

# Fowler Pavilion - Some internal photos taken of the installed Fowler Display





Vickers Wellington Bomber  
Range: 1,500 miles / Payload: 2,000kg / Crew: 5 or 6



Avro Lancaster Bomber  
Range: 2,000 miles / Payload: 8,000kg / Crew: 7



Douglas DC3



## THE DEREK FOWLER STORY

PICTURE COURTESY OF THE DEREK FOWLER STORY

The life and times of the benefactors of this pavilion

The Fowler Pavilion: This building was made possible through a substantial bequest from the estate of 'Yola Peter' Fowler, in memory of her husband, Derek Colin Fowler OF (G35-40). These displays reflect, in particular, Peter Fowler's wish that there should be a proper memorial to Derek's distinguished war service in the Royal Air Force. They go on to explore Derek's fascinating career as a private pilot to a Greek shipping millionaire, and to show the strong bond of friendship that existed between Derek and a number of his school-friends leading, in retirement, to a series of annual reunions for those friends and their wives, hosted by Derek and Peter at some of Suffolk's finest restaurants.

Derek Colin Fowler 1912-2008 / Yola Mica Augusta 'Peter' Fowler 1909-2014

THE DEREK FOWLER STORY  
The life and times of the benefactors of this pavilion

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(G35-40)  
the  
pavilion



**An East Anglian Childhood**  
Derek was born in Southwold, in East Anglia, in 1912. He was the youngest of four children. His father was a lighthouse keeper and his mother was a school teacher.

**Framlingham College**  
He passed O-levels in 1929 and went to Framlingham College, where he was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.



**RAF Recruitment Office**  
Derek was recruited to the RAF Recruitment Office in 1931. He was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.



**Outbreak of War - 1st September 1939**  
Derek was recruited to the RAF Recruitment Office in 1931. He was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.

**Evacuation to Repton School**  
Derek was evacuated to Repton School in Derbyshire in 1939. He was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.

**Derek decides to leave school early**  
Derek decided to leave school early in 1939. He was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.

*Right young Fowler, you've got some 'nerve' to leave like this!*

**Chilton**  
Derek was recruited to the RAF Recruitment Office in 1931. He was a member of the school football team and the school orchestra.

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*He immediately flew to the air base and established with 'talking effort'*



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**A City Decision, but a good one**  
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*after a sudden decompression at altitude, Fowler lost consciousness but fortunately, Derek and his crew had oxygen.*

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*It was a very important, as it allowed him to be a part of the amazing life.*





Grumman Gulfstream 1



The ill-fated Learjet

# THE DEREK FOWLER STORY

Flight Lieutenant Derek Fowler DFM (G35-40)

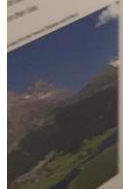
The life and times of the benefactors of this pavilion



ing must be made. Derek was not flying at the time, given their common membership. However, the fact that he had the time and the money to do so...

together - building it all together. Derek and Peter had been working together for some time...

the following year, Derek had developed prostate cancer, which the news would eventually tell him. He no longer wanted to be anywhere but at home in Suffolk...



### A Jet-Set Lifestyle

Peter wanted to learn to fly. They bought a Cessna Skylane, on which she trained, then a Piper Frontier, and finally a Cessna Citation G, a jet aircraft capable of island-hopping across the Atlantic. Peter was soon an accomplished pilot, and took on at least an equal share of the flying. They also bought a Hughes 500E helicopter, which Peter loved to fly.

They bought a house in St Leonards, Florida to add to their homes in Suffolk, Devon and Monte Carlo, and flew regularly between them. In Florida, they had a wide circle of friends, particularly at their exclusive West Beach country club, and were regular visitors at the Ivers Beach Museum of Art.



Derek had always tried to keep in touch with a group of his schoolfriends - in particular, Paul Griffin, Mike Dobson and David Brink. In 1993, David Brink suggested a get-together at the Duffield airbase, and Derek and Peter flew over for it.

