

128

A ROYAL CELEBRATION

*Coronation Flypast fit
for a King and Queen*

NUCLEAR CLOUD SAMPLERS

*The epic tale of
76 Squadron*

THE MAGAZINE OF THE RAF CLUB SPRING/SUMMER 2023

BRITAIN'S LAST DAMBUSTER

*A tribute to Sqn Ldr
George 'Johnny' Johnson*

AWARD WINNING CHEFS

*The latest news from
the Club's kitchens*



ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB
— FOUNDED 1918 —



ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB
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The Royal Air Force Club,
128 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY

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ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB
FOUNDED 1918

Much to celebrate

Before I sit down to write the foreword to "128" I always like to peruse all of the articles for balance, interest and relevance. The first thing that I saw in this edition was a picture of the rotunda at College Hall, RAF Cranwell.

A few years ago, as a relatively senior officer, I was invited to attend a function at College Hall and when I arrived through the front door, without thinking, I just strolled in and walked straight ahead. I was brought to my senses by a loud voice shouting "get off the carpet!" at me which in a truly Pavlovian way, I responded to, leaping to one side.

The owner of the loud voice was the College Warrant Officer, who, with much mirth, informed me that it was his party trick to watch Air Officers revert to quivering Officer Cadets. Those who commissioned at Cranwell will understand what I mean and hopefully smile, but for the uninitiated, until one actually successfully commissions as an RAF officer, during training you have to walk around the carpet, on pain of extra duties! Happy memories.

Turning to the rest of this periodical, the articles cover a very wide number of subjects. I am reminded of that ancient Chinese curse – "May you live in interesting times". During this quite extraordinary period, the Club has seen so much, coming out of COVID and dealing with its financial implications, the re-awakening of London and the two milestone events of the loss of our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen and the subsequent coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

Since COVID has receded, the Club has been tremendously busy but the two royal events have been quite exceptional and in my 42-year membership I have never seen the Club quite so full. Consequently, I am delighted that in one article our Club President, Air Marshal Sir David Walker, who spent much of his RAF career working directly for Her Majesty The Queen, first as her Equerry and then as the Master of the Royal Household, has shared his personal experiences of his time



"What we are about is providing a place to meet old friends and new, with common bonds and interests, enjoying high quality service and prices as low as possible"

with Her Majesty, including his sad final duty as a pallbearer at Her funeral.

Equally, I was delighted (as was the Club!) that so many members wanted to share the occasion of His Majesty's coronation in each other's company, with a wide variety of Club members, from 90-year-olds to young children celebrating alongside each other, their only connection being that they were members of the RAF Club.

In the meantime, the back-office bit of administering and governing the Club quietly goes on and I want to sincerely and publicly thank and pay tribute to the myriad of members - the volunteer Trustees, the volunteer Committee members and all the other Club volunteers - who gladly give their time, expertise and knowledge so freely to ensure that our Club continues to thrive. Without their significant and much appreciated contribution, we would certainly struggle. That said, the

Club Committee does not claim a monopoly of good ideas so any suggestions or recommendations from members are always welcome!

The RAF Club is about one thing – you, the membership – and I really do feel, and I hope that you do too, that the RAF Club is your London home from home. We are not a hotel and never will be. What we are about is providing a place to meet old friends and new, with common bonds and interests, enjoying high quality service and prices as low as possible.

Finally, for a variety of reasons, I often visit other Clubs in London and talk to other Chairs, who are amazed at what our executive team and staff continue to deliver. The consistently high standard, the quality that we achieve at such low prices and the friendliness and helpfulness of our people. I have even had two other Club Chairs, who both charge over £2,000 a year to be members of their Clubs, ask me if they can become members of the RAF Club (the answer by the way is no).

Which causes me to reflect - aren't we all so fortunate to be members of the best Club in London?

AIR VICE-MARSHAL THE HON. DAVID MURRAY CVO OBE DL RAF CLUB CHAIR

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Reaching New Heights

Since our last magazine it has been wonderful to see so many Members returning to the Club with all the facilities having become consistently busier.

Seeing so many reunions and private events taking place and sensing the buzzing atmosphere when one walks into the Running Horse is heartening.

Early 2023 has seen the refurbishment of the lobby which has given the area a new lease of life and our new front doors are much more in keeping with our magnificent building. As we move into the summer, extensive works are required to the façade of the building which regrettably will require the front elevation to be scaffolded for several weeks. We shall also be commencing a renovation project to improve 11 bedrooms. Our thanks to the 'Friends of the RAF Club' for their generous contributions to these important renovations.

