

PARHAM Airfield Museum

WINTER 2023-2024

NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS EDITION

- Remembrance Day
- Storm Babet wreaks havoc
- Veteran VIPs
- Masters of the Air review
- Our Christmas social
- A book launch at Parham
- 2023 visitor stats & much more....

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT!

We are thrilled to share the news of once again receiving the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice award. Our newly acquired 2023 badge now proudly adorns our page, and this accomplishment wouldn't have been possible without the support of visitors who took the time to share such wonderful reviews.

Thank you for contributing to our success!



FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR TRUSTEES



Welcome to our first newsletter for 2024. Thank you once again to Lydia, our busy editor, for compiling another interesting read.

The 2023 season was a very successful one for the museum, with increased visitor numbers and various group visits, including by local schools. A full review of the year will be published in the Trustees Annual report, available on the Charity Commission website after the members' AGM on 24 March.

Our volunteers have been busy with essential maintenance and a major project to strengthen the balcony supports, although engineers judged the structure to still be sound and safe after 81 years! Not bad for a wartime emergency building. The weather has not been on our side this winter so there are plenty of outdoor tasks yet to do. We will be ready to open a day early this year on Sunday 31st March and then again on Monday 1st April.

We are excited about the prospects for 2024. Several school and museum parties have already booked, along with some car clubs and a veteran motorcycle group. We have several new displays ready for visitors to enjoy. Both the new Apple TV miniseries and the 80th Anniversary of D-Day are expected to generate new levels of public interest.

Our next edition will feature some engine panels from the dreadful crash that occurred in Parham village and a new tribute to the many Black Americans who contributed to victory over the Nazis. Look out for a new feature in the Resistance area too. It will link the shooting down of the B17 pathfinder that crashed in Great Glemham with a British Army Intelligence Corps officer who won the George Medal for leading those who rescued the crew. Why had he been posted there, we might wonder?

Best wishes for 2024 to all of our readers.
We hope to see many of you at Parham.

Peter Senior



We were pleased to welcome a group of tourist guides from the World War II Museum on 12th January, preparing for more visits this summer- we hope it will be warmer the next time we see them!

WINTER WORK

During our closed season, our maintenance team (The 'Old and Colds') have been hard at work on various repairs and improvements around the museum. Ongoing and completed projects include:

- Upgrading the taps in the Ladies and Gentleman's restrooms
- Fitting additional LED lighting to display cabinets in the Kindred Exhibition Hall
- The window shutters on the control tower have been replaced
- Renovation of the desk display in the Watch office
- Upgrading our displays of nose art and some of our information posters
- Preparing and mounting new exhibits, including two engine cowlings from 'Gloria Ann' which crashed at Parham.



Thanks to our Maintenance lead, Martin Scripps and the core team – Peter Senior, Richard Clark, Steve Smith and Tony Hallows for their continued hard work.

We are also grateful to many of our other volunteers for giving their time and expertise over the past couple of months. Peter Willis has begun the huge task of accessioning the Charlie Cairnes Collection that was bequeathed to us last year.

Patrick Wilson is renovating and upgrading our LED display of USAAF bases in East Anglia. Paul Fenner has started the annual maintenance of our firearm exhibits

Barry Walton and John Curtis have given our bomber jackets their annual waxing

• And finally, Gerry Senior has been busy with a deep clean of many of our display cabinets and exhibits in readiness for our opening at the end of March.



STORM BABET



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE....

During the storm more than a month's worth of the average October rainfall fell in just 24 hours.

This was the most widespread flooding event to impact Suffolk for a significant number of years, and a major incident was declared for 24 hours.

The date Friday 20th October 2023 will go down in local history. Due to heavy and sustained rainfall during Storm Babet, there was flooding across east Suffolk. Sitting on high, flat land, flooding was not a risk we had been overly worried about in the past, but Storm Babet has now changed that!

We are very grateful to our neighbours over the road at Warrior Fire & Rescue for coming to our aid in our hour of need and helping to pump out all the excess water. Thanks also to everyone who spent hours sweeping water out the door on the day.

Amazingly, we were able to open again for an arranged group visit on Sunday 22nd October and internal damage was minimal. We are very fortunate that the water did not damage any artefacts or reach our tea room with its laminate flooring and electrics.



Above, the car park adjacent to Framlingham Castle suffered badly. The flooding made the national news.

VERY IMPORTANT VISITORS

Visits from US Eighth Airforce Veterans



On the 14th September, we were delighted to welcome Henry Kolinek Jnr, right, and also below, who is in his 98th year. Henry flew 35 missions as a B17 tail gunner with the 384th Bomb Group who were based at Grafton Underwood in Northamptonshire.

