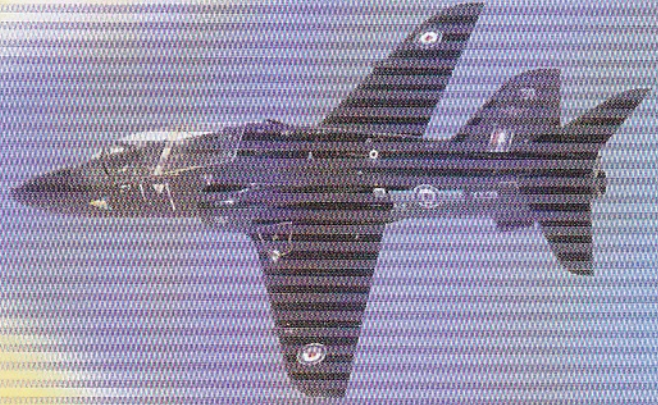


NAVAL EIGHT 208 NEWS 2007

The Annual Newsletter of Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association



Ninetieth Year Reunion

With over eighty members and their guests in attendance, the 2006 Reunion Dinner at the Royal Air Force Club was a great success. There was a wide spread of members present, from the Hurricane/Spitfire era all the way through to Hawk of the present day.

It is delightful to know that our new Squadron Representative and Hawk Chapter Representative, Flt Lt Mike Bowden, has taken his task very seriously and brought at least ten new members to the Association from the Hawk era. This means that our Association now numbers over 420 members.

As usual, the Chairman "chaired" the gathering's formalities and is seen below addressing members and guests after a delightful meal had been served. Following him was the

Squadron Boss, Wg Cdr Gary Kelly, giving the annual "State of the Squadron" address, then Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright and introduced the invited Guest, Air Vice-Marshal John Ponsonby, AOC 22 Group RAF. Air Marshal Ponsonby presented Flt Lt Martin Pert with the Geoffrey Bromet Memorial Trophy and then talked about the state of the Royal Air Force today and gave us hope for the future of No 208 Squadron, indicating that the new Hawk 128 would be joining 208 Squadron as it enters RAF service. Export versions of the Hawk 128 have already been delivered and are performing well.

It was interesting also to have among our number "Mister Hawk" himself, Professor Gordon Hodson, accompanied by his wife Thelma.

Without doubt, the "piece de resistance" came from Gp Capt (ret'd) "Twinkle" Storey, whose reflections on the transition from Spitfire to Meteor (and the dubious tale of how one Spitfire was disposed of!?) kept us highly amused and, for those unable to attend - and those who perhaps couldn't believe what they heard, is repeated in this issue in full. Enjoy again!

As you can see from the picture on the right, once more the 208 Squadron Standard was with us, as is now tradition.





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N8/208 Rumblings

The President's Foreword:

The two major events celebrating the 90th Anniversary of Naval Eight/208 Squadron last year were a great success. The Open Day at RAF Valley was exceptionally well organised and thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended; even the weather was perfect. A very big thank you to Wg Cdr Gary Kelly and all Squadron Members for a job well done. The Reunion Dinner was a similarly successful with very good attendance and some entertaining after dinner speeches, held in an extremely relaxed mood. In particular the speech (which is re-printed in this edition of the Newsletter) given by Twinkle Storey about his time on the Squadron in the transition from piston to jet age in the early 1950's was enthralling. Following on from Twinkle I am pleased to announce that Mike Bradley has kindly agreed to be our guest speaker for this year; he will recount deeds of daring-do from the Meteor era.

The Reunion Dinner will be held, once more, in the RAF Club. If you are not a member of the Royal Air Force Club we can always arrange for you to stay in the Club as guest of a member; the prices are very reasonable for central London. Meanwhile by the time you receive this Newsletter you will have seen a flyer from the Chairman about a possible change in venue for future Reunion Dinners; please let us know your opinion so that the Committee can make an informed decision on this important issue.

I am very pleased to report that the membership of the Association is very healthy, with close to 440 members. We have about 20 new members, mostly, but not exclusively in the Hawk Chapter – a very warm welcome to all.

On the Committee front I would like to inform you that Air Cdre Ben Laite has very kindly agreed to take over as the Association Membership Secretary from Wg Cdr David T-Ryder (who remains Chairman). Many of you will know that Ben, as an Ex-OC, Ex-Chairman and current Vice-President has been involved with the Association for many years; good luck to Ben with the Access Database! Also Flt Lt Mike Bowden, who is an instructor on the Squadron, has taken over as the Hawk Chapter Member from Wg Cdr Neil Meadows (Neil remains as Deputy Newsletter Editor).

Finally, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Naval 8/208 Squadron Newsletter and I look forward to seeing and meeting as many of you as possible at the next Reunion Dinner on 27th October.



Ed Lines:

This year's Newsletter is again later than we ever intended - you will receive it in August, but our target had been the end of May, or at the latest the beginning of June. One of the most important items in the Newsletter, certainly in my view, is the Letter From the Squadron. Well, the Squadron had a pretty frantic year this year and so its letter did not reach me until mid-July. Other material was a little late, but we could have hit an early July deadline if we had had everything together. However, I hope that you will still find the Newsletter a good read and that there is something close to your period with the Squadron in its pages. If there is not, then there is an opportunity for you to correct that by submitting a piece yourself. Contributions are welcome from two points of view - to widen the scope and coverage of the Newsletter and to expand our historical archive.

In this, the Squadron's ninety-first year, I am hoping to bring to you a new miniature medal display at the forthcoming Reunion Dinner. I have managed to make some good progress in locating miniatures, at economic prices too, so that we should be able to mount most of the total display within our budget. What you will see at this year's Reunion, and I hope that many more of you will be there, will be as many medals as I am able to obtain, in the planned display space, while those I cannot locate in time for the Reunion will have photo images in their place until the actual live medal or medals can be located.

The display will feature a selection of individual personal medal sets, the sum of which will cover every campaign medal and decoration won by serving members of Naval Eight and 208 Squadron whilst they served with the Squadron. Many of you will have seen the five medal sets already displayed at a few past Reunions - these will be complemented by a selection of inter-war, World War Two and Post-War. All this will give you the total medallic history of Naval Eight/208 in a single frame.

Even though we have Great War DSCs and a DFC to display, the medals in the present display are actually incorrect, in that they are of King George VI period. The DSC carries the Royal Cypher of the reigning monarch and the original Distinguished Flying Cross, approved in 1918, carried the letters "G" and "R" on each of the horizontal tips of the cross, with the Roman character "v" at the top. It also had a ribbon with horizontal purple and white alternating stripes, whereas the present version has diagonal stripes.

I am particularly trying to locate accurate miniatures of these World War One DSCs, carrying the George V cypher, and a George V Distinguished Flying Cross. If anyone can help, it would be greatly appreciated.

That's it from me for now - see you at the Reunion?



Naval Eight/208 People:

Meteor: Desmond Penrose organises an annual (usually in May) get together for ex-Meteor members at a pub in the Home Counties, for all ranks. If you wish to join them next year, give Desmond a call on

Hunter (Cyprus): Dave Gill keeps an extensive database of all personnel who were on 208 Sqn when the Sqn was based in Cyprus. If you know of anyone who served on 208 at the time give Dave a call on (or inform the Membership Sec and he will pass on the information). The 208 Squadron (Cyprus) Association is planning a trip back to Cyprus next year to celebrate 50 years since the arrival of 208 there. Contact Dave for details – he has at least 16 people interested at the time of going to print.

Hawk: Flt Lt Mike Bowden, a serving QFI on the Sqn, has taken over as both the Sqn Representative and Hawk Chapter Member. He has recruited about 20 new members already!

