

NAVAL EIGHT/208 NEWS

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

1998

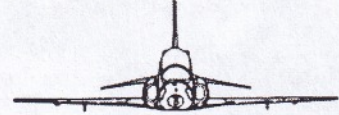


The Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association Committee:

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Cp Capt N M Huckins MBE BSc RAF
Sqn Ldr JCA Fraser BSc RAF, SE Jefford BSc,
A G Maitland, Flt Lt K Marsh RAF (No 208 Sqn),
Air Commodore GR Pitchfork MBE RAF (Ret'd)
Air Vice-Marshal R A Wright AFC RAF.

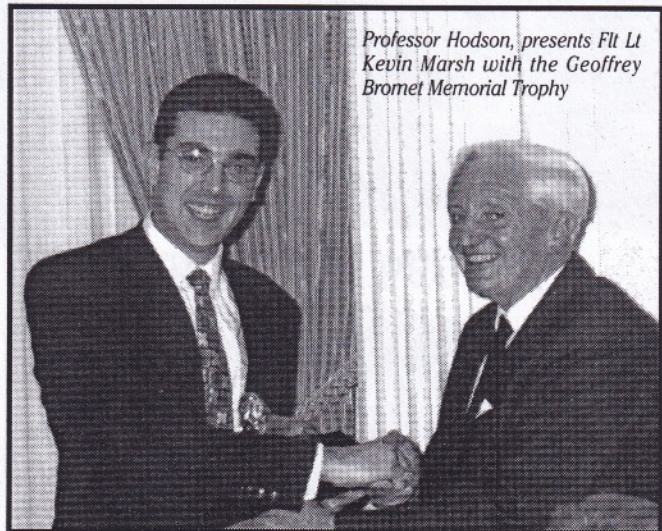


ANOTHER EIGHTIETH FOR 8/208

Yes, Number 208 Squadron is eighty years old this year, along with the whole of the rest of the Royal Air Force. But for 208 Squadron it is special, because our Squadron brought with it a comradeship that created an immensely strong squadron association which has endured since the end of the Great War of 1914-1918. Our first reunion was held in 1919 under the stewardship of one Wing Commander GR Bromet. Only the inevitable break of World War Two caused the temporary decline of reunions, but they were soon revived and this Association has gone from strength to strength ever since.

The great strength of our Association comes in no small part from the close links that we have had with the active Squadron down the years, but even when we didn't have a squadron to communicate with, our members were held together with a pride in their service and their Squadron's achievements that really is second to none. Even though Number 208 is no longer a front line unit in the same way as the fighter/ground attack/strike squadrons of days past, it remains an important asset of the Royal Air Force today, providing as it does fast jet training for every new pilot that comes into the Service.

So, if you've not been to a Reunion Dinner for a year or two, why not make this year the one you do turn up to? After all, it's eighty years since the formation of the Royal Air Force, eighty years since Naval Eight became Number 208 Squadron and almost eighty years to the day since the end of the Great War of 1914-1918.



Professor Hodson, presents Flt Lt Kevin Marsh with the Geoffrey Bromet Memorial Trophy

1997 REUNION A HUGE SUCCESS

Professor Gordon Hodson addresses members and guests at the 1997 Dinner. His links with the Hawk, 208's current flying machine, meant he had more than a fair prospect of a welcome from the Association. His presentation after dinner assured it. As you can see, he held his audience. Some seem pensive, others curious, some bemused. But all were attentive. Yet another highly successful Naval Eight/208 Reunion.



For the first time ever, we had a non-Service Guest of Honour at a Naval Eight/208 Reunion Dinner in the person of Professor Gordon Hodson. With his extensive experience of the Gnat and Hawk, and the association of those aircraft with firstly the Red Arrows and then 208 Squadron, he and his wife, Thelma, settled into the spirit of the evening very quickly. Of course, we have many "ex-Reds" among our number and with today's 208 Squadron suggesting, when asked what aircraft should replace the Hawk, that they'd like another Hawk, it was pretty clear that the whole event would be a success. Professor Hodson is now an Honorary Member of the Association, so we hope we'll see him and Thelma at future Reunions.

