer and had panels suitable for instrument and night flying. Mr H J Lehman became George's instructor for the whole period that he spent learning to fly the AT-6A. George recalled that this was a lovely aircraft, which had full radio, retractable undercarriage, real power and was great to fly. *"It was rather like flying a fighter plane, and the power and the speed gave an exhilarating feeling. As the RAF used the Harvard for advanced training, we felt that because we were now flying an aircraft used at home, we were nearly there!"*

George's Log Book shows that he now flew for longer periods, with one navigation exercise, which lasted two hours 5 minutes, taking him over Bartow and Vero Beach on February 13, and another, the following day, lasted two hours 28 minutes, when he flew over Tasmania, Babson Park, Melbourne and West Palm Beach. On March 3, he flew with another Course 3 cadet, P S Engelbach, as a passenger from Clewiston over Daytona to Dunnellon taking two hours 14 minutes for the trip, and then spent another hour and 13 minutes as a passenger while Engelbach piloted the aircraft from Dunnellon back to Clewiston. He did one navigation exercise at night on February 21, when he made one trip over Carlstrom and a second over Fort Myers. George's last flight at Clewiston was a solo flight on March 6 lasting 65 minutes practising forced landings, steep turns and aerobatics (slow rolls and half-rolls).

¹⁸ North American Aviation designed this plane. It was known as the AT-6 by USAAC and USAAF, as the SNJ by the US Navy and the Harvard by the RAF and other British Commonwealth Airforces. After 1962, US forces designated it the T-6 Texan.



Harvard trainers

YEAR 1942	AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	DAY		NIGHT	
	MONTH	DATE				Type	No.	DUAL (1)	PILOT (2)
					TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD	67.58	70.16	2.45	6.00
FEB	11	HARVARD			LINK TRAINER				
	12	AT-6A	208	MR. H. J. LEHMAN	SELF		.45		
	12	AT-6A	201	SELF	11. TAKE-OFFS (INTO WIND)				
					12. LANDINGS (INTO WIND)		.22		
	12	AT-6A	208	SELF	11. TAKE-OFFS (INTO WIND)				
					12. LANDINGS (INTO WIND)		1.02		
	12	AT-6A	208	SELF	11. TAKE-OFFS (INTO WIND)				
					12. LANDINGS (INTO WIND)				.28
	13	AT-6A	206	SELF	24. NAVIGATION (CLEWISTON - BARTON - VENO BEACH - CLEWISTON)		2.05		
	13	AT-6A	208	SELF	13. FORCED LANDINGS				
					17. CHANDELES, LAZY 8'S				
					18. AEROBATICS (LOOPS, SLOW ROLLS)		.57		
	14	AT-6A	208	MR. H. J. LEHMAN	SELF				
					23. INSTRUMENT FLYING				
					24. NAVIGATION (CLEWISTON - TASMANIA - BONSON BEACH - MELBORNE - WEST PALM BEACH - CLEWISTON)		2.28		
	16	AT-6A	211	SELF	13. FORCED LANDINGS				
					18. AEROBATICS (SLOW ROLLS, LOOPS)		1.02		
	16	AT-6A	208	MR. H. J. LEHMAN	SELF				.28
					25. NIGHT FLYING (3 LANDINGS)				
	16	AT-6A	212	SELF	25. NIGHT FLYING (1 LANDING)				1.12
GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)]						71.11	76.13	3.13	7.12
157 Hrs. 49 Mins.						(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD									

Page from George's Log Book showing Advanced Training record from February 11 to 16, 1941

ADVANCED				
SUMMARY FOR TRAINING				
UNIT	6075 CLEWISTON	AIRCRAFT	2	
DATE	6 th March 1942	TYPES	3	
SIGNATURE	C. G. H. H. H.		4	

1 Harvard AT-6

18.25 2839 1.13

Summary of Advanced Training



T-6 Texan designated as the AT-6 by the USAAC and USAAF and known to the RAF and those outside the US as the Harvard.

The aircraft in the picture, taken in 2014, is still flying and is owned and operated for training and pleasure flights by Stallion 51 of Kissimmee, Florida.

Link Training¹⁹

George had little memory of using the Link Trainer and his Log Book records just 15 hours total. Sessions lasted an hour with the first held on December 18. The Link Trainer was not installed in Clewiston until December 1941, by which time the cadets on Course 3 were able to fly and were well into their Basic Training.

¹⁹ The Link Trainer was a flight simulator produced between the early 1930s and early 1950s by Link Aviation Devices, Inc. and used during World War 2 as a key pilot training aid.



Link Trainer at Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre, Scotland – photograph taken 2013

Summary of Training

George's total flying hours in Clewiston (dual and solo flights) were 179 hours 17 minutes of which approximately 55% were solo flights.

Aircraft Type	Engine	Total flying hours (day and night)	Night flying hours	Number of models flown
Stearman PT 17	Continental	70 hours 3 minutes	1 hour 40 minutes	32
Vultee BT 13A	Pratt and Whitney	54 hours 40 minutes	7 hours 5 minutes	11
Harvard AT 6A	Pratt and Whitney	54 hours 34 minutes	7 hours 30 minutes	14

FLYING SUMMARY FOR TRAINING 1942		AIRCRAFT		TYPES	
UNIT 5 BPTS Clewiston		1	PT-17	2	BT-13A
DATE 18 March 1942		3	AT-6A	4	
SIGNATURE <i>George Hogarth</i>					
GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)]					
179 Hrs. 17 Mins.		TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD			
77.30	85.32	3.58	12.17		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		

Summary of all training hours in Log Book

Training exercises

George's logbook shows that he undertook 25 different training exercises. These exercises are numbered 1 to 26, but there is no record that George undertook exercise 19 (and there is no description of what exercise 19 was). Although many of the exercises were done in each section of the training, they became more difficult and flights tended to last longer as flying skills developed.

Mock Landings - The cadets had to do mock landings described by George as follows:

"...mock dead stick landings for which the instructors didn't give a lot of warning, but would point to a field and ask you to land. An undershoot would mean that you landed in the field in front of that intended; however, as all the fields were square, it was very difficult for the instructors to be precise as to which field he intended you to land in – that was the excuse used by the cadets anyway!"

Navigation Exercises - The longest flights were Navigation Exercises; the first, on December 5 was a solo flight in a PT-17 lasting 2 hours 31 minutes (this is the only navigation flight without a route noted). On January 10, George flew solo in a BT-13A from Clewiston to Dunnellon taking 2 hours 10 minutes with the return journey taking just 1 hour 30 minutes and later, on March 3 in an AT-6A and with P S Engelbach as a passenger, the same journey took two hours 14 minutes. The return trip, piloted by Engelbach with George as a passenger, again took less time, just 1 hour 13 minutes. The difference is likely to be because, as recorded on March 3, the outbound route went over Daytona and the inbound route was a direct flight. This is the only time George flew with another cadet as a passenger and on the return journey, the only time, George flew as a passenger to another cadet.

On February 14, a Navigation Exercise with George, flying dual in an AT-6A from Clewiston, flew over Tasmania, Babson Park, Melbourne, and West Palm Beach before returning to Clewiston. The flight took 2 hours 28 minutes.

A night navigation exercise was undertaken solo on February 21 flying from Clewiston to Carlstrom and back, then after landing and taking off again, flying from Clewiston to Fort Myers and back again. The whole exercise took 1 hour 40 minutes.

Formation Flying - Although a dual Formation Flying exercise took place on January 3 in the BT-13A (no details recorded), no further Formation Flying was practised until the end of Advanced Training when five flights are recorded. George flew in a formation of three aircraft (or "*ships*") for 45 minutes dual on February 27 and 28, 1 hour 10 minutes solo on February 28 and finally, two solo flights of 1 hour 10 minutes each on March 1.

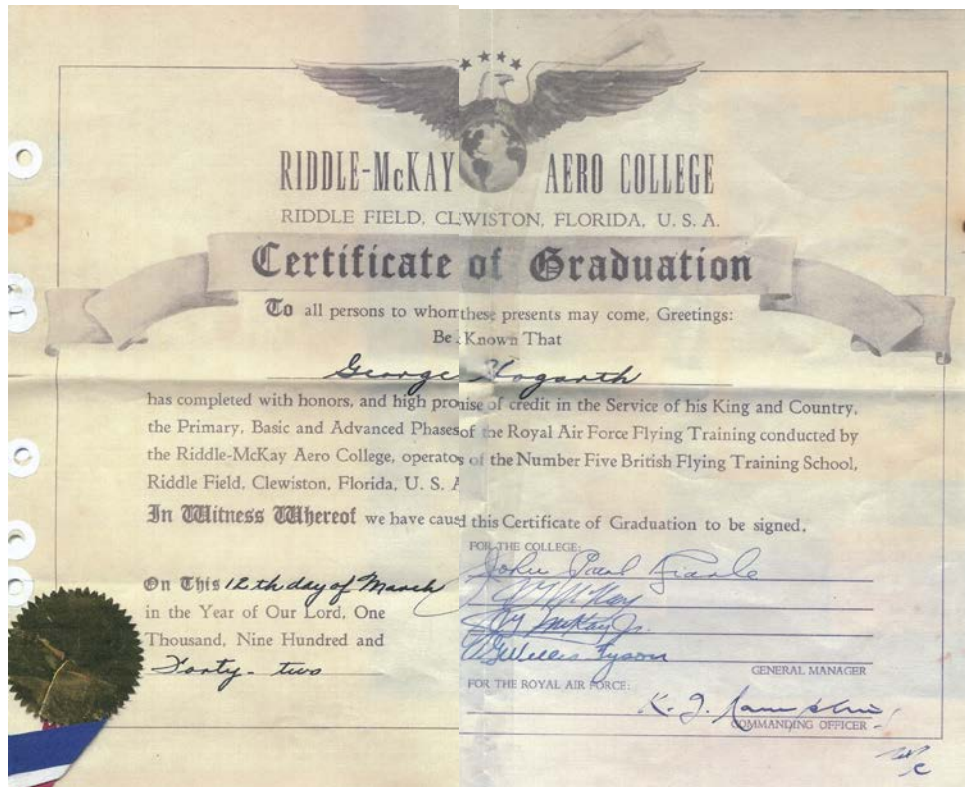
First and last - George's first flight at Clewiston, on October 9, 1941, flying PT-17 number 11 lasted just 35 minutes when he learnt the effect of the controls and how to fly straight and level. His final flight at Clewiston was on March 6, 1942, and lasted 1

hour and 5 minutes when, flying solo, he practised Forced Landings (with overshoot), Steep Turns and Aerobatics (slow rolls and half rolls) in an AT-6A number 211.

Number	Training Exercise	Primary	Basic	Advanced
1	Preliminary familiarisation		<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Effect of controls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Flying straight and level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Medium turns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Climbs and climbing turns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Glides and gliding turns	<input type="checkbox"/>		
7	Coordination (S-turns, 8s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Stalls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Spins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Taxiing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	Take-off (into wind)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Gliding approach and landing (into wind)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Forced landing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Slips			<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Low flying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Steep turns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Advanced coordination (Chandelles, Lazy 8s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Aerobatics (slow rolls, loops, half rolls)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Power approach and landing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Precautionary landing		<input type="checkbox"/>	
22	Slow flying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Instrument flying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Night Flying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Formation flying		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Graduation

On Graduation Day, March 12, 1942, Course 3 had a Wings Parade and flypast, but no Wings Parade party, as these were not organised then. Johnny Penman, Bill Cooper, Sandy Manson and George held their own celebration, which George thought was probably in Miami, with the Simpson family.



As well as their graduation certificate, the cadets were all presented with a wallet made from alligator skin by Riddle McKay Aero College.





Graduation Flypast



*George with his Sergeant's strips
March 12, 1942*



The cadets of Course 3 were given their 'Wings' and graduated as Sergeant Pilots on March 12, 1942. Normally, about 10% of the cadets on each course would be given commissions, but the Air Ministry decided that all of those on Course 3 who had graduated should become Pilot Officers. This was because they were all from the University Air Squadrons of the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford or Edinburgh. On March 13, George was discharged from his rank of Temporary Sergeant on Appointment to Commission, and the following day, March 14, 1942, George was given an Emergency Commission as Pilot Officer.

Of the 50 cadets who joined Course 3 in October 1941, 46 graduated. Roger Crosskey was killed when his aircraft crashed, and three who started out in October 1941 fell by the wayside. Of the 13 cadets from Edinburgh University who started Course 3, twelve received their Wings and graduated as pilots on March 12.



Graduation Day – March 12, 1942

Edinburgh University contingent

George is second from the left on the back row.

THE CLEWISTON NEWS

VOLUME 15—NUMBER 16

CLEWISTON, FLORIDA, FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1942

SUBSCRIPTION—\$2.00 PER YEAR

CLASS OF 46 RAF CADETS WILL GET WINGS THURSDAY

The first class of RAF cadets to come directly to Riddle Field to begin their flight training are graduating next week and it is believed that they have established a record in that forty-six of the original class of fifty will receive their wings at exercises to be held at the field next Thursday.

This group of fifty cadets, all students at Oxford and Cambridge, arrived soon after Riddle Field was opened last fall to begin their training. Primary flying was completed with the class still intact, all fifty entering basic work together. During basic training one of the members was killed, the only flying casualty at the field since its opening, and when the basic course was completed one member was left behind to brush up on certain parts of the course as his classmates went into advanced work. At least one, and probably two of them were "washed out" in advanced flying leaving the forty-six.

The cadets will go to Palm Beach tomorrow night where they will be entertained at a dance to be given at the Everglades Club and will likely have several days vacation before they are given their wings at the ceremonies next Thursday. They will leave the latter part of next week to await, in Canada, passage back to England.

Members of the basic and advanced primary classes have completed their work and are taking a few days vacation before beginning their advanced and basic training. A new class of fifty cadets is expected the latter part of next week.

This item mentions that the original group of fifty cadets were all students at Oxford and Cambridge.

Unfortunately, the reporter did not mention that 13 of the cadets, including George, were from the University of Edinburgh!

THE CLEWISTON NEWS

VOLUME 13—NUMBER 17

CLEWISTON, FLORIDA, FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 1942

SUBSCRIPTION—\$2.00 PER YEAR

AIR MARSHALL EVILL PRESENTS WINGS TO GRADUATING CADETS

Air Marshall D. S. C. Evill of Washington arrived by plane at Riddle Field Thursday afternoon in time to present forty-six graduating RAF cadets with their wings and to speak to them a few words of encouragement and advice.

"Watch yourselves and don't get careless," Evill cautioned the cadets. "We need you now."

More than two hundred people attended the graduation ceremonies and the weather was near perfect as this record-breaking class of cadets stood in formation as they were inspected by their officers. Flight Commander K. Rampfing, Squadron Leader George Burdick and Captain Nickerson, heard their names called to receive their coveted wings, heard the short but impressive talk by Air Marshall Evill and paraded by the reviewing stand before dismissal.

