

# CA Obituaries

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**B**

# RIP

Dave Baugh



We are sad to report that David Baugh of 85 Entry (B Sqn) passed away on the 19th April 2025.

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# RIP

## Peter Bennett



We regret to announce the passing of Peter Bennett of 94 Entry (C Sqn) on 3 June 2024.

His 2 ½ year course was one of the first where basic flying training was on jets (Jet Provost) and Pete already showed signs of being an exceptional pilot.

After fast jet training at Valley on Gnats, Al Holman (also 94 Entry) recalls: *"Peter and I were selected as the first two newly qualified pilots to train on the Harrier. We were the guinea pigs to see if inexperienced pilots could cope with the complexities of the Jump Jet. Both of us had wait until the two seat Harrier T2 arrived 18 months later."*

So, during this time, Pete joined 72 Sqn as an 'Ops Officer' and spent this period flying the Wessex at Odiham.

During his 18 months at Odiham, Pete went on exercise in Malaya and also Singapore. It was there he persuaded his CO to let him go solo at Changi qualifying him as a helicopter pilot which was to prove very useful during his later test flying career. He also spent a couple of months in Northern Ireland at the height of 'the Troubles'.

In October 1970 Pete was on the Gnat refresher course and then the Hunter Tactical Weapons Unit at Chivenor. He completed lead in courses including one on helicopters at Ternhill and, by the beginning of May 72, was at Wittering on the second Harrier conversion. The comprised seven members: all experienced Hunter pilots except Pete and Al Holman. It is a testament to Pete's talent as a pilot that he finished up winning the course trophy.

Pete joined 4 Sqn at Wildenrath becoming a Fighter Reconnaissance Instructor before moving to 1 Sqn at Wittering. As well as numerous deployments to the North and South flanks of NATO, he was part of the initial Harrier deployment to Belize when Guatemala threatened to attack.

Pete's most hair raising experience was being hit by lightning while flying a Harrier between two dark clouds. The lightning bolt welded the top of the sideslip vane about 50 cm in front of his eyes and left a neat 8mm hole in the tail cone where it departed.

In 1977 Pete went to Empire Test Pilot School and, after graduating, did experimental test flying at the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), Bedford. During nine years with the RAE, he undertook Harrier Ski Jump trials for the Navy, was project pilot for the Sea Harrier Poor Weather and Night Approach System, and developed the symbols used in the new RAF fast-jet Head Up Display (for which he was awarded the L G Groves memorial prize for aircraft safety). Together with a scientist, Pete conceived and developed the novel Control System for Vertical and Short Take Off and Landing aircraft that is now in the RAF's new F35 Stealth Jets. This involved both many hours in advanced simulators as well as in the air.

He once managed to fly test sorties in a Harrier (fast jet), BAC 1-11 (airliner) and Wessex (helicopter) as Captain, all on the same day! He was very proud of this particular achievement.

Thursday 7 January 1982 Pete was involved in a near fatal accident when, on final approach to Bedford, his Hawk was caught in vortex wake. On instinct he ejected but he hit the ground in the ejection seat before the parachute deployed and he suffered severe and life changing injuries.

Whilst recovering, he transferred to RAE Farnborough to direct a research programme which involved converting a two seat Harrier to use Forward Looking Infra-Red and Night Vision Goggles.

After retirement from the RAF, Peter was a manager with Selex ES (a subsidiary of Finmeccanica, active in the electronics and information technology business, based in Italy and the UK) and Business Development Director of Euroradar.

He was also a Civilian Instructor with 870 (Dreghorn) Squadron, Air Training Corps.

# RIP

Nigel Betts



We have learned the sad news from Indonesia that Nigel Betts of 95 Entry (A Sqn) passed away on the 8th December 2024. Nigel served at St Morgan (Nimrod) then Scampton, High Wycombe Strike Command and then finally Gütersloh (Harriers).

Peter Slawson (Slaws) sums up Nigel and this is taken from his eulogy:

*What comes across most of all is that Nigel was a unique wonderfully jovial character who put friendship high on his priority list. Whilst it was clear to all of us that he DID have a bob or two (but from his demeanour you would never have known that he was wealthy) However, he was running around in a Lotus Elite whilst we were scrambling to put together fifty quid for some old banger!*

*BUT how did he become known as BIFFO? Biffo the bear was a character in the Beano comic of our times and renowned for getting into all sorts of scrapes. Nigel did have a certain propensity, not to say astounding ability, to be completely unaware of the necessities of ordinary daily life! For example, he would forget to check oil levels in his car- a necessity in those days- and end up with a seized engine.*

*Touring in Spain in the Lotus, he had to borrow some money because he'd thrown his wallet into the back of the car whilst driving at speed while quite forgetting that the top was down.*

*We'll never forget the time when he'd chewed up his dental plate so much that there was only two front teeth on it, and these two teeth appeared in full view on the end of a French loaf. He had swallowed the teeth; and they were never seen again!*

*But enough of his Biffoness.*

*Nigel also had some very admirable qualities.*

*He was a fantastic skier. Certainly the best in the RAF team and probably the best the RAF has ever seen. Who could forget the looks of astonished amazement on the faces of the French ski instructors at Ancelle when Nigel disappeared down the mountain in a flurry of powder snow? (They'd only taken us up there to enjoy the view!!)*

*Nigel was quietly very astute and an incredible entrepreneur. His video rental, ski clothing and car dealing businesses were just a few of his ideas.*

*Nigel was a one off- when they made him they broke the mould.*

*Farewell old friend.*

# RIP

Jon Buckler



We are sad to report the passing of Jon Buckler of 92 Entry (B Sqn) in December 2024.

After the OCU at Chivenor, Jon was posted to 8 Sqn in Bahrain (Hunters). From 1971 to 1974, as a QFI at Linton he was in the Linton Gin/Blades Formation Aerobatic Team. He was then flying Harriers with 1 Sqn (Wittering) and IV Sqn (Gütersloh.) It was with 1 Sqn when, on the 9th April 1975, the Harrier's engine main bearing failed and the aircraft crashed near Ditton Priors in Shropshire. Jon ejected at 3000 feet while the aircraft was in a slightly nose up attitude and he sustained minor MDC spatter injuries above eyebrows and bruising on the back of his left hand.

From 1988 to 1990, Jon was OC 20 Sqn (Tornado) at Laarbruch. In August 1990 Tornados from the TWCU at Honington and 20 Sqn were involved in a midair collision off Spurn Head. Jon was command ejected by his navigator and was the sole survivor of the accident.

From 1994 to 1995 Jon was Wg Cdr Operations on in the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force HQ on Operation DENY FLIGHT (patrolling of Bosnian airspace) with the addition of NATO airstrikes in support of UNPROFOR (June 1993 to July 1995) as well as a limited air offensive against the Bosnian Serbs with Operation DELIBERATE FORCE in August and September of 1995.

