

## **The Bardney Lancaster Memorial**

In 1980, Jim Brookbank the Chairman of IX(B) Squadron Association which had been formed in June 1976 together with some of the original committee members - Norman Sirman, Norman Wells, George Pocock and Ron Goebel (Ron was the bomb aimer in the crew whose wireless operator George Thompson was awarded the VC on New Year's Day 1945) had been working hard to find a suitable site for a memorial to those who lost their lives whilst serving on IX(B) Squadron in the Second World War. The Squadron had been based at RAF Bardney and the Association Committee members had all served there from April 1943 until a few months after VE Day, so it was decided that Bardney would be a fitting place. The Bardney Parish Council agreed and asked the IX(B) Squadron Association to find a site and present their plans. A site within the grounds of the School House Museum which backed onto the village green together with a small room within the museum for a display was offered to them and both were accepted, and the hard work began to design the Memorial. Ron Goebel had trained as an architect after the war so he volunteered to design the Memorial. The design and works drawings were approved by Bardney Parish Council, so works started straight away. Jim Brookbank and Max Caven asked their friend – Ron Williams at British Aerospace Hatfield about a propeller. Ron Williams agreed to supply a Lancaster propeller and the memorial stand free of charge.



*Bardney School Museum*

Jim Brookbank organised his merry men and after a few months everything was ready for the dedication service which took place on Sunday 19 October 1980. The Association had placed notices in national newspapers and invitations had been sent to all known ex IX(B) Squadron personnel. The response took everyone by surprise, as the queue of people entering the church went down the road and round the corner. The dedication service was conducted by the Rev. Ron File, Rector of Bardney and was attended by more than 300 people including some from Australia, Canada, USA and Norway. The IX(B) Squadron Standard

Party attended from nearby RAF Waddington. After the church service the congregation went to the memorial for the dedication service which was led by the Rev. Denys Evans, Chaplain of the IX(B) Squadron Association. The ceremony included flypasts by the BBMF Lancaster PA474 as well as four other aircraft. After the ceremony the IX(B) Squadron Association exhibition was opened in the School House Museum.



*The dedication service - Sunday 19 October 1980*

Sadly, the charity who owned the Grade 2 listed School House could not afford the upkeep and extensive repairs that it required and decided to sell the property. The new owners did not want the memorial in their garden and agreed for it to be moved. The Parish Council gave permission to re-site the Memorial on the village green and work started in 1989. Unfortunately the new owner started the work then stopped and confirmed that he would no longer be able to fund the operation. The unfinished memorial sat on its new site of the village green for some months. Local historian Roger Audis took on the work and did an outstanding job replicating the original design. He completed the work in time for the memorial to be re-dedicated by the Bishop of Lincoln on Remembrance Sunday in November 1992.



*Re-dedication - The Bishop of Lincoln on the left, then Roger Audis, with Jim Brookbank in the centre.*

On 14 April 1993, Roger Audis held a '50 Years to the Day' event to mark exactly 50 years to the day that IX(B) Squadron arrived at RAF Bardney. The event was attended by over 400 people and Roger Audis managed to get sponsorship and finished up with a profit on the day, which was put into a fund held by the Parish Council solely for the upkeep of the memorial. This money enabled him to plant the hedge and garden shrubs and install a floodlight which illuminates the memorial throughout the winter period. The hedges and garden are now mature and together with the memorial it is considered to be one of the best RAF memorials in the Bomber County of Lincolnshire. Much discussion was undertaken within the IX(B) Squadron Association about the future of the memorial and it was decided to ask Bardney Parish Council to adopt it in perpetuity. This request was accepted so the memorial is secure for the future.