On the 9th October, we welcomed visitors from the National Museum of World War 2, New Orleans. Among the party of guests was John Luckadoo, aged 100 and the last surviving pilot and Operations Officer from the 100th Bomb Group. John flew 25 missions from Thorpe Abbots during his tour. The group were nicknamed the 'Bloody Hundredth' due to the number of men they lost in combat and Thorpe Abbots is the bombardment group showcased in *The Masters of the Air* mini-series. Although John's character is not part of the series, he did attend its premiere as a VIP.

Both veterans signed our wall in the Chapel of Remembrance.

During our open season last year, we welcomed organised tour parties from the Mighty Eighth Museum from Savannah, Georgia, and the National Museum of World War 2 from New Orleans. Two American Eighth Airforce veterans were among our visitors.

**Tony Nials
Vice Chair**



John, whose nickname was 'Lucky', released his biography, *Damn Lucky: One Man's Courage During the Bloodiest Military Campaign in Aviation History*, in April 2022.

Masters of the Air

The long-awaited mini-series 'Masters of the Air' finally hit our TV screens on Friday 26th January – albeit on Apple TV+ as opposed to a terrestrial channel.

So - we had to invest in AppleTV+ didn't we? Sad, isn't it???



Like two kids on Christmas Eve, my wife Jennie and I watched the clock waiting for the first two episodes - the only difference being that these kids are now old enough to have a glass or two of wine or malt whisky to accompany the prize!

Based on the book by historian Donald L. Miller, 'Masters of the Air' tells the true story of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) 100th Bomb Group, also known as the Bloody Hundredth due to the number of airmen they lost during the hostilities. I'm sure most readers will be aware that the 100th were based at Thorpe Abbots near Diss in Norfolk, and like the 390th and 95th, were part of the USAAF 13th Combat Wing. (The 100th also have an excellent museum based at the old Thorpe Abbots airfield - well worth a visit if you have not yet been).

Produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks this nine-part miniseries focuses on the USAAF's bombing exploits in the European theatre of World War II, from 1943 from a perspective that begins at 25,000 feet, above enemy territory in freezing, uninsulated, and unpressurised B17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers, delivering their high explosives to the heart of Hitler's Third Reich.

As you would expect from a Spielberg /Hanks production (cast your mind back to their 2001 – yes 2001 – mini-series 'Band of Brothers') this offering has had a huge budget thrown at it – and first indications based on the attention to detail and the Computer Generated Imaging (CGI) are that the money has been well invested.



The first two episodes are - to quote our Museum Chair, Peter Senior, 'very authentic with drink, girls and local kids all mixed in' – let alone a good old fist fight with your RAF allies outside an East Anglian pub!! However, they do not dwell on this for long and are quick to show the 100th in action over Germany – the claustrophobic, cramped environment on board the B17's is well portrayed. So are the different characters – from those who are calm and determined to those with self-doubt who make mistakes (do not grip a 50 calibre machine gun with your bare hands at 25,000 feet – it appears the freezing metal rips the skin and flesh from your hands).

The CGI scenes of the bomber stream flying to target through well aimed heavy flak are truly disturbing – and the speed of the head-on attacks by German fighters is equally terrifying. Seeing a damaged B17 slowly, slowly fall away from the protection of the pack makes you grimace and fear the worst for both the plane and the young crew.

If I have a criticism at this early stage, it is that for a nine-part series I'd like to have seen an opening episode that concentrated more on time in the United States prior to deployment to England - perhaps highlighting the necessary huge uplift in production of aircraft, recruitment and equipping of the crews, flight training, perhaps a little more on the background of the main characters.

However, Jennie - who is also the museum archivist - felt it prudent to remind me of my natural impatience and that those points may come out as the series moves forward. Experience shows that she is rarely wrong!!

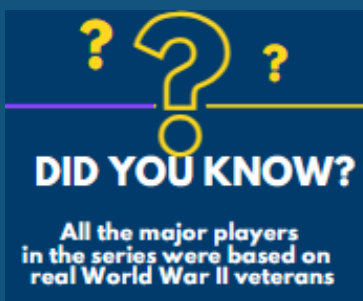
The series continues each Friday concluding in March, and my initial thoughts are that it is likely to be as well received as 'Band of Brothers' was by critics and viewers alike. One thing is certain; if the first two episodes flying scenes are anything to go by – Jennie and I will need to review our wine and whisky stocks as the series progresses!!



Steve Smith
Museum Volunteer



100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum



REMEMBRANCE DAY

**On the 11th Hour
Of the 11th Day
Of the 11th Month,
We Remembered**



Pupils from Framlingham College's army cadet group joined us for a short memorial service on 11th November.

