



INGHAM WHITE EAGLE

Za Waszą wolność i naszą

Summer 2023



**To the Memory of all who served at RAF Ingham and
Dywizjony Bombowe Polskich Sił Powietrznych**



(A warm summers evening outside the Sgt's Mess, RAF Ingham)

Welcome

Hello and welcome once again, as we enjoy a mixed bag of heavy rain, strong winds and sunshine we must be having a traditional British summer!

This last 6 months have once again proved to be monumental in the continued development and evolution of our Heritage Centre, and of which our team can be justifiably proud. We are now in a stronger position than we have ever been to succeed in creating a globally unique Centre (more about that later in this edition).

This will be my last edition as Editor, as I'm now passing on the baton to Ian Shaw, our group's new Secretary. So thank you all for your input and feedback over the last 10+ years, and good luck to Ian.

Geoff Burton

Chair/Trustee

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Announcement

I'm sure many of you will have already heard on the grapevine or social media, but for a variety of reasons the Committee has decided to postpone the official opening of our Main Exhibition Centre (MEC) until April next year. We like many of you, were disappointed at the news but in the clear light of day this was actually a blessing in disguise.

So looking forward, this will now allow us to completely finish the renovations of both the MEC and surrounding footprint, so that we can deliver an even higher level of visitor experience.

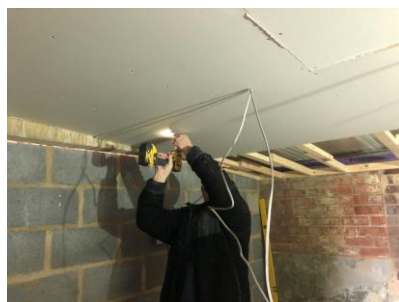
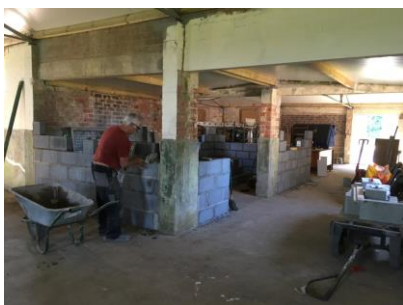


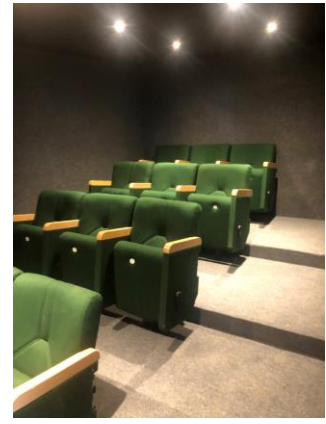
3D image of the proposed internal layout of Main Exhibition Centre

On-Site Round-Up

Over the last six months we have again made incredible strides towards the completion of our Heritage Centre project.

Possibly one of the most obvious changes, has seen the open space in the corridor between the two wings been turned into our new cinema / multi-media suite, which will be used to show wartime footage for our visitors, as well as being used as a briefing room for small groups.





The front office is also now taking shape and will become the admin and operational hub for the entire Heritage Centre. Special thanks most go to Pat Taylor and his team of electricians, who've not only wired-up the Cinema and Office, but also our Workshop.



Externally, we've been busy installing a rain-water drainage system around the buildings.



We've also extended our pathways and included a ramp down into the rear garden, to aid accessibility and provide level access to those with disability issues.



Huge amounts of internal and external wall repairs and rendering have been taking place.



And all finished-off with a coat of green paint.



The Memorial Garden has also had some TLC, with shrubs being cutback or pruned; the wooden benches resealed; the Memorial stones and name plaque are undergoing some minor paint repairs; and the 'log border' has received some much-needed attention.



As part of our ground-prep for our new Remembrance Garden and flagpole, we've moved the Tool Store and former Exhibition Cabin to the south side of the car park; and until the opening of the new MEC next year, the former Exhibition Cab has been re-rolled as the temporary Reception & Shop, run by husband and wife team Alison & Neville.



Faldingworth Memorial

Since the Memorial was built at the end of RAF Faldingworth's main runway in 2004, it has been looked after by Mr Colin Mitchell-Smith and the Faldingworth Memorial Committee.

Over the years they have organised bi-annual commemoration events and guided-visits (pre-Covid).



Unfortunately, due to a combination of factors, including age and ill health, the Faldingworth team has dwindled, and was disbanded earlier this year.

Their parting wish, was to pass the baton onto ourselves, with our intrinsic connection to the Polish Bomber Sqns.

As a result, we have now formally taken-over the custodianship of the RAF Faldingworth Memorial. For our part, we intend to ensure the Memorial Area is kept tidy and well maintained. We intend to start organising planned visits to the Memorial, with interested parties booking in advance, more details to follow.

80th Anniversary - Operation Chastise

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of 617 Squadron's raid on the dams of Germany on 16 May 1943, the BBMF Lancaster flew over 28 former Bomber Command airfields in Lincolnshire, including RAF Ingham.



The Lancaster was due over Ingham at 1921hrs. Our volunteers had arranged a quiet BBQ to celebrate the event, but to our astonishment, dozens and dozens of people suddenly appeared at our gates; almost like the film 'Field of Dreams'!

Now it might be that the likes of RAF Scampton were rammed to the gunnels or it could be the lure of our wonderful Heritage Centre! I like to think it was the latter. Either way, we were treated to an extremely low (250 ft) pass, right over our car park. Truly spectacular, and despite having seen and heard those Merlins so many times it still managed to reverberate through the chest.

A real honour for our Centre, and great tribute to not only 617 Sqn, but to the 166 aircrew who lost their lives flying from RAF Ingham, with Bomber Command.