Chris Finn (Buccaneer) left the RAF a couple of years ago and has joined the world of academia. He is a Senior Air Power Lecturer for King's College London, based at Cranwell.

David Styles (Editor and Historian) has once again been awarded an International Automotive Media Award from the US-based International Automotive Media Conference. His award this year was a Gold Medal for a magazine front cover on The Vintage Motor Cycle and the frontispiece for that magazine's 2006 Calendar. His picture featured as its main subject CE "Titch" Allen, the founder of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club, then approaching 91 years old, and a famous racing Brough Superior motor cycle that he recalled seeing in action before World War Two at Brooklands Track. "Titch" had commented that he would love to see the old Brough again at Brooklands and he had the idea that it would be nice to have a picture near the Members' Bridge. The Members' Bridge was replaced a few years ago with an exact reproduction of the original by the Royal Engineers, crossing the Byfleet Banking which, apart from a few weeds, remains very much as it was in its heyday. David's task was to get the present owner of the motor cycle to bring his mount from the southwest of England to the track, then to transport "Titch" from his home in north Leicestershire to Brooklands. Several dates were selected as options and early morning weather checks were made by both parties before the two journeys were made. As it happened, the first date was good, so man and machine were brought together at Brooklands after a gap of almost seventy years and at eleven o'clock in the morning, after walking the track to locate the best photo location, the machine was brought to its location. Then "Titch" was driven to the spot and helped out of the car. He stood on the slope of the banking, facing downwards for a few minutes, as the bike was positioned alongside him. "Titch" was then placed adjacent to the machine, looking for all the world as though he had one hand on the seat and the other on the handlebars - if he had, the machine and he would have gone tumbling down the banking! In fact, he was supported by his two sticks, which were carefully hidden and the bike was supported by strategically placed wooden blocks. Careful camera positioning put the banking and the Members' Bridge visible behind the twin subjects and the shot was "in the bag". The Gold Medal was presented for the combination of logistics and picture. The day proved to be a wonderful day out for "Titch" and the rest of us and the photograph has been used on a number of occasions for promotional purposes since.

Lost Contact:

The Association has lost contact with a number of Members, as of time of going to press (July 2007). If you have any knowledge of their whereabouts please let the Membership Secretary know. They are:

P Bowker
J B Brazier
J A Clark
N Diamond
Wg Cdr M Jeffery
D C Lott
A J Munro
O G Patterson
M H B Snelling
Wg Cdr P J Wallace

Meteor
Spitfire (44-45)
Unknown
Hunter (58-59)
Buccaneer (87-90)
Hunter
Hunter (64-66)
Spitfire (48-50)
Hunter (69-70)
Buccaneer

Chapter News:

Desmond Penrose reports that the Meteor Chapter held its gathering this year at the Bath House public house in Dean Street, London W1. Sixteen members were there on the night, in response to thirty two invitations being sent out. That is a superb response level - 50% (wouldn't it be wonderful if we could achieve that level of attendance at the annual reunion? Imagine - 220 members plus partners! - Ed).

Desmond comments that it was an excellent gathering, with good food, good comradeship and, it seems, the drinks weren't bad either! Interestingly, the attendant groundcrew numbers were just above the number of pilots, keeping the spirit of Geoffrey Bromet's original all-ranks reunions.

The next Meteor Chapter gathering is planned for 7th May 2008. So if you are a Meteor man, or know someone else who is and who might be interested in this informal and very friendly gathering, put the date in your diary.

A Letter Home:

Peter Large served with 208 Squadron in the early 1950s. Some time ago, he was clearing out his mother's house after she died and he came across this letter that he had written home back in June 1954. It presents very well the way things were in the Royal Air Force of the Middle East in those days. A far cry from regular phone calls home, emails and television cameras on site. It was pen and paper once a week or so back then. This letter is published with Peter's kind agreement:-

208 SQUADRON
ROYAL AIR FORCE

18 - 6 - 54

Dear Mother,

Thank you for your letter it was waiting for me when I came back from Cyprus along with 3 weeks papers so I have a bit of reading to catch up.

I came back last Monday for there was no flying on Sunday when my leave finished so I had a total of 16 days over there. Although there is a leave camp over there I stayed in Famagusta at the Victoria Hotel. In some ways it was better in the hotel but I found the food monotonous even though it was very well cooked. Every breakfast we had 2 fried eggs, sausages, tomato, brown bread & margarine and weak tea. For dinner and tea we had the choice of four meals for the whole time; chops egg & chips, steak egg and chips, boiled ham & salad (but no lettuce) & herrings. The chops were the thickest & juiciest I've ever seen and were really very good and the steak was quite good but with the boiled ham it didn't seem like a salad without the lettuce.

As for the hotel though it was bare as compared with English standards but comfortable. The manager we used to call him Louis & he usually wore a sports shirt and shorts even in the evening when most people would had a good shirt and flannels of not a suit. He certainly looked after us though as for example when I was booking in I was still hot after carrying my bag & he put a glass of lemon squash in front of me - on the house, when we went out for the day he would pack sandwiches for us at no extra charge.

While I was over there I met up with a bloke in the Welsh guards and he had a car out for 3 days. It was a Ford Consul and in the 3 days we covered 400 miles visiting the Troodos the highest point on the island, Kantara Castle & Kyrenia. Troodos is nearly 6000ft and the road bends and doubles back on itself for about 20 miles but the scenery there is well worth the trouble. Unfortunately we were in Cyprus when nothing was in season as apricots had just ended but all the way up there were orange groves, currants, grapes, pomegranates etc and it was an unusual sight for us to see that nearly every house had its own grape vine growing round the porch. This has the advantage of not only purchasing grapes but giving you shade to sit in. The weather was much cooler on the mountains but it was still warm.

There are a lot of castle, monasteries etc in Cyprus and Kantara is a typical castle. It was built on the very summit of a mountain and well into the rock. It was impossible to reach it except from one direction and it had an excellent view of the surrounding plains for miles around. What astonished us was how they built such places for there were tons of stones that could

hardly have been quarried there and the only way they could have carried the stone was on mules. I took a few photos while I was over there so if they come out I'll send some.

The detachment to South Africa leaves on Monday and there has been a big panic this week to try and make them look good. 5 aircraft & about 10 blokes (not counting pilots) are going. They will call at about 10 different airfields to see that RAF equipment on loan to the airfields is being serviced properly. The blokes have been given 4 different currencies ie Egyptian, East African, Rhodesian & South African.

I have gone back onto embodying modifications in to the aircraft as I was doing before leave. It is a good job for there is plenty variety for it is unusual for a job to last more than a day or two and gives you experience of most parts of the aircraft. I have put in for my Corporal Technician board because on April 1 the time qualification was cut from 5 years to 3 years from leaving Halton so that if I pass I will be able to turn my tapes upside down straight away. You have to have a specialist subject such as instructing or aircraft inspection duties but they will also accept an ordinary national as one, for you could claim drawing as your specialist subject so will you send my National certificate so that I can show the board. It is in my drawer probably in a cardboard roll so will you send just that.

That is all the news so cheerio.

With love from
Peter.



"Hunters Over Amman"

Several years ago, your Editor had the thought that it would be pleasant to have a memento of his time with 208 Squadron in the form of a painting. He had the idea of a picture of a formation of Hunters flying over Amman, in Jordan. He had a photograph which he had taken over the City of Amman in 1958, but no pictures of Hunters over Jordan, because there were no air-to-air shots taken of Squadron aircraft during the Britforjor detachment. So he struck up the idea of a formation of four aircraft selected from an earlier photograph, but then, for various reasons, did no more about it.

More recently, having met an artist whose work in motoring paintings is highly acclaimed and who had an interest in branching out into aviation work, David decided to go to work. He scanned the four Hunters from the formation picture, cut them out of the background and superimposed them on to a scan of the Amman shot. Now he had the layout for "Hunters Over Amman".

