Bon Voyage VeRA September 2014

According to the official Canadian Lancaster website the old warplane, affectionately known as ‘VeRA’, has touched down safely in Hamilton, Canada. To quote Vinnie Jones, ‘It’s been emotional’ as it could be said that this tour had many of the elements that were evident when the bombers flew during the 1940’s. Imagine flying over a 1000 miles of freezing water in a 69 year old aircraft at under 300mph with nothing but your winter woollies protecting you from the elements? Not only that, but VeRA had already suffered one engine failure due to an oil leak which necessitated borrowing one from the Memorial Flight’s stores. To make that flight takes nerve and confidence in both your aircraft and the whole crew around you. The Canadian Lancaster tour has touched many people on so many levels that it would be extremely hard to put VeRA’s impact into words but a small boy, watching the BBMF take the air to say goodbye to the Canadian at RAF Coningsby, might just have summed it up in one word: Wow! I could not have agreed more.

The two Lancasters have created excitement and interest that can only benefit the cause of aviation heritage. Obviously there were those who were disappointed, myself included, who missed seeing her because she was grounded due to bad weather or while that damaged engine was replaced. But none of the people I spoke to at the Shoreham Air show blamed VeRA, it was just bad luck. How many times was that phrase used during wartime? And thank heavens for the well organised BBMF who had the facilities in order to put VeRA back in the air; comrades from differing nationalities working to together for a common cause.

Thanks also must go to the backers; those who put the cold hard cash up so this could happen. Thwaites may well make a fortune from selling Lancaster Ales but the tab for this tour reputedly cost the brewers $750,000 with the rest coming from private donors including two individuals paying $80,000 each to fly the ocean leg on the plane. However, the cost of fitting and hiring the replacement engine could well exceed $180,000, expenditure that was not bargained for and has yet to be paid for. Let’s hope the $10,695 the Lincolnshire Lancaster Association presented to the Canadian Crew helps a little. Why the exact figure of $10,695? Because that is the number of Canadian Aircrew who died during World War Two.

There’s a lot of debate in the UK about the cost of keeping these old aircraft flying but I believe it is important they do so and not just for nostalgia. Aircraft like these are showstoppers. They help bring the crowds to airshows and museums. To watch and hear the Vulcan, the Memorial Flight and the B-17, Sally-B, is an amazing experience in itself but one also gets an inside view of an age gone by and, of course, the revenue generated has lasting benefits for many people. More information on the Canadian Lancaster can be found at these websites:

https://twitter.com/LancsBomberAle
https://sites.google.com/site/orfordbridge/
http://www.raf.mod.uk/bbmf/

Toy Library in the Lancaster Room, Brookenby Community Centre
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Community Groups Update

Limelight Theatre
We are beginning rehearsals for Christmas shows. We have scheduled performances for Sat/Sun 13/14th Dec
both matinees at 2.30pm. The juniors will present 2 musical nativity plays called 'God's Angels' and 'The Cat's
Tale' whilst the rest of us will put together a musical 'rock & roll' Christmas selection yet to be decided upon. The
adults are presently rehearsing for a Murder Mystery that is to be performed in Market Rasen on Saturday 15th
of November along with a set menu 3 course dinner all at the Social Club in Serpentine Street. If it goes well
there then we may adapt it and try to bring it also to Brookenby at a later date depending on catering
possibilities. Ron

Church News.
Services for November are as follows.
2nd. C of E Holy Communion. 9th. We meet at Church at 10.30 and drive up to the RAAF War memorial on the
airfield. Service is Methodist led and we invite you all back to the Church afterwards for soup and a roll to warm
up! 11th. We are privileged to have our own Remembrance service at 11 am. This is especially important as it is
100 years since the start of World War One. Rev. John Carr will be taking the service, starting at 10.50am
outside the Community Centre. You are invited into Church afterwards for tea/coffee and biscuits. Margaret
Quaggan will recite one of her poems on both occasions.
We also meet every Tuesday at 9.30 for informal morning worship and on 10th and 24th at 2pm for relaxed Bible
Study with Rev. Leslie Gillis.
We are very happy to welcome new members and if you feel you would like someone to "escort" you on your
first visit tel Jean on 399214 and we can introduce you.

