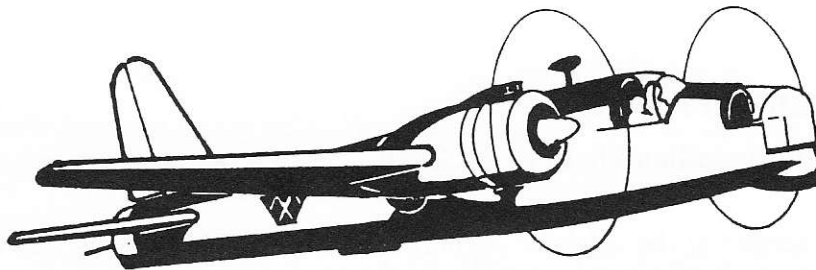


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

C/- Jim Whitem
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This issue is the second of the new arrangement of 3 issues per annum. Henceforth the newsletter will be published in March, July, and November.

Reunion Compact Disk

All who attended the final reunion should have received a CD of its proceedings, so have the VIP guests and the Australian War Memorial. We hope that the grandchildren played their part in having you view it. John Gibbins and Wendy Whitem-Trunz would be pleased to receive any comments about it. Please send them to the editor for forwarding. Additional CDs can be posted to members at a cost of \$5. Contact John Gibbins.

FLIGHT REPORTS

South Australian Flight by Pat Cribb

The service at the Adelaide Airport for the RAAF Memorials was held on Sunday, April 23. The turn up was good, considering the confusion over car parking caused by the (eventual) opening of the new terminal building. Wing Commander Barry Wright, O.C. No.6 Wing of the Australian Air Force Cadets, who believes that the cadets are "perpetually entrusted" with those sacred memorials, hosted the service. RAAF Memorial people hope that Adelaide Airport Limited may be moved to recognize this trust and the sanctity of the memorials which lie within the Airport lease.

The O.C., RAAF Base Edinburgh, Wing Commander Dave Flood, laid the first wreath on behalf of the RAAF, and the Air force Cadets and representatives of all squadrons followed. As S.A. Flight President, Colin Hutchinson placed our wreath on the 458 plaque.

Marching on Anzac Day under the 458 banner carried by Rick Michell and led by Col Hutchinson were Reg Priest, Glen Forgan, Michelle Rowe, Alex McKinnon, Keith Grimshaw, Lyne Skinner, Sharon Hobby, Trish Cosh and John Ringwood

Following the march, 30 gathered at the Kensington Hotel for lunch - apologies and messages from Brian & Joan Woodhead, Jim Perry, Monica Thorn, Mattie Baker, Kevin Tait, Marjory Oliver and Margaret & Peter Harden (John Excell's family). A highlight of the function was seeing, and holding, the damaged signet ring found very recently by Captain Francis of Air France Airline, investigating wartime crashes. It was in a French paddock near Scherberg, and confirmed the identity of Wally Forgan (uncle of our member Glen Forgan), his crew and his crashed Holme-on-Spalding Moor Wimpy, lost in a raid on Brest in 1941. The ring, a treasured token of remembrance, was personally brought to Australia and presented to Wally's brother Robert and family in Mt. Gambier. Before enlisting Wally Forgan (407639) worked for Bennett & Fisher, Melrose S.A. His Commanding Officer (Mulholland) was killed en route to the Middle East.

Rick Michell's second cousin, who is in the RAAF at Tindal, sent him a couple of pages from "Wings, Autumn 2006", which outline many interesting notes on 458 Squadron's role in Bomber Command, early casualties and the qualities of the Wellington. There is also an excellent report on the October final 458 Squadron Association Reunion.

Our next get-together is lunch, again at the Kensington Hotel, on July 6 at 12.00 for 12.30 - cost \$15. We look forward to another good chat. Best wishes to all from South Australia.

Queensland Flight by Evelyn Lewis

News from "Q" Flight very scarce, however I'll do my best.

