



SILVER CITY ASSOCIATION

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SILVER CITY NEWSLETTER 2014

Last year, we were sending greetings to you all after another cold winter. This time, instead of hoping that you've all been keeping warm, we hope that you have all managed to keep dry! Hopefully, the sun will be shining again at Lydd in July.

If you have received this Newsletter by post instead of by e-mail as you may have done before, then perhaps you've changed your e-mail address and not told us? If so, please let Paul have your new details.

2013 REUNION REPORT – SATURDAY, 13th JULY

It was a sunny day at Lydd but with a cooling breeze to keep things comfortable. Numbers were a little down compared with 2012 but seventy people attended the event – including eight from Invicta and Air Ferry. The proceeds from the raffle and other sales resulted in a profit of £92.00 for the Association. As ever, our sincere thanks go to everyone who brought along a raffle prize. A number of people commented on the excellent quality of the buffet this time and the catering team received a warm vote of thanks for their efforts.

After lunch, Paul welcomed everyone and reported on another successful year for the Association. He was delighted to announce that a new home had been found for our large collection of material relating to Silver City and its associated companies. It was now going to be taken into the care of the British Airways Heritage Centre near Heathrow and once it had all been catalogued and moved to its new home, BA and the Association would publicise the fact in the aviation press. The collection would be available to researchers by appointment.

Paul added that the website continued to attract a lot of interest from around the world with a regular flow of questions and memories about Silver City and its operations. He said that a Spanish museum with an ex-Silver City DC-3 (G-AMZB) had contacted Keith via the website and was delighted with all the information that we could provide on the history of their aircraft.

The Government had finally approved Lydd airport's expansion plans but further objections had immediately been lodged by the Lydd Airport Action Group and the RSPB, so it remained a case of "watch this space". It was thought that the appeal would be heard in the High Court in early 2014.

Paul said that he, Sally and Keith had been thinking very carefully about the price and venue for future gatherings. He added that it was difficult to strike the right balance as some people were prepared to pay more while others felt that the present price was high enough, once travel was taken into account. This all added to the cost of the day. A small increase in price for 2014 was very likely but every effort would be made to keep it to a minimum.

Paul closed his remarks by thanking Sally, Keith, Rae Bark, Frances Shilling and Gill Rowell for all their help in making the day a success.

DEPARTURE LOUNGE

Sadly, it has not been a good year for the Association and we have lost a lot of old friends since the last Newsletter appeared. We have been told of the passing of Pat Wood ('Timber Wood's widow), George Hunt, Ted Turrell, Mike Cole, 'Nobby' Hall, Graham Sturrock, Gordon Ross-Munroe, Ken Bailey, Roy Day, Alan Offer, Joy Gaitskell, Les Pavey, Cliff Melhuish and Dave Flett. Our sincere condolences go to all their families and to any other members who have lost loved ones.

We were particularly sorry to hear of the passing of those last three Citizens, who were well known to many of you. Ken Honey has kindly contributed an obituary of Dave Flett which is included with this Newsletter.

Les Pavey passed away in a South Croydon nursing home on 1st October 2013 at the age of 89. He had previously spent fifteen weeks in hospital in Hampshire before moving to the home last June. Les had served as an Air Gunner in Bomber Command during the war and had lived with shrapnel in his brain since 1945. Following efforts by his niece, Mrs June Thorpe, and the Royal Air Forces Association, Les had been presented with the Bomber Command Clasp in August.

Cliff Melhuish died on 13th February 2014, aged 87. He began his flying training with the RAF at Shellingford in July 1947 and was disconcerted to find that one of the wheels of his Tiger Moth had fallen off during his first solo. However, both aircraft and pilot managed to return to the ground safely. He left the RAF and joined Silver City in 1956. Cliff recalled a Freighter sheep flight where a crew member fell down the cockpit ladder into the sheep pens and as he disappeared, Cliff could see a sheep wearing a Silver City cap!

BLACKBUSHE AIRPORT COMMEMORATION

On 21st October 2013, Paul attended a ceremony at Blackbushe Airport on behalf of the Association to commemorate the companies that used to operate from there – including Silver City. A large display board was unveiled by Mr Harold Bamberg, the founder of British Eagle, who is now 90. The display is extremely well produced and a Silver City B170 appears at the top, together with a Britavia Hermes. 'Taffy' Powell's son, Wyndham, was also there, together with some other Association Members and Associates.

CARDS, PRINTS AND BOOKS

We still have a few cards and prints of 'Crossing in Style'; cards are £1 each or £5 for six and £10 for 15. The large prints are £15 each or £30 signed by some SCA pilots. (Contact Keith for details.)

DO YOU REMEMBER?

In future issues of the Newsletter, we'd love to include some of your anecdotes and stories of Silver City days. Paul has already received a few but we're sure there are lots more out there. What about those pigs?????

2014 REUNION – LYDD AIRPORT, SATURDAY, 12th JULY (12.30 – 17.30)

The reunion will once again be held in the main lounge where there will be a cold buffet and bar; **the entrance fee this year will be £12 per person** and we will be aiming for a slightly different menu. As usual, just turn up with your wives, husbands, partners or friends. If you would like to donate a raffle prize please bring it with you. Once again, our sincere thanks for your continued support for the Association either by coming to the reunion or by e-mail and letter. We look forward to seeing you in July.

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