



## AUGUST NEWSLETTER

### Local History Group at Tangmere Military Aviation Museum



Local History member David Smith is a trustee and guide at the above museum and when it was his turn to organise the meeting, he naturally chose Tangmere. Nineteen of us enjoyed the tour which started with his "Tangmere film"! He told us that the Americans originally built the aerodrome in 1917, but it was not until the Second World War that it really came to the fore. It was an important base at the time of the Battle of Britain and as such was severely targeted by the Luftwaffe. On 16

August 1940, many Stuka dive bombers raided the base. Two hangars were destroyed, 16 aircraft were badly damaged, workshops, sick bay and officers' mess wrecked and the water supply put out of action. Fourteen service people and six civilians were killed. The Stuka attack on Tangmere aerodrome had started at 1300 hours and lasted only twenty minutes. The bombing was unfortunately extremely accurate with no bombs dropped outside the aerodrome perimeter. Some forty vehicles were also destroyed in the raid. However, the Luftwaffe did not escape unscathed, our fighters quickly took to the skies and claimed twenty five enemy aircraft destroyed. The eight squadrons based at Tangmere and its satellite airfield, Westhampnett (now Goodwood) were responsible for over 300 enemy aircraft destroyed during the whole Battle of Britain period.

As I entered the main museum, my attention was immediately drawn to the shiny red Hawker Hunter in which, my

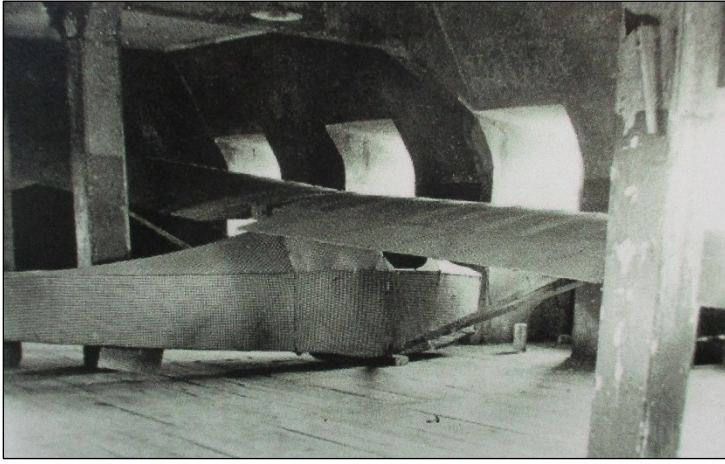


boyhood hero, Squadron Leader Neville Duke first broke the sound barrier and then went on to break the world air speed record off Littlehampton achieving 727.6 m.p.h. in September 1953. He took the machine from its trials, as the Hawker P1067 in July 1951, to a world speed record of 727.6mph in September 1953, and whilst Duke has many ties with Tangmere, (he was honorary president until his death in 2007) his test flights in 1951-1953 were actually at Dunsfold aerodrome in Surrey. I remember as a 13 year old, regularly crouching in the

bushes at the end of that runway as he took off with a mighty roar over my head! Dunsfold was a three mile cycle ride from my school, and therefore a favourite ride!

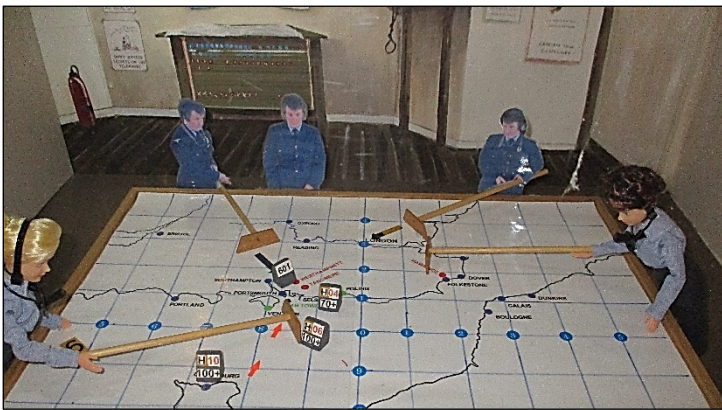
There are so many accounts of war time bravery to read and digest at Tangmere, you need a day or perhaps a week to absorb them all! One that caught my eye was the Cock glider - anyone remember? Think Colditz Castle? See picture below, this is the only known illustration. It never actually flew but they made a film about it! The Colditz