Rev. Brynn Bayman led the service and wreaths were laid by the Cadets and three museum representatives.



IN MEMORIAM Ellis. B McClintick

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Ellis McClintick in November 2023, at the age of 101. Ellis was stationed with the 390th Bomb Group from March 1944 until October 1944. He was in the 570th Squadron and was a navigator. After he survived his tour of 35 missions of aerial combat from Parham, Ellis completed pilot training.

Ellis continued to serve during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and the Cold War as a Command Pilot, Staff Officer and Commander, completing 1000 hours on B17s after 1945. Among the medals he received in recognition of his service are four Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Legion of Merit Awards, the Polish Home Army Cross and the French Legion of Honour.

After his retirement, Ellis actively supported the public effort to ensure all military veterans are honoured and remembered. He remained interested in the 390th Bomb Group and us here at Parham Airfield Museum. He was also a founding member of the American Air Museum Building at Duxford and attended its opening in 1997.



AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

DECEMBER



EDDIE GEORGE SKINDINGSRUDE

23 SEPTEMBER 1925 – 25 DECEMBER 1944

Eddie was born in Edgerton, Wisconsin. On enlisting into the USAAF he trained as a Tail Gunner. Eddie was killed on his 17th mission from Station 153.

Christmas Day 1944 saw Eddie on A/C 44-8323, "Blonde Bombshell" on a mission to Morscheid Bridge, Germany.

A/C 323 received a direct hit by flak in No.4 engine which flew off in pieces. The aircraft made a shallow peel off to the right with the wing on fire. A/C lost about 1500 ft in a shallow dive, went into a loose then tight spin. It exploded at about 20,000 ft. Only 2 chutes were reported and the plane crashed at Diekirch, Luxembourg.

Eddie is buried in Hillside Cemetery, Walworth County, Wisconsin. He was 19.

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AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

JANUARY



HENRY THOMAS GRISTAK

20 MAY 1920 – 04 JANUARY 1944

Henry was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He enlisted into the USAAF on 29 October 1941 and trained as a Waist Gunner. Henry was killed on his 2nd mission from Station 153.

Mission 44 was to Kiel, Germany. Aircraft 42-30289, 'The Dull Tool' flew with the formation to the rally point but was then seen to fall behind. All 10 crew were ordered to bail out of the aircraft near the south coast of Denmark. The Co-Pilot jumped with Henry but observed that when Henry pulled his rip cord the chute failed to open. It is believed that Henry hit the Baltic sea.

Henry's body was never found. He is remembered on the Tablets of the Missing at the Cambridge American Cemetery. He was 23.

We Won't Forget

By Bernard T. Gallagher
Pilot, 568th Bomb Squadron, The Dull Tool

Sleep-beneath your barren plot of foreign soil, old pal.
Because you gave so much - we won't forget.
You were the best, and now you lie alone.
Your cross of wood with winter's rain is wet,

And though your eyes are closed and voice is stilled,
Your spirit lives with us who did not die.
On every spot of ground where your blood spilled,
A poppy raised its face unto the sky.

And when at night the sobbing winds begin
Where'er you are, I know your eyes turn west
To dream of home and all that might have been -
Sleep, old pal - we won't forget.

Dedicated his friend Henry Thomas Gristak, who died in Denmark on 4th Januar 1944.
Bernard T. Gallagher wrote this poem in Stalag Luft I on 10th April 1945.

Finn Buch - Denmark

Accused 150 7895 R 1A 50

REGISTRATION CARD			
SERIAL NUMBER 5 31	1. NAME (PRINT) Henry Thomas Gristak	ORDER NUMBER 5 3000	
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (PRINT) 220 Kentucky St., Winton, Hancock, W.Va.			
3. MAILING ADDRESS 220P			
4. TELEPHONE none	5. AGE IN YEARS 23	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Pittsburgh, Pa.	7. OCCUPATION laborer
8. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Mary Gristak, 220 Kentucky St., Winton, W.Va.			
9. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Winton Steel Co., Winton, W.Va.			
10. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Winton, Hancock, W.Va.			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. S. B. FORM 1 (Revised 6-9-41)		Henry Thomas Gristak (Subscriber's signature)	

AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY



PETER EDWARD STENE

06 DECEMBER 1918 – 17 FEBRUARY 1945

Peter was born in Almena, Wisconsin. He enlisted into the USAAF on 6 June 1941 and trained as a Pilot. Peter was killed on his 20th mission from Station 153.