He died in Spain where he lived and was cremated on 15 December 2024.

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**D**



# David Donnelly

We are sad to report that David Donnelly of 89 Entry, C Sqn, passed away on the 23rd February 2024.

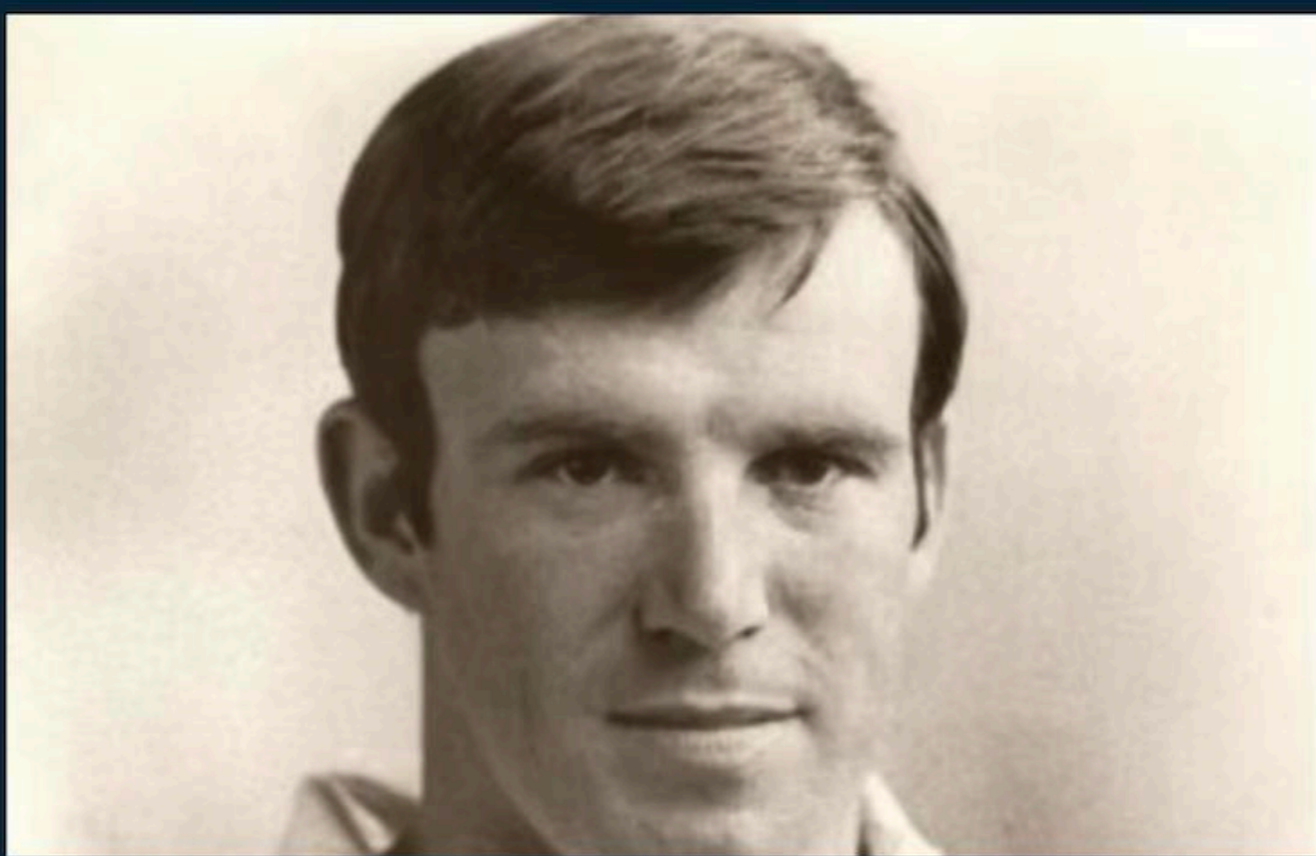
David was born on 6th February 1945. After the war, his father was flying for BOAC in Montreal and David spent his early years in Canada. Following the family's return to UK, he went to school at Wokingham where he joined the Air Cadets and learned to fly, gaining a PPL.

In 1963 he joined the RAF at Cranwell to train as a navigator and graduated in 1966. Whilst at Cranwell he represented the College at basketball and athletics and was captain of gliding. Then followed postings to Aden, Bahrain and Benson, flying on Argosy aircraft. From there he went to Brize Norton on VC10s, flying worldwide. In September 1970 he was sent on an exchange tour with the Royal Canadian Air Force at Trenton, Ontario flying all around the world on Boeing 707 aircraft. Whilst at Trenton he met and in June 1971, married his wife Anna.

Returning to UK, postings at RAF Manby, Valley, and Upavon followed, before being posted to MOD in London. After attending the Army Staff College at Camberley David was posted to RAF Rheindahlen in Germany where he was the head of the UK delegation for Berlin. He returned to the UK in 1985 to the Air Navigation School at RAF Finningley. Another spell at MOD was followed by his final posting to NATO's SHAPE headquarters in Mons, Belgium.

Following retirement, David and Anna moved to Pateley Bridge in North Yorkshire in June 2000. He took up furniture restoration and went to College in Leeds to gain a City and Guilds in Furniture Restoration. For a few years he enjoyed walking along the river to Glasshouses Mill where he restored old furniture.

**G**



## RIP Peter Glover

12th March 2024

We are sad to announce that Peter Glover (91 Entry D Sqn) passed away suddenly on 12th March 2024.

A talented all round sportsman, Peter actually had ambitions to play cricket for Yorkshire. However, it was with rugby that he excelled, first for the England Schools and England Under-21s before representing Harrogate, one appearance for the Barbarians and, while at Lyneham, 41 appearances for Bath. Peter's three England caps came straight after graduating from Cranwell in 1967, his debut being against Australia at Twickenham Stadium in 1967 with the last cap in 1971. At that time, he was also playing for the RAF and Yorkshire.

During his appearances for the RAF, he played against the French Air Force Academy. Meeting "their opposing team", the evening was soon far from "a dry old do". However, the next day at the line-up and totally hungover, they were horrified to see total strangers opposite them: the French had sent their second team to get them drunk!

As if rugby wasn't dangerous enough, Peter once confronted a basking shark during dinghy drill in the Atlantic. Safely zipped inside the dinghy after the usual high speed tow, it was suddenly tipped over by something large and it was when he became submerged that he saw the offending creature!

Peter's career flying Hercules certainly curtailed his international rugby career which was as good as over by 1971

After resigning in 1975 he flew Comets with Dan Air, 737s with Britannia before working for Gulf Air as well as several UK charter airlines. He retired in 2005 having clocked up 18,000 flying hours after which he trained commercial pilots for the next 6 years.

He sadly lost his first wife Nyria to a brain haemorrhage in 2004 but married his second wife Mary in 2006. Peter sadly died of the effects of Alzheimer's and is survived by Mary and his two sons from Nyria, Ben and Tom.

