

**BELGIAN BRANCH NEWSLETTER**

Editeur responsable  
R J Whittingham  
Memlingdreef 5  
3090 Overijse

RAFA Belgian Branch  
Siège Social  
Maison des Ailes  
Rue Montoyer 1 – bte 33  
1000 Brussels

RAFA Belgian Branch Account  
BE58-0014-2061-1779      BIC GEBABEBB

---

**NEWSLETTER NO 111**

**JUL – AUG – SEP 2013**

<i>Page 2</i>	<i>Committee Contacts</i>
<i>Page 3</i>	<i>Chairman's Introduction</i>
<i>Pages 4 to 10</i>	<i>Episode No. 11-1 from 'The Chronicle of a Passer By'</i>
<i>Page 11</i>	<i>In Memoriam – General Baron 'Mike' Donnet</i>
<i>Pages 12-14</i>	<i>Report on Past Events</i>
<i>Pages 15 to 18</i>	<i>Episode No. 11-2 from 'The Chronicle of a Passer By'</i>
<i>Pages 19 to 21</i>	<i>La Cornette - Speeches</i>
<i>Page 22</i>	<i>Remembrance Service in the National Basilica – 28 Sep 13</i>
<i>Page 23</i>	<i>Future Events Calendar</i>
<i>Page 24</i>	<i>Report on the Barry Horton Memorial Golf Tournament</i>



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**  
**Maison des Ailes – Rue Montoyer 1-B 33-1040 Brussels.**  
 Branch No: 0645  
**Patron:** Her Majesty The Queen  
**Honorary Patron:** H.E. Jonathan Brenton British Ambassador  
**Branch Honorary Co-Presidents:**  
 Air Marshal Sir Christopher Harper KBE MA FCMI RAF  
 Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) E Hearn DFC\*

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN	Robert (Dick) Whittingham (Gp Capt Ret'd)
VICE CHAIR	Wg Cdr Ross Mckenzie
HONORARY CHAPLAIN	Father Walter Peeters
SECRETARY	Flt Lt Arlene Walker
TREASURER	David Trembaczowski-Ryder (Wg Cdr Ret'd)
HONORARY WELFARE OFFICER (HWO)	Mrs Ghislaine Walkden
ASSISTANT HWO	Mrs Deborah Whittingham
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Mrs Brigitte Horton
BRANCH WEBMASTER	Bob Jenkins (Wg Cdr Ret'd)
SHAPE RAFA LIAISON OFFICER	Sgt Richard Atha
DEPUTY SECRETARY	Sgt Mark Lawson

*For a quick answer to any query, please contact via email [rafa.belgianbranch@gmail.com](mailto:rafa.belgianbranch@gmail.com) or to the Secretary on 0032 (0) 707.5470, NOT via the Post Box at Rue Montoyer*

From: Group Captain R J Whittingham FRAeS, Royal Air Force (Retired)

Brussels  
26<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Dear Friends,

### **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

In the last Newsletter, I looked forward to a bit of sunshine to lift our spirits. Well, we certainly got that with some really amazing Mediterranean weather which I hope was enjoyed by all. However, despite this, I am sad to have to record the loss of our old friend and colleague General Baron 'Mike' Donnet whose obituary appears on page 11 of this edition. I am very struck when reading past editions of our Newsletter how often General Mike was the one delivering the eulogies for colleagues who had passed away: on many occasions he gave personal remembrances of the departed. His loss is felt greatly and I am sure that everyone will join with me in offering our condolences to La Baronne Jacqueline and the family.

On the Committee front we have had some changes as our Vice Chair Wg Cdr Gill Ward left the RAF and returned to work in England. This is sad news for us because Gill always brought clarity and wisdom to our discussions, but we wish her well in her new job as a school Bursar. The good news is that Wg Cdr Ross Mckenzie has 'volunteered' to take over as Vice Chair – Ross is enormously well-qualified for the task as he has all the right skills, and he is serving in Brussels, is married to a Belgian and is living in Brasschaat north of Antwerp. A warm welcome!

In this edition we have a further fascinating segment of Edward Hearn's 'Chronicle', as well as reports on the many Remembrance events that have taken place during the Summer: I particularly commend to you the speeches given at the event at La Cornette which are printed in full on pages 19 to 21. On the back page there is a report on our Barry Horton Memorial Golf match at DMGC: once again a most successful event which was super fun and raise significant funds for Branch welfare. Very many thanks to all who supported and participated.

Planning for our most significant event for some years, the Remembrance Service in the Air Force Chapel of the National Basilica on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September, is well underway. All members should have received my personal invitation and I am pleased to say that the positive responses are rolling in. Please remember to let us know about your participation by 9<sup>th</sup> September – just in case, there is an extra response form on page 22! I very much look forward to meeting many of you there.

In this electronic age, we are making more and more use of both email and our excellent Branch website <http://rafabelgianbranch.yolasite.com/>. This is very good as it means that we can retain the services of our indispensable webmaster Bob Jenkins, despite the fact that he has now moved to Spain.

Yours most sincerely,



# The Chronicle of a Passer By

By Edward Harty Elliot Hearn

*Editor's Note:*

*This eleventh episode of our Branch Honorary Co-President's 'Chronicle' as transcribed by Gp Capt (Ret'd) Mike Connor, contains extracts from Part 3 Chapter 2 when he was working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from 1953 to 1963. Please see Newsletter 101 for the Contents List.*

## **PART THREE – 1947 – 1993**

### **3 - 2. Arras, former Capital of the Artois, with Missions to Germany, Corsica and Ireland**

On our way to Arras in France with my family to take up my new appointment with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, we passed through London and found all the main roads and byways decorated and festooned ready for the approaching Coronation Ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II. The year before, she had succeeded her father, King George VI, who had died whilst she was in Africa. The sad departure of her father was followed by a period of preparation leading up to the Coronation in Westminster Abbey. Our arrival in London coincided with the final days of that preparation and we were able to catch the exuberant mood of Londoners and the thousands of visitors to the Capital who were there to celebrate this happy event.

At the end of our journey, in Arras, we found that the British community there were also celebrating, aided by the local inhabitants. Within days we were taking part in gatherings and we were left in no doubt that this part of Europe was also determined not to be left out of the festivities.

