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Model village: An aerial view of Hampstead Garden Suburb taken from the Raymond Lowe Collection showing the planned street layout with St Jude's Church in the heart of the community.

Suburb on postcards

The latest collection to arrive online at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Virtual Museum is the extensive *Raymond Lowe Collection* of picture postcards, telling the story of the Suburb's development from its very beginnings and giving views of its buildings and street layout.

The collection also traces the history of one particular extended family of early residents and their neighbours and friends, some of whose descendants still live in north London today. Raymond was an avid collector, who enjoyed searching through boxes at postcard fairs for Suburb scenes over many years. He mounted and annotated them in several large albums, the contents of which have now been painstakingly scanned into the Virtual Museum.

As with the museum's moving *First World War Collection*, Raymond's postcards also depict the repercussions of world events and little local ones as they affected the life and people of Hampstead Garden Suburb from 1907 onwards. You can find them in the 'Collections' section and explore the rest of the museum at www.hgsheritage.org.uk.

Moving play tells story of young men of Bomber Command

By Diana Cormack

When Bob Baldwin read his father's log book covering his years as a wireless operator on Lancaster bomber aircraft in the Second World War, he was inspired to write a play.

With Max Kinnings he has created *Wireless Operator*, which reveals the harsh reality of life in Bomber Command, where the odds of survival were the worst in the armed forces and the average age of death was 23.

Heavy toll

Britain's carpet bombing of German cities has long been criticised, particularly for the huge number of civilian lives lost. However, over 55,000 British aircrew died in the ser-

vice of their country and it took until 2012 for them to be given national recognition when the Bomber Command Memorial



Airman: Playwright Bob Baldwin's father JJ Baldwin

was unveiled in London.

Families and survivors welcomed the Memorial but some still felt aggrieved that, unlike other war veterans, no campaign medal was awarded in recognition of their services, just the offer of applying for a clasp.

Few of the airmen who came home were willing or able to speak fully about their terrifying experiences but it is now becoming clear that a great many of them suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder for the rest of their lives. Bob's own father, a joiner by trade and a pacifist by instinct, was only 21 when he flew his first mission.

Edinburgh and beyond

Co-producing his moving one-man play and hoping to premiere it at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe is actor-producer Hilary Townley, known locally for her stalwart work organising East Finchley's Community and Christmas festivals and the installation of a permanent Christmas tree on the High Road.

Wireless Operator explores the unspoken stories of how hard it was to live or grow up with a Bomber Command survivor's sufferings in the wake of the war. Hilary and the production team are appealing for financial support to help take the play to Edinburgh. Visit www.wirelessoperator.co.uk to make a donation and to find more information.

The play is already raising much interest, including from Rolls-Royce, who produced the Lancaster's distinctive-sounding Merlin engines, and from the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln which is very keen to collect more stories from the families of aircrew.



Aiming for Edinburgh: Co-producers Hilary Townley and Stephen Graham. Photo Mike Coles.



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