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**Н**



## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

### Sir David Harcourt-Smith RIP



We are sad to announce that Air Chief Marshal Sir David Harcourt-Smith GBE KCB DFC of 56 Entry passed away on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Educated at Felsted School, he was commissioned into the RAF in 1952. He flew the Venom during the Suez Crisis and Aden Emergency, where he won the DFC for gallantry and devotion to duty in 1957. He was the author of *Wings Over Suez*, an account of air operations during the Sinai and Suez wars.

Appointed OC 54 Sqn on Hunters at RAF West Raynham in 1963 and OC 6 Sqn on the Phantom F4 in 1969, he moved on to serve as Station Commander at RAF Bruggen in 1972 before being appointed Commandant of Royal Air Force College Cranwell in 1978.

In 1980 he was Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Operational Requirements), AOC-in-C RAF Support Command in 1984 and Controller of Aircraft in 1986. As Controller of Aircraft, he oversaw the introduction of the Tucano training aircraft.

Sir David retired in 1989.



## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

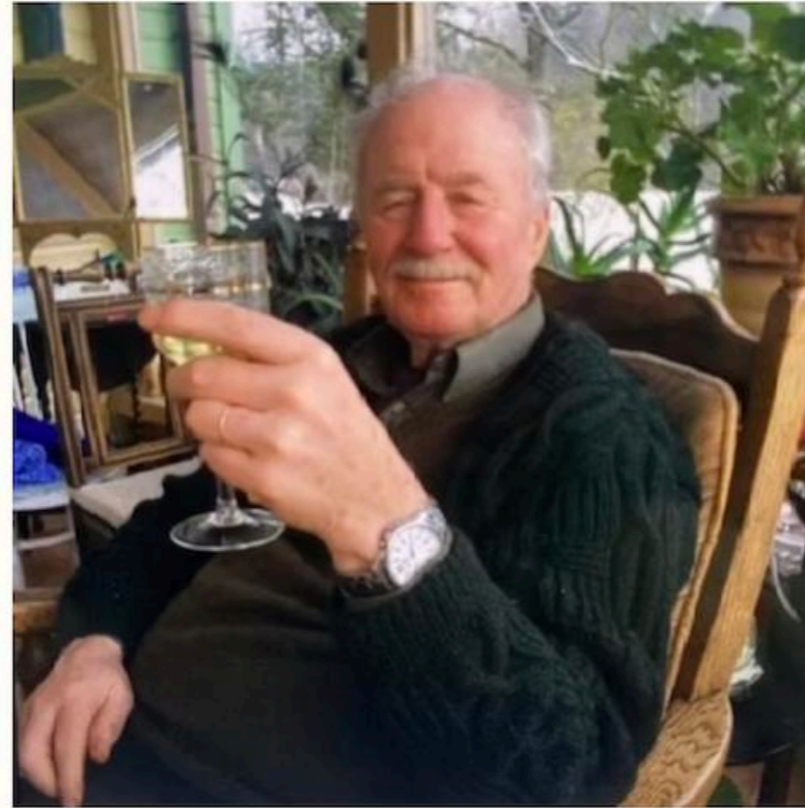
### FRANK HILTON RIP



We regret to announce the passing of Frank Hilton of 91 Entry (C Sqn) on 18th July 2024. Frank was born in West Kilbride, and spent his early years in Ardrossan, north Ayrshire. He grew up in Lancashire until the family moved down to Kent, where he finished his education. He entered Cranwell in October 1964. Amongst other things, he represented the College in the cross country team, and he produced, directed and acted in *The Lark* (by Jean Anouilh), which was a major contribution to a week of French Culture. After further flying training, he joined 35 Sqn in Cyprus as a co-pilot on the Vulcan. He achieved his captaincy, but resigned his commission at the end of that tour. His final posting was at RAF Bentley Priory, where he had the privilege of working under Air Marshal Sir Ivor Broom. Frank's career then took him from university lecturer in Communication (Manchester University, Manchester Business School and Stockholm University), to self-employed business consultant, involved in professional development training in presentation skills, facing the media, crisis management, and international negotiation skills. Notably, he was the first independent consultant to run communication workshops at the World Economic Forum in Davos - supported by Pierre Salinger, press secretary to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Although his time in the RAF was only one part of a varied career, it stayed with him and remained an influence throughout his life. One of his lecturers at Hull University remembered that as a mature student "with his unconventional background and life experience, and his good nature and good humour, he was an ideal link between staff and (often immature) students". To his many friends, Frank was the perfect gentleman – considerate, kind and modest

# RIP

## David Holliday



We received the sad news that David Holliday of 84 Entry (D Sqn) passed away on the 14th February 2025. From what we have heard, it was due to an accident on his large estate of land in Lithuania. At Cranwell, David became Captain of the Cricket Team where later in his career, he managed to take the Marham cricket team to the station finals at Vine Lane. He did finally get an international call up, aged 70! He was selected to represent Lithuania in a triangular tournament against Latvia and Estonia. He was a keen Soccer player and a Qualified Soccer Referee, for which he was much in demand!

He was on Victor Tankers (57 Sqn) then served as "Plans" in HQ Ops Wing in the late 70s

David's sense of humour was typified by the following little story. The Stn Executives were about to fly off on a "Western Tankex" to Offutt, Nebraska. David got the COMCEN to fabricate a Signal from Offutt to say they were closed on the day of departure. At the morning briefing in Ops the "signal" got passed along the front row to the Stn Cdr, then back, each Exec reading it turn! The briefing was all but forgotten, and a very worried looking Benny Jackson (later ACM Sir Brendon Jackson) with OC Ops "Spike" Milligan in tow, departed the briefing Room. As they passed David Holliday, he asked if he could "have his signal back"!

He was a French linguist and went on to do a tour in Taverny, in Paris, before learning Russian, and going into the diplomatic circuit. Following a challenging tour in Moscow his marriage sadly ended. David went on to do another "diplomatic" tour with the Army, based at Ashford, before returning to Embassy work as the Air Attache to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, although he was based in London. During that job he met Migle, in Klaipeda, Lithuania, where she was involved in hosting visitors, in particular those from visiting cruise ships. After David's retirement from the RAF, he married Migle and took on a large estate of land near Klaipeda. He was totally accepted into his new family there, and integrated into the local community, although he visited the UK frequently. He was a regular attendee at both his Cranwell 84 Entry reunions, and his old School Reunions in Ipswich.