We were not long in finding a house to rent. It was quaint in every respect. Its white stucco frontage was barely 5 metres wide, but it stretched back as far as 15 metres before stopping at an enclosed courtyard. All the upper floors were on different levels, necessitating small staircases in awkward places. The two floors and basement of the house were situated at the bottom end of a narrow road named the Rue l'Oeillet, ('Carnation Street') and it was adjacent to a pharmaceutical pill factory.

The town of Arras, 175 kilometres north of Paris, carried a long and tortuous history. The XVII<sup>th</sup> century Grand Place, the XVI<sup>th</sup> century Town Hall and the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century Cathedral had been carefully restored and maintained. In the fifteenth century, three important Treaties were signed here and it was Louis XIII who chased the Spaniards out in 1640.

In this very bourgeois French town of some 55,000 inhabitants, an astounding revelation was that there was a cricket team - amongst the British expatriates of course. The French preferred to think of the term (criquet) as an orthopterous jumping insect. One could not try to explain in their language that it was a game played in the open air, where each side of eleven members tried to eliminate the opposing players by 'bowling', 'running out', 'stumping', 'leg before wicket' or 'catching' them out. I had no difficulty in joining the club because players of some or no experience were welcome.

After playing in the Arras team for almost two years, and whilst Richard, our second son, was arriving in a local clinic, I reached double figures for the first time. My mother-in-law, sitting beside Paule's bed in the clinic, must have had her view of British eccentricity confirmed during that bright sunny June afternoon.

At the most convenient time after the arrival of Richard and in an attempt to educate Paule in the delights of the game of cricket, I brought Paule and Michael along to watch their first game and their introduction to the intricacies of the sport. It was a friendly match and the general atmosphere came close to that of an English cricket scene with its attendant spectators and tea on the grass. Unfortunately, the pitch was not as smooth as one might expect, its long preparation still leaving holes and lumps on the surface. I went in to bat way down the list and the family watched with great expectation from the periphery of the field. The very first ball bowled to me found a most inconvenient spot – swung off and hit me over the eye, drawing blood. Staggering off the ground watched by my shocked family, I was taken to a local doctor who promptly punched and stapled four stitches in the cut over my eyebrow. Paule's reaction was quick and definite – "Is that cricket?".

We rapidly became accustomed to our new environment and a routine call was usually made at Chez Paul in the Rue Gambetta to collect our English newspapers. One Saturday morning, I had bought my paper and was sitting having an apéritif in the crowded bar, when I walked Guy Mollet. It was 1958, the year of the French general elections. Guy Mollet, then in his 58<sup>th</sup> year, a long time Mayor of Arras, General Secretary of the Socialist Party and a Member of Parliament for many years, was conducting his campaign for re-election. He made a tour of the café, shaking hands with all the customers, then ordered drinks for everyone. He searched for a seat and found the only vacant one, which happened to be opposite me. I was the only foreigner in the café, which he quickly observed from the paper I was reading, but it did not seem to bother him for he soon struck up a conversation in perfect English (before becoming a politician, he taught English). He lived in a modest apartment to the right of the Town Hall in the Petite Place in the centre of town and had often been seen in the early morning walking between the Town Hall and his apartment wearing only bedroom slippers on his feet. Although his potential votes were all around him, he concentrated on our conversation, which was very general as I was of no interest to him as a voter. I found him to be a very interesting

man, highly intelligent and very courteous. On leaving, he shook my hand, waved to the customers in the bar and then, presumably, continued on his electoral foray.

He was re-elected and later became Prime Minister under General de Gaulle and showed his courage in the Algiers and Suez crises when he suffered criticism from which he never really recovered. I met him once again at an official Commission dinner. He was quieter and more introspective, but still retained his certain charm.

Operating out of the Commission's European Headquarters in the Place Marechal Foch opposite the railway station, my task was concerned with the construction of new memorials and major repairs and construction work to existing edifices. The Commission's policy, instituted by Royal Charter in 1917, was that each of the dead struck down in battle be commemorated individually and permanently near to the place where they had fallen. That policy had remained unaltered for almost three quarters of a century.

Of the 23,000 memorials and burial grounds managed by the Commission, there are over 2,900 in France. Worldwide, inscriptions on graves and memorials total 1,700,000 names and the annual budget to provide this care is borne by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand, and South Africa.

The nature of the task is not perhaps fully appreciated, but those relatives, members of the younger generation and visitors who have travelled and seen for themselves the very high standard of maintenance, the quality of the buildings and, above all, the work of the faithful gardeners in the creation and tending of these havens of peace, know the truth and the value of the Commission's work. Many of those gardeners spend the whole of their working lives tending and caring for the graves and memorials of the thousand upon thousand of men who fell in battle, and they know the names of their plants and trees by heart (*Prunus Padus*, *Fagus Sylvatica*, *Aesculus Hippeecastanum*, etc).

My mission was principally concerned with the construction of the new memorial at Dunkirk, which was designed by an eccentric but very traditional architect by the name of Hepworth, and the renovation of the massive 150 feet high Lutyens memorial at Thiepval in the flat lands of the Somme. However, it also meant extensive travel throughout Europe for the inspection and programming of other works of a similar nature.

One of the first of those inspections was to be in Germany. I set off with a colleague and we were soon on the motorway to Munich. Even though many years had gone by since the signing of the Armistice, a stop at Essen for lunch was an uneasy experience. The number of maimed people with either lost legs or arms was horrifying. It took a considerable time for us to be served at the luncheon table, our turn being continually missed and we waited for over an hour before a reluctant waiter came to take our order. We ate in silence before leaving to continue our

journey in our official car. Having covered a considerable distance, we had to stop on the motorway to fill the tank with petrol. While the petrol poured into the car, we were surprised when a large head and arms thrust their way through the front side window. We did not know what to expect.

“You English?” - the question came with absolute directness. We nervously agreed and wondered what would happen next. But the man stuck his hand through the window obviously requesting that it be shaken. In exactly correct English he explained, “Me prisoner of war on a farm in Cornwall for four years! Marvellous time!”

Feeling much better, we went on our way and made a further stop at Baden-Baden, the German health resort with natural mineral springs. We found a small hotel and booked in for the night. At eight in the evening we decided to stretch our legs and wander through the town. Every house must have had double-glazing because it was so silent and our footsteps seemed to reverberate through the whole length of the streets.