Cock was a glider built by British prisoners of war during World War II for an escape attempt from Oflag IV-C (Colditz Castle) prison camp in Germany. The idea came from Lieutenant Tony Rolt. He had noticed the chapel roof line was completely obscured from the German guards' view. He realised that the roof would make a perfect launching point from which the glider could fly across the River Mulde, which was about 60 metres below. (they were to launch it along a slide made from tables). The officers built a false wall to hide the secret space in the attic where they slowly built the glider from stolen pieces of wood. Since the Germans were accustomed to looking down for tunnels, not up for secret workshops, the officers felt



quite safe from detection. The glider was approaching completion when the American Army liberated the prisoners on 16 April 1945.

Another section told us that from the autumn of 1940 there were a large number of WAAFs who were employed in the Tangmere Sector Operations Room that had been set up away from the airfield in St James' Infant School, Chichester. This move from the airfield followed the bombing I refer to above, on 16 August 1940. Later in the war, with the build up to D-Day and the rapid expansion of air operations it was realised that a larger operations room was needed and a new one was constructed inside College Hall, Bishops Otter College. It opened on 15 February 1944 and remained as a Sector Operations Room until the end of 1944. The picture on the left shows the control room.



The use of the airfield as a base for Lysander moonlit trips into rural France for agent drop offs is dealt with elsewhere in the newsletter. The group thank David Smith for arranging this most interesting visit! **Alan Borrow**

## We fly by moonlight....

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, 19 members of Local History were reacquainted with the brave nocturnal deed of the Lysander SoE flights from RAF Tangmere during the war. In addition to transporting SOE agents, and bringing back our downed pilots who had been rescued by the Resistance, Tangmere also had pilots who carried out night Mail Pick-Up (MPU) operations. For these missions an adapted Lysander was used with a 15 foot bamboo cane and hook suspended below the aircraft. A winch operator was carried in the rear cockpit with the winch and arrester gear braking mechanism. In the rear cockpit, the winch operator could manoeuvre the cane and hook through a trap door in the floor. When lowered, the cane could be locked four feet below the wheels of the aircraft ready to pick up the mail-bag. Not needing to actually land the plane, made the journey far less hazardous!

But the most important missions of those Lysander pilots were to take in and bring out SOE agents who were trained to work with the Resistance. One of their most important "agents" was Jean Moulin.



**(seen left)** On the night of 24 February 1943 a Lysander of No 161 Squadron flown by Squadron Leader Hugh Verity took off from RAF Tangmere for a field near Issoudon, south of the Loire near Bourges. Moulin, a former Prefect of l'Eure-et-Loire at Chartres, had met with General De Gaulle in London and had been appointed his representative and co-coordinator of all the different factions of the Resistance in France. Verity found the landing ground fogged out and on returning with Moulin to Tangmere found the very same weather conditions. Realising that his passenger did not have a parachute, Verity decided to land and made eleven

approaches without seeing the runway. On his twelfth attempt, still in fog, he estimated his height as about right, closed the throttle and adopted a landing attitude. He was thirty feet too high. The Lysander crashed but did not catch fire. Fortunately, both occupants were uninjured and Moulin's response after Verity apologised, was to thank him for "a very agreeable flight". Moulin was successfully flown out from Tangmere to France a month later by another pick-up pilot, Flight Lieutenant John Bridger. Moulin carried out heroic work in trying to get the different Resistance groups to amalgamate but he was eventually caught by the Gestapo and, it is believed, died of torture or suicide.