The House Committee is currently reviewing our Capital plan which outlines further improvements to the Club's infrastructure over the next 10 years. Early discussions are taking place to see how we can re-design our kitchen areas in the basement and provide more space in the Running Horse and upgrade equipment, whilst also looking to provide an effective and safe working environment for our team.

As the Trustees and Management review plans for the future, more detailed data is required to assist in making informed decisions. Please ensure that you bring your membership card with you when you come to the Club, so that we can register your visit. We are also wishing to gather extensive data of Members' usage of all of the catering

facilities within the Club. Detailed research is ongoing regarding the introduction of new membership cards which, once implemented, will be used on one's phone, as we believe this is the way forward.

I am delighted to advise that on 18th May it was announced that for the second year running the Club was listed within the Caterer Top 30 Best places to work in Hospitality and we ranked in 15th place. My colleagues are a tremendous asset to the Club, and I am exceptionally proud of the team. The letters and emails of thanks



“our new front doors are much more in keeping with our magnificent building”

and recognition for the staff's service and professionalism are always a wonderful tonic for the team, who unfailingly strive to deliver an extremely high standard of work.

We are delighted that our kitchen department, led by Michael Dutnall, have been able to make time to enter some culinary competitions and what a success they have been. Encouraging the chefs in this way keeps them focused and ensures that they keep developing. Recruitment continues to give us ongoing challenges but by looking after the team we do hope that those who join us will stay with us on our journey. The staff have their own 'Charity

and Social' team who have enjoyed raising funds for charities close to their hearts. The staff also have a 'Green' team who are working with the House Committee to develop our sustainability strategy for the future.

As we have all seen at home, inflation continues to create additional challenges and as a result of this it has been necessary to put price increases in place for some of our commodities in the Club. We hope that further increases will not be necessary this year as we strive to continue to offer excellent value for money.

The Events Committee have put together an excellent programme for this year with some different types of speakers for our Dinners and some new events. I would encourage you to visit our "what's on" page: www.rafclub.org.uk/whats-on. If you do have any suggestions for who you would like as a guest speaker or for a particular type of event, please let us know by emailing our Events Manager, Emily Moss, at events@rafclub.org.uk. Whilst we do not remunerate speakers, we do offer overnight accommodation for themselves and a guest.

It was wonderful to welcome so many Members to the Club during the Coronation celebrations and to see London so busy for such a memorable occasion. With the wet weather on the day, we ended up having televisions showing the Coronation in five of our function rooms!

My colleagues and I are committed to offering a warm welcome to all our Members and guests and I look forward to seeing you all in the next few months.

MILES POOLEY FIH MI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & CLUB SECRETARY



CLUB GOVERNANCE

New Vice-Chair (Business)

At the end of January 2023, John Fisher (pictured on the left) handed over the role of Vice-Chair (Business) to Haig Tyler (pictured on the right). During John's tenure, he had been instrumental in assisting the Club through some most interesting and challenging times. As Chair of the Centenary project, John worked closely with the Executive team to convert the Squash Courts to 17 bedrooms, a fitness centre, a business suite and offices. The challenges of dealing with the contractors were considerable and John brought his experience and knowledge to ensure the project finished in time for the new wing to be officially opened, as part of our Centenary celebrations in October 2018, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

John was also a leading figure on the Trustees' working group to see the Club through the Covid-19 pandemic.

We wish to thank John for the significant contribution he has made to the RAF Club in the various roles that he held over the years.



We would like to offer our congratulations to RAF Club Trustee Haig Tyler, who is serving alongside Club Vice-Chair (Serving) Air Cdre Adam Wardrope.

Haig has been a member of the Board of Trustees for nearly four years and enjoyed a nine-year career as an engineering officer. Since leaving the RAF, he has held several senior roles in various organisations including Deloitte, Cable and Wireless and Bupa. He currently serves as Chief Information Officer at global law firm Herbert Smith Freehills.