Following the exercises nine of the advanced training planes, piloted by members of the class and led by Flight Commander (Continued on Page 5)

THE CLEWISTON NEWS

passenger. Six months later forty-six of them graduate as finished pilots and after a short period of combat training will be ready to go into action. This is the largest of the three classes to graduate from Riddle Field and it is believed that they have set a record in the percentage of the original group to complete the course. Only two of the boys failed the course entirely and one, Roger Crosskey, was killed in the crash of his basic training plane near the end of this second phase of their training.

The class is expected to leave from Clewiston either this afternoon or tomorrow afternoon for Canada to await assignment and transportation to the combat field selected for them.

Most of the class members are well-known in Clewiston and are as follows:

J. H. Akerman, B. A. Arterton, J. P. Bassett, P. M. Bichel, I. A. C. Hine, A. C. I. Brown, J. C. Buckland, P. F. Clayton, S. J. Colman, B. B. Cooper, R. M. Cumming, E. H. J. Dixon, A. Dunn, F. S. Engelbach, I. A. S. Gibson, T. S. Hayden, G. Hogarth, H. K. Humphreys, D. Hunter, S. R. James, E. A. J. Jenkins, D. H. Johnson, C. Jolly.

W. A. Lindsey, N. D. Mackertlich, K. MacVicar, W. A. P. Manser, A. W. Manson, P. R. Mellor, A. P. Mellowes, A. M. Michie, R. P. Monk, J. Penman, P. C. Price, R. D. E. Richardson, J. M. Robertson, R. D. Serase, A. E. Stonan, P. F. Smith, V. St. John, J. V. Stuart-Duncan, J. C. Taffe, J. R. P. Taylor, A. S. Williams, D. F. Wilson, J. C. Yorke.

Au revoir to Clewiston



Leaving from Clewiston Station

(Photograph - Clewiston Museum)

But not goodbye!

“Maybe Course 3 got the best deal of anyone”.

Course 3 cadets were in America before the country entered the War and were amongst the first people from the UK to learn to fly in Florida. Course 3 was also the first Course to spend their entire time at Clewiston. As George said, *“While the later Courses got wonderful hospitality, ours was superb”.*

“All I can say is that if we had to do it all over again and had any say in the matter, we wouldn’t do anything different and we would certainly want to do our training in Florida. Maybe the boys in California, with the nearness of Hollywood, had a better time – but I feel it would be difficult to have had any better experience that we had in Florida.”

Many of the cadets corresponded with their American hosts for years; visits were arranged, cadets (and their families) went over there and their American friends came over here. George kept up with Ed and Ruth Simpson, and after their deaths, with their daughters Laura and Marion. The links with the Simpson family continued until Laura’s death in 2009.

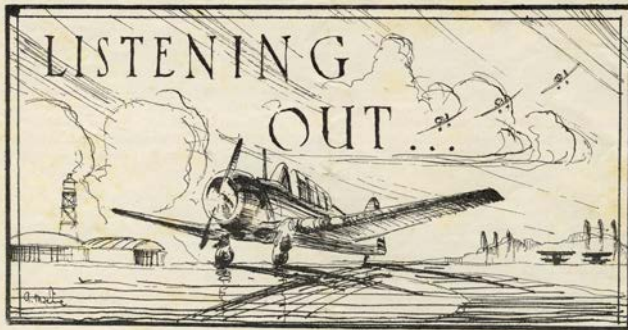
The cadets of Course 3 recorded thanks to their hosts by way of an illustrated letter called ‘Listening Out’²⁰. It includes photographs of all Course 3 cadets who received their Wings along with a photograph of Roger Crosskey.

There is an invitation *“To those who have shown us such good times we can only say, come over and be our guests après la guerre”*. Many have!

And finally, *“To our long suffering instructors and to the scores of other friends we have made, we say, until we meet again, good-bye to y’all”*.

“Thanks for the Memory”

²⁰ ‘Listening Out’ was produced by each Course as they prepared to leave Clewiston. A full set is included within the 5BFTS Association Archive in Clewiston Museum.



CUAS EUAS OUIAS



No. 3 COURSE
 No. 5 B.F.T.S. CLEWISTON, FLORIDA
 OCTOBER 2nd, 1941 . . . MARCH 13th, 1942

Thanks for the Memory

As we look back over our six months down here in the heart of Florida, surely long enough, we feel, to have qualified us as "crackers," it is interesting to compare our experiences with what we imagined it would all be like when we first learned we were coming here to train. Our ideas about America then probably came from two sources. One was the by now quite famous little blue book issued to us which, along with strict instructions for our department, gave us the impression that the U.S.A. was a land where the people were very different from us, and where we should feel that we were foreigners. The other source was the Hollywood "flicks" on which we had all been brought up from our cradles. From there we gathered that America was inhabited mainly by gum-chewing gangsters and their molls, speak-easies, hot swing bands, dashing reporters with slouch hats, and jitterbugs.

But now, looking back, one feels that the diplomatic author of the little blue booklet was a little too apprehensive—we seem to have got by without causing an international situation, and on the other hand, we have not found life in America as hectic as Hollywood would have us believe, which is a good thing, as after all, we did come over here to learn to fly. In fact, we found that the people were really very like us. They even spoke the same language, practically, although some of us have had trouble with certain differences in pronunciation, experienced with our instructors at one end of the intercomm. and us at the other! But one thing the little blue book did not exaggerate. It warned us about American hospitality, and boy, it was right! We have been entertained right royally wherever we have gone, at Fort Myers, Palm Beach, Miami and even one of us, inadvertently, at Tallahassee. To those who have shown us such good times, we can only say, "come over and be our guests, après la guerre."

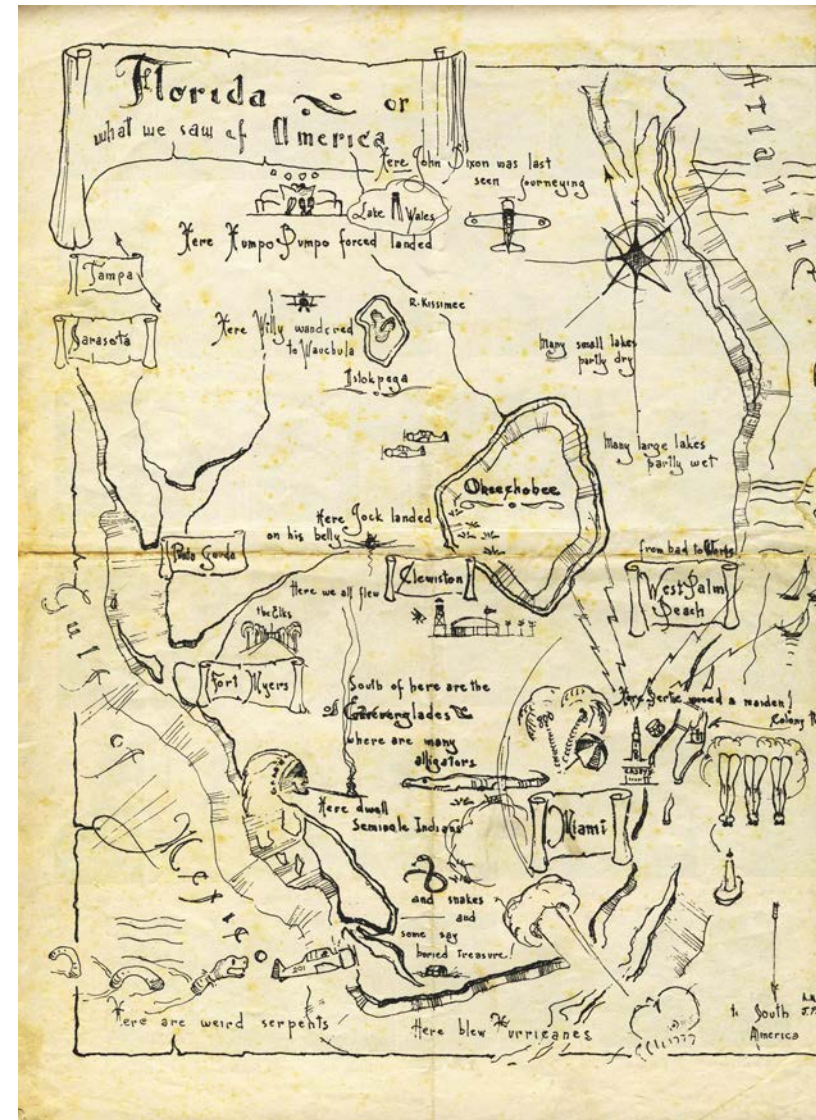
And while we are saying our thank yous, there is one good friend we have all made over here, who hails from our own country, the all-providing and, we have come to believe, omniscient Syd Burrows. His hotel on Miami Beach has become a veritable Colony of the R.A.F. in Florida during the last few months, and to his safe keeping as a sort of guardian angel to the R.A.F. in Miami, we entrust all future flights that come to Riddle Field, knowing that he'll never let them down. He really should be made an Air Commodore!

But as well as our week-ends off, the gradual and sometimes painful growing of our wings has had its lighter moments. A whole saga could be written of our fledgling days, including Tim's crazy Grand National across the flying field in a B.T. ending with the magnificent jump that just cleared the telegraph wires, and Boris who "really wasn't competent to tell when he was drifting," and the interesting experiment of Willy and Johnny Penman proving conclusively the indestructibility of P.T.s. And so we could go on, but for further escapades see our map of Florida. Coming as we did straight from our carefree undergraduate days, where we combined the full life with the study of all manner of unwarlike things, "from cabbages to kings," we entered into flying with little knowledge, but immense enthusiasm. In fact, the scum of milling men 'round the dispatcher, poor man, all clamouring for "solo ships," reminded us at times of 9:55 in the evening at the "Leo," the "Randolph" or the "Tuns!" Of course, there have been times when the daily round has seemed tedious, and people are even known to have felt sleepy in ground school, but it's been fun, all of it, from the mingled surprise and triumph we felt when we got back to earth in one piece after our first solo, to the exalted dignity of flying A.T.O's in formation. To those few who started out with us, but fell by the wayside, we send our best wishes wherever they may be and especially to Ian Samuels (alias "Clancy"), who by now should be flying elsewhere.

We shall take back with us many things. A new vocabulary, for one. Some of us can even say "I betcha" with that irresistible Southern drawl. We are old hands at the grand old sport of "jukin'" and one or two, it's rumored, have learned to jitterbug. Then there are new tastes—fried chicken, sweet potatoes, "cokes," cuba-libras and (did someone say), Zombies. And memories, lots of them. Swimming and sunbathing on the shores of the Atlantic (a warm and peaceful sea down here!), riotous Saturday nights, Florida sunsets, the moon over Miami and, ah, those Southern girls. At least the movies weren't wrong about them. So to them, and to our long suffering instructors, and to the scores of other friends we have made, we say, until we meet again, "good-bye to y'all."



Compiled by J. P. Bassett, E. H. I. Dixon, A. M. Michie, P. C. Price, P. F. Smith, J. V. Stuart-Duncan, D. F. Wilson.



Going home

After the course at Clewiston was complete, the cadets went by train to New York. They stopped in Washington DC just to change engines, but didn't see anything of the City, and arrived in New York early the following morning. They were put up in an hotel somewhere, possibly the Hotel Columbia. George recalled that he didn't really know why they needed the hotel, as he doesn't think that anyone went to bed! He remembered going to a film on Fifth Avenue, which started at 1am. They went up the Empire State Building, then the tallest building in the World, and the Rockefeller Center, with the Radio City Music Hall. These were all new experiences and they had a great time in New York.

New York: March 1942



Broadway



From top of RCA (Radio Corporation of America) building, Rockefeller Centre



Brooklyn Bridge



Rockefeller Centre

They then went to Monkton in Nova Scotia, which was the new dispersal camp. On their way down to Clewiston, six months earlier, they had travelled via Toronto, but

since Monkton had opened, Toronto was no longer being used as a dispersal camp. Monkton really was a sea of mud, because this was March and the spring thaw had come. George recalled, *“My goodness, you have never seen such a muddy place!”*

When they were deciding on forward transport for Course 3, it transpired that the ship they should have been going on was almost full, and so only the first 20 people from A to K were selected to sail on this ship. This included George, but the rest had to wait for another ship. *“They were most annoyed!”* When they landed in Liverpool, George received his smart new Pilot Officer’s uniform and went off on leave.



Convoy travelling home, 1942

In George’s words, *“We did not feel ready for combat after leaving Florida. I think this is probably because we knew we would have to go to an Advanced Flying School and an Operational Training Unit before we would be ready for operational flying; however, when we left Clewiston, we did feel confident as pilots. I went straight on to twin-engined aircraft with no problems and very quickly was flying operational aircraft”.*



Pilot Officer 1942

Chapter Three – After Clewiston

More training

George's first, and very brief posting, when he arrived back in the UK was at Bournemouth on the south coast of England. George wrote to his sister, Kathleen, on May 8, 1942, that he was looking forward to moving from Bournemouth because "*down here, though the weather is very nice, warm & sunny, we are too far away from Scottish civilisation*" – a comment that never found its way into his letters from Florida!

In June 1942, George went to No. 6 AFU (Advanced Flying Unit) in Gloucestershire where he learnt how to fly twin-engine aircraft, and finally in July, he went to No. 54 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at RAF Charterhall in the Scottish Borders to train as an operational night fighter.

RAF Church Fenton - first operational posting with 25 Squadron

On October 1, 1942, George was given a war substantive commission as a Flying Officer and was posted to 25 Squadron at RAF Church Fenton, North Yorkshire. He was with 25 Squadron from October 27, 1942 until December 29, 1943.



*25 Squadron: October 1942 to December 1943
George is sitting on the front row, fourth from the left*

The Squadron was changing aircraft from Beaufighters to Mosquitos; George flew his first solo Mosquito on November 29, and became operational on January 2, 1943.

The Mosquito was a beautiful aircraft – “it looked lovely but, rather more importantly, it was a fast aeroplane, being even faster than the Spitfire. Its manoeuvrability was excellent”. It was one of few operational front-line aircraft of the time constructed almost entirely of wood and was consequently nicknamed ‘The Wooden Wonder’.



25 Squadron - George



25 Squadron A Flight Dispersal Hut
L-R: George, F/O Bridges, P/O Hampson, F/O Haslam

Don Forryan, a member of the 25 Squadron Association, in an article entitled ‘*The Progress of ‘Cambridge’ Don*’ in the newsletter of the No. 25(F) Squadron Association, Issue No. 6, Spring 2000, writes:

“My introduction to the Mosquito was with F/O George Hogarth in a very rare dual controlled Mosquito No. 878 on 22nd August, 1943, and he demonstrated a magnificent stall – just like a lift swiftly descending; the aircraft was of course very light having no armament.” This is recorded in George’s Log Book as a Demonstration Trip with Sgt Forryan as his second pilot, pupil or passenger. The trip lasted 50 minutes.