I received a nice surprise a couple of weeks back, a phone call from Sel Foote after a long time not hearing from him. Joan still in Canossa Hospital not being able to leave there. Sel had to sell their lovely unit and he is now with his daughter Kath & family at St. Lucia. The family is able to have her home on an odd day. When Sel phoned me he was able to put Joan on phone for me to say hello I think she knew me. Sel took some phone numbers from me to phone some of the boys to chat to.

Peter & Jean Bailie are in separate nursing homes but can visit each day if Peter is well.

Chas Ruthven has made some improvement in his cancer treatment he is able to get out in his garden again which is good.

Bert Garland rang me early June just to say hello. He said: I ring everyone to see how they are so he thought he would ring me to see how I was. Thank you Bert, such a nice thought. Bert has serious back problem, Doctors still making decisions.

My complaint I live at Physio to try & get relief for my back. I was down in Wollongong back in April to see my sister & I always contact Cyril Bevan & Lucie to say hello, as they are friends of my sister. Spoke also to Bill & Gwen Johnson. Both Cyril & Bill commented on the last news and to pass on what great reading from the flights and happenings to read about. I assured them the news will continue what ever news of interest comes forth. Do hope members take a note, as I for one would like to hear.

Anzac Day has come & gone. For the first time ever we had no one to march or to carry the banner. Cadets not permitted to be called upon- problems arose last year over various matters.

I was given to understand four Squadrons had to withdraw from the march. 458 banner still in our hands safe with President Eric. Sad to say the health of so many members plays a big part in activities these days. Our luncheons for one - no more. With regards to all.

New South Wales Flight by Eric Munkman

On Anzac Day, we marched under the Squadron Banner, carried by two of our younger members, David Longhurst and Rob Wilkinson. Our attendance was a little disappointing, and I realise we are getting older, but try and make the effort to keep the flag flying, or at least come in and join us at the luncheon. If there is a special mate you wish to see, let us know and we can put you in contact.

We were pleased to see Jim Whittem, Wendy Whittem-Trunz and Dusty Miller and family, all of whom travelled from the country. We held our AGM and discussed various matters. The election of officers resulted in the same committee being elected, with the addition of Bev Bitmead, the first lady on the committee. Congratulations, Bev.

It is with much regret that I advise the passing of our dear friend and Squadron member Jean Longhurst, on 16-5-06, who unfortunately hadn't enjoyed good health for some time. Jean was the widow of Stanley, who passed away many years ago, and also the mother of David, out NSW State secretary. Jean will be remembered by most members for her outgoing and happy way. She was always happy to assist the Squadron in any way, particularly at reunions. Squadron members and wives attended the funeral. Our deepest sympathies to David, Phillip and Peter, and respective families, in their sad loss.

In August 2005 it was discovered that Bob Lyndon had a melanoma tumour on the brain, which necessitated an urgent and delicate operation. Unfortunately, this was not a complete success, requiring another operation in December 2005. During this time, Bob suffered much pain and murmurs in the head, and if the operation was not successful nothing more could be done. He was also having MRI tests every three months. Now the good news. A recent examination has shown ALL CLEAR, and that is great news Bob, with all the pain and anguish over. Best wishes from all.

It is with sadness that I also report the passing of Dorothy Whittem, on 13-6-06, after a prolonged illness. We remember Dorothy as a regular attendee at our reunions, the last being in Canberra, where many will recall her smiling in her wheelchair, with Jim at her side. Dorothy was one of the few Canadian wives of 458, and, we believe, the only one who served

during the war. At least she was the only one who served in the RCAF, where she was a meteorological observer. She put her knowledge and experience into practice as mate and navigator of the Whitem yacht Diatom, making many trips with Jim, including two to the Whitsundays, all in fine weather. Rob Wilkinson and David Longhurst attended the funeral on behalf of the Squadron. We extend our deepest sympathy to Jim, Wendy and family.

