



Hello, and welcome to our Seething Control Tower quarterly newsletter.

I say quarterly of course but it's more like the first half of 2022 so, most importantly, my thanks to all our members for renewing and continuing to support the memory of the 448th at Seething. Throughout the year the team here has been all hands to the pumps to recover from tough times and continue to develop the museum and memorial for future generations. I am pleased to say we have bounced back from Covid restrictions really well thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team of volunteers (if you fancy joining them, then please drop me a line!). Over the past twelve months this has been our highest priority. As a result, we feel confident the Museum has returned to its former glory.

During the winter months our volunteers were busy repairing and refurbishing within the tower. Many of our displays have been improved and additional information added where possible resulting in space for extra artifacts to be displayed. Volunteers are of course on hand to help with any queries they can. During June we were extremely fortunate to be allocated a band of enthusiasts from the Aviva volunteering programme; this merry band, under the direction of our regular volunteers, carried out every task put to them as the weather threw cold, wind and rain at them throughout the day.

Our Open Days continue to create a lot of interest with some of our visitors travelling considerable distances to visit. So far this year we have welcomed two 448th veterans families to Seething, an absolute highlight for the team to meet them and help them revisit the footsteps of their relatives who served here. Going forward we have some exciting new ideas and opportunities and will be able to keep you fully updated on the next stage in the development of this museum and memorial here at Seething.

~Richard



Open Days 2022

Join Us at Seething Airfield on...

- August 14th
- September 4th
- October 2nd

Experience a living memorial to those who served in the 448th Bomb Group at our Open Days! We are open on the first Sunday of the month from May to October, 10am to 4pm.

Visiting and parking is free of charge but you're invited to enjoy one of our iconic Bomber Burgers or other refreshments. Other activities include...

- experience military vehicles & re-enactments
- wide range of interesting exhibits, artifacts and photographs
- explore the former WWII Control Tower & Nissen Hut

For more information contact us at info@448bombgroup.co.uk



Volunteer Spotlight

In the last newsletter we promised to introduce you to our team of volunteers. For this edition, meet Barry and Ken who have been members of the team, looking after the Tower for a very long time. They specialize in maintenance but extend to pretty much everything it takes or has taken to keep the Tower going...



BARRY

Hi, my name is Barry and I have been involved with the Seething Tower for the past 22 years. But first of all, let me tell you how this came about. I was getting to know the area after moving up from Kent, and while I was on a visit to Thorpe Abbots I met a chap called Tony Jeckells who was also visiting TA, we seemed to gel instantly. He mentioned that he was involved with Seething Tower and invited me along. SO, on the following Thursday I made my way to the tower. Tony took me out the Nissen hut and asked me to climb on to some scaffolding and paint the ceiling! Now, anybody who knows me also knows me and heights do not go together-I get a nosebleed on the first rung of the ladder. Tony had disappeared by then, so not wanting to loose face on my first day, I lashed together two broomsticks and jammed a roller on top - that way I found that I could paint the ceiling without having to leave the floor. *continued on next page*

KEN

Hi! I am Ken Woodgate. I joined Station 146 Tower Association in the summer of 1991, along with my wife Sue and youngest son Chris, ten years old. Chris and I had been to Thorpe Abbots, 100 BG, in the morning for a visit. We called in at Seething in the afternoon. Pat Everson said, I must introduce you to Terry Bidwell. Like myself, Terry was a self-employed builder—the rest is history. With more than a love of history and old listed buildings, I was soon part of the small team helping to restore the tower to what we see today. We met as volunteers on a Sunday morning in those days, after the summer open days were over. One of my first jobs with Terry, who incidentally became a great friend and work colleague, was installing the serving hatch in the kitchen and helping to build the counter in the American room. It was then that I realised that concrete and hard brick buildings were not the places to be in the deep winter months, damp and extremely cold. *continued on next page*