Mission 256 was to Frankfurt. Peter was the Command Pilot of A/C 44-8566 and was returning from the mission. At 14:00 hrs the aircraft caught fire from an explosion in the nose whilst over the North Sea, just off the coast of Ostend, Belgium. The A/C crashed into the sea with 6 crew still aboard. The only survivor had bailed out nearer the coast and with the help of his Mae-West, survived in the water for 2 hours before being rescued.

Peter's body was never found. He is remembered on the Tablets of the Missing at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, and on memorials in his home town. He was 26.

SERIAL NUMBER 1159	C. NAME (7700) Peter Edward Stene	ORDER NUMBER 450
2. ADDRESS (7701) Minong Washburn Wis.		
3. TELEPHONE 34	4. AGE IN YEARS 21	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Almena Wis.
6. DATE OF BIRTH Dec 6 1918		7. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
8. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mr. Peter J. Stene		9. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON father
10. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON Baldwin St. Croix Wis.		
11. EMPLOYER'S NAME School Dist. No. 1, Minong		
12. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Minong Washburn Wis.		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. Peter E. Stene		



A Press Release from January 1944

Copied verbatim from the Station History:

The battle career of Staff Sergeant Dick Chin, 24-year-old flying fortress gunner, of San Francisco, Calif., was nipped on his 13th mission over Nazi Europe. Chin and the crew of the Fortress "Dinah-Mite," on which he was tail gunner, have been reported missing in action.

The only Chinese flyer with the Eighth Air Force, Chin escaped the Japanese in China by fleeing from his home in Canton and coming to the United States. Flying mates at his station who have developed a warm friendship with the easy-smiling, capable Chin, hope that he will still be able to fulfil his principal desire to fight the Japs.

"My family always pays it's debts. Most certainly we owe the Japanese something," he recently said. Men flying in the same formation with the "Dinah-Mite" on its luckless mission, reported that it fell from its position after passing through a heavy flak field. The plane did not seem to be in immediate distress, they declared.

He entered the Air Force from San Francisco where he had been living with other members of his family, however, his parents, to the best of his knowledge, are still in Japanese-controlled Canton. Flying with a Group commanded by Colonel Edgar M. Wittan, of Newport News, Va., he had been officially credited with probable destruction of an FW 190 and damaging of an ME 110 in different attacks on targets in Germany.

Chin was one of 24 survivors of 51 Chinese youths who travelled 800 miles through jap-infested areas, to escape the enemy.



Standing L to R:

Sandy J. Partenzi, Waist; Albert H. Redwine, Engineer; J. Russel, Waist; Dick Chin, Tail Gunner, Carter J. Lunsford, Radio; Walton W. Beach, Ball Turret

Sitting L to R:

Charles L. Lee, Navigator; Paul K. Fabian, Bombardier; Elmer W. Schwankl, Co-Pilot; Clyde J. Baughar, Pilot

Photo: Dick Chin, back row, 4th from the left

Archivist Note: Dick Chin ended up being captured on 21st January 1944 and spent the rest of the war as a guest of the Germans.

He was liberated on 25th May 1945.

Jennie Smith
Museum Archivist

VISIT US VIRTUALLY



We are thrilled to share the exciting news that you can now embark on a 360-Degree Tour of our museum, all from the comfort of your own home!

Immerse yourself in the rich history and fascinating exhibits by simply clicking the link below to begin your virtual journey through the museum.

Explore every nook and cranny, marvel at the artifacts, and uncover the stories that make our museum a unique treasure.

This tour was produced by Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team using funding from the Heritage Lottery.

<https://www.staybehinds.com/interactive/parham-museum>

Masters of the Air- A Plea to Visitors

We are amazed with the interest that the *Masters of the Air* series is already creating in the USAAF , and especially those in the 13th combat wing- us here at Parham (home of the 390th Bomb Group, officially known as Framlingham Station 153) and our friends at 'The Bloody Hundredth' Thorpe Abbots and Horham, home of the 95th BG.

We look forward to welcoming individuals who have had their interest in the 8th Air Force piqued. The museum site will be open to visitors on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays from 31st March and Wednesdays in summer. Please note that the remainder of the airfield and its associated sites are situated on private land. Access to these areas is not permitted without the explicit permission of the respective landowners. We kindly ask visitors to respect these boundaries while enjoying their visit to Parham. We anticipate a rise in visitor numbers and look forward to welcoming both familiar faces and new guests alike.

If you have a connection to the 390th and are planning on visiting us, please let us know in advance and we will try to arrange a tour of some private parts of the base.



Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 24th March at 10am. All voting members are welcome to attend.

At the meeting, we will be electing our new trustees and receiving reports from the past year. Please note, there will be a short training session after the AGM for all volunteers.

