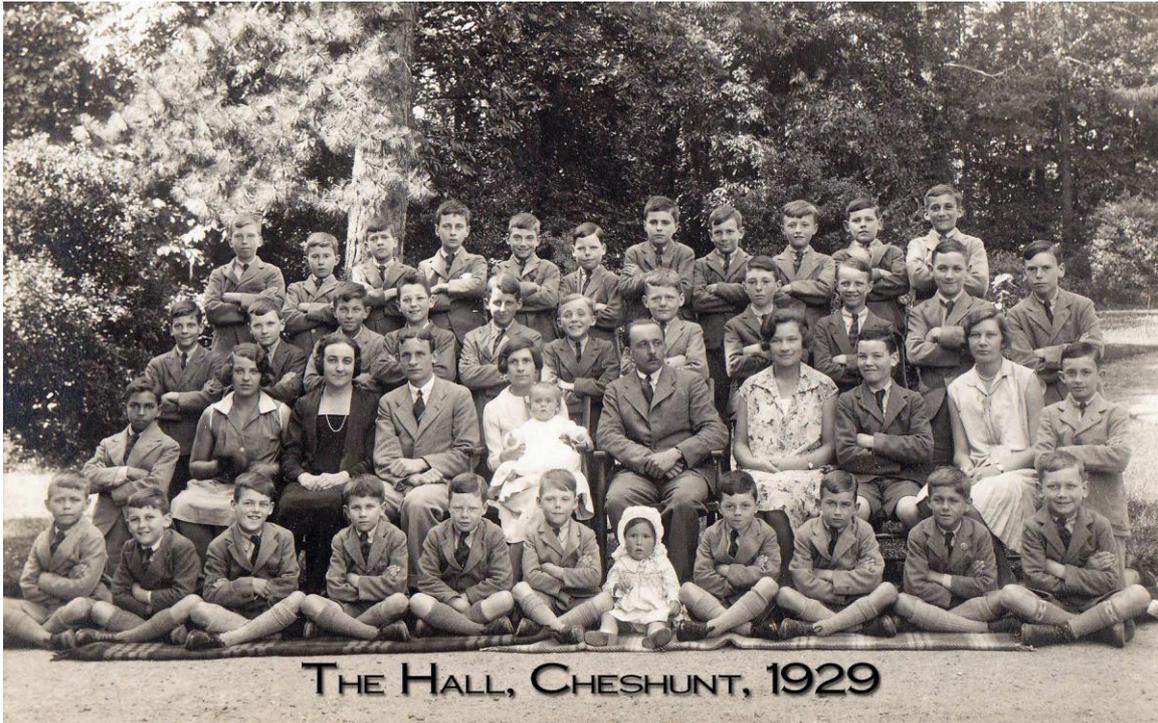




Peter King, approximately 1923-34. The gentleman with him is likely to be his father, Victor



Peter King, centre of picture on the knee of his mother, Violet. Approximately 1923



School photo from "The Hall" Cheshunt, UK, 1929. The lady in the second row from the front with the baby on her lap is my grandmother Daphne Griffith, and the gentleman sitting next to her with the moustache is my grandfather, Paul Griffith. On my grandmother's knee is my mother, Diana Griffith (now Diana Parsons). The baby in the front row on the ground is my mother's older sister Elizabeth, and sitting next to Elizabeth (4th boy from the right) is Peter King.



School soccer team, 1935. Peter King is sitting in the middle row on the left hand side



RAF Gunnery Training School at Stormy Downs, Glamorganshire, Wales in 1943. Peter King is seated in the second row from the front, second person from the right.

Peter King visited my grandfather in February 1944, and expressed his grave fears about being a rear gunner in the Lancaster bomber. At the time he was quite upset and depressed, having seen so many of his fellow airman lose their lives.

My grandfather advised Peter that he should not give up, and that he needed to do the right thing by his crew, his parents and himself. He suggested to Peter that he request to be retrained as a Wireless Operator, as this was a less hazardous position in the plane than the rear gunner.

In May 1944, Peter finished his Wireless Operator training and received advice that he would be transferred from his squadron at the time (166 Squadron) to the 550 Squadron. Peter wrote to my grandfather and let my grandfather know that he had been successful in being transferred, and would continue to fly in the RAF.

On the following page is the letter my grandfather wrote to Peter upon hearing this news. This letter, and others, were rescued from the personal effects of Violet King, Peter's mother, some years after she died in 1990. My grandfather wrote this letter on 17th May, 1944. Only ten days later, Peter's plane was shot down and crashed at Rebecq.

TELEPHONE:
POTTERS BAR 3947

NORTHAW HOUSE,
NR. POTTERS BAR,
MIDDLESEX.

May.17th.1944.

Dear Pete,

I cannot thank you enough for your letter. It has cheered me up so very much indeed, as quite naturally I have had you tremendously on my mind.

You are really a splendid person rising to the occasion like this. God alone knows how terribly hard it is especially when one is down, and in addition feeling ill as you were.

It is a great achievement Pete and I am very very proud that you have done it.

Now do not on any account look back and feel sheepish because you felt like giving in, far far greater men than you have felt like you did in their time and I have in my own way been through similar trials, though not as great perhaps as yours, and there is nothing to feel ashamed about.

So lets put this all behind and forget it.

This is I fear a very disjointed letter but boys keep on cracking into the study and I seem to be interrupted every second, but I felt I had to get a line off to you by return.

Derek Walker straight from mucking about in the Channel was here last week end, so was Ruttledge and Wilkinson. We had a great little re-union and we had a great chat about you all and of old times. I felt quite homesick when the week end finished and they had to go off.

Well Pete you are a great fellow and you know that there is never a minute that we are not thinking of you.

yours ever

Paul Ruttledge