After discussions about colour schemes, detail and markings, David commissioned the painting and it is now complete and will be on view at this year's Reunion Dinner. It is believed to be the only painting produced of 208 Squadron Hunters and is in time to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Hunter entering service with 208 Squadron, the actual date being March 1958.



In Memoriam

Since the last Newsletter and Reunion, we regret to have to report the passing of the following Association members:-

James Breingan DFC	Spitfire (44-45)	Arthur Hamnett	Hunter (58-59)
Allan Burdett	Hunter (58-59)	Peter "Jimmy" James	Meteor (50-53)
Mike Bush RN	Buccaneer (75-78)	Gp Capt (rtd) Anthony Mumford	Hunter (62-64)
Jeff Camplin	Hunter (58-59)	G R Must	Spitfire (48-49)
Thomas Dudley	Lysander (40)	H R Short	Hurricane (40-43)
Douglas Grant	Atlas/Hurr (36-39)		

We regret to say that due to a reporting error, Chris "Hoppy" Granville-White was mistakenly announced as having passed away in the "In Memoriam" section last year. We are very pleased to say that he is alive and very well. Our most sincere apologies to Hoppy and his family.

The Naval Eight 208 Reunion 2007

The Annual Reunion Dinner will take place on Saturday 27th October 2007 at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1V 0PY. Dress is lounge suits and Members may bring a guest or guests. It is important that the name of your guest(s) is on the booking slip and that you indicate your period of service with the Squadron for the seating plan. Seating will be based on the Chapters. Timing is 6.30 pm for 7.30 pm and the price per head this year is £36.

Tickets will not be issued - but contact the Secretary (details below) for any last minute changes.

The menu for the Dinner is:

Potted Smoked Trout and Hot Smoked Salmon (with horseradish dressing)

*

Topside of Lamb with a Trio of Onions
(with glazed carrots, mange tout and Parmentiers potatoes)

*

Bread and Butter Pudding (with crème Anglaise)

*

Coffee and Petits Fours

If you have not already reserved your place at the Reunion, please complete the tear-off slip on Page 14

Pictures From the Past.....



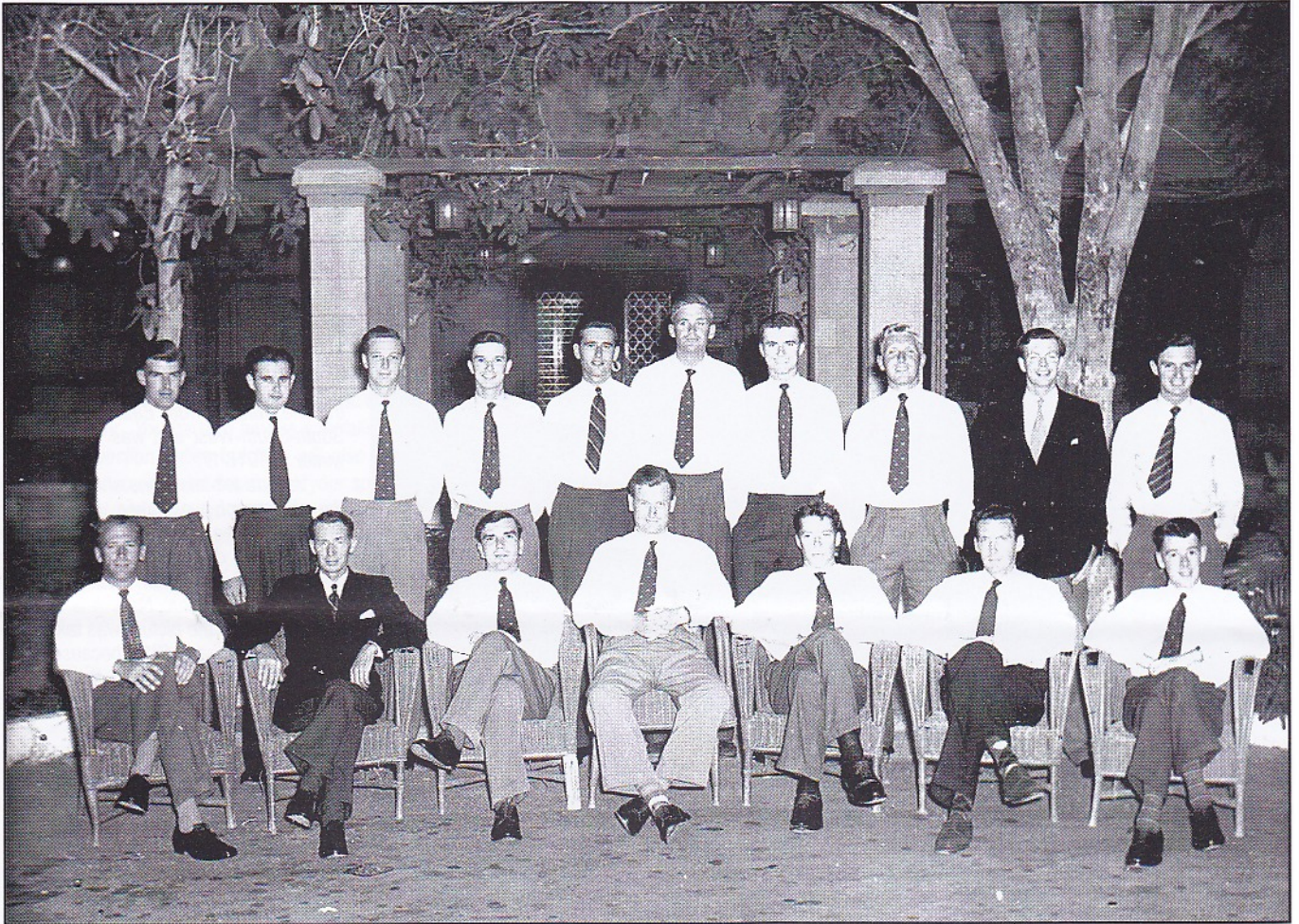
On the left: where it all began - le Vert Galant, 1916/1917. It is an interesting photograph, since it is a direct overhead reconnaissance-type picture, so gives a good map-like view of what used to be Monsieur Bossu's farm on the Doullens-Amiens Road (Amiens to the South). The road is to the left of centre, at the west of the site, running from East-North-East to South-South-West and was taken in the winter of 1916/17.

Various tell-tale signs show us when the photograph was taken, for example the length of the shadows indicate that the sun was well down in the sky, so it was taken late in the winter afternoon. Why winter? The trees are bare. It is actually more likely that the picture was taken late in 1916 than in early 1917, because of the aircraft on the ground and the weather conditions. We know from Sqn Cdr Bromet's diaries that the weather in late October was wet and cold, but there was no snow. It may even have been taken in the first two weeks of November, because we know the weather was improved, though still cold - so, cold and bright.

The other factor that gives us an indication of when the picture might have been taken (for there is nothing written on the print, which itself is very old - it came to the Editor from the late Sqn Ldr JA "Ally" Shaw), is the aircraft standing on the field. Those on the right, near to the four Bessoneau canvas-clad hangars, are De Havilland DH-2s (identified by the fact that there is no solid fuselage between the wings and tails of the aircraft), while those on the right are a mixture of Sopwith Pups and Sopwith One-and-a-Half Strutters, with a single Nieuport. We already know that Naval Eight and 32 Squadron RFC were located at le Vert Galant at the end of 1916 and the aircraft operated by Number 32 Squadron were DH-2s. 32 actually left le Vert Galant shortly after the arrival of Naval Eight. The seven sheds occupied by Naval Eight are up in the right hand side. The crossroads are barely distinguishable, because they were earth roads, but the lie of the land is as described by Sir Geoffrey Bromet.

