

## Newsletter No. 8 – September 2017

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### Reflection

In the UK, we watched the progress of Hurricane Irma with some trepidation knowing that our friends who live in Florida might be under the path of the hurricane. Many were able to evacuate and thankfully, as far as I know, no one has been hurt and property damage although very inconvenient, is repairable. Run off from rainfall is making Lake Okeechobee rise above the normal high but I read that no damage has been done to the dike even where there is major construction work as in Clewiston. We hope it will not be too long before life returns to normal although newspaper reports here are predicting that this will take some time in the tourist areas on both the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

On October 30, 1991, I was in Cape Cod. Hurricane Grace was merging into a strong storm system over the sea resulting in the Perfect (or Halloween) Storm. We went to the Marconi Wireless Station on the beach that morning. As it took all our strength to stop our 12 year old from being blown over, we beat a hasty retreat. By noon, the beaches had closed. My photos show a sea that is foaming and white under a dark grey sky. We hastened back to Hyannis on Route 28 through torrential rain. Shortly after we arrived back at the hotel, flooding closed this road! Winds were reported as high as 78mph (they certainly rattled the roof of the hotel swimming pool!) and the massive waves led to extensive coastal flooding.

I know that the threat of hurricanes is an inescapable part of living in Florida but looking at pictures of Irma's damage, made me think about our time on Cape Cod. We went out that day not appreciating the power of the storm – by the time we returned, we knew a little of what it felt like. The message - never underestimate nature!

In this edition, we remember with pride, four men who became pilots at Riddle Field, served their countries well and afterwards, helped to ensure we remembered what they did and whom they did it for.

*Jenifer Harding*

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

### Five 5BFTS Facts

Opened July 1941  
Closed September 1945

Riddle Field was 2,500 acres in size

Cost \$2 million to build

1434 graduates (1325 RAF and 109 USAAF)

23 RAF cadets died in training



Useful websites:

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

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

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

'George Hogarth – Clewiston and Beyond'. Memoires of George Hogarth, 5BFTS Course 3  
<http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/>

US Contact: Harold Kosola – [hkairplane@aol.com](mailto:hkairplane@aol.com)

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## Annual British Memorial Service 2017

We gathered once again at Oak Ridge Cemetery on May 29, for the annual British Memorial Day Service. It was hot (95F or 35C) and humid, but this didn't deter people from coming. Judy Kirkpatrick, British Memorial Service Chair, was away attending a graduation, so Paul Seusey, Past President of Arcadia Rotary Club, ably led the service. Ross Allen of the Jacobite Pipe and Drum Band of Sarasota (Courtesy of the St Andrew's Society of Sarasota) played the bagpipes in his usual evocative way. The Arcadia City Mayor, the Honorable Judy Wertz-Strickland, welcomed us to the service, Terry Stewart, Arcadia City Administrator, led the singing of the national anthems and the Pledge of Allegiance and Vernon Keen, an Arcadia Rotary Club member, led the Invocation and Benediction. I had the honour of reading out the names of the 23 cadets who lie in the cemetery.

The special guest was William C Thompson, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). Bill gave a thoughtful and moving address, which showed he really understood 5BFTS, what it stood for and how the cadets must have felt being in Florida, which for many, was the first time away from home. Bill's wife, Sally, came with him and laid a poppy wreath and flag on John Paul Riddle's grave.

As in other years, a large number of wreaths were laid. For some reason, two 5BFTS wreaths had been delivered, so one was left at Oak Ridge by the British Plot marker and the other was taken to Clewiston Museum where Jeff Barwick and I laid it the following day. As usual, a number of those participating, including Bill and Sally, enjoyed a delightful lunch at Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit after the service.



