

**PRESS RELEASE – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

**DAMBUSTERS HERO VISITS AIRPORT**



Members of the Gloucester branch of the Light Aircraft Association enjoyed a visit from a Dambusters hero last night. 90-year old Sqdn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson DFM was guest speaker at the association's monthly meeting.

Johnny, who now lives in Bristol, was bomb aimer onboard one of the second wave of Lancaster bombers sent to attack the Sorpe dam on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943. His aircraft made ten approaches to its target before dropping its bouncing bomb, which inflicted damage on the dam but did not breach it.

In total, 19 aircraft were sent into action that night. Eight failed to return with the loss of 53 lives. The Mohne and Eder dams were breached, severely damaging the German industrial areas of the Ruhr Valley.

Members listened to Johnny's recollections of the training, the raid and his thoughts after the event. He has returned to the scene of his attack and to the various crash sites in recent years, meeting survivors and soldiers.

Gloucestershire Airport head of operations, Darren Lewington said: - "It was incredible to hear Johnny's story first hand. He spoke with such passion, humility and good humour. The audience were utterly enthralled and gave him a warm standing ovation. It was a privilege to spend time in the company of a true hero."

The Light Aircraft Association has various branches around the UK. The 'Gloster Strut' meetings take place at The Flying Shack on Bamfurlong Lane, the Airport's newest microlight aircraft and social club on the second Tuesday of the month.