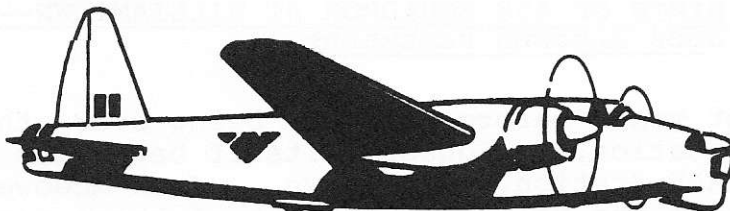


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, G.P.O. Box 5289, Sydney, 2001, AUSTRALIA.

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### 4 5 8 S Q U A D R O N O F F I C E - B E A R E R S .

Squadron President: John Carey (S.A.) Squadron Vice Presidents:  
Squadron Treasurer: Peter Alexander (NSW) --Australia: Jack Lewis (Q.)  
Squadron Secretary: Graeme Coombes (ACT) Stan. Longhurst (NSW)  
Squadron Hon. Auditor: Bert Thompson (NSW) Canada: Jim. Donaldson (Manitoba)  
U.K. Norman Duke  
New Zealand: Ron. Verity

Editor: Peter Alexander

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\*New Address.

### FORTY YEARS ON.

An English Public School, Harrow, has a School Song called, as we remember reading, "Forty Years On". Your Editor recalls feeling impressed in his early teens, on hearing of the song, with the drama of the thought of the passage of such aeons of time and of being after that elapse of time, able to see what one had made, and what one's friends had made of the opportunities of life over forty years. Well, here we, who have worked for the Squadron News, and we who have read it, now are. Flight Correspondents, in this Issue, do look back and we leave that to them.

For Editorial selves, we comment that while 160 in itself is no very different figure from 159 or 161, it is a sort of punctuation mark. A chance to realise, with a sense of renewed shock, how great was the impact on young men of the experience shared in youth, of war, of adventure of some peril; of how great was the link then formed. No doubt, there has been a power of endurance and commitment on the part of contributors and editorial people, too.

But the useful thing to do is to rejoice in the shared brotherhood of that large 458 family, to value what it has offered over the post-war years, and to resolve to carry on. But of that there is little doubt.

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THE BIRTH OF 458 SQUADRON AT WILLIAMTOWN--JULY, 1941--  
JOCK MCGOWEN REMEMBERS.

Eight years before--the war being over--the News commenced publication, the Squadron itself began its Australian existence at RAAF Station, Williamtown. Jock McGowen, who was there, has written the following account of those early days.

As one of the original members of 458, Peter Alexander has asked me to put down a few of the items of interest that occurred over 48 years ago. To help celebrate the 40 years of the Squadron News, I am proud to help and offer my congratulations to Peter for his efforts over those past 40 years.

Like a lot of the early members of the RAAF our full intention when we joined was to go overseas. Why? Don't ask me. Maybe like our fathers before us, we wanted to help. I for one cannot answer the question, even now after 48 years. However in May 1941, the Infiltration scheme was introduced whereby we could eventually go overseas, link with the RAF and eventually form into RAAF Squadrons. I applied and found myself at Williamtown, just north of Newcastle--a desolate camp, lots of barrack huts, one single gravel runway, no aeroplanes but an occasional Tiger Moth and a very rare "staggering" Beachcraft. Like us the 'plane survived--and is now in a museum.

I was only 20 at the time; others were older. Tony Stone was older and my dear old Mum asked him to keep a fatherly eye on me. A bit like asking Dracula to look after the blood bank. However, we both survived.

On arrival, the Station C.O. was W/Cdr. Joe Paget, an RAF type who had his blue-grey uniform died to get a blue RAAF colour. It came out black. If we had known about the Gestapo, his nickname could be imagined. As it was he had to be satisfied with "Little Caesar". His object in life was to tame this "rabble" he had got. History does not record his thoughts on whether he had succeeded but we did our best to ensure that he didn't.

Soon after arrival we were put on parade and names were called. Suddenly they stopped at M. The remainder, some 29, became the RAAF nucleus of 458 on 10th July 1941. More names were added until we had some 39 members--with as our C.O. F/Lt Pike who did not come away with us. Our preparation was normal, I suppose. Kit parades, drill, bayonet practice, gasmask races, painting stones around the parade ground, moving them, painting them again. We knew we were on our way when we received our long greatcoats and were told to add AUS to our service numbers and then came tin hats. Many 458 necks were tested to the limit when a lump of 3' x 2' oregon was used to test the strength of the tin hats.

