

### **Sad to Report - Peter Hairs MBE RIP [Clapham College 1924 to 1931]**

Scotty, this month's Catenians' magazine, Catena, reports the death of a **Peter Hairs**, who has died aged 99. He went to the College in 1924, and left in 1931. Needless to say, he flew Hurricanes in the Second World War! He was surely our oldest Xaverian! He was mainly training pilots in Britain, Canada, etc Peter's obituary refers to him living in Poole. Eric, or Brendan, or John Rayer and myself are Catenians. John Rayer presented him with a medal not long ago !! Colin Garvey



Putting Peter's birth date into perspective - in 1916. The light switch is invented by William Newton. Remember Peter would have been born in the middle of the 1st World War - there was the famous Battle of Jutland between the British Royal Navy's Grand Fleet and the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet in the North Sea, the War's only large-scale clash of battleships. The Battle of the Somme was ongoing in France. Robert Baden-Powell publishes *The Wolf Cub's Handbook* in the U.K., establishing the Wolf Cubs (modern-day Cub Scouts).

Back to Peter - he fought in the Battle of France 1940, also over the Channel Islands and the Battle of Britain throughout 1940. Flt. Lt. Peter Raymond Hairs MBE worked as a junior clerk at Barclays bank before the War, he joined the RAFVR in October 1937 as a Pilot (741206) and carried out his early flying training at Gatwick in 1939, awarded his wings, and commissioned as Pilot Officer.

The squadron flew to France on the 10th. May to join the Advanced Air Striking Force and had their first experience of combat. On the 15th Hairs shared in probably destroying a Do 17. On the 3 June he was shot down, but fortunately not seriously hurt. On the 17 June the squadron flew to the Channel Islands from where patrols were carried out over Cherbourg to cover the evacuation of Allied troops; on the 19 June they returned to England where the squadron was re-formed and during this period Hairs destroyed Bf 109 on September 5. Hairs was posted to 15 FTS, Kidlington on October 13 1940, as a flying instructor. The later to Canada In November 1943 Hairs returned to the UK and after a short course on Spitfires joined 276 Squadron at Harrowbeer. In 1945 he was posted to RAF Kinloss - final posting was to India in 1945 Peter was released from the RAF on 30 October 1945, as a Flight Lieutenant. He received a Mention in Despatches (14.6.45) and was made an MBE (1946). He then returned to Barclays Bank retiring in 1975 on his 60th birthday.