

# THE ROUGHAM CONTROL TOWER AVIATION MUSEUM

Registered Charity No. 1069934

## SPRING ROUNDUP 2019



From left to right representing the Sybil Andrews Academy on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of March:

Nathan Hope, Teacher of History

Ottalie Lines, Harrison Seely, Hannah Walker, Imogen Frankland

and History Teacher Colette Walker-Aldridge

A detailed account concerning this event is included in this newsletter.

## **RTA Committee 2019**

**Chairman**      Graham Sage

**Treasurer**     Mike Brundle

**Secretary**     Wendy Sage

Judith Atkins      - Admin Support Officer

Clint Cansdale     - Paranormal Group Visit

**Organiser**

Richard Phillips

Christopher Day

Clifford Fullam     - Tower Manager

**Website**        [www.rctm94th.co.uk](http://www.rctm94th.co.uk)

**E-Mail**           [info@rtam94th.co.uk](mailto:info@rtam94th.co.uk)

**Telephone**    07931 971771

**Sunday 30/06/19 - Visit by the Rolls - Royce  
Enthusiasts Club  
( East Anglian Section ).**

**Main event date: Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup> Echoes of the Past.**



## Chairman's Chatter

Hello All,

Let me start by welcoming you all to the first newsletter of 2019, thank you Clifford for all your hard work.

I am writing this in mid-April, only 5 days before the opening day of the season, 5 days to go and we still have 10 days work to get in!

As some of you know we've been hard at it over the past few months with re-painting and re-organising the upper floors of the Tower, we've now got new items to display in newly built cabinets, we hope you like the layout, it will make it easier to move around the exhibits.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the small band of volunteers who have tirelessly given up their free time to upgrade the museum, Clifford, Clint, Richard, Chris, Peter, Wendy, Mike and Ben ( sorry if I've missed anyone out!) have all been busy clearing the site, cutting grass, painting, building, behind the scenes stuff and generally mixing in with the work.

We've got visits and events planned and are trying to get a list together for speakers at the public meetings, last Tuesday of each month, come along and bring a friend. If you know of anyone who does an interesting talk ( not necessarily military) give us a call on 07931 971771 or email: [www.rctam94th.co.uk](http://www.rctam94th.co.uk)

Thanks again to you all for supporting such a worthy cause, and don't forget we're here for the veterans, their families and the general public, not for ourselves and we hope to see many of you coming through the gates this season, also keep an eye out for Roy and Hanna on the display stand, coming to an event near you this summer.

Graham Sage.

RTA Chairman/volunteer.



## **A report from Roy Hollocks**

Following on from their visit to the tower last summer, the Stanningfield agricultural club kindly invited myself and a plus one along to their annual dinner

My daughter Hanna accompanied me on the evening of Tuesday 22th January 2019. We were treated to a lovely 3 course meal and drinks.

We met with a lot of their members who are very interested in coming back again for another visit. We would like to thank Maureen Simpson for the kind invitation.





## December Departure 2018

Thank you to all who attended.



### Good turnout at museum's remembrance service

A special remembrance service was held at Rougham Tower Museum at the weekend to mark the anniversary of when the United States Army Air Forces left RAF Bury St Edmunds at the end of World War Two in 1945.

About 40 people, including the Mayor of St Edmundsbury Cllr Margaret Marks, gathered in memory of those who sacrificed their lives during the conflict as well as in World War One.

Andrew Caldecott, trustee of the museum, said: "It's one of those days when you really do appreciate the value of what was done for us by those American GIs and all the rest. It was a solemn but happy day, as remembrance events are."

The day also saw chairman Graham Sage lay wreaths on behalf of all at the museum, while presentations were given by Cliff Hall and Linda Scoles.

An Email from Frank Crosby - 07 01 2019



*We met regarding the Bury Guildhall project but I'm writing to about about a different matter now. Lester Frank Stanford served at Rougham (he called it Bury St Edmunds) flying B-26s as part of the 9AF and then operated from France post- D-Day. He died last year in Toronto and his wife Mary has asked me to find a suitable home for his uniform which I now have here in the UK. He remained in the USAF reserve into the 1950s and this is his post 1947 Major's air force blue dress uniform. He was highly decorated (69 WW2 missions) and the uniform has the medal ribbons, some earned while flying from Rougham, still in place. He visited your museum with a group a few years back, I'm told. Is his uniform something that your museum might like, given his Rougham link?  
Kind regards Frank*



**Lester F Stanford, born Feb 15 1920, died May 26 2018.**

Les, as he was known, joined up in 1942 following Pearl Harbor and got his wings, and a commission, in the United States Army Air Force in January 1943. He trained on B-26 Marauders and was assigned to the 451st Squadron, 322nd Group (Medium Bombardment) which was based at RAF Bury St Edmunds (Rougham). He arrived in Britain in May 1943 and was in his second week of Combat Crew Training when fellow Rougham squadrons lost 10 Marauders on one mission. After some months of combat experience Les was transferred from the 322nd to the 391st and racked up a total of 40 missions before going back to the US on leave. He returned to the UK just before the 391st moved, post D-Day, to Roye Ami in France. He flew a further 29 missions. He was discharged in December 1945 but was soon active again in the Air Force reserves in which he served with distinction until finally retiring with the rank of Major in 1964. Post-war Les became involved in television, first in New York and then in Toronto. He maintained his interest in and support for aviation heritage until his death.