That quintet of double trouble, Kessler, Trewartha, White, Wilson and Freddie Strom formed "Q" Flight. Even looked after the Mess. How did we survive to go overseas?

The great day arrived, August 7th and we were on our way. I think as 506 I was first to get in line. We sailed at 4.p.m. that day, from Sydney on that grand old lady the Awatea, escorted by HMAS Sydney. It was the roughest sea the Awatea had experienced and were we sick! But the food was literally first class. The Awatea eventually went down off Oran, North Africa.

We had a day in Auckland, then on to Fiji. We did not have any idea what was going to happen to us. But after 458 some of us got home after a few years. In my case, like others, I got back in August 1945. Freddie Strom was probably the last, in October. There are still a few left of the old originals: Silbereisen, Palmer, Strom, Stone, Hyles, Munkman and yours truly. No doubt others, and I apologise for not including them. Many stories left to tell--but space does not allow that pleasure.

Aus 14128, Jock McGowen.

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FROM THE SQUADRON PRESIDENT.

John Carey writes:

With this Issue that completes 40 years of publication of 458 SQUADRON NEWS, I would like to commend our Editor for his long and continuous services in the interests of 458 Squadron generally. Without this service it is doubtful if we would have achieved the 40 years of continuous news and the comradeship that is so important to all members and associates of 458. My congratulations and appreciations also to the many people who have contributed so much in time and effort to make this wonderful organisation something to be proud of.

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Are you reading this, Syd. Bartram? Sounds familiar? It's what you wrote 15 years ago when you were Squadron President. I've only changed the number, since you wrote it for the issue that commemorated 25 years of continuous publication.

In that same issue there were many other messages--one from Her Majesty the Queen, from a brace of Prime Ministers, from former Commanding Officers of 458, and many other V.I.P.S from within and without the Squadron. One sentence from one of these messages sums up the common theme that ran through all of them. The then Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, said:

"It is a remarkable tribute to the traditions of the Squadron and the bonds of comradeship among its members that their publication has continued to appear regularly for so long."

There is no need for me to add anything to that or to the words of Syd. Bartram.

Except to say that what has been said before applies with even greater weight to-day.

John Carey.

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FROM THE SQUADRON AT HOLME-on-SPALDING MOOR.

Reunion and rededication Ceremony. from Sid Thompsett.

What a memorable time was had by those who attended the Reunion dinner at the Viking Hotel, York and the very moving ceremony at the Airfield at Holme upon Spalding Moor! There were 28 at the dinner on Saturday 16th. This includes 8 who had come over from Australia. Those attending were: Norman and Joyce Duke, Sid and Violet Thompsett, Ken. Morris, Harry Bishop, Matt and Mary Lanigan, Harry and Nance Filley, Charlie and Joyce Humbles, Eric and Sylvia Phillips, Reg. and Betty Windett, Peter and Eileen Leonard, Jim and May Croft, Eric and Dorothy Munkman, Al and Joy Wheat, Bernie and Helen McLoughlin, Jack Baker and Joy Beattie. After a very enjoyable meal, Eric Munkman presented to the U.K. Flight a laminated map shewing our operational areas in Europe and Africa. Much talking and drinking continued afterwards in the Lounge until rather late.

During the night a lot of rain fell and it was still rather dull first thing, but then a fine day followed for which we were eternally grateful. Lunch was taken at the Red Lion in HOSM. The Ceremony started at 1445 combining both 458 Sqdn and 76 Sqdn. Canon J.H. Armstrong and the Rev. D.S. Cook officiated. Flages were paraded with Eric Munkman and Al. Wheat being the standard bearers. The Australian flag covered the Memorial which was unveiled by Bernie McLoughlin, and the wreath was laid by Norman Duke. A further bouquet of flowers from the local community was laid by Doris Robertson, A wreath and a bouquet was also laid on the 76 Squadron memorial. The lesson was read by Al. Wheat.