1999 REUNION DINNER

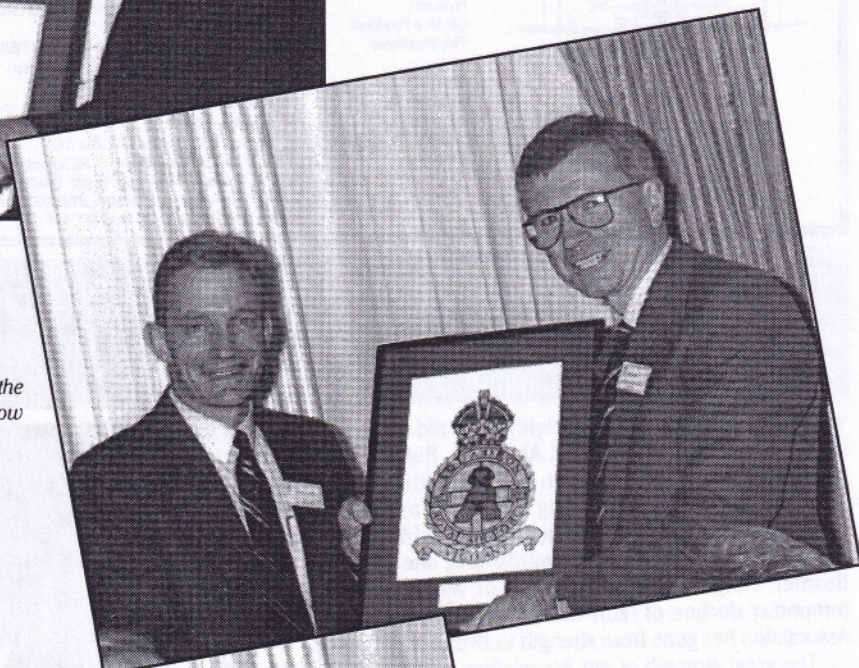
OCTOBER 23RD

6.30 FOR 7.30 PM - RAF CLUB



Association President, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Stear hands over to Squadron Leader Monty Christie the Blazon of Arms prepared for and donated by the Association to the Squadron.

Chairman Ben Laite also presented to the Squadron, from the Association, a mounted picture of the stained glass window now adorning St Aidan's Church at RAF Lossiemouth



You could well be forgiven for thinking that this was Monty's Farewell Picture Page, except that he's not really going anywhere, other than out of uniform. But it really isn't that at all, it was just that there were several presentations being made to the Squadron and Monty, as Squadron Boss, received them on behalf of Number 208. Here, Arnold Cutt has just presented to the Squadron a painting of a Lysander landing during the Greek Campaign of World War Two. The painting was by Ron Dunn and will occupy a place of pride in the Squadron Crew Room at RAF Valley.

Ken "Batty" Feldon was a long standing supporter of our Reunions and missed very few down the years. A surprise presentation, only announced on the night, was this gift of a mahogany model of a Lysander (Ken was a gunner on "Lizzies") to the Squadron. We were all very sad to learn that very shortly after the 1997 Reunion, Ken died. But at least he had his last Reunion and his daughter, Mrs Cheryl Brooke, has been invited to join our number as an Honorary Member. We look forward to seeing her at future Reunions



RUMBLINGS:

Members contemplating making a weekend of it at the time of this year's Reunion Dinner might be interested to know that the Aircrew Association is holding a concert, to be performed by the massed bands of the Royal Air Force at the Royal Albert Hall on Friday 23rd October, Saturday 24th October and Sunday 25th October. The event co-incides with the Aircrew Association's 21st Annual Reunion and General Meeting. If you're interested in going (preferably not on the 24th, please), then contact Don Cox on 01305 776152.

More on medals. It seems there might be a light at the end of the tunnel in the matter of the Greek Campaign medals - as long as somebody doesn't switch it off before those interested get there! Seriously though, things do seem to be moving, as "Red" Hardiman has actually received his, together with a certificate that tell you all about it - in Greek. "Red" wrote to Sid Jefford earlier in the year to tell him that he had been to Melbourne and was presented with the Greek Campaign Medal 1940-41 and the Greek War Medal 1940-45. So, whilst the advice "Don't hold your breath" still stands, it does look as though something might at last be happening. We'll keep you posted from these pages as far as we can.

Still on medals, do you remember the mention in last year's Newsletter of the Jordan Service Medal, marking the presence of British Forces in Jordan during 1957 and 1958? Association members who were with the BRITFORJOR detachment in Amman in 1958 will be entitled to the "Royal Air Force" clasp and can still obtain information from JA Clark, 4 Old Park Close, Broad Street, Cuckfield, West Sussex RH17 5DR.

Books from members seem to abound this year. Some of you may know that Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork has a passion for medals and he has written a book entitled *Men Behind the Medals*, published by Pen and Sword Books Limited, telling of the exploits of 21 RAF aircrew during the Second World War who received awards for gallantry. They're not famous people, just pilots, navigators, engineers and gunners who did their jobs without ever thinking of anything more than doing the job and getting home in one piece. Illustrated with dramatic photographs and written in an easy reading style, it must be a candidate for the Christmas present list. Pen and Sword can be contacted at Freepost, 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2BR and the price of the book is £25.00 plus postage of £2.50 in Great Britain, £3.50 overseas or £6.00 overseas by airmail.