25 Squadron Mosquito flown by George

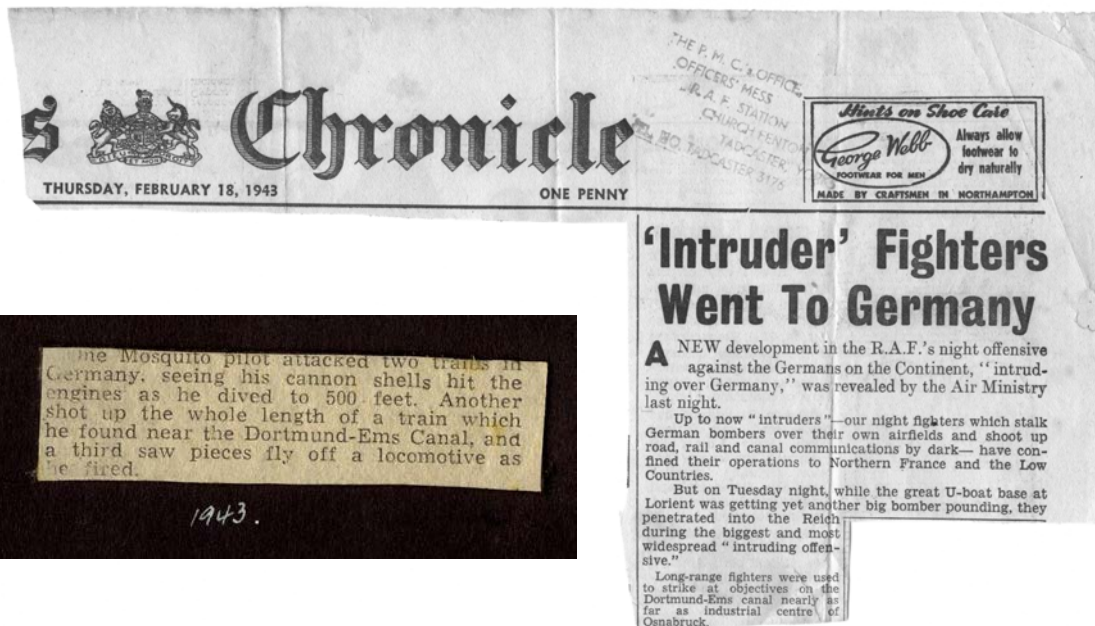
25 Squadron was a defensive night fighter squadron equipped with radar airborne interception gear. As well as defensive night flying, George flew intruder patrols over airfields on Continental Europe and aimed to disrupt the enemy by shooting at trains over Germany. The Squadron also pretended to be 'straggling bombers' flying just behind bomber streams to try and attract German night fighters into combat, although George doesn't think that this was very successful. With 25 Squadron, George flew a total of 467 hours (48% at night). Much of this was defensive patrol, but over 52 hours was spent chasing German (or suspected German) aircraft or flying over the Continent.

George said in a talk about his RAF service: *"Our speciality over Germany was looking for the smoke from steam engines and then bombing them, and getting home quickly before we were found out ..."*

Later, writing in response to questions from his family about his experiences with 25 Squadron, George said:

"There was not very much enemy activity about, and somebody in Air Ministry had a 'good idea'. This was that we should fly over Germany and shoot anything that was moving. This sounded very exciting ... but we had no experience and we had nothing to help us. We did several cross-country practice runs, although I doubt if a Mosquito circling over Edinburgh would have led to any excitement on the ground.

I did fourteen of these Intruder Patrols with my Observer, although we had to keep our defensive Night Fighter screen operational, as this was our primary function. We did, however, have one or two sorties over Germany, which involved chasing trains, including one train, which blew up and earned us a sentence in the national press."

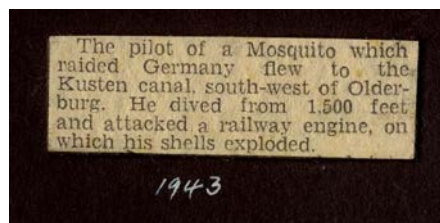


YEAR	AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)
	MONTH	DATE			
1943					TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD
APRIL	8	Mosquito F11	757	SELF	Air-to-Air Firing
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		MASTER III	600	S/L TRENDSIDE	DEMONSTRATION
	9	Mosquito F11	757	SELF	Air-to-Air Firing
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		do.	757	SELF	do.
		do.	757	F/O WOODTON	To Church Fenton.
		Total for 1489 F.G. Course, MATLASKE.			
	10	Mosquito F11	688	SELF	Sgt MORGENTHAU N.E.T. and No 1 X.C.
	10	do.	688	SELF	do. PATROL
	11	do.	688	SELF	do. No 2 X.C.
	12	do.	688	SELF	F/O UNDERDOWN N.E.T. and No 3 X.C.
	13	do.	688	SELF	do. G.C.I. Comp. and N.E.T.
	13	do.	688	SELF	do. PATROL and S.L.C.
	14	do.	564	SELF	do. N.E.T.
	14	do.	264	SELF	do. PATROL and G.C.I.
	15	do.	688	SELF	do. To Colthall
	15	do.	688	SELF	do. RANGIER OPS. ^{Train seriously damaged} in vicinity of Oldenburg
	16	do.	688	SELF	do. N.E.T. - H. P.F.

From George's Pilot's Flying Log Book: Night flight on April 15 lasted 2 hours 45 minutes

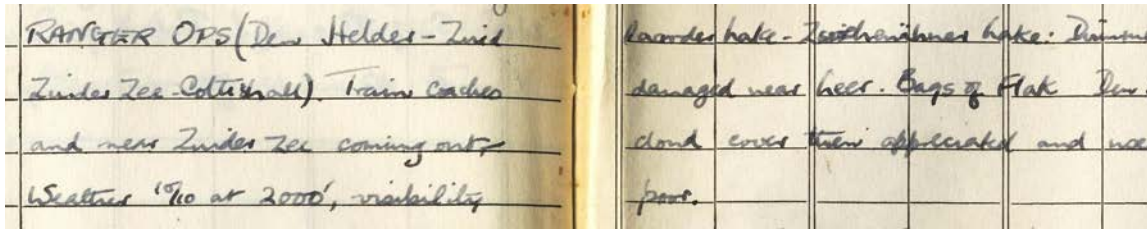


A second appearance in the press was at the end of April 1943. Then a change of direction meant that their 'free and easy' time was over, and George was back to night patrols.



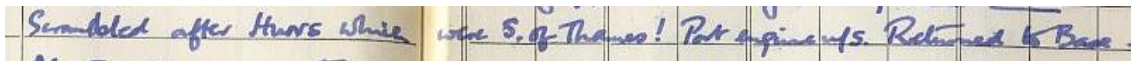
YEAR	AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)
	MONTH	DATE			
					TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD
APRIL	17	Mosquito F11	689	SELF	F/O UNDERDOWN PATROL and N.E.T.
"	18	do.	754	SELF	do. Air-Test.
"	18	do.	687	SELF	do. N.E.T.
"	18	do.	689	SELF	do. PATROL
"	19	do.	688	SELF	do. To Colthall
"	20	do.	688	SELF	do. RANGIER OPS. ^{Train coaches damaged}

From George's Pilot's Flying Log Book – Night flight on April 20 lasted 2 hours 40 minutes



Records in George's Operational Flying Log show that other trains were damaged on August 30 and September 15. On August 30, George flew a Mosquito to Deelen. He patrolled for 50 minutes and dropped 2 x 500 bombs. He noted that there was no opposition. This flight lasted 3 hours and 10 minutes.

Operations were not always so successful though! George's Operational Flying Log reads on November 28, 1943, that he:



'Scrambled after HUNS which were S. of Thames! Port engine u/s. Returned to Base'

When he got to base, he had a 'Prang' and his Mosquito met an untimely end!

YEAR		AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	PASS- ENGER	INSTR./CLOUD FLYING [Incl. in cols. (1) to (10)]		LINK TRAINER
MONTH	DATE	Type	No.					DUAL	PILOT	
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD										
Nov	25	Mosquito F.II	712	Self	P/O Hassan	Maintenance to Kotel. No Joy	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
"	28	do.	752	Self	do.	N.F.T.				
"	28	do.	752	Self	do.	Scrambled - Port engine u/s - Prang!				
<p><i>Prang</i></p> <p>O.C. 25 Sqn.</p> <p>P. M. Wright - Bomber</p>						Summary for November 1943: Types: Mosquito F.II	<p>I certify that I have carried out destruction of, and abandonment from aircraft.</p> <p>George Hogarth</p>			
<p>Dek. 20/1/43. Unit: 25 Sqn.</p> <p>Signature: George Hogarth</p>										

Radar

'Radio - location', known as RADAR (Radio Detection And Ranging) after Spring 1944, was developed by Robert Watson Watt.

The breakthrough came when equipment, small enough to be carried in an aircraft, was designed. This was known as AI (Airborne Interception). AI Mk 4 was in operation while 25 Squadron was at Church Fenton. The Squadron was later

converted to AI Mk VIII, a much more sophisticated system, which enabled night fighters to ‘see’ much better. This improved system was due to the invention of the magnetron, which used wavelengths of 10 cm; before this the standard wavelength was 1.5 m.

As noted in George’s Flying Log on September 2: while flying Mosquito II, no. 752 with F/O Haslam as navigator, the planned flight to Mahmoud had to be aborted because “A.I. packed up after three minutes”. The total flight time was just 10 minutes.

The pilots also used IFF (Interception Friend or Foe), which enabled the British to recognize enemy aircraft.

George’s operational time with 25 Squadron finished on December 29, 1943. He was recorded as being ‘Above Average’ as a night fighter justifying the interest shown by Clewiston instructor, Mr Lehman, when he asked George if he had thought of taking up night flying some two years previously!

OPERATIONAL TOUR

SUMMARY of FLYING and ASSESSMENTS FOR YEAR COMMENCING ON 21st October 1943

[* For Officer, insert "JUNE"; For Airman Pilot, insert "AUGUST."]

	S.E. AIRCRAFT		M.E. AIRCRAFT		TOTAL for year	GRAND TOTAL All Service Flying
	Day	Night	Day	Night		
DUAL			1.05	-	1.45	121.35
PILOT			242.10	228.55	470.65	653.50
PASSENGER						

ASSESSMENT of ABILITY
(To be assessed as :- Exceptional, Above the Average, Average, or Below the Average)

(i) AS A M/E PILOT ABOVE AVERAGE

(ii) AS PILOT-NAVIGATOR/NAVIGATOR _____

(iii) IN BOMBING _____

(iv) IN AIR GUNNERY _____

* Insert :- "F.", "L.B.", "G.R.", "F.B.", etc.

ANY POINTS IN FLYING OR AIRMANSHIP WHICH SHOULD BE WATCHED.

Date: 29/12/43 Signature: C. M. Wright - 17 sq w/cdr
Officer Commanding 25 sq.

RAF Defford

RAF Defford, in Worcestershire, was constructed on land that included Defford Common and part of Croome Park (the house, Croome Court, and parkland form an 18th Century landscape created by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown for the 6th Earl of Coventry). It was completed in 1941 as a satellite for the Wellington bombers of No 23 OTU based nearby at RAF Pershore. This was a short lived activity, however, as the airfield was soon needed for a secret task – the testing of radar. Britain’s Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE), which was devising radars to

meet new enemy threats, moved from its vulnerable coastal site at Swanage in Dorset to Malvern College in May 1942. The aircraft used for trials for the TRE, the Telecommunications Flying Unit (TFU), which had been based at Hurn near Bournemouth, then moved to Defford which was the nearest airfield to Malvern. RAF Defford grew into a large station accommodating over 2,200 service personnel as well as TRE scientists. The TFU operated up to 130 aircraft at Defford flown by RAF, Royal Navy and Commonwealth aircrews. The radar and other electronic systems they tested would revolutionise the operational capabilities of British aircraft during World War 2.

TFU were responsible for testing and demonstrating prototype hardware produced by TRE, but TRE also had some (limited) capacity for manufacturing new systems for special or urgent service operational commitments. These were installed and tested by the RAF Defford Special Installation Unit (SIU). In addition to TRU aircraft, Defford managed a further 80 aircraft through their SIU operation.

RAF night fighters were equipped with Airborne Interception (AI) radar, which was developed continuously at TRE. Without a doubt, the war's outcome was influenced by TRE's H₂S radar, which enabled Bomber Command to locate targets, and Air to Surface Vessel (ASV) radar, which gave Coastal Command the means to seek and destroy U-boats in the North Atlantic. The British invention of the cavity magnetron was vital to the success of all of these radars.

There were many other technological successes demonstrated by TRE during the war. Gee²¹ was the main en route navigation aid used by Bomber Command. Precision bombing by the Pathfinder Force was achieved using the Oboe²² system. Window aluminum foil strips were dropped from bombers to produce reflecting clouds which caused confusion on enemy radar screens. A wide range of electronic countermeasures (RCM or Radar Counter Measures) systems were in place to warn aircrews of enemy surveillance and which also deceived and jammed enemy radar screens - Monica was a radar set mounted in the tail of the aircraft to warn of approaching AI-equipped fighters.

The Rebecca homing system, used in combination with an Eureka beacon on the ground, helped the RAF to carry out re-supply drops to Special Air Service patrols operating far behind enemy lines. The Rebecca/Eureka system found a number of other uses including blind bombing, airfield approach and as a blind landing aid in the Beam Approach Beacon Signal (BABS) form.

As many of the war time systems used similar display units, the Lucero system was introduced to send the proper signals to interrogate any of these systems, allowing a single display unit to be used for H₂S, ASV, AI, Rebecca and BABS.

²¹ Gee was a radio navigation system

²² Oboe was an aerial blind bombing target system based on radio transponder technology

The development of navigation and landing systems, applicable to civil as well as military aircraft, was also TRE's responsibility. The world's first automatic approach and landing was performed by a Boeing 247D at Defford in January 1945, paving the way for today's airliners, which arrive safely at their destination whatever the weather.

George was posted to RAF Defford on December 29, 1943, initially to the Telecommunications Flying Unit (TFU), but after two weeks, George joined the Special Installation Unit (SIU) where he stayed until March 1945. He then returned to SIU in September 1945 and finally worked with the TFU from December 1945 until he was demobbed in June 1946.

George's Service Record shows that he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on March 14, 1944.

George wrote:

"After my first tour in a Night Fighting Squadron was completed, I was posted to Defford for my 'rest period'. This 'rest period' did not mean what it sounds like! Somebody high up in the Air Ministry decided that all pilots would be classed as operational, but, following a tour of duty with a Squadron, they would be transferred to another station for this so-called 'rest period'. There was an important difference between the two, which could affect a pilot's social life! If you were on a Squadron you would get an allowance of petrol, but, alas, this allowance of petrol would be stopped when you were transferred to a 'rest period' station. But Defford was regarded as a Special Operational Unit, and we were very pleased to have a 'rest period' there, as it meant we kept our petrol allowance! Defford was a Special Operational Unit, because all research into Radar was concentrated at the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE) at Malvern, some five or six miles away, and all the testing of the equipment was being done by pilots based at Defford. There was very strict security, as you can imagine."

Defford was a mixed station, RAF and Royal Navy. The 'boffins' at TRE, flying with aircrew from both the RAF and Royal Navy, tested radar systems that were to revolutionise the capability of Allied aircraft. There were no problems with RAF and Royal Navy personnel being on the same station as each went their own way and followed their own work patterns. But there was a shortage of naval pilots, and many RAF pilots assisted by flying Royal Navy planes, such as the Firefly and Barracudas.