We came upon a building with a red-canopied entrance. A liveried flunkey stood on guard at the bottom of the carpeted steps. As it was fairly early in the evening and we had discovered a casino, we decided to go in and try our luck. We slipped by the flunkey to be met at the top of the steps by a stiff-necked official in full evening dress. He asked for our passports. Having committed ourselves on crossing the threshold, with some hesitation we handed over our passports. They were examined by reference to a large red tome of a book, then handed back to us with a signal allowing us to enter.

We made for the bar, that being the place where we thought we would be able to pick up some information. Neither I, nor my companion could speak a word of German so we tentatively tried to order a drink in French. The tousle headed, bow-tied barman gave us a soulful stare and asked for our order in a broad Irish accent. With his strange accent he indulged in his freedom to talk, knowing that all those people around us would not understand the brogue. Without demure, he accepted the whisky we offered him and warned us against playing at the tables in the adjoining room.

Both my friend and I were very hesitant about gambling. Following my proposal, we agreed to maximise our losses to £5 and that we would stick to playing the number 7 or various combinations of that number. We each bought chips to the value of £5 and found places at the nearest green clothed table. At the head of the table was the unsmiling croupier in a smoking jacket and black tie. In front of him was the roulette wheel, the coloured numbers around the edge awaiting the toss of the silver ball.

By mutual agreement and to ensure sparing disbursement of our cash, we decided to play alternately and, when the ball was dropped in and the wheel spun, it

was my chip that was placed firmly in square 7. The ball settled in the slot of the wheel and we had won our first game. We continued to play choosing 4 + 3, 2 + 5, 1 + 6 and finally the number 14. One of our numbers came up each time. We were confronted with piles of chips stacked before our eyes, but a nudge from my friend warned me that something was wrong. There was a glacial silence around the table, each participant in the game plus the croupier looking down, evidently bent on ostracising us.

After the next turn of the wheel, which we lost, I noticed that the winner pushed some of his winning chips back towards the croupier. So that was the problem – we had not been aware of the practice of tipping the croupier (the labour queue in India with the foreman at its end flashed through my mind). We got up from the table and at the same time I quickly worked out 10% in my head and handed that value in chips to the croupier. This brought forth half smiles and relaxation around the table and a muttered acknowledgement from the croupier.

We went back to the bar, agreed that it was too early to go back to the hotel, and returned to the gaming table. Our combination lasted well, the pile of chips increased, the croupier gathered his share of our earnings and we ended our very profitable evening by tip toeing back to the hotel in the dark and silence of the night.

Our meeting in Munich had been pre-arranged. We knew the name of the engineer, but were unprepared when our interlocutor turned out to be a retired German engineer officer who had no fingers to his hands (or, I believed, toes to his feet because he had difficulty in walking). In the short time we were with him, we found out that he had served on the Russian front and frostbite was the cause of his disability. He astounded us with his knowledge of English literature and, in conversation, included a phrase from Shakespeare's, 'The Comedy of Errors':

"I to the world am like a drop of water  
that in the ocean seeks another drop  
Who, failing there to find his fellow forth,  
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:  
So I, to find a mother and a brother,  
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself".

Completing our visit to Munich, where we found the people less dour than their northern compatriots, (the gaiety in the beer gardens) we returned to Arras by the same route, having learned a lot on the way.

We arrived in time to be present at the Christmas party held for the children in a hired hall in Arras. It was an important event and our two young sons were amongst those in the balloon-decorated room. Amid the joy of the children, news was brought to me of the death of my father. I remember sitting down on a nearby staircase, away from the packed assembly. He had been in retirement for only two years. After his hard seafaring life, I don't think he ever came to terms with the long

wished for solace of his garden and roses. At the beginning of his retirement, he took to visiting his club every mid-day, where he met another ex-seagoing friend of long standing. The day arrived when his lunch hour partner did not appear and my father learned that he would never visit the club again as he had passed away very suddenly. My father stopped going to the club, his final contact with the sea had ceased and he himself faded away from a heart that had failed him. I suppose that it was from him that we followed his habit of always being punctual and his own self-discipline seemed to be that which we should follow. He had served for half a century with the same maritime company, had never been absent through sickness and had rarely taken a holiday. He was buried in the cemetery at Hawkinge, close to the Battle of Britain airfield, quietly, as he had lived.

In Arras, we moved again to an apartment on the Boulevard Faidherbe. It was on the ground floor at an angle with a forecourt, had three bedrooms and an extensive basement that was used for hobbies and out-of-office hours work. Michael was at St Joseph's College and Richard was about to join him. Other Commission staff occupied a building in the Place Victor Hugo, where the General, the Director, occupied the first floor. In the flats above, small and large families lived together with their pets including lively productive hamsters! These friendly rodents wandered at will sometimes causing consternation to the General when they arrived at his gin and tonic cocktail hour.

I was called upon to make a trip to Corsica to attend a pre-arranged meeting. I travelled down to Marseilles via Paris during the day and boarded the SS Napoleon, destination Ajaccio. The ship left the port in the early evening in the glowing sunset that had settled over Marseilles. On board the ship, sitting on stools at the bar, were Daniel Gelin and Michel Auclair, two very well-known French actors. Daniel Gelin had survived a heart attack a few weeks beforehand, but on this voyage he was surrounded by and was being looked after with great attentiveness by six beautiful actresses. They were all on their way to Ajaccio for a stage performance.

Also on board this modern ship were a large number of farmers with their livestock – chickens, rabbits and piglets. These, together with the abundance of fruit and vegetables and the cacophonous noise coming from the animals created an atmosphere of farming at sea. Wandering almost furtively amongst this strange collection of passengers and merchandise were several black-bereted youths with striped shirts and jack knives stuck in the tops of their trousers.

Arriving at Ajaccio in the early hours of the morning, I was able to catch the first available train on the single line to Bastia. The train trundled along at a lazy pace, the 153 kilometres taking four hours because we stopped at every station, where most of the passengers got off and had a quick succession of drinks before hopping back on to the train. A good proportion of those passengers had been on our ship transporting their livestock and produce which they brought into the railway cafés whilst drinking – no doubt for security reasons.

Bastia was a cigarette-manufacturing centre, had a sizeable port and thrived on its commerce with the many tourists. My meeting did not take too long so I was able to catch the return ship to France from Bastia, thus missing the return journey to Ajaccio by rail with all the excitement that that might have entailed.

My short stay in the Mediterranean island of Corsica was not long enough to appreciate the countryside, the people or the food. I left with the taste of earth in my mouth due, no doubt, to the change from cooking in butter to cooking in oil. I have many friends who adore this island and one who lives there, which proves that one's first impression might be unjust.