**J**

# RIP

## Andy Jones



We are sad to have just found out that Andy Jones of 80 Entry (C Sqn) passed away on the 22nd July 2024. At only 17, Andy was the youngest of his Entry. His early training was on the Piston Provost and then the Vampire. However, after suffering from a medical problem which set back his training, he was re-coursed to 81 Entry which was the first Entry to train on the Jet Provost. He transferred to D Squadron when it was formed and graduated in July 1962. Vampire and Gnat Advanced Training at Valley preceded 9 Sqn (Vulcans) at Cottesmore. Following a QFI Course he returned to Valley as a Flying Instructor on Gnats, was part of the aerobatic team and on stand-by for the Red Arrows. In 1971, promotion to Sqn Ldr saw him posted as Squadron Commander on the Apprentice Wing at Cosford. 1974 to 1977 saw Andy back on Vulcans (44 Sqn, Waddington) where he was also a display pilot/Instructor flying the Vulcan to its limits in displays world-wide for two years, the last display being at Carswell AFB in the USA and he was instrumental in changing the UK Low Flying System.

Sqn Ldr Operations at TTTE Cottesmore was followed by Sqn Ldr Operations at RAF Bruggen during the changeover from Jaguar to Tornado. In 1987, promotion to Wg Cdr led to recruit training at Swinderby and from 1988 -1990, he was head of the RAF Kuwait Liaison Team and Air Attache Kuwait.

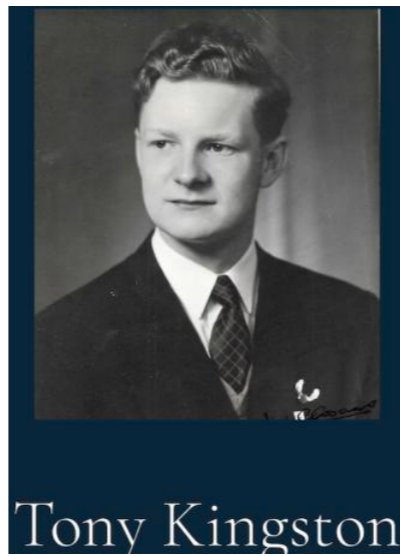
During August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, initiating the First Gulf War. Andy and his eldest son were captured and, together with ten Japanese, two French, a German, two Americans and five other Brits, they were kept in captivity in Basra (as Andy said "as guests of Saddam Hussein"). Andy's wife and younger son were taken to Baghdad and returned home in September. Andy and the eldest son were released and returned two weeks before Christmas 1990. Most of the family belongings were left behind in their flat in Kuwait City and Andy lost 40 lbs in weight whilst in captivity.

In 1991 he was appointed Deputy Head of the Air Board at the OASC Biggin Hill. He left RAF prematurely in 1992 to join BAe in Saudi Arabia for four years as Tornado Operations Manager at Khamis Mushayt and then ten years as General Manager at Taif and Jeddah.

In 2006 he retired to the USA having remarried.

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**K**



Tony Kingston

We regret to report that Anthony Charles Edward Kingston of 76 Entry (A Sqn) passed away on the 8th April 2024.

Tony learned to fly whilst at Kings College school in Wimbledon and took his test to get his flying licence just after his 17th birthday. At the time he was the youngest person with a pilot's licence: something he would never let anyone forget and pointed out that he could fly before he could drive! He said he used to use the railway lines and other features in the landscape to navigate and that his favourite plane was a red Tiger Moth, regularly flying across Surrey and the North Downs Way.

Joining 76 Entry in 1957, Tony was a first-class Squash player and in the College First Five. This stamina was tested at the Entry Survival Camp in the Harz Mountains, Germany. Everyone seems to remember being very hungry at the end of the 5 day Escape and Evasion Exercise. The cadets survived by only eating tiny fragments of rations – and Tony's family have still got the tin with half its contents!

He did this almost too successfully where he lost so much weight that his mother didn't recognise him when he went home on leave and knocked on the door.

Tony surprised everybody in that, despite having skill in handling an aircraft, this didn't translate into instrument flying and so was "chopped" from flying.

Sir Michael Graydon recalls:

*"There were some rather immature QFIs around then whose main aim seemed to be to chop cadets. I was lucky in having a mature instructor who was also the Cricket Officer. I was a good cricketer which probably got me through the challenge."*

Another cohort, Sir Richard Johns, adds:

*"I also remember being very surprised when Tony was chopped at Barkston Heath: it just didn't seem right that someone so blessed with athletic coordination had problems flying. That said, in those days the chop rate was high as with National Service in full swing there was no problem with potential shortage of pilots. QFIs were not slow to swing the axe: patience was not their common virtue in my opinion. Whatever, there is no doubting Tony's longstanding affection for the College and his fellow Flight Cadets in 76 Entry."*

After Cranwell, Tony took a role in the family's meat business at a time when the high street butcher was having to make big changes due to the influx of supermarkets. He helped transform the company from a firm of butchers' shops into what it is today, a successful property company. He lived most of his life in Betchworth in Surrey with a view of the North Downs Way and loved seeing the odd biplane go past from time to time, following the same route and doing the same tricks he had done as a teenager.



About 15 years ago, the internet allowed Tony to track down his old Tiger Moth to Northamptonshire where it had been operational (still doing stunts) right up to 1995 when it was destroyed beyond repair in an accident on approach. The pilot didn't see the power cables but thankfully walked away. He got a picture of it, framed it and hung it above his desk in his office, before being taking it with him to his care-home where it hung in his bedroom. Tony was always incredibly proud to have been accepted into Cranwell and, despite only having been there for a relatively short time, it made a huge impact on his life and, until mobility issues made it impossible, he attended every reunion where possible.



**L**

## RIP Mark Long

We are sad to announce that Squadron Leader Mark Long (201 IOTC) was killed on 25th May 2024 when his Spitfire crashed near RAF Coningsby.

Mark was born in Bury St Edmunds and graduated Initial Officer Training in 2003 before being sent to RAF Linton-on-Ouse to fly the Tucano, gaining his 'wings' in 2003.

His Advanced Flying Training was on the Hawk and he was selected to remain on 208(R) Squadron to take on the role of an Instructor. Mark later converted to the Harrier GR7/9 and was posted to 1(F) Sqn RAF Cottesmore. He was the last RAF Harrier pilot qualified to conduct operations off an aircraft carrier.

In 2012, Mark joined the Typhoon Force at RAF Coningsby and in 2016, he was the Typhoon Display Pilot with his primary role teaching student pilots.

Alongside these instructional duties, Mark was also doing his share on Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) duties, both in the UK and in the British Forces South Atlantic Islands (Falklands Islands), and additionally conducting QRA duties whilst on Baltic Air Policing Operations in Lithuania. Also, of course, Mark was flying for the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) and was to be the next OC.



“In life, we are occasionally privileged to meet incredible people like Mark. Mark touched the hearts of everyone that he met, always prioritising the needs of others before himself. The epitome of a military fighter pilot, he personified the very best of the Royal Air Force and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. We were lucky to have him as part of the team and part of our BBMF family. Always a vision of calm, Mark faced life’s obstacles with a wry smile, a knowing nod and a pint of tea. Above all, he was a devoted husband and a proud father. Whilst words alone cannot adequately convey our loss, he will remain forever “the best boss that BBMF never had”.”