Keith Cousins and I attended the RAAFA Annual Assembly. Keith was awarded Life Membership of the RAAF Association. Congratulations Keith.

There will be another luncheon at TAFE Ryde on 1-8-06 (12.00noon for 12.30pm). Please advise Eric of your attendance (9972-0641).

Planning is underway for a NSW reunion, to be held in late March. Visitors from interstate will be welcome. More details in the next newsletter.

Victorian Flight by Rupert Pearce

At the Commonwealth Games 2006. Paul Burgess was the favourite to win the pole vault as he had cleared 6 metres last year. His preparations were interrupted because of a damaged right calf and he failed in all three attempts to clear 5.60 metres. Stan Hooker (Aust) won the event at 5.80 metres.

A BBQ at the Ellis home on 5 March attracted Jack & Margaret Ellis, John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil Dean and Joyce Reeves, John Anderson and Marcee, Harry and Nell Ashworth, Rupert and Norma Pollard. Apologies were received from Joann Hinton, Roy and Barbara Pearce and June Schoppe. It was a pleasant day. Our thanks to our hosts.

At the Anzac Day march were Neil Dean, who led our band, John Bilney with grandson Rohan, Jack Ellis with son Ted and grandsons Joe and Jason, Ken Fleming, Joyce Reeves, Brian Paroissien, Rupert Pearce and daughter Linda, Helen Cartledge daughter in law of Stan and Karen grand daughter of Stan Cartledge. Those who came and saw us off were the Jackson family (relatives of Gordon Nash) and David and Paul Prideaux with Caleb, Georgia, Mary and Nathalie in memory of Bruce. Those who came to the Melbourne Bowling Club were Shorty Bradshaw, Margaret Ellis, Barbara and Roy Pearce, Norma Pollard and June Schoppe. George Zagon carried the Wellington photo, his wife Vicky, son Daniel and Nathan Cooke of the Cadets helped with our banner.

Cecilia Temple (daughter of Cec Percy) wrote to tell she and her family had attended the Anzac Day Service at Stratford, where an RAAF S/Ldr. from Sale had spoken.

The A.G.M. was held on May 29th.at the Bentleigh Club. Neil Dean is to continue as President, Rupert Pearce as Secretary/Treasurer, Jack Ellis as Senior Vice President and John Bilney as Junior Vice President.

Present were Ian and Val Alison, John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Laurie and Jean Kew, Roy Pearce, Rupert Pearce and Norma Pollard.

Apologies were received from Jim Anderson and Marcee, Ken Fleming, Neil McPhee, Barbara Pearce, Joyce Reeves and June Schoppe.

It was resolved that subscriptions would no longer be payable.

Social Activities for the year 2006/7 were to be: lunch at the Manningham Club Bulleen 28th. August 12 noon; BBQ at the Bilney home, Ferny Creek, 26th. November if available (Jells Park if not); and BBQ at the Ellis Home Dromana 4th. March 2007

Nell and Harry Ashworth recently celebrated 63 years of marriage. Sue Eggers is now in an Aged Care Home in Hawthorn, Stan Cartledge is not well and missed Anzac Day. Roy Pearce has had a heart operation and Barbara has been in hospital. Both are now at home and recovering. Jim Anderson and Ken Fleming are not well.

VALE.

Tom Primrose died in his sleep on 4th. April. He was 92. His wife Rita is 97 and came to his memorial service. Many of his relatives, members of his Masonic Lodge, the President of the Coburg RSL and I represented the Squadron. A piper played a farewell in memory of him. Tom was an instrument maker and was with the squadron in the Middle East.. Our members will remember that his daughter Eleanor came with him to the Anzac Day march, after the march at the Bowling Club and the lunches, until he became too frail to attend. We remember he wore the clan kilt with great pride.