Geoff Green served with Number 208 in the days of the Meteor FR9. Abu Sueir was the home of the Squadron then, though the side canopy of the Land Rover in the background has chalked on it the inscription: "208 is Back". This refers to a return from Armament Practice Camp at Nicosia in Cyprus. Squatting at the front right is Mike Bradley, then a flight commander.

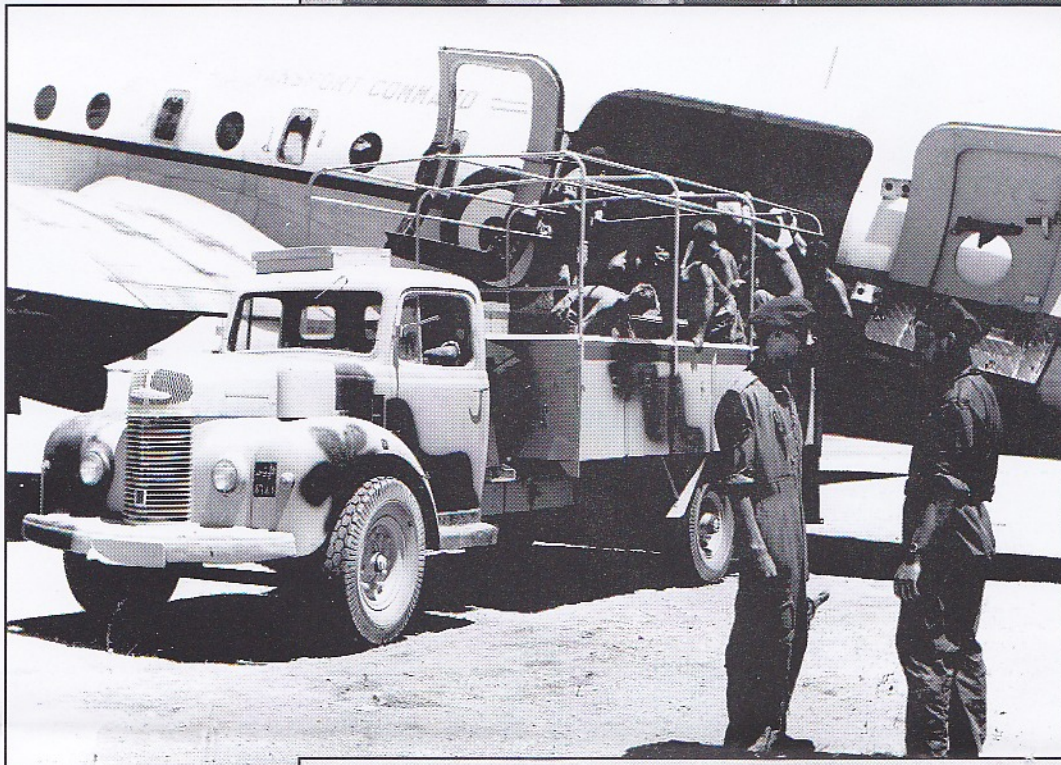
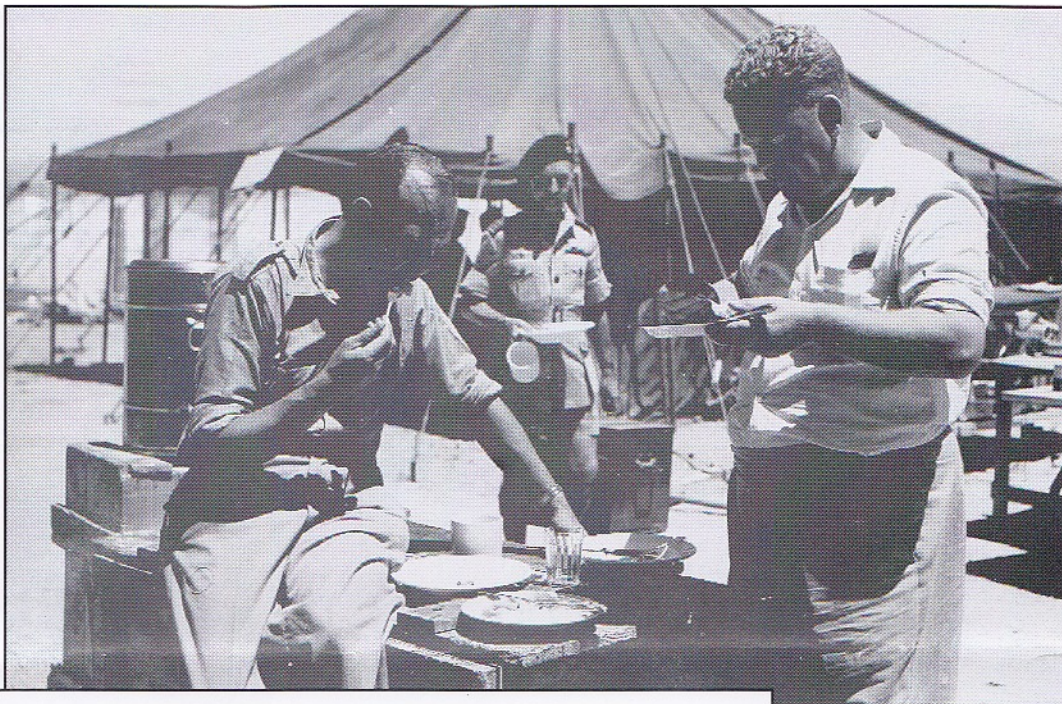




Above: another picture from Geoff Green, showing the pilots of the Meteor era Squadron all together at Abu Sueir. This year's Guest Speaker, Mike Bradley, is seated third from the left on the front row, next to CO Sqn Ldr Tom Neil (Geoff is standing on the extreme right). Below, some five years later, in 1958, soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 16th Independent Parachute Brigade, dig in at Amman airfield to provide a secure perimeter. In the background is a C-124 Globemaster of the USAF based in Germany, several of which kept us supplied until RAF aircraft were allowed to resume flying over Israel.



Above: Gentlemen of the Press, relaxing and enjoying a lunch make up from composite rations. Interestingly, we all fed on re-worked "compo" rations for most of the detachment to "Britforjor" and, perhaps surprisingly, most found the food quite acceptable.



Left: an amusing picture which brings back an amusing recollection by your Editor, who recalls that, when boxes of 30mm ammunition were being passed from a similar 70 Squadron Hastings to the back of a Jordanian Army truck like this one, the British airmen and soldiers forming the human chain, began to throw them the very short distance from one person to the next. Suddenly, there were no Jordanian soldiers to be seen!

This print was among a bunch of 208 pictures, but had no inscription on the back or accompanying note with it, so it required a little detective work. It is an FGA9, with which 208 was first equipped in 1960, though the paint scheme, in which the upper colours wrap around the leading edge of the wings, puts it into the mid-Sixties, because it is fitted with rocket rails, while later FGA9s carried the Matra SNEB rocket pack. So our detective work suggests that this aircraft is in Aden, or very early in the Bahrain era, before the old-type rockets ("three-inch drains") were abandoned.