David Styles has two books in print this year, both primarily dealing with motoring subjects, but both having an aviation element to them. The first is from Crowood Press and is entitled *Porsche 356 - The Story of the Flat Four Porsches*. A slightly long winded title and not 100% accurate, because David looks briefly at Ferdinand Porsche's exploits with multi-cylinder aero engines, including one cruciform 32-cylinder unit. With an eight-page colour section, the book tells you about all of Porsche's flat-fours, from the VW and Kubelwagen to the racing 904GTS. Priced at £19.95, it's available in the bookshops now.

David's other book is titled *Riley - Beyond the Blue Diamond* and may be of interest to members because Naval Eight and 208 are mentioned. The main thrust of the book is the migration of the Riley family from Ireland in the 18th Century and the development of a weaving business, then their entry into the bicycle industry, progressing to the manufacture of motor bicycles and cars. At the beginning of the Great War, Percy Riley patented a crosshead aero engine of novel design, but when it was not taken up, he concentrated on the production of alloy pistons for Clerget rotaries. Former 208 pilot Harold Goodwin (who was later a leading Riley distributor) comes into the story to confirm Riley's making of alloy pistons some time before WO Bentley, who claimed to be first. Published by Evenwood Limited, it is priced at £25, plus £2.50 postage in Great Britain, and can be obtained from good bookshops or direct at P.O.Box 2, Belton, Loughborough LE12 9UW.

MEDAL DISPLAY APPEAL:

Did you know that the total list of awards, decorations and medals held by past and present members of our Squadron, from Naval Eight to 208 and awarded or earned during service with the Squadron, add up to thirty seven? That's a pretty impressive list, made more so when you realise that among them are the Distinguished Service Order and

Bar, the Distinguished Service Cross and two bars, as well as Distinguished Flying Crosses for all three monarchs since that decoration's inception. Arising from a conversation about the merits of creating a display of miniatures of all these awards and medals, a discussion took place at last year's Association Committee Meeting, in which it was decided that it would be an excellent idea to build up a collection of full-size medals to cover all thirty seven items, together with a miniature of the Squadron Standard, for display at Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association events.

We hope that you might agree with this idea, for whilst we have a display of aircraft models available to us for display, medals are more about people. They are more personal and it is felt that a display would help to bring to life our Squadron's distinguished history in a way more closely related to the people who actually made that history. Where do you come in? Well, in order to create this display we need your support, because to fund the acquisition of full-size copies of the orders, decorations and medals will be a costly business. So we are launching an appeal to the Association's membership through the Newsletter for donations. The first donation has already come from Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork, in the form of the miniature Squadron Standard, which he has generously offered to provide at his cost.

You may feel that there is an alternative way of helping collect the medals essential to this display, whilst addressing also the problem of cost. It may be that you have actual medals that haven't seen the light of day for a long time. They might be your own, or those of a relative who served with Naval Eight or 208 and perhaps you might be willing to donate them to the display? We certainly would give an absolute assurance to anyone who donated medals that they would be shown in the display case as those of the recipient. It doesn't matter how you can help, though, whether it be with a small cash donation or a Great War medal set, your name will be recorded as a contributor to this worthy cause. We hope that you will give it your support. There is a space on this year's booking slip for cash contributions to this project, but if you feel you'd like to do something else towards it, then please let the Hon Sec know. Our target date for the complete display is the Millenium year.

As this Newsletter closes for press, we learn of support from GEC Marconi, who have generously donated the sum of £250 to the project.

NAVAL EIGHT/208 PEOPLE

Our President *Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Stear* has recently been elected President of the Royal Air Forces Association, after being Vice-President and a long-standing member. Congratulations Sir Mike.

Congratulations also to ex-208 Boss *Monty Christy* who is to remain at RAF Valley, because he has been appointed Facility Manager with Reflectone Limited (a BAe company), who are to operate the new Hawk simulator training programme for all Hawk pilots in the RAF. There's a letter from Monty elsewhere in this issue.

Welcome then to *Sqn Ldr Paul Comer*, who takes over command of Number 208 and about whom there is also more elsewhere.

Our Chairman, *Air Commodore Ben Laite*, has now retired from the Royal Air Force and has taken up the post of Diocesan Secretary in Truro. He and Helen have set up home in Cornwall. Ben has also decided to step down from the Chairmanship of the Association and so, at this year's Reunion, he will hand over to *Group Captain Bill Cope*. Congratulations, Ben, we wish you well in your retirement and your new post. And we congratulate and welcome Bill to the Chair.

That meant a further change, with our Hon Sec "moving on", so *Sqn Ldr John Fraser* will become our new Hon Secretary after the Reunion this year.