OUR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

We would like to thank our Volunteers for all their hard work over the year. Whether meeting and greeting members of the public, serving in our tearoom or being part of our maintenance crew behind-the-scenes, you are valued and we are pleased to have you in the team.



ORAL HISTORY

Talking to Mr Dudley Page, right, the other day... Dudley is a life-long inhabitant of Framlingham. During the War, his father was the landlord of the Railway Inn.

One night, in bed upstairs, Dudley heard an altercation going on in the Bar below. A USAAF serviceman from Parham and a local man from Kettleburgh were having a fight in which the local man came off far worse.

The next day an Officer came out from the Base to see what had happened. "He chose the wrong one to fight with there", the Officer explained. "Our Joe Baski is a heavy-weight Boxing Champion back in the States!".



News from ‘Across the Pond’

‘Across the Pond’ seems a most apt heading as I sit writing this in the grip of Storm Babet- and having just taken a call from the museum maintenance manager to see if I’m available tomorrow morning, Saturday 21st October, to assist in clearing the flooding ‘Babet’ has caused in the Control Tower! The joy and diversity of volunteering at the museum knows no bounds!

Now – to the point of this article....

Many of you will be aware that the 390th Bomb Group has a Memorial Museum in Tucson Arizona; their mission statement is reproduced below – a straight lift from their website – so please – no e-mails about my poor spelling!!

‘We seek to honor and memorialize those veterans who provided ground support and flew the B-17 in the 390th Bombardment Group of the Eighth Air Force in World War II, to serve as a window on the air war over Europe by the 390th and related Bomb Groups in that conflict, and to educate the public on their service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom-.

One of their dedicated staff is a chap named Frank Drain. His father was Richard E. Drain who was a radio operator with the 570th Squadron. According to records, Richard flew 19 missions whilst based at Parham from 23rd June 1944 to 25th August 1944 – that’s a hell of a lot of missions in a short space of time.

Frank is a fairly regular visitor to Suffolk, travelling from America and staying for several days to visit our museum and explore the environs.

He is quite a talented chap and has just completed this incredible painting (below) which now adorns a wall within the Tucson museum.



Frank stands beneath the painting and the eagle eyed amongst you will notice that he is sporting one of our museum's polo shirts – top man!!

Some of you may be familiar with the picture. It is a depiction taken from a famous - nay iconic - photograph (reproduced below) taken in mid-flight of a 390th raid against Emden in Germany in 1943 featuring a B17 from the 570th Squadron with the nose art name 'Skippy' serial No 42-3329.

The curved contrails in the photo were apparently created by the 'Little Friend' fighters accompanying the raid.

It must have been at best disconcerting, at worst – terrifying - for the crews to see the trace that those contrails left in their wake.

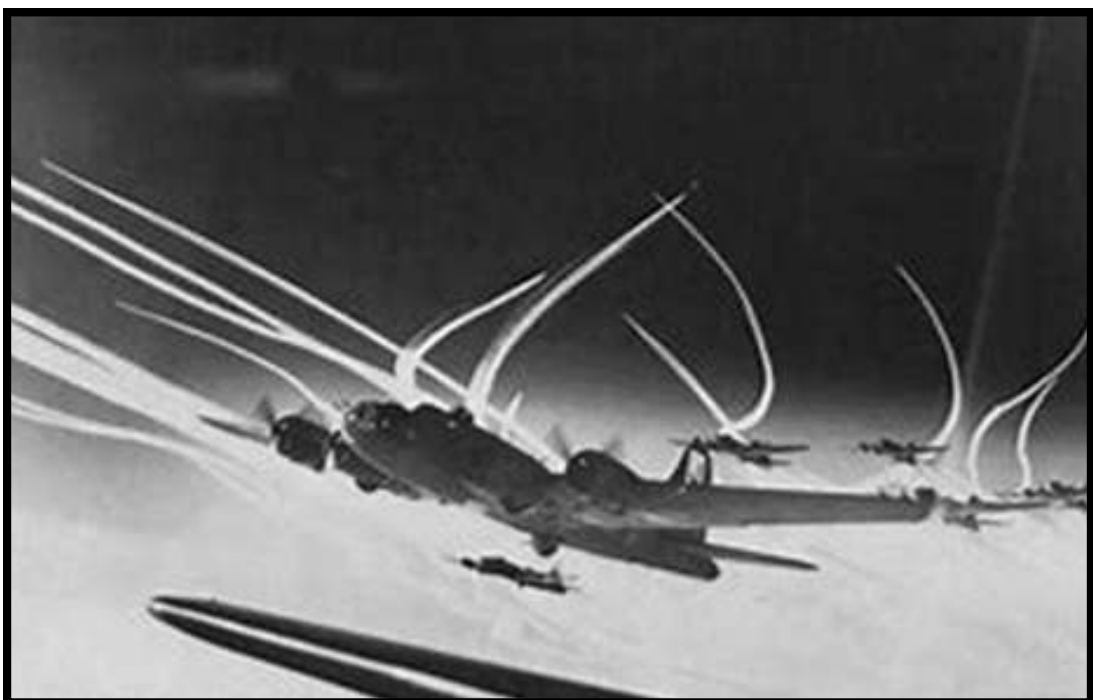
I'm sure you'll agree Frank's painting is a superb representation of the photo – Tucson must be thrilled to have it.