Numerous photographs were taken, so I am sure some will be available soon. As I stated earlier it was a very memorable day and will stay in our minds for a very long time. A few other members joined us for the ceremony, Betty Johnson (widow of Guy) Fred and Pip Nieman, Doug and Mrs. Jennings, Dai and Mrs. Davies;--and an original member of 458 who actually lives in HOSM, being Jock Pattison. I was pleased to meet up with him.



At Holme-on-Spalding Moor (cont.)

The Ceremony finished with a March Past, the Salute being taken by Sqdn/Ldr. McHugh of the RAAF, at present stationed at RAF, Cranwell.

I learned that Fred and Pip Nieman will be leaving us in November and going to live in New Zealand--they have a daughter out there. Best wishes to you both from U.K. Flight.

Some of the chaps and their wives went up to the Church on the Hill where there are five graves of Squadron members who were killed. They were in immaculate shape and a special effort had been made by Mick Redshaw who looks after them.

The weekend passed all too quickly; much talking took place, particularly among our first timers, Ken Morris, Matt Lanigan, Jim Croft and Doug Jennings. It was hoped that Christina McKenzie might come to the Ceremony, but unfortunately she didn't arrive. I hope I have covered most of what went on, but if I have missed anything, I am sorry.

Sid. Thompson.

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N.S.W. REPORT FOR THE SQUADRON NEWS.

by Cy. Irwin.

Firstly, a report on NSW members who have journeyed to the U.K. to attend the Dedication service for the Squadron Memorial at Holme-on-Spalding Moor on 17th September--Eric Munkman, and Jack Baker and their ladies made the trip and maybe one or two others. We await full details on their return. Other travellers from our midst are Stan. and Jean Longhurst who have undertaken a motoring visit to W.A. and will be glad to meet Squadron members in that State.

On Functions--Past and Future.

The Air Force Bowls Day, set down for 17th August was unfortunately cancelled due to bad weather, so our bowling hopefuls have to wait for another day. Future functions--as a Member branch of the Air Force Association our Squadron members support and if possible participate in fixtures arranged by the Association. Some of these will be past history on receipt of this News, but are as follow:

Air Force Golf Day at Windsor Golf Club on Sunday 5th. November.  
Church Service at the Air Force Memorial Church at Lindfield on Sunday 12th November at 7.15 p.m.

Xmas on the Rocks Function at Lower Fort Street, on Sunday 12th November, at 1 p.m.

Our Melbourne Cup Sweep tickets are in the hands of members and attracting good support.

Our pre-Xmas Get together and dinner arrangements are in the pipe line and we look forward to that evening.

Members on the Sick List.

We are pleased to report that Lofty Bracker, although still not well, has left the Eastern Suburbs Private Hospital and returned to his flat at Potts Point, under constant care. Jack Aitken is to be thanked for his help to Lofty during past months. Arthur Jollows suffered a severe stroke and while in hospital had a blood infection causing severe illness. He is now off the dangerously ill list in Lady Davidson Hospital at Turrumurra, where he can receive visitors. Our sympathy to him and to Tess and hopes for his future improvement.

Forty Years After. With the 40th anniversary of the News, some reminiscences from the late Forties to now were sought. So here goes:

Firstly, the origin of our formation as an ex-service group in N.S.W. flowed from early impromptu evenings in the Mess at Air Force House, Goulburn Street, and at 330, George Street, and elsewhere in Sydney. Many happy evenings were spent together. Further functions followed at Air Force Club premises in George and Clarence Streets, and later at the Pitt Club in Market Street. We remember News publication nights at Sam Barlow's Campsie H.Q.

In early days we were much preoccupied with sport and the outdoors:-

N.S.W. Notes (cont.). Cricket, at Centennial Park and elsewhere (including a memorable trip to RAAF Station, Rathmines, one hot humid weekend, where we were fed in the Airmens Mess, rebuked for not having "irons", sent home without a drink but victorious. The cold beer at Gosford Station is memorable to this day); Golf at Campbelltown (do you remember that creek, Bob Millar?); tennis and sports days at Mt. Wilga; family picnics and barbeques at Lane Cove Park and Warwick Farm Racecourse.

In concert with members from other States, we recall many interstate and international Squadron reunions, reaching as far as U.K., N.Z. and Canada. The above will last in our memories with pleasure. In addition a major highlight was the publication of the Squadron History in book form, with "We Find and Destroy", followed by a second edition. We have passed the 40 years mark for the News. Let us look forward to a further 10 for the Fifty mark.