Western Australia Flight by Ted Jewell

We have had our last Anzac Day March in Perth; in 2006 we had no starters due to poor health. We still met for lunch at Miss Maud's Restaurant in Perth although numbers were down there too. Members present were Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Ted Jewell, Mick Singe and Margaret Gannaway, and a number of associate members and friends. Mick was to go to hospital for a hip replacement, but was found to have a heart problem, which was fixed. No more news of him at present.

I must congratulate John Gibbins and Wendy Whitem-Trunz for the reunion disk. I was really wrapped to see so much of the squadron life during and after the war. It could not have been done better.

The few members in W.A flight who we have contact with all seem to have health problems. These include Nobby Nobbs, Jim Palmer, Bill Clues, Ted Jewell, Mick Singe, Bill Kelliher, Henry Etherton, and Jack Cobb. We have had no contact with others for several years.

On 2 July we are going to Phil & Shirley Hick's' home for lunch. It should be a great day. Phil flew Cats during the war years.

I have just come home after two weeks in sunny Queensland, staying at the Twin Towns Hotel in Coolangatta. The weather was nice and warm, but not the pokies. Then back to Perth for some of the coldest days on record.

UK FLIGHT by Keith Wilkinson

Throwing caution and common sense to the wind, we have boldly decided to start the UK Flight 458 reunion on *Friday the thirteenth!* Undaunted by superstition, we are to meet on October 13 and 14 this year in Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon. We have used the Falcon

Hotel several times for reunions. Being sticklers for tradition - that's where we are going again. This time, though, all ladders are to be avoided.

This splendid Warwickshire venue was selected in April, over a couple of pints of Ruddles' best bitter, beneath the beams of another olde worlde 16th Century inn - The Spread Eagle, at Thame in Oxfordshire. A former haunt of the likes of Evelyn Waugh and Charles II, we couldn't help wondering: is there any English pub that king didn't visit - he must have been a right boozer?!

Former pilots Leon Armstrong and Jack Christianson called this mini-meeting in the pub's "cockpit" so we could thrash out a plan of action for October. I immediately circulated our entire UK membership with the details, but for those who have lost them or thrown them out with the cat, here they are again:

As part of the 458 deal with the Falcon, the cost for dinner, bed and breakfast for two nights is £125 per person. For Saturday only (thus avoiding the dreaded 13th), it's £81. If you want to just show up for the Saturday night formal dinner, and then clear off, it's £19.50 per head. Leon is co-ordinating things, so if you want a booking form, you can phone him on 0121-443-1075. Or write to him direct at: Flat 34, Highbury Court, Howard Road East, Kings Heath, Birmingham B13 0RQ, England. But please, get your skates on! We need your confirmations, asap.

As is our current policy for "blue skies thinking", we are mulling over a few reunion ideas for 2007. After sampling the Ruddles beer, there was even excited talk of us all going out to Egypt. This may or may not happen, but if the idea takes off, The Squadron News will bring you the story exclusively. Sadly, it may well get lost in the dusty file called Daft Things We Never Did Other Than Talk About. If you'd like to contribute some ideas, let us know.

We would, of course, welcome with open arms anyone planning to come to our October reunion in Stratford from the wider 458 family across the world, and we have already had some interest from the USA - a grandson of 458-er Fred Kleckham (who passed away in 2000) has been in touch. I wonder how many of you remember Fred from his Squadron days? He seems a really interesting character. Fred's nickname was Gobbo. He'd gone out from the UK to live in Australia in 1919 when he was four. His dad had been the personal chef to Cecil Rhodes, and was later head chef at Parliament House in Capetown.

Fred's son, who lives in Queensland, tells me "Fred was the best, a quality person of good morals and high humour. It was his nature to want happiness and he created it around him. Everybody loved him, and looked forward to seeing him and he had top parties here at the beach and in PNG. Eventually he contracted cancer of the lungs and that's what got him in the end, way before he was due. Fred was exceptionally fit and should have lived beyond 100. He climbed many mountains, and was scheduled to climb Everest with Hilary at one time, but for some reason the trip had to be cancelled, which disappointed him greatly.