*Participating and contributing organisations were St Andrew's Society of Sarasota, Gulf Coast St David's Welsh Society, Sarasota Welsh Society, Caledonian Club, EAA Warbird Squadron 24 Inc, The British American Club of Charlotte County, The Scottish Clan and Association of Florida West, Sarasota British Club, Alumni of ERAU, British Car Club of SW Florida, British American Club of SW Florida, Royal Canadian Legion Ponce de Leon 176, Canadian British Club, Daughters of the British Empire in the USA, RAF British Defence Staff, British Commonwealth War Graves Commission.*



Paul Seusy



Arcadia City Mayor



Terry Stewart



Ross Allen



Placement of Union Jacks and Poppy Wreaths – Sally (in the black and white dress) was by John Paul Riddle's grave.



British Plot after the Memorial Day Service



Harold Kosola and Jeff Barwick



Harold, Bill Thompson and Jenny Harding



Granddaughters of Charles Sweet (US Co 18) 5BFTS  
←

**I should like to thank the Arcadia Rotary Club, and especially, Judy Fitzpatrick for all the hard work and dedication in keeping these memories alive**



→ Wreath at Clewiston Museum

## Annual British Memorial Service 2018

The next **Annual British Memorial Service** will be held on **May 28, 2018**, at the British Plot, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, when we gather to remember the 23 RAF cadets who "Crossed the river to rest in the shade of the trees". They died during training and never left Florida to return to their homeland. John Paul Riddle's ashes are buried alongside the cadets.

Every annual service is special and we owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to the Rotary Club of Arcadia for the organisation of the service and to the many others who contribute.

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>The service starts at 10am</b></p> <p>The Service is organised, as it has been for the past 61 years, by Arcadia Rotary Club<br/>Mailing address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492<br/>Telephone for information at 863-444-0664<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:BritishMemorialService@gmail.com">BritishMemorialService@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>EVERYBODY IS WELCOME</b></p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

And afterwards: If you feel in need of refreshment, can I recommend lunch at **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. Reservations are a good idea – phone 863-494-0615 or email [nbruden@msn.com](mailto:nbruden@msn.com). For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please visit: <http://marymargaretsteaandbiscuit.com>

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## In Memoriam

**Alan Bruce DFC (Co 11) died November 7, 2016**



*Cadet Alan Bruce Course 11*



*Alan Bruce receiving his Veteran's badge from the Mayor of Hull, June 27, 2007*

Alan was a long-standing member of the 5BFTS Association joining around 1988 and attending several reunions. Born in Hull, he served in the RAF from May 1942 to August 22, 1946. He travelled to Clewiston via Canada, Boston and New York where he went to the Radio City Music Hall and saw the great Glenn Miller. Whilst at Clewiston, he spent weekends in Fort Myers staying with Miss Flossie Hill who owned the main store. Alan graduated as a Flight Sergeant from Riddle Field on April 9, 1943; of the 50 cadets who started Co 11, 48 graduated and two sadly were killed (Derek R Clandillon and John A Clay who crashed 20 miles north-east of Okeechobee and now rest at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia).

Returning to Britain, Alan was posted to 14 AFU (Advanced Flying Unit) at Banff. From there, he converted from Wellingtons to the new Halifax heavy bomber at 1663 Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU) at Rufforth. While at Rufforth, he was sent on two trips with the heavy bomber squadron, 102 Squadron RAF Pocklington. On January 20, 1944, he went on an operation to Berlin; the crew Alan flew with came home, but this was recorded as “an exceptional night of misfortune” and a “terrible shock to the squadron” as 8 Halifaxes were lost, crashed or were badly damaged and 16 aircrew were killed or posted missing and 22 became POWs. Sadly, the crew that Alan flew with did not return from Magdeburg the following day.

Alan joined 10 Squadron (Bomber Command) in March 1944. After being in one of the 1000 heavy bombers that delivered a devastating attack on Essen on April 20, 1944, Alan was interviewed by the Hull Daily News and was quoted as saying, “The fires got such a grip that the target indicators were [word unreadable] in the brilliance of the blaze”. Alan was awarded the DFC in February 1945; at the time, he was designated Acting Flying Officer.