This is hot off the social media press - so I don't have the answers to the obvious questions such as how long did it take to complete; what is the actual size of it, and did your wife mind you spending so much time in producing it....amongst others. I'll endeavour to find out in time for the next issue – it will be a good excuse to submit the photo for inclusion in the newsletter again.

I know Frank is partial to a dram of good Scotch – as am I - and I shall raise a glass to him in recognition of his efforts in due course - probably tonight actually...

Top effort Frank – Salut!!

Steve Smith
Volunteer



Maintenance of the Control Tower

Our Control Tower is now 82 years old and has been subject to many modifications and general maintenance during its life.

One concern was the strength of the balcony, which gives access to the stairs leading up to the Watch Office on the roof.

An external survey was carried out and recommendations were made to future proof the structure. The company, M Construction, who was the main contractor for the Kindred building, manufactured the RSJs and support columns. New bases were dug and three cubic metres of concrete foundations were laid deep into moist soil, preventing any future ground shrinkage movement. The RSJ's and columns have now been fitted by Terry Smith and an operator from M Construction, with some help from the President and his Merlo. All this work was carried out in 1 ½ days.

The final grouting and setting of the support columns is now complete, with care taken to cover the wet concrete to prevent night frost damage. All that remains to do is add another coat of green paint to the RSJ's, when the weather improves, to improve corrosion resistance.

Martin Scripps



ROGER WILSON

Roger passed away recently after a short, unexpected illness. It was our privilege to host a commemorative gathering for about 80 of his family and friends.

Roger was a retired agricultural engineer who helped Peter Kindred with maintenance before many of us were involved with the museum. He was a founder and active member of the "Old n' Colds" working group. It was Roger who introduced Martin Scripps to us: Martin is now our Maintenance Lead and a trustee. Roger liked hard work, not hours of meetings and paper policies. He used his skills to help with almost every task, from demolition to design, refurbishing pictures to road surfacing. His great interest was classic cars and trucks. He should take the credit for the huge number of vehicles that attended our open day in July.

We send our condolences to his widow Lorraine and the family. Us volunteers miss him whenever we unlock the building. Our biscuits go soft before they are all eaten; that never happened when Roger was around.





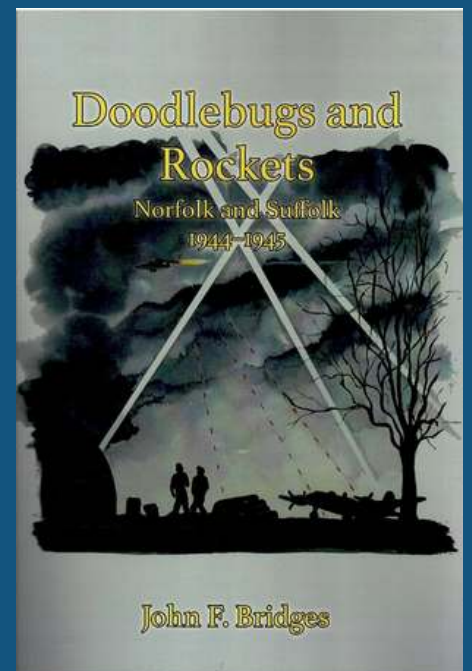
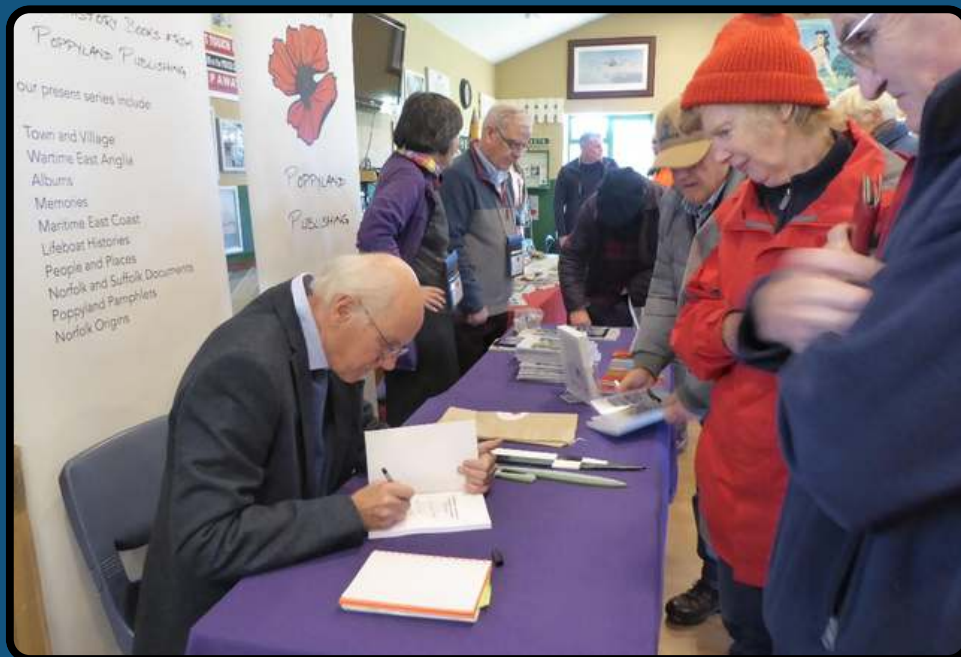
BOOK LAUNCH: *DOODLEBUGS & ROCKETS*

