

Welcome to the fourth Newsletter produced by the Museum of Berkshire Aviation. Hope you enjoy the articles.

ENGINEERING SECTION - Miles M.25 Martinet

by Ian Simmons

May I firstly say that throughout this last year we have seen some very interesting progress on all of our main working projects at the museum. The Wednesday crew being busy as usual.

Work on the Miles Martinet has progressed well. One of the first things tackled by Monty and myself was the re-building of the almost non-existent starboard rear spar of the wing centre section. Patterns of parts for this had been made when we renewed the ply facings on the port rear spar. We were able to carefully copy all of the interior webs and use these on the starboard side.

The under carriage, which had

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been temporarily removed while working on the spar, was replaced and a manual test retraction on the port side proved that it was still functioning correctly, locking in

the retracted position at the first try - much to our surprise!

The next stage was the floor of the rear cockpit. We were lucky to have some 'wreckage' to guide us, so proceeded to form this section as a separate item which was then

fitted between the lower longerons when completed.

Skinning of the port side of the front fuselage section has now been done and we can see the fuselage shape developing. It is intended to leave the starboard side uncovered for now to allow access to the interior where there is much detailed work to be completed.

Though mainly working on the Gannet Fairey during the summer months, when weather permitted, Dennis and Ted have also done much of the work in the front cockpit area. This includes installing the cockpit floor and control column

assembly. They are now refurbishing the throttle box. The instrument panel is now 'in situ' and forward of this will be the battery and oil tank.

Away from the museum, the rudder is being constructed and is almost ready for ply skinning. The main reason for progressing this item, was to obtain some of the reference points needed to establish the size of the stern post and other parts of the rear fuselage, which will enable us to continue with the rear fuselage structure.

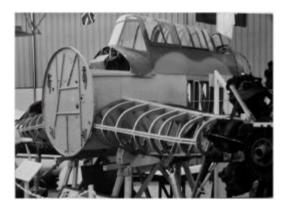


Figure 1 Miles Martinet, port side.

The Bristol Mercury engine, now standing alongside the Martinet, is being given a coat of paint and tidied up by John and Brian who were also helping with work on the Gannet during the summer. I think we are still short of a set of spark plugs (18) for this engine. Can anyone find us a set of aircraft plugs?

May I take this opportunity to ask if any of our readers can help with information and the following parts required to help our work progress;

- 1. A clear photo, that could be enlarged, showing details of the final towing mechanism/pulley that protrudes from the underside of the fuselage.
- 2. Has anyone facilities, or know of any, available to do a few small aluminium castings, e.g. hinge

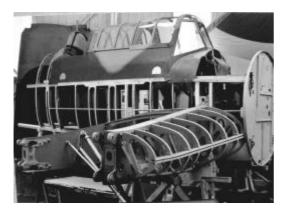


Figure 2 Miles Martinet, starboard side.

brackets and control arms, if patterns are provided. Must be cheap.

- 3. Any off cuts of mild steel plate (1/8" or 1/4" thick) that would be useful for making fittings.
- 4. We also need a few old, clean cotton sheets to carry out some covering experiments.

Junior Link Trainer

An exciting new project now beginning to show signs of leaving the drawing board and progressing to the building stage is the Junior Link Trainer. John Kite has been responsible for this project and has his own write-up on this elsewhere in this newsletter. Best of luck John.

Miles M.100 Student

The Herald Society lads have made some remarkable progress with their Miles Student, all achieved with little information to work with, other than that obtained from straightening out parts from the very badly damage original.

I would like to say thank you to all the Wednesday team (a team of which I am proud to be a member). Also, thank you to the members of the Herald Team, co-operation between the two teams this year has been of great benefit to both.

THE MINI-LINK TRAINER PROJECT

By John Kite

Some months ago when we heard that we were losing our Dakota nose section, and with it one of our main children's attraction, a group of museum volunteers had a discussion to see what ideas we could come up with to fill the gap left by the loss of the Dakota nose section.

After many ideas were considered (and most rejected!) it was decided that a Mini-Link

Trainer that children could "fly" would be something that would be an added attraction, within our capabilities to design and build, without being prohibitively expensive.

This idea was put to the museum committee who agreed this project could go ahead provided it was self-funding.

Luckily we have a Wokingham District Councilor in the team (Terry Dredge) who knows his way around and he became our leading edge for the promotion of funding.