10 Squadron  
Crew of Halifax 'Z' – Zebra after 37 Ops  
Alan is the pilot

Photograph taken after February 1945 as Alan Bruce (back row centre) is credited with his DFC.

**Blaine Harris Schultz (Co 12) died November 24, 2016 aged 94**



Cadet Blaine Schultz Course 12



Blaine Schultz – Obituary photo

Blaine was born January 30, 1922 in Caledonia Township, Trail County, North Dakota, in the same farm house in which his father had been born. While attending North Dakota State College, he took pilot training as part of the Civilian Pilot Training Program. After Pearl Harbor, he joined the US Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet. He learned that, because of his previous flying experience, he could volunteer to be trained at a British flying school and upon graduating, he would be awarded both RAF and US pilot wings and would be placed in the Air Transport Command.

USAAF and RAF cadets trained alongside each other on seven courses (Co 12 to Co 18)

and Blaine was one of the first 12 USAAF cadets on Course 12. Overall, 109 USAAF cadets graduated and were able to wear both USAAF and RAF Wings. In the 1980s, the Course 12 American graduates started having small reunions amongst themselves. The first was in Columbus Ohio in 1984 and Blaine was one of the attendees along with Doyle Alexander, John Gilette, Pete Lazzara, Fred Renshaw, Ralph Rissman, Dick Schmidt, Otis Skubal, Bill Slade and Clif Suhm. Reunions continued until 2002; the last one was in St Louis and included a tour of the McDonnell Douglas aircraft manufacturing facility. Blaine also played an active role in the 5BFTS Association and was the US contact until 2004. He was offered and accepted the honour of becoming Vice President of the Association.

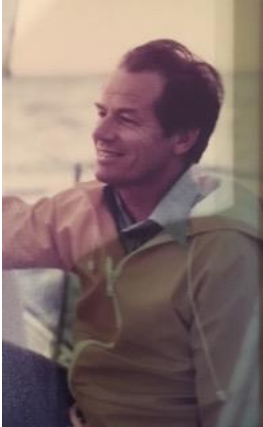
After graduating from Riddle Field and joining Air Transport Command, he initially delivered a C-46 plane to Marrakech, Morocco, and then served 13 months in North Africa flying a variety of planes out of Casablanca and Tripoli. He returned a C-54 to Memphis TN at the end of the war. He accumulated a total of 1700 hours (900 overseas). After discharge in December 1945, he resumed his engineering training in January 1946, graduated in June 1947 and remained in the engineering industry for the whole of his career.

Blaine was an active involved citizen, serving on the South Milwaukee Redevelopment Committee, SM Street Beautification Committee, and the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Committee and more. He was an election proctor for 20+ years. A member of St. John Lutheran Church in Cudahy since 1959, he served there as President of the Congregation, on the Board of Elders, Head of Education Building committee, the evangelism committee, taught Bible study and was a lay liturgist. He also dedicated 49 years of active membership to the South Milwaukee Lions Club where he was awarded the Birch-Strum Fellowship, Presidents Award, named a Knight of Sight, Eye Bank transport driver and was twice awarded the Lions Club’s highest honor, the Melvin Jones Award. He was also a member of Old Goats, (Gentlemen of Assorted Talents and Services) which met for lunch weekly after his retirement. His wife, Muriel, whom he married in September 1944, and their daughter Judith and sons Lawrence and Geoffrey survive him.

