

Thursday June 26<sup>th</sup> 2009  
FOCUS ON NOSTALGIA

# MR LEICESTER

In association with the Leicestershire Chronicle



**AWARD:** All Saints head Mary Lawson wearing the medal at the Polish Embassy, and, right, a memorial service held at the school

## Tribute to Polish pilots

Several readers have written to me about the Lancaster bomber that crashed in Wigston Magna in 1946.

None of the Polish crew survived the tragedy but their sacrifice was not forgotten by the pupils and staff at the school - All Saints Primary, in Long Street - which was built on the crash site.

The school has a memorial plaque to the flyers, a display cabinet with artefacts linked with the crash and a small garden dedicated to their memory outside the head's office.

The men who died were Wing Commander Romuald Sulinski and his crew, navigator Wladyslaw Jedrzejczyk, flight engineer Feliks Mikula, wireless operator Wacław Brzezinski, bomber Michał Szwandt,



**HONOUR:** The medal

and air gunner Czesław Sulgut. Each year in February the school holds a memorial service for the six Polish airmen who died. Last February marked the 63rd anniversary and the memorial service was attended by the Polish Military Attaché and

his deputy and a fly past was organised by the Leicestershire Aero Club.

The Polish diplomats were so moved by the service and impressed by what the school had done that they invited the head teacher, Mrs Mary Lawson, to the Polish Embassy in Portland Place, London. There she received a medal in appreciation of what the school had done. The reception, which was held at half-term was also attended by members of the Polish Resistance.

Mrs Lawson was awarded the gold medal of the armed forces in recognition of engagement in popularisation of Polish armed forces abroad. The medal was presented by the minister of the national defence of Poland, Bogusław Klich.

When the Lancaster crashed on February 14, 1946, it hit a beech tree which had to be cut down. The young man who cut it

down, the future councillor and alderman, Duncan Lucas, has provided the school with a new beech tree, which was planted in the memorial garden, in the middle of a six-pointed star - each point commemorating one of the pilots.

Mrs Lawson says: "We want the pupils to understand what happened to these young men and not to forget.

"We have also been in contact with the families of the crew in Poland and a niece of one of them is visiting in November.

Mrs Lawson received a letter from Roman Mikula, the brother of flight engineer Feliks Mikula who died in the crash.

He thanked the school for the wonderful thing they had done, adding: "I am awestruck that you have not forgotten the six and so relieved they are remembered there.

"I don't think there could be a better place."