The results of his efforts so far are:

- £100 from Gibbs and Partners, Reading.
- £300 from Wokingham District Council, Educational Fund.
- £200 from Woodley Town Council.

This proved pretty satisfactory in the early stages, but as always, when we got further into the design/build stage the estimated costs escalated to nearer £800£900. This has resulted in us approaching a number of other sources for Sponsorship.

The final design of our Mini-Link Trainer is delta jet in form and will be controllable from a central control column in roll, pitch and yaw, with a working instrument panel, simulated jet engine noise effects and of course simulated machine gun effects.

The approximate size is 152" long with a wingspan of 88" and a height to tip of rudder of 44". The whole thing is to be mounted on a bomb trolley which is at present being reconditioned by members of the "Wednesday" team.

We are lucky to have Ian Simmons and his "magic computer" to design the airframe,

with Dick Gordon at present in a deep design coma trying to work out all the control and drive engineering, helped by Alan Foskett who is trying desperately to calculate where the centre of gravity is likely to be!

The Woodley Carnival Committee have also donated £200 and are interested in having the Mini-Link Trainer in the next Carnival procession Saturday 9th June.

On Wednesday 15th January the P.R. department of the Wokingham District Council had a photo call at the museum for publicity purposes.

Progress of this project can be seen in the museum workshop where the airframe is currently under construction.

The machine gun circuit has been built and is working, the jet engine simulation is a more complicated circuit. If we have an undiscovered budding electric genius in the museum membership who would be prepared to build this circuit, (all components plus P.C.B. are available) would he please make himself known to me.

MILES MASTER IN FRANCE

By S/Ldr James Leathart, O.C. 54 Sqn.

Towards the end of the Battle of Britain, the Germans made a last effort to ground the front line fighter aircraft of No.11 Group. RAF Station Hornchurch, was the key defence station, being in the centre of the enemy's natural approach to the U.K. The station was an obvious choice for bombing.

It was about the end of August 1940, when I was at standby (i.e. with engines running) ready to take off, I could see a formation of Heinkels approaching the airfield and asked Control for permission

to go. Nothing happened! The formation was nearly upon us when I decided to take off without permission; a heinous sin as the squadron would not have been notified to the other defence units.

I was leading the squadron take-off and was unaware until later, that the bombs had exploded under "B" Section following Flight us. Lieutenant Deare, leading the section, was blown upsidedown. He couldn't get out of the cockpit which was soaked with petrol, but did not catch fire. He was helped out later. His No.2 (I think Sgt. Norwell) was not badly damaged, and walked away. His No. 3, Sgt. Davies, was not so lucky. He was blown over the very muddy river bordering the East side of the airfield, known as Shit Creek. He wasn't going to swim back, so he hired a taxi some distance round the village of Hornchurch. Later he put in a claim, but the Accountant Officer refused to pay. It happened that I knew Group Captain Cave of Air Ministry Accounts. He paid in full and sacked the Station Accounts officer.

It was on the 23rd May 1940,

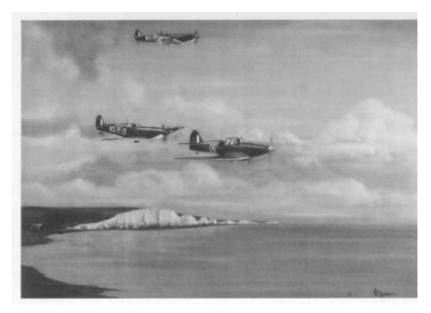


Figure 3 Miles Master escorted by 2 Spitfires.

that I took off from Hornchurch at dawn to patrol Dunkirk, where the Army was finally evacuating the Continent. I was leading 54 Squadron. 65 Squadron was also with us and we had several engagements with Me 109's and Me110's. When all was eventually quiet and we began to return individually, I saw a Spitfire streaming glycol. I escorted it until it force-landed on a small airfield at Calais-Marke. The pilot got out and waved.

On arrival at Hornchurch, during breakfast, we heard that Squadron Leader White was missing.

54 Squadron had just been equipped with a Miles Master * for instrument flying training. It was a very advanced trainer with a Rolls Royce Kestrel engine of some 800 plus H.P. and not much slower than a Spitfire. I discussed the idea of taking it to Calais-Marke escorted by Flight Lieutenants Al Deare and Johnnie Allan, my flight Commanders, and we decided to go and bring Squadron Leader White back.