Happy Hearts
The Children’s Christmas Party is free to anyone registered to youth club or their siblings. Children under youth
club age who live in Brookenby and Binbrook, and children who go to Binbrook Play School can also come free
but have to register to come. They can ring Dave Lindsay on 01472 399549 to book – the closing date to
register is Saturday December the 6th. Please complete the form at p16
Christmas Bingo: Saturday December the 6th doors open 6.45 and it starts at 7.30. Anyone with donations for
bingo please let us have them by Tuesday the 25th of November at latest.
Is there anybody interested in another kurling session? Please let Sarah know 01472 398593. Sarah
Community Groups Update (continued from previous page)

Brookenby Camera Club
We are in the process of teaching some of our more inexperienced members on how to use their cameras. We are fortunate to be able to go on line and use tutorials on You Tube. Up to date we have covered the use of apertures or aperture values and how to avoid camera shake. At our next meeting we will be covering shutter speeds. Anyone wishing to improve their camera skills or can pass on their skills are welcome to join us at the Community Centre on Wed. 29th. October at 7-30 pm. John B

Children’s Links Coffee & Christmas Crafts

The Lancaster Room, Brookenby Community Centre
10.30am till 12 Noon on
Thursday 27th November

Calling All Volunteers
Voluntary Centre Services supports volunteers and voluntary and community organisations across West Lincolnshire.
As well as operating accredited Volunteer Centres in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford that deal with over 2,000 volunteer enquiries each year, we can offer help to anyone wishing to set up a group, funding advice and access to news and networks in the voluntary and community sector. To sign up for our fortnightly newsletter, which includes information about training events, local networks and support forums please follow this link: http://eepurl.com/Ad9Sj

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Testimonials
Billy Wales - great service, walking on air
Niki Marshall - great to have someone turn up on time and offer a fantastic service all in the comfort of my own home
Phone: 0788 9071794
Brookenby Parish Council

At the meeting held on 7th October, the following matters of significance were discussed:

• Brookenby Community Centre update: the Sure Start Toy Library has reopened; repairs to the Fire Doors have been carried out. It was also reported during the Public Forum, that the consultative panel referred to in the report by the Community Development Officer and to include Parish Councillors, residents, WLDC representatives and others, to consider matters related to the Options Appraisal Report, will be included on the Agenda for the November meeting for a decision on how this panel will be convened.
• The privately owned open spaces: the ownership of the various parcels still remains to be determined although Ian Jarvis (from the floor) offered some advice on various ownerships.
• Hedge cutting on land adjoining access roads: one quote had been received and the Council agreed to accept a suitable quotation up to the value of £400.
• A proposal from Ian Jarvis had been received regarding the development of land between Swinhope Road and Dale View Road. The Council agreed to accept gratefully an offer to hand over land adjoining the houses to public ownership once it has been landscaped.
• A proposal from Dan Stephenson for the holding of a firework display. The Council agreed that a display could be held on the top field adjoining Lorraine Road on New Year’s Eve.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 4th November starting at 7.00 pm. The Agenda for that meeting together with Minutes of the previous meeting are usually posted on the noticeboard outside the old shop a few days before the meeting. Any resident wishing to contact the Council should refer to the Parish Clerk Sam Coulam on 399652 or write to samcoulam@talktalk.net.

November 2014, 10am – 12noon
Lincolnshire Archives – First World War

To mark the centenary of the start of the First World War, Down Your Wold is working with the Lincolnshire Archives to hold a session on its records relating to the War and the Lincolnshire Regiment. The session will provide a selection of sources relating to life in Lincolnshire 1914-1918. The Archives holds records relating to casualties, civil defence, letters from the front, prisoners of war, propaganda, recruitment and soldiers rolls. Spaces are limited so to book a place please call the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service on 01507 609740
Heritage Group
A small working party has been formed to look at developing some heritage themed projects in Brookenby, including representatives from Community Lincs, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage, Brookenby Parish Council and local residents. Ideas currently being worked on include: Display cabinets in the foyer area of the Community Centre. The cabinets will be funded using a donation given to the Parish Council by the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust in recognition of the excellent event organised to celebrate the dedication of the new memorial outside the Community Centre. It is hoped to be able to display items of memorabilia from RAF Binbrook Brookenby Map Project. This will be led by BYPP (Brookenby Young People’s Project). The young people will undertake Oral History training and will make recordings related to areas of interest on the map. It is hoped that the recordings will be digitally reduced and put on to a CD to be played in the Royer as part of the cabinet display, Community Art and Garden Area. We hope to develop an area of waste land at the side of the Community Centre, to incorporate some heritage themed community art. The young people will attend workshops with a local community artists to design and produce the artwork themselves. The area will be developed into a quiet area /memorial Village event of the Anniversary of VED Day – it is hoped to arrange a village event in May 2015, to commemorate the anniversary of VE Day, also to incorporate the launch of these projects. Long term plans for the Community Centre: The Parish Council are currently working with the WLDC Community Assets Fund around the future development of the Community Centre, and heritage projects will be part of the consultation process with the community. We really welcome any new volunteers who would like to take part, not matter how large or small, in these projects.