**Peter Alfred John Brannan (Co 25) died June 24, 2017 aged 91**



*Cadet Peter Brannan Course 25*



*Peter enjoying his second transport love - sailing*



*Peter at Clewiston Civic Park – Memorial Day May 27, 1985*



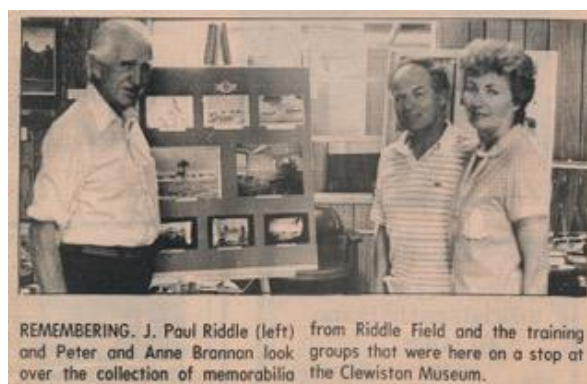
*In later life*

Peter Brannan was born near London on June 27, 1925. He joined the Air Training Corps at 15 and the RAF at 18 in 1943, and then spent many frustrating months doing training courses and odd jobs on bomber aerodromes. Eventually he “gained freedom” and in February 1945, he was on Queen Mary bound for New York and Canada. One of the fortunate few chosen to train in the States, March 1945 found him in Riddle Field as part of Course 25. After some days lost because of illness, he was reassigned to Course 26. In the

end, however, Peter did not get his Wings. In his words<sup>1</sup>, “I had been training for almost 4 years and it was not easy to see those magic wings slip through your grasp simply because the war was over. It was only later we realised how lucky we had been to be ‘the last of the many’”. Peter returned to Britain in September 1945 to be “re-mustered”. He lost his aircrew training status and the cadets ‘white flash’ worn on the front of forage caps (and the 7/6d daily flying pay!) and became an ordinary AC2; however, all was not lost as he was then re-mustered as a PTI (Physical Training Instructor) giving him the rank of Corporal and 8/- a day extra pay (more than he had as a cadet!). He was finally demobilised in June 1947 having served nearly four years in RAF Training Command.

After WW2, Peter worked as a reporter on the Harrow Observer moving to a Fleet Street magazine in 1955. With his family, he emigrated to Toronto, Canada, in December 1956 and became assistant editor of Canadian Aviation magazine subsequently being the editor for 10 years. He travelled extensively in search of stories including flying to the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line in the Arctic, flying on the inaugural Eastbound Comet IV service between New York and London in 1958, attending the Farnborough Air Show in 1960, being the first North American aviation writer on Concorde, and taking off and landing on an aircraft carrier. After leaving the magazine, he became the Editor of Debates for the Ontario Provincial Legislature (Hansard).

Peter’s time at Riddle Field was momentous. Arriving in March 1945 on Course 25, the first course that did NOT get their Wings, he saw VE and VJ Days and then the closure of the field, attended the Farewell Dance and was on the final train taking cadets northward pursued by cars with waving (and sometimes tearful) young ladies. He returned twice to see the Riddle Field buildings before they were demolished. On Memorial Day 1985 (May 27), he arrived in Clewiston too late for the service at the 5BFTS Memorial, but while lunching at the Clewiston Inn, was quickly identified as an ex-5BFTS cadet and ended up seeing the museum and speaking to many people who had helped entertain the cadets between 1941 and 1945. But the highlight for Peter was meeting John Paul Riddle (“a wonderful young gentleman in his eighties”) who just happened to be lunching with his biographer at the Clewiston Inn as well.



Top RHS: Peter, Beryl Bowden (Clewiston Museum curator) and John Paul Riddle  
LHS and bottom RHS: From Clewiston News - May 28, 1985

<sup>1</sup> As told to Will Largent in ‘RAF - Wings over Florida’