I landed at Calais with the two Spitfires patrolling overhead, expecting White to run up to the aircraft, but after several minutes no sign of him. So I took off again. No sooner had I got my wheels up, when Al Deare shouts 109's over the R/T. At the same time tracer bullets were passing me. I broke the seal for emergency boost and was able to out-turn and climb past the 109. There were two 109's and my escort attacked them both. Assuming that plenty more of them were close at hand, I landed smartly and jumped into a ditch, almost on top of White, who had anticipated the air battle overhead.

We stayed under cover for about twenty minutes watching the



Figure 4 Flight Lieutenant Deare, leading the section, blown upside-down.

fun, seeing several aircraft shot down. (Al and Johnnie got the two that attacked me).

During this time the German Army tanks and lorries were trundling along the road some quarter of a mile away on their way to Dunkirk. Why they didn't put a shell through the Master I'll never know.

When the air battle above ended, we emerged and had to start the Master by cranking it by hand. Fortunately the two handles were in the aircraft. Eventually it started and we took off for home. Surprisingly she took off in about 200 yards and climbed like a "tart in the bath" (as the current expression was). It was not until then that I realised I had broken the throttle seal, and we had 28 lbs. of boost!

I flew the Channel with my wheels down in the hope that our Navy would not mistake us for a log!

On arrival at Hornchurch, never a word of thanks from White! I've never heard of him since.

* In the copy of the painting, which accompanies this account, the leading plane, the Miles Master, is depicted in camouflage paint with RAF roundels. Training aircraft at the time were painted bright yellow, which may have been a factor in averting friendly fire from the Royal Navy.

HANDLEY PAGE HERALD MODEL

By Annette Hedges

When Jean and I recently went to pick up a model Argonaut from "Collectors Aircraft Models Ltd." at the Sheraton Skyline Hotel, Heathrow, little did we know that we would be setting off a chain of events that would affect the Museum of Berkshire Aviation.

In the course of an interesting conversation with Nigel Milton - Thomas, Managing Director, it transpired that he was in the process of planning a series of Handley Page Herald aircraft models. This, in turn, led us to suggest that he might like to visit the museum, which he did on Sunday 26th November.

The news is, after he and his wife had been shown over G-APWA, and we'd all had coffee and a great exchange of views and aviation experiences, he told us that he now proposes to model his Heralds on a our very own Whisky Alpha!

THE MUSEUM FILM AND VIDEO ARCHIVE

by Alan E Lott

As mentioned in the July Newsletter I have now provided Harry Fraser Mitchell with copies of the video tapes he requested from our collection.

As many of you know, on 25th Jeremy Friday August Clarkson and a BBC television crew visited the Museum to interview Dennis Bancrofton the history of the M.52 project. They propose to use the information in a new series to be broadcast in 2001. probably entitled "Speed". Those of you present will remember the frustration caused by a Police helicopter hovering motionless overhead for some threequarters of an hour, its noise making it impossible to conduct interview! No sooner had it departed than a Police patrol car into the car Apparently there was an urgent search for an eleven-year-old girl who was missing from a Festival at Rivermead in Reading. Sighs of relief when it departed, but a few

minutes later, a small white van containing a loudly barking dogs came into the car park! Later it was possible to conduct the interview.

Whilst the BBC crew were waiting to proceed I asked Mr P Chinn, the researcher for this production if it would be possible for us to have a copy of the footage for our archives, on the same lines as Meridan had supplied uncut camera footage to us when they recorded the bomb being delivered. He said that under BBC rules that would not be possible, but that he would arrange for the museum to have a VHS copy of the completed copy after the broadcast next year.

I have now received a letter from Rebecca Lavender, Production Manager, BBC Science, on condition that a copy will be for personal and individual viewings only and not for sale onto a third party broadcasts for public viewing.

During the afternoon I was able to have an interesting conversation with Mrs Elizabeth Bancroft. She was very excited to learn that we had a air-to-air film of a Miles Master II. This was something that Dennis had been wanting for a long time. A little "horse trading" took place and for a promise from me to supply VHS video of the Miles Master II, I was allowed to borrow several reels of 16mm film Dennis had in his car. These turned out to be:

- "Girls at Work Physical exercise".
- Miles News Reel No. 1
- Miles Movie News
- The Miles Aerovan (black and white; sound)
- Miles Aerovan (colour camera original; silent)
- Miles Newsreel No. 3.