George's Log Book shows that he regularly flew a Firefly and a Barracuda during his time at Defford. Between May 2 and May 10, 1944, he made 21 test flights in a Firefly (number 1869 or 1870) and in June 1944, he made a total of 18 test flights, all on a Firefly (numbers 1869, 1877, 1874 and 1833). All of these were to test the Airborne Interceptor (AI) systems.

In addition to the Firefly and Barracuda, George also flew the Hellcat for the Royal Navy, the Anson, Wellington and Brigand (a new aircraft, which was replacing the Beaufighter, as it was much faster, and which George had to collect from Bristol), four light aircraft (Proctor, Auster, Martinet and Magister), the 4-engined Lancaster, and not forgetting, of course, his favourite Mosquito – quite an interesting mixture.

The Hellcat was an American plane to which a night fighting device was being fitted and George had to test it. George wrote that it was “*so odd*” going back to an American aircraft after flying British planes; the main difference was in the braking system as British planes had a handle on the steering column, which was pulled to put on the brakes whereas American types used a foot pedal to apply the brakes. “*It was surprising how you forgot the one and tried to do the other when you switched from British to American!*”

George flew spent a lot of time flying Special Installation Tests (SIT) on a variety of aircraft. He flew a Lancaster Mark III to test an Automatic Gun-Laying Turret (AGLT), a British radar aimed turret, which was devised to allow a target to be tracked and fired-on in total darkness. Referred to as Village Inn during development, it was evaluated and tested at RAF Defford before being put into production. His Log Book shows that George tested this in a Lancaster for the first time on February 29, 1944, with further regular test flights during March and April. Listed amongst those present in the aircraft on occasions is a Mr Williamson, a scientist from TRE. In July and again in August, George flew a Firefly as a target for AGLT.

George’s Log Book records flights testing a variety of radar systems; Lucero and H₂S were tested in April 1944, Monica in July 1944 and again in August. In September, he flew a Firefly as a target for Monica. Also in September, George tested a Ground Controlled Interception system (GCI) for guiding night fighters to their targets.

In January 1945, George started a series of tests for use of H₂S. On a few occasions, he flew a Mosquito, but mostly these test flights were on a Lancaster and continued until March 8 when he left Defford to return to operational flying.

- “*And there were the WRENS*”

Defford was a mixed station with RAF and Royal Navy personnel. Both the RAF and Royal Navy each had a small section of service women on the station - the WAAF’s (Women’s Auxiliary Air Force) and the WRENS (Women’s Royal Naval Service). The WRENS mostly worked in the Naval Section at the airfield, but a small number worked at TRE at Malvern and were transported back and forth from Defford. On his first railway journey to Defford, George got into conversation with a WAAF who was stationed at Defford and coming back from leave. She told George about how superb the Station was, and that he would grow to love it. Her description was first class.

And as George says, “*I got a certain proof of this – I married one of the Wrens ...*”

Wendy was a Radio Mechanic WREN in the Fleet Air Arm. Although technically stationed at the Royal Naval Air Station (HMS²³ Daedalus) at Lee on Solent, she was posted to Defford in May 1943 where her main job was to service the radar equipment in naval aircraft, but she also went to TRE Malvern to work with the scientists there. Wendy worked with ASV to start with followed by AI, IFF, radio altimeters, BABS and ASVX. Being on BABS duty required cycling to far-flung huts before breakfast to check it was working, and at times, servicing the equipment was undertaken while airborne.

George and Wendy met in February 1944 while they were both stationed at RAF Defford when Wendy acted as bridesmaid for her friend who married George's navigator and radar operator at Croome Church. Then in March, Wendy, having been at Defford since May 1943, was posted to HMS Nightjar/RNAS²⁴ Inskip in Lancashire, and then, on August 31 to HMS Condor, Arbroath in Angus, Scotland. George and Wendy married in September 1944; Wendy was never posted back to Defford and the nearest she got was a posting to HMS Godwit, Hinstock in Staffordshire in February 1945. This was a compassionate posting to be near George; but George then promptly got posted back to operational duties in Europe! They were able to set up home together near Defford after August 1945 following Wendy's demob and George's posting back to Defford until he was demobbed in June 1946. In retrospect, it seems quite ironic that George spent nearly twelve months after he met Wendy stationed at Defford in Worcestershire, and Wendy, whose home town is in Worcestershire, was sent to Arbroath in Scotland, just 79 miles from George home city of Edinburgh! But, as Wendy says, "*being apart was nothing unusual during the war*".



George and Wendy's Wedding, September 30, 1944

George and Wendy were married on the last day of September 1944, and spent their honeymoon in Snowdonia, Wales. After one week together, Wendy returned to

²³ HMS stands for Her or His Majesty's Ship. All ships in the Royal Navy have the prefix HMS. The prefix "HMS" is also used by shore establishments, which are commissioned 'stone frigates' in the Royal Navy. A 'stone frigate' is a nickname for a naval establishment on land, which is why RAF Defford was officially known as HMS Daedalus by the Royal Navy establishment there.

²⁴ RNAS stands for Royal Naval Air Service

Arbroath and George went back to Defford. They didn't meet again until New Year's Eve when George joined her (and other Petty Officer Wrens) for a riotous Scottish Hogmanay in Arbroath. Wendy remained in the Wrens after they were married, and although married Wrens could leave the Service at any time, George was pleased that Wendy did not want to do this.

Return to Operational Flying

In March 1945, George and Norman (his Radar operator) now felt that it was time for them to get back to a Night Fighter Squadron. This was fairly easy as they were ex-members of 25 Squadron.

George might have been an 'above average' night fighter pilot but was judged 'exceptional' as an experimental pilot when he left Defford!

175470-132723) Wt. 34331-2854 20M 10/64 I.S. 700 SPECIAL INSTALLATION LEASIT FORM 414 (A)

SUMMARY of FLYING and ASSESSMENTS FOR YEAR COMMENCING 1st 44

[* For Officer, insert "JUNE"; For Airman Pilot, insert "AUGUST."]

	S.E. AIRCRAFT		M.E. AIRCRAFT		TOTAL for year S.I.L.	GRAND TOTAL All Service Flying
	Day	Night	Day	Night		
DUAL	—	—	14.20	—	14.20	133.05
PILOT	107.10	—	84.05	—	191.15	879.30
PASSENGER	—	—	—	—	—	15.55

ASSESSMENT of ABILITY
(To be assessed as: Exceptional, Above the Average, Average)

(i) AS AN Exp. PILOT Exceptional

(ii) AS PILOT-NAVIGATOR/NAVIGATOR

(iii) IN BOMBING

(iv) IN AIR GUNNERY

(v) IN S.B.A.

† Insert: "F.", "L.B.", "G.R.", "F.B.", "Instructor", etc.

ANY POINTS IN FLYING OR AIRMANSHIP WHICH SHOULD BE WATCHED

Date: 11/13/45 Signature: R.M. Lyonsdale
Officer Commanding: Cliff Defford

George and Norman completed a special short course at Cranfield (51 OTU) in March 1945 and were then attached to 219 Squadron. They went to Amiens, then, within a few days, moved to Gilze, in Holland, then to Twente, still in Holland but near the German border. They continued with regular night fighter patrols (two nights on, and two nights off). George wrote that it was interesting to meet the Dutch people who had remained very loyal to the Allies.

Night Fighter Leaders School, Defford and Demob

Early in July 1945, George was asked if he would like to attend the Night Fighter Leaders School that was being held at RAF Tangmere, Sussex. The War (in Europe)

was over and this was a new challenge. The very intensive course lasted until the end of August, and included special Navigation, Air to Ground Bombing and Rockets, and Special Experience Type planes, in this case, the Meteor. The Gloster Meteor was the first British Jet fighter and the Allies first operational jet aircraft during World War 2. George's flight in the Meteor was on August 21 and lasted for 30 minutes. After this, the war suddenly ended with the Japanese surrender on August 15 and the signing of the surrender documents on September 2, 1945. George went back to Defford for the next eight months when he continued to fly a variety of aircraft to test radar equipment. He was demobbed on June 11, 1946.

George's last flight took place in a Wellington aircraft on May 27, 1946. He had flown 1044 hours 30 minutes and taken off and landed at 61 different aerodromes in six different countries (UK, USA, Holland, Belgium, France and Germany). He had flown at least 43 different types of aircraft, ranging from the US biplane, PT-17 Stearman, and other US trainers to the jet engined Meteor. His favourite plane and the one he flew most during his RAF service was the Mosquito. A list of the airplanes flown by George is shown as Appendix 1.

After Demob

After leaving the RAF, George never piloted an aircraft again. He did harbour a desire to fly gliders, but *"never got round to it"*. He did, of course fly in civil aircraft as a passenger but *"after being an RAF pilot, it was about 25 years before I felt anything but scared in an aeroplane with a civilian up front!"* Later, when we flew anywhere as a family, it was always slightly disconcerting to sit by George, as he would mutter things like 'wheels should be down now' and 'why aren't the flaps up (or down) yet?' and at times, would look quite uncomfortable. I discovered later that many of the cadets felt like this, and their families heard the ex-pilots making similar comments.

George did, however, see and touch a Harvard AT-6 again. In 1973, during a 5BFTS Reunion in Florida, the ex-cadets on that trip had the opportunity to see, feel and sit in an AT-6, which flew into Riddle Field.



*George admiring the
AT-6 at Riddle Field
1973*

*There is more
information about this
1973 trip in Chapter 4.*

Chapter Four

No. 5 British Flying Training School Association

After the war, the pilots, who as cadets had trained in Florida at 5BFTS, decided to form an Association. Their first two national reunions were for the ex-cadets only, but after that, wives were included. George was an active and enthusiastic Association member, organising the very successful regional meetings in the Midlands, which started in 1973, and acting as Association archivist until 2002.

In January 1980, George became seriously ill, first with a painful shingles in his eyes and subsequently with a stroke. This meant that the plan to build on one of the well-established Midland meetings by organising a national reunion in the Midlands was deferred. George fortunately recovered and continued to organise Midland meetings for many more years. It was at one of these functions that I learnt how much most pilots wanted to fly a Mosquito and how envious they were of George, because he had!

5BFTS - The Association - Aims and Objects

1. The name of the Association shall be “No. 5. British Flying Training School Association”.
2. The Association shall embrace both sides of the Atlantic and the two sides shall be called “The British Branch” and “The American Branch”.
3. The aim of the Association shall be to foster and maintain the bonds of friendship between the British and American personnel, which were forged during wartime service at Clewiston, Florida, in the years 1941 to 1945.
4. The membership shall consist of:

Full Members - Those people, both men and women, who served at No. 5 BFTS in the RAF, AAC/AAF and all civilians, on the ground and in the air, who were on the staff at Riddle McKay Aero College or attached thereto.

Associate Members - Families of the above

Honorary members - Those persons proposed to and accepted by the Committee on behalf of the members of the No. 5 BFTS Association.

How did the Association start?

In the words of John Potter (Co 11), Association President, writing in 2005, “*It was a complete accident*”.

John recounted how, when he and his family were enjoying a holiday around Camber Sands in Sussex, they came across an old church in the heart of nowhere, and as they walked in, John accidentally bumped into someone with a very familiar, but unidentifiable, face. The 'face' was clearly puzzled, but neither John nor the 'face' said anything to each other. After the 'face' drove away with his family, John's daughter asked if she could put their names in the Visitors' Book – and the mystery was solved – the 'face' was Johnny Jorgenson – also from Course 11.

John contacted Johnny, met him for lunch, and in between the many "do you remember/s", John and Johnny decided to try and gather Course 11 together for a reunion. So, on April 9, 1964, the acorn was planted from which the mighty oak tree called 5BFTS Association grew and prospered. Twenty-one years after their Wings Graduation, twenty-one ex-cadets dined at the Royal Aero Club in London. Their Clewiston Commanding Officer, George Greaves, who was the CO and Chief Flying Instructor between January 27 and November 10, 1943, was able to join them as their 'guest of honour'. Shortly after this, John heard from Isobel, the widow of John G. McKay, joint owner of Riddle Field, as she had received a letter from Tony Linfield (Co 18) who was seeking help in his attempt to form an association of former 5BFTS cadets.

The first Committee, with John, as chairman, Tony, secretary, Fen Charlesworth (Co 11), treasurer and Hugo Trotter (Co 11) as honorary solicitor worked on 'Project Association'. They advertised in local newspapers and on local radio, and built numbers steadily, even though hearing of wartime deaths of many of their colleagues frequently saddened them. By December 1970, the Association had 125 members. In 1985, Bob Peters (Co 26) led a project to publicise and raise awareness of 5BFTS via local radio. With tenacity and perseverance, Bob 'discovered' and recruited 37 new members for 5BFTS and identified a further 35 ex-cadets who had trained at other BFTS airfields. Membership continued to grow, and in December 1996, there were 338 British Members and Family Associates and 72 American and Canadian Members. Sadly, one regular feature of the Association newsletters (which date back to the early days) is a list of members who are no longer with us, but, even so, the last Directory of Members, published in 2005, was still able to record 263 names of British Members and Family Associates, 47 American Members, Family Associates and RAF and Riddle McKay Instructors and Staff, as well as six American Honorary Members/Vice Presidents.

John Potter remained as Chairman until 1998 when he stood down in favour of the Vice-Chairman, Gerry Beardsmore (Co 24). John was asked to stay on as 5BFTS President, which he did until his death in 2011. His successor, Gerry Beardsmore was Chairman until he retired in December 2005 when Harry Leeks (Co 5) took over. As Chairman, Harry continued to concentrate on the complex and essential tasks of planning and organising reunions, events, etc, but some of the other tasks of the Chairman reverted back to John Potter. When Harry died in August 2009, John Broome, who had been Vice-Chairman since July 2003, became Chairman. It was John who chaired the final annual national reunion in September 2013 in Bedford.

Many 5BFTS Members have taken an active role in the Association, but after John Potter who was either Chairman or President from the start in 1964 until his death in 2011, the longest serving Committee Member was probably Fen Charlesworth (Co

11). Fen was Honorary Treasurer from 1964 until he was reluctantly forced to retire from the office due to ill health in 2004.

5BFTS Newsletters

These have been written and circulated by the Chairman since the start of the Association. Many are functional, dealing with the organisation and arrangements for reunions, holidays, etc. Regular features included amendments to the Directory of Members, news of new members and, more sadly, 'In Memoriam' noting the names of members who had died. From the mid 1990s, members submitted articles they had written to add to the newsletters, which consequently increased in size but also in interest and the articles and information added to the story of 5BFTS, life in Florida, after Florida and post WW2.

Newsletters included information from America provided originally by Frank Veltri (ex-instructor), followed by Blaine Schultz (Co 12) and since Blaine stepped down from being the main point of contact in 2004, by Harold Kosola. After he stepped down from being Chairman in 1998, John Potter wrote 'Notes from the New World' for each edition, aided by information provided by the American contacts and members.