Congratulations to Membership Secretary, *Wg Cdr Nigel Huckins*, who has moved to RAF Germany in the rank of Group Captain. Finally, congratulations to *Wg Cdr Peter Gallagher*, one of our first Hon Members, now in Germany, on his promotion to Group Captain.

LETTER FROM THE SQUADRON:

Time flies when you are having fun, or so the saying goes. It also goes quickly when you are extremely busy and stationed on an island outpost in Northwest Wales. It has been a year in which 208 Squadron has tried to produce as many pilots as possible without lowering standards, with limited aircraft (of which more later), with ever changing staff and with the vagaries of the Anglesey weather to cope with. Where to start?

Let's start with the good news. So far we have been pretty successful. The quality of graduating pilots, or certainly those that make it to the advanced phase 2 training, has not reduced even if the numbers of successful graduates fluctuates markedly from course to course. The Sqn QFLs are, to a man, committed to ensuring that they provide the best training possible. However, the initial lack of available aircraft, following the contractorization of engineering support at RAF Valley, had a huge impact on our ability to keep up with the course strike rates. However, credit IS due to BRAMA who gradually sorted out their procedures and, together with other measures being instigated to improve the life of the Hawk airframe, we are now being provided with as many aircraft as our current manning can cope with. So, as soon as the weather improves, we will be back up to speed.

Changes are taking place in other areas of the Squadron. Instructors continue to come and go. New inexperienced instructors out of CFS training and experienced A2 instructors-back to the CFS staff. This is nothing new, but the current manning shortfall and the 'mirror image experiment' have exacerbated the situation. It is a delicate balance between maintaining the Squadron experience levels and ensuring the Wing's assets are evenly spread. Recovery from the 'mirror image training system' continues to make steady progress. We are re-learning a lot of lessons previously learned and subsequently lost. Unfortunately, the re-establishing of corporate knowledge or re-inventing the wheel is not a rapid process.

Apart from regular Squadron functions and the continuous stream of Graduations (although not all of them on time), there have been few other notable social events during the last 12 months. As this was due mainly to the burden of the training task, we hope that this will change during the summer months. Indeed, we have just received authority to re-commence providing a static display at air shows and conducting overseas training flights (OTFs). With weather and training opportunities improving, morale and the quality of instruction should be sustained.

We look forward to seeing Association members at the Annual Reunion or at any of our allocated air shows.

PROFILE:

OC 208 SQN - SQN LDR PAUL COMER

On 30 March 1998, Squadron Leader Paul Comer took over command of 208 Squadron, succeeding Squadron Leader Monty Christy who has now left the Service. Born in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, in August 1963 to a Service family, he moved around infrequently during his formative years. The family settled for a 10-year period at RAF Marham and he was educated at the local Grammar School in Downham Market, Norfolk. After successfully hoodwinking the local examination board to award 3 'A' Level certificates, he joined the RAF in October 1981 and started officer training at the Royal Air Force College.

Pilot training followed and, after 4 years of courses and holds various, he ended up at RAF Bruggen flying the Tornado GR1 on 14 Squadron. Despite a strong desire to stay on the front line, his latent potential as an instructor meant he was destined for Qualified Flying Instructor duties and a second visit to RAF Valley. However, the reward for 3 years on Anglesey was an exchange tour to San Antonio, Texas, to fly the T-38 Talon at the USAF Pilot Instructor Training School.

Unfortunately, the inevitable pendulum of fortune swung back and he was posted to a ground tour in Headquarters No 1 Group, at RAF Benson, with responsibility to the Harrier and Jaguar Operational Conversion Units. However, as promised by Innsworth (a rare occurrence these days), promotion to squadron leader followed after 10 months and he was re-toured within Headquarters No 1 Group (now moved to RAF High Wycombe) to be one of only 3 staff officers in the Ground Air Liaison Branch. With much delight, Innsworth offered him a return to flying and his first choice of posting - back to RAF Valley to command 208 Squadron.

Paul is married to Karen and they have 2 children - Rebecca, aged 10, and Timothy, aged 8. In his spare time, he is very much the family man but enjoys most sports with varying degrees of ability.

MONTY'S MISSIVE (or a letter from Anglesey)

This is the first time we've had a letter from the immediate past CO of 208, but as Monty Christy will continue to be associated with the Squadron, and since he only handed over this year, we thought it appropriate to include a note from him.....

Last year I contributed to the newsletter as the then OC 208 Squadron. Having now handed over to Sqn Ldr Paul Comer, I was gratified to be offered the opportunity to yet again contribute to the Newsletter, this time by way of an article which tells you something of my current employment.