Maybe you have your own collection of memorabilia, or can help with some of the history of the village. Are you interested in helping to create a memorial garden, or have an interested in art? Would you be able to help with organising a street party, can you bake, sing, make bunting? Volunteers can give as much or as little as their time as they please, but all help will be welcomed. For more information please contact either Margaret Quagggen, Brookenby Parish Council or Anne Cater, Community Lincs.

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Village Library
The Library (located just inside the Church premises) contains a good selection of fiction and non-fiction titles available without charge to anyone in the village. Please feel free to borrow any and return when read.
Idly trawling through the internet I came across two postings on Rod Collins’ website; www.rodcollins.com, which I found really interesting. I thought I’d record them here for anyone who happened to be serving at RAF Binbrook in 1982 and, like the person who sent the first posting, couldn’t understand why they worked a series of extremely long shifts fitting under wing fuel tanks to Lightnings, only to take them off again pretty soon afterwards.

“When the Falklands crisis kicked off in 1982 we worked eighteen hour days for two or three weeks getting our aircraft serviceable and fitting external underwing fuel tanks as we were told they were going down to the South Atlantic. Not long after we’d finished though and due to the brevity of the conflict we were told that we could restore our aircraft to their previous state as they were no longer required, this necessitated another few weeks of long hours of labour stripping them down again. By the end of this I was practically sleepwalking everywhere. I don’t even think we were given any time off to make up for all the days off we’d lost and extra hours we’d worked.” Electric Warrior.

“I feel a pang of conscience about Electric Warrior’s 18-hour days during the Falklands emergency, and he deserves an explanation.

When the Falklands action got going, we asked Group and Command how/if we could help. We were told by absolutely everyone that we would definitely not be required to deploy. Not a chance, they said, some of them clearly amused at the suggestion. But there’s an old military saying that ‘if everyone’s thinking the same, then someone’s not thinking’. So, being Binbrook, we went ahead with some preparations anyway.

Overwing tanks were difficult to fit to, and get working on, the Lightning F6. We were supposed to be able to generate 4 aircraft in OWTs in 19 days. The year before, in 1981, it had taken longer than that to get a single aircraft fitted and serviceable with them! For years the tanks had been stored at North Coates, their seals had dried out and they were covered in bird droppings. So we had a little programme in 1981 to get 8 serviceable tanks, and fit at least 4 of them to a couple of aircraft and fly them to ensure they worked in flight as advertised. We then noted carefully which tanks worked on which wings of which aircraft, and stored the newly serviceable ones on racks in ASSF’s hangar.

As Operation Corporate to recover the Falklands got under way, we had got one aircraft flying in OWTs and had another about to fly. The Editor of the Grimsby evening paper got very excited about the sight of the OWT aircraft and rang up to ask when we were deploying to the South Atlantic! We told him there was no prospect of that, which of course was the truth.

One Sunday lunch time the phone rang in my married quarter and my young son answered it, thinking it was his Granny. It was Strike Command Ops, for me. “How quickly can you get 4 aircraft into overwing tanks?” they asked. “In about 8 days” I replied. “But HQ 11 Group tell us it takes 19 days” they said, disbelievingly. “It does,” I said, “but we started 11 days ago!” “Oooh THANK YOU!” said the voice, “We’ll call you back”.

But they never did. The air defence task was the point defence of Ascension Island’s runway against the possibility of enemy attack. The quick-reaction Lightning was ideally suited to this task except for one thing: its tyre pressures. Ascension’s taxiways and dispersals were asphalt, and the TPs on the Lightning were so high that the wheels would have punched straight through it. So Coningsby deployed its Phantoms instead, with their wimpy low-pressure tyres, and all that hard work at Binbrook came to nought. Sorry, Electric Warrior! And I am sorry you couldn’t be told all this at the time, but I am sure you can understand why.”