It was therefore, in the service of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) that the Lysander aircraft found its 'raison d'être'. Lysanders were adapted for this role in several ways. Black paint was applied to the undersides and in some cases all over, to make the aircraft harder to spot from the ground when flying slowly at low level near landing sites. A 150 gallon fuel tank was fitted to the belly of the aircraft to increase its range to 1000 miles, and a ladder was fixed



to the port side of the fuselage to give passengers faster access to the rear section of the cabin. **The picture shows the Lysander at Tangmere, note the fixed ladder and the long range fuel tank mounted under the fuselage. The agent climbs aboard to join a female colleague. The pilot stays in the cockpit.** An average time on the ground was just 5 minutes. The 'special duty' Lysander pilots had to navigate by the light of the moon, using just a map and compass. The possible flying period was seven days before and after the full moon. Usually they were looking for an improvised landing strip in a field marked out with flame torches by an SOE agent or the French Resistance, although they were advised not to rely purely on spotting these lights. Once on the ground in enemy held-territory, a fast turnaround was

imperative to evade German patrols. Up to four passengers could be carried in the Lysander in extreme circumstances (and extreme discomfort): one on the floor, two on the seat, and one on the shelf. Once loaded up,



the Lysander would quickly get airborne again, the pilot using boost control override to climb away as rapidly as possible. It was also essential of course not to fall for a trap set by the Germans. Pilots were told to avoid landing if the identification signal (morse by torch) was not correct, or if there was an irregularity in the flare path or if the indicated field was not the one they expected. About 40 Lysanders were converted for this SOE work. The most successful Lysander pilot was Jimmy 'Mac' McCairns. After being shot down when flying with Douglas Bader's Tangmere Wing in June 1941, he was captured and imprisoned. 'Mac' escaped from his prisoner-of-war camp and was determined to help the resistance organisation which had managed to smuggle him back to the UK. He therefore joined No. 161 (Special Duties) Squadron at Tangmere. In thirteen months, he made 25 successful Lysander pick-ups (out of 34 attempts) and was awarded three Distinguished Flying Crosses to be added to his Military medal for escaping from the prisoner of war camp. There were two atmospheric paintings at Tangmere that took my eye. The top one depicts the occasion when the Lysander landed successfully but sank into mud in spite of the pilot's revving. Two bullocks were sent for and harnessed to the



plane – no joy! Two additional were hitched but again no luck. The pilot had no alternative but to set fire to his plane and join the resistance fighters. They managed to fly him out on the next full moon.

The second painting creates a nocturnal scene which is so expressive I felt I was there! Interestingly, you can just make out the special “headlights” enclosed within the fairings of the undercarriage.

## ‘Invitation from the Garden Group’ Summer Outing to Sussex Prairie Gardens and Borde Hill Gardens on Wednesday, September 13th

We have room in our coach for some more U3A friends, so if you would like to join us on this lovely day, please let Diana Faithfull ([dianamf1223@gmail.com](mailto:dianamf1223@gmail.com)) know as soon as possible.

The coach will be leaving Emsworth at 8.30am and return about 4.30/5.00pm. The morning will be at Sussex Prairie Garden, Henfield, West Sussex, where there will be a talk by the owner and refreshments available. We will then travel to Borde Hill Gardens, not far away, for the afternoon. We suggest you bring a picnic lunch, although light lunches are available at Borde Hill. The cost to include entrance to both gardens is £34.00.



*Left: Borde Hill gardens Right: Sussex Prairie Garden*

We would love you to join us and bring a friend as long as they are members of any U3A. Looking forward to hearing from you.

## U3A members getting gently smoked.....



Wine One enjoyed a calm, warm and sunny evening for their annual barbecue and the fare was well received, as was the many different red, white and rosé wines. The Friends of the Community Garden adjacent to the new Emsworth Surgery was the ideal venue for this type of event and forty one winos enjoyed this rural little paradise right in the



middle of Emsworth! Recently many alterations and improvements have been made by the trustees administering this charity and if you read your most recent edition of the Ems you can learn and appreciate the scale of their generosity in their grants to local charities who qualify by contributing in some way to the health and well being of our residents! We are extremely lucky to have this little oasis in the centre of our town (village?). Lamb steak, barbecue chicken thigh, Lincoln sausage or plain old pork banger?