Sqn Ldr Mark Sugden, OC BBMF



## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

### Colin Loveday RIP



We regret to report the passing of Colin Loveday of 59 Entry (A Sqn) who died in Sydney, Australia on 18th June 2024. In response to a RAF Commonwealth recruitment drive, Colin (born and raised in New Zealand) enlisted into the RAF on 3rd April 1950 and reported to Cranwell on 10th January 1951. A talented tennis player, he was part of the Tennis VI throughout his Cranwell years, captaining the team by 1953. Prior to Graduation in 1953, he was selected as the Colour bearer parading the Queens Colour in Parliament Square on the new Monarch's coronation. Colin's flying training was on Proctors and Chipmunks, advancing to the Harvard 2b before a posting to Gloster Meteors Marks 7 and 8 at RAF Worksop, Lincolnshire. In 1954, he moved to 50 Squadron, RAF Binbrook, flying Canberras, the aircraft which came to define his service years. Following a tour with CFS, in July 1961 he flew 32 Squadron's first Canberra B15 nuclear bomber from England to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus direct. This posting tasked him with devising and instructing crew training on the Low Altitude Bombing System on the American-modified Canberra B15 (granting it nuclear strike capability). In the process he excelled by achieving top score when securing the NEAF Sassoon Trophy for 32 Squadron (1962) and winning the Individual Element for most accurate target strike (a standing world record for Loft Bombing). In 1963, promoted to Squadron Leader, he assumed command of 231 Operational Conversion Unit RAF based at RAF Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, training crews on Canberras. His final posting was to RAF Changi, Singapore in 1965 on staff at the Head Quarters of RAF Far East Air Force. In 1969 he left the RAF to return to New Zealand and began a long and distinguished civil aviation career chiefly in Airline Captain posts flying for various companies serving the Australasian, Pacific and South East Asian routes. His last professional flight was in November 1992 flying as a senior Captain with Malaysia Airways System aged 62, thus ending a career of 43 years of military and civil aviation; the latter flying a multitude of different types from Piper Cubs to MacDonnell Douglas DC-10s. He retired to Buderim on the Gold Coast of Australia to bask and write the occasional aviation article.

**M**

# RIP

## Bruce Madden



We have learnt from Western Australia that Bruce Maden of 76 Entry (C Sqn) passed away on Friday 23rd May 2025. After graduating from Cranwell in 1959, he was posted as a navigator on Vulcans and he retired on the 21st May 1965. He ran a construction company near Preston specialising in restoration of farm buildings. He was a very keen cricketer and for 40 years was passionately involved with the Great Ecclestone Cricket Club, of which he was President. A lifetime love of the outdoors, he continued long walks to the end. He was a mountaineer having climbed both Matterhorn and Mount Blanc as well as all 283 of the Scottish Munros.

In later years, following the death of his wife, he commuted between his Lancashire home and West Australia, where he married Dianne and became heavily involved with the Church Mission in Dunsborough, 200 miles south of Perth.

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## Val McCarthy

We regret to announce the passing of Val McCarthy of 81 Entry (B then D Sqn) on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024.



As well as basic pilot training on the Jet Provost, Val also passed an external degree with London University. With London Irish rugby experience, he went straight into RAF College 1st XV and was subsequently Captain for 61/62 season. Val graduated in July 1962 having been awarded the Philip Sassoon Memorial prize.

Val's postings (and of course Rugby milestones!) were:

- Sep 62 – Mar 63. RAF Oakington. Advanced Flying Training Varsity.
- Mar 63 – Oct 63. Posted to 242 Air Transport OCU Thorney Island (Hastings then Beverley).
- Late 1963. 47 Beverley Squadron at RAF Abingdon. RAF Rugby against RN and Army 65/66.
- 1966. 34 Beverley Squadron at RAF Seletar. Captain Far East Air Force Rugby team.
- 1968. QFI at RAF Manby and RAF Strubby delivering refresher training on Varsities (for a range of pilots from those awaiting transfer to OCU's to senior officers who had been away from flying) In the RAF Rugby team 68/69.

Val retired from RAF in 1971 to fly executive jets in the Middle East before joining Cyprus Airways as first officer on HS Tridents, moving to Kyrenia in North Cyprus. During the 1974 Turkish Invasion of North Cyprus and after several days lying flat in his kitchen, he was airlifted by a Royal Naval helicopter from a Kyrenia beach to HMS Hermes. A fellow pilot recalls talking to Val on the phone with their conversation interrupted by explosions around his home, and then the line went dead. He then joined Cathay Pacific and moved to Hong Kong during which he got married and had two children. After First Officer on the B707 he progressed quickly on to Captaincy, in which role he flew the Tristar and B747.

During his service with Cathay, Val became President of the Hong Kong Aircrew Officers' Association representing the interests of all professional pilots in Hong Kong. He was widely respected among the aircrew community for being an astute and cultured Airline Captain with a great sense of

humour and a true gentleman. As he had done throughout his RAF training and service, he excelled in so many ways, being engaging and a witty observer of humanity who was never short of memorable observations.

In 1994, he retired to Sunningdale, Berks doing volunteer work mainly centred around charitable work and the Roman Catholic Church, of which he was a strong member. His faith was a big part of his life and he walked the long pilgrimage from France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in Spain. Val was a devoted family man who also was very proud of his Irish inheritance and his extended family in Ireland.



## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

### Keith Mossman RIP



We are sorry to announce the passing of Keith Mossman of 47Entry (B Sqn) on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2024. Winning the Groves Memorial Trophy for the best pilot on his course, he also won Victor Ludorum, establishing record times for sprinting and excelling at rugby, which he went on to play for the RAF.

Keith's flying training started on Tiger Moths, eventually converting to the Meteor day fighter before joining 63 Squadron at a time when there were 45 fighter squadrons in Fighter Command. On one occasion he ferried a Meteor F8 from Chivenor to Singapore, where it was to enter service with the Royal Australian Air Force. This was a 21 hour 16-leg journey staged across RAF occupied bases in the Mediterranean, Middle East, India and the Far East.

After training at the Central Flying School (CFS), Keith returned to Cranwell as a flying instructor (Harvard) but within 18 months, he was back at CFS on the Vampire.

Following a tour at the MoD (managing the careers and appointments of junior pilots) he served at HQ Fighter Command as the Bloodhound surface-to-air missile Plans Officer.

In 1959, Keith joined 25 Sqn (Waterbeach) as a Javelin Flight Commander. He was then posted to the Central Fighter Establishment to command the All-Weather Fighter Combat School at West Raynham, Norfolk.

His career took a very different turn in 1962 when he began a three-year secondment to the Royal Malaysian Air Force based at Kuala Lumpur. The young air force was equipped with the piston-engine Provost, the Pioneer and the Twin Pioneer. Keith converted to all three, allowing him to fly into jungle outposts and landing grounds.