CLUB ART

New additions to our collection

Since the last edition, the Club has been delighted to accept these paintings of the A400M Atlas and C-130J Hercules, donated by Airbus UK and No 47 Sqn Association respectively. Both aircraft were used by the Royal Air Force as part of Operation Pitting (13th-28th August 2021) to help evacuate over 17,000 people from

Kabul during more than 100 evacuation flights. C-130J Hercules is planned to be withdrawn from service on 30th June 2023 and many of the aircrew and ground crew will transition to operate the A400M Atlas. The paintings are now hanging in the ground floor corridor of the Royal Air Force Club.

ABOVE LEFT
From left: Wg Cdr James Poynton, Flt Lt Lauren Stewart and Wg Cdr James Sjöberg, OC No. 47 Sqn.

ABOVE RIGHT
Top: A400M Atlas from Airbus UK; Bottom: The C-130J Hercules.

HM sharing an anecdote
with Flt Lt Colin Bell

TRIBUTE The Final Duty

We pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, with a unique, personal insight from her former Equerry, our very own President, Air Marshal Sir David Walker

HM Queen Elizabeth II lived a long and extraordinary life. We were greatly privileged to have Her Majesty as our Patron since her accession to the throne in 1952. It was with the greatest sorrow that we joined the Royal Family and people around the world in mourning her passing on 8th September 2022. Her Majesty's lifetime of faithful service to

the UK and the Realms and the Commonwealth was remarkable and all Members and staff of the Royal Air Force Club will hold the memory of her fondly. In 2018, the RAF Club was honoured to welcome The Queen to the Club to celebrate our Centenary year. During the visit, Her Majesty opened our new extension and unveiled two newly commissioned artworks: our stained-glass window celebrating the role of

women in the service of the Royal Air Force, and a portrait of herself in The Sovereigns' Room. Sadly, this was her last visit to 128 Piccadilly.

Our Club President, Air Marshal Sir David Walker, spent much of his RAF career working directly for The Queen, as her Equerry, and then as Master of the Royal Household. He remained an Extra Equerry until her death. In the 2011 Queen's Birthday Honours, he was

appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, which was bestowed in a personal audience with Her Majesty shortly thereafter. His last duty for The Queen was as one of the Pallbearers at the State Funeral.

On 6th March 2023, the Club was pleased to host the second of our Friends' events that included an insightful talk from Sir David as he covered three topics: the British Monarchy; the State Funeral; and finally The Queen as he was privileged to know her. Sir David has kindly agreed that we might share some of these insights with you, which are below.

The British Monarchy

The British Monarchy is an extraordinary institution, but our monarchy is by no means unique. There are 12 other monarchies in Europe and 43 in the World. Yet there are special aspects of ours - extreme longevity, and adaptability. The roots of our modern Monarchy can be traced back to the Scottish and English Kings of the 9th Century and through adaptation, not least under the wise guiding hand of The Queen, our Monarchy has remained a cornerstone in the lives of the British people for over a millennium. And, of course, our Monarch is also the Head of State of 14 other independent countries, as well as being the Head of the Commonwealth. The key to understanding our Monarchy can be found in the words of author Sir Antony Jay. Once our Ambassador in Washington but, perhaps, better known as the author of "Yes Minister" and "Yes Prime

Minister", Sir Antony described two roles: one as Head of State and the other as Head of the Nation.

Every country has a Head of State with constitutional and representational duties, often laid down in law. The King is no different, though the scope of his duties has generally been defined by history rather than by lawyers. The King is politically impartial and exercises his constitutional powers on the advice of Government ministers. In the famous summary of the Victorian constitutionalist Walter Bagehot, the Sovereign has "the right to be consulted, to advise and to warn." The King's constitutional duties include: the Opening of Parliament; the appointment of the Prime Minister; and the approval of Parliamentary and Secondary legislation. There are also representational duties such as the paying and receiving of State Visits. In addition, The King is the fount of all honour, all state awards are given in his name, and Head of the Civil Service, the Armed Forces and the Judiciary, underlining their political impartiality.

The King's role as Head of Nation is now as significant as his role as Head of State, and can be divided into four elements – identity, continuity, achievement and service. On the first, one commentator described the Monarch's role as expressing the national mood: "interpreting the nation to itself". The more so in times of difficulty or success. Take the Olympic Games as an example. When our athletes win medals, we all walk a bit taller, uplifted by a sense of national pride. Nationhood is more than population and land; it is about the sense of unity and identity, and the Monarch is very much a focus for this.