Sadly, the decision to leave the RAF was a fairly straightforward issue. The lure of an immediate pension, coupled with a wallet-fattening lumps sum, set against an ever-swelling plethora of lucrative job vacancies for ex-military aircrew left little doubt in my mind as to my career direction. However, the decision to relinquish command of 208 Squadron was, I must add, not so easy. Although, at least I had the comfort of knowing that I couldn't have asked for a better job to see out my RAF career. Not being interested in airline flying and, strange to some, being keen to remain on the tropical paradise of Anglesey did reduce my available options somewhat. I was therefore staggered, in early September last year, to receive a phone call from an ex-colleague explaining that he had put my name forward in respect of a senior position within a simulator company who were bidding for the forthcoming Hawk simulator contract at RAF Valley. Considering that I had only given my notice to leave the RAF some 2 weeks earlier, 'staggered' is an understatement. The company (Reflectone, owned by British Aerospace), were eventually awarded the contract and I was appointed manager of the on-site facility at RAF Valley.



A slightly battered Squadron shield is handed over by Sqn Ldr Monty Christy to Sqn Ldr Paul Comer on the occasion of Monty's handing over of command of 208 Squadron to Paul. We welcome the new "Boss" to our number as a Vice-President of the Association during his tenure of command and look forward to seeing him with other members of the Squadron at this year's Reunion Dinner.

The role of Reflectone HST Ltd will be to provide high fidelity simulator training for all Hawk pilots in the UK, the main task, though, being that of ab-initio pilot training. This will be achieved by way of a computerised Cockpit Procedures Trainer, an Instrument Trainer that will be enhanced by a forward visual capability, and two Weapons and Tactics Trainers that will sit within high fidelity domes. All devices will centre around cockpits representing the current Hawk T1A in use at RAF Valley today. A degree of realism will be provided that, until now, has only been the dream of Valley aircrew and computer games enthusiasts alike. The facility will be completely operational in late-1999. But what else is new. Well, as another first, both building and equipment will be owned completely by the Company, that despite its siting well within the Valley 'wire', adjacent to the Station Operations Block (you can see the construction if you look southward during the final stages of the London-Holyhead mule train). Therefore the RAF et al, who have no paid a penny up-front for this piece of 21st century technology, will effectively lease the use of the simulators at a pre-agreed hourly rate. Furthermore, the training itself will be provided by Company-employed instructors, whilst the remainder of the 22 or so staff will also be similarly engaged. However, all of the instructors and the vast majority of the remainder will have a military background. The whole package is a PFI (Private Finance Initiative, now having been rejargonised as 'PPP', an instantly forgettable set of initials) deal and is due to be one of the first such MOD/Private Sector ventures to become fully operational.

I am clearly happy to be involved with this new project, which marks a personal challenge in both the business and training sense that the RAF, in its wisdom, was unable to provide (Air Secretary, if you read this, take note). Likewise, my senior instructor a massively-experienced Hawk pilot, felt sufficiently uplifted by the enterprise to also leap into a civilian 'uniform'. But, before anyone gets the wrong idea, 9 until 5 it is not, nor could it be considered to provide a 'fat-cat' salary at the end of each month. However, the job satisfaction far exceeds anything currently on offer to me in the Air Force, the added bonus being that of the continued association with both the Station and the RAF fast jet training system.

So that wraps up one ex-Squadron Commander's happy experience (thus far) during his first few months of civilian employment. For anyone paying Valley a visit, don't forget to pop in and see us. However, I hope to see many of you at this year's re-union - for those who haven't met me yet, I'll be the one with a big grin on his face (*this is a 208 Reunion, Monty, they'll all have big grins on their faces - Ed.*)

THIS YEAR'S REUNION AND GUEST OF HONOUR:

Guest of Honour for the 1998 Reunion is Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns (MoD photo)



The 1998 Naval Eight/208 Reunion Dinner will once more be held in the Royal Air Force Club at 128 Piccadilly, on Saturday 24th October. **Guest of Honour** this year is to be **Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns GCB CBE LVO ADC FRAeS RAF**, who is currently serving as Chief of the Air Staff.

Air Chief Marshal Johns was commissioned at the Royal Air Force College in 1959 after completing flying training on Piston Provost and Meteor aircraft. He was posted to No 4 Squadron, flying Javelins in the night/all weather fighter role, first at RAF Duxford with subsequent moves to RAF Waterbeach and RAF Binbrook. In 1964, he transferred to Hunters and the following year was posted to No 1417 (Fighter Reconnaissance) Flight at RAF Khormaksar in Aden, for a two year tour (*during which time he flew alongside 208 Squadron in at least one detachment - Ed.*)

RAF Valley followed in 1967, when Flt Lt Johns was a flying instructor on Gnats. On promotion to Squadron Leader in 1969, he moved to RAF Cranwell as a Jet Provost Squadron Commander. The tour was interrupted at the half way point by an attachment to the Queen's Flight to take over as HRH The Prince of Wales' flying instructor on the Bassett. Later he instructed the Prince to wings standard on the Jet Provost back at Cranwell.