So now you know!

Friends of Binbrook School

All the children at Binbrook CofE Primary School and Binbrook Early Learners will receive a First World War commemorative bookmarker as a gift. To mark this special year, Friends of Binbrook School will be holding a coffee morning on Tuesday 11th November 2014 where we will have additional book markers for sale. They will be priced at £2.00 each or £1.50 each if you purchase more than one. Please come and join us in the school hall from 9.30am until 10.30am.

Classified Ads

FOR SALE: Gear4Music Electric Guitar and case with 12 volt amp unit. £150
Call: 01472 851504
### Useful Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Binbrook Surgery</th>
<th>Binbrook C of E School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Back Lane, Binbrook</td>
<td>Orford Road, Binbrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 01472 398202</td>
<td>Tel: 01472 398340</td>
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<th>Binbrook Children’s Centre</th>
<th>Callconnect</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orford Road, Binbrook</td>
<td>Tel: 0845 234 3344 or to request a call back, text the word ‘CallConnect’ to 82727</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 01472 398889</td>
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<tr>
<th>Clerk to Brokenby Parish Council</th>
<th>Police:</th>
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<tr>
<td>please contact Sam Coulam on: <a href="mailto:samcoulam@talktalk.net">samcoulam@talktalk.net</a> or call</td>
<td>Call 101 when it’s less urgent than 999.</td>
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<tr>
<td>01472 399652</td>
<td>PC Chris Bell is the Community Beat Manager. Tel: 07944 776883</td>
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<tr>
<th>Potholes and Faulty Street Lights:</th>
<th>Taxis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Can be reported to Lincolnshire CC Highways Division</td>
<td>Blanchards: 01673 843114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 01522 782070 or online at: <a href="http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/doitonline">www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/doitonline</a></td>
<td>Handy Cabs: 01673 844070</td>
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<td>SBR Grimsby: 07738079932</td>
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<tr>
<th>West Lindsey District Council</th>
<th>Window Cleaners</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 01427 676676</td>
<td>H&amp;G Maintenance 07983 579042</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency out of Hours telephone: 01427 613960</td>
<td>Mick’s Window Cleaning 01469 560797</td>
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<td>S&amp;J 01472 371445</td>
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Live Lunchtime Music at The Grimsby Minster

The Autumn/Winter season of lunchtime recitals has recommenced. The café is open from 11.30am to 2pm with the Recital from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Entry is £3 per person on the door. November’s music is published as follows:

**Wednesday 5th** - Doug Badger & Matt Kam (Cello & Piano)

**Wednesday 12th** - Linda & Lara Harvey (Soprano & Mezzo)

Don’t forget this year’s Binbrook School Advent Fair will be on Thursday 4th December 5.30pm till 7.00pm
Big Energy Saving Network

The Big Energy Saving Network is a Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) funded initiative to support trusted third sector organisations and community groups to provide targeted, personalised advice that can help bring down the energy costs of some of the UK’s most vulnerable consumers. Sessions are targeted at frontline workers and Community Groups that support people on low incomes/in receipt of benefits/live rurally/disabled/have no access to the internet.

Frontline worker sessions are suitable for any staff who have a remit to support, for example vulnerable people to improve their health, living conditions, maximise their income or maintain a tenancy. Sessions are based within your premises and all sessions are free.
Each session is approx. 1 hour long and will cover:
Payment options for energy
Information on how to compare energy prices and the switching process
Help with Energy Efficiency
Identify sources of assistance and advice providers.
Sessions for Community groups are similar, with the aim of helping people reduce their energy costs. This could be by assisting people to take action on payment options, tariffs or switching. The primary objective of these sessions is to increase people’s awareness of energy prices, think about pursuing the best deal, gain confidence in contacting their own supplier and understand their bills.

Both frontline and consumer sessions provide information to take away. In addition the frontline worker session attendees will be given access to a downloadable booklet.
We aim to make sessions fun with a couple of quizzes thrown in….. with prizes!