The Monarchy also promotes an important sense of continuity and stability at a time of rapid social, cultural and technological change. Governments and Prime Ministers come and go. The Queen had 15 UK Prime Ministers from Sir Winston Churchill to Liz Truss, yet throughout her long reign she was the constant in all of our lives, and I think we all felt it terribly when she was no longer there. But apparently seamlessly, The King swiftly assumed this mantle in our minds. Another of the modern

"The Queen had 15 UK Prime Ministers from Sir Winston Churchill to Liz Truss, yet throughout her long reign she was the constant in all of our lives"

Monarchy's principal purposes is to recognise, on behalf of the Nation, achievement, excellence and success in our society. This is not just by the Honours system, but also by a more informal range of awards. These include those for Enterprise, Voluntary Service, Music and Poetry. And finally, the Sovereign endeavours to recognise and support the service given by others to the Nation, whether in the voluntary sector, in public life, or in the armed forces and emergency services. Part of this recognition is through the regular themed Receptions at Buckingham Palace which are filled with people who have made tremendous contributions to local or national life and are all thrilled to be present. During my early days as Equerry, one of the ladies-in-waiting said to me: "very few people come here to get told off, we are in the happiness business" which was a perfect description of what those celebrations are, a projection of happiness.

The State Funeral

I first worked for The Queen in 1989, progressing through three positions on loan from the RAF, to eventually become the Master of the Royal Household in 2005. I left HM's direct service in 2013. My appointments were very personal ones and when the Court was out of London I would live and dine with those members of the Royal Family in residence. I came to know The Queen as well as I know anyone, and I admired, respected and liked her greatly. Her death came as a great personal sadness. I had known for many years that I would be a Pallbearer at the State Funeral as HM wished this duty to be fulfilled by her former equerries. The task was to form the close escort to The Queen's coffin, not to carry it which was the duty of the Guardsmen of the Bearer Party. We were instructed to go to Buckingham Palace immediately after the death and after various briefings, we found ourselves on the Parade Square of Wellington Barracks for our first rehearsal,

"Modest, considerate and tolerant, she loved to laugh and to make others do so"



Sir David (in front of HRH Princess Royal) escorting The Queen's coffin at the State Funeral

in company with the Household Division. Everything under the gimlet eye of the formidable figure of the Garrison Sergeant Major, who is one of the most impressive people I have ever met. The Household Division rightly prides itself on its ceremonial. So to say that initially I found the whole thing intimidating would be a significant understatement. But the rehearsals were, in fact, marvellously encouraging. Our first public duty, in the gaze of who knows how many millions of observers, was when The Queen's coffin was processed on a gun carriage of The Royal Horse Artillery from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall for the Lying-in-State. This went well and gave us confidence for what was a much more demanding day the following Monday. The rest of that week remains like a dream, I know I was there but I don't feel I really was. To add to the surreal nature of the experience we were

getting up in the middle of the night to rehearse in the cold, dark and empty streets of London or Windsor. I simply cannot find words to describe the day of the State Funeral itself. But the sense of relief that we all felt when we took our seats for the Committal Service at St George's Chapel, our duty done, was almost palpable. I have had a most fortunate and richly filled life,

but of all that which I have experienced, The Queen's funeral was the most profound. Sad, exhausting but somehow uplifting – a celebration of a great life lived to the fullest.

The Queen as I knew Her

The Queen was a marvellous human being, made more so by her unshakable conviction that whilst she was the holder of an extraordinary duty, she was herself quite ordinary. In that, of course, she was entirely wrong. She was, perhaps, the most recognisable person on Earth, and yet in herself was the very antithesis of celebrity. Modest, considerate and tolerant, she loved to laugh and to make others do so. The warmth of her smile and her sparkling eyes were captivating. She was nevertheless a determined, decisive and courageous leader. Possessing an intense curiosity, she was also the most assiduous listener and observer. At the end of the day, she would often reflect on all that she had discovered during its course. The possessor of an unfailing memory, her store of knowledge and wisdom was fathomless. For those who chose to seek it, her counsel was always thoughtfully and patiently given. Dutiful to the last The Queen was, above all, one of the wartime generation. They were forged in a very different time and we shall not see their like again.

AIR MARSHAL SIR DAVID WALKER,
PRESIDENT, RAF CLUB

A tribute to Britain's last Dambuster

*Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson MBE DFC,
25th November 1921 – 8th December 2022*

George 'Johnny' Johnson MBE DFM, the last surviving original Member of No. 617 Squadron RAF and of Operation Chastise, the 'Dambuster' raid of 1943, has died at the age of 101.