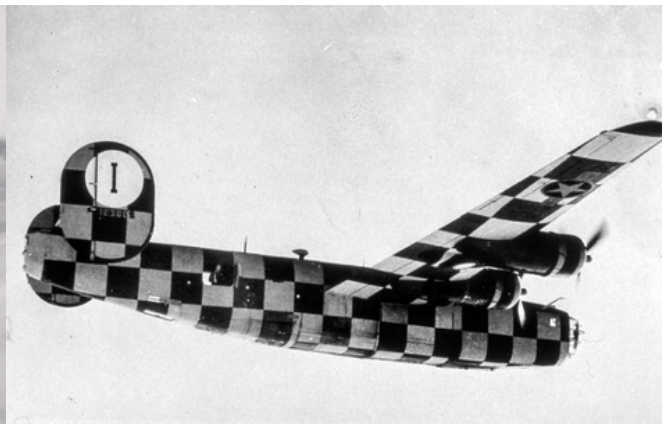
Volunteer Spotlight

BARRY, CONTD.

Long story short, to promote me to head painter, (I should point out here that Tony and myself were the only volunteers at the tower at that time.) I still use that particular “bodge” and if you see me in action, you will notice that I still get more paint on me than the thing I am painting! The last 22 years have flown by and I still enjoy every visit to the tower. But perhaps the best part is meeting old friends and making new ones on our open days. Some wise man once said, “a stranger is just a friend you haven’t meet yet.” So true, and I look forward to meeting you on our next open day.

KEN, CONTD.

In 1992, Sue and I were asked to join the committee and so began out long association with the tower. It was in the early years (1993/94) that we erected scaffolding and stripped the previous external rendering, which was showing signs of failing, right back to the old London Brick Company shell. At the same time, we rebuilt the southwest corner of the tower, which had decided to part company from the rest of the building. Finally, two new coats of render were applied to walls and olive drab paint. The next major task was to manufacture and fix a new flight of stairs to the top of the tower roof from the balcony, something I was told would be impossible to do, followed by replacing the railings to the roof and asphaltting the balcony concrete. Most of this work was carried out in the closed period before the summer open days. I also remember laying carpet tiles to Pat’s room and Terry and I installing display cases. The glass house/radio shack was the final construction job to be completed. My first veterans’ reunion also took place in those early days, which was something I shall never forget. Other lasting memories are the wonderful atmosphere of the open days. Washing up cups and plates in the new kitchen, Margaret Wickham’s ever popular catering. Organizing fundraising dances in air of the tower funds—the 50-year anniversary of the end of World War II at the Jubilee Hall—Loddon especially sticks in my mind. A film crew attended from the states, the whole evening being filmed and beamed back to America. It helped by being a founder member of a very busy 8-piece function band. The monthly winter evening slide shows and talks at Brooke Village Hall. At this time Sue started a junior members group. 80+ junior members received their own newsletter, competitions on open days and each received a birthday card. Having been members now for over 30 years, its truly rewarding to still be involved with this lasting memorial. Many good and loyal friends have come and gone over the years, but their spirit and memories are not forgotten. Seething Control Tower continues to live on through the new members and officers and all those still involved from the past years, who give thanks to the men of the 448th BG and their supreme sacrifice for our freedom.



SEETHING CONTROL TOWER MUSEUM, JUST SOME OF OUR TEAM:

PRESIDENT
JOHN FULLER OBE
VICE PRESIDENT
PATRICIA EVERSON
CHAIRMAN
RICHARD NASH

VICE CHAIRMAN
CHRIS THACKER
CURATOR
ANDY WELLS
US LIAISON
JEFF BRETT

VOLUNTEERS:
JEAN NASH
JOHN LEONARD
PAUL BEASLEY

VOLUNTEERS:
EMMA WELLS
CARL HEFFER
JOHN FORD
BARRY PAY
KEN WOODGATE



Pat's Piece

Pat Everson started 'Pat's Piece' in the original Station 146 Tower Association newsletters as a way of telling the history of the 448th Bomb Group and their time at Seething. In honor of her work, we will continue to provide stories and history of the 448th Bomb Group and the brave men who served so selflessly. We hope to share this legacy through the continuation of 'Pat's Piece.'