It was a pity that I had no chance to get to know the Corsicans. The only memory I had was of the animals and livestock on the ship and Daniel Gelin and the beautiful girls at the bar. I was also left wondering whether the presence of those ladies was the best way of dealing with the recent heart attack?

The renovation of the Somme Memorial was completed. It had taken four years, some of the work being quite hazardous with only rudimentary scaffolding being used at the highest reaches.



There was hardly any scaffolding at all on top of the 150 feet edifice. Above that, a 20 feet flagstaff stretched upwards to the sky, surrounded by planks and ladders, but nothing else to hang on to. The gold leaf ornamentation on top of the flagstaff had to be examined. Getting up there was not difficult, but once there I was transfixed, not daring to look down and incapable of movement. The Clerk of Works, seeing me in trouble, climbed up and helped me down. Flying in an aircraft at 25,000 feet was not the same as looking down on fixed objects from a height of 170 feet!

*Continued on Page 15*

## IN MEMORIAM

### General Baron 'Mike' Donnet CVO DFC,

Lieutenant General Donnet born of Belgian parents in Richmond, England on 1 April 1917 (exactly one year before the RAF was 'born') passed away on 31 July 2013 at the age of 96. He served during World War II in first the Belgian Air Force and then the RAF. He shot down four enemy aircraft confirmed, and achieved the RAF rank of Wing Commander. After the war, he returned to the Belgian Air Force, and held several important commands.



Before retiring in 1975 he was appointed as the Belgian Representative on the NATO Military Committee. He joined the Belgian Branch of RAFA in 1967, and served as the Branch Chairman from 1975 to 1979 and was made Branch Honorary Life Vice-President in 1985.

General Donnet trained as a pilot with the Belgian Air Force and, after the German invasion of the Low Countries on 10 May 1940, he flew reconnaissance missions in support of the retreating armies until he was captured on 1 June following the capitulation of Belgium. He later escaped from German-occupied Belgium by working with a colleague to repair an old Bi-Plane found in a German depot and flying it to England. He was commissioned in the RAFVR and trained on Spitfires before joining No 64 Squadron in November 1941. After completing 100 operations, many over enemy territory at low level, attacking trains, armed ships and gun posts, he was awarded the DFC for his 'great courage and devotion to duty'. After a period as a fighter instructor, he was given command of 350 Squadron, the first all-Belgian squadron to be formed in the RAF. He later commanded the Hawkinge and Bentwaters Wings before completing his final 375<sup>th</sup> operational sortie on 6 May 1945. The Branch was strongly represented at his funeral: the Branch Standard was paraded and the RAF Flag was draped on his coffin. Léon Rubin gave a eulogy highlighting his loyal and true support to the RAFA Belgian Branch for over 45 years, and the Branch offered its heartfelt sympathy to Jacqueline and the family.

*Photo courtesy André Bar*

## REPORTS ON PAST EVENTS

### Remembrance at Eppe Sauvage - 20 April 2013

Eppe Sauvage is a very small town just inside France over the border of Belgium, south of Mons. In a double tragedy in April 1943 the RAF lost a Lancaster shortly followed by a Halifax with a combined loss of 8 RAF lives. Some crew survived and escaped and some became POWs. The townsfolk have shown their respects year on year ever since.



To commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event on 20 April 2013, two Welsh families, representing their long lost relations, and most of the village, were present for a heartfelt ceremony led by the Madam Mayor. The village school was present with the young boys and girls reciting poems and memories handed down through the years, and a gathering of Belgian and French flag bearers. The RAF Representative was Wg Cdr Mckenzie (now our new Vice Chair), who laid a wreath. Wg Cdr Mckenzie has written a full report of this event – please see the Branch website <http://rafabelgianbranch.yolasite.com/>

### Remembrance Service for Lancaster LL810 at Rebecq – 29 May 2013



On the night of 27 May 1944, Lancaster LL 810 of 550 Sqn with a crew of 7 (4 RAF and 3 RCAF) took off from North Killingholme to bomb the railway marshalling yards at Aachen. After completing the mission, the aircraft was shot down near Rebecq and 5 of the 7 crew were killed and are buried in the Commonwealth War Grave at the Brussels Town Cemetery at Evere. Of the 2 who survived one was captured and the other was helped to escape by the local Belgian resistance. On 29 May 2013 a Ceremony of Solemn Tribute was held at Rebecq and attended by the British Ambassador to Belgium Jonathan Brenton, members of the families of the crew and representatives from the 550 Sqn Association and the Royal British Legion: the Branch Standard was paraded by Jean-Pierre Blanckaert and the Chairman laid a wreath. The Ceremony was organised by the Memorial Association of Rebecq <http://www.rebecq-memorial.eu>

## Royal British Legion Commemoration, Brussels Cemetery, Evere 29 June 2013



The Brussels Branch of the Royal British Legion held an Act of Remembrance at the Brussels Town Cemetery in Evere on 29 June 2013. The ceremony was in 2 parts: the first at the magnificent Victorian memorial dedicated to the 22,000 Officers and Soldiers of the British Empire who gave their lives in the Battle of Waterloo and were buried in Belgian soil, and the second at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery where Katrina Johnson the Deputy British Ambassador to Belgium gave an address and where wreaths were laid (above left) on behalf of the RBL, the RAF and the RAFA. The Branch Standard was paraded by Jean-Pierre Blanckaert (above right).

## Remembrance Service for Lancaster DS690 at La Cornette and Les Hayons – 13 July 2013

On the night of Thursday 13 July 1943, Lancaster DS 690 of 115 Sqn with a crew of 7 took off from the grass strip at East Wrentham as part of a 356 aircraft raid on industrial targets at Aachen. Immediately after releasing their bombs on the target, the aircraft was hit by cannon fire from a Ju88 and sustained damage that forced them to take an independent southerly route home. Over Belgium the aircraft was attacked again, this time fatally, by a night-fighter, and the aircraft crashed just outside the village of La Cornette. One crewman managed to bale out and was taken prisoner: the others perished in the crash and are buried in the cemetery at Les Hayons. The monument (right) was erected by villagers at the crash site to mark the tragic event.





To mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the crash, the History Circle of Bouillon organised a commemorative ceremony at the crash site and in the cemetery at Les Hayons. The event was supported by relatives of the crew, serving RAF members of 115 (R) Sqn, 115 Sqn Association, and local dignitaries. At the crash site, the event organiser Pierre Michiels and Ceanan Baird, the son of the Pilot, gave very moving accounts of life in Bomber Command in 1943. The Branch was strongly represented by 3 committee members and the Branch Standard Bearer. The RAFA Liaison Officer at SHAPE (Sgt Richard Atha), supported by Corporals Matt Ridsdale and Clive Keen (see left) added a further, very welcome touch of light blue.

RAFA wreaths were laid at the Crash Site by the Chairman and at the cemetery by the RAFALO. For further historical information go to [www.lancaster-ds690.com](http://www.lancaster-ds690.com).

### **Remembrance Service for Halifax MZ829 at Jalhay Tigelot 18 August 2013**

At 1600 hrs on the 2 Nov 1944, a Halifax bomber MZ 829 KN-X of 77 Sqn took off from RAF Full Sutton in Yorkshire on a mission to Düsseldorf in Germany. The crew of 7 were all members of the Royal Canadian Air Force apart from the Flight Engineer, Sergeant Edward Payne from Scotland: their average age was 22. On the return over Belgium, the aircraft crashed at Le Tigelot near Jalhay in the Ardennes, and there were no survivors. The crew are buried at the War Cemetery at Hotton. In 1950, the mother of the navigator (Harold Le Noury) came to reflect by her son's grave and then visited the crash site where she met Mr Albert Adans who had been one of the first persons at the scene of the tragedy.



Mrs Le Noury expressed her wish for a permanent memorial to be erected at the crash site. The following year on 21 Sep, the memorial was inaugurated by Mr Adans in the presence of the Canadian Ambassador in Brussels, to 'honour the airmen who gave their lives for our freedom'. Ever since, the society of the 'Memorial Canadien du Tigelot' has organised annually an event consisting of a religious service celebrated in Jalhay church, a wreath laying ceremony at the crash site and a memorial luncheon. This year's 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the memorial was attended by relatives of the crew and RCAF personnel as well as representatives of the RAFA Belgian Branch, the Royal British Legion and the Vieilles Tiges de Belgique. For more details, contact the Memorial President, Léon Boulet ([leon.boulet@skynet.be](mailto:leon.boulet@skynet.be))

*Episode No. 11-2 from 'The Chronicle of a Passer By'*

The contract had been placed with a firm called Reynes, owned and run by a poly-technician from Paris. He had built up the firm from scratch and employed a work force of some 500 men. The firm specialised in renovation work and in the construction of churches and religious buildings. One of these buildings was the Basilica at Lisieux in the Calvados region of Normandy. It took 33 years to build and, on completion in 1952, Monsieur Reynes laid on a banquet for all his work people – masons, bricklayers, carpenters, artisans and labourers. At the time it was rumoured that the greatest contribution to the financing of the structure came from China.

Monsieur Reynes died a few years after the renovation of the Memorial at Thiepval and, due to the division of his heritage, his firm was broken up with the dispersal of all his craftsmen.

The Engineer in Charge of the Somme Memorial renovation work on behalf of Reynes was a Monsieur Gillaume, who lived with his wife at Samer, a village near Hardelot, between Le Touquet and Boulogne. They had no children. He was a radio enthusiast and I learnt that throughout the whole of the Second World War he operated a secret radio in his attic, mainly used to help Jewish parents and their children. He and his wife were not Jewish, but had become obsessed with the sorry plight of these people.

The construction of the new Dunkirk Memorial was completed during the same year as the work to the Memorial at Thiepval.

The inauguration ceremony at Dunkirk took place on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1957 in the presence of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and the Duke of Gloucester. They had arrived for the ceremony in HMS Chieftain and the Grenadier Guards and the French 33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment saluted the visitors on their descent from the ship to the sounds of the bagpipes of the Scots Guards.



Wing Commander P.F. Thompson flew a solitary Hurricane fighter plane over the Memorial. The Royal Navy fired a salute and the Merchant Marine sounded all their sirens in the harbour as wreaths were laid on the base of the Cross of Remembrance. The large Assembly led by the choir of the Welsh Guards sang

'Sine Nomine' by Vaughan Williams and Edward Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance'. Our Director of Works from the UK, General Stedman (known as 'Elephant Bill' by his troops in Burma) was there, as was I, dressed in a morning suit and acting under instruction as an usher. It was a very warm afternoon with temperatures in the thirties Celsius.

After the ceremony, the members of the Royal family embarked on HMS Chieftain and, on the way out of the harbour, the Queen Mother threw a wreath into the sea in memory of those lost in those waters.

We departed and crossed the border into Belgium where we were invited to quench our rabid thirst by the Station Commander of the Belgian Air Force Base at Coxyde (Koksijde), near the Belgian coast.

At a convenient time we decided to visit Cissie in her holiday home that was only about 17 miles from her permanent Convent of Mercy at Loughrea in County Galway. Her chosen monastic name was Sister Madeleine. I had not seen her for over 25 years – Paule, Michael and Richard had never met her. It was the summer of 1960. We drove from Arras to Calais, stopped on the other side of the Channel to make our usual call at Folkestone, then travelled up to Fishguard and boarded the evening ferryboat to Dun Laoghaire, the Dublin port. Disembarking about midnight, we were confronted with a large sign at the Customs House warning us about a smallpox scare. This was not a very welcoming omen.

Unfortunately, we had not made a hotel reservation. We spent a good hour circling the town looking for accommodation. We were not helped at all by the misguided directions given by slightly inebriated citizens. Unknowingly, we had arrived in the middle of the Dublin Horse week – a sacred national event.

Moving on to the outskirts of the city, I spotted a light in a remote lodge on the top of a hill, drove towards it and saw a hotel sign above the entrance door. Behind the reception desk was a beautiful copper-haired Irish colleen. She looked up as I approached and listened with a smile as I explained that we had been travelling for over 16 hours, that we had two young boys in the car and were desperate for accommodation.

"I'm very sorry" she said in a strong Irish brogue, "All our rooms are taken because of the Horse Week." I probably looked very crestfallen. After pausing for a moment she continued, "What I will do if it will help, is to put you up in the lounge, but you must promise me that you will be up and dressed before the guests come down for breakfast."

I heaved a sigh of relief and she brightened her smile and we both went to the car to announce the good news. The four of us settled on the coloured chintz-covered settees in the lounge and our Irish saviour brought us hot tea and freshly made sandwiches.