Born in Lincolnshire, he volunteered in 1940 for flying duties in the RAVFR and trained as an air gunner, later completing a course as a bomb aimer. After flying 19 operations including attacks on Berlin, Hamburg and industrial cities in the Ruhr, his crew was selected for a newly formed 'X' Squadron for a special task, later given the title 617 Squadron. The Lincolnshire-based squadron undertook the daring night time 'Dambuster' raid, named 'Operation Chastise', which took place over Germany's industrial Ruhr Valley dams on May 16th/17th 1943.

Johnny's role in the raid was to aim his aircraft's 'Upkeep' bomb on the Sorpe Dam, which required a different form of attack from those mounted on the Möhne and Eder Dams. Instead of 'bouncing' the bomb on the lake in front of the dam, Johnny had to align his bomb run in parallel to the dam. Several runs were made before Johnny was satisfied that the position of the aircraft was suitable to drop the bomb, which was achieved accurately, although due to the more resilient structure of the dam, the bomb failed to burst it.

After the war, he trained as a navigator and flew with Coastal Command's No. 120 Squadron, flying the new Shackleton aircraft, followed by a tour in Singapore. He ended his RAF career in 1962, with his final tour being at a Thor ballistic missile site in Lincolnshire.

Johnny published a book of his memoirs in 2014, named "The Last British Dambuster: One man's extraordinary life and the raid that changed history".

In June 2016, he was appointed MBE for

his remarkable services in World War II.

Johnny was a Member of the Royal Air Force Club and we were delighted to host Johnny and his family in 2017 at a lunch time reception where Johnny was presented with his Lifetime Honorary Membership by the CEO and Club Secretary Miles Pooley.

We were once again very privileged to host a Club dinner marking the 75th Anniversary of Operation Chastise on 21st May 2018 in which Johnny was the guest of honour.

We mourn the loss of another veteran of a generation that gave so much, so that we could all enjoy peace and live freely today.

RIP Johnny, the last of Dambusters

Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Dambusters raid

Led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, 19 Lancaster bombers took part in the mission. They flew low over the water to



Johnny pictured at the Club after receiving his MBE in 2017

avoid enemy radar and anti-aircraft fire, and dropped the bombs from a height of just 60 feet. Despite heavy losses, the raid was considered a success, with two dams destroyed, two more severely damaged, and several factories and mines flooded.

The 80th Anniversary provides an opportunity to remember the bravery and sacrifice of the RAF crews who took part in the mission, and to reflect on the impact of the raid on the course of the war.

CLUB EVENT

'Attack On Sorpe Dam' – 'Johnny' Johnson's Dambusters Story

**Wednesday 1st November 2023,
1830hrs – 2100hrs**

Discover the story of 'Johnny' Johnson and a lesser known part of the Dambusters legend. Join us for a special screening of the 2023 film 'Attack on Sorpe Dam', directed by Andrew Panton.

Tickets: Members: £55.00 / guests £60.00. The ticket price includes the movie screening (55 minutes), Director Q&A, an informal hot fork buffet dinner, ½ bottle of wine and a £10.00 donation to the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre Lancaster restoration project, something Johnny was very passionate about.

To book for any Club Social event please visit: www.rafclub.org.uk/whats-on, email events@rafclub.org.uk or call 020 7399 1081. For more information on the film, visit www.attackonsorpedam.com



MEMBER STORIES

The epic risk & rigour of 76 Squadron

The incredible story of the British Nuclear Cloud Samplers

Opposite: An English Electric Canberra B6 used in Grapple Zulu Nuclear Tests, painted "anti-flash white" for its sniffer role. The white colour was to reflect as much as possible of the thermal radiation from the explosion, protecting the aircraft and crew; Flt Lt Joe Pasquini. This page: Operation Grapple Zulu Flagpole – one of a number of tests of early atomic and hydrogen bombs in 1957 and 1958.



We have been very privileged for more than three decades to live without the fear of nuclear conflict – very privileged until now. As we enter a new era of unprecedented global conflict the world waits with bated breath as the potential for a 'hot' conflict edges closer.

The threat of nuclear war in the Cold War was constrained by deterrence and, in part by the UK government's 'peace through strength' policy and the nuclear tests which were carried out in the 1950s in order to establish the country as a true nuclear power. Indeed, Britain became the World's third nuclear power in 1952 with Operation Hurricane.

