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# obituary

## SQUADRON LEADER "ROGER" KYTE

*News has reached us of the death of WWII fighter ace Squadron Leader "Roger" Kyte. In tribute to his fond memory we reprint an obituary by the son of Squadron Leader Kyte's best friend, Aviation Historian R.A.F. Duxford. .*

Alvis Boxter [aka "Roger"] Kyte - a veteran of more than 3 sorties - was a great one for chasing jerry (as well as a bit of skirt in his what he called his "down time"!) and was known to be as at home in his kite as he was in the bar of the Dog and Duck in Guy's Marsh. Flying out of RDAF Guys Marsh from March 1944 until June 1944, he quickly gained the respect of his men alongside a reputation for flying and playing hard. Something



of a character he was admired by sprog crew and old lags alike, not to mention the WAAFs! Such was his joie de vivre, he once boasted that he had enjoyed "three in one night, two of them simultaneously and all standing up". Whilst this gained him the admiration of many of his peers, it naturally vexed others - double whiskies being in short supply at this critical phase of the war.

Handy with the "beer-lever" and the

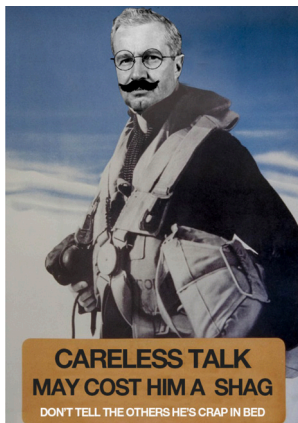
survivor of at least one "dicey-do" (April 1944, behind the Dog and Duck), perhaps the most engaging of the many accounts of Roger's pranks involved a group of pongos and squaddies and a run-in with a mahogany spitfire\* over a pranged kite. After taking a quick shufti, Roger, who had imbibed a fair few whallops, declared the whole thing tiggerty-boo (it was very far from such) and recommended his Wing Commander take it for a quick spin. Wing Commander Armstrong "Archie" Undercart - who had very recently returned to base on a goolie-chit - was not amused!

\* a desk "flown" by "penguins" and "ground wallahs"



The son of a Chaldon Herring Master Butcher, Squadron Leader Kite had ready access to quality meat - a rare and much sought after commodity in

those dark and distant days - and so was popular with the land girls who it was once said would do anything to get their hands on a good meaty sausage. "Roger", whose real name I discovered many years later was Melvyn - made the most of his opportunities in this and many other regards.



*POSTER BOY: Though Roger had a "good war" he did not age well during it. Compare the picture with his squadron above (April 1944) with that (immediately above) taken two month's later when - his exploits "out of the cockpit" being well known at HQ - he was chosen to front a campaign urging land girls to help keep up crew morale by not telling tales "out of school".*

Solutions to the puzzle regarding the attribution of the name Roger are a matter of conjecture and at this historical distance it is unlikely we will ever have a definitive answer. Some believe it was merely generic and might have alluded to radio transmissions he frequently made - "Roger, over and out" was a not

uncommon way in which many airmen, not wishing to identify themselves to the Messerschmitt pilots chasing their tails, signed off a transmission and in "Roger's" case the name may have stuck. Alternatively, some believe it was a reference to his prowess in positions other than the airborne and seated - though occasionally that too\*\* - which may be why he also acquired, briefly, the sobriquets "Todger" and "Shagger".

After the War, Squadron Leader Kite joined the RSCBE as a maintenance man, rising to the position of Commissionaire before retiring in 1978. He recently featured in the Thrupini Stickers Collection: *Famous Dorset Graves Edition* (No 846).

Alvis Boxter Kyte b. 20th May 1924 to Albert and Doreen Kyte [nee Undar-Karridge] in Piddletrenthide, d. 23rd December 2011 at his home in Fishpond Bottom. He is gratefully survived by his wife of 66 years, Enid "Flaps" Kyte [nee Wingspan

\*\*see Oats (158, reprinted 1995) "Always Available: A Tale of Heartbreak, Backache and Opportunity amongst Dorset's Landgirls" Threadbone WWII Reminiscences, The Threadbone Press.

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