## Do-Re-mi

Let's start at the very beginning

A very good place to start

When you read, you begin with A-B-C

When you sing, you begin with Do-Re-Mi

'The Sound of Music' might have made its debut in 1959 as a stage musical but for most of us, it is the musical film with Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer, with its life-affirming elements, that is loved by generations. So can you take the iconic musical film and transport a theatre audience in Chichester to the Austrian Alps and have them fall in love all over again with the von Trapp family? Well, that is exactly what Chichester Festival Theatre's new, production has achieved!



The theatre critics gave it rave reviews when it opened on the 10th July and the 19 members of the U3A Theatre group who went along eight days later were mesmerised, from the Preludium sung by the nuns to the von Trapp's exit through the mountains. It's a joyous production and guaranteed to put a smile on your face! It's rumoured that CFT's production of 'The Sound of Music' will follow in the footsteps of their production 'Crazy for You' and transfer to the West End.

So long, farewell.....!

Maureen Falloon

## The History of the BRICK

“Brick Business” meets on a Tuesday afternoon, the fourth in the month. When we first started nearly five years ago, we looked at the history of the common brick from 10,000BC to the current time. Since then we have ‘visited’ many towns, villages and iconic brick buildings locally and all over the world. The seed for the idea was sown when Anne, our past chairman, presented me with the wonderful tome: “Brick – A World History”. You don’t realise what you started, Anne!

Now, there has been a call for a return to “how it all started” mainly I suppose because those who were there for the first year numbered just 8 or 10! Our membership has grown to over fifty so I propose, commencing with the September meeting, to start again! We will go right back to 10,000BC – to Mesopotamia and Jericho – where it all started! I will give it a new twist however to make sure those who were there to support me at the start are not bored or forgotten!

**If any new members wish to join us on this journey through the brick construction ages, please contact me through our web site in the next four weeks.** Below is a taster!



The world’s oldest bricks were discovered in Jericho on the banks of the River Jordan by Kathleen Kenyon in 1952. The “town” she found was so old that it pre dated the invention of pottery or the discovery of metals. It would have been Neolithic or Stone Age! The bricks were humble mud bricks but some survive to this day!

Interested in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, The great wall of China, the Hagia Sophia Mosque, The Castle of Malbork, Pagan temples in Burma, The Taj Mahal, Victorian sewers under London, the Chrysler building in New York? Join Ems Valley’s “BRICK BUSINESS” the only u3a interest group in the whole of the UK that has this title!

**Alan Borrow**

## Parham House & Gardens – 16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

Steve Gorban from Daytrippers reminds us of their forthcoming visit to Parham House. He says that it is a gem, and although not a great distance from us, has not been visited by many. To learn more, click the attached link.

<https://www.parhaminsussex.co.uk/visit/>



A few times during the season, the house is open for public group tours on a first come first served basis. Feel free to bring friends and family. You need to book direct for the special tour of the house on that day. When you access the web site above, go to “Book now” and then click “Book a tour”.

Lunch, mostly sandwiches can be purchased at Parham, but feel free to bring a picnic.

## MORE NEWS FROM DAYTRIPPERS!

### Albury Vineyard Tour and Tasting - 27 September 11:00 AM Start

Pub Lunch at nearby The Drummond At Albury to follow

Message from Steve Gorban:

Hello all,

We hope your summer is going well. We are working more outings for the upcoming months.

On offer now is a day out, not too far to travel, for a vineyard tour and tasting with a pub lunch following.

We need 15 people to make this trip possible.

**Please forward a deposit of £10.00 p/p to Steve Gorban by 14 August**

Mr S Gorban

Sort Code 40-45-22

Account Number 11658476

Albury Vineyard is the result of Nick Wenman's passion for quality wine. Nick planted the vineyard in 2009 having retired from the IT industry to fulfill his dream of owning a vineyard.