Britain's search for more powerful nuclear weapons continued with Operation Totem in 1953, Mosaic (2 explosions) and Buffalo (4 explosions) in 1956, Antler (3 explosions) in 1957, and Operation Grapple (9 explosions) in 1957 and 1958. As each year passed, the science of how to build a bigger bomb kept expanding – and with it the potential strength of the explosions up to an official maximum of 3 megatons. For reference, in 1945 the explosive power of the 'Little Boy' which destroyed Hiroshima was 15 kilotons (of TNT equivalent) and the 'Fat Man' Nagasaki bomb 25 kilotons. In less than seven years, the British capabilities in this area had excelled.

The British Nuclear Tests were held at the Montebello Islands and Maralinga in Australia and later at Christmas Island in

the Pacific ocean. All of these operations required huge manpower resources for the preparation of the tests, for the actual detonations which were filmed and documented in every way possible, for the scientific study of each explosion (power, fallout, environmental, human, etc), and the subsequent decontamination of anything – people and equipment – which were at risk of coming into contact with radioactive material.

So, you might ask, who was put most at risk? The answer is probably the aircrew of the RAF's 76 Squadron – the nuclear cloud samplers. "The primary task [of 76 Squadron] was to be the sampling of radioactive cloud formed by

"76 Squadron pilots and their crews were true aviation pioneers as they guided their Canberra B6s into freshly bloomed atomic and hydrogen mushroom clouds"

nuclear explosions," states a document from the period. In more detail, they were to measure background radiation as well as to collect minute particles from the explosion so that scientists could study the efficiency of each weapon.

Another document reveals, "Their contribution is so important to weapon development that a carefully calculated dose (of radiation) is allowed for them – but one that cannot produce any possible permanent injury." That maximum safe dose was calculated at 10 roentgens.

The very first nuclear cloud sample, a 'cut' into the cloud, occurred in October 1953 with Operation Totem – 6 minutes after the flash from the detonation. The pilot of this aircraft was Geoffrey Dhenin who later went on to become an Air Marshal. "After testing the level of radioactivity with sensors mounted on the wing, Dhenin made an initial pass through the mushroom cloud, followed by two more: one through the base and one through the top. On return to base, the aircraft was tested and found to be contaminated with radioactivity... Dhenin and the two other crew members received high doses of gamma radiation."¹

76 Squadron pilots and their crews were true aviation pioneers as they guided their Canberra B6s into freshly bloomed atomic and hydrogen mushroom clouds – more than once. As mentioned above, with Operation Totem 3 cuts at various altitudes were made. With Operation Grapple Zulu Flagpole, one of the crews made 6 cuts. The 76 Squadron Nuclear Cloud Sampling 'teams' involved English Electric Canberra B6s referred to as Sniff Boss, Sniff One, Sniff Two, Sniff Three, etc. These iconic aeroplanes, and their crews, were specially equipped with a series of measurement equipment. For example, the Romeo meter measured the current radiation (r/hour), the Charlie meter the cumulative radiation doserate, and the Salmon meter measured the amount of particulate matter being collected as the Canberra B6s dashed through tumultuous nuclear clouds.

Radiation was not the only risk the 76 Squadron faced. Altitude became another challenge as the nuclear particle sampling appeared to be more successful when sampling the top part of the cloud as opposed to the stem.

“The stem at 10,000 and 20,000 ft is also substantially free from fission products which, in air samples, may start to be found at 30,000 ft and upwards. With bigger yield weapons (two and over megatons) the same substantially holds, but even at 45,000 ft the main body of the fission products will not be found, they are quite obviously in the area of 55,000 to 60,000 ft,” states a document from the period.

However, the standard Canberra B6 had an official service ceiling of 49,213 feet*. 76 Squadron would sometimes be flying beyond this limit – at times at 54,000 - 55,000 feet. The risks of flying at these high altitudes were real. Apart from the concern of radiation exposure, there was also the extreme cold temperatures where -82° F was frequently recorded at 53,000 ft, as well as unknown turbulence inside of the billowing thermos-nuclear clouds – and let us not forget the threat of ‘coffin corner’, where a plane could stall or exceed its maximum Mach number, with potential catastrophic results. It meant that pilots had to fly extremely accurate airspeeds with no margin for error. 76 Squadron’s exploits were truly heroic.