With the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in September 1963, tensions with Indonesia increased and there was an uprising in Brunei. During this, Keith made frequent visits to Borneo flying a newly acquired de Havilland Dove aircraft.

He developed a keen interest in butterflies and, in the jungle, discovered a new species which was named *Ypthima Doherty Mossmani* in his honour.

In 1965 he was posted to the Master Radar Air Defence Station at Patrington, near Hull. With promotion to Wing Commander he commanded of No 260 Signals Unit in Cyprus.

With a long-range early warning radar mounted on Troodos mountain at 6,400 feet, (which extended the range of the radar considerably), the air defence of Cyprus was provided by a Lightning squadron and a Bloodhound guided missile squadron.

Lightnings were scrambled frequently to intercept both Soviet and Egyptian Air Force Tupolev 104 long-range bombers which often tried to enter Cypriot air space. At the end of his tour, Keith was appointed OBE.

After the Air Warfare Course at Manby, Keith remained on their staff for 18 months before he took command of RAF Buchan in Aberdeenshire. This large Air Defence Early Warning Radar Station provided the crucial cover for the airspace north of Scotland and into the Norwegian Sea.

On one memorable New Year's Eve party in the Officers' Mess, he dressed up as an oil-rig worker in a long wig and a suitable check shirt. No-one recognised him and he maintained that he learnt a lot about his station that night! For his services at Buchan, he was advanced to CBE.

Keith's final appointment was Deputy Director of Air Defence responsible for the many aspects of air defence of the UK including fighters, missiles, airborne early warning, and the early warning radar units. He was also responsible for the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. He chaired a NATO tri-service group on air defence, requiring regular visits to Brussels.

After three years, Keith retired from the RAF and took up an appointment with the Sultan of Oman's Air Force, overseeing the installation and commissioning of an Integrated Air Defence System, which had been purchased from British Aerospace.

On retirement, he became head of the Emergency Planning Office for Cumbria County Council.

He had a wide variety of interests as a fisherman, clock maker and repairer, and beekeeper. He and his wife travelled widely, including a special visit to Hawaii where he attended a family reunion with the Hawaiian descendants of James Mossman, a sea captain who had settled there seven generations before.

**N**



## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

### Tim Nelson RIP



We regret to announce that Tim Nelson (70 Entry C Sqn) passed away on the 29th May 2024. Tim entered the College in September 1954 achieving Under Officer and represented the College at Boxing. He retired from the RAF in April 1980.

Sir Michael Graydon recalls:

*"Tim flew Hunters with 74 Sqn and graduated onto the Lightning, 74 being the first Lightning Squadron around 1961/2 period. 74 Sqn stole show at Farnborough in 1961/2 with stream Rotation Take-offs.*

*Tim served on 92 Sqn and then CFS (Gnat) before joining Red Arrows where he was part of the Synchro pair in his time.*

*After Staff College, Tim was then back to Lightnings as Flt Cdr on 5 Sqn (Binbrook) on the Mk 6.*

*Tim left RAF at his "38 point" and settled in Sussex for career which included estate management."*

Tim's first kill:

1964 started with the Squadron going to the Missile Practice Camp at Royal Air Force Valley in Anglesey. This was the first Lightning detachment there. The detachment started with a visit to Aberporth to see the radar set up which controls the range over the Cardigan

Bay. On the following morning the Squadron drove North to Llanbedr to see the Jindiviks (Aborigine for "the hunted one"). These are the pilotless drones that tow magnesium flares for the pilots to fire missiles at and camera pods to record the missile performance. Everyone had their eye on one Jindivik, which had done twenty sorties on the trot without being hit itself. Two days later Tim Nelson went up for the first live firing with a telemetry round. On this occasion Tim had a spot of finger trouble as he forgot to press the R.T. button during the count down. Consequently the magnesium flare was not lit, and the missile homed onto the jetpipe of the Jindivik smashing it into a million pieces much to everyone's delight at a total cost of £50,000. The next Jindivik "flamed out" and crashed into the sea before anyone could fire at it, which brought the Squadron bill up to over £100,000.



Tim, as RED 7, is 7<sup>th</sup> from the left.

**R**

## Michael Roberts

We regret to announce that Mike Roberts of 88 Entry died peacefully in hospital on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024.

At Cranwell, Mike took part in a variety of activities, including gliding, skydiving and an attempt at the Devizes to London kayak race. He graduated with the Supply Officer prize in 1965 and went on to his first posting at RAF Leuchars.

Mike's next posting was to RAF Laarbruch, where he became an instructor at the Two Rivers Gliding Club. Here he met Ann, who also became a glider pilot and married Mike in 1970. A posting to RAF Hendon and two children, David and Helen, followed. Mike and his family moved north to RAF Wittering and north again to RAF Dishforth, where he worked at MoD Harrogate.

After 23 years service, Mike left the RAF for a career in systems analysis and programming, specialising in supply and stock control. He worked first for a kitchen cabinet company and then for many years at Associated Dairies (later MD and then Arla Foods) in Leeds, until retirement in the year 2000. Retirement gave Mike the time to indulge his passion for hill walking.

Before he retired, Mike had become involved in the committee of Harrogate Sea Cadets and volunteering at the District Hospital, where he had received treatment for myeloma. After having been given a "Making a Difference Award", although failing health meant that Mike had to stop volunteering. On leaving the Sea Cadet committee he received an award from the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire for 30 years of outstanding service.



**S**



# Pat Sanders

Pat Sanders RIP

We regret to report the passing of Pat Sanders (87B) on the 12th February 2024. Pat did his first tour on No 20 Sqn Hunters at RAF Tengah, Singapore circa 1965. He was a Flt Cdr on 63 Sqn at Brawdy 1975/76 and then went on to the Jaguar OCU at RAF Lossiemouth in 1978.



## Jeremy Saye

We were saddened to hear that Jeremy Saye (74 Entry B Sqn) passed away on the 5th January 2024.

His father G. I. L Saye entered the College (entrant no 297) in January 1925 and rose to the rank of AVM, so very much a family calling.

After graduation, Jerry attended 55 Course at Chivenor on Hunters before being posted to Germany (26 Sqn Gütersloh then 14 Sqn Jever after which the squadron moved to Gütersloh: both were Hunter squadrons) In 1962, he was appointed ADC to ACM Sir Kenneth ('Bing') Cross, AOC-in-C Bomber Command before returning as staff on 229 OCU at Chivenor. In 1968 he was posted to 20 Sqn (Hunters) in Tengah (Singapore) but after a year received an exchange posting with the USAF on Phantoms (F4 C, D and E). In 1973 he attended the RAF Staff College at Bracknell and was appointed OC 1 Sqn (Harriers) in July 1976.

1982 saw Jerry returning to Chivenor again as Stn Cdr before being appointed Group Director at Bracknell. Jerry retired in 1987.



## SAM SHURDOM



It is with regret that we have heard of the passing of General Ihsan "Sam" Shurdom, Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF) of 82 Entry on 9th June 2024 (although Sam graduated with 82 Entry, he always supported his original 81 Entry at reunions).