Nick believes that key to the success of the wines is the vineyard's commitment to organic and biodynamic principles, together with excellent winemakers and his talented Estate Manager Alex, one of the few female vineyard managers in England. Her expertise is vital to the running of the vineyard, and her dogs Attila, Ulisee and Mildred are well loved by visitors!

Nick's daughter Lucy now manages marketing and events, and Alex has been joined on the vineyard by vineyard manager Dominic and apprentice Declan.

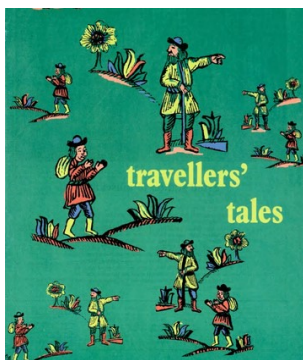
Albury Vineyard is situated on the southern slopes of the North Downs in the beautiful Surrey Hills, just outside Guildford on the A25 towards Dorking. The vines are the traditional Champagne varietals of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, as well as some Seyval and Pinot Gris. They are committed to producing organic fruit without the use of chemicals such as herbicides and fungicides, and produce English wine of the highest quality; a still rosé and quality sparkling wines.

OTHER PLANS are "in the works" for a garden visit, a return to South Downs Planetarium, a canal boat trip and a guided tour of historic Portsmouth with a lunch following.

**With our best wishes, Simon and Steve**

[psasibs@gmail.com](mailto:psasibs@gmail.com)

## 'TRAVELLERS TALES' REDISCOVERS ITSELF!



Peter Goldfarb gave up leadership of Travellers' Tales in April and John Kieron and Alan Borrow have taken up the mantle! The group members have been notified but we put out this little invitation to any other Ems Valley members who may wish to join us for an evening WINTER ONLY interest group, starting with our first meeting in October, (16<sup>th</sup> October).

Please contact me, Alan Borrow at the email listed at the end of this newsletter, if you are interested. An evening consists of two travel trip presentation, where the accent is on the "TALES" as well as the "TRAVELLER'S DESTINATION"!

## Tony Carter specials from Canada.....

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.

A pessimist's blood type is always b-negative.

My wife really likes to make pottery, but to me it's just kiln time.

Dijon vu: the same mustard as before.

Practice safe eating: always use condiments.

I fired my masseuse today. She just rubbed me the wrong way.

A Freudian slip is when you say one thing but mean your mother.

Shotgun wedding: A case of wife or death.

I used to work in a blanket factory, but it folded.

I used to be a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the ax.

If electricity comes from electrons, does that mean that morality comes from morons?

A man needs a mistress just to break the monogamy.

Marriage is the mourning after the knot before.

A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Corduroy pillows are making headlines.

Is a book on voyeurism a peeping tome?

Dancing cheek-to-cheek is really a form of floor play.

Banning the bra was a big flop.

Sea captains don't like crew cuts.

A successful diet is the triumph of mind over platter.

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

A gossip is someone with a great sense of rumour.

Without geometry, life is pointless.

When you dream in colour, it's a pigment of your imagination.

Reading whilst sunbathing makes you well-red.

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.





## Two Irish Brothers.

There were two evil Irish brothers. They were rich and used their money to keep their way from the public eye. They even attended the same church and looked to be perfect Christians:

Then, their pastor retired, and a new one was hired. Not only could he see right through the brothers' deception, but he also spoke well and true, and the church started to swell in numbers.

A fundraising campaign was started to build a new assembly hall.

All of a sudden, one of the brothers died.

The remaining brother sought out the new pastor the day before the funeral and handed him a cheque for the amount needed to finish paying for the new building.

"I have only one condition," he said. "At his funeral, you must say my brother was a saint."

The pastor gave his word and deposited the cheque.

The next day at the funeral, the pastor did not hold back. "He was an evil man," he said. "He cheated on his wife and abused his family."

After going on in the same vein for a fair time, he concluded with...

"But, compared to his brother, he was a saint."

**All contributions for the next newsletter please to:  
[alanborrow@virginmedia.com](mailto:alanborrow@virginmedia.com)**