I have transferred all of these on to a Super VHS master tape, museum reference No. 33a, before Ken arranged the despatch of the films back to Dennis in Cornwall. I have dubbed the sound from the black and white copy onto the colour version of the video copy.

I asked Denis if he had any knowledge of the Martin Harper film system. He knew of it but had nothing to do with it. However a few days later he sent me four large black and white prints. They were of the special film perforator, the optical reduction printer, the soundtrack contact printer, and finally a very enlarged photograph of a strip of printed film. He did not require these to be returned but I had made negatives copy and prints for use in a follow up article in the magazine, Amateur Cine World. I had deposited the prints supplied by Dennis in our film cupboard.

Dennis did not have any idea of the fate of equipment but gave me the address of the then chief photographer of Miles Aircraft; Mr Kevin MacDonell. I contacted him and he even remembered the system but like Dennis had no idea of the fate of the equipment.

However one never knows what will surface next. I suddenly had a phone call from my old friend and staunch cinema enthusiast Mike Trickett of Geelong, Victoria, Australia. Unbeknown to me and owner/publisher magazine Amateur Cine enthusiast, a member of the museum staff (who shall be nameless, but you all know who it is) had included my complete article on the Martin Harper system on the museum website! Mike has now sought permission to publish this in the Reel Deals magazine he publishes in Australia. This has been agreed.

The videotape being compiled for the museum by members of the Reading Film and Video Makers has progressed slowly, largely being hampered by the lack of film, as opposed to photographs of pre-war Miles Aircraft and activities. However Ian Thirsk of

RAF Hendon Museum, has just supplied us with some excellent footage of a Miles Magister, air-to-air in RAF colours.

At Ken's request, Dennis Burke is including footage of ML Aviation devices and I have supplied VHS footage for him to use. Dennis informs me that the master video is about three-quarters complete.

At the weekly meeting of the Reading Film and Video Makers in November, Dennis demonstrated a motorised, variable speed, dialogue scroll machine which he had built especially for use with this video. It has taken him many hours of experiment to finalise the design. It was bolted immediately under the camera lens and ran the dialogue, printed in large letters, from right to left as seen by the commentator, in this case of Don Currie. Because the scroll was so close to lens it looked as though Don was looking directly into the camera, although he was reading the dialogue. The commentator was able to vary the speed of the scroll by means of a concealed remote control. The very nicely engineered unit was the subject of much favourable comment and the on-screen demonstration of a few test shots outside the Museum were excellent.

Full credit must go to Les Hillier for supplying the TV and VCR now installed in the refreshment area. I think that the committee should give thought to a more optimum position now that it has been tried and tested; many thanks Les.

On 21st of October I attended the 9.5 Mini-Festival of Films at Wimborne, Dorset. On the Bring and Buy stand I discovered a 16mm Rank Aldis sound projector at a very reasonable price, so I purchased it for the Museum, using part of the funds obtained from the sale of the Super 8 mm projector donated by Mrs. Craig (Newsletter July 2000). It has an internal speaker delivering 5 watts output, but will deliver 15 watts into a suitable external speaker of 15 ohms, 15 watts capacity. I shall now keep an eye open for such a unit

I shall write up a Users Handbook and I am making enquiries regarding a circuit diagram for the amplifier so I can give it a good checkout.

Also present at the 9.5 Festival was Graham Murray, who also writes for the Amateur Cine Enthusiast magazine. He said that on a recent visit to the John Huntley Film Archives he had seen a large reel of Martin Harper film but no one knew what it was. He will now inform them - it will be interesting to know the subject matter.

NUMBER 8 ELEMENTARY FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL, WOODLEY

By Brian Lloyd

One of The Trustees of the Museum, Ken Fostekew, suggested that it would be interesting if the Museum could make contact with personnel who had trained at EFTS before the War and went onto greater things and achievements. We placed a notice in "Air Mail" the RAFA magazine, the RAF News and page 487 of Channel Four Teletext.

We have much pleasure in publishing some extracts from the responses and other interesting information.

The Reserve Training School (RTS) was established at Woodley in November 1935 and was operated as a school by Phillips and Powis (later Miles Aircraft

Company) under the terms of a Contract with The Air Ministry. On the opening of the school it had a fleet of 13 Hawk Trainers and 8 Tiger Moths. The Chief Flying Instructor was Flight Lieutenant James F. Moir who was a New Zealander. In June 1938, RTS was renamed Number 8 Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School (E&RFTS). E&RFTS was allocated more aircraft by the Air Ministry in the shape of one Hawker Hart Trainer, two Hawker Hinds and Four Hart Bombers. Then in September 1938 E&RTS was renamed number 8 EFTS.