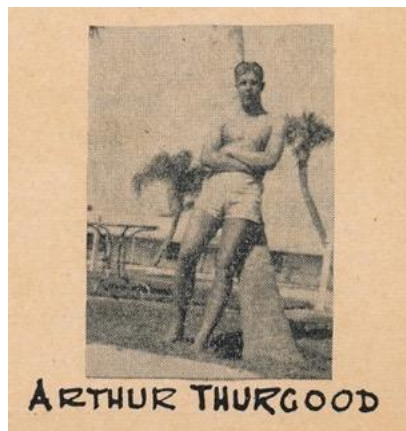


*Peter and Anne Brannan at home - summer 2015*

**Arthur John (Clem) Thurgood (Co 19) died 25 July 2017 aged 94**



*Cadet Arthur Thurgood  
Course 19*



*Listening Out – August 15, 1944*



*Long service Inspector calls it a day – retirement no. 1 in 1975*

Arthur John Thurgood, known as Clem, joined the RAF during WW2 and did his initial pilot training in Florida. Part of Course 19, he started training on February 6, 1944 and graduated (received his Wings) on August 26, 1944. Course 19's 'Listening Out' supplement in Flypaper August 15, 1944, refers to the Course as "The Notorious 19th". Arthur married Dorothy in 1945 and they celebrated their Diamond wedding in 2005. Dorothy died in 2011.



After the war, Arthur joined the City of St Albans Police Force and his two daughters, Linda and Susan, were born in St Albans. After integration of the St Albans Police Force into the Hertfordshire Police Force, he served in Hemel Hempstead, Letchworth, St Albans again, and then Watford. Finally, on promotion to Inspector, he returned to Hemel Hempstead where he remained for nine years before retiring in 1975 aged 52 after completing 30 years



service with the Police. After his Police service he joined Dacorum Borough Council as Rating Officer and finally retired for the second time when he was 65.

Arthur had a great sense of humour and many interests but most of all he loved his Masonic Lodges and playing golf. He enjoyed a close and loving relationship with his family, which included six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His funeral was held on 21 August at St Mary Church Hemel Hempstead.

**We remember with thanks these pilots who have handed in their logbooks, and to other pilots, Riddle Field staff and friends known to us who have done so much to keep their memories alive.**

***WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE!***

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### Harold Kosola – very much on the way to recovery!

In March, I reported that Harold Kosola, a 5BFTS American Honorary Member and current US contact, who had a stroke on December 24, 2016, started home rehab at the end of January.

Harold was able to carry out his normal task of distributing the March 2017 Newsletter to our US friends and was recovering so well that he and his wife, Joan, were able to join us at the British Plot at Arcadia's Oak Ridge Cemetery on Memorial Day and come to lunch afterwards at Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit.

Harold – it was lovely to see you on May 29. Keep on with the rehab and we look forward to seeing you in 2018!



*Harold and Joan Kosola – Oak Ridge Cemetery. May 29, 2017*

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### LIFT Wings of legacy – A Living History

In January, I heard from Alan Cesar who told me that he was “writing a story for LIFT, the Embry-Riddle alumni magazine, about the No. 5 BFTS facility at Riddle Field”. This was published in May 2017. In the Wings of Legacy section of the magazine, it is entitled “A Living History – memorial keeps British Flight Training School and World War II era alive for Central Florida Community.” Alan mentions the reason why Embry Riddle started training pilots for the RAF in 1941, the annual British Memorial Day Service at Arcadia, and includes contributions from me, Jeff Barwick, Judy Kirkpatrick, Harold Kosola and Charles (Chuck) Neyhart (Co 17). Chuck was one of the USAAF cadets who was awarded both RAF and USAAF Wings and is quoted in the article as saying that “The RAF training was more stringent than American training, including night flying, solo flying and navigation”. After Clewiston, Chuck served in WW2 as a ferry pilot and later in the Korean War and in Vietnam. He retired in 1968. LIFT is available on the internet - <https://lift.erau.edu/a-living-history/>



In May 2017, I heard from Chuck (more formally, Major Charles A. Neyhart USAF (Ret), BS, MS, PhD) who said that he served in the US Air Force for 30 years. He married Shirley, who comes from the UK (Sutton in Surrey). She lived during the London Blitz and was bombed out three times. Shirley was a nurse and midwife. She and Chuck have been married for 53 years and live in San Antonio, Texas.