### The annual reunion lunches

Duffield set in train a series of great annual lunches, hosted by Derek and Peter, for friends, across and partners, for which they would fly over from Suffolk each summer, usually staying at Hildesheim Hall for a few days. They were memorable occasions for everyone. Amongst them were David Brink (G34-40), Paul Griffin (G32-40), James Gray (G34-40), Michael Carr (G30-40), Roger East (G30-40), Mike Dobson (G30-40), Bill Lawrence (G30-40) and Alan Sandison (G30-40). Griffin, Carr and Sandison were all members of that winning Garter House rowing team of 1963.

Paul Griffin's diary records those events every year from 1983 to 2005 - mostly at Hildesheim but, from 2002 onwards, at Southwell - Derek's childhood home. The last lunch was at the Crown Hotel, Southwell, in May 2005. Mike Fowler drove Derek and Peter over from Hildesheim, and they'd just arrived when, suddenly, Derek was struck down, apparently with food poisoning. Derek insisted the lunch went on without him, but told the hotel to send him the bill, as usual.

By the following year, Derek had developed prostate cancer, which the news would eventually tell him. He no longer wanted to be anywhere but at home in Suffolk, and Peter began disposing of their houses in Devon, Monte Carlo and Florida. His illness was a long one and must have left him in great pain, and Peter nursed him till the end, which came in October 2008.

### Honouring Derek's memory

Peter was shattered by her loss, and never entirely recovered from it. Her driving force, now, was to create a lasting memorial, firstly to Derek's wartime service, and then to their lives together in retirement. She approached a number of organisations: the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, the RNU Lifeboat station at Southwell, and Southwell Museum, to name but three. All these seemed promising avenues to start with, but never met her exacting requirements to preserve Derek's name with a particular development, and to safeguard his medals and wartime memorabilia. By now it was 2011, and Felicity Griffin - Paul Griffin's widow - put Peter in touch with the Society of Old Framlinghamians to see if they could help. There was no discussion about money or a permanent memorial - Peter had almost given up hope on that score, and was already exploring other memorial options in Florida - she just wanted to be sure that the medals and memorabilia would be preserved and displayed.

The Society was only too happy to help and, by the middle of 2011, Peter was content that she could now relax. She told her principal correspondents, Peter Inwood-Dobson, Chris Essex and Norman Parker, that they wouldn't hear anything further until after her own death, when a box of memorabilia would be delivered by her solicitor.

### A Florida Memorial to Derek and Peter Fowler

In parallel with her efforts to honour Derek, Peter had been thinking about their lives together, and particularly their time in Florida - a special place for Peter, who'd spent memorable parts of his childhood there. Friends there knew that the Ivers Beach Museum of Art was of special interest to Peter and Derek, and put Peter in touch with Cindy Galtison, the museum's chief executive.

It was 2012, and Peter wouldn't miss the family home in Suffolk, so most of their correspondence was by email. In 2013, Cindy and her husband, hitherto in Suffolk and met Peter for tea in St Merris.

From there, things moved swiftly, and Peter made up her mind to designate the majority of her estate to fund 'The '60s Peter' and Derek Fowler Endowment for Acquisitions and Exhibitions'. The legacy is currently the

largest in the museum's thirty-year history. In August 2014, Peter was due to have lunch with an old friend, but didn't arrive at the restaurant. On visiting the house, she found that Peter had had a terrible fall, and suffered a fatal head injury.

### This is Doctor Johannes Burger - I have instructions to pay you \$1 million!

The first the Society knew of Peter's death was when, in January 2015, the trustees received this astounding message from Peter's Luxembourg solicitor. His letter read:

*"I have instructions to pay you One Million Dollars"*



After Peter's death, the trustees of the Society of Old Framlinghamians were informed that Peter had left a substantial legacy to the Society. This was a testament to the Society's long history and the respectability of its members. The trustees were in no doubt that the Society's trustees were in no doubt that the Society would have wanted it to be used to create a permanent memorial to her husband, and they were delighted that the College was of like mind.



Following a period of due diligence to properly establish the source and nature of the funds, the Society made a gift of £100,000 to the College. This secured the financial springboard for the creation of The Fowler Pavilion and will, in due course, lead to a further named development at Bowditch Hall, Framlingham College's prep school. Appropriately, perhaps, as Bowditch Hall was given to the College by the 5th Earl and is a living memorial to Framlinghamians and residents of Suffolk who had their ties in both worlds.



ing on 1st April 1941, he'd have got his Wings by the end of September. to six weeks of Operations training, and then he'd have been assigned squadron by the end of the year.

