



Horsham Group 50 Post – Cuckfield. Chief Observer Derek Wood

Ed Combes and **Mark Russell** have for some years been refurbishing Cuckfield Post in 2 Group Horsham. **Derek Wood** a former Observer and well known throughout the Corps for his authoritative book *Attack Warning Red (AWR)* served on Cuckfield Post. Derek also wrote many other aviation related books including the *Narrow Margin*, regarded as the definitive history of the Battle of Britain. He also started the well known *Janes Defence Weekly* magazine in 1983.
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Wood_\(author\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Wood_(author))

Ed and Mark have now recognised Derek's service in the Corps by way of a glass frame containing his cap badge, long service medal, shoulder title and badges. Included is a picture of Derek being presented with the second clasp for his medal. They also plan to acquire a small plaque engraved with Derek's details and years of service, plus a little bit about his literary career and AWR to mount underneath the frame - they have applied for his service record to enable this.

The medal will be displayed in the Post on Cuckfield open days, and during winter months it will be displayed at the local museum as and when it fits in with their current displays. At other times it will be safely stored in Ed's house - if any former Observers or other interested parties happen to be visiting Sussex and want to see it please contact Ed at eafcombes@gmail.com

Lin Wood gifted the medal and the photo to Ed and Mark. She has expressed that her desire would be for the medal to be retained by them at Cuckfield 50 Post and in the event of the Cuckfield project discontinuing she has specifically asked that the items go into the archive at the local history museum - she absolutely wants them to stay in Cuckfield where Derek was very active and lived most of his life. For this reason they are sorry that it won't be available to be loaned out, but when visiting ROCA/ROC events the tribute will go too.

Ed and Mark are, in their own words, 'pretty humbled that Lin gave it to us, to be honest a real honour to be presented with it and trusted enough to look after it. Lin has been very helpful and supportive of the restoration of Cuckfield and has visited more than once' Her only regret is that Derek is not still alive to see it as she says 'he would be absolutely thrilled that the Post he served on, within the Corps he cared so much about was being preserved and remembered'. 'She was a bit tearful as she told us this'

To reassure all ROCA members, the medal won't be being hidden away in a personal collection or in a drawer, the plan is to make it available at Cuckfield for anyone to see.



Lin Wood – presenting Ed Combes and Mark Russell, the Cuckfield Post restorers with a signed copy of Attack Warning Red written by her late husband Derek.



Derek receiving the second clasp for his long service medal



Top picture: Derek's wife Lin with Ed Combes and Mark Russell
Above left: Derek receiving a second clasp to his ROC medal.
Above right: The picture frame with his medal, cap badge and other insignia.

This tribute was posted by Cheryl Stewart of the ROCA Heritage team. September 2014