Sam had joined the RJAF in January 1959 and, as well as Cranwell, Sam attended the Junior Commanders School of the Pakistan Air Force, the RAF Staff College and the USAF Air War College. After defending Jordan as a fighter pilot in the disastrous (for Jordan) 1967 war with Israel, Sam was one of the pilots chosen to fly the Lockheed Starfighter when they were delivered in 1968.

After helping set up the air element of the Bahrain Defence Force in 1975, Sam rose to be promoted to RJAF Chief of Air Staff from 1983 to 1993, when he retired. He then facilitated initial contacts between retired Jordanian and Israeli military officers under the sponsorship of the Initiative for Peace and Cooperation in the Middle East, as well as taking part over many years in peace dialogues both in the region and beyond.

After serving as an advisor to HM King Hussain of Jordan, he worked as Chairman for the Middle East Australian Trading Company as well as a director and Chairman of the Board for the Century Investment Group.

It was with the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM) that Sam was a recipient of the Peace Award from the European Foundation for Culture, and the Rose Prize from the Labour Movement of Denmark. Sam's wife Margaret, duly honoured as a CPTM Companion, joined him at many CPTM events.

He also received an Honorary Doctorate from Kalamazoo College in Michigan for his commitment to international peace. Through his earlier service career, he received (amongst many others) the Jordanian Military Gallantry Medal, the Bravery Medal of Iraq and the Medal of Bahrain. He was also a Board Member and Treasurer of the Petra National Trust which looks after the protection of that UNESCO World Heritage site.

# RIP

## Ken Simpson



We were sad to hear that Ken Simpson of 80 Entry (D Sqn) passed away in Nov 2024.

Having completed a tour as a fighter ground attack pilot with No. 1 (F) Squadron at West Raynham, Ken undertook a Reconnaissance Course at Chivenor before being posted to Aden in mid-1965, where he began a tour with 1417 Flight at Khormaksar.

While flying an up-country sortie on 9 May, 1966, a Griffin Vulture struck Ken's Hunter FR.10 in the starboard intake. *"The huge bird entered the intake and although much of it smashed its way out through the upper skin of the wing, sufficient went into the engine causing it to surge. As the rpm stabilised in mid-range I left the throttle alone and, by dropping my external tanks, managed to nurse the aircraft up to 10,000 ft on a heading back to Khormaksar where I was able to carry out an emergency landing."*

With the disbandment of the Flight in September 1967, Ken transferred to 8 Sqn for a few months and, at the completion of his Middle East tour in late 1967, he went to Davis Monthan AFB near Tucson, Arizona, to do a three-month conversion course onto the F-4 Phantom. On return from the USA, Ken became an instructor at RAF Coningsby, converting RAF pilots onto the Phantom.

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## CRANWELLIAN ASSOCIATION

### Peter Symes RIP



We are sad to announce that Peter Symes (76 Entry B Sqn) passed away on the 10th April 2024.

Typically Peter, the following example of planning ahead and organising is from him and is in his own words!

“I had three careers in aviation administration; the first was for about 19 ½ years in RAF, the second, with an inclusive tour Airline in the then Thomson Holiday organization and the final in the heritage component of The Shuttleworth Trust.

Service at 11 locations entailing: after our first MQ at Maastricht, 6 others in the next 8 years.

My RAF-cum-RAF College interests being maintained through coordinating regular reunions with the survivors of my No76 Entry at Cranwell since and an interest in the Cranwellian Association of alumni particularly since its reconfiguration in 2014.

Detailed Life/RAF summary

Origins – From a Somerset family, my Maternal Grandfather killed in action on Mayday 1917 – “emigrated” to Cornwall when 6 months old

Education – Redruth County Grammar School – “protégé” of the Headmaster, a Royal Naval Air Service pilot in WW1. Academically educated by a host of WW2 veterans notably my Classics master who was instrumental in my GCE A levels in Latin, Greek and Ancient History

Royal Air Force – ATC Cadet on School Squadron, Flight Cadet at RAF College Cranwell Lincolnshire, Jan '57 – Dec '59

Postings to:

- Marham, Norfolk – V Bomber/Tanker Base
- RAF Detachment Hickam Air Force Base Honolulu – Transport Command link to Christmas Island
- Wattisham, Suffolk – Fighter Station

ADCT

- Commander in Chief Flying Training Command, nr Reading
- RAF Support Unit Allied Forces Central
- Europe at Fountainebleau, nr Paris – relocated to Brunssum nr Maastricht in the Netherlands
- Married Pam 6 January 1968, RAF Machrihanish, Mull of Kintyre, Scotland – Annerley born – after casualty evacuation flight to Glasgow
- Linton-on-Ouse Yorkshire, Flying Training Station
- HQ Strike Command Buckinghamshire
- RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire – Vulcan Bomber Base – Timothy born
- HQ RAF Support Command, Brampton
- Britannia Airways, Luton (10 years)
- The Shuttleworth Collection (10 years)”

Sir Michael Graydon writes:

“Peter was a popular member of 76, a good rugby player and passionate Cornishman.

His work in organising us as an Entry was relentless. It was he who led the charge to celebrate Jack Holt, the SNCO who terrorised us in our first year but became a much respected friend and legend. Jack’s legacy over a number of Entries is immortalised with the annual award of the Jack Holt pace stick to the SNCO engaged in Initial Officer training and considered by the College to have done most to induce in the cadets the qualities needed in an officer in the Royal Air Force. Jack Holt’s name is enshrined in the College wall at C Sqn facing out to the parade square. Peter was also much involved in driving forward the Trenchard Statue appeal amongst our entry.

He was a Cranwellian through and through and never failed to make his views known if he felt that standards were slipping.”

Duncan Herd writes:

“(I always remember him as) a fine young man and always good company. He was always a good and trusted friend to us all, both while we were Cadets together and after our graduation.”

**T**

# RIP

Mel Turner



We were sorry to hear from Canada that Gardiner Melvin Turner AFC of 62 Entry (B Sqn) passed away on the 22nd of February 2025.

Photographed here with Mike Allisstone (left), Mel was awarded College colours for Fencing and Modern Pentathlon.

He was a Shackleton captain on 37 Sqn at Khormaksar in 1958, a QFI at CFS and then became a test pilot at Boscombe Down. He then retired in July 1968 as a Sqn Ldr then emigrated to Canada, married Sandy and re-trained for the legal profession, ending up as a QC (now KC).