C. Irwin.

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#### A NEW ZEALAND NOTE. from the Editor.

A business visit to Auckland during this September enabled me to visit the South Island for the first time. A great experience in a lovely country included a dicey flight towards Milford Sound where the cloud cover of the mountains forced a return to base at Queenstown.

(I made it, by bus, next day) But a highlight, in Christchurch was a meeting with N.Z. Squadron Vice President Ron Verity. Ron is well and still in production with his Rose glasshouses. He is keenly interested in all 458 events. Ron and I went to the N.Z. Air Force Museum at the Air Force Base at Wigram. This is excellent by the highest world standards and was shewing a special Bomber Command Display of fascinating detail.

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#### CROWEATERS' CAUCUS.

from Ted Creighton.

Special Copy for a Special Issue. The only thing your intrepid correspondent could think of was to ring a number of S.A. Flight and pop the question: What were you doing in November '49? Below are some of the printable answers:

Bill Cribb after being reminded by Pat Cribb Oh! Yes! We'd just moved into our first home and a month later we had a baby. The Cribbs by the way have been golfing up the Riverland and had a cup of tea with Ian Showell;

Geoff Esau Well now! We were between moving from one country property to another and our third child was born.

Jack Riseley After flipping, flopping and flapping, decided he was celebrating his 29th birthday in Perth and enjoying early years of marriage. He hastened to add that he is still enjoying the later years of marriage.

Peter Thom recollects that he was the corner grocer in suburban Black Forest.

Syd Bartram after eliminating Coober Pedy and a few other things finally decided that he was involved in a jewellery business in the Adelaide Arcade and had been married for two years

Brian Woodhead. 'Strewth! I can't think of a thing! (Life by the Lake must be spoiling this bloke! Great copy, Brian!)

Jim Perry. Aw! Nothing special, Ted. Think I was in the Commonwealth Railways at the time.

Bert Oliver About the only thing I can think of is that was the year our only daughter was born.

Bill Taylor We had just moved into our first house, our son was one year old, and all my time was taken painting the house, etc.

Bert Ravenscroft I rang my best mate and said Ken! It's a boy!

John Carey Our first child was born, in Melbourne. The only reason he chose Melbourne was to be near his Mother.

Ted Creighton. It's easy for me. With our Golden Wedding Anniversary coming up this November 16th I'm just not game to forget that we were thencelebrating our 10th anniversary.

Croweaters' Caucus (cont.).President's Perth Paragraph.

The lack of air transport could not stop John and Pat Carey making a recent trip to Perth and back to welcome the arrival of another grandchild. While in Perth John was impressed by the quality of the RAAF Association Museum at Bull Creek. The Museum includes a display by 458 Squadron W.A. Flight, and Flight President Bill Clues mentioned to John that to strengthen and enhance the exhibit, the Flight is continually searching for memorabilia associated with the Squadron. Any member in any State who can assist in this direction should contact Bill Clues at 179 Kooyong Road, Rivervale, 6103.

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Q.FLIGHT NEWS.

from Jim. Holliday.

After reading Q.Flight's contributions to the Squadron News over 40 years, it is obvious the highlights are reports of the good times we have spent in each other's company. So, the highlights are the Interstate Reunions that Q.Flight has hosted. Each has had its individual uniqueness that makes it memorable. Our first, in Brisbane the Queensland Premier, ex WW1 Digger, Sir Frank Nicklin, opened and participated in the discussions. But we socialised in the earthy atmosphere of the Waterside Workers Club. Then there was Broadbeach, with the Unwritten History Session and the eating of King Prawns on Jack Baxter's Prawner in the middle of Moreton Bay. Surfair, with the day trip to the Coloured Sands in 4-wheel drives along the broad beach. Then that memorable address given by Bruce McKenzie as Guest Speaker for the Anzac Day Service at the Memorial Park on the cliffs overlooking the blue rolling ocean. Regrettably, it was unrecorded. But we remember that Bruce spoke feelingly of our peaceful existence isolated from the strife prevalent in other countries. A few months later he was the victim of a bomb. Shortly after, "Johnno" Johnston followed him, a victim of surgical shock after bowel surgery. Then, there was Chas. Richardson, long-term Q.Flight President who died the night he retired.