Fred's ashes were spread into the sea here at Seaforth beach under the observation of many friends who came great distances for the farewell. We held an informal beach top funeral meet to farewell Fred, and followed with a barbeque and piss-up he would have been proud to be part of."

Hopefully, Fred's grandson Floyd can join us in Stratford. We are hoping to attract to our ranks what you over in Oz refer to as "brats". However, it is not a term we use recklessly in polite Britain, as our precious offspring might thump us!

On a more serious note, our hearts go out to Ken and Kathleen Morris from Yorkshire who have attended many a reunion in the past. Ken, who's 86, and Kathleen, 82, have both developed cancer during the past year or so. Both have had operations and chemotherapy and, sadly, both have remained far from well of late. Ken has also had several minor strokes. 458ers will remember Ken - or "Morri" - as a pilot, posted to the squadron, via Shallufa, after training in South Africa. Ken and Kathleen married after the war when they met at the insurance firm where they worked. Kathleen wrote to me to say they couldn't attend the next reunion: "We are disappointed as we have many happy memories of reunions at Stratford and elsewhere. Please remember us to everyone and we do hope it is a happy weekend for all who are able to attend." We wish them both the very best.

Canadian Flight by Bryan Quinlan

I had a welcome letter from Jim Palmer advising that his granddaughter Sarah plans on spending a year working in Canada, and may be contacting me if she needs some guidance in finding her way in a strange country. Certainly hope that she will be in touch and will be happy to help in any way possible, including getting advice from DI Atherton who has recent first-hand experience in a similar situation.

By telephone from Willowdale, Ont., Alan Ruggles advised that his granddaughter is taking a teaching course in Brisbane and, knowing Grandpa's Aussie connection, attended the recent Anzac Day ceremonies. Following the parade she visited various Memorials and was excited to come across the 458 Memorial in Brisbane that had special meaning for her so far from home and family.

Two of our Canadian 458 family are looking forward to moving into assisted living facilities where they can continue to enjoy independent living without the burdens of house upkeep and living alone. Marg Reid expects to complete the sale of the house where she and Mickey lived for over 50 years and make the move to the new residence in Mississauga, Ont. in June. Daughter Cathy and son Bill will help.

In a similar manner, Ernie Ireland anticipates the sale of his house and move to new quarters in Cranbrook, B.C. during the summer with assistance from family members.

Sid and Joyce Winchester report in as "satisfactory" although Sid comments that their lifestyle is relatively uneventful as their travel capacity is somewhat restricted. Sid's Hugh "Red" Conlin memorial story in the last Newsletter evoked some special memories for Tom Rowan in Saskatchewan, as the two were very close friends in training and on 458 Squadron in Egypt, Malta, Algeria and Tunisia and recalled many "adventures" they shared during those years. Tom was a W/AG with the Withecombe (RAAF) crew and he recently sent me a copy of several pages of photos taken on the Squadron, in addition to some Royal Canadian Legion Honour List information. The latter revealed to me for the first time that other members of Bill Hailstone's mainly Saskatchewan crew (KIA 13.07.43) have lakes named in their honour in that province, including, McConechy Lake, Bradley Lake and Wright Lake. All three were W/AGs. So 458 has four lasting connections to geographical locations in Saskatchewan.

Bill's sister Betty, in Regina, receives a copy of the Newsletter and, if not already known to her, will be interested in the foregoing.

As Tom Lindsay and I are fairly close neighbours I see him out shopping with his daughter, who lives with him. Tom maintains his interest in the local radar technicians group and attends their periodic meetings. best wishes to all our Aussie mates.!

Editorial. I have two apologies – one for the mis-spelling of 'Nunawading' in previous issues. I should have known better, as we lived in Melbourne for seven years, and I ran a Senior Scout Venture in Nunawading. Sorry. The other relates to that light aircraft in New Zealand reputed to have flown 25000 hours. It should have read 2500 hours Kiwi-land is not that big!