Suddenly, he's a Sergeant Pilot, flying a Wellington bomber, and still just 18 years old.

It's January 1942. He's assigned to 38 Squadron, flying Wellingtons out

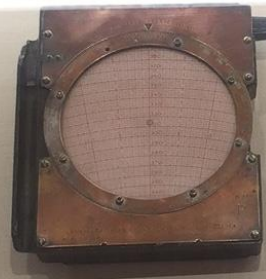
Derek's Lancaster Crew: Derek at extreme left; Wireless Operator Fred Garnham at centre.

By now, his Commanding Officer thinks Derek needs a break, but Derek insists on carrying on for a few more months until he's forced to go on leave in early 1943.

that his unfinished education wasn't a great help to him, and that flying was all he really knew.

He flew for a couple of budding airlines before joining a young air-charter firm, Transair, based at Croydon airport. Transair flew freight as well as people, and Derek often found himself delivering the morning papers and a couple of lobsters to Brussels and Paris.

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**Derek's Crucifix**  
Rupert Kneess, who was the College's chaplain and Housemaster of Rendlesham, gave this to Derek when he heard he was planning to join the RAF. Derek kept it in his breast pocket on every flying mission.

**Woods Mk III navigational computer**  
Displaced by the word computer - there was nothing else about this vital navigational tool. The knurled Bakelite knob was used to adjust the position of the continuous canvas band, marked with radial lines, to correctly reflect the aircraft's speed, and the outer brass ring was then adjusted to show the angle of the wind to the direction of flight. The correct course to

**Distinguished Flying Medal**  
Awarded to Derek for exceptional valour during his Wellington bomber operations against enemy shipping one night in October 1942. He was just 19 at the time (you can read more about this in the article above). The criteria for the

**Derek's wartime Campaign Medals**  
In addition to the 1939-45 Star, which he earned for his military service throughout WWII, there are the Africa Star - with its clasps depicting his work in North Africa in 1942-43, and the France and Germany Star which was particularly associated with his service in bomber command. The other round medals are the War Medal 1914-18 and the Defence Medal. Unlike his DFM, which was presented to him soon after its award, these campaign medals were delivered by post some time after his demobilisation.

**The emblem of 325 Squadron**  
The squadron was formed in March 1942 and based at Downham Market, it was equipped with Lancaster bombers and formed part of the elite Pathfinder Group in Bomber Command. It was soon re-equipped with Mk III and later with Mk IV Lancasters. The squadron disbanded in September 1945.

and that flying was all he really knew.

He flew for a couple of budding airlines before joining charter firm, Transair, based at Croydon airport. Transair flew all as people, and Derek often found himself delivering the papers and a couple of lobsters to Brussels and Paris.

*consciousness but fortunately, Derek and his co-pilot had oxygen at hand, stayed in control, and brought the aircraft down safely.*



out WWII, there are the  
and the France and  
ber command. The  
Unlike his DFM,  
his were delivered

**The emblem of 635 Squadron**  
The squadron was formed in March 1944 and based at  
Downham Market. It was equipped with Lancaster Mk I  
bombers and formed part of the elite Pathfinder  
Group in Bomber Command. It was soon re-equipped  
with Mk III and later with Mk IV Lancasters. The  
squadron disbanded in September 1945. The squadron

**635 Squadron Photograph, May 1945**  
This commemorative photograph was taken after Victory in Europe Day (8th May 1945), when the  
German High-command had agreed to unconditionally to representatives of Britain, America and  
the Soviet Union. The photograph shows the officers and other ranks in front of one of their Lancaster  
bombers. The squadron disbanded just as the war ended, with the unconditional surrender of Japan,  
on 2nd September 1945.





**Fowler Pavilion - Some internal and external photos taken on 10 July 2017**









**The spotlights on the wall show the position of the Fowler display**









**Fowler Pavilion - Some external photos taken on 8 April 2017 showing all windows in old pavilion now replaced**





**Old Framlinghamians** The Society of  
[www.oldframlinghamian.com](http://www.oldframlinghamian.com)







## Fowler Pavilion - Some internal and external photos taken on 4 April 2017











