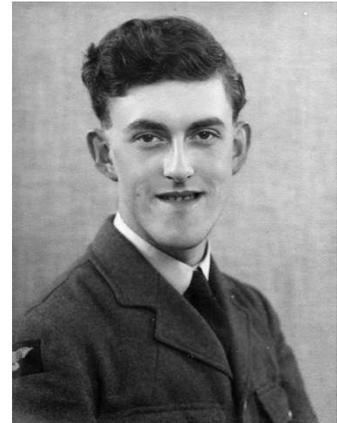


Letter from the Desert

Greetings from Alan & Grace.



Our Dad
in RAF uniform
Douglas John Cook
1923 - 1996

4 September 2002

This month being September, we particularly remember our dear Dad, who died on 13th September 1996. Dad and Mum were married on 20th September 1947 - almost 50 years of married life together.

Back in Kuwait after our recent holiday in dear old Blighty, we've settled back into the routine of life here once more. It was so good to see so many old (and not so old!) family and friends in England, although there were some we just didn't get around to seeing as time is always so limited – sorry if we didn't get chance to see you. Next year we are planning to go to the Philippines, as Grace won't have seen her family for 2.5 years and it has been her first time away from them – and out of the country. We'd be pleased to receive visitors in the Philippines if any of you would like to visit us there. That's the plan at the moment, although Bush, Blair and Saddam Hussain may have different ideas – the three un-wise monkeys of modern politics – and people call them *leaders*! A lot will also depend on the job situation – anything could happen in the next 10 months!

We camped out in the Trough of Bowland, just south east of Lancaster before calling on our family in Preston for a few hours. It was so good to see them. It was their first time to meet Grace and we all had a lovely time. Despite the foul weather, we were also able to visit the Lake District. This is a favourite area of the country and we'd been looking forward to going there last year, but the weather was so bad we had to postpone our visit until this year. We camped for two nights before deciding to stay in Youth Hostels for the remaining three nights as the weather was so bad. On our return journey to Haywards Heath, we stopped off at Preston for another quick visit to the family.

We also managed to get to Farnborough Air Show and the Eastbourne Air Display, both of which were very enjoyable. It was good to see the new Eurofighter Typhoon being the star of the show at Farnborough – British engineering leading the way – of course! On another day we went to London, as Grace wanted to see St. Paul's Cathedral. Sadly, it's become a national disgrace instead of a national pride. It's a dirty, dismal, depressing, disgusting rip-off-the tourists dump. No longer is it the House of God; it's become the House of Money (6 Pounds each to enter a church!), and Grace was very disappointed by her visit – and I was highly embarrassed as a result.

Despite the good things about Britain, I'm very pleased not to have to live in the UK. The weather is so bad, the roads so crowded and the cost of living so frightful that, together with the legislation/over-regulation that now interferes with everyone's life (George Orwell got it right!), I wasn't surprised to read that 51% of the population would like to leave the country. I guess the remaining 49% are the immigrants who have entered Britain through the Channel Tunnel!

Since returning to Kuwait, we've spent most of our time at home. We've spent a lot of time scanning the negatives and transparencies that we took while on holiday. These are now available on CD should anyone want one. We have also installed the new video capture card and updated software (Pinnacle Studio 7) that we bought in England and have started learning how to use it to produce edited video tapes/Video CD's. It will take us some time to become competent at that!

While we were in England we found some very old family photographs, which we brought back with us. These have now been scanned and, where necessary, the images have been re-touched to repair the damage and deterioration that had occurred over the years. Some of the pictures were taken in the early 20th Century, so they needed to be scanned in order to preserve their image for posterity. Photographs in print/negative/transparency form do not last forever, so it's been nice to know that the images are now preserved – and are now in better condition than the original. Again, if there are any family members reading this who would like a copy of these photographs (on CD), please let us know.

Having got my book (Cockroach in my Cornflakes), complete (as an e-book, on CD, as a .pdf file), it was nice to be able to give out a few copies whilst in England. I hope you enjoyed reading it. I've now sent some sample chapters to a literary agent for their appraisal, in the hope that it might be published one day.

I've been quite busy at work. Although we haven't started teaching, I've been working on a fairly large document for the military. I'm pleased to have got it out of the way before the next course starts.

Some of our holiday photographs:



Grace



Grace in Bowland



Family in Preston



At the Kent show



Grace, Mother and Fiona