In the last issue we mentioned items for sale – the data has altered. Eric now has no copies of the Squadron History left, but copies can still be obtained direct from the publisher. I hold five pockets and seven lapel badges.

Assistant Editor. At the NSW flight meeting on Anzac Day, we persuaded Rob Wilkinson to undertake this new task, primarily for the sake of continuity. Rob Wilkinson, a member of the NSW flight committee is a son of Bill Wilkinson, who was one of my WAG/S.E operators, so we are keeping the newsletter in good hands. I will continue as editor for as long as I can.

As this is a relatively short issue, we have room for a great contribution from Glen Forgan a member of the S.A. Flight. Enjoy your newsletter.

D1785 – a ring cycle *[Adelaide enjoys ring cycles – Ed]*

At 0435 hours on the morning of 9th January in the winter of 1942, Wellington D1785 of 458 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force took off from the Holme on Spalding Moor air base in East Yorkshire. Their mission was to join with 30 other bombers to bomb the port of Cherbourg in occupied France to mount a diversion for a larger group of 131 RAF bombers that were assembled and dispatched to the French harbour of Brest. Their challenge was to find and destroy the German pocket battleships, the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau that had survived over 60 similar bombing missions from March of 1941.

On board Wellington D1785 were flying officer Bernard Hickey, a 28 year old from Brisbane, his 24 year old co-pilot, Vic Johnstone from Lockington, Victoria, front gunner, William Wallace Forgan, a 22 year old from Crystal Brook in South Australia and Bob Birnie, 24, bomb aimer and observer from Auckland, New Zealand. In addition to these flying ANZACS were 2 RAF airmen, Fred Hinton, a 21-year-old rear gunner from Leicester, and Albert Austin, wireless operator from Birmingham in the UK.

Weather conditions over the Normandy peninsula that January morning were appalling, snow was falling, visibility was negligible and, to make matters worse, the German flak was particularly active. Only three of the 31 aircraft were able to drop their bombs and many were forced to turn back. Of the three Wellingtons from 458 Squadron that left Yorkshire that day only one returned home to base. Wellington Z1312 was hit by flak but managed to reach England with its load of bombs intact, but crashed in Dorset after hitting high tension lines killing 4 of its Australian crew with only the pilot and co-pilot surviving.

Wellington D1785 disappeared completely and never returned to Holme on Spalding Moor.

The log books of the crew were signed off in red ink with the notation "*Operations as ordered, but failed to return*", next of kin were notified of their son's or husband's fate with the sorrowful telegram "Missing in Action," and personal possessions were returned home.

The fate of D1785 and the crew remained a mystery to relatives for over 64 years until Georges Dennebouy, an Air France captain on A330 and A340 Airbus aircraft, began to research a war time incident which happened on his family's farm at Colomby in Normandy. In time, Georges teamed up with three other researchers, Mickael Simon, Claire and Claude Letallier who had started to unravel the mystery a decade earlier by interviewing and recording the accounts of eye witnesses of pre D-Day aircraft crashes over Contentin in the department of La Manche.

It was in the winter of 1942 that Georges grandmother along with other locals saw a plane in flames flying at low altitude over Colomby before it crashed into a snow covered field before dawn. Together with other inhabitants they were on the scene before the Germans but were powerless to do anything as the aircraft was on fire except for the tail section and were not helped when German soldiers roughly made them leave the scene.

Two days later the Germans requisitioned 2 local farmers Mr. Joseph Anquetil and Mr. Auguste Mulot to recover the bodies of the aviators and place in the coffins provided by the occupying forces. The bodies were awfully calcined (burnt) except for the young blond haired tail gunner who remained trapped in his turret, the floor strewn with lolly wrappers, testament to the loneliness of a rear gunner's station. Mr. Anquetil remembered very well the military honours given to the victims by the German soldiers who presented arms and also had this scene filmed by a cameraman.