Harold Kosola – and how he was introduced to 5BFTS:

- In the same way that George and his fellow cadets listened eagerly to the BBC Overseas Service to find out what was happening at home, the young Harold (aged 4 years and living in Detroit) listened to 'London Calling' about the blitz and heard the news about the exploits of the RAF. Hearing on December 7, 1941, that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor started his interest in airplanes.
- Harold moved to Miami when he was aged 6 years. His uncle, Gaston 'Don' Davis, one of the first pilots flying for Eastern Airlines knew John S W Davis (no relation), a flight instructor (and 5BFTS Association Vice President until his death in 2001) at Riddle Field who was training the British cadets. Uncle Don took Harold to Clewiston where he met some of the cadets and toured the base. In 1943, when aged 7 years old, Harold and his father were heading north from Miami on a train bound for Jacksonville. When it stopped in West Palm Beach, a number of RAF cadets boarded the train on their long journey back to Britain. They became young Harold's heroes!
- Harold became an internationally renowned and respected aeronautical engineer and was closely associated with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. When he became President of the Embry-Riddle Alumni Association in the early 1970s, he made contact with 5BFTS cadets again and attended a Reunion in Miami at Sweden House. Harold's interest in the RAF grew and from the early 1990s, he started to attend reunions regularly. In 2005, he accepted the invitation to become an Honorary Vice-President of 5BFTS and became the official American contact.

The newsletters chronicle a changing world – increase in cost of living, changes in technology and, sadly, the increasing frailty of members. The early newsletters were reproduced using a spirit duplicator (also referred to as a Ditto machine in North America, Banda machine in the UK or Roneo in France and Australia), but during the 1970s, photocopying started to be used. In 1984, a formal letter heading, drawn by Charles Tayler (Co 17) was used for the first time to celebrate 20 years since the start of the 5BFTS Association.



In December 1970, there were 125 members each paying an annual subscription of £1. This was £2 by 1977 and in the mid 1990s, rose to £8. In 2004, it was agreed that as virtually all male members were aged over 80 years and the Association had a substantial bank balance, the collection of annual subscriptions should be discontinued as there was enough money in the bank to see the Association through until the “last man turns out the light”!

Early in the life of the Association, an Association tie had been produced (at a cost of £1 in 1970), but when all the stock was sold, a new tie was commissioned. At an increased cost of £4 (to include inflation, VAT and postage!), the new tie was navy blue and retained the existing alternate RAF and US Army Air Force wings, but the quality was improved and incorporated a twin diagonal stripe of pale blue and red – the traditional RAF colours. The US cost was \$10. Although another supplier provided later stocks, the price of £4 was maintained.



John Paul Riddle MBE (1901-1989) – 5BFTS President 1986-1989

John Paul Riddle was acknowledged as one of America's greatest aviation pioneers. From the early 1920s, he was involved either singly or jointly in many enterprises, perhaps the most notable being the development of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the largest of its kind in the United States. Of particular relevance to 5BFTS is that in 1940, with John G McKay, John Paul Riddle opened a flying school in Miami, the forerunner of 5BFTS at Clewiston.

His devotion to flying however, had started many years earlier when, after learning to fly, he taught flying, barnstormed and toured the country with his one-man air shows. In 1925, together with T Higbee Embry, he founded the Embry-Riddle Company, which operated a flying school, sold aircraft and won one of the first contracts to deliver airmail nationally. From this latter business grew the Aviation Company of Delaware – later to become American Airlines!

In more recent years, he concentrated his interests on 'his university' at Daytona Beach, and it was there, in 1986, that he accepted the invitation of 5BFTS to become their President and was presented with an English crystal decanter to mark the occasion.

John Paul Riddle died suddenly in 1989. His ashes were scattered over the Atlantic and, with the agreement of the War Graves Commission, he is remembered by a marker in the British Plot at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, which lies alongside the 23 young British men who died whilst training in Florida. A headstone was prepared by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in a style in harmony with the British headstones. 5BFTS donated £250 towards the costs of the headstone.



Remembering those who never left Florida

The Oak Ridge Cemetery in Arcadia, Florida, is the home of the British Plot. Managed by the War Graves Commission, it is the final resting place of 23 cadets who were killed in training in South Florida. For many years, the Rotary Club of Arcadia has organised a thoughtful and sensitive Remembrance Ceremony held each year on the US Memorial Day, and those of us who have been fortunate enough to attend, have found the ceremony moving and a fitting and dignified tribute to these young men.

In 1972, 5BFTS sent a Union Jack and an RAF Ensign at the request of the US folk to fly at the commemorative service. A poppy wreath is ordered annually from the Royal British Legion and sent to Florida for presenting at the ceremony.

In 1982, 5BFTS Association provided two large flags (the Union Jack and the RAF Ensign) for the American Legion Hall in Arcadia, which were presented by Ray Searle (Co 18) in September 1982.

In 1989, Frank Kennedy (Co 10) took on the task of trying to track down the remaining relatives of the 23 cadets killed during training. When he was able to trace any relatives, he offered them the chance to remain on the active circulation list if they wished.

In April 1998, John Potter presented a picture (the Arcadia Memorial Painting) to the Mayor of Arcadia for the people of Arcadia as a token of respect and gratitude for their continuing devotion to the last resting places of the cadets in Arcadia's Oak Ridge Cemetery.



We, the members of No 5 British Flying Training School Association, commissioned this original oil painting by Len Homes, an Associate of the Guild of Aviation Artists in London, to present to the warm-hearted people of Arcadia, Florida, as a token of our respect and gratitude for their continuing devotion to the last resting places of our comrades in Arcadia's Oak Ridge Cemetery.

21st April 1998

In January 1999, the (then) new Chairman, Gerry Beardsmore (Co 24) reported that Mrs Jean Golby, who lived in Naples and was a member of the Florida State Society of Daughters of the British Empire, had made contact with him. Unknown to the Association, she had been representing her Society at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Arcadia and they had been responsible for the individual Union Jacks for each grave. Gerry officially recorded the very grateful thanks from 5BFTS to Mrs Golby's Society.

The American, Charles Sweet (Co 18), was a loyal and active US member of the Association for many years and represented the Association at every annual Memorial Day Service. He presented the wreath sent over from the UK and continued to do this until he died, despite failing health in his later years. In recognition of this and other contributions, in about 1997, Charles was invited to accept the position of Honorary Vice President. Sadly, Charles died in February 1999, but his widow, Gloria and her family have volunteered to continue presenting the wreaths.

5BFTS has organised formal gatherings at Arcadia when a reunion trip has coincided with Memorial Day (the last Monday in May), but many others have attended if they happened to be near Arcadia on Memorial Day.

Memorial Day – 1989

The Florida Reunion of 1989 was timed so that the party could officially attend the Memorial Day service held on May 29. Members of 5BFTS placed a small Union Jack and a small poppy wreath on the graves of the 23 cadets.





George placed the Union Flag and poppy wreath on the grave of Roger Crosskey (Co 3).

Roger was killed when he crashed through a fog bank and his plane burst into flames whilst he was on a night flying exercise in January 1942

<i>Memorial Day Service</i> <i>British Plot May 29, 1989</i>		<i>Oak Ridge Cemetery</i> <i>Arcadia, Florida 10:00 a.m.</i>	
Prelude		Sarasota Mobile Home Park Concert Band	
Assembly		Leo Laier	
Opening Ceremony: Introduction		Richard H. Wood, Chairman, British Ceremony Committee	
Greeting		Tony Guidry, President, The Rotary Club of Arcadia	
Welcome		Honorable Walter J. Banull, Mayor of Arcadia, Florida	
Singing—"America" and "God Save The Queen"		Charles Weaver, Rotary Club of Arcadia	
Pledge of Allegiance		All, led by Tony Guidry	
Raising of Union Jack and Royal Air Force Ensign		Squadron Leader C.M.I. Baker, 67th Attack Fighter Squadron, Macdill A.F.B. Assisted by Embry, Riddle Aeronautical University	
Placement of Union Jacks		Lt. James Johnston, St. Andrews Society Assisted by American, British and Canadian Officers and Associations*	
		Twenty-three small Union Jacks, and Poppy Wreaths are carried to the twenty-three graves as the names are called	
Invocation		Reverend Ted. W. Land, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia	
Placement of Floral Tributes		Robert B. Johnson, British Cemetery Committee Representatives of organizations place floral tributes at the Rupert Brooks Plaque site	
Introduction of Speaker		Judge Howard Holtzendorf, Rotary Club of Arcadia	
Memorial Address		John F. Potter, Chairman, 5 BFTS Association	
The Lament		Bagpipers	
Benediction		Pauline Dionne, American Legion Auxiliary	
Last Post		Leo Laier	
* American Legion Auxiliary, Daughters of the British Empire, English-Speaking Unions of the United States, St. Andrews Society, Canadian Legion Posts, Warbirds of the R.A.F., U.S. Air Force Assn, No. 5 B.F.T.S. Assn., United Kingdom Clubs, British Floridian Clubs, British Islanders Clubs, British Commonwealth Club			
Refreshments and Rest Facilities are offered before the ceremony and luncheon after the ceremony at the American Legion Hall courtesy of the American Legion Auxiliary			

Memorial Day – 2003

The Florida Reunion in May 2003 also coincided with Memorial Day, Monday May 26. To end the official part of the visit, the party attended the Memorial Day ceremony at Arcadia, sang the two national anthems, saw the raising of the Union Jack and the RAF Ensign, and watched as 23 small Union Jacks and poppy wreaths were placed on the 23 graves as each name was called.

Memorial Day 2011

The 'Arcadian' of June 2, 2011, tells an amazing story about when the 'Son of an RAF pilot finally finds his father'. For years, Neil Tait had no idea that his mother was actually the woman he knew as his sister Marjorie, and that his father was a 5BFTS RAF cadet, Michael Hinds, who had been killed while practising a landing. Marjorie and Michael had been dating and after Michael was sent to Clewiston to train as an RAF pilot, Marjorie discovered she was pregnant. When Michael was killed and as single parenthood was frowned upon, Marjorie's mother brought the baby, Neil, up as her own child. Eventually, the story was unravelled when Neil Tait's niece began investigating the family genealogy and so, sixty eight years later, Neil and his wife Audrey attended the annual Memorial Day ceremony at Oak Ridge cemetery on May 30, to honour the father he didn't know. Michael K Hinds (Co 19) died on July 13, 1944, when he crashed in a landing overshoot after pull-up in the southwest quadrant of Riddle Field. As well as finding a large family of relatives that he never knew that he had, in travelling to see his father's grave, Neil also found another new family of friends in Arcadia.

Memorial Day 2012

In 2012, George's daughter, Jenifer, who was visiting Florida with her husband, David, was invited to give the Memorial Address at the Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony at Arcadia on May 28, 2012. As George had done in 1989, David laid a small Union Jack and a poppy on Roger Crosskey's grave.

In her Address, Jenifer recalled some of the comparisons between Florida and Edinburgh made by George in his letters home while he was at Clewiston and the lifelong influence George's time in Clewiston had on her family's life. George always retained a deep love for Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh, the city of his birth, but alongside Edinburgh and Scotland, George's years in the RAF were his last memories. When he found it difficult to remember what he had done yesterday or last week, he could always remember quite clearly about his time in Clewiston and flying his favourite plane, the Mosquito, and always enjoyed sharing the remarkable experiences from this part of his life with us, his family, but also with many children in local schools who have been fascinated by the experiences of a very courageous man.





Remembering all those who served – the National Memorial Arboretum

In 2001, the Association was advised about the proposed National Memorial Arboretum being created on some 150 acres at Alrewas in Staffordshire. As the 1914-1918 WW1 Centenary Edition (Edition 5) of the Guidebook says, 'This extraordinary and unique place is the UK's living tribute to the service and sacrifice of so many for our freedom'.

After a site visit by Gordon (Co 24) and Alma Newsham in February 2001, the Committee agreed to donate at least £150 for a tree and a donor's plaque to be situated in the proposed RAF Grove. Donations were invited from members in March 2001, and by July, had reached nearly £1000. The final total was £1100 and it was agreed that this would be used to provide a small grove of three North American birch trees and two English Birch trees (5 for Number 5) and an information board at the entrance to the RAF Wings site, which will stand in the shade of the birch trees. On behalf of the Association, Gerry's wife, Mary, also worked a kneeler for the Chapel at the site.

On September 22, 2002, a Service of Dedication took place at the Arboretum for the trees and information board. This coincided with the Annual Reunion weekend at Mickleover in Derbyshire and about 50 members and friends assembled at Alrewas for a short service held in the chapel at noon and conducted by the Reverend Prebendary John Ridyard ex RAF and now of Lichfield Cathedral. The party then proceeded to the entrance of the RAF 'Wings' plot where the five trees were already in place; however, one awaited formal planting by John Potter (Association President) who did a fine job with a silver spade recently used by Her Majesty the Queen for a similar purpose!

In 2009, Gordon Newsham (Co 24) and Peggy Charlesworth (widow of Fen, Co 11) separately reported that the trees were growing well and the information board was in fine condition. George's family visited the Arboretum in October 2014 and are able to

confirm that the trees are indeed looking fine and in good condition, but noticed that the information board was now in need of some restoration.



National Memorial Arboretum - 5BFTS Grove of Birch Trees – October 2014



5BFTS Association Archive

5BFTS Archivist

George was the official 5BFTS archivist (the two years spent at Edinburgh University reading History before joining the RAF being put to good use!) until 2002. In 2002, he retired from this office and handed over to Gordon Newsham (Co 24).

Lamar Philpot

Lamar, who lived in Bradenton, FL, was invited to become an Honorary Member in 1974 to acknowledge his role as the 'Almost 5BFTS Official Historian'. He was a professional photographer, and although he had served in the US Marines in the Pacific, he took a deep interest in the RAF in Florida and attended every Memorial Day at Arcadia, taking photographs of the ceremony and contacting relatives. He planned to write a history of Riddle Field as seen from an American viewpoint and asked Association Members to contact him if they would like to contribute. Lamar died in 1981 before his work was completed; however, George and Lamar had corresponded for some years, and after his death, his widow donated the many bundles of letters, photographs and more than 70 tapes of interviews with colleagues to the Association Archive. When Reed Clary (ex-instructor) and his wife attended the London Reunion when these were handed over to George.

Clewiston Museum

In 1984, John Potter received a letter from a Mrs Beryl Bowden of Clewiston, who told him about a project to establish a museum for Clewiston, and their wish to reflect the relationship between the RAF and Clewiston. Beryl asked if members had any donations of publications, photographs and memorabilia, which they would be prepared to donate. In particular, she was asking for an RAF flag, which the Association donated. This original museum was opened in 1984 and located in a house of early Florida design dating back to the 1930s, at 318 East Sagamore. When I first went to Clewiston in 1989, the museum was locked when we arrived but a note pinned to the door said that the key could be had in the First Bank (of Clewiston) whose parking lot was opposite the museum. We followed instructions, went into the Bank and were given the key! About half an hour later, the curator came over and joined us. The RAF artefacts were in a room, the centrepiece of which had a large sign which said 'Welcome Home – No. 5BFTS Cadets'. Around it were some uniforms, pictures and other artefacts.