If you are interested in hosting a session, or know a group/organisation that could benefit from this type of session please contact Janet Clark or Roy Pell at Community Lincs using the details below:

E: Roy.pell@communitylincs.com
T: 01529 301964

Remembrance and Wreath laying Service

9th November 2014
From 10.30 am at Brookenby Church or
From 10.50 am at the War Memorial on the Tech Park

Lest we forget
The Last Post

World War One commemorations recall stories of heroics, courage and sacrifice. Lincolnshire's own is especially compelling, with only three of the eight Beechey brothers surviving the war. "The Last Post" is Lincoln's commemoration of an unparalleled sacrifice. It is the city's own play, inspired by the 300 letters the Beechey brothers wrote home. A true community remembrance of the Beechey family's dignity and extraordinary sacrifice, it was written to be performed in the very place where men trained in readiness for war a century ago.

Join the Lincoln Mystery Plays company at Lincoln Drill Hall, in Armistice Week, to honour this remarkable family and so many more. As surviving brother Eric wrote: “We can only pay the honour due to them and reverence them forever in our memories”. Performances: Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15 November at 7pm, and 2pm on Saturday 15 November. Tickets £12 and £10. Call Lincoln Drill Hall on 01522 873894. Details at www.lincolnmysteryplays.co.uk

Mrs Amy Beechey raised fourteen children. All her sons: Barnard, Charles, Leonard, Christopher, Frank, Eric, Harold and Sam, served during WW1. As stated in the publicity for “The Last Post” five of her sons were killed and one was maimed for life. In April 1918, Mrs Beechey was presented to King George V and honoured for her sacrifice, however, even though she was extremely proud of her children, she is reported to have said to Queen Mary “It was no sacrifice, Ma’am, I did not give them willingly.” For a more in depth recounting of the Beechey family history, Michael Walsh has written a book called “Brothers In War”.

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Please contact me on 01472 398858 / 07590220420 / marieclark230@gmail.com or via Facebook
I was delighted to be invited to attend the Harvest Festival service on Sunday 19th October and thank those present, personally, for their generous donations. The Nomad Trust relies heavily on food donations in order to be able to supply over 20,000 meals a year to the homeless. Meals are prepared by our own cook and served up at St. Mary-le-Wigford parish church as they have more space than we have at the shelter.

Donations of tinned meats, sugar, long life milk, fresh fruit and vegetables, laundry detergent and toilet rolls are particularly well received.

Donations can be dropped off at the office at 15a Monks Road between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday or at the shelter at 15 Monks Road from 8.30 pm any evening.

Financial donations can be made electronically by phoning the office or by cheques made payable to The Nomad Trust. Any financial donation can be enhanced if the donor is a UK taxpayer able to use the gift aid scheme. Regular monthly standing orders can be set up easily by requesting the necessary forms from the office on 01522 883703. These regular gifts can be as little as £2 per month but they enable us to plan a little better for the future.

Any donation either financial or 'goods in kind' is gratefully accepted and we are forever indebted to the people of Lincolnshire for their continued support.
Lincolnshire's Finest – Jennifer Saunders

Jennifer was born in Sleaford, on 6 July 1958. Her mother was a biology teacher, and her father served as a pilot in the RAF, reached the rank of Air Marshal. She was educated from the age of five to 18 in boarding schools and then at St Paul’s Girls’ School, an independent school in west London.
She later received a place at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London on a drama teachers’ course in 1977, where she met her future comedy partner, Dawn French. Both came from RAF backgrounds. They had grown up on the same base, even having had the same best friend, without ever meeting. The comic duo originally did not get on well, and as far as Saunders was concerned, French was a "cocky little upstart". The distrust was mutual: French considered Saunders snooty and uptight. After the initial friction, while at college Saunders and French shared a flat together.

The two performed together after graduation, working the festival, cabaret and stand-up circuits. Saunders and French would eventually come to public attention as members of the informal comedy collective the Comic Strip part of the alternative comedy scene in the early 1980s.
Both Saunders and French became continuing members of the Comic Strip, which included Peter Richardson Rik Mayall and Robbie Coltrane, as well as Saunders’ future husband Adrian Edmondson.
The comedy group appeared on Channel 4’s first night on air, in the first episode of The Comic Strip presents: Five Go Mad In Dorset, broadcast on 2 November 1982.
In 1987, she and French created French and Saunders, a popular series for the BBC which aired until 2007. By the end of the 1980s, the show was an established comedy programme and became a staple in BBC viewing. Saunders and French followed separate careers as well as maintaining their comedy sketch show. Saunders' biggest solo success has been Absolutely Fabulous. The series, which she wrote and starred in as the irresponsible fashion PR agent Edina Monsoon alongside Joanna Lumley brought her international acclaim and attention. The show ran for five full series, a two-part film and three special episodes over the course of thirteen years from 1992 to 2005.
The final series French & Saunders series aired in 2007. A Bucket o' French & Saunders featured a compilation of old and new sketches and aired on BBC One in September 2007. It was the third show she had written in a year.