A few days later, a group of Germans began to salvage parts of the plane, but to their horror they discovered that the plane still carried its 8 bombs of 250lbs! Bomb disposal experts were called in to detonate the bombs and the enormous explosion volatised the Wellington with one of its engines leaping well over 100 metres as a result.

The Germans then made a macabre discovery when they found a sixth body under a wing and ordered yet another inhabitant Mr. Roger Blestel to remove the seriously mutilated body and place it in a coffin. This proved to be the body of Wally Forgan, the front gunner, who is presumed to have attempted a parachute jump, as he was hung on the wing at the end of his suspending rods that somehow snagged the wing as the plane made its fiery descent.

In 2005, the group of amateur aviation historians undertook a ground search of the Breul farm crash site to confirm that the wreck was indeed a Wellington and to match the crash to the graves of 6 allied airmen buried in the old Cherbourg cemetery. Using a metal detector Claude Letallier recovered various fragments of aircraft and located a part of the airframe's distinctive geodetic design bearing a serial number which was sent to the British Aviation Archaeology Council for determination. The BAAC confirmed that it was from a Vickers Armstrong Wellington.

Their search took a new twist when amongst the innumerable bolts of recovered twisted metal there was a silver ring. Clearly it was not a French ring but a Sterling silver ring of the Commonwealth bearing what appeared to be the initials of one of the unfortunate crew. But the initials in flowing script *LMM* did not match those of D1785 crew members; maybe it bore the initials of a girlfriend or fiancé? For three months emails and letters flowed between

France, Australia and the UK trying to solve the riddle, when one day Mickael Simon reversed the piece of contorted metal and saw the initials of "WWF". Overcome with a rush of adrenalin and emotion, they had found the proof they were looking for. The ring once worn on the right hand of William Wallace Forgan confirmed that this was the crash site of the 6 airmen whose remains lay in Cherbourg.

Emotions ran high on the other side of the world when the Forgan family was contacted in Mount Gambier, South Australia and were sent photographs of the ring and were further astounded to hear that the French researchers vowed to return the ring in person within the year.

Georges and his colleagues in turn, were also surprised to learn that David Johnstone, a nephew of Vic Johnstone, and Nick Hayes, a great nephew of Wally Forgan, had flown together in skies far less hostile for an aviation company in the Northern Territory and unaware that 60 years earlier, their relatives had also forged bonds in the skies over Europe.

The promise made by the French team was honoured in late March this year when Georges Dennebouy and his wife Liliane flew to Australia with the express purpose of visiting the Hickey family in Brisbane, the Forgan family in Mount Gambier and Adelaide and the Johnstone family in Lockington, Victoria where he was welcomed by three of Vic Johnstone's siblings.

At an emotional gathering in Adelaide, Georges returned the ring back home to the Forgan family and it was here that yet another coincidence occurred. The late sister of Fred Hinton, an RAF air gunner, had migrated to Adelaide after WWII, and a nephew and a niece of Fred, from Leicester, were also present and part of the informal ring ceremony.

The dedicated work of Georges, Mickael, Claire and Claude gave closure to a number of families in Australia, NZ and the UK. It rekindled contact between the families of the air crew and brought back the times when the parents of the lost crew corresponded together in hope, refusing to believe that their sons were lost until they failed to return home to Australia after hostilities ceased. Correspondence continued until this grieving generation died out.

At his Adelaide reception, Georges said that their work was unfinished. *"It is out of respect and gratitude to these young people who came from far away lands we carried out this research."* *"We hope that a memorial to the crew of D1785 and for the many pilots and crews who perished in the air and on the ground of Cotentin will be raised to honour those who died to return our freedom to us".*

For those who met Georges on his Australian pilgrimage they have no doubt that this will happen and declared that they want to be part of it and will be there when it is unveiled.

Lest we forget.