

## BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 17 – NOVEMBER 2024



### Local Airmen Win Distinction

## Welcome

Ladies & Gents,

Welcome to the November edition of the *HistoryFare Bulletin*.

As always, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at a HistoryFare event soon.

Brian



**February 6<sup>th</sup>** – Monthly Talk – Polish Bomber Squadrons - RAF Ingham Heritage Centre.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>** – Monthly Talk – Leicester Cathedral Memorial Chapel – Rebecca Hale – Leicester Cathedral.

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Monthly Talk – WW2 Aerial Photo Reconnaissance – Jim Blackwood RAF Wyton Heritage Centre.

To keep up to date with forthcoming HistoryFare events and to book a place, visit my website <https://historyfare.co.uk/events/>

## Raffle



Many thanks to those of you who have supported the monthly raffles by donating prizes for use the draws, they have all been gratefully appreciated.

If you would like to donate prizes to future raffles, biscuits, chocolates, wine, beer etc are all acceptable proving they are in date! Books and artwork etc will also be accepted.

## HistoryFare Gift Vouchers



Don't forget Christmas is just around the corner and are you still looking for the perfect present for a friend or family member?

We'll look no further, HistoryFare gift vouchers are the perfect gift for friends, family and colleagues who love getting outdoors, discovering history, or exploring new places.

HistoryFare provide guided walks and talks across the historic market town of Melton Mowbray.

Give a HistoryFare gift voucher as a give they'll love!

For more information, see my website: [HistoryFare Gift Vouchers - HistoryFare](https://historyfare.co.uk/gift-vouchers)



## Local Airmen Win Distinction



The photo on the front cover of this bulletin and also opposite appeared on the front page of the Melton Mowbray Times published on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1944 with the headline "Local Airmen Win Distinction".

The Officer in the centre of the photo is Flying Officer Frederick William Huckerby and he is photographed with his crew from No 76 Squadron at RAF Holme on Spalding Moore.

He was the second son of Mr & Mrs William and Gertrude Huckerby of Long Clawson. Frederick was born 14<sup>th</sup> July 1914 and was educated at the Long Clawson school followed by the Bennett College. After leaving school, Frederick joined the Mounted Section of the Lancashire Police Force and served with them for seven years until the outbreak of war.

His maternal grandfather was Mr Randolph M Smith who fought with the Middlesex Regiment during the Zulu War.

On the outbreak of war, Frederick volunteered to join the RAF as NCO aircrew and underwent flying training in the USA, where during his leisure time, he was a member of a concert party engaged in raising money for the American Red Cross.

After completing his training in the States, he came back to the UK and was posted to No 1663 Heavy Conversion Unit at RAF Rufforth, learning to fly the Halifax bomber.

On the night of 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> November 1943, Sergeant Huckerby was the Captain/Pilot of Halifax DJ983 on a training flight. His crew on that sortie were:

Navigator - Sgt Walter Henry Mustoe RAFVR (1330717).

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt Douglas Albert Jones RAFVR (1435327).

Flight Engineer - Sgt James A Duff RAFVR (1568587).

Air Gunner - Sgt Eric Basil Upton RAFVR (1809229).

Air Gunner - Sgt Derek Norman John Scott RAFVR (1805168).

Halifax DJ983 took off from Rufforth airfield at 21.40hrs to undertake a training flight and on their return to Rufforth the undercarriage would not lower properly and the aircraft had to make a belly landing made there at 02.50hrs which badly damaged the aircraft. The crew all survived uninjured.

Later the same month, the crew were posted to 76 Squadron at RAF Holme on Spalding Moore.

Frederick Huckerby received a commission to the rank of Pilot Officer on probation (171768) on 7th February 1944 and rose to Flying Officer six months later.

For service with 76 Squadron he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross which was Gazetted on 14th November 1944. He and the Wireless Op, Sgt Jones (who also received a



commission) were posted to 617 Squadron on 25th August 1944. Huckerby was posted to 1660 HCU in February 1945.

Another Grandson of the late Randolph Smith, was also awarded the DFC, he was Flying Officer J A Smith of Australia and whilst in this country he made his home base at Dovecote Farm in Long Clawson with his uncle and aunt Mr & Mrs Harry Smith.

Another DFC recipient was Acting Flight Lieutenant Ronald Arthur Squire of Great Dalby. Flt Lt squire was educated at the Melton Modern Boys School and he joined the RAF in 1940 and was commissioned in 1943. He lived in Great Dalby for a number of years and played cricket for the village team.

The final award was a Distinguished Flying Medal awarded to Flight Sergeant Josphe William Naylor of Wymondham. Josphe was joined the RAF in 1942 as aircrew passing out as an air gunner. He was awarded his DFM whilst serving with the RAF Pathfinders No 7 Squadron at RAF Oakington and completed 63 operation missions over enemy territory.

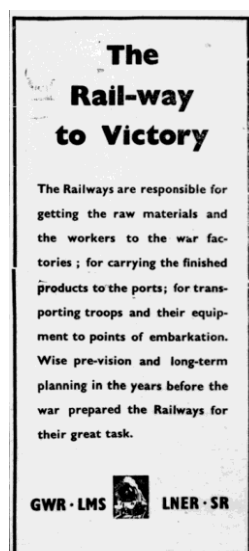
Prior to joining the RAF, he was employed on the Stapleford Estate as gardener to Lord Gretton.

## British Railways

At this time of year, there were many different schemes to send Christmas parcels to loved ones serving away from home in His Majesty's Forces.

Many of the mothers, wives and girlfriends were all busy knitting woollen garments for their loved ones as part of the their 'volunteer' activities for the relevant comforts fund.

The railways were seen as a key asset for the war effort and as such were campaigning to try and reduce the number of Christmas parcels sent via the railways. They had posters created and adverts placed at Railway Stations, parcel offices and in newspapers to try and encourage fewer parcels at Christmas.



*Mount Pleasant Parcel Sorting Office London*

## Christmas Tree Festival



If you love Christmas, why not pop along to this year's Christmas Tree Festival in the beautiful Grade I listed St Mary's Church where HistoryFare will have a tree on display again.

Admission to the festival costs £3 per adult and accompanied children are free.

The Christmas Tree Festival will run from Friday 6th to Tuesday 10th December. Last admission will be 1 hour before closing time.

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> 10am – 9pm

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> 10am – 5pm (songs of Praise with Hathern Brass Band at 6:30pm)

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> 10am – 8pm

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm.

## Speakers Wanted



If you can do a talk, or you know of someone that can do a talk, please get in touch as I am on the lookout for speakers for our 2025 itinerary.

You don't have to be a professional speaker, just someone that is passionate about their subject.

**Thank you for your support!**

## Till next time!

Please feel free to share this bulletin with whoever you think may be interested.

**For any enquiries or to submit articles, please email Brian at [meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)**