Its crews practised their ‘Order of Battle’ drills rigorously before each flight to ensure they were ready for the unprecedented challenges they faced. However, even with all of the intense practice, the reality of the situation still presented chilling experiences to confront.

For example, Flt Lt Christopher Donne describes his Operation Grapple Y mission as follows: *“I remember seeing this yellowy-brown thing ahead of me, stretching out almost as far as I could see, and I remember turning the aircraft and getting it straight and level and just scrambling up those last few feet and then approaching the cloud and hoping that I’d got a small part of it—we called it a ‘cut’... And then we hit it, and I can remember my navigator saying ‘Bloody hell! Let’s get out of here!’ But, of course, we couldn’t because there was no way I could turn the aircraft—*

RAF 543 SQUADRON

The article specifically speaks of the work of the 76 Squadron, but we must not forget that RAF 543 Squadron based in Lima in 1974 also participated in nuclear cloud sampling during tests which were conducted by France and China.

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

In 2008 Prince William, today the Prince of Wales, spent three months learning to fly with 76 (Reserve) Squadron at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, and would have been aware of the important work of those that wore the 76 Squadron Badge before him.

the turbulence was causing me to concentrate very hard on flying it at all at that height”.

“I can remember sort of glancing out of the side of my eyes to look at the instruments — the needles were pressed very firmly up against the stops ... showing the very high levels of radiation, which were very much higher than we’d anticipated...”²

Flt Lt Joe Pasquini also recalled during Grapple Zulu Flagpole, *“Right at that very moment of entry (into the nuclear cloud), my right elbow exploded! The pain was excruciating. It shot up my arm, across my body, up to my head and down to my feet, literally paralyzing me... I was physically and mentally out of action ...”³*

The exploration of this new aviation frontier did not stop there though. Flt Joe Pasquini also shared his experience, in a book he published in 2020, a year before his passing, of rain at 46,000 feet. Weather does not happen at these high altitudes. One just has to think about flying in a commercial

aeroplane, which tend to cruise in the region of 30 - 35,000 feet, where weather clouds can be spotted far underneath the aircraft. What Flt Lt Joe Pasquini’s ‘Sniff’ plane experienced though was not normal rain – it was radioactive rain which made all of his *“radiation measuring instruments [light] up before me like a Christmas tree.”*

For many years, the experience and work of 76 Squadron during the British Nuclear Tests was unknown owing to the protection afforded to it by the Official Secrets Act. This year, however, 70 years since the very first nuclear cloud sample took place, 76 Squadron will finally be given recognition by the British Government for their historic and pioneering work.

76 Squadron truly has an incredibly epic story to tell about the risk and rigour involved in flying into nuclear explosion mushroom clouds – for Queen, for country, and most importantly for peace.

Flt Lt Joe Pasquini, Flt Lt Christopher Donne, and Air Marshal Geoffrey Dhenin were all Members of the Royal Air Force Club.

Presented by the Family of Flt Lt Joe Pasquini

It must be remembered that the legendary work of the British Nuclear Tests could not have happened without the support of all of those also taking part on the ground (such as those involved with radiation decontamination of the aeroplanes after each mission), at sea, and so many others each playing an important role to make these tests happen.

They all have unique stories to tell about their participation in the British Nuclear Tests. Stories which for many years there were unable to share any details of, even with their families, due to the Official Secrets Act.

This year, in 2023, those stories from the ground and at sea will also be recognized with a medal from King Charles III – an important recognition which may possibly be one of the first of his reign.

* Reference: <http://www.bcar.org.uk/english-electric-canberra>
¹ From GRAPPLING WITH THE BOMB : BRITAIN’S PACIFIC H-BOMB TESTS by NIC MACLELLAN page 169
² From GRAPPLING WITH THE BOMB : BRITAIN’S PACIFIC H-BOMB TESTS | NIC MACLELLAN page 199
³ from Curse of the Nuclear Cloud Flyer by Flt Lt Joe Pasquini pages 117 - 118

HERITAGE

A Royal Visit

Remembering Lord Trenchard, the ‘Father of the Royal Air Force’

On Thursday 9th February, we were pleased to welcome representatives from the RAF Benevolent Fund following their annual memorial at the RAF Chapel in Westminster Abbey, to mark the anniversary of Lord Trenchard’s death with members of the Trenchard family. The RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF’s leading welfare charity, hosted their President, HRH The Duke of Kent, and Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Mike Wigston.