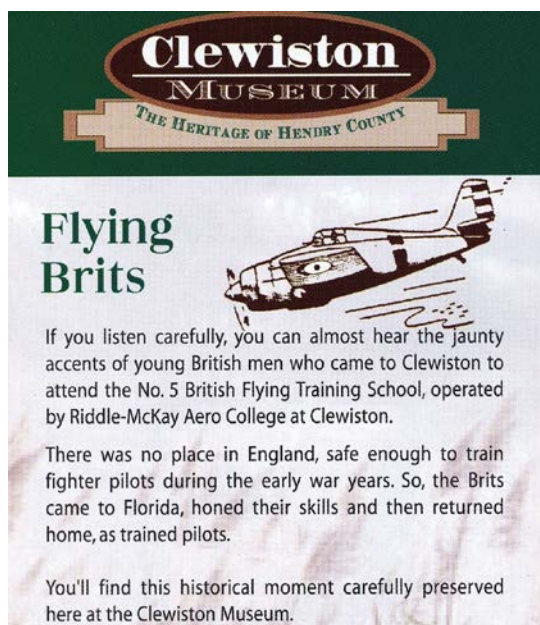
In 1990, the Association was informed that the museum was to be moved to a 'new' home in the old Clewiston City Hall; the RAF room became a feature of the new Museum. In 2006, the Museum underwent further major reconstruction and modernising and was reopened on September 21. It now includes 19 display exhibits together with numerous other artefacts and historical information panels. The area covering the history of Clewiston during World War 2 is largely linked with Riddle Field and 5BFTS. Memorabilia includes helmets, goggles, navigation devices and correspondence between cadets and their American hosts. There is a painting of Cadet (now Sir Jack) Hayward (Co 17) and flying kit donated by Jim Appleby (Co 21) complete with goggles and oxygen mask.

BEFORE - Interior and exterior of Museum located at 318 East Sagamore - August 1989



AFTER - Museum located in the old Clewiston City Hall at 109, Central Avenue – May 2012





*Leaflet for Museum before reconstruction
2005*



*Interior of Museum after reconstruction
May 2012*

The Museum holds a cache of 5BFTS archives and when the Association disbanded in 2013, it was agreed that all the UK 5BFTS archives should be donated to Clewiston Museum. By a happy coincidence, I was visiting Clewiston in April 2014 when the UK archive arrived and spent two very pleasant and nostalgic days at the Museum working with Jeff Barwick, reading about things I knew, but had forgotten, and learning about things I didn't know, but found so interesting and amazing. Jeff, a long time resident of Clewiston, was a driving force behind the development of the new style museum. The Association Archives include the material from Lamar Philpot.



The 5BFTS Archives – sorted!



*Author and Jeff Barwick
Clewiston Museum – April 2014*

Association Reunions, meetings and other events

The first National Reunion was held in 1967; since then, the ex-cadets and their families have got to know each other very well, and enjoyed many reunions, holidays and other events. Harry Leeks (Co 5) joined the Committee in 1983 and from then on, became the champion of 'Reunions and Holidays' aided in the task by his wife, Jean. As well as reunions, Harry organised trips abroad to places such as Malta, a Mediterranean cruise in May 1999, Tenerife in 2000 and a trip to the Italian Lakes in 2001. The Association has been invited to attend the Old Warden – Shuttleworth air show held on the first Sunday in August and the Royal International Air Tattoos usually held at RAF Fairford. Members have taken part in Project Propeller, which started in 1999, and aims to match up WWII RAF aircrew with current pilots. The aircrew and pilots meet up at a convenient airfield, fly to the venue for the day, and then fly back home once the event comes to a close. In addition (and all other conditions being favourable) it is hoped that the veteran aircrew get an opportunity for some more "stick and rudder" time.

National Reunions 1967 – 2013

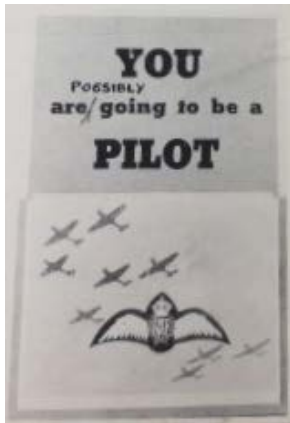
Just five National Reunions were held between 1967 and 1983, but after 1984, the Reunion became an annual event. National Reunions have been held in many different parts of the country, but in 2005 found a regular home in Bedford. The full list of venues for the National Reunions is shown as Appendix 2.

First National Reunion Dinner - October 14, 1967

Ninety-four ex-cadets attended the first National Reunion Dinner on October 14, 1967. They ate:

- Florida Citrus Cocktail
- Southern Fried Chicken with sweetcorn, vegetables and potatoes
- Apple Pie Clewiston

The back of the menu card had pictures of some of the Instructors and included, on the left hand side, the words THANKS TO YOU ALL and, on the right hand side, FROM ALL YOUR 'EX-PUPILS'. In between, there was a cartoon showing a Florida instructor shaking hands with a British pilot as he leaves at the end of the Course. The American is saying "it's been swell knowing youse guys" and in true RAF style, the pilot is smoking his pipe and responds "Perfectly wizard old boy!"



Front of Menu card



'Speeches!'

George is in the centre of the photograph, laughing and sitting slightly forward on his chair

National Reunion – 1982

The Reunion in 1982 was the first one for some 9 years, the last being in 1973. The Committee had tried to arrange reunions in the intervening period, but had found it very hard to get sufficient support from members; however, in November 1982, 59 Members and friends gathered at the Gatwick Hilton when a visit to the operations of British Caledonian Airways at Gatwick Airport was arranged by Ray Searle (Co 18). This was followed, back at the hotel, by drinks, an excellent dinner with a decorated Reunion cake and a slide show of Clewiston.

National Reunion – 2011

The thirty-third National Reunion (2011) was a special one for George's wife, Wendy, and their elder daughter, Jenifer. For a few years, George had been too frail to attend the National Reunion, although George and Wendy attended Midland events taking along Jenifer as the driver! Although George would not have been able to go in any event, Wendy and Jenifer had already decided that they would attend the 2011 Reunion in Bedford. As it turned out, George died on August 23, but Wendy felt that she would still like to go to Bedford. This turned out to be a very good decision; while both Wendy and Jenifer were sad that George was not with physically with them, they did feel that he was there in spirit, and the wonderful support given by the former cadets was so uplifting, that they couldn't have wished for a better company at that time. The current Chairman, John Broome, remembered George in his Welcome before dinner along with other members who had 'handed in their Log Books'. What a wonderful way to describe the passing of all those cadets who came to America as young men and left as RAF pilots ready to fight for their country.

Final National Reunion – 2013

The thirty-fifth National Reunion was held at Bedford on September 14, 2013. This celebrated fifty years since the Association was founded, but also marked the final National Reunion. So many members had 'handed in their Log Books' and as the remaining ex-cadets were becoming increasingly frail, this seemed to be a good time to say 'So long' to the Association. Eleven ex-cadet Members of the Association were present. In the photograph below, the last Chairman, John Broome, is second from the left in the front row.

As usual, the toasts were:

- The Loyal Toast
- The United States of America
- Absent friends





A very warm welcome to you all, especially as this will be our final formal meal together. There are some here who have attended all our reunions, many others who discovered the existence of the Association during their retirement and have all found the friendship and camaraderie that is always associated with the armed services.

We have been fortunate and indeed blessed by the excellent foundations laid out by our past officers and their unsung helpers. We remember them all with gratitude. Many of our members have not only opened their homes to us, but have provided delicious meals and trips to nearby places of interest. At times we were overwhelmed by their generosity and kindness. We thank them all.

When we depart from this gathering, we will take with us fond memories of times past and many happy reunions, outings to air shows and the pleasure of meeting friends, some of very long standing. How lucky we have been!

John Broome



Chairman's farewell - the back page of the menu card - 2014

At every National Reunion, the following Grace was said before the formal dinner (the author is unknown). It seems appropriate to include it here alongside details of the final National Reunion.

'How lucky you and I were then
To fly as boys becoming men
To fly those planes which served our ends
To fly with men who were our friends
For all these blessings in bygone years
And, tonight, for good food and good fellowship
We thank thee O Lord. Amen'.

Midland Meetings

In 1973, thanks to the willingness and effort of George, a Midland Branch of the Association was established, holding its inaugural meeting on October 30, 1973, in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. The first, and very successful, social event was held in August 1974 at the home of one of the Midland members, and from then on, meetings

were social events which may have included a pub lunch or visit to a place of interest and often started or finished in the home of either George and Wendy Hogarth in Worcestershire, Ron and Kay Ballard, also in Worcestershire or Gordon and Alma Newsham in Leicestershire. The Association Committee Members were always invited to attend. Meetings continued to take place annually (usually in July); the last one being held in 2011. In 2002, Gordon Newsham wrote about the meetings in the Association newsletter...

MIDLANDS RE-UNION

Members of the Midlands Branch of No.5 BFTS gathered at Ron and Kay Ballards home in Abberley for the annual midland re-union on Tuesday 2nd July. This, again, was a very successful event and was enjoyed by all present.

Ron had arranged a visit to Brintons Carpet Factory at Kidderminster and this proved a real winner. We were shown around the factory and the methods of carpet of manufacture were explained – all very complex. Because of the noise, we were asked to wear earplugs. Our Chairman, who had just obtained new hearing aids, was not sure whether to use the plugs or to remove the aids.

We left the factory and made our way, in convoy, to the Ballard's home. Here we all enjoyed, good food, good company, and if you were not driving, lots of booze! As usual, Kay had worked very hard to put on a splendid selection of food. I suspect that Kay had over estimated the salad quantity, since she was forecasting that Ron would be eating nothing but salad for the following two weeks!

In all a very successful annual meeting and our thanks are due to Ron and Kay for their hard work.

The Midland Branch reunions, which have taken place over many years, owe their success to the efforts and enthusiasm of George and Wendy Hogarth. It all started many years ago when George invited members to his home in Bromsgrove. A few members turned up and things have progressed since then. Wives are now welcome and visits to places of interest are a special feature.

These visits began when George took our members to hear a demonstration of Bell Ringing, from that time onwards, these visits have become an important part of the event.

From memory, we have visited a quarry, Caulke Abbey, DEFRA, RAF Dog Handling, ITV Television studio, Bell Foundry, Coventry Air Museum, Cranfield Research Centre, Barge trip along a canal, Worcester Pottery, tour of the Ballard farm, a Discovery Park and Brinton's Carpet Factory.

All of this, thanks to George and Wendy Hogarth. Each year George sets his sights on someone and says "What about next year?" You haven't the heart to refuse so we all hope that George can carry on for a few more years to keep things going!

I feel that all members would agree that the meetings are very enjoyable and that they will continue for many more summers

If there are any Midland Members who have not attended and would like to join us, please contact either George Hogarth or myself and we will send you an invitation next year.

Gordon Newsham Co 24

Other regional meetings

A few regional meetings were held in the North Western area, organised by Fen Charlesworth, in the Glasgow and Edinburgh area organised by Wilson Galloway (Co 17), and in Wales organised by Fred Bateman (Co 16) but none of these ever matched the enthusiasm, desire for regular meetings and long term commitment shown by the Midland members.

Florida reunions

Since 1970, when just three members and their wives visited Florida, eight formal reunions have taken place in Florida, with an additional invitation to a US Association Meeting, and a visit to dedicate the plaque in Clewiston in 1975. In 1998, everyone seemed to think that this would be the last reunion (although the same had been said in 1993); however, a further trip was made in 2003. This one was billed as the 'Last Visit to Florida' and 'Our Final Fling in Florida'. But there was yet a further trip organised in 2007 – which was followed by what really was the final formal trip made in 2010!

Month	Year	Venue	Month	Year	Venue
October	1970	Miami	September	1993	Clewiston
November	1973	Miami	April	1998	Arcadia
October	1975	Clewiston (Dedication of Clewiston Plaques)	May	2003	Clewiston (Dedication of Airglades plaque)
November	1978	Miami (US 5BFTS meeting)	February	2007	Clewiston (Dedication of Airglades Terminal)
April	1986	Clewiston			
May	1989	Clewiston	October	2010	Clewiston

First Florida Reunion – October 1970

In October 1970, six travellers from the UK, Fen (Co 11) and Peggy Charlesworth, Wilson (Co 17) and Betty Galloway, and John (Co 11) and Pat Potter, arrived at

Miami Airport to be greeted by Frank Veltri, the architect of the trip, and his wife, Gen. Fellow instructors, Jim Cousins and Larry De Marco, were also at the Airport to greet the UK visitors. In a subsequent newsletter to Association members, John said, "I cannot speak too highly of our American Associates! Their welcome was so warm and their hospitality throughout so well planned, so thoughtful and so generous that it is impossible to describe it adequately." He tried, however, and described the first official reunion event, taking place in Sweden House, Miami, when about 70 people came together, some of whom hadn't met each other since the days of Riddle-McKay.

The following day, a motorcade took them to Clewiston, where they had lunch at the Inn, and then they visited Riddle Field to see the Control Tower, cadets' lounge, billets, ground school and dining hall – all deserted and some derelict – and the swimming pool, which was still operational. The highlight was the chance to fly and show off their "creaking pilot's skills" to their wives. The next day, they went to Daytona Airport, to be welcomed by the Principal of Embry-Riddle University and were eventually flown back to Miami in Embry-Riddle's Dakota. On the last evening, a private dinner party at Coral Gables Country Club, Miami, saw engraved silver salvers presented to each ex-cadet and, in return, John presented two pewter tankards inscribed "To our American friends from the RAF pilots of 5BFTS".

Florida reunion – November 1973

A holiday as well as a Reunion, George and Wendy attended this Florida Reunion and, with their younger daughter, Louise, spent two weeks in Florida. They had various expeditions including a visit to Disney World, which was great fun, Cape Canaveral, to see the rocket launchers, and Cypress Gardens to see water skiers. They also stayed in Miami, and visited the Simpson family who had entertained George so well during the war. They stayed with Ernest and Ruth Simpson in Fort Myers, Ernest and Ruth's daughter, Laura and her husband Duane Anderson in Miami, and were taken to stay on Captiva Island where Laura and Duane had a beach home.

From: The Bromsgrove Messenger, November 23, 1973

An RAF Reunion in America

"A Bromsgrove ex-fighter pilot returned on Sunday from a Stateside reunion with RAF colleagues who trained in America ... We got exactly the same hospitality we received 30 years ago. It was terrific ... A local Florida family more or less adopted some of the cadets and we have kept in touch with them ever since. Our daughter was named after one of the family's daughters.

Of course the main purpose was to visit Clewiston to see what remained of Riddle Field and the following is taken from a description of the visit written by George for the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Alumnus newsletter.

No 5 British Flying Training School, Clewiston, Florida.

Reunion Visit by ex-cadets, November 1973

The harsh roar of the AT6, better known to the RAF as the Harvard, was suddenly heard over an almost derelict airfield in Southern Florida. It was a lovely November day with the temperature well into the 80s, and 38 pairs of eyes looked skywards to try and identify the sources of the noise. Soon the aircraft landed, and for 16 of the people present, there was only one place to go, and go they went – to clamber all over the aircraft, to sit in the cockpit, even to try – somewhat gingerly – the controls.