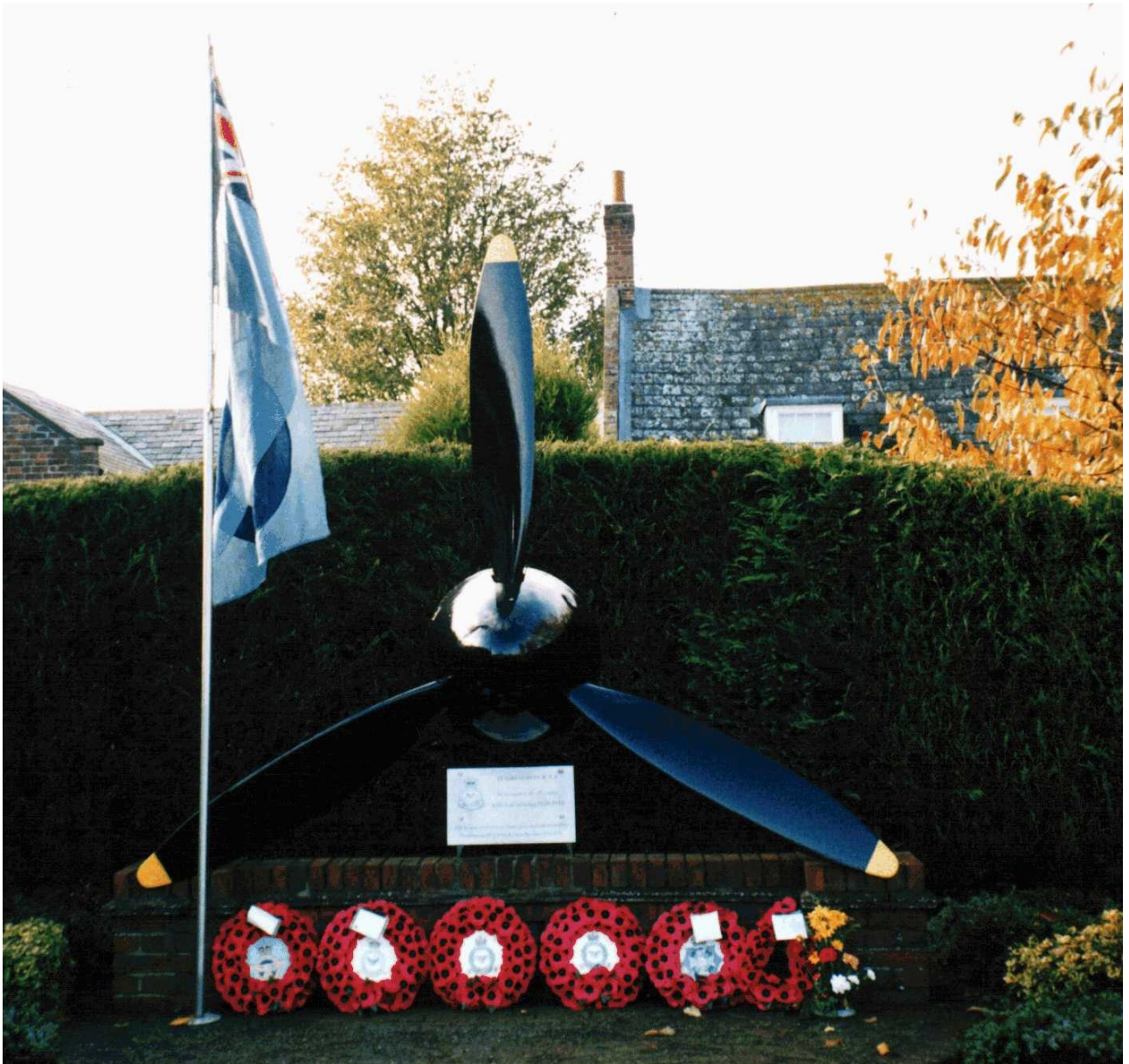
*Warrant Officer Gerald Victor Prettejohns – Lancaster Flight Engineer*





*The IX(B) Squadron Standard Party and Memorial on Remembrance Day 2002*

We are indebted to Jim Brookbank and other original committee members - Norman Sirman, Norman Wells, George Pocock and Ron Goebel for their leadership in forming the IX(B) Squadron Association and creating the IX(B) Squadron Memorial in tribute to those Squadron members who failed to return from operations or lost their life on the ground.



The IX(B) Squadron Memorial, Bardney village following the Remembrance Service of 2004.