

Letter from Mr H.V. Hand - 28th October 1991

malcolmravenhill.co.uk

28th October, 1991

Dear Mr. Ravenhill,

I write in reply to your notice in 'Air Mail' concerning your cousin Flying Officer Malcolm Ravenhill RAF, of No 229 Squadron, whose name I recall very well.

Having served as groundcrew with 229 Squadron from December 1939 until May 1941 I was at Northolt at the time of Fg. Off. Ravenhill's death, though at this distance in time cannot recollect any details, or indeed remember his face, just his name.

I regret that I cannot help your research, other than to be almost sure that your cousin flew Blenheims with 229 at Digby when I joined the Squadron there; and he later flew Hurricanes on our detachment to France in May 1940.....an ill-fated 8 days during which we lost all but one aircraft of 'A' Flight (L1770) and the groundcrews escaped 'by the skin of their teeth'. I know nothing of Malcolm's part in that debacle except that he must have got back to Digby somehow! Flight Lieutenant Fred Rosier was our Flight Commander then (now Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Rosier RAF Ret'd) and of course would have known Malcolm very well.

I have come across Fg. Off. Ravenhill's name in one or two Battle of Britain books borrowed from my local library. It also occurs to me that living at York is an ex-229 Squadron member (groundcrew) who, incredibly, was the only one to serve with the Squadron throughout the war. He is an ex-Corporal Fitter named Jack Withy, and has a fund of memories including names and exploits of 229's pilots; he may be able to help you. His address is :-

<< address supplied >>

(Sorry, no post code or telephone number known).

Jack was with us on the detachment to France 1940.

I wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Vic Hand

H.V. HAND.

ex. LAC/CPL. FITTER-ARMOURER, No 229 SQUADRON 1939-41, at Digby, France, Wittering, Northolt, Wittering again, and Speke.