The RAF Staff College came next, in 1972, followed by a year as PSO to Commander-in-Chief Near East Air Force in Cyprus. Converting to the Harrier, Wg Cdr Johns was posted to RAF Wildenrath as OC 3(F) Squadron. At the end of 1977, having moved to RAF Gutersloh, he left Germany for the MoD, where he served first in the Directorate of Forward Policy and then, on promotion to Group Captain, as Director of Air Staff Briefing. In 1982 he returned to RAF Gutersloh as the RAF Germany Harrier Force Commander. During this second German tour he also participated in the joint Army/RAF Air Mobility Trial, flying Puma and Chinook helicopters, which were under his peacetime command as Station Commander.

Promoted to Air Commodore in January 1985, he attended the Royal College of Defence Studies before taking up the appointment of Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters RAF Germany in December 1986. In January 1990, Air Vice-Marshal Johns was appointed the Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters Strike Command and Deputy Chief of Staff Operations United Kingdom Air Forces. For the last three months of that tour, he was Director of Operations for Operation GRANBY at JHQ High Wycombe.

On 15 April 1991, appointed Air Officer Commanding No 1 Group, Air Vice-Marshal Johns was immediately charged with leading the Joint Service Reconnaissance Team that established Operation HAVEN to assist the displaced Kurds in Northern Iraq. On promotion to Air Marshal on 22 February 1993, he assumed the post of Deputy Commander in Chief, Headquarters Strike Command and Chief of Staff, United Kingdom Air Forces, which post he relinquished on promotion to Air Chief Marshal on 16 June 1994. Air Chief Marshal Johns was also made a KCB in 1994.

Following a brief period as AOCinC STC, Sir Richard became Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Northwestern Europe from 1 August 1994 until 11 March 1997 and on 10 April 1997, he was appointed Chief of the Air Staff.

Air Chief Marshal Johns is married to Elizabeth and they have two daughters and a son. His interests include military history, hill walking, rugby, cricket and most recently, an interest in equitation.

A 40TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

by Dave Gill (Hunter Chapter, Cyprus & Jordan 1958-59)

It all began about eighteen months ago when a letter arrived addressed to a Mr Gledhill from a fellow called John Clarke, who was the volunteer RAF co-ordinator for the recently approved Jordan Service Medal. He was trying to trace ex-208 members from 1958-59. Out of that, 28 ex-Squadron members and their wives travelled from as far as Aberdeen and Llanelli to Kettering for a reunion which took place on 30th May this year. For most, this was the first time they had seen each other for forty years, but after identities were established and name tags donned, acquaintances were soon renewed. The beer flowed and we soon settled down to some advanced lamp swinging and catching up on what each of us had done with the last 40 years. The evening was pronounced a great success and promises made to repeat the exercise within the next two years. '208/2000' has a certain ring to it, don't you think?

CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES' NAMES AND ADDRESSES NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

HURRICANE/ SPITFIRE : SE Jefford BSc, 7 Springfield Close, Ongar, Essex CM5 0BB.
 METEOR : MG Bradley AFC MA, "Pastoral" North Huish, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9NQ.
 HUNTER : AG Maitland, 25 Main Road, Shutlanger, Towcester, Northants NN1 7RU.
 BUCCANEER : Sqn Ldr JCA Fraser BSc RAF, 30 Park Avenue, Rudloe, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0JT.
 OTHER TYPES : Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FBIM FInstSMM FIMI, 24 de Verdun Ave, Belton, Loughborough LE12 9TY.
 MEMBERSHIP SEC : Gp Capt NM Huckins MBE BSc RAF, Bunsen Strasse 41, 70771 Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Germany
 (information on potential new members and existing members seeking to renew contacts should be addressed to the Membership Secretary)

1997 NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION DINNER RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS

The following Members and their Guests were present at the 1997 Reunion Dinner:

JK Babraff	DR Drake	RC Hooper	GR Pitchfork	MA Telford	Flt Lt M Dean
DW Barlow	CM Draper	R Hyslop	RS Porritt	JW West	Flt Lt P Francis
P Bristow	FK Feldon	SE Jefford	J Pratt	KM Whiley	Flt Lt K Frewin
CK Bushe	HO Field	M Kemp	BC Robinson	RB White	Flt Lt S Main
R Calvert	JCA Fraser	BC Laite	JE Shaw		Flt Lt K Marsh
MH Castle	P Gallagher	BJ Mahaffey	S Small		Flt Lt E Moriarty
RG Clarke	G Goodman	AG Maitland	Sir Michael Stear	Serving Members of	Flt Lt D Oetzman
AW Cope	G Green	IK McKee	P Steele	208(R) Sqn:-	Flt Lt A Scott
AF Cutt	DL Groom	FW Mitchell	DG Styles		Fg Off M Westwood
RG Davis	GK Hodson	NV Morss	JA Swain	Sqn Ldr M Christy	