Hugh Montague Trenchard, 1st Viscount Trenchard, is widely regarded as the ‘Father of the Royal Air Force.’ Born on 3rd February 1873, Trenchard was a British officer who played an instrumental role in establishing the Royal Air Force.

Trenchard started his career as a young infantry officer and served in India. Later, with the outbreak of the Boer War, he volunteered for service in South Africa. However, during the war, Trenchard was critically wounded and lost a lung, which resulted in partial paralysis. On medical advice, he travelled to Switzerland to recuperate, where he took up bobsleighbing. Following a heavy crash on The Cresta run, his spine had re-adjusted and his injury had gone and he could walk unaided. He returned to



the first Chief of the Air Staff before taking up command of the Independent Air Force in France.

Trenchard returned as Chief of the Air Staff under Winston Churchill in 1919, where he spent the following decade securing the future of the Royal Air Force. Trenchard’s contribution to the RAF was not limited to his military career. In 1919, he founded the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, originally known as the RAF Memorial Fund. Apart from supporting those who needed financial help after World War One, one of its charitable objectives was to raise money for a memorial for airmen who died in the Great War. Thus, the Fund is the custodian of the RAF Memorial on the Victoria Embankment (which celebrates its centenary this year) and more

recently, the Fund became the custodian of the Bomber Command Memorial directly opposite the Club. Trenchard’s legacy in the RAF is significant. He is recognised as one of the early advocates of strategic bombing and was instrumental in the formation of the RAF College Cranwell.

Trenchard’s contribution to the Royal Air Force was critical in establishing the world’s oldest independent air force. His efforts in securing the future of the RAF have shaped the way air power is used in modern warfare and the value that he placed on the moral component of fighting power – in large measure by creating what is now the RAF Benevolent Fund – farsighted indeed. Trenchard’s legacy will continue to inspire future generations of aviators and military personnel. The RAF Club pays tribute to Lord Trenchard with a portrait of him in our Churchill Bar.



HRH The Duke of Kent with the Club CEO, Miles Pooley; Bomber Command Memorial



CLUB STAFF

Stronger together

The Royal Air Force Club Staff have had a busy year in and outside the Club as they continue to grow stronger together as a team. All departments have joined forces representing the finest of the hospitality industry at Careers Fairs and RAF Bases, as well as supporting each other and celebrating their hard work.

RAF Benson Trip

Staying connected with our Royal Air Force roots, we were grateful to visit RAF Benson in Oxfordshire in August last year. The team were greeted by Club Representatives, Sqn Ldr James Traynor and Flt Lt Jessica Powell who kindly showed them around the Officers' Mess and grounds. Staff were lucky enough to take a close look at two front-line Puma HC2 helicopter squadrons and



one Operational Conversion Unit, flying a mix of Puma HC2 and Chinook HC4 helicopters and enjoyed hearing fascinating stories from Pilots and Engineers about the Helicopters' magnificent history and capabilities.

We were delighted to receive an RAF Benson Puma print from Sqn Ldr 'Rio' Richards, which we have since framed and displayed proudly in the Club.

This trip helped widen RAF knowledge among staff, helping to provide the best possible service to our Members.



Service Anniversary Lunches

We love to celebrate our hardworking staff and show them just how much we appreciate their efforts! We have come up with a fun and delicious way to recognise their service anniversaries by treating them to a monthly lunch. Our Club CEO, Miles Pooley, hosts these celebratory events for staff to enjoy some delicious food and each other's company.



Careers Fair

In November, the Club represented the hospitality industry at the Skills London 2022. Staff were excited to talk all things hospitality at the UK's largest jobs and careers event for 14 to 24-year-olds at the ExCeL in London.

We were also fortunate enough to be invited to the annual careers fair for The Edge Hotel School at the Wivenhoe House Hotel in October. Here, our inspiring staff promoted careers in hospitality and enjoyed meeting the next generation of service industry professionals.



Staff Summer Boat Party and Christmas Party

In addition to work-related events, the staff also had chances to come together, boost morale and have some well-deserved fun. At our summer boat party, the team enjoyed music, games and a BBQ on the top deck, taking in the beautiful sights of London.

At a Christmas Lunch held in the Sovereigns' Room, staff were joined by Club President Sir David Walker and Club Chair The Honourable David Murray, who presented the annual awards, celebrating our Food and Beverage Department and Meetings and Events department receiving the department of the Year.