This 1917 Sopwith F1 Camel could well be at le Vert Galant, but it isn't, it's at the Shuttleworth Trust Collection at Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire



Wg Cdr Gary Kelly delivers his "State of the Force" address

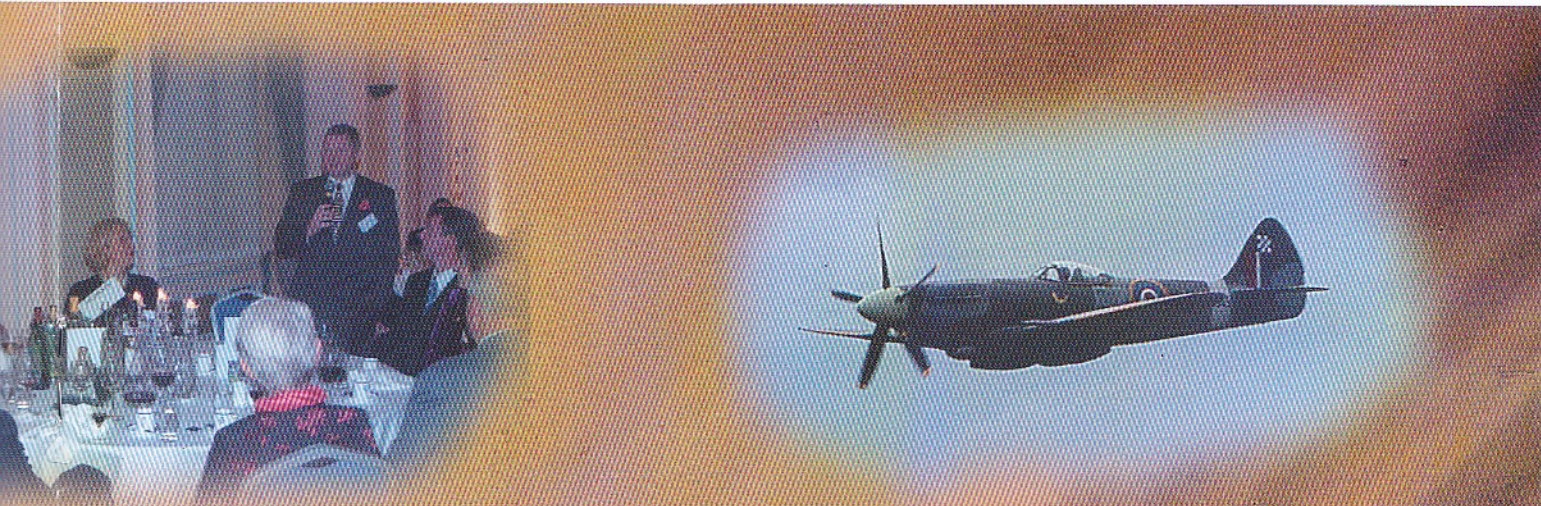


Air Marshal Sir Rob Wright delivers his Presidential Address



Today's 208 mount needs no introduction, the Hawk T1a, this pair being captured by the editorial camera some three years ago.

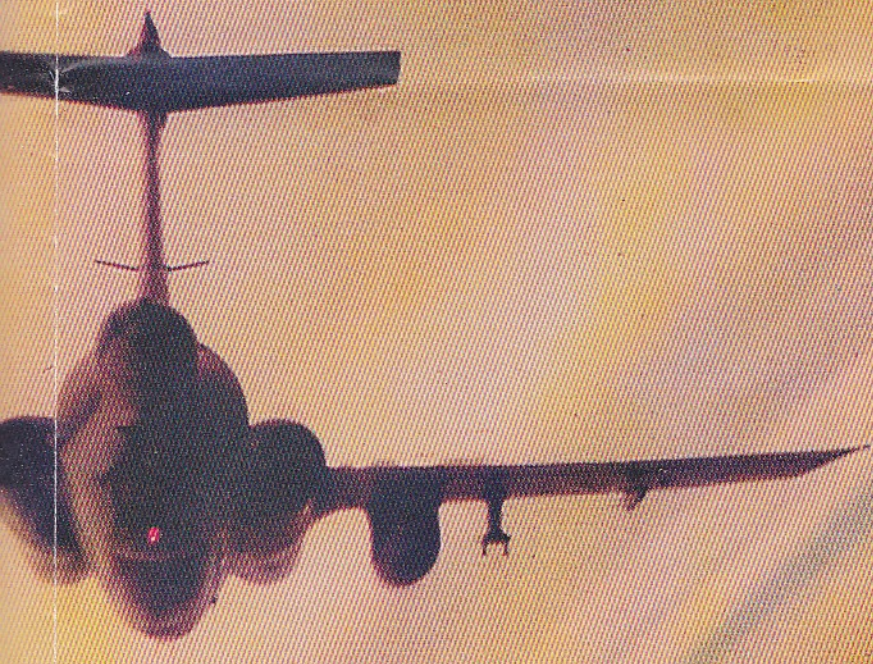
This shot was taken, as its original caption states, on the morning in 1978. Two Buccaneers were seen from the aircraft from which the picture was taken by Philip Pinney, then OC 208. Captured early, but what a stunning sunrise!



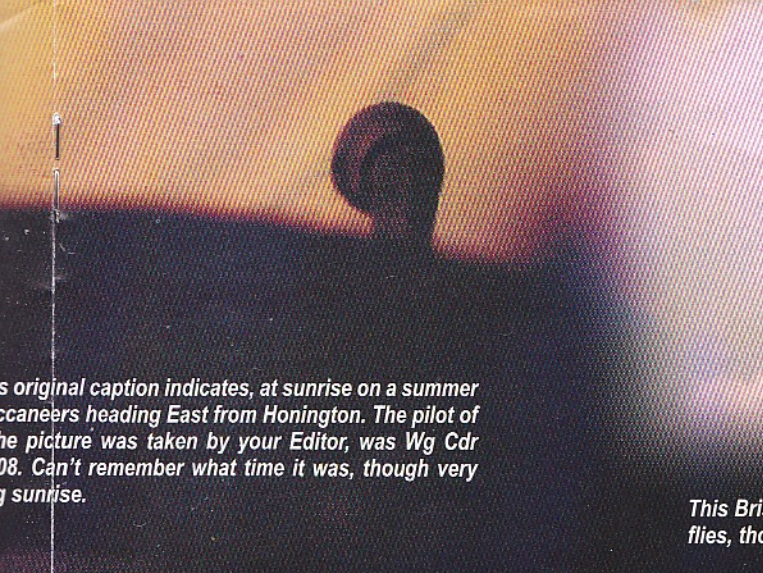
"State of the Squadron" address to an enthusiastic audience.



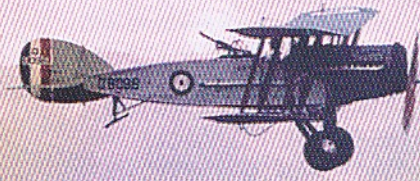
A Spitfire Mk XVIII in the colours of 208's sister squadron in Palestine, No 32, photographed at Duxford.



Still flying interesting types is Meteor Chapter Representative Desmond Penrose, who certainly appears to be enjoying "Twinkle's" presentation.



As the original caption indicates, at sunrise on a summer morning, the biplane is heading East from Honington. The pilot of the picture was taken by your Editor, was Wg Cdr [unclear] D8. Can't remember what time it was, though very early in the morning.



This Bristol F2B Fighter, D8096, is owned by the Shuttleworth Trust and still flies, though not now in its original 208 Squadron colour scheme, as here.

2006 Guest of Honour - "Twinkle" Storey

At the last two Reunion Dinners we have had excellent accounts, by Ken Pugh and Roy Bowie, of the Squadron in action in Italy and in Palestine. Unfortunately, I cannot give such an account because the only action I saw during my Squadron tour was in the bar. However, I would like to tell you of my long association with the Squadron.

So I start with the 2nd June of last year, when the Squadron gave an extremely impressive performance, both in the air and on the ground, to celebrate the 90th anniversary. It was evident that the Squadron had put much effort into providing Association Members with a memorable day. But for me, being at Valley stirred a memory of a previous visit. It was a period in my service life that until then I had all but forgotten: it was 62 years ago.