This was an RAF reunion; and a rather special reunion. For 15 of the pilots who had trained at this airfield – Clewiston – in the years 1941 to 1945, had come back from Scotland, England and Wales to relive their memories, to sample yet again, the wonderful American hospitality, and to have a holiday far away from the problems at home. And they were joined in Florida by one of their number who, after the War had decided that Miami was the only sensible place to live – and has lived there ever since.

All are members of the No. 5 BFTS Association, which flourishes on this side of the Atlantic having as its members, ex-cadets who trained at Clewiston; and in Florida, where the ex-instructors, many of whom are now airline pilots, keep together and form the American branch of the Association. The Harvard was a real surprise; unknown even to most of the Americans present, it had been flown in by the son of one of the instructors, and was the highlight of the return to Clewiston.

As was to be expected, there was a lot of nostalgia around. It might be tales of daring flying exploits over the Everglade swamps; it might be Jock Blue, once a Typhoon pilot and now a doctor in the Lake District, who mourned that he just ‘couldn’t find Miami Beach’ because of the concrete buildings now lining the waterfront; it might be George Hogarth, an ex-night fighter pilot now living in peaceful Worcestershire, who spent most of the holiday with the family who entertained him, and his friends, in 1941 – ‘we got exactly the same hospitality we received 30 years ago; it was terrific’; perhaps more sadly, Alex Findlay, a welfare officer in Aberdeen, had hoped to visit just such a family, but he found that the elders had died, and their children grown and scattered.

A visit, on behalf of the Association, was made to the cemetery in Arcadia, 130 or so miles to the north, where 23 of the wartime trainees, mainly from Clewiston, lie buried beneath the lime trees, their graves beautifully tended by the Rotary Club of Arcadia and their friends.

But it wasn’t all reliving the past; during the fourteen days, a lightening tour was made of Cape Canaveral and the Space Centre, Disneyworld was visited, and the visitors became children again, at least in spirit; and at Cypress Gardens, flying of a

different kind – kite flying with a water skier reaching a height of 300ft propelled by motor boat and gliding down to land on water skis – was seen and voted ‘much more dicey than our type of flying’.

The American branch of the Association, as was to be expected, enjoyed the reunion activities as much as anyone. On the first day, a welcoming party was held at the home of ex-instructor, Jim Cousins, when over 70 people were present and the old days of Clewiston were remembered and discussed for hours. The visit to Clewiston itself came a day or two later, and the last night was enlivened (and considerably lengthened) by a dinner given in honour of the visitors, when toasts were drunk, mementoes exchanged, and friendships re-cemented.

The No. 5 BFTS Association is flourishing; but more members are wanted. And there must be plenty of them about – so far, only about 10% of the total potential membership has been contacted. The Secretary of the Association is Tony Linfield; he lives at Roundabout Cottage, West Chiltington, Pulborough, Sussex. If anyone reading this was trained at Clewiston, or knows of anyone who was, please get in touch with him: he’ll be delighted to hear from you.

George Hogarth (Co 3)

Ex-Cadets at Riddle Field – 1973



Back row: L Moore (17), Mick Cooper, Ian (Jock) Blue (3), Harry Leeks (5), Gordon Newsham (24), George (3), unknown, Gerry Beardsmore (24)

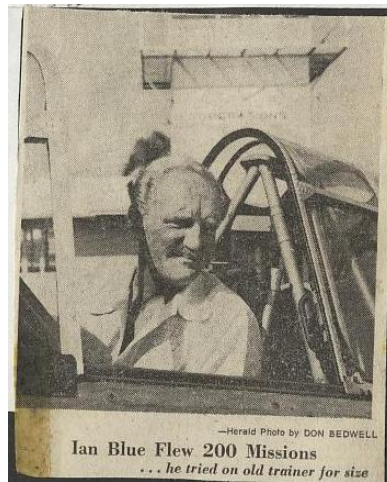
Front row includes: Frank Rees (6), T Clanzly (9), C Fraser (4), Sid Slape (6).

In photo, but not identified: D Harris (13), L Clarkson (15), C Clarke (17) A Findlay (20)

The number in brackets is the Course number of the ex-cadet



Ian (Jock) Blue 'trying out an old trainer for size'



Riddle Field – 1973 (Photographer unknown)



Looking N towards the front of the canteen. The building was still in excellent condition complete with soda fountain although not in use



Looking NNW towards the tower



Looking S across the swimming pool to the canteen



George's Hut

On November 1, a reunion dinner was held in Miami when Harry Leeks (Co 5) and his wife, along with several other American friends and representatives from Embry Riddle University, joined the party. John Paul Riddle also came – reported to be an extremely fit at 73 years old!



Photographs taken by Lamar Philpot 1975

The plaques were permanently sited in the City of Clewiston Garden of Remembrance in 1977.



*City of Clewiston
Garden of Remembrance*

1977

Photographer unknown

In 1984, the plaques were described, following visits to Clewiston, by Len Hammond (Co 23) and Ian Collin (Co 19) as looking a ‘rather tired and weather-beaten’. Frank

Veltri was asked to advise on restoration. Whether this happened is unknown, but in November 1998, Alan Boyd (Co 24) reported that the Clewiston memorial plaque had been damaged. John C Perry, Councillor and former Mayor of the City of Clewiston, who accepted an invitation to become an honorary Vice President of the Association in 1999, arranged for the plaque to be refurbished and then permanently maintained. John was planning for another plaque to be placed at the former airfield (now Airglades Airport) and was also negotiating for an extension to the museum so that the RAF contribution to the history of the city could be more attractively displayed and told.

Sadly, when last seen by the author in April 2014, the plaques were definitely in need of some restoration; however, there is absolutely no reduction in the spirit generated by these two plaques or their intended purpose - to remember the friendship and hospitality of the people of Florida, which is still so evident today.

In July 1979, at a small event at the Royal Air Force Museum, John Potter handed over a book containing the names of all those who contributed to the plaques to the Deputy Director. This Book of Donors is held in the Museum Archives. There is also a list of donors in the 5BFTS Archive held at the Clewiston Museum.



City of Clewiston Garden of Remembrance - 2012



Bronze Plaque 3' x 2'3" headed by the RAF Eagle Crest in 1989



Bronze Plaque 3' x 2'3" headed by the RAF Eagle Crest in 2012



Bronze Plaque 15' x 10' in 2012

US 5BFTS group meeting - November 1978

Organised by Frank Veltri and once again, held at Sweden House, South Miami, John Potter (Co 11) and his family and Eric Mowser (Co 17) and his wife represented the cadets. Several instructors were present as were John Paul Riddle (reported as 'spritely' and still playing tennis every day) and Lamar Philpot. Fen Charlesworth (Co 11), Robert Peters (Co 26), Charles Tayler (Co 17), Roy Searle (Co 18), Wilson Galloway (Co 17) and George Hogarth (Co 3) sent greetings from the UK.

Florida reunion – May 1989

Another holiday as well as a Reunion, George and Wendy's second trip to Florida was in 1989 when they joined a party, which travelled from New York down the East Coast finally ending up again in Miami and Clewiston. The trip was timed so that the party could attend the Memorial Day Service at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, on May 29.

A Message from our Chairman

Dear Friends,

In this our Silver Jubilee Year we make our most ambitious visit to USA. Most of us will first take the opportunity to see something of the East Coast States before joining the remainder of our party to share a linking up in Miami and Clewiston with our American wartime colleagues, then journeying to Arcadia to attend the Annual Memorial Day Service.

We look forward with great pleasure to the total programme but most particularly to the highlights in Florida. Our visit to Arcadia will give us a belated opportunity to express our admiration and thanks to The Rotary Club and to the good people of that City who for more than forty-five years have kept fresh the memory of the 23 British cadets who were killed during training and who are buried in the plot dedicated to them.

Our evenings in Miami and Clewiston will provide venues for warm and nostalgic reunions with old friends including our President, Dr John Paul Riddle MBE, and we believe many will accompany us to Arcadia. There we hope also to renew some of the friendships made during our memorable weekend visit to the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in April 1986.

To all whose generosity and comradeship we are privileged to share we bring the warmest of greetings from Association members in Great Britain and the hope that some of you might be persuaded to make a visit to us in October 1990 as we are planning a special reunion in London at that time to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Very sincerely,
JOHN F. POTTER

Au Revoir, America We'll Be Seeing You

TO OUR INSTRUCTORS

For The Time You Spent
The Trouble You Took
The Good Advice You Poured On Heedless Ears
For The Effort You Spared
For The Patience You Showed
Endless Patience When You Must Have Wanted To Scream
For Sticking Your Neck Out
For Getting Us Out Of Trouble
For Standing Up For Us When The Boot Was Due
For Sweating In The Heat Of Day
For Shivering On The Flarepath, Each Freezing Night
For The Many Hours You Gave To Make Us Each A Pilot

OUR THANKS

Your Work Was Not In Vain
Britain Has More Silver Wings

*Taken from the First Anniversary Brochure
No. 5, B.F.T.S.
July 1941 - July 1942*



Riddle Field 1989



Modern hanger



Remains of swimming pool from 1941

Florida Reunion and unveiling of the Airglades Airport Plaque – 2003

The welcoming ceremony for this visit was held at Riddle Field. The plaque, to be placed in the new terminal building at Airglades Airport (to be named No 5 British Flying Training School Memorial Building) was unveiled by Commissioner William Pelham from the Hendry County Board of Commissioners. Then Harry Leeks (Co 5) presented the Mayor of Clewiston, Mali Chamness, and with a copy of the Arcadia Memorial Painting for hanging in Clewiston City Hall (115 West Ventura Avenue). Bob Rockett of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University was also given a copy. A few members then went on a short flight in a helicopter over what was left of Riddle Field. The large 'diamond' area, which contained the domestic buildings, could still be made

out, but most of the structures²⁵ had gone and the swimming pool filled in.

The following day, the party went to La Belle Airport Freedom Day with a ceremony, which included a US Marines Colour Guard, Colonial Drum and Fife Corps band, the Seminole Honour Guard and a troop of confederate civil war enactors. Flying behind the rostrum was the Union Jack, the Stars and Strips and the Seminole Indian flag, and, a nice touch, the RAF Ensign was draped over an old wooden propeller. After lunch, about ten Members were taken aloft in a Stearman – a fitting end to the day’s celebrations.

At the Farewell Dinner that evening, sponsored by the City of Clewiston and US Sugar Corporation, Harry Leeks replied to speeches by one of the Association Vice Presidents, John Perry, and Clewiston Mayor, Mali Chamness, by noting that there was just 40 years between the Wright brothers first flight at Kittyhawk in 1903 and the cadets learning to fly on Stearmans at Riddle Field in 1943 – and 60 years later, we are still flying in Stearmans.

The official part of visit to Florida 2003 ended at the Oak Ridge Cemetery for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony.

Florida Reunion 2007 – Opening of the new Terminal at Airglades Airport

Dedicated in honour and memory of 5BFTS



²⁵ Hurricane Wilma destroyed the final structure, a hanger, in 2005

AIRGLADES AIRPORT (RIDDLE FIELD)

The official opening of the new Air Terminal at Airglades (Riddle Field) took place on the 22nd February. Jean, myself and Jim & Kathy attended and were delighted to see a number of 5 BFTS members and Embry Riddle personnel were present together with ex instructors and families. Also present were a number of local dignitaries representing the City of Clewiston and Hendry County BOCC. Amongst those attending were :-

Eric Loveland Co.8; John Smalley Co.16; Ken Mills Co.17; Ron Cox Co.22; Jim Moxom Co.24; Bob Hosford-Instr; Reed Clary-Instr. Douglas Day-Instr; Roscoe Brinton; Tom Chappell; Bill Read Link Tr.; John Perry, V.P. 5BFTS; Harold Kosola V.P. 5BFTS and ERAU; Ronnie Davis & daughter Lenora; Son, Daughter and Grandchildren of Jim Cousins; Bob Rocket ERAU; Michelle Berg and Jamie Belongia ERAU; Steve Craft ERAU; Lois and Lewis Blount.

The Ceremony commenced with a Moment of Silence and the playing of the American and British National Anthems followed by TAPS. County Administrator Lester Baird introduced the Mayor of Clewiston Mali Chamness. Mali's fondness and love of 5.B.F.T.S. was never more apparent than in her very emotional speech and we noticed many tears being wiped away. This was followed by the introduction of No.5 BFTS cadets, Honorary Members and Guests. I was then honoured by being asked to take part in the ribbon cutting ceremony and the New Airglades Terminal was declared open.

Commissioner Kevin McCarthy then dedicated the new building in honour and memory of The No.5 B.F.T.S. A plaque mounted on the wall near the entrance reads:-

DEDICATED IN HONOR AND IN MEMORY
OF THE CADETS AND STAFF OF THE
No.5 BRITISH FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL
(No.5 BFTS) WHO TRAINED AT
RIDDLE AIR FIELD DURING THE PERIOD
OF 1941 - 1945
THEIR EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE
FREEDOM OF THE WORLD WERE NOT IN
VAIN AND WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

I was then invited to make an acceptance speech and, after reading a moving message from our President John Potter, I congratulated everyone on the work that has been done saying how touched we all were by the many references to No. 5 BFTS in the development of the airfield. Our grateful thanks were given to the people of Clewiston for their continued care and support for our Association. Finally, on behalf of our Association, I proudly presented an RAF Ensign Flag which I was assured would be found a prominent position for display. After the ceremony we had refreshments and a tour of the terminal and Mayor Mali invited everyone to an excellent lunch at the Clewiston Golf Club.

It had been intended that a memorial to 5 BFTS was to be created in the old hangar on the airfield but Hurricane Wilma made this impossible as the hangar was destroyed. In fact, there is apparently nothing still standing of the airfield as we remembered it although the drive down the lane from the main road felt like we were "coming home".

The new Terminal Building has been created on the spot where we believe the old Control Tower stood. It is a lovely modern building but internally the old wartime photographs of Riddle Field around the frieze tie it all in with our days there. Some cabinets with 5 BFTS memorabilia are being placed in the main entrance although the main displays will still be at the new Clewiston Museum.

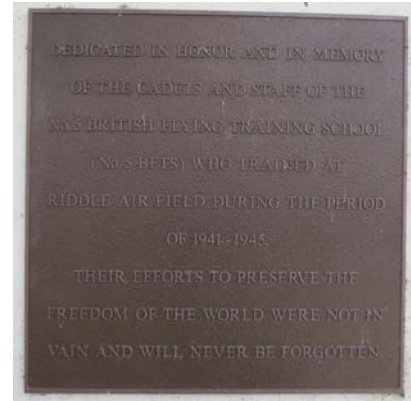
The whole area has been smartened up and we believe will be used as a small commercial airport for private flying and small planes, as well as the headquarters for a Para-Gliding Club.

If anyone is lucky enough to visit Clewiston again you will find the Airglades Airport and new Clewiston Museum certainly well worth a visit.