Saunders wrote and appeared in “Uptown Downstairs Abbey”, the Comic Relief parody of the critically acclaimed historical television dramas Downton Abbey and Upstairs Downstairs shown in 2011.
In 2013, Saunders starred as Connie in the BBC adaptation of Blandings by Wodehouse.

Saunders has also appeared in several films, such as In The Bleak Midwinter (1995), Muppet Treasure Island (1996), Fanny and Elvis (1999) and also made cameo appearances in the Spice Girls’ film Spice World (1997). She most notably appeared in the internationally successful DreamWorks animated movie Shrek2 in 2004, voicing Princess Fiona’s evil fairy godmother and sung the songs “The Fairy Godmother Song” and “Holding Out For a Hero”. The sequel broke the first Shrek’s own box office record in the U.S in just a fortnight, and it proceeded to make $353 million in just three weeks in the U.S. Her role won the American People’s Choice Award for the best movie villain in 2005. She also voiced Miss Spink in the animated film Coraline, in which Dawn French also voiced a character called Miss Forcible.
She has won three BAFTA Awards (1993, 2009 and 2012). She and husband Adrian Edmondson have three daughters and two grandchildren.
Times Gone By

We introduce a new feature to reflect the fact that 100 years ago covers the respective period in World War 1 and 75 years ago, the respective period in World War 2.

100 Years Ago – November 1914
1. Europe: Russia, the UK and France break off diplomatic relations with Turkey.
3. Turkey: Anglo-French ships bombard the Dardanelles.
4. Turkey: Russia invades Armenia.
5. Constantinople: Turkey declares war on Russia, the UK, France and Serbia.
6. SE Asia: Australian cruiser Sydney sinks German cruiser Emden off Sumatra.
7. Eastern Front: Russian troops reported to be advancing on Konigsberg in E. Prussia.
8. Western Front: The Prince of Wales becomes the aide-de-camp to Sir John French.
9. Isle of Man: Austrian and German internees riot at a detention camp.
11. Eastern Front: Germans, advancing on 55-mile front, reported only 40 miles from Warsaw.
12. UK: 700 die when HMS Bulwark blows up in the harbour at Sheerness, Kent.
14. US: Ex-President Roosevelt criticises the US for its “tame and spiritless neutrality” in the war.

BIRTH
25. US baseball star Joe Di Maggio.

DEATHS
3. Austrian poet Georg Trakl (b 1887)
14. British commander Field Marshal Earl Roberts of Khartoum (b 1832)

75 Years Ago – November 1939
1. London: The government says butter and bacon will be rationed from mid-December.
4. Washington: Congress approves the “Cash and Carry Bill” which ends the arms embargo.
10. Switzerland: General mobilisation is ordered.
13. The first bombs are dropped on British soil, on the Shetlands.
14. UK: Petrol is increased by 1½ pence to 1s9½d a gallon (9p in decimal currency).
17. Prague: Nine Czech students are executed by the Germans for leading anti-German demonstrations.
18. London: Three Czech students are executed by the Germans for leading anti-German demonstrations.
21. Berlin: Two Britons are arrested for a failed bomb attempt on Hitler’s life.
22. UK: German planes drop mines in the Thames estuary.
24. Czechoslovakia: 120 students are shot by the Gestapo.
24. London: Imperial Airways and British Airways merge to form the British Overseas Airways Corporation.
25. Finland: The USSR tells Finnish troops to pull back 16 miles from the Russian border.
26. London: One person is killed and 22 injured when IRA bombs go off at Victoria and King’s Cross stations.
30. Finland: Soviet planes bomb Helsinki and Viipuri.

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Who Sunk the Tirpitz (or the Battle of the Tirpitz Bulkhead)?

A quick search around the internet websites and forums reveals lengthy discussions on the above subject but I’m not sure if there’s enough hard evidence for anyone to prove, beyond reasonable doubt, which plane from which RAF squadron, the killer blow was delivered. What is certain is that she was immobilised and then ultimately destroyed on the 12th November 1944, 70 years ago, and the British War Office could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

So what was so important about Nazi Germany’s battleship Tirpitz that prompted Winston Churchill to say in 1941: “The destruction, or even the crippling, of this ship is the greatest event at sea at the present time. No other target is comparable to it. The entire naval situation throughout the world would be altered.” A profound statement especially as in 1941 Britain still ruled the waves, didn’t she?