Some seven to eight miles south east of Valley there is a village of Bodorgan and it may not be realised by some present and past Squadron members that there was, during the war, a grass airfield located there: RAF Bodorgan. It had been constructed for the purpose of providing target aircraft for the large Anti-Aircraft training regiment at Ty Croes. I was posted to Bodorgan for the last four months of 1944 where we had five or six Martinets and three Hurricanes. The Martinets towed drogues for the gunners to fire at and the Hurricanes provided various flight profiles to train the radar operators.

Towards the end of the year there was continuous rain (not an unknown factor in Anglesey) and the Bodorgan airfield was too saturated for operations. Thus we took 3 or 4 Martinets and Hurricanes to Valley and operated from there for some ten to fourteen days. Why do I tell you this? I wish to lay claim to being the first 208 Squadron pilot to operate from Valley.

On the 26th October, 1949, I joined 208 Squadron, at Fayid in the Canal Zone. It was great to be flying Spitfires again and with an outfit, which I quickly learned, was a happy one and full of keen pilots. The blue skies and relatively flat desert was an excellent setting for low flying which could be done without risk of reporting, unless you flew over command or group headquarters. Also, it was not long after the end of the war and rules and regulations were different from today. I recall a detachment to Tripoli to support an army exercise when we took six or perhaps eight aircraft – all fully armed and which I doubt was cleared with HQ. Anyway when we reached the area of the desert, where the armies of Rommel and Montgomery had fought, there were remains of tanks, armoured vehicles and lorries everywhere. The formation leader called to say he was "going in" and we each picked our targets and fired away. There was no range safety officer and no one to record your hits (or misses). It was a very good feeling to carry out that live firing on real targets.

In mid-March 1950, I was pulled of the squadron and placed in the operations room at HQ 205 Group and on the 24th May the Squadron deployed to Khartoum as its main base. On the following day, eight or nine of the aircraft flew in to Asmara, Eritrea, where they supported the Royal Berkshire Regiment who were in action on the ground against the Shifta bandits. Hence the operation was known as Shufti Shifta. George Bush and Tony Blair would have classified the Shifta as international terrorists but I think they were doing what they had done for many years and are still probably doing on a minor scale: raiding the villages, stealing the cattle and raping the women.

There were Eritrean police posts throughout the country which were continuously manned, and some of them



reinforced by patrols of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, who also scoured the countryside in pursuit of the Shifta. The Squadron would dispatch two aircraft to check the mobile patrols as and when required. The pilots would check a post, climb up to ensure R/T contact, and inform the police/army HQ of what they had observed and what that had seen from panels displayed on the ground indicating direction of Shifta bandits and estimated distance. Weighted canvas bags, with messages from the pilot or prepared instructions from the Joint HQ, were thrown out of the cockpit to the ground forces. Mainly, the Squadron was providing essential communications and following up reports of Shifta activity and often scaring them by their presence overhead, especially when they were found stealing the cattle.

For the pilots the flying was a great and welcome change from the desert of the Canal Zone. Asmara was just under 8,000ft altitude and the countryside in general was mountainous and challenging. The local maps had been prepared by the Italians before the war and were far from accurate and the generally clear blue skies of the desert were now replaced by changeable cloudy conditions. Having taken off in clear weather the pilot would return to base to find the cloud would be just above the ground. Bearing in mind the rugged terrain, low cloud and with limited R/T range the contrast with the Canal Zone was readily apparent. I delivered a Spitfire, after minor servicing, from Fayid to Asmara and was able to enjoy a week with the Squadron and thus can say that we all enjoyed some challenging flying on that detachment.

Now here's a picture that comes from "Twinkle's" period with 208. It came from Geoff Green just a little too late to be included in last year's Newsletter, but entirely appropriate to this tale. It shows in the background a Meteor FR9 ("A" - the Boss's?) and four young stalwarts walking towards the camera. Those four young stalwarts are, from left to right: Jack Fryer, Geoff Green, Frank Seaton and Mike Bradley. These four were members of 208's aerobatic team, quite some time before aerobatic demonstration teams were a feature at home.



The Eritrean operation lasted some three months and the Squadron returned to Fayid in September to find one Meteor 7 had arrived. Shortly afterwards, they deployed to APC at RAF Nicosia. At that time Cyprus was a wonderful place: tourism hadn't started, housing development was unknown, EOKA hadn't surfaced and the island was unspoilt with many places of cultural interest one of which, the Chanteclair nightclub in Nicosia, was very popular. Since about 40% of the Squadron pilots were NCO's it was an ideal meeting place for all pilots.

It was on an occasion towards the end of the evening that a discussion ensued about the late arrival of the Meteor Mk 9 aircraft. The A Flight commander felt that the only way to expedite the arrival of the "Nines" was to get rid of the Spitfire 18s and, when pressed, said that he would get rid of one the next day. He was then challenged to do so for a bottle of champagne. He rejected the offer but said he would do it for two bottles. On the following day he was observed taxiing one of the older aircraft and duly took off. By pumping the throttle the Griffon engine was soon spluttering and coughing and the aircraft remained on the circuit area whilst the pilot spoke to the control tower. Then, just clear of the airfield and in open country, but for all to see, the pilot appeared at the side of the aircraft and parachuted to a safe landing. I was not present for the occasion but the surviving members vouch for the authenticity of the incident.

I returned to the Squadron in mid-December and the new aircraft commenced to arrive in the February of '51. The conversion period slowly proceeded and during that time I recall two major incidents: the first was at APC when, on a ground attack, the pilot failed to effect recovery in time. That was a heavy blow for the Squadron but, in my opinion, could be listed under "conversion" since the response to the stick in the pull out was very different from that of the good old "Spit". A second crash, but with a happy ending, occurred when a newly arrived young pilot was about to land the Meteor 7 at Fayid. At the point of touchdown, the aircraft landed heavily, careered off the runway, across the desert and stopped when it hit a solid built guard-post. The post was completely destroyed, the aircraft wrecked and the pilot a little shaken but generally in good form.

Towards the end of '51, December, the A Flight commander said to me, as B Flight commander, that he was starting a flight formation aerobatic team. Accepting this for what it was, a challenge, I said it was a good idea and B Flt would do the same. Thus we commenced our training. This was not difficult

as the blue sunny skies, and good weather, meant that we could carry out practices on a daily basis. We soon had two proficient aerobatic teams as well as a Squadron Seven. For the AOC's Inspection in March we presented him with a Squadron Formation and the two Flights then performed their individual displays in front of him. The competition was judged by four senior staff officers, who were a part of the Command HQ at Abu Sueir, and I am happy to report that the winners were B Flt. However, to be fair, there was not much difference between the two flights: only that B Flt was better! The Squadron, with the old Spits, had been the cinderella of the Canal Zone. Now we were truly the best. The other squadrons certainly could not provide two teams and, at that particular time, I doubt whether the home squadrons, practising in the UK weather, could have matched our displays. I left the Squadron in May of '52.

Some time after I had left, I looked back on those wonderful days I had in the Canal Zone. I decided that I had belonged to an extremely good flying club: HM provided the aircraft, servicing and maintenance, also food and accommodation. We pilots had only to provide the beer money and enjoy the flying.

In August, 1966, I had the good fortune to be given command of RAF Muharraq, Bahrain. The Persian Gulf was then a quiet backwater, although Muharraq was a major staging post on the Transport Command route to the Far East and Aden. Overall, the station was very much transport orientated with a Beverley transport squadron and a communications squadron with Pembroke aircraft. The presence of a fighter squadron with young pilots injected the life which I felt was just the right balance for the station as a whole. That it was 208 could not have been better for me. Just over two months after my arrival, the Squadron celebrated its 50th Anniversary and Sir Geoffrey Bromet, the first Squadron Commander, was the guest of honour. Towards the end of my tour, 8 Squadron came to join us from Aden. I then had two squadrons of young Hunter pilots enlivening the station. Despite giving me grey hair, it was a great life for a station commander.