Harry Leeks Co 5 Chairman



Part of the frieze of wartime photographs above the entrance door



Airglades Terminal Building - April 2012



Remains of the 'Diamond' from Yesterday with the new Air Terminal of Today in the background – April 2014

Florida Reunion - 2010

Although the Association had made what was meant to be its final trip to Clewiston in 2003, and a further trip in 2007, the actual final trip was organised in 2010. Despite dwindling numbers and declining health, six ex-British cadets, some spouses and

widows were joined in Florida by several ex-American cadets, instructor pilots and other affiliated people who live in the United States. On the way to Clewiston, where they stayed in the Clewiston Inn, they visited Arcadia's Oak Grove Cemetery and the graves of the 23 cadets who died during their training. They went to Clewiston Museum and saw film footage from the training days and photographs of the cadets and their classmates. To round of the evening, Peter Hiles (Co 19) quoted Binyon, "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor the years contemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them".

The following day, they went to Airglades Airport for a ceremony in honour of 5BFTS and later, on behalf of 5BFTS Association, Wing Commander Brian Spragg (Co 10) laid a wreath at the 5 BFTS plaque in Clewiston Civic Park.



Ivan Sneezum (Co 22) looks at his course graduation pictures with his wife at the Clewiston Museum (Photograph – Clewiston News, October 7, 2010)



Poppies placed in the Airglades Terminal Building – Message reads, "Thank you for all you have done for us over very many years. No 5 BFTS Association on their last visit. October 2010". Photograph taken May 29, 2012

The visit was reported in the Clewiston News (Thursday, October 7, 2010). Jean Leeks, widow of Harry Leeks (Co 5) said, "My husband used to tell me about the Clewiston Inn. There was not a lot here when he trained at Riddle Field. There was the Sugar building, the Inn and an ice cream shop. My husband wasn't allowed to go into the Inn because he wasn't an officer". In the past, George has also said that he could not recall ever going into the Clewiston Inn (despite their 1986 publicity materials saying cadets "often congregated at the Inn to play piano, sing and socialize with their American hosts") and thought that was because only officers were allowed inside the Inn.

Clewiston – then and now

Apart from the (outside of the) Clewiston Inn, there are two other buildings in Clewiston that should be instantly recognisable to the cadets from 1941-1945 – the cinema and the ice-cream parlour – although the latter is now providing for the different needs of the early 21st century rather than the mid 20th century.



*City Limits of Clewiston – 1935
(Images of Clewiston)*



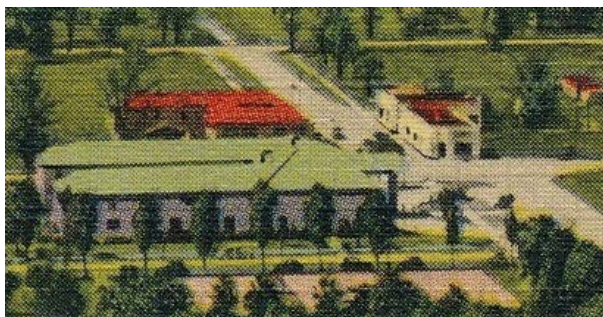
*2014
(Images of Clewiston)*



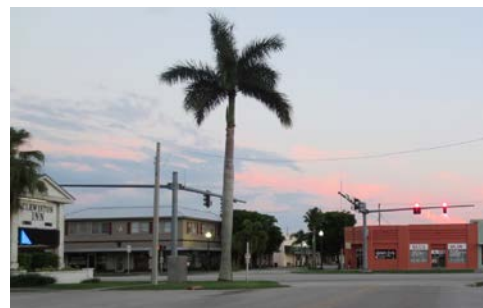
*Dixie Crystal Theater – Built 1941
Picture in Flypaper, December 25, 1942*



Dixie Crystal Theater in May 2012



*Clewiston 1940 (from a postcard)
The ice cream parlour is the cream building in the centre right (the building with the green roof in the foreground is the Clewiston Inn)*



*Clewiston 2012
The cream ice cream parlour is now an orange building housing the Uptown Girls Consignment Boutique and a Nail Salon*

The beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?

Clewiston and its residents have enjoyed a close relationship with 5 BFTS through the years. Former Mayor (now Commissioner) Mali Gardner and former Mayor John Perry Sr. have both visited England to attend reunions, and Clewiston proudly flies the Union Jack alongside the American flag in Civic Park in the heart of town.



Clewiston – April 2014

In a preface to the last Directory of Members in 2005, the Association President, John Potter, wrote:

“But now, we must face the inevitability of gradual decline. The enthusiasm is still much in evidence but the passing years take a toll on our membership at a faster and faster pace. I’m very proud of what we have achieved and shared and I am most grateful, not only to those who have served with me on the committees across the years but also to those who have supported us, with attendance, with suggestions, with compliments, even with criticisms. You really have been the strength of the association.

This will be our last Directory so keep your copy safe. But this is not the end of No. 5. It is just. Ignoring the creaks and groans, we’ll aim to keep the association reasonably active for as long as you want it to survive.”

The formal end finally arrived in September 2013, when, at the National Reunion in Bedford, members voted to disband the Association. As the Chairman, John Broome, wrote, “When we depart from this gathering, we will take with us fond memories of times past and many happy reunions. How lucky we have been.”

This was not, however, the end of the RAF in Clewiston. It was just the end of the beginning!

The Clewiston Sugar Festival Guide for the 28th Annual Festival in April 2014, says:

“During World War II, Clewiston was the home of British Flying Training School Number 5, established west of the city at Riddle Field. Almost 2000 young Brits were trained as RAF pilots and formed lasting friendships with local citizens. Some still return to visit with their “Yankee” friends.”

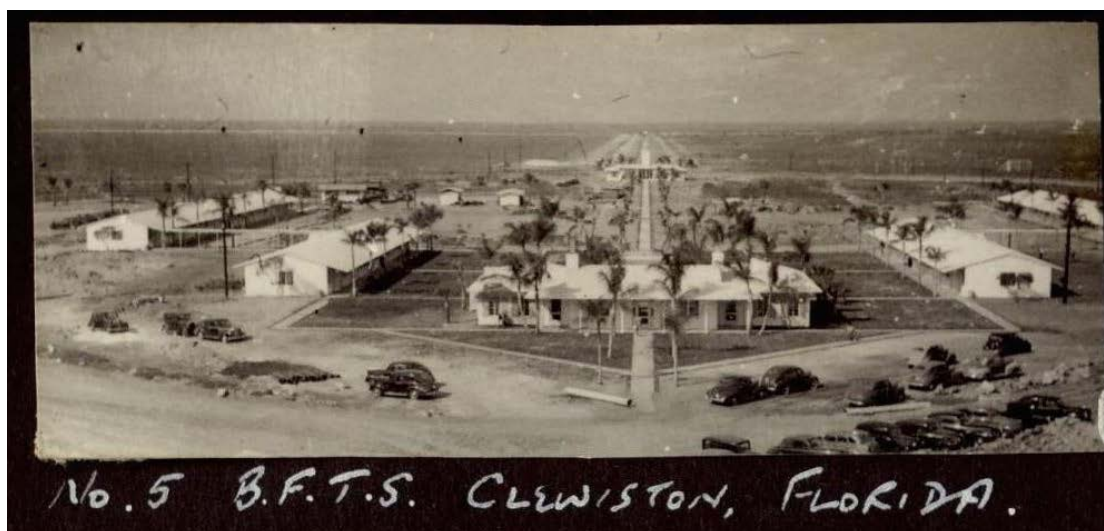
The ‘some’ are getting frailer and smaller in number, but the mantle is being passed on, and my generation will continue to remember...

In 2010, the wife of Ivan Sneezum (Co 22) said, *“Many of these boys were 18, 19 years old when they came here and they still come back here to this day. What is amazing is that Clewiston remembers them and welcomes them always”*.

The Union Jack continues to fly in Clewiston, at Airglades, and at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia on Memorial Day, and with luck, it will continue to fly for many more years to come.

This Chapter has been read by the last Chairman of the 5BFTS Association, John Broome (Co 18), who has given it his blessing.

It is dedicated to all cadets (British and American) and staff of the Number 5 British Flying Training School (5BFTS) who were at Riddle Field between 1941 and 1945.



Epilogue

In 2014, during a trip to Florida, I was fortunate enough to have a 60 minute flight, not in a Harvard AT-6, but in a P-51 Mustang built in 1944. With my very experienced instructor, I did some basic manoeuvring, stalls and simple aerobatics such as aileron and barrel rolls. Stallion 51 of Kissimmee owns the Mustang, and their literature states that they can promise a ‘rare and exhilarating experience’. It certainly was, and has helped me to understand some of the joy and excitement experienced by the cadets as they learnt to fly.

The cadets never forgot why they were in Clewiston, and to reiterate George’s words from 1976, *“by today’s standards, we were astonishingly very immature, and yet with this immaturity, we seemed to have a seriousness which is perhaps lacking today. Of course, we were at war and this did provide a constant purpose to a young man’s life”*.

They never forgot the people in Florida who treated the cadets like their own sons and brothers. George was more or less adopted by the Simpson family of Fort Myers and kept in touch with them after the war. My sister is named after one of the family’s daughters. My parents and sister visited them and they came to stay with us in Worcestershire. Letters, cards and gifts were exchanged; I remember being sent a card shaped like an old-fashioned American steam train with a dime slotted into the wheels for Christmas many years ago. When staying in Fort Lauderdale several years ago, I chatted at length to one of the family on the telephone.

They also never forget those who went out to Florida, but didn’t return home, the 23 cadets who died during training (*“While preparing to defend their Country²⁶”*) and are buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Arcadia. An annual Memorial Ceremony continues to be held at Oak Ridge on Memorial Day organised by the Rotary Club of Arcadia with a wreath provided and laid each year on behalf of the 5BFTS Association. Although the Association has now officially ceased meeting, the members have made sure that wreaths will be provided and laid for many years to come.

We, who are the cadets’ sons and daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren, will never forget the debt we owe to our fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers. Those young men played their part in winning the War, which allowed us to live as we live today. Many of the cadets are no longer with us; some died during the war, others since, but they are all very real to us and we remember them. For all those who trained in Clewiston at 5BFTS including those who died in Florida, those who were killed on active service, those who survived World War 2 but have since ‘handed in their Log Books’ and those who are still alive – and for their instructors, who must have had endless patience - we say ‘thank you’.

²⁶ Fly Paper, January 29, 1942, with reference to the death of Roger Crosskey, Course 3, who died on January 20, 1942.

There may be no more formal reunions, and many cadets are no longer with us, but families have now become close friends, bound by the comradeship generated in Clewiston and by generosity of the people of Florida, which has continued to the present day. Visit Clewiston today and the first thing you will see is a Union Jack flying alongside the American flag in Civic Park in the City of Clewiston. Then see the 5BFTS memorial in the Park. Visit the Clewiston Museum and view the display dedicated to 5BFTS. Take a drive out to the site of Riddle Field, where you will see a small display dedicated to 5BFTS. On the site of the camp, there are more flags flying. As soon as you arrive in Clewiston, you will stop being a stranger and will become a friend – their generosity continues.



Clewiston Civic Park 2014



Site of Riddle Field and the 5BFTS Camp - 2014

At the site of Riddle Field and on the wall of the Clewiston Airglades reception building, which is dedicated in honor and in memory of all those who were at 5BFTS, there is a plaque to 5BFTS, which ends with these words:

**‘Their efforts to preserve the freedom of the world were not in vain
and will never be forgotten’**

As George put it so well, “All I can say is that if we had to do it all over again and had any say in the matter, we wouldn’t do anything different and we would certainly want to do our training in Florida. Maybe the boys in California, with the nearness of Hollywood, had a better time – but I feel it would be difficult to have had any better experience that we had in Florida.”

Wherever the British Flag is flown
With the stars and stripes above
You’ll find a kindred unity
Of friendship and of love;
Each British heart beneath those flags
Whoever it may be
Says ‘Thank you’ to America,
‘For what you’ve been to me²⁷



© Dr Jenifer A Harding, January 2015

²⁷ Written by a cadet who completed his training in 1942

Appendix 1 – List of different aircraft types flown by George while in the RAF

Aircraft		Engine	Aircraft		Engine
T	Stearman PT-17A	Continental	SIU	Mosquito XV	Merlin 61
T	Vultee BT-13A	P & W	SIU	Stirling III	Hercules
T	Harvard AT-6A	P & W	SIU	Anson	Cheetah IX
All	Airspeed Oxford	Cheetah X	SIU	Mosquito IX	Merlin 72
T	Blenheim I, IV & V	Mercury VIII & XX	SIU	Mosquito III	Merlin 21 & 23
T	Beaufighter II	Merlin 20	SIU	Firefly I	Griffon II
O TFU	Beaufighter I	Merlin	SIU	Barracuda II	Merlin 32
O	Mosquito II	Merlin 21 23	SIU	Hellcat I	P & W Wasp
O	Martinet I	Mercury XXX	SIU	Mosquito XVI	Merlin
O	Magister	Gypsy Major	SIU O	Mosquito XXX	Merlin 76
O	Master III	P & W Wasp	T SIU	Mosquito XVII	Merlin 76
O LS	Mosquito VI	Merlin 22, 23 & 25	LS	Taylorcraft Auster	
TFU SIU	Proctor	Gypsy Queen	LS	Meteor II	Rolls-Royce Halford H1
TFU	Mosquito XII	Merlin 21 & 23	SIU	Mosquito XXXV	Merlin 113
TFU	Mentor	Continental	SIU	Mosquito XXXIV	Merlin 114
TFU	Beaufighter IV & VI	Merlin 20 & Hercules	SIU	Brigand	Centaurus
TFU	Mosquito III	Merlin 21 23	SIU	Hudson	P & W
SIU	Lancaster I III	Merlin 38	SIU	Liberator	P & W
SIU LS	Wellington X1	Hercules	SIU	Mosquito IX	Merlin
SIU	Firefly NF II	Griffon II			

T = aircraft flown during training, O = Operational aircraft, TFU and SIU = aircraft flown while at RAF Defford, LS = aircraft flown while at the Night Fighters Leaders School at Tangmere.

P&W = Pratt and Whitney engine

Appendix 2 – Full list of venues for 5BFTS Association National Reunions

Month	Year	Venue	Month	Year	Venue
October	1967	Royal Aero Club, London	October	1996	Chester
October	1969	Victory Club, London	October	1997	Bournemouth
October	1971	Royal Automobile Club, London	October	1998	Buxton
	1973		September	1999	Bedford
November	1982	Gatwick	September	2000	Harrogate
November	1984	Banbury	September	2001	Oxford
October	1985	Southport	September	2002	Derby
October	1986	Cambridge	September	2003	Stratford upon Avon
October	1987	Harrogate	September	2004	Derby
October	1988	Bristol	September	2005	Bedford
October	1989	Woodhall Spa		2006	
October	1990	London Battle of Britain Memorial Weekend		2007	
				2008	
October	1991	Emsworth		2009	
October	1992	Milton Keynes		2010	
October	1993	Wilmslow		2011	
October	1994	Anstruther		2012	
October	1995	Tunbridge Wells		2013	