After his 69th and final mission, Les' crew chief gave him the parachute release handle he'd never had to use in combat and that unique artefact is part of the collection presented to the museum.

## **Front Cover Story**

We received an email from Mrs Joanne Carbonella Lledaras from Massachusetts USA, asking for a wreath to be laid on the Memorial on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> in memory of her Uncle, Joe Carbonella, a waist gunner of the 410<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Joanne has spent many years tracing the crew members families and has found and contacted them all.

His aircraft crashed on that day in 1944 in the North Sea after a mission to Brunswick, Germany.

On the return journey they were badly damaged by enemy fire and unable



to make England, belly landed into the sea.

An escorting P47Thunderbolt fighter reported the crash and observed 3 crew evacuate the aircraft, and 2 more in a dingy; the fighter pilot dropped another life raft but had to leave the scene owing to a lack of fuel.

An Air Sea Rescue boat was dispatched to the area but on the way caught fire, exploded and sank. Another launch was assigned and picked up 3 members of the first boat, proceeding to the area of the B17 crash but after a considerable search failed to find the wreck or any of the crew, the boat then searched for an another B17 crash, but as before no wreckage or crew members were found.

To mark this poignant occasion the committee invited staff and pupils from the nearby Sybil Andrews Academy, the academy standing on what was the airfield area for the 410<sup>th</sup> Squadron. With the assistance of two history teachers and four pupils, each child read out two names of the crew, the teachers reading out the Pilots and Tail Gunners name. A

A wreath, on behalf of the families of the crew, and crosses, one for each crew member, were then laid at the Memorial.



## **Friday 1st March**

A group of 14 serving personnel from RAF Mildenhall, including 2 LT/COLS, a couple of Majors, and pilots from both KC135 a/c and Ospreys, utilized our site for the morning.

Whilst on the tour of the control tower, on the roof, Mike and I were invited to attend an impromptu meeting with the group! It was an honour being requested to stay, and interesting to say the least. This group photo, in all the years of the memorials existence, within its curtelege is the first!

The remarks in the visitor's book makes it all worthwhile; "thanks for preserving our history", "a lovely day, thank you", "awesome experience, "fantastic, thank you".



## **Donations**



Matt Jewers kindly donated this early promotional plaque that once was used in the local area. Now on display in the Control Tower



We would also like to thank the following folks for donating items concerning the RAF commitment

Although not relevant to RAF Rougham, items are on display in the Control Room:

A RAF Sextant and Star Reading Charts, once belonging to Group Captain Clare, kindly donated by George Grimshaw.

A shoe cleaning kit, kindly donated by Colin Gibbs,

and finally, a RAF Swagger Stick, kindly donated by Alan Bray.

## **Tower Manager's Report**

The Signal and Control room walls have been painted; the Signals Room now displays the donated uniforms from the States. Improvements to the display area and updated security have transformed this room.

As the airfield, then known as RAF Bury St Edmunds, was initially built as a night bomber station for the RAF, a decision was made to highlight this part of its history.

We hope the items donated in the above article will aid with this.

In the Control Room, three long wooden cases were created to sit alongside the interior wall to protect their contents from the possible ingress of damp and moisture.

The four display cases that originated from Index (a jeweller's shop in Bury that closed) are now positioned alongside the northern wall and containing displays that are not so susceptible to moisture, together with the airplane propeller.

Clifford Fullam.

## **Membership**

As stated previously, from 01/04/19, all annual membership subs would be due, irrespective of the month originally joined.



Hopefully, this will make the membership database, issuing of membership cards, etc. more efficient.

So, if you would like to renew your annual membership for this year, please do so asap! Thank you.

Judith, our Admin Support Officer, has been a great help sorting our membership database. Membership numbers and details can now be easily updated when we receive annual subs and new members!

We now have a clear and accurate record of members, which is currently **94**, these include annual and life, here and overseas.

We will be issuing a **new membership number** when you renew. We were hoping to have new cards too, unfortunately they are not available yet. So you will receive our current one when you renew.

Unfortunately, we have lost contact with quite a few American life members, (no forwarding address or they have sadly died) and some of our annual members have not renewed for a year or more!