Much of our news records joyous get-togethers. Perhaps the most memorable were the celebrations after the March on Anzac Days. For many years after the war, Q.Flight hosted the revelry at A.T.C.H.Q. at Perry Park, where it seemed almost all the ex-RAAF who marched used to join us. Then there were those social dances at Perry Park and then at Water Street that kept up a cracking pace far into the night.

Our later despatches reflect the slowing of our steps and our present contentment just to sit, sip, and enjoy the wartime companionship when we now get together.

The overall highlight of the News Bulletin is that all recognise that this is a vehicle for communicating with each other. More and more are now writing their activities so that others may know how they are faring. Naturally this brings a response from friends of other years, and so we keep in touch. Thank heavens for "Squadron News". May it live eternally !

Padres' Tape.

Two further items of interest have surfaced from correspondence. Mrs. Frances Hunter forwarded a diary kept by Mick of the journey of the voyage to the M.E. and of the journey by truck from Egypt to Tunisia. Having a first class flight twice to the ME while the ships did 8 knots round the Cape, I found the diary fascinating. The daily record of the 3 months trip clearly expresses the boredom and, yet, its instant history records the facts when they happened as well as first impressions of scenes and people encountered for the first time. The diary is frail. With Frances' permission I handcopied it. Frances would like others to read it. So please ask me for photocopies. (EDITOR: How many other members kept wartime diaries and what do they intend to do with them? It is possible that the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, which collects such items, would welcome the diaries for their archives).



Q.Flight News (cont.)

Then, Vera Etherton wrote that Henry took 1,400 photos between leaving Aussie and returning, and spent the last two years sorting, placing in albums and labelling them. Another album contains news cuttings, cards, etc. What a comprehensive personal record of his war!

Personal Items. Bernie and Helen McLoughlin have just returned from an extensive overseas tour ending in the rededication ceremony of 458/76 Squadrons Memorials at HOSM. Proud to be present and full of praise. Brought home news that the persistence of Reg. Windett has paid off. A Plaque of 458's crest is now displayed in the RAF Museum. The Very Rev. Fred Mackay has been awarded the Senior Australian of the Year by the Later Years Organisation to honour his pioneer development of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Australian Inland Mission.

Ipswich Grammar School, the first public Secondary School in Queensland has not only named its new Library Building the Clive Wyman Building but recently granted Clive the Achievement Award for 1988. These honours recognise Clive's 20 years on the School Board and seven years as its Chairman.

We record with regret the passing of Bob Male on 22nd July after a long illness (Bob was, of course, a 458 Pilot well known to Squadron members both in peace and war. We shall remember him),

Alan Atherton has retired from business in Mackay to take up cane farming.

Jack and Shiela Hobbs are back from their annual safari to the North to escape Southern Queensland's rigorous winter. Tony and Moya Stone have just ended their ride to the Longreach "Stockman's Hall of Fame". Joyce and Jim McKay spent much of the winter laid back at Freshwater, Cairns. Erle Hetherington's new venture is chartering tourists to the Reef in his steel boat. And Peg and I returned recently from a fast ride round the Longreach Stockman's Hall of Fame and the Far South West of Queensland.

Jim. Holliday.

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SANDGROPPERS SAY..... FROM Ted. Jewell.

Congratulations on the 40th Anniversary of the 458 Squadron News. It is hard to believe that those years have gone by so fast. When I look back at the days in the Squadron till the present time, I think of all the good memories connected with 458 during the war years and the time since. That thought leads me to say how grateful we all are to Peter as Editor and all connected with it for the tremendous feat of producing those publications for 40 years thus enabling so many 458 members to keep in touch all those years from the first publication. I would say personally that a lot of the Squadron's highlights would be the All-States Reunions where we would renew old friendships with mates not seen since the war years, especially the Reunion back to Holme-on-Spalding Moor, the Station where we first became attached to 458 Squadron, and to be able to have a beer or two at the old Pub in the village which was so well known by most.

At the Air Force Museum, Bull Creek.

W.A. Flight has for some time been collecting material for the 458 Squadron Stand at the Air Force Museum at Bull Creek, under the care of Flight President Bill Clues. He has just received from Mel Priest's widow, Mel's full uniform plus full ribbons, which includes his D.F.C., which will eventually be on show at the Museum. Bill is still calling on any members who have any material suitable for the 458 Stand to forward it on to him.