The British fear of the Tirpitz could be traced back to the 21st May 1941 and had everything to do with her sister ship the Bismarck. On that day HMS Hood, for twenty years the largest and heaviest warship in the world and the pride of the British navy, along with a brand new battleship and two heavy cruisers attacked two German ships. The battle lasted around 18 minutes and the result sent shockwaves through the British Empire. Ten minutes after opening fire a single shell penetrated HMS Hood and a chain reaction blew her apart. She sank in under three minutes and of her 1,415 crew only three were rescued. The battleship Prince of Wales was so new that she had numerous fitting out issues including problems with the gun turret control systems. She prudently withdrew under smoke and was fortunate not to have been chased down by the German pair.

The Tirpitz, named after Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, was commissioned to replace the SMS Schleswig-Holstein an old World War 1 ship that fought at Jutland and then fired the very first shots of World War II. The Tirpitz was even bigger than her sister ship, the Bismarck, 251m long and weighing in at over 56,000tons, the Tirpitz could still race through the water at an equivalent of 35mph. To be safe from her main armament you had to be 22 miles away and each of her eight 15 inch gun could fire an average of a 2.5 shells a minute, accurately. The Bismarck was eventually sent to the bottom of the sea 3 days after sinking the Hood but it took a large force and some luck to do it.

No-one knew what damage the Tirpitz could do to the Atlantic convoys or for that matter, a seaborne invasion force, so the Tirpitz was attacked over 25 times by the Royal Navy and both the Soviet and the Royal Air Forces.

Until September 1944 the most successful attack had been by the Royal Navy. In October 1942 they had tried using manned torpedoes but bad weather had thwarted the attempt. 11 months later the Royal Navy tried again, this time using midget submarines. Two of these tiny craft managed to position their 2ton mines and the resulting explosions put the Tirpitz out of action for six months. The two mini-sub commanders both received the Victoria Cross.

The Tirpitz was then attacked by the Fleet Air Arm, with varying degrees of success until the job was given to Bomber Command’s No5 Group. They now had the very weapon needed to finish the battered battleship off. A 5.4ton Tallboy “earthquake” bomb which was designed to impact at over 750mph and create a crater so big, the target would simply fall or shift on its foundations. And the man who designed it knew what he was doing for it was none other than Barnes Wallis, designer of the dam-busting Bouncing Bomb and the Wellington Bomber.

The mission was entrusted to 9 & 617 squadrons and in September 1944 they launched their first attack. The result was a single hit on the bow but it was enough to render the ship uneconomic to repair. She was moved 200 miles south to Tromso and was attacked again, to no effect. Finally on the 12th November 1944 the Allies got the result they had been waiting four years for. With the Luftwaffe unaware the ship had been moved, the Lancasters were able to concentrate their attack and scored two direct hits and several near misses. The near misses shifted the sand bank built to stop the Tirpitz rolling over but the great ship did just that with the loss of over 900 men.

The Tirpitz was a huge symbol of Nazi pride. At the time she was built she was the greatest warship built by a European power and yet she had hardly fired her guns in anger and like many other great warships, including
the greatest of them all the 70,000ton Yamamoto, the Tirpitz was sunk by air power. The age of the Dreadnoughts was over. At the end of the war she was 56,000 tons of scrap metal lying in water so one might be forgiven for thinking that this was the end of the story but there is an interesting appendix, one that links the Tirpitz with RAF Binbrook. And the Battle of the Tirpitz Bulkhead begins.....