The following Members sent their greetings to the 1997 Reunion, as they were unable to attend:

J Aldrich	R Dennett	PH James	LW Phipps	GE Townsend
PJ Anstee	CAF Denton	T Johnston	PG Pinney	AR Tyler
PW Armstrong	AB Dicken	GCW Jones	WF Plumpton	PD Tyler
M Asher	TH Dudley	J Kershaw	JKT Pugh	R Tyner
J Babington	G Ellis	KS Lamb	FGM Robinson	AJ Vincent
HW Barber	EH Erskine-Legget	KJ Lambden	IC Ross	A Wadsworth
E Beedham	K Evans	JR Leask	E Sharp	G Wadsworth
RM Begbie	JAF Ford	JM Mason	L Shaw	JH Waller
ERE Black	JL Fordham	JD McConnachie	P Small	TM Webb
MG Bradley	M Ganner	TJ McElhaw	AG Smith	RB Weeks
GK Bradshaw	F Gibbs	M McGrogan	AH Smith	BW Weskett
IA Bremner	T Gibson	R McLellan	TA Smith	JW White
RH Burden	DR Grant	GR Must	DR Southwood	RJ White
MW Burton	IN(W) Griffiths	TF Neil	JW Stewart	PF White
JRJ Clark	ER Gwilliam	FJ Nicoll	GJ Storey	H Wood
JA Clarke	RJ Hardiman	PJ O'Donohue	H Tapner	G Yates
GS Cooper	HCV Hawker	KP Oliver	G Thompson	
JW Coulson	KJ Heathcote	J Pascoe-Watson	SJ Thompson	
JB Craig	JM Henson	JI Parker	IDC Tite	
RC Davey	JHG Hext	FL Payne	JN Tomes	
RB Davidson	R Hills	JD Penrose	KL Trow	
JH Dent	CB Holroyd	PF Perry	P Turville	

In Memoriam

We have received news during the year of the passing of the Members whose names are listed below. Our sympathy goes to their relatives. May they rest in peace.

JEAN, LADY BROMET (widow of Sir Geoffrey Bromet and Honorary Member)
FK FELDON (Lysander) IK McKEE (Meteor)
KJ HEATHCOTE (Meteor)

1998 CHRISTMAS CARDS AND HERALDIC PRINT

This year, the Association has produced a new Christmas card. The new card is a full colour reproduction of the beautiful blazon of arms painted by Mrs Mary Denton for the Heraldic Trust. The price is £3.50 for 10 cards, plus postage and packing. Inland and BFPO postage is 57p per pack of ten cards, whilst Australia and New Zealand members face postage of £3.96! A pack of ten weighs 168 grams, so members overseas should allow for that weight for postage when ordering.

Printed in landscape format, the picture is bordered in blue and gold. The message reads: "With Best Wishes for Christmas and the coming New Year". Cards can be obtained from Gp Capt Bill Cope, at 45 North Close, Medmenham, Buckinghamshire. An order form is included in the tear-off Reunion booking slip below.

An A3 sized print of the painting will also be available, at £7.50 per copy, plus £1.50 inland postage (mailed in a card-board tube). Overseas postage rates have yet to be established and delivery will begin in October.



ANNUAL REUNION DINNER 1998, SATURDAY 24TH OCTOBER

It is imperative you send back the reply slip below if you wish to attend the 1998 Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association Annual Reunion Dinner at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1V 0PY on Saturday 24th October. Dress is lounge suits and Members may bring male or female guests. It is important that you name your guest/s on the booking slip and that you indicate your period of service with the Squadron for the seating plan. Timing is 6.30pm for 7.30pm and the cost this year is £23.50 per head, including a glass of port. Even if you are unable to attend, please return the reply slip, as it is our only way of ensuring continuing contact with you.

Please complete the booking slip as early as possible and return to: Gp Capt AW Cope MBE AFC RAF at 45 North Close, Medmenham, Marlow, Bucks SL7 2EL.

NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION - REUNION BOOKING SLIP - 1998

From (Name): _____ Chapter/Period with 208: _____

Full address : _____ 1999 same? or: _____

I will/will not* be attending the 1998 Reunion Dinner on Saturday 24th October and require _____ places at £23.50 per head.