Good Time at the Turleys.

W.A. Flight had a great day at Ray and Marj. Turley's home at the beginning of October for a BBQ lunch. We were very lucky as the weather was perfect during the day but the rain came down heavily by the evening. Nobby Nobbs and his wife Esme picked up Elsie and myself and we drove up from here in Mandurah to Ray's place. We had a good roll-up considering quite a few were sick. But with friends and Associate members we had a very enjoyable day. Members there were:

Bill Clues Jim Palmer Nobby Nobbs Ray Turley Ron Gannaway  
Gordon Jones Ted. Jewell .

Stan and Jean Longhurst have been staying over in the West with a niece

Sandgropers Say (cont.)

for a few weeks and after contacting Bill Clues, it was arranged to meet for lunch and drinks at the Mundaring Hotel. It was a great reunion.

Xmas Dinner. We have an Xmas dinner arranged on 17-12-89, Sunday, for a midday smorgasbord at the Freeway Hotel, 55, Millpoint Road, South Perth. Will any member coming there please ring Bill Clues by Dec. 10th on 457 7402.

Once again congratulations on the 40th anniversary. Forward to the 50th !

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VICTORIAN VIEWS From Stan. Tarczynski.

Old Age is sure creeping in. A second Amende Honorable is necessary. --the Xmas BBQ at Ken and Bea Morkhams, 19 Terang Avenue, E. Burwood is now Sunday December 3rd. There is a thought that with so many functions nearing the festive season, we should have it in March (Moomba) or June !

Ern Laming received a letter from Mona Matthews who unfortunately was in hospital when he and Helen were in England. Her sister-in-law took good care of them. Ern has photos of the dedication memorial service and they can be obtained from him at 35, Manton, St. Heidelberg 3084 (Tel 4599547). Mick and Mavis Singe recently took a bus trip to Northam (W.A.) to see son David and family. They were disappointed at not being able to meet Wal and Dora Archbold who were returning from Perth via Melbourne by RAAF flight the day they were due here and their bus was leaving. They were also thwarted in meeting Jim and Lucy Palmer through the latter being ill. The Cuthbertsons are moving--to a smaller and lower maintenance block. Peg wants to acknowledge the pate dish and knife that Joan Russell brought back for her.

Neil and June Dean took a trip to the Murray and Riverina and called on George and Beatrice Brain at Deniliquin. They were showered with hospitality and saw more of Deniliquin in a few hours than the locals would in a lifetime

Nostalgia of Forty years.

Congratulations to 458 Squadron News! In Victoria we were so keen in those early days that we held monthly meetings at Hutton Armstrong's Coffee Shop, dinners at the Francis Hotel, and then over to Jim Munday's office in Parkville, to the Air Force Association at the top of Flinders Lane and later Queens Road and then in Harry Ashworth's plumbing loft. What about the fund-raising at Bob and Beat McKinna's on Good Friday--Hot Cross Buns and coffee (laced!). Then the progressive dances at the Martin's, Timms, McKinna's, Lamings's and Ashworth's--and the odd Bingo nights. There were the dinners at the Baron of Beef in Sherbrooke Forest and on one occasion there was a Rolls Royce Convention with at least forty RRs all parked together!

There were Xmas BBQs at Rodwells at Ashwood with John Fleming winning the Xmas cake raffle regularly--and the many Melbourne Cup Day BBQs at the Russell's at Doncaster. These have all gone, but the memories linger on with only a few of us left.

Finally Settled Secretary. In conclusion I would like to bring to the notice of all members that I have finally settled in to my new abode in the Elderly Citizens Units at 10/5, Stocks Avenue, Ashwood, 3147--Tel. 885 5583. After a few setbacks in recent years, the last two months have relaxed me to such effect that I have won four consecutive golf competitions and reduced my handicap by four strokes. I still reckon I'm too young for bowls !.

Stan. Tarczynski.

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NEXT ISSUE.

The News has received an interesting letter from Roy Chappell, of Tasmania, who has written the biography of Don Saville, 458 Squadron Flight Commander of the early Squadron days. We shall hope to include this in the next Issue--No. 161.