← Chuck Neyhart wearing both RAF and USAAF Wings



Thanks to Anne Hughes a volunteer researcher at Imperial War Museum, Duxford, the 5BFTS (Riddle Field) section on the American Air Museum Internet Archive is expanding; there are now 22 biographies of 5BFTS people (cadets, instructors and John Paul Riddle himself) on the website.

In the last edition, I mentioned that, in February 2017, Nick Jordan (son of John Jordan Co 13) had come over to Britain from his home in Canada, and met with Anne and me at Duxford. What follows is Nick's account of his trip including his meeting with Eric Denham (Co 13) in Oxfordshire and that wonderful day in Duxford.

As has already been mentioned in previous newsletters, I made the trip of a lifetime on my motorcycle last year from my home in Vernon, British Columbia, to Florida. The primary objective was to be in Arcadia to attend the 60th annual Memorial Day service for the 23 cadets who were killed in training. I got to meet Jenny and her husband and also to see Riddle Field as it is today, where my father John Jordan learned to fly as a part of Course 13, from January to July 1943. Up to date pictures of the airfield, taken by Anne Hughes, were in the March newsletter.

Having found out that Eric Denham, who was one of my father's room-mates (along with Don Gaastra and Johnny Muraille) was still alive, I decided to make a trip back to England early this year to meet him. A wonderful man, who filled in many of the blanks in what I knew of my father's time in the Air Force. They lost touch after they got back to England, but finally re-connected as a result of the 5 BFTS Association. They were planning on meeting in 1995 or 1996, but unfortunately my father became ill and passed away before that could happen.

I was also lucky enough to visit the IWM at Duxford to meet Anne Hughes and re-meet Jenny, for the 'unveiling' of the souvenir book that had been signed by my father, Eric, and the other cadets on Course 13, as mentioned in the March newsletter.

After the war in Europe ended my father transferred to the Fleet Air Arm in the hopes of seeing action in the Pacific theatre. At that time no one knew about the atom bomb, and the assumption was that the war against the Japanese was going to be protracted. He was trained to fly in Corsair aircraft and one of his last operational airfields was RNAS Yeovilton. The Fleet Air Arm Museum is located there, so a visit was in order, primarily to see a FAA Corsair in its original colour scheme.

*Thank you Nick for your contribution and Anne for all your hard work in developing the 5BFTS Archive.*

If you haven't been to Duxford yet, I strongly recommend that you visit if you are in Cambridgeshire – but allow a full day, as there is so much to see there! Visit [iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) for more information.

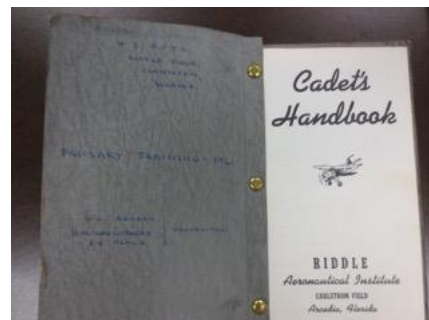
To read about the 22 5BFTS people on the American Air Museum Internet Archive, please visit <http://www.americanairmuseum.com> and search on 5BFTS and/or Riddle Field.

To read more about the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum at Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton (also known as HMS Heron) or make plans to go there, please visit <http://www.fleetairarm.com>

### More about Duncan F Wilson Co 3

In the last edition, I reported that Andrew Houiellebecq from Jersey had written to us about a book he was given on the weather that had the name D F Wilson and 5BFTS written on the inside cover. I have since discovered a little more information about Duncan.

Duncan became a Squadron Leader with the RAF and then joined BEA. He was a captain with British Airways when he retired. On April 17, 1986, Duncan and his wife visited the Clewiston Museum and on April 29, Duncan wrote to Beryl Bowden, then curator of the museum, to say "thank you" for the hospitality they received and to donate two items to the museum. The first item is a road map of Florida dating to 1941-1942 and the second is a 'Cadet's Handbook' issued to all cadets (at least in the first few courses) which contains a certificate showing that Duncan made his first solo flight on October 25, 1941.