After sleeping well, we kept our promise and rose early, washed, dressed and went in to join the other guests for breakfast in the dining room. We had orange juice, tea and coffee, cereals, eggs, bacon, sausages and tomatoes followed by toast and marmalade. On leaving, I went to the reception desk to pay my bill. The Irish colleen was still there, on duty behind her desk. She gave me a cute smile before answering my request.

“Sorry Sir”, she said, “I can’t give you a bill. You haven’t really stayed here have you!” Despite my pleading, she refused to accept any payment for our overnight stay and copious quantities of food.

Heartened by this surprising good will, we set off for Galway. This time we had no difficulty in finding rooms in a small guesthouse. After dining on fresh salmon and lobsters, we stayed the night and set off the next morning for Lochrea.

We were greeted with emotion by sister Cissie when we arrived at the detached country house which the sisters used as a holiday home. Gathered around her were three other sisters who were sharing the house and sharing the welcome given to us.

Lunch was served by Cissie and her companions, a lunch that had been carefully cooked by them before our arrival. They even produced a bottle of wine for Paule and I, whilst the boys were served with liberal quantities of orange juice. They did not sit down and eat with us but hovered around with the plates and dishes and chattered away thoroughly enjoying the company of their visitors from over the seas. After lunch, we all walked down to the river in the valley, took off our shoes and socks and the nuns lifted their robes and we paddled in the clear flowing stream.

Before departing, we returned to the country house where the nuns produced guitars. Michael and Richard found to their delight that the nuns were well up to date with the very latest pop music. This happy day ended when we piled into the car and drove off with four happy nuns running and waving goodbye, their robes billowing in the wind. We returned to our small guesthouse in Galway very content with the day spent with the ‘religiuses’.

The next day we commenced the return journey and stopped again in Dublin. We strolled along by the banks of the River Liffey, visited the market where there seemed to be as much fruit and vegetables on the ground as on the stalls, inspected the outside of Trinity College and the inside of the Cathedral where we saw a portrait of President Kennedy of America over one of the side altars.

We stayed for two more days in our guesthouse eating enormous beefsteaks and giant helpings of fresh salmon. On booking out, Paule saw some Worcester jugs behind the cashier’s desk. She had been collecting them, but could not find what she wanted in England or France. She made a remark that must have been overheard by the cashier. Surprisingly, the cashier reached behind, took one of the

jugs off the shelf and thrust it into Paule's hands. Once again, complete strangers that we were, received open knowledge of Irish generosity. That Worcester jug has reminded us over the years of our Irish visit with its hospitality, openness and liberty of expression.

We returned across the three lands and two seas to our home in the Boulevard Faidherbe in Arras well content with seeing Cissie and her lively nuns and with the assurance that she too was happy in her life in the closed Order.

In Arras, I knew that my work with the Commission was nearing its end with the completion of a major new construction and a major renovation. Although I had a permanent appointment, I did not believe that I could settle properly to the routine of day-to-day maintenance even though my colleagues had the courage and patience to do so.

During my travels I had met the partner of a private consultants' practice in Harley Street, London, who was involved in the construction of a toy factory in Calais. In the correspondence that followed that meeting it was suggested that he and his partner were anticipating the movement towards Continental Europe. Would I be interested in opening an office in one of the European capitals? We had further discussions and possibilities in Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam were examined. This examination resulted in the selection of Brussels, it being considered that it was more central in the general European area and because private and office accommodation were more easily available and cheaper.

With the choice of the capital, my decision was made and I agreed to open and run an office in Brussels as soon as I could agree a date to be released from the Commission.

This decision was not easily reached. The Commission looked after its staff well; employees had the cover of the Civil Service umbrella that ensured permanent employment; I understood and respected my colleagues for their devotion to the tasks they performed but, I suppose, I was drawn in the direction of the new adventure and its attached risks.

The fortunes and hazards of the past flowed through my mind whilst contemplating this move. Perhaps by doggedness and some good luck I felt that, so far, I had not failed in any project (apart from my efforts at painting!). I had never experienced the tragedy of unemployment. Into this I weighed the responsibility attached to my family. On balance, I knew the direction in which I should go.

So it was that, in June 1963, I set off alone for Brussels with a capital of £2,000 to set up a new office, search for living accommodation and hoping with some anxiety that I would find my first client.

*To be Continued*

## **SPEECH BY PIERRE MICHIELS AT LA CORNETTE ON 13 JULY 2013<sup>1</sup>**

We are in the exact spot where an RAF bomber was shot down 70 years ago today. Since then, the villagers have always kept in their hearts the memory of the sacrifice of these young men, ensuring that they were given Christian burial in the cemetery at Les Hayons and remembered with due honour.

In the Autumn of 1944, at the end of the German occupation, the villagers placed a wooden cross on this site, remembering the sacrifice of the British airmen. The cross was regularly renewed, and inserted into a masonry base, and then, in 1993, at the initiative of volunteers, the massive concrete cross we see today was erected. The theme for this commemoration is to unveil a commemorative plaque demonstrating how the memory of the tragic night in July 1943 is constantly renewed and kept alive.

But let us go back into the past:

In 1943 in Europe, although Soviet troops were also providing fierce resistance, it was only England, with the limited resources at its disposal, that still opposed the Nazis. Of course, things began to change in North Africa, but for more than two years, it was only the roar of the engines of the British bombers, night after night, that showed the populations of occupied Europe that someone, somewhere, was still resisting. The crews of British bombers paid a heavy price for this fight because half of them would be lost during the conflict: more than 55,000 men in all.

Here, where you are standing, exactly 70 years ago today, it was hell. Everything was burning. At 2:10 on the night of July 13 to 14, 1943, a heavy bomber crashed with six RAF airmen on board. The seventh member of the crew had time to parachute over Saint-Médard. 4 engines, 30 meters wide, 20 tons of metal rained down on the Ardennes ground after a 2 hour flight returning from a mission to bomb the industrial area at Aix-La-Chapelle. The Lancaster was brand new. It was its first flight with on board a seasoned crew with airmen who had each completed between 15 and 45 missions. A crew who knew that they had at that time only a 1 in 6 chance of being alive after 3 months.