So World War II is finally over and millions of people are trying to rebuild their lives surrounded by the detritus of war. One of those doing just that was a fisherman called ‘Jeep’ Jepson who, only two years previously, had been a rear gunner with 9 Squadron. He heard that the salvage workers demolishing the Tirpitz had discovered the crew had painted a mural on a propeller shaft bulkhead. Mr Jepson got word to the Mayor of Tromso that 9 Squadron would be delighted to take guardianship of the memento despite the fact it was over a metre square and weighed a modest 100kg. After a complicated series of communiqués the bulkhead was presented to RAF Bomber Command by the Commander in Chief of the Royal Norwegian Air Force on 16th February 1950. As both 9 & 617 Squadrons resided at RAF Binbrook at the time, it made sense to keep the bulkhead at Station Headquarters. 9 Squadron thought otherwise and promptly relocated it to their Squadron building only for 617 (known as the Junior Squadron) to remove it for their own display. The two squadrons, who had always been serious competitors, now had something to focus their rivalry on, even though it weighed 100kg. This auspicious trophy has changed hands many times including an audacious raid by 9 Squadron on 617 Squadron while the junior squadron was based at RAF Scampton. A team stole the bulkhead from Scampton, drove it to RAF Wittering where a 9 Squadron pilot flying from RAF Waddington had diverted and made an emergency landing at Wittering. A totally confused ground crew watched as a van drove up to the Vulcan bomber and transferred the “prize” to the bomb-bay just before take off. The bulkhead was once again in 9 Squadron’s possession - in Cyprus!!

The bulkhead has been mounted on walls, set in reinforced concrete, smuggled on cross-channel ferries and fixed with welded bolts. When 617 Squadron moved to Lossiemouth, legend has it that it took four workmen several days to extract the bulkhead for the move north of the border.

Sadly, the modern age called a halt to the inter-squadron competition and a truce instigated. 9 Squadron is now equipped with Tornados and 617 is currently disbanded awaiting the F-35 Lightning. The iconic bulkhead itself is safe and since 2002 has been on public display at the Royal Airforce Museum at RAF Hendon. And as to who sank the Tirpitz? I am sure that debate will go on for time eternal but without one person it would almost certainly not have happened. The Tallboy bombs that finally did the damage were such an innovative design that the War Office was reticent about purchasing them. It was a good job that Barnes Wallis was able to use his powers of persuasion!

For further information check out the following websites:
http://www.9sqn.co.uk/history/tirpitz-bulkhead/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Allied_attacks_on_the_German_battleship_Tirpitz
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_battleship_Tirpitz
http://www.raf.mod.uk/organisation/617squadron.cfm

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Monthly meetings are on the 1st Thursdays of the Month. 7 pm for 7.15pm start.

Binbrook Village (Queens) Hall – Plenty of Free Parking.

(male as well as female visitors are always welcome unless otherwise stated)

NEXT MEETINGSThursday 6th November 7.15pm

Speaker :- Rev. David Reese

Subject :- A display & talk about his vast collection of Nativity scenes from around the world, from traditional to quirky. Be prepared to be amazed by our highly recommended speaker.

Competitions :- A nativity figure & instead of a single flower, A display of dried leaves. Thursday 4th December 7.15pm

NO SPEAKER OUR CHRISTMAS PARTYMEMBERS ONLY PLUS INVITED GUESTS

October's meeting, was packed with a record breaking number of visitors, extra chairs had to be put out. Jerusalem sounds so much better when sung by a large group. Dr Kate Hewis gave an interesting talk on DNA, pointing out that an unsung lady scientist Rosalind Franklin did most of the preparatory work concerning the structures of DNA. During her presentation she had us doing all sorts of things, bashing strawberries to a pulp, then adding buffer solutions & alcohol to separate out the DNA. Another job was to construct a face using DNA ‘bar codes’ giving us a ‘hands on’ idea of how DNA works in forensic detection. (see result on WI notice board in hall) Yellow was worn by most ladies in recognition of Lincolnshire day. It was very difficult for Dr Kate to decide the winner of the Made in Lincolnshire competition as so many took part, in the end she decided, in 3rd place Norma Smith, a photo her three grandchildren, 2nd Linda Todd, (new member) A pot of home made rhubarb chutney and in 1st place Sue Jezzard, (new member) A large jar of home cured cucumbers.

The Mosaic workshop, was a great success with everybody enjoying themselves, we all managed to produce either trivets, place-mats or coasters to a good decorative standard, so much so that many of us wanted to do it again – I’m on it already, that's on top of organising our VIP trip to Market Rasen Races this November, plus trips to St Andrews Hospice and Grimsby Library for a ‘Find the Ancestors’ event during 2015 – just a taster of what’s in store as extras to the monthly meetings.

Our Roll-a-Penny game will be at Binbrook Christmas fair on December 7th. For more information phone Marina 01472 3995 Visitors £3.50 Members free Raffle 50p Refreshment included.