### #5 British Flying Training School Clewiston, Florida. Website Update



Since March, the website has had several enquiries. An email from Susie Bond told us that sadly her father, Arthur Thurgood (Co 19) had died and she was seeking information about his time at Riddle Field. See 'In Memoriam' for more information about Arthur.

We had an enquiry from a Japanese television producer and two enquiries about instructors.

- Vicki Brittain, whose father Frederick J Brittain was an instructor from 1942-1945
- Bill Archibald, whose father Alfred William Archibald (known as Pappy to the cadets), was an instructor at Riddle Field. Bill tells us that his father was in his 30s – and probably seemed very old to the cadets! Bill was born at Clewiston during WW2 but can remember very little – apart from lots of airplanes!

I had the great joy and privilege to meet with Vicki at Clewiston Museum in May (See details under Clewiston Museum) and while at the museum researched the archives to find out some more information about Bill's father. There is very little on the website about instructors; however, this is an area now under active development.

Any photos that are passed to us will, with the owner's permission, be uploaded onto the 5BFTS website and if relevant, to the American Air Museum Archive at Duxford so that we can all share them. The 5BFTS website can be found at [www.5bfts.org.uk](http://www.5bfts.org.uk)



Clewiston Museum Update – Jenny Harding

In May 2017, I was privileged, once again, to be able to attend Oak Ridge Cemetery on Memorial Day for the annual British Memorial Day Service. After the service and an excellent lunch at Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit, my husband, David, and I set off to Clewiston where we had made plans to stay for a week. This wasn't entirely a social visit (although as usual, we received wonderful hospitality) as Jeff Barwick and I were on a mission to sort out and catalogue the museum's 5BFTS archives. When Beryl Bowden was curator (there is a picture of Beryl with Peter Brannan and John Paul Riddle in the 'In Memoriam' to Peter Brannan), she listed and catalogued as things were received. Since then, the British 5BFTS Archive has been received and sorted, and the museum refurbished, but little has been done to continue Beryl's work and catalogue the vast number of archives donated directly to the museum but not on show. The museum has expanded and Butch, the current curator, has many other responsibilities, so Jeff and I gave him some help with the 5BFTS archive.

We worked for four days and many things are now sorted into 'categories'. I have noted the items in the various categories – my task is to make this into an internet friendly list that can be added to the website so that all can benefit. In the museum's storeroom, we also found books, flags, plaques, pictures and items of uniform – all now listed as well.

We also had a morning excursion along the back roads to get an impression of what the routes out of Clewiston would have been like in the 1940s.



*This is the old route to the east, about 9 miles out of Clewiston, built by 1926. Now known as Corkscrew Boulevard, it was the road taken by the cadets when they travelled to Miami, West Palm Beach or the Everglades Club on Palm Beach. In the 1960s, a new road was built as part of the improvements to the Hoover Dike. This old road has now fallen into disrepair and is mainly impassable unless driving a 4x4 vehicle. Quite a contrast to the present dual carriageway US27 highway at the same point 9 miles to the east of Clewiston!!*

The Museum website [www.clewistonmuseum.com](http://www.clewistonmuseum.com) has display information and links, which connect to photographs and other archives on the subject of 5 BFTS.



← Forage cap  
donated by P J  
Appleby Co 21

Jeff Barwick  
holding to LHS -  
uniform donated  
by Marty Bennett  
(Instructor) and to  
RHS - flying suit  
donated by C  
Edwards (Co 2)  
→



Flying Jacket  
donated by Dina  
Moore in 2016.  
The jacket  
belonged to her  
husband L O  
Moore (Co 17)