Damaged over the target, the bomber was separated from the main flow of about 370 aircraft and was flying westwards towards home, alone and isolated some 60 km south of the main formation. Detected by the German radar station at Menuchenet-Mogimont, the Lancaster was successfully intercepted by a night fighter over the forest of Anlier, and the heavy bomber was seen by many witnesses as it flew in flames low over the town of Bertrix. Helpless and totally on fire, the bomber shaved the roofs of Fays-les-Veneurs before crashing a few hundred meters from the hamlet of La Cornette, here at this exact point, as marked by the monumental cross.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Report on pages 13 and 14. This text translated from the French.

## **SPEECH BY CEANAN BAIRD (SON OF THE PILOT OF DS690) AT LA CORNETTE ON 13 JULY 2013<sup>2</sup>**

Mr Mayor, members of the Royal Air Force and Royal Air Forces Association, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In 1942 Sir Arthur Harris, Marshal of the Royal Air Force and Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, broadcast to the British people: "The Nazis entered this war with the illusion that they could bomb the whole world and that nobody would bomb them..... they have sown the wind and now they will reap the whirlwind." It was powerful imagery from the Old Testament.

The task of Bomber Command was to fly over the enemy navy, penetrate their air defences, attack their centers of production, transport and communication taking the war directly into the enemy's homeland.

They flew at night. Operations could last 9 hours. 500 to 1,000 bombers were sent at the same time stacked in three horizontal layers. Formation flying without navigation lights required great precision to avoid mid-air collisions. There was no heating. The temperature inside the aircraft fell to less than twenty-nine degrees. Fatigue and fear were their constant companions.

Using radar, anti-aircraft Flak batteries were ready for them. Enemy night-fighters were an additional hazard, equipped with four cannons and two machine guns. The Lancasters had no fighter escort. It was like a clay pigeon shoot.

Extreme measures were sometimes necessary to avoid detection. In April 1943 there is an entry in my father's service logbook: "Crossed Denmark at zero altitude and hit a tree on the way back."

When 'coned' by multiple searchlights, the interior of the plane was filled with a blinding light, so bright that the pilot was unable to read the instruments. It preceded heavy, intense and accurate artillery fire concentrated on a single aircraft.

Evasive action when caught by the searchlights was known as the "corkscrew" and required heavy aircraft to be put in a violent spiral dive at 300 mph descending to 1,000 feet. In this manoeuvre, men and equipment were tossed about like peas in a drum. In one case, the fuselage of a Lancaster was so twisted that the plane never flew again. During an attack on Dortmund, DS690 was caught and held by 40 searchlights for 7 minutes.

Searchlights and flak intensified as they neared the target. On the final bombing run they were on fixed courses and were like sitting ducks. These minutes were almost suicidal. Crews could only watch helplessly as their friends in nearby aircraft caught

---

<sup>2</sup> *Translated from the French*

fire, exploded or were raked by enemy gunfire. The crews had only a one in five chance of surviving.

Today we understand that courage is an irreplaceable quality that everyone possesses in varying degrees. But in 1943 the men who were removed from operational duties for medical or 'lack of moral fibre' (LMF) reasons were treated harshly, court-martialled and punished, whatever the psychiatrists said.

55,573 young men from Bomber Command were killed and 9,784 were made prisoners of war. 115 Squadron itself suffered the highest attrition-rate of all. In fact, from start to mid-May 1943 they had little chance of surviving more than 14 missions. The RAF was composed only of volunteers, mainly aged 17-27 years.

Concerning the contribution of the Lancaster Sir Arthur Harris said:

"The Lancaster took the major part in winning the war with its attacks on Germany. It forced the Germans to retrieve from their armies half their sorely-needed anti-tank guns for use as anti-aircraft guns and over a million soldiers who would otherwise have been serving in the field. Above all, the Lancaster helped to win the war by taking the major part in forcing Germany to concentrate on building and using fighters to defend the Fatherland, thus depriving their armies of essential air and especially bomber support. "

Concerning the young volunteers in Bomber Command, he said:

"There are no words with which I can do justice to the crews who fought under my orders. There is no equivalent in the war of such courage and determination against danger over such a prolonged period of combat: danger was so great that only one in three men could expect to survive thirty operations. "

You have adopted DS690 as "Your Lancaster," as witnessed by the memorial here. For us, this is a unique moment to share, and I want to thank the Mayor and all of you for your warm welcome.

Particular mention should be addressed to Pierre Michiels and his family, who have made such efforts to locate the descendants of the original crews, as well as for their diligence in building their impressive website of the DS690.

The Bomber Command Memorial in London was erected last year. It, too, was funded by private donations, the most sincere form of gratitude. It was not built to the glory of victory, but in a spirit of recognition of combatants on both sides, and the futility of war.

Max Hastings, renowned journalist and historian, said:

"I am grateful that my generation has been spared the need to discover whether we could match the impossible sacrifices that they made."

## REMEMBRANCE SERVICE - NATIONAL BASILICA, KOEKELBERG 28 SEP 13

September 2013 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of the stained-glass windows in the Air Force Chapel in the National Basilica. As per the back page of Newsletter 110, the Branch is sponsoring a special Remembrance Service in the Air Force Chapel on Saturday 28 Sep 13. In addition to personally inviting all Branch Members, the Chairman has sent invitations all known surviving Belgian RAF veterans from World War II as well as to the widows of those now passed away. Attendance will be led by the Belgian Chief of Defence General Van Caelenberge and our Honorary Co-President Air Marshal Sir Christopher Harper.

The Service will be supported by the Musique Royale de la Force Aérienne Belge and a new memorial plaque will be blessed.

The Remembrance Service starts at 11:00 hrs, so all participants are asked to be seated by 10:50. Dress: uniform/ blazer/lounge suit with medals. Lunch in the Basilica Restaurant will follow the Service at circa 12:30: space for the lunch is limited, so please make an early booking in accordance with the response form.

This is a very rare and special occasion to demonstrate the values and strength of the broader Air Force 'family' community and, in accordance with our Association's principles, to deepen our friendship so that we may provide help and support to those who need it. If you have not already done so, please now complete the form below and return it to me at [rafa.belgianbranch@gmail.com](mailto:rafa.belgianbranch@gmail.com) or R J Whittingham, Memlingdreef 5, 3090 Overijse by 9 Sep 13.

-----

NAME:\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Many thanks for your kind invitation: I plan to attend the Remembrance Service in the National Basilica on 28 Sep 13.

\*I would like the following person to accompany me:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*I regret that I cannot attend the Service personally, but I would like the following to attend as my representative:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*I/We would like to attend the lunch<sup>+</sup> and have paid 25 € per head (total \_\_\_\_\_ €) to the RAFA Belgian Branch Account BE58-0014-2061-1779 BIC GEBABEBB, or\* I will pay cash on the day.