I enclose my cheque/postal order* for: Reunion Dinner (£23.50 each) : £ _____

***Please delete as necessary. Please make cheques etc payable to "208 Squadron Association"**

Christmas cards : £ _____

Total : £ _____

NAME/S OF GUEST/S: _____

I also wish to make the following donation/s:-

General donation : £ _____

Donation to the Medal Display Appeal Fund: £ _____

Total Donation : £ _____

A SQUADRON IS BORN

It was on 18th October 1916 that the decision was taken to form an additional RNAS unit to support the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. The first Battle of the Somme had not gone well and British aviators were having a hard time of it. The Naval units on the Front had already been reorganised to conduct a bombing programme in order to divert enemy air activity from the Somme. By October, it was decided to take six aircraft from Number 1, 4 and 5 Wings in order to form a fighting squadron to support the RFC and within days, a young RNAS officer was summoned to the office of Wing Captain CL Lambe at Guston Road, Dover. That young officer was Squadron Commander Geoffrey R Bromet.

So far, so good. We now have a question which has been harrying historians and Naval Eight/208 enthusiasts for years. It is: "When was Number 8 Squadron, Royal Naval Air Service formed?". You have seen elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter a reproduction of a truly beautiful work of art in the form of a Blazon of Arms, painted by Mrs Mary Denton for the Heraldic Trust. The inscription underneath that painting threw a spanner in the works, because it told the reader that Naval Eight was formed at Teteghem on 25th October 1916. But we have always been proud of the fact that our most significant anniversaries have been held on the exact anniversary date of the Squadron's formation - October 26th. So we're a day out. Why?

Geoffrey Bromet always held out that Naval Eight was formed on 26th October 1916. He tells, in Chapter One of the book *Naval Eight*, that he sailed from Dover to Dunkirk aboard HMS *Nubian* on 25th October to report for orders at Headquarters RNAS. He was informed that his new squadron, to be numbered "8", would be attached to the 22nd Wing of the 5th Brigade RFC and that the unit would be located at le Vert Galant, near to Amiens, from which airfield No 32 Squadron would move out to make room. All this happened on October 25th.

In the morning of the following day, October 26th, Sqn Cdr Bromet collected Lt John d'Albiac RMA, who was appointed Squadron Records Officer, and together they drove to le Vert Galant. They arrived at about three in the afternoon, to find a few officers and a small advance party of men who were already preparing for the

arrival of the main contingent and the machines Naval Eight was to fly. Before dusk, all the aircraft took off from Dunkirk (St Pol), but less than half made it to le Vert Galant, as darkness fell. On that same day, the main party arrived with eight trucks, five tenders, a trailer and a workshop vehicle. The Squadron was born.

Going back over the timings of this story, we are faced with the question of when a squadron is formed. Geoffrey Bromet was firmly of the view that his squadron was formed only when men and machines were brought together at the appointed location. So, in his view - and that of many - Naval Eight was actually formed on 26th October 1916 at le Vert Galant. However, there is another view, which is that a squadron is formed when the order is given to do so. If you support that view, then Naval Eight was formed on 25th October 1916, not at le Vert Galant, but at Headquarters RNAS in France, which was actually located then at Teteghem.

Part of the confusion here is created by the fact that reference was made by Sir Geoffrey only to RNAS Headquarters in Dunkirk. There was an RNAS HQ building at the dock, whilst Teteghem was an operational airfield to the east of Dunkirk town (adjacent to the railway line up to Ostende), but which also housed the main RNAS HQ. St Pol, on the other hand, is where the aircraft for Naval Eight were assembled and was the location of the Headquarters Depot (or in today's terms, the Maintenance Unit). St Pol sur Mer (to give it its full name) was also known loosely as "RNAS Dunkirk" and was located to the south west of Dunkirk town.

So there you have it. **Either** Naval Eight was formed on 25th October 1916, upon the issuing of the forming order at Teteghem, and assembled on the following day **or** it was ordered to be formed at RNAS Headquarters Dunkirk (Teteghem) on October 25th and when Sqn Cdr Bromet arrived at le Vert Galant and assembled his collection of aircraft, men and equipment, only then was his squadron formed - on 26th October 1916. The latter was always the Bromet view. Having now been presented with the facts of the situation, it is for you to decide when you feel that Naval Eight was formed. No doubt the argument will go on, but at least you know why there is confusion.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The Association is always trying to update its records of former members of 208 Squadron, as many people leave the Squadron without making contact with the Association as they move on. For this reason, if you know of anyone who served with the Squadron and is not in touch with the Association, please let us know. It would help if you take a moment to enter details below. We'll do the rest:-

I BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL SERVED WITH No 208 SQUADRON IN: _____

AT RAF: _____ THE SQUADRON WAS FLYING _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____