We were pleased to welcome friend of the museum John Bridges and his publishing company to launch his new book, *Doodlebugs and Rockets*, at the Museum in November. Over 100 copies of his book were sold on the day and John was very busy writing personalised inscriptions for all his customers.

About the Book

Most people of a certain age will be familiar with the term 'doodlebug' or V1, but less familiar with the impact that it, along with the V2 rocket, had on Norfolk and Suffolk during the Second World War. Several rockets were specifically aimed at Norwich, whereas the V1s' target was predominantly London, yet a great number found their way to East Anglia causing death and destruction.

This book sets out the background to the V-Weapon campaign against Britain and the significant part that Norfolk and Suffolk played in combating these attacks. The countless missions from the airfields, the role of Radar and the Royal Observer Corps, through to the artillery barrage from the coast are explored. A record is provided of all V1 and V2 incidents along with first-hand memories of those who experienced them.



Doodlebugs and Rockets: Norfolk and Suffolk 1944-1945
is available to buy from our gift shop or online via our eBay store.

The British Resistance Organisation Museum

From the British Resistance Archive....

On Remembrance Sunday we remembered the members of the Auxiliary Units, Special Duties Branch, Section VII and all the civilian volunteers, who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice if the Germans had invaded in the Second World War.

Most went to their graves without saying anything to anyone, without any recognition, but we remember them now.

This cross was laid this morning at Coleshill House, the HQ of the Auxiliary Units by Roger Green and Steve Treadwell.



A Review of 'Britain's Secret Defences' **by Andrew Chatterton, Casemate, 2022**

Andrew Chatterton provides a clear account of the top-secret units created to defend the UK had the Nazis invaded. He explains their origins without devoting excessive space to the machinations of government. The title "British Resistance Organisation" is rightly recognised as inappropriate: Chatterton writes of the "Anti-Invasion Civilian Forces", dividing them into "Chaos and Sabotage" and "Spies, Wireless Operators and the ATS". The secret radio network often receives less attention than the auxiliary patrols and there is welcome detail on how it functioned.

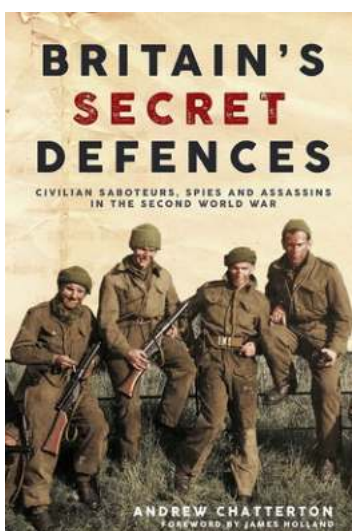
There are some memorable gems within. The lapel badge for auxiliaries had to be claimed by the local officer on stand down and was not to be worn until after war in Europe ended. Each person offered one had to pay 6d for it! Whilst secret radios were broadcasting fake military traffic to confuse the enemy before D Day, the spy network was expected to report on the extent to which local civilians were talking about things that should be kept secret. It is now accepted that there were other civilians far inland who were trained to fight a guerilla war after the invaders had gained control and the original fighters had mostly been eliminated. They were trained by the SIS, (later MI6), utilising dumps of arms and explosives which had been spread around the country from late 1939. Of course, the SIS was only meant to carry out such activities abroad, but