NB: please include message – for Basilica Lunch for (*add name(s)*)

<sup>+</sup> (*Apéritif, Entrée, Plat, Dessert plus coffee and 2 glasses of wine*)

\* *Delete/complete as appropriate*

## **FUTURE EVENTS CALENDAR**

**28 Aug 13** - Modave - commemoration in memory of the 70th anniversary of the crash of Halifax JD371 KN-O in Survillers on 28 August 1943. The Chairman, committee members and the Branch Standard Bearer will attend. For further details, see <http://www.rememberjd371.be/>

**28 Sep 13 - Belgian Branch Remembrance Service in the Air Force Chapel in the National Basilica, Koekelberg.** All members urged to attend. Please see page 22 for administrative details.

**4 – 6 Oct 13- European Area Autumn Conference in Guernsey.** Chairman and 2 other Committee members will attend – other members are very welcome to participate. Those interested should contact the Chairman.

**12 Oct 13 - Remembrance Day at the Parc du Cinquenaire Belgian Air Force memorial.** On the occasion of the anniversary of the creation of the Belgian Air Force (15 Oct 1946), Belgian Armed Forces ceremony in memory of those who gave their lives in air service. Ceremony and wreath laying starts at 11:00 hrs followed by reception in the Air section of the Royal Museum of Army and Military History. <http://www.mil.be/aircomp/index.asp?LAN=fr> - Agenda

**19 – 20 Oct 13 – Comet Line Annual Reunion in Brussels** including Sunday Mass at National Basilica and ceremonies at the Comet Line Window and in the Air Force Chapel, followed by buffet lunch in the Basilica Restaurant. <http://www.cometline.org/cometnews.htm>. The Branch will be represented.

**1 Nov 13 – Commemoration at the Belgian Air Force and Commonwealth War Graves at the Brussels Town Cemetery, Evere.** Ceremony starting at 11:00 hrs in the Belgian Air Force Field of Honour to remember the Belgian airmen who fell during the Second World War. Followed by wreath laying at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. <http://www.mil.be/aircomp/index.asp?LAN=fr> - Agenda

**7 Nov 13 – Veterans Reception (18:00 – 20:00 hrs) hosted by the British Ambassador to Belgium, at the Ambassador’s residence.** Entrance will be on presentation of invitation only. If you would like to attend, please contact the Branch Secretary.

**10 Nov 13 – Remembrance Sunday – 12:00 hrs at Holy Trinity Church Brussels.** British Remembrance Day service followed by lunch organised by the Brussels Branch of the Royal British Legion. <http://www.britishlegion.be/events.html>

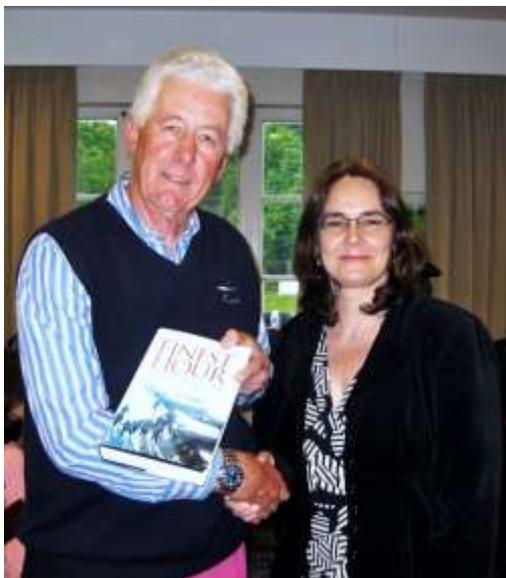
**6-8 Dec 13 – Escape Lines memorial Society (ELMS) Annual Christmas Reunion in London including Service at St Clement Danes.** <http://www.wv2escapelines.co.uk/events/>

**18 Dec 13 – Belgian Branch Winter Lunch at the NATO Staff Centre at Evere.** Starting at 12:30 hrs. All members and friends are encouraged to attend. **Please register with the Branch Secretary.**

## Report on the Barry Horton Memorial Golf Tournament – 28 June 2013

Thanks to the continuing kindness of the President and Committee of the Duisburg Military Golf Club (DMGC) and the support of the Military Sports Centre, we were once again able to hold the Barry Horton Memorial Golf Tournament and Barbecue as our major annual fund-raising event. This year we were honoured that Katrina Johnson the Deputy to the British Ambassador to Belgium could be with us and to present the prizes on behalf of our Branch Patron His Excellency Jonathan Brenton. As ever, the Tournament proved very popular with over 50 golfers and more than 60 for the meal. Special thanks are due to Branch Member Ian Youd and to Ed Cutting of Fulcra Management who very kindly provided golf balls for all competitors and this set the scene for a closely fought competition.

In the Ladies competition, **Caroline Jonker** repeated her 2012 win by coming first with a magnificent score of 25 points: for the Gentlemen, first place went to **Gaston Vintevogel** on 19 points. The Barry Horton Memorial Trophy is for the best net score of the day, and hence the 2013 winner was Caroline Jonker: the engraved trophy donated by Terry Maddern was, in accordance with our tradition, presented by Brigitte Horton.



Other prize winners. Gentlemen: Mike Mandl and Kris Hofmans. Ladies: Lucy Mason and Nadine Rouvois. Nearest the Pin Ladies Brigitte Horton, Gentlemen Jacques Van Belle. Longest Drive Ladies Marion Tomkins, Gentlemen Alex Nielsen. The new RAFA prize was won by Peter Bedford seen (left) receiving his prize from Katrina Johnson. Many thanks to our chef David Ryder and his supporter Bob Jenkins, who, despite the not exactly perfect weather, overcame the challenges to produce a magnificent BBQ. Special thanks too to all those who provided the most marvellous salads and puddings.

Grateful thanks is also due to those who supported the Tombola both by donating prizes and by buying lots of tickets: the generosity of those attending led to an extra 590 Euro (a record?) being made available to support our RAFA Belgium members in need. 'Mentioned in Dispatches' are Richie Atha and his family 'team' for tombola ticket selling and folding, and the double act of Peter Bedford and our past-Chairman Mike Connor for acting as our Tombola 'Master of Ceremonies' team.

*Newsletter Printed by evmprint*