

The Life of Stan Fielding, 100 years old on 26th July 2017

Stan was born on 26th July 1917 in Rochdale and grew up in difficult times in the later stages of the war and the years of austerity that followed. At school he was usually in the top ten in his class but excelled at sport and made the town schoolboys football and cricket teams, but that was the end of his talent!

After school he had two jobs as junior clerks, the second of which was at the Gasworks, and here he accepted a challenge from the 'tar-men' to climb the girders of the gasometer and walk across the domed top which was at its maximum height. Health and safety was not known in those days!

He then agreed with his parents that a police job would be good, so he joined the Lancashire Constabulary as a cadet and then, at the age of 18, trained as constable at Lancaster Castle and became a fully-fledged constable.

The police service was a restricted occupation during the war, just like the services, but, with the loss of pilots during the Battle of Britain, the Government decreed that policemen could volunteer for pilot duties, so Stan trained in Canada and found himself in Coastal Command flying Beaufighters. The first assignment was in Cornwall on anti-submarine patrols in the Bay of Biscay. Finally Bomber Command destroyed the submarine pens in Brest, so Germany moved its bases to Den Helder, and Stan's Squadron was moved to Lincolnshire doing dawn raids on that dock area.

Finally when Russia came into the war and we were sending cargo ships round the North Cape to Murmansk, Germany based its submarine fleet in the Norwegian Fjords, so Stan was moved to Banff (Aberdeenshire) to join a Wing, moved on to Mosquitos and finished his tour of ops attacking whatever was sighted in those waters. He was then moved to Ferry Command flying Spitfires to Italy. By now he was a Flight Lieutenant. He witnessed many losses of comrades and is grateful he survived.

Stan met his Wife Joan in 1940 and they were married soon after he had joined the RAF. They were blessed with two daughters, Carole and Dianne, who each had seven schools because of their father's movements as you will see in a moment, but both qualified as teachers. Stan and Joan had some 60 years of life together and it was a very happy and eventful time but sadly Joan died in 2004.

At the end of his RAF life Stan returned to the Lancashire Constabulary as a constable, plodding the beat, but eventually promotions came along, each time with a move of house, and he progressed through the ranks finally attaining the rank of Chief Superintendent at Rochdale. It was at this point that the Borough Police Forces were disbanded and became part of the bigger Forces, so Rochdale Borough Police became part of the Rochdale Division, doubling his responsibility.

Stan retired at the end of 1970 and took up an appointment with the Ministry of Defence based at Woodford airfield (BAe), finally retiring at 65.

Some 6 years ago Stan moved to Boughton Hall to be nearer to his elder daughter and her husband. He then joined U3A and has given one lecture and hopes to be invited again.

Stan has been a Rotarian for 52 years, is a Paul Harris Fellow, awarded for outstanding service to the Communities of the World and regularly lectures to raise money for Rotary charities. He is currently a member of Chester Deva Rotary Club and a life member of both Rochdale Rotary and Probus Clubs.

To celebrate his 100 years 120 guests, including his families from Canada and South Africa, gathered at Boughton Hall on 31st July and heard speeches by the Lord Mayor of Chester, a senior RAF Officer from Valley (Anglesey) and senior personnel from the Lancashire Constabulary and Rotary. Stan suitably responded.