



Bomber Command teddy snaps to attention

By Diana Cormack.

Some of the thousands of poppies dropped from a Lancaster flying over Green Park when the Queen unveiled a memorial to RAF Bomber Command landed in East Finchley. Sadly Roger, the official Bomber Command Memorial Bear, could not attend the ceremony at the end of June as he was off to Afghanistan to have his photo taken with the troops. However his owner Dennis Gimes, who lives on the High Road, managed to take a photo of Roger at the site later.

Dennis is president of the Heritage Foundation, which worked hard to raise funds for the memorial commemorating the 55,573 aircrew from Bomber Command killed in action during the Second World War and the victims of bombing from all nations. It was Dennis's idea to raise awareness of the memorial and of its subsequent upkeep by inviting well known people to have their photo taken with Roger. In addition to a number of show business per-

sonalities, the prime ministers of Canada and New Zealand have also been pictured with the bear. Our own Prime Minister David Cameron has written a letter of thanks to Dennis and the Heritage Foundation for all their work on the memorial.

For further information or to make a donation, please visit www.bombercommand.com or contact The RAF Museum, Grahame Park Way, Hendon, London NW9 5LL, telephone 020 8205 2266.



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Visitors always welcome



Wing walker: Martin hard at work restoring the Mosquito.

Eye on Stanley Field

Stanley Field was at the centre of a typically barbed article in *Private Eye* magazine in July in which London mayor Boris Johnson came under fire for his position on the sell-off of playing fields.

The article claimed that Johnson had once written in the *Daily Telegraph* that selling off playing fields made him "almost wild with anger" yet when it came to supporting Sport East Finchley's bid to turn the field into a sporting facility, rather than hand it over to housing, he refused to get involved and claimed the decision was down to Barnet Council.

The council has rejected Sport East Finchley's plans and indicated that housing development will take place on Stanley Field but the charity is still working with the council to try to secure some leisure space on the site.

Mosquito comes out of retirement

By Nick Young

As retirement projects go, Martin Bronkhorst's takes some beating. For the past year, Martin has been involved in the restoration of the prototype of the Second World War fighter aircraft the de Havilland Mosquito.

He is part of a 12-man crew responsible for work on the aircraft, which is taking place at the de Havilland Aircraft Heritage Centre at Salisbury Hall, near London Colney in Hertfordshire. This volunteer-run aviation museum is dedicated to the restoration and display of de Havilland aircraft. Many of the volunteers served in the RAF or worked for de Havilland.

For Martin, who lives in Durham Road, there is a personal element to his involvement. "My father was in the Air Force," he explains. "When I was a kid, we all wanted to be fighter pilots ... I've always been interested in aeroplanes. I still think they're miraculous."

Wooden wonder

The Mosquito was one of the most important aircraft of the Second World War. Made almost entirely out of wood, it first flew in 1941 and was used by the RAF and other Allied air

forces as a precision bomber, night-fighter, fighter-bomber and for photo-reconnaissance.

Unlike heavy bombers such as the Lancaster or the Flying Fortress, the twin-engine Mosquito was designed for speed, and was the fastest warplane in the world until the first jet fighters were used in 1944. It also was easy to build as no specialist metalworkers were needed, and 7,781 were constructed, with work taking place at de Havilland's subsidiary companies in Canada, South Africa and Australia as well as in England.

However, like their crews, Mosquitos had a short life expectancy. "Just 14 weeks was the normal length of bomber crews' lives," explained Martin. There are about 30 complete examples in museums throughout the world today.

Salisbury Hall was owned by founder Geoffrey de Havilland in the late 1930s, and it was there that the Mosquito was designed and the prototype constructed. Today, the museum houses a number of de Havilland aircraft from the 1920s to the 1950s, several of which are ongoing restoration projects. For details about opening hours, visit the museum's website: www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk/

Bobath boost

The Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy in East End Road is thanking two recent benefactors. The Bald Faced Stag pub raised £120 during Euro 2012 from a "Guess the minute of the first goal" competition. Whetstone Barclays branch raised over £1,200 at a fundraising day featuring a staff-run coffee and cakes sale and raffle, the proceeds from which were doubled by Barclays' community matched-giving fund.



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