We are indebted to the undermentioned people for supplying us with the following information;

Wing Commander E.F.P.Wheller who was posted to Woodley in 1936 for a stay of two months and went onto RAF Uxbridge. His Chief Instructor was F/L T Moir and Wing Commander Wheller went solo after five hours, believed to be a record at that time. Apparently Trainees were accommodated in a property called "Hawkhurst House." Wing Commander Wheller flew throughout the War and was the first RAF pilot to fly a Mustang in 1943 as part of the 26 RAF Squadron Army co-op.

Douglas Mourton, RAFVR at Woodley, 1937 to 1938. To quote from Douglas' Book, "Lucky Doug" - memoirs of the RAF 1937 to 1946 and after.

"I was instructed to report to Woodley Airfield, near Reading, on a Monday evening at 6pm. It was a small airfield, situated in the country, looking almost like a farm. On one side of the perimeter fence, were a few buildings housing the Instructors' rest room, crew room, a little canteen and some small hangars. It had a pleasant restful atmosphere. I arrived there on a glorious evening for an aptitude test. This comprised of being taken up for about thirty minutes in an aircraft and I was subjected to spins, loop the loops, slow rolls, flick rolls, in fact a whole range of aerobatics. The sensations were indescribable, like visiting a very futuristic fun fair. If this was flying I knew I was going to enjoy it. I could not wait to be a pilot myself. I was told to report the following weekend, when my instruction as a pilot would commence. This was the beginning of my career in the Air Force.

"Our instruction was on two types of aircraft, the Tiger Moth, an open cockpit biplane and the Hawk Trainer, an open cockpit monoplane. They were both two seaters with dual control. Our instructors were mainly ex RAF Officers, pleasant good-humoured men. My instructor often said he was reluctantly preparing us for war. We did not believe him but how right he was."

Doug continues in his book about various experiences whilst training and recalls some happy social occasions in the area.

Wing Commander D. Martin, OBE. He commenced training at Woodley in 1939 and his first flight was in a Hawk Trainer, G-AEEL. with Flying Officer Crommelin, Aircraft number N2259 and then in L6915. On 20th March more tests with F/Lt Trewby and then a test by F/Lt O'Connell. Routine training then continued. Sometimes solo and

sometimes with the aforementioned instructors.

Wing Commander K.H. Wallis MBE. July to September 1940. This gentleman has kindly sent us a few stories from those days which we are pleased to publish to give some feeling of those wartime days at Woodley;

"One afternoon the airfield was bombed, but all of us managed to get into trenches around the edges of the airfield once the raid had commenced. It was usual to have to disperse the aircraft on the airfield as much as possible if an air raid was imminent. A couple of "Maggies" were destroyed in the bombing. When the raid was over we went to the remains, recovering the odd piece as a souvenir. Later we retired to bed." Wing Commander Wallis seems to remember the quarters for the pupils were to the east of the Airfield.

"At about 0500 hours the following morning our sleep was disturbed by the building shaking from a large explosion. Where we had been picking up the pieces from the wrecks of the "Maggies" there was a large crater. We had not realised that there was a large bomb buried under the wreckage with its time fuse running.

"I enjoyed my EFTS there - the place had a very positive atmosphere and all of us were very keen aviators."

During the war he flew Martinets when he Commanded "x" aerial Gunnery Training Flight at 210TU Moreton in the Marsh and then at Enstone. The Martinets were used for target towing duties.

As a postscript to the Wing Commanders' memories, he was featured on the front of a book by

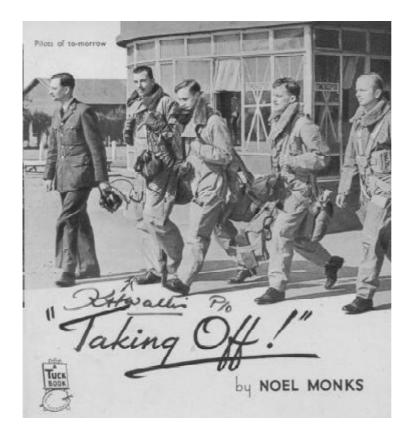


Figure 5 P/O Wallis (2nd from left) at Woodley, circa 1940.