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**V**

# RIP

## Brian Voller



We were sad to learn that Brian Voller of 70 Entry (C Sqn) passed away on the 24th July 2024

David Scouller writes

*Brian and I first met when we joined the Royal Air Force together at Cranwell on 6 September 1954. I got to know Brian well; he was always a cheerful happy-go-lucky sort of fellow, who laughed easily, was very gregarious and never boastful. He dealt with matters as they occurred.*

*When we began flying training, Our pay went up from seven shillings a day by three and sixpence flying instructional pay (that's 57p today!) The course was very academic, covering some 24 subjects, 12 humanities and 12 sciences. Concurrently we learned to fly on the Provost and the Vampire....*

*It was during our flying training that Brian's panache and lucky streak became evident. The north airfield at Cranwell has large areas of undulating grass. Shortly after Brian had made his first solo he was sent off to do some solo circuits and landings in area out of sight of the staff. The Provost was powerful with a 550 hp engine and on take off would tend to swing to the right. The take-off run was marked by a row of sodium lights.*

*Take-offs were made from the left side and landings on the right. Brian lined up, didn't get the stick back and opened the throttle quickly. The aircraft swung to the right through 360 degrees, missing the sodiums, finishing up on the right hand side pointing in the correct direction. At that point he collected his wits and took off normally without any instructor noticing. He was a very good pilot, graduating 30 July 1957.*

*Our paths remained together as we converted to the Hunter at Chivenor in Devon and joined 54 Squadron at Odiham in early December 1957. Our flight commander was David Harcourt-Smith; known for his short fused temper and great sense of humour.*

*54 was a day fighter ground attack Squadron. A pilot officers pay in those days was £300 a year. Brian bought a VW Beetle for £365 shortly before going on leave. After coffee in the crew room, Brian in high spirits, departed in the car. Half an hour later the phone rang and an unmistakable voice said "I've crashed - can someone come and help me". He had taken a corner too fast, the car rolled over one and a half times, the door burst open and he was thrown out. When collected he was of course smartly dressed and he had neither injuries nor damage to his clothes. The car needed a completely new body shell and he sold it for more than he originally paid for it. At Odiham members of the Officers Mess had a concession to play golf at Farnham golf club; not that we were much good at golf, and Brian played with his usual gusto. He sliced the ball one day and it flew off to the right into a field and landed between a horse's legs while the horse was quietly grazing. Brian climbed over the fence walked up to the horse, slapped it on the rump and then drove the ball back onto the fairway. A bit further on that day we came to a hole with a dogleg and the pin was not visible. Nevertheless, in Voller style, he attempted to bypass the dogleg by driving straight ahead over the trees and he then realised that the ball must have landed in someone's back garden.*

*By now you'll have little doubt about what happened next. He left the course and then walked down the street to the point where he estimated the ball had landed and went up the garden path. There was no reply to his knock and he heard the family in the back garden. So he walked round the side of the house and saw that his ball was lying on their lawn. He was always very polite in such circumstances and I feel sure that they expected him to just pick up his ball, thank them and depart. Not Brian, he had the nerve to drive the ball off their lawn and back onto the course.*

*From 54 Squadron on Hunters Brian was posted to 8 Squadron in Aden, also to fly Hunters. He then went to the Lightning OCU at Coltishall before joining 111 Squadron at Wattisham in Suffolk. He later served a period as an instructor on the Lightning Simulator at what is now Teesside Airport. A further move was to 56 Squadron at Akrotiri in Cyprus. It is on 56 that Brian decided to exercise his option to retire from the RAF in 1974 before retraining as a teacher.*

*One last anecdote that I gleaned is from a widow now in her 80s who married a pilot on 208 Squadron also in Aden. She had been in her late teens in Aden and, although they only overlapped by a year, she remembers Brian as a loveable rogue, possessed of great charm.*

**W**

# RIP

## Sir John Walker



We have just heard that John Walker of 68 Entry (B Sqn) passed away on 29 January 2025.

John first served as a pilot with 66 Sqn (Hunters) from 1957 then joined 4 Sqn, also flying Hunters, in 1959. After attending the RAF Staff College in 1966, he was an exchange officer with the 12th Air Force, USAF, from 1967 to 1969. He became OC Jaguar Conversion Team at Lossiemouth in June 1973, Station Commander Lossiemouth in August 1975 and Station Commander Bruggen in 1976.

In 1978 he was Gp Capt Offensive Operations at HQ RAF Germany then Air Officer-in-Chief, Central Tactics and Trials Organisation in December 1979.

After attending the Royal College of Defence Studies, he was Director of Forward Policy (RAF) at the MoD in December 1982. He then served as Senior Air Staff Officer at RAF Strike Command in May 1985, Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations) at Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe in April 1987 and Director-General Management & Support Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence in 1989.

His last appointment was as Chief of Defence Intelligence in 1991 before retirement in January 1995.

# RIP

## Brian Watt



We are sad to announce that Brian Watt of 99 Entry (C Sqn) passed away on the 12th April at the age of 74 . Retiring as a Wing Commander he obtained a place at Cranfield School of Management and was awarded an MBA. For 25 years thereafter, he was responsible for supply chain and manufacturing operations in many different countries, with major projects in Europe, China and Poland. He joined Chubb Fire and Security as Operations Director and retired in 2009 following his first throat cancer. On recovering, he set up his own business consultancy and moved to Jersey in 2014 to be near family.

When he finally retired he was persuaded to become Chair of Governors at Victoria College, a governor and then Chair of Governors at Read School, Drax and Chairman of WetWheels Jersey, a charity which takes disabled and disadvantaged people to sea in a specially adapted motorboat. He was a keen sailor, loved skiing with his grandchildren, cooking, playing the guitar and was an amateur astronomer.

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# RIP

Bill Wood



It is sadness we announce the passing of Bill Wood of 81 Entry (C Sqn) on the 8th July 2024. He was immediately distinguishable from other cadets in his cohort through sporting a Coronation Medal, having previously been a chorister at HM Queen Elizabeth's coronation on the 2nd June 1953.

After basic flying training on the Jet Provost, in Aug 62 he was at Valley for Advanced Flying Training before Vulcans with 27 Sqn then 617 Sqn at Scampton. This was followed by CFS in August 1965, a spell as a Chipmunk QFI at Edinburgh UAS then PRg Canberras at Luqa. Promotion to Sqn Ldr in 1971 and a QFI Refresher course led to Bill serving as OC Southampton UAS (Chipmunks), Personnel Selection at the OASC Biggin Hill then MOD Op Requirements in 1977, before retiring in 1978.

Following his retirement, Bill worked for six years as a Contracts Manager within the Defence Industry dealing with training contracts for technical personnel overseas on behalf of the Government. In 1986 he joined Grimley and Son, a firm of Chartered Surveyors, and he was appointed Partner, Head of Human Resources and Administration in May 1991, the first Partner of the Practice in a non-surveying role. After his retirement in 2001 he continued to work for several years as a consultant.

Sadly, Bill developed Parkinson's Disease which gradually reduced his mobility over his last years and finally took his life. However, throughout this time he remained a great event organiser and was mentally very active, notably writing children's stories for his grandchildren. He was well able to join in many social activities with his family and former RAF colleagues, including attending Entry reunions.