## Meeting up – a special day at Clewiston Museum

When I set out from Heathrow Airport on the way to Tampa, FL, for the Memorial Day service and subsequent visit to Clewiston, I was hoping to meet some new friends in Clewiston, but I hadn't bargained for such a wonderful experience as we had on June 4, 2017. Vicki Brittain (whose father, Frederick J Brittain was an instructor) and David Brannan (whose father, Peter Brannan was on Co 25 - see 'In Memoriam') with his wife Debbie met me at Clewiston Museum along with Jeff and Carlota Barwick, Mali Gardner (Mayor of Clewiston) and her husband, Terry, and my husband, David. Jeff took Vicki, David and Debbie round the museum and then we spent a wonderful time – talking and sharing photos, artifacts, experiences, etc. After a bread and cheese lunch (with wine kindly supplied by David) we went over to Clewiston City Civic Park to see the 5BFTS Memorial Plaques in the newly planted Memorial Garden. After that, we all went off to Airglades to see the 5BFTS plaque and the flags, which permanently fly on what was Riddle Field.

After we met, Vicki sent me an email saying, *“The visit has really inspired me to learn more of the BFTS days. I saw that there was also a cadet with the last name Brittain [S A Brittain Co 24]. My father’s logbooks really paint a picture of those days. For example, I was looking at an entry where they were on a flight to look for a missing aircraft, which unfortunately coincided with the date on the Oak Ridge Cemetery list of two cadets that tragically died. I will be looking at the logbook more closely to better understand the story. I did find one entry where my father flew with a Cadet Brennan [E J Brennan Co 25], but not Brannan”.*

There will be more about Peter Brannan and Frederick Brittain in the March 2018 Newsletter



*Clewiston Museum  
L-R: David, Debbie, Vicki and Jeff*



*L-R: Mali, Jenny, David and Vicki (with her father’s 1986 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Diamond Jubilee Eagle)*



*Terminal Building (No 5 British Flying Training School Memorial Building) at Airglades Airport, Clewiston. L-R: Vicki, Jenny and David*



*5BFTS Plaque on the Terminal Building – opened in 2003*



Flags flying on 'Riddle Field' – June 4, 2017 (Thunder clouds in the background!)

Jenny Harding writes: *On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick and Curator, Butch Wilson, for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum.*

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### **Lois Heflin Blount - Riddle Field Remembered**

I heard from Lois in May 2017 and again in June 2017 when she sent me a collection of cuttings and photos.

Thank you Lois - I plan to include many of these in the March 2018 Newsletter

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### **Memories – Ron Cox (Co 22)**

Ron Cox wrote to me in July. He told me that he graduated from 5BFTS in March 1945 just before his 20th birthday. He says:

“Like everyone who was lucky enough to train in Florida, it formed one of the most memorable periods in my life. I first went back in 1966 and visited Mrs NeSmith in Palm Beach, and a couple of girls with whom I had kept in touch, Phyliss Gotschall (née Smith) and JoJo Walton (née McNeill). After Palm Beach and Clewiston, I found Naples on the west coast, which I fell for and have visited virtually every year since, including lengthening periods each winter since 1980 when we established a winter home there. Until he died a couple of years ago I also regularly visited my Primary Instructor, Reed Clary, in Miami. Briefly, I live in Sevenoaks with my second wife. Between us, we have five children, nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren. I am still able to play golf on a buggy, and hold a pilot's licence, which I use regularly, being a member of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots (a Guild) - indeed an honorary member of the Flying Club as the only member over 90 still flying!”

Thank you Ron for these memories. Do they jog any memories? Ron says that he would be very happy to keep in touch with anyone interested and so if you want to make contact, please let me know and I will pass details on to Ron. You can get in touch with anyone contributing to this newsletter via me ([jen@jennyharding.co.uk](mailto:jen@jennyharding.co.uk)).

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The next newsletter will be published in March 2018. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of February 2018. The more you tell me, the more interesting the newsletter will be – and I would especially like to hear if anyone worked with, or knows, any of the people mentioned in this newsletter. Anecdotes, stories and pictures would be great. So - over to you and .....**“Until we meet again, “good-bye to y’all”.**