Noel Monk, "Taking Off' and the front cover is shown above. In the photograph Wing Commander Wallis, as a Pilot Officer is second from the left, leaving the crew room, with one of the instructors, F/Lt Hooper.

The Wing Commander is also well known for his post war exploits and his close connection with the 'Wallis' type WA-116 (XR-493) Autogyro 'Little Nellie' which featured in the James Bond film, 'You Only Live Twice.'

Following on from the EFTS at Woodley, we are now interested in the RAFVR post war at Woodley. Although we have had some responses, we will still be pleased to hear from any RAFVR veterans who kept their hands in at Woodley from 1948 up to 1953 when RAFVR were restricted.

P & P PLAYERS (continued)....

Following on from the article in the January 2000 issue of the newsletter....

The following response has been received from Ben Lovegrove, who would be willing to correspond with anyone who knew Mary or Richard.

"The author is Michael Burn. He was a Captain in the Commandos and he took part in the combined operations attack on St Nazaire in 1942. He was captured and spent the rest of the war as a POW. He was transferred to Colditz Castle for the latter part of the war. His experiences there became the basis of one of his books, 'Yes, Farewell.' Michael married Mary Booker in 1947 and they moved to North Wales to live in the cottage near Portmeirion.

"My parents lived nearby and the four of them became friends. When I arrived Mary became my Godmother. I remember her as a beautiful lady of great style and humour. Michael still lives in his cottage in Wales and his is autobiography will be published this year. You may have seen some pictures of Mary in the Channel 4 documentary about Richard Hillary which was shown on Boxing Day, and Michael has been on several programmes shown in 2000."

Regards Ben Lovegrove ben@lovegrove.co.uk

NATIONAL LOTTERY INFO

Following the recent EGM the subject of a National Lottery grant was brought up.

To gain a grant from the National Lottery, the Museum would have to register with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Commission in order to qualify to apply for a grant. This would cost approximately £10,000. Which is a none starter. Every item in the museum would have to be catalogued, a full-time job! However it may be possible to

apply to the Small Grants Scheme for a grant towards a specific project, for example, the Museum extension.

Toward the end of January, the Wokingham District Council Resources sub-committee agreed that the top car park could be leased to the Museum, to exhibit aircraft, with terms to be agreed (including rent) in discussion with the Countryside Service.

FORTHCOMING RBAS EVENTS

Tuesday 6 March 2001 *Meeting* - **A.V.M. Spink** - Hurricane to Tornado.

Wednesday 21 March 2001 *Visit* - Met Office, Bracknell.

am - Visit to the Scott Building Archives, Sterling Centre Business Site, off Eastern Road, Bracknell, commence at 10:15.

pm - Visit to HQ Building, London Road, Bracknell, commencing at 12:50 and ending at 15:30.

Group size restricted to 20.

Contact Bob Sale for further information.

JOIN THE RAF CHANGI ASSOCIATION

The aim of the Association is to bring together in true comradeship all those that were stationed at RAF Changi, Singapore, (including all those that were based at HQFEAF), so that they can renew their friendship, and make new friends.

For details, write (enclosing sae) to;

Mr M James, 12 Shiner Elms, Yatton, Bristol, BS49 4BY, MikeJames4@compuserve.uk

TANGMERE AVIATION MUSEUM

Don't miss the unique collection of aviation exhibits relating to this famous battle of Britain airfield. An excellent display hall is graced by two record breaking aircraft on loan from the RAF Museum, Meteor IV special EE549 and Hawker P.1067 WB188.

Telephone: 01243-775223.



YORKSHIRE AVIATION MUSEUM, ELVINGTON

The former RAF Elvington is the largest WWII Bomber Command Station open to the public in the country. From this base British, Canadians and French aircrews flew on missions to the continent. The highlight of the Museum is the reconstruction of Halifax II 'LV907'.

Telephone: 01904-6085950



FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you enjoyed our latest newsletter. Don't forget that this is your newsletter; let me know what you think of it and what you would like in the next issue. If you want to write an article, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Also, don't forget that the Museum still needs volunteers to man the museum on Sundays throughout the Winter. If you want to help, please let me know, below you can find my e-mail address. The Museum also needs volunteers for outside events, such as the Woodley Extravagansa. If you want to help out, contact either Margaret Etridge or myself. Also, why not check out our updated website; http://fly.to/MuseumofBerkshireAviation e-mail:

MuseumofBerkshireAviation@fly.to