

## THE PILOT'S SON

A few years ago, Jean helped us find the remains of Mustang I which had crashed in 1943 in Northern Brittany. Among the parts we found (picture 1) there was the clock of the dashboard, which had stopped at the exact time when the aircraft crashed (picture2), a moving testimony but also a symbol of the drama that had occurred there.

Jean was 16 at that time, he had seen the aircraft wreck immediately after the crash and the pilot's body which had been thrown out of the aircraft. Jean told us that that this young English pilot was the father of a young boy, aged only of a few years.

## LOOKING FOR THE PILOT'S SON

The pilot's name was Anthony Willcock, and once the reasons of the crash had been established on the web after a long search, the idea which came to mind was to find his son –Christopher- to remit him the remains of his father's plane.

But the task was enormous: I was aware that I was looking for a needle in a haystack.

I had launched a couple of « messages in a bottle » : some mails to Royal Air Force pilots associations, several letters to friends living in London, « posts » on specialized websites, with no result. I obtained no answer, until this day when...

## FEBRUARY 2012 : I RECEIVE A MAIL...

Although I was on holidays, I always have my « blackberry » with me, I glance at the phone and saw that a mail was sent from England by a unknown person. It said:

«Sir, I have seen your mail in which you are looking for Christopher Willcock. This person is my father, he lives in Oxford, he is very interested in your researches, his email is here after, please contact him»;

I went wild with joy and as soon as I got home, I grabbed my computer. A correspondence started between us, strong and very personal. I was incredibly lucky: I was looking for « Christopher Willcock » but the person to whom I was writing was named « Klim Mc Pherson ». The explanation was quite simple, like many English people, Christopher had decided to use his second first name, and being brought up by his father in law, Mr. Mc Pherson, he had chosen to use his name. It was by pure luck that one of his cousins making genealogy researches had read my« post » on the website « RAFCommand » and had forwarded my contact details to Klim's daughter who contacted me.

Klim explained to me that he was very young when he lost his father and he never had a chance to actually know him. He ignored the circumstances of his death. After I told him of my findings, he wrote to me very quickly: « I want to meet you and Jean. When could I come to Brittany? »

## THE MEETING

So, I organized a meeting: Klim, Jean and myself.

Three months later, with a few close friends, we were waiting for Klim, somewhere in Brittany. At the meeting time, one car arrived, then two, then three! Klim had decided to come with his entire family, his three children, and the grand children: they were thirteen!

As we would expect it, there was plenty of emotion (picture 3). Jean took us to the very place where Klim's father lost his life almost 70 years ago (picture 4). He described to us what he had seen when he was young and he showed the place where the Mustang was and where the pilot's body laid.

Klim explained to his grandchildren, who listened with a great deal of attention (picture 5).

Back to the car, I gave to Klim the remains of his father's aircraft, including the dashboard clock (picture 6). The journalists took pictures of us and we went for lunch in the next village.

There is something that Klim ignored: I had called the mayor of the village a few weeks earlier, asking her to prepare a reception, and this would be a surprise for Klim.

Upon our arrival, in front of the Memorial, waiting for us were the village councilors, the war veterans, the commander of the Landivisiau Air Force base, many inhabitants of the village, (picture 7) etc.. ;

## THE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

After a couple of speeches, Klim realized what he had to do, reveal the plaque that had been carved in the memory of his father on the War Memorial. He did it in front of the silent assembly (picture 8); And a picture was taken with all his grandchildren, the Mayor in front of the memorial (picture 9) ;

Then, the Mayor invited the assistance at the village hall. Pictures brought by Klim were shown and one was actually striking by the stunning resemblance between Anthony Willcock and his grandson (picture10).

An article in the local newspapers related these events (see ..).

Then, a friendly lunch took place in the village inn, Klim, his family and the village people, gathered together (photo11). During this lunch, Klim showed us many documents concerning his father's disappearance (picture 12);

This is how this intense day ended, a day that will always have a space in our memory and, as our new English friend would say: « A day to remember ! »

As a matter of fact, in line with the target we have set ourselves, our researches allowed an English pilot who died for our freedom to live again and to immortalize his memory for his son, his grandchildren, and for each of us.