



# "STICKY FINGERS"

## IPMS HORNCHURCH - NEWSLETTER

Dear Members

### Exhibitions

The following is information I have received today 24<sup>th</sup> June in connection with the change of date I announced at the last club meeting, of the Model Show being presented by the Romford Model Railway Club along with the Sydney Russell School PTA. This show will now be on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 1997 from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the Sydney Russell School, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, Essex.

I have been promised at least a 20ft frontage with a table at the rear and chairs. This will give us the opportunity to put on a really good display. I understand Alan Wright has done a large diorama just for this occasion. I will prepare route maps for you all a little nearer the date.

### Notice

I have just learnt today 24<sup>th</sup> June that Mick Pitts was in hospital, and has now lost the tops of his middle and index fingers, as the result of his works accident some time ago. I am sure you will wish him well in coming to grips with this loss, I do hope this is not too much of a handicap in our hobby. Get well soon mate.

### "A Million To One Coincidence"

I served in the RAF as a Signals Teleprinter Operator at RAF West Malling, Kent from July 1949 to July 1951. If you were in the Signals Section you always worked shifts or as it is known "watches". This kind of duty gave you time to yourself during the day.

On the occasion I am referring to I was off duty watching 2 RTO (Radio Telephone Operators) friends of mine working in the Control Tower on a dull and misty day. They were doing a QGH Flight, which means it was a controlled descent through cloud flight, in which the RTOs recorded every word the pilot said to the Control Tower and what the Flight Controller and radar operators said back to the pilot. This should bring the plane right down to the end of the runway, in this case at West Malling it was Runway 29.

The plane on this flight was a Meteor 4 and the pilot non-other than the Station Commander of West Malling a Group Captain by rank. The flight took some 20 minutes to complete, but it didn't end as it should have, because near the end of the duration of the flight there was a long silence from the pilot, and a dull explosion at the end of it.

We learnt later that the plane had dived into the ground near Tunbridge Wells.

With the death of the Station Commander this caused many problems to all the airmen serving at RAF West Malling, resulting in a funeral party, guards of honour on the runway made up of all ranks. Visiting high ranking officers, the Central Band of the RAF in attendance etc., and tons of



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spit and polish. This all went very smoothly but it took several weeks before things settled down to normal again :-

Now all this I had forgotten about until recently, when a friend of mine from our railway club gave me some up-to-date aircraft magazines to read. One of them was the Aeroplane Monthly dated April 1997, and on page 32 there was an article called "To Russia With Love", about the RAF Wing sent to Russia in 1941, made up of 81 Squadron and 134 Squadron of Hurricanes (type not known), to help support the Russian Air Force. Whilst there some of the Squadron officers received Russian war decorations i.e. "The Order of Lenin", this was later amended to read "The Order of The Red Banner".

At the top of page 34 is a photograph of a Wing Commander and the caption next to the photograph says "New Zealander - Wg.Cdr H.N.G. Ramsbottom - Isherwood was awarded The Order of Lenin, he was killed flying a meteor 4 over Tunbridge Wells on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1950."

**"THIS WAS THE OFFICER COMMANDING OF MY RAF STATION"**

**KEN**