We all recognise the extent to which the government denied the existence of all such organisations until the mid-1990s. The wartime generation were particularly good at keeping quiet about what they knew. However, Chatterton seems unaware of one item recently acquired by Parham. This is an article published by the Daily Sketch on 14 April 1945, under the headlines Britain's Maquis: Secret Civilian Army Stood By For Invasion. The journalist was well informed! To be fair, this was a surprise to us too. It seems that few people took notice of it at the time, or perhaps historians were put off by the lack of any supporting evidence.

One minor point is that although Chatterton writes about Operational Bases, he frequently lapses into calling them "bunkers", which they were not. However, the book is based on thorough research and interviews with those who served. There is also some practical advice for those wanting to investigate more.

Chatterton's book gives a useful introduction for the general reader or someone starting to develop a serious interest in the topic. A recommended read!

Peter Senior





Are you interested in the British Resistance?

Please check out the 'staybehinds' website for a wealth of information on auxiliary unit patrols and all known personnel, archaeology, special duties branch and much, much more.

The British Resistance Archive website at www.staybehinds.com is maintained by the Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team (CART) to share research about the Auxiliary Units of the Second World War, sometimes known as **Churchill's Secret Army**, a sabotage organisation set up in 1940 in case of a Nazi invasion.

The Auxiliary Units were a secret resistance network of highly trained volunteers prepared to be Britain's last ditch line of defence during World War Two. They operated in a network of cells from hidden underground bases around the UK.

On the Staybehinds website, you can explore the Auxiliary Patrols and the Auxiliers by county, by patrol name or personnel by surname.

www.staybehinds.com



2023 Visitor Stats

Throughout 2023, we had the pleasure of hosting a total of 6,128 visitors. Notably, 971 of these were children, indicating a good level of interest from the younger generation in local history and World War II.

Unsurprisingly, our busiest day was 2nd July when we had over 1,000 visitors for our open day. Our busiest 'normal' opening day was 27th August, with 168 people.

Our busiest Wednesday was on July 5th, when we attracted 104 visitors. Among them were repeat attendees who, having already visited for our open day that Sunday, returned for a second time to delve deeper into our exhibits.



2024 Opening

We may be closed to the public presently, but our volunteers continue to beaver away behind-the-scenes and work parties are happening most weeks over winter.

This year we will be open again to visitors from Sunday 31st March, followed by Bank Holiday Monday, 1st April, until the last Sunday in October.

We will also be open on Bank Holiday Mondays from April and also Wednesdays in June, July and August.

We are currently reviewing our opening times. We plan to move to a 4pm closure with last entry at 3pm on Sundays and Mondays, but not until our existing leaflet stocks have been used. Please watch our website, Facebook and Google for any announcements.

Parham Airfield Museum

Parham Airfield

IP13 9AF

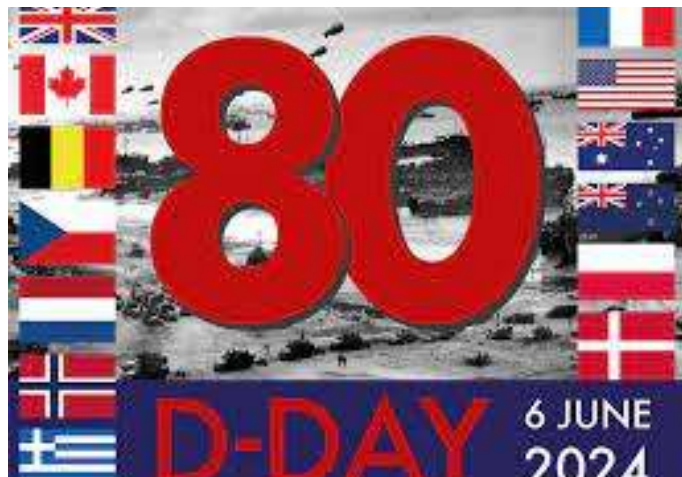
Our What3Words address is:

///scanner.baseless.mimic

Look out for our brown

Tourist Information signs from the A12.

www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk



Did you know?

Past editions of our newsletter are available on our website.



**CALL FOR
CONTENT**

We would welcome your contributions to
spring's edition of our newsletter.

Please email your articles, wartime memories,
questions for other readers, letters or photos for
inclusion by 28th March.

We would love to hear from you.

Lydia Kirk



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