I have had a close and very enjoyable association with the Squadron. I have attended the 50th and 90th Anniversaries and I much look forward to the 100th.



Letter From the Squadron

This is my second newsletter in command. Although I shouldn't be, I am surprised at how rapidly time has passed since my last! This year we seem to have been busier than ever.

208 Squadron welcomed eight British Forces flying training courses during 2006/7. These courses consisted of 34 RAF, 5 RN and 2 RM officers. Of these personnel, three officers were creamed off (chosen to instructor training at the end of their 208 Squadron course) to Valley and a further 2 were posted back to RAF Linton-on-Ouse to become creamie instructors on the Tucano. The remaining officers, with the exception of one withdrawal from training, were graduated to Tactical Weapons courses undertaken at either 19(R) Squadron on the South side of the airfield or to the NATO Flying Training Canada course based at CAF Cold Lake.

The Squadron continues to undertake training of Indian Air Force students as part of an agreement between BAe Systems and the Indian Government. RAF Valley welcomed four courses of Indian Students comprising a total of 23 officers. It continues to be a hugely rewarding experience for both the instructors and the UK students to work with the Indian Air Force. Despite the obvious cultural differences, and a climate that is very different from the one they are used to at home, the Indian students have shown that they are capable of adapting to our way of flying training and display huge amounts of enthusiasm. The programme comes to an end in February 2008 and we will miss them.

Flight Lieutenant M E W Pert flew 44 displays during the 2006 season, many of them at various locations around Europe. Approximately three million people watched the display and the Squadron received countless letters, telephone calls and e-mails congratulating him. He hands the reins to Flight Lieutenant M J Child for the 2007 season. "Chikey" has already distinguished himself by winning the Wright Jubilee Aerobatic Trophy for the best display and has begun his season with the skill and brio expected.

The highlight of the year was the Squadron's 90th Anniversary Open Day, Graduation ceremony and Guest night on 2 June. Many Association Members joined current Squadron personnel on a blazing hot day to celebrate the event which concluded with a very successful dinner. Following this in October the 208 Squadron Anniversary Painting was unveiled. The painting was presented by Ocean Limited, the company which provides our IT support for programming, as a gift to honour the Anniversary and a limited edition of 208 prints are available. One painting was presented to the Officers' Mess at RAF Valley, where it hangs in pride of place in the reception.

The Squadron was involved in a busy visits programme over the year. The Valley Aviation Society organised their annual photo shoot in the summer. Several high-ranking visitors, both Service and civilian came to the Squadron including a delegation from the Pakistan Air Force. I was accompanied by 10 QFIs to the Association Dinner at the RAF Club on 28 October. As you are aware AVM J M M Ponsonby, AOC 22 group attended and spoke after the dinner. I also accompanied OC RAF Valley, Gp Capt A S Barmby, in a visit to India in January as part of the continuing association with the IAF.

Squadron Leader P T Millward rejoined the Squadron in the spring after a tour with 100 Squadron, he replaced Squadron Leader M J Sharp who retired from the RAF. Squadron Leader Sharp achieved the milestone of 3000 hours on 14 August 2006.

Other notable highlights were 2 Force Development Detachments undertaken by the Squadron. In May, I led the Squadron permanent staff on a Battlefield Tour to Normandy.



Wg Cdr Gary Kelly presents his "State of the Squadron" speech at the Reunion.



Martin Pert receives the Geoffrey Bromet Memorial Trophy from A-VM John Ponsonby at the 2006 Reunion Dinner.

Air Vice-Marshal John Ponsoyby addresses the Dinner party after presenting the Bromet Memorial Trophy to Flt Lt Martin Pert.



This gave the opportunity for 35 staff to study the planning and implementation of Operation OVERLORD, visit the birthplace of 208 Squadron at Le Vert Galant (a particularly special event) and the V2 rocket sites in the Calais area. The visit to Le Vert Galant was particularly poignant, and we took the opportunity to toast Squadron Commander Bromet outside the buildings he used to establish our Squadron over 90 years ago. My staff researched and briefed members of the party at each site, analysing the events and giving their own interpretation of the lessons identified.

The second Force Development tour was to Malta and Italy. 12 instructors of 208 Squadron flew 6 Hawks to Malta via a fuelling stop in Istres, France. Squadron members visited the Malta Aviation museum located at Ta Quali airfield. The Squadron operated Meteors from here in the 1950s. After a 2 day visit we then flew to Perugia in central Italy. During this stay we visited Castiglione del Lago airfield, based on the Western coast of lake Trasimeno. 208 Squadron were based here in 1944-5 during the campaign for the Gothic line. It was at this airfield where 208 Squadron was visited by His Majesty the King. An educational and enjoyable time was had by all.

All in all this has been a busy but very successful year. You can rest assured that morale on the Squadron is very high, and that the spirit of 208 Sqn is as strong as ever. Whilst planning and seeking to improve our future performance, we continue to look back to our past to gain a contextual understanding of our place in the present. I particularly value the contributions many of you have made to our considerable historical archive over the last 12 months. As ever, you are welcome to visit the Squadron should you be passing RAF Valley. I look forward to meeting you at the next dinner in October if not before.



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: _____

CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES' NAMES AND ADDRESSES

NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN Wg Cdr D J Trembaczowski-Ryder BSc RAF,
HURRICANE/SPITFIRE SE Jefford BSc,
METEOR JD Penrose,
HUNTER TM Webb AFC
BUCCANEER Wg Cdr M Ward,
HON SEC MW Brown,
HAWK Flt Lt Mike Bowden, c/o 208 Sqn,
GROUNDCREW P Steele Esq,
HISTORIAN/EDITOR Dr DG Styles MBA PhD FBIM FInstSMM FIMI,

MEMBERSHIP SEC Air Cdre Ben Laite
 (Information on potential new members and existing members seeking contacts should be addressed to the Membership Secretary)

2006 NAVAL EIGHT/208 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION REUNION DINNER

RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS

The following Members and their Guests were present at the 2006 Reunion Dinner:

MRS J ABELL	MR G GREEN	MRS M MOULE	MRS R RIVETT
FLT LT BOWDEN	MRS S GREEN	MR F J NICOLL	SQN LDR SHARP
MR M G BRADLEY	PROF K G HODSON	FLT LT NORRIS	FG OFF SIMCOX
MRS D L BRADLEY	MRS T HODSON	MISS S O'GORMAN	SQN LDR SIMMONDS
MR M W BROWN	MR S E JEFFORD	MRS J O'GORMAN	MR A G SMITH
MRS H BROWN	WG CDR G KELLY	MR J I PARKER	MR P SMITH
MR P CARROLL	MRS N KELLY	FLT LT PARR	ACM SIR M STEAR
MRS B CARROLL	MR M KEMP	MR J PASCOE-WATSON	LADY E STEAR
FLT LT CHILD	FLT LT KENDALL	MR J D PENROSE	MR P STEELE
MR W COPE	MR B C LAITE	MR P G PINNEY	MRS M STEELE
MRS M COPE	MRS H LAITE	MR G R PITCHFORK	MR G J STOREY
FLT LT D DAVIES	FLT LT LLOYD-JONES	AVM J PONSONBY	MRS E STOREY
MR R G DAVIS	FLT LT LONG	MRS .. PONSONBY	DR DG STYLES
MRS E DAVIS	FLT LT MORRIS	MR J K T PUGH	MRS A STYLES
MR J FORD	MR J MOULE	MR N RIVETT	MISS E STYLES

The following Members sent their greetings to the 2006 Reunion, as they were unable to attend:

K ALLEN	E ERSKINE-LEGGET	P LARGE	LD TODD
Hammy ARMSTRONG	J FRAZER	N MEADOWS	G E TOWNSEND
H W BARBER	Dave GILL	P O'DONOHUE	KL TROW
E BEEDHAM	Geoffrey GOODMAN	AVM L W PHIPPS	R TURNER
L F BOYCE	Chris GRANVILLE-WHITE	WF PLUMPTON	P E TURVILLE
G K BRADSHAW	Whitney GRIFFITHS	J PRATT	P VICKARY
R CALVERT	D L GROOM	Brian ROBINSON	T M WEBB
A J CHAPLIN	RA HARPER	S SMALL	J W WHITE
T R COHU	Raymond HILLS	AH SMITH	R WHITE
Ronald DENNETT	C B HOLROYD	Kim SMITH	David WILBY
A B DICKEN	G C W JONES	Trevor A SMITH	
C M DRAPER	R KEMP	E A THOMSON	

Naval Eight/208 Squadron Association - Reunion Booking Slip - 2007

From (Name)..... Chapter/Period with 208.....