Visit by Director - Institute of National Remembrance

On 27 May we were delighted to welcome Mr Adam Siwek, Director - Institute of National Remembrance, Poland, during his visit to the UK. He was accompanied by Patryk Gowin, Deputy Consul General, Manchester. During his visit, Mr Siwek was fully briefed on our project and its aims to create a globally unique centre to remember the men and women of the Polish Bomber squadrons. He was



fascinated that a group of British people were so enthusiastic and passionate about preserving and commemorating the heritage of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain in WW2. He commended us for our dedication in preserving a very important part of Polish history. He said that he was hopeful that the Institute of National Remembrance may be able to support our project in the future.

204 (Lincoln) Sqn - Air Cadets

As part of our continuing involvement within our local community we have been working with 204 (Lincoln) Squadron Air Cadets over the last year. One of the major aspirations for any cadet is to complete their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (D of E). The scheme is split into different disciplines which you must complete, one of which is Volunteering in the community.

On 25 June and 23 July we welcomed a new group of cadets for this year's D of E Volunteering activity lead as ever by Sqn Ldr Mark Wood. The cadets got stuck-in to a variety of tasks including:



fence painting, mowing the grass, laying hardcore and painting the rendered external walls.

Thanks to all the cadets for a couple of great days, which will help them to reach their target of volunteering hours, and gain the D of E award they're striving for.

Unveiling - General Sikorski Statue

Several hundred invited guests gathered in Newark Cemetery on 4 July for the unveiling ceremony of the bronze statue of General Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski. The date was highly significant as it was the 80th anniversary of his death in a plane crash, shortly after taking off from Gibraltar.



The statue was unveiled by His Excellency Mr Piotr Wilczek, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, and Air Chief Marshall (Retd) Sir Andrew Pulford GCB CBE

DL. The statue of the General now looks over the graves of the many Polish servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

After the ceremony, there was a Reception at Newark Town Hall.



Another Unexpected Phone Call

On the way back from the above Reception, I received an unexpected phone call from Patryk Gowin, Deputy Consul General, Manchester. He was inviting Brendan and I back to the Newark



Town Hall the following evening..... all a bit hush hush!
"Come in a suit and bring ID"

The next evening, we dutifully arrived. There was a heavy armed local police presence outside the Town Hall. It turned out that this was going to be an award ceremony, and that the guest of honour was no less than Polish Minister of National Defence, Mariusz Błaszczak.



As it transpired, along with a small group of other local recipients, Brendan and I were to be awarded with Polish Army Medal (Silver Class). What a great honour for both of us, and a great reflection on our entire team's efforts at RAF Ingham.

Woodhall Spa 1940s Weekend

Another great weekend was had by all at the Petwood Hotel for this year's Woodhall Spa 1940s Weekend. This year we split the team in two, each working Sat or Sun, apart from Tony & Carol who volunteered to do both. We made some great new contacts and signed up 4 new volunteers over the weekend.

This is an ideal moment to welcome Neville & Alison, our new Fundraising Team, who used this event to launch our



new merchandise.

The sales went very well, and they'll be expanding the selection of items for sale in the near future, and will hopefully be opening our on-line shop by early 2024.

Spotlight on a Volunteer



In this edition the Volunteer Spotlight falls on **Karen Frith**.

Karen along with her husband Chris joined our Volunteer Team in late 2021. Karen can turn her hand to most jobs, but can often be found holding a paintbrush, up a ladder or scaffold tower, painting those difficult and hard to reach places! She also enjoys organising our social events, such as BBQs and Christmas dinners.

But this is only one part of Karen's involvement with us; her primary role is as our **Volunteer Coordinator**. This role involves every aspect of a Volunteers journey and involvement with us, from that initial

application and through the induction and training requirements. She fills a role that is vital to the weekly running of our team of dedicated volunteers.



“An organisation, is only ever as good as its team of volunteers”

Forthcoming Events

Sat 02 Sep - Polish Air Force Commemoration Day, Northolt

Sun 03 Sep - RAF Ingham Open Day

Thurs 21 Sep - Polish Air Force in East Midlands, a talk by Michael Czajkowski

Sun 24 Sep - Air Bridge Ceremony, Newark Cemetery

Sun 29 Oct - All Souls, Newark Cemetery

Sun 12 Nov - Remembrance Service, at Heritage Centre & at Ingham Church

Details for all these events can be found on our website.



POLISH BOMBER SQUADRON CENTRE
Centrum Polskich Dywizjonów Bombowych

OPEN DAY

Sunday 03 Sep
1000 - 1600hrs

- Discover RAF Ingham's Wartime History
- Learn about the Polish Bomber Squadrons
- View our Projects Successes to-date
- Visit the Polish Families Nissen Hut
 - Enjoy Traditional Polish Food
 - Talks on Polish Air Force
 - Wartime Films
 - Military Vehicles
 - Cafe & Toilets


Free Entry & Car Park
(Donations Welcome)

RAF Ingham Heritage Centre - DN21 5BU

A Talk on the

Polish Air Force

in the East Midlands




by Michael Czajkowski

1900hrs - 21 September 2023
at
Ingham Village Hall, Lincoln LN1 2XT

Entrance £8.00

Contact: enquiries@rafingham.co.uk for more information

Proceeds in aid of:



*Thank you for your continued enthusiasm
and support of our Project.*

Registered Charity No 1142147

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RAF Ingham Heritage Centre

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Consulate General
of the Republic of Poland
in Manchester



POLISH AIR FORCE
MEMORIAL COMMITTEE



Communities
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