In 1942 preparations began in small rural villages of South Norfolk to build an airfield, houses demolished, and families moved out, land compulsory purchased from local landowners, they were told when they could work in fields. Lorries loaded with gravel from local gravel pits were rushing through the villages, Irish labourers and others involved in the construction were billeted with local people. John Laing & Sons were the firm building it, with 3 runways surrounded by a perimeter track with concrete pads for a/c parking, '2 T2 Hangers, the Control Tower, Headquarters Site, and many other sites and buildings needed to house, treat, train, and feed the 3,000 airmen and their B24 Liberator bombers. At RAF Station 258 in August 1943 there was a small complement of RAF based there while some construction work was coming to an end.

Reginald J Dunn had been based in other units then assigned September 1943 to Seething from Metfield where he had set up a telephone switchboard and teleprinters in their Operations block.

"I was met by a RAF Officer who directed me to my barracks area and informed me what my duties were to be in the Control Tower, at that time there were very few RAF personnel and no American personnel had yet arrived. I remember the next morning; a colleague and I were given the key to the Control Tower, and we walked – no vehicles or even cycles at that time- somewhat apprehensively to the Tower. We unlocked the door and went in, and up the staircase which was to be the workplace for some months or even years to come. We had no idea how long our stay would be before we were moved on elsewhere. Our task was to prepare the Control Tower for the arrival of the USAAF 58th Station Complement Squadron and the 448th Bomb Group (H). We had about four or five days to do this work which included setting up some RAF equipment which was to be used in conjunction with the USAAF's own equipment. The 58th were later than we expected which meant we had a day or so to relax and have a look round and acquire a bicycle. After the 58th arrived we were instructed that from then on we were to take our orders from the USAAF's Control Tower Officer 1st Lt Wallace Bollscheiler who had been in England since December 1942. We found it difficult to either spell or say his surname fortunately we felt more relaxed in his presence than a RAF officer and he told us to call him Wally which was a great relief to us. It was the first time I had been under the control of an American officer, and it was to turn out a very happy experience and with all future contact with American officers."



Pat's Piece

William H Searles was the Commanding Officer of the 58th Station Complement Squadron.

"We were the first Yankee troops at Seething just one Yank a Lt Col Gage on base when we got there. The station was in a hurry-up construction period and my unit of 6 officers and 150 enlisted men were quartered and rationed by the RAF. We established our own mess later and were soon involved in the many services required to prepare the base for the combat unit we were well acquainted with the drome operations by the time the 448th arrived. The runways were being laid at the time of our arrival, as we were so close to the North Sea, we often had emergency landings by disabled aircraft returning from missions. Each time we brought one in the Clerk of the Works would have a leaping fit for fear one would crack up on the not yet completed runways and delay his progress for future construction! I cannot readily remember how many crippled aircraft landed, but it was far too many for the Clerk of Works. I do recall at least 3 Yank fighter aircraft and 1 Lancaster and a Mossie. I remember how wonderfully clear and quiet the nights were- how the sound of sirens carried so far – how the guinea hens always alerted to air raids in the vicinity, even before we could hear the sirens – the problem of becoming accustomed to the total black-out, which we were not subjected to in the States. I have realized for a long time just how arrogant we must have been to you fine people, but I can truthfully say that I have never been treated with such kindness and dignity as I was during my 2 years at Seething. I was invited into local homes many times, for a holiday or just a social evening and I was made most welcome. Soon after our arrival, the men in my Squadron established a bridgehead at a pub in Loddon (The Swan) as I recall, it was about 4-mile bike ride into Loddon and I have ridden it many nights in the pitch black, guided by instinct and a little bit of luck. My office was in the administrative block, but I spent most of my time in the operations block and the control tower."



Carl D Baldwin.