Full Address..... 2008 same? or.....

I will/will not be attending the 2007 Reunion Dinner on Saturday 27th October and require.....places at £36 per head.

I enclose my cheque/postal order* for Reunion Dinner (£36.00 each) £.....

Total for Reunion Dinners £.....

Name(s) of Guest(s).....

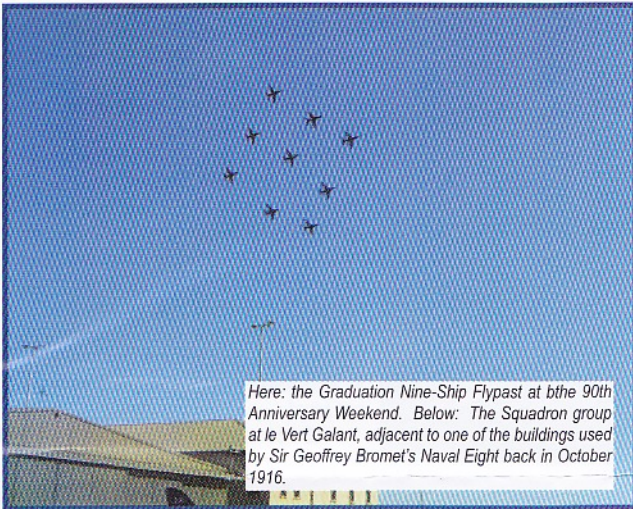
I also wish to make a donation to the Squadron Association Funds £.....

Total cheque/postal order/money order value £.....

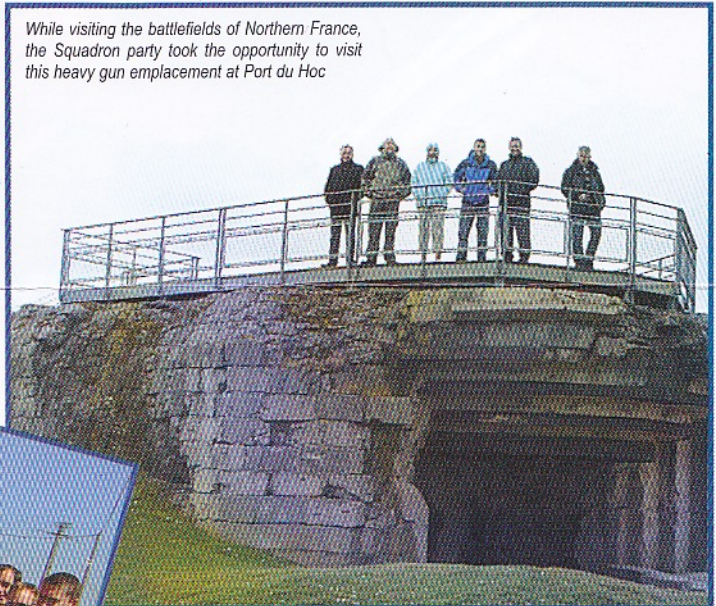
*Please delete as necessary.

Please make cheques payable to: 208 Squadron Association

Pictures From No 208 Squadron



Here: the Graduation Nine-Ship Flypast at the 90th Anniversary Weekend. Below: The Squadron group at le Vert Galant, adjacent to one of the buildings used by Sir Geoffrey Bromet's Naval Eight back in October 1916.



While visiting the battlefields of Northern France, the Squadron party took the opportunity to visit this heavy gun emplacement at Port du Hoc



Below: the group who visited one of 208 Squadron's old haunts from World War Two - Castiglione del Lago, where the Squadron operated Spitfires.



Above: the Squadron comes into Malta, another past home location of Number 208 - Luqa airfield was their destination, where the Squadron's Meteor FR9s were once resident.

208 Bits 'n' Pieces



Most Association members will know of the toy maker Corgi. Perhaps not so many will be aware that about five years ago, Corgi began manufacturing model aircraft for collectors and surprisingly, 208 Squadron has featured no less than four times in this series, as illustrated here.

The first 208 aircraft was a little dubious, in that it was a Gulf War machine and could have belonged to 12 Squadron or 208, as had passed from one to the other and back again in a very short period. The second 208 aircraft was also a Bucc, but this time identified clearly as a 208 machine, though with the pale blue of its arrowhead marking on the nose in pink, not blue!

All of these models have been produced in limited editions, but anyone

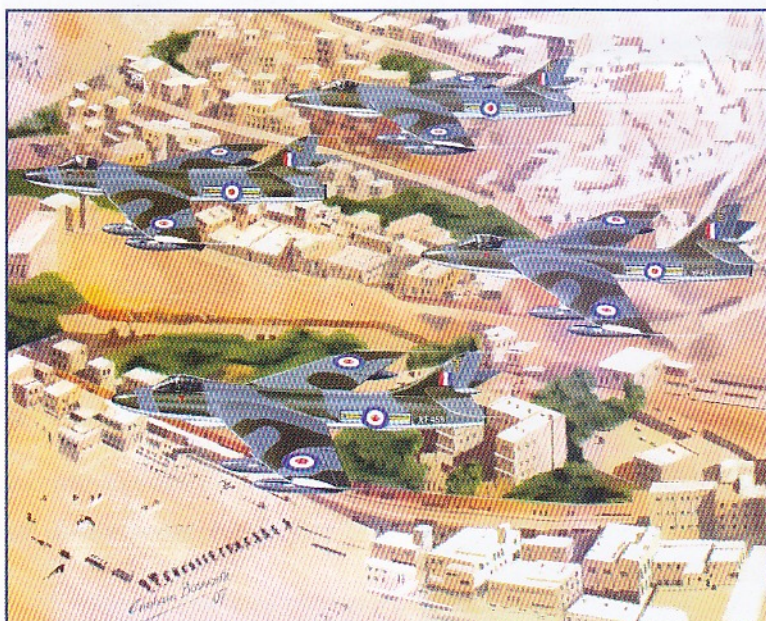
interested in locating any of them should be able to do so through the major model sellers, such as the aviation goodies shops at the major airports. Even your local model shop might be able to help.

To the right are the other two models, the Meteor FR9 (topical in this issue!) and the most recent model, the Hawk T1a in shiny black.

All of the models have good outline shapes and are quite well marked (except for the pink in the Buccaneer's nose marking!), though panel lines are a little heavy (understandable in diecast models). The Meteor is perhaps the best of the bunch and is still available at around £30.



Below: here is a preview of the painting "Hunters Over Amman", which will be on display at the forthcoming Reunion Dinner in the Royal Air Force Club. The photograph used as the basis for the painting did not feature these particular four aircraft, but all four were in Amman during the Squadron's attachment there. The aircraft in the lead is Sqn Ldr John Granville-White's "G-W", which had, only a short time before the Jordan detachment, been repaired after a pencil bomb attack had damaged the nose.



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