"The 58th was a diversified outfit and since I was classed as a 405 (clerk) I was assigned to the control tower and worked there until February 1945. At first we had a lot of things to get used to, first the language, although we spoke English your brogue and nomenclature was different. We had to learn your money- at first when the boys played poker; they threw pound notes around like dollar bills. At that time a pound was worth four dollars and we had to drink warm beer! I found the natives very friendly people.



Pat's Piece

My duties in the control tower was to keep track of all the aircraft coming in and going out, including times of arrival and departure, and filled out clearances for aircraft from other fields. We had to have a weather clearance and we would get that downstairs in the weather room. Our weather officer would stick his head out of the window then write down the weather on the clearance. It always made him happy when we told him we could have done that! There were many exciting days in the tower; the invasion we had missions scheduled all day, one right after the other. Someone had been a little careless and a 500lb bomb fell through the bomb bay of a B24 luckily it wasn't fused so it didn't go off. On another mission about every aircraft was loaded to take off when we were socked in, fog you know. Wing Headquarters said put them up at any cost, our C.O. would only let experienced pilots take off the others were ordered to return to their hardstands. In February 1945 I was transferred to the 715 th Squadron 448th and worked Squadron Operations until the end of the war"

John L Ludden.

"I worked as a ground gunner and spent many hours on the roof of the control tower behind the 50 calibre gun mounted there. I saw many red flares coming from those B24s even some B17s indicating they had trouble. I also flew 5 missions as a waist gunner and had two aborts. I loved the countryside and all those churches in the area. I can remember a farmer who gave us eggs in exchange for some butter and sugar."

Raymond J Schwartz.

"As an airfield controller, most of our time was spent in the black and white caravan at the touchdown part on the runway. When radio silence was maintained air traffic was controlled by Aldis lamp signals and flares from Very pistols. We were in telephone contact with the control tower. Some of our duties were to refuse aircraft landing for various reasons one was wheels were retracted or several other ground movements. We were on duty 24 hours and 24 hours off when there was no traffic at night we, and I ended up slept in the bunkhouse in the Tower. There were times that we worked with the alert crew, one of their duties was to use the 'Follow Me' jeep and guide visiting aircraft to the parking area and to light kerosene flares along the runway. After the aircraft left on a mission, we had very little to do until they returned or one returned with trouble. One day we heard a fighter plane above the low overcast with a stuttering engine so we contacted the control tower and we were ordered to fire flares into the sky – minutes later the P51 landed and the pilot personally came out to the caravan to thank us as he was lost and out of gas when he saw our flares. There were many exciting moments too numerous to mention. As airfield controllers we were rated as sergeants but there were no openings so we ratings were always as corporals!"

William S Schwinn.

"The people who were in the Complement Squadron were all ground personell and I ended up in the control tower.

The Tower consisted of two sections, and my first job was Airman of the Watch. I had a desk with 2 or 3 telephones on it, and in the morning when a mission was to run, whoever was in charge of the mission had to bring the paper work to me. One of the papers would have a layout of the formation that they would be flying that day. If you dug further, you would come up with the target, which was always a secret. Inside the Tower was a huge flight board all marked off. You had to fill in the spaces with the pilots name; the aircraft number; the estimated take-off; the actual take off; the estimated time of arrival; and the actual time of arrival. This board was used to count the ones that were lost and identify who they were. Once in a while they thought they had lost some, but of course some had malfunctions and landed in fields and couldn't get all the way back. We used to track the air raids and there was an intercom or PA system behind the desk. They would telephone from some Defence Centre and give you the markings of their location from a map and grid. You would plot them to see if they were coming your way; as they approached, they would announce how close they were over a loudspeaker. By they got to a 30 mile radius, they would be identified and the whole thing was for nothing.



Pat's Piece

We plotted a lot of airplane movements, and the only two times we got bombed they didn't track them. Both times were at night, and I don't ever remember tracking one at night. The enlisted men who worked in the tower did so upstairs, and in the flight room an enlisted man was the radio operator. When I first arrived, there was not a lot of radio use because they didn't want to give anything away- it was restricted stuff- but after a while it opened up.

There was a Captain in charge of the Tower and there were a couple of lieutenants. We worked 8-hour shifts and we always worked with the same radio operator, working days and nights together. Sometimes it was very hard to stay awake at night. The other part of the Tower enlisted personnel was a group that worked outside, called the Alert Crew. Their primary job was to check the runways. The missions, started very early in the morning, particularly in the winter, we would get calls to see if there was any ice or snow on the runways, or anything that shouldn't be there before the mission started. To see if all was o.k. the alert crew went around checking in their jeeps.

At other times when weather conditions changed the mission might be put on stand-down. Since they couldn't use radio, we used to jump in the jeeps and tear off down the perimeter track and go and tell the pilots personally what was going on. I remember the big snow in 1944 - we did a lot of shoveling of it on the base that winter!

If someone were wounded on a mission, the ambulance (we called them the Meat Wagons) would park alongside the road by the perimeter track near the tower. We would sometimes get involved in helping the wounded from the airplane. This was one thing I guess, that really brought the war to you, making it a reality instead of something you read about. It wasn't pleasant, but you tried not to let things like that stay with you too long.

I think I had it really easy. The only two times I really had gut-burning fears was when the base was being bombed and once when a V-2 rocket hit the base. I suppose our billets were about a mile from the flight line and this thing hit just off the perimeter track. I thought it was going to collapse the barracks.

Usually when a new man came to the Tower, he was assigned to the watch detail. Most of them worked it for a while and then asked to be transferred to the Alert Crew. There was a lot more freedom and the job was more interesting. When we were on the night crew, we had the front room in the Control Tower for sleeping. Usually there were 4 or 5 of us on duty at night. I stayed there for a while (it was nice in the winter), but then got out and joined the Alert Crew. I stayed there until the end of the war. "



Pat's Piece

Carl C Wunderlich.

"I was part of the 58th Station Complement Squadron which arrived first at Seething R.A.F. Personnel had charge of the field, and it was they who cooked for us during those early months. I shall never forget the delicious Yorkshire pudding and the darker coloured bread with orange marmalade. They even talked us coffee drinkers into the habit of the tea wagon and it's baked goodies (it really didn't take much talking on their part) and after 40 years of trying I still can't make tea taste as good as that.

We were living in the small group of Quonset huts (about 6) each holding about 12 men. It wasn't long after we arrived that we experienced our first German strafing. No one was hurt, but it did shake us up a bit. It didn't take us long to recognize that peculiar throb of the German aircraft.

I was a radio operator and mechanic in the Control Tower. We installed the runway lights and set up the radio equipment in the tower. There was a hanger to the left and rear of the Control Tower and in between the hanger and the tower there was a shed which was used to recharge the batteries used for the runway lights.



There were steps that went up to the roof to reach that small glass shed which was used as a radio extension every now and again during the summer months.

I am reminded of the time a British Lancaster made an emergency landing. Before I came on duty, I wanted to see what it was like inside. I crawled up the ladder and I only took a quick look, because even though they had removed the body there was enough there to realize the poor tail gunner never made it.

We spent evenings at the "Mermaid" (we Americans had a much more vulgar name for it). I shall always remember Mrs. Barker (Landlady) calling "Time, ladies and gentlemen, please", and Mac playing the piano in the other room and everyone gathering around singing. Mac transferred to the 448th and was lost in a raid over Germany. He was one of ours (the 58th) and so we all felt very bad about it.

I can recall going to several dances in a hall down the road from the "Mermaid". I think the most popular number was called "Polly Wolly D". On second thought, maybe I should have just described it as "put your right foot in, put your right foot out".

Looking back, it must have seemed that we noisy Americans were taking over your country and there didn't seem much you could do about it. However, I have come to realize that by the time we arrived, you had gone through the worst of it all and had won your battle. I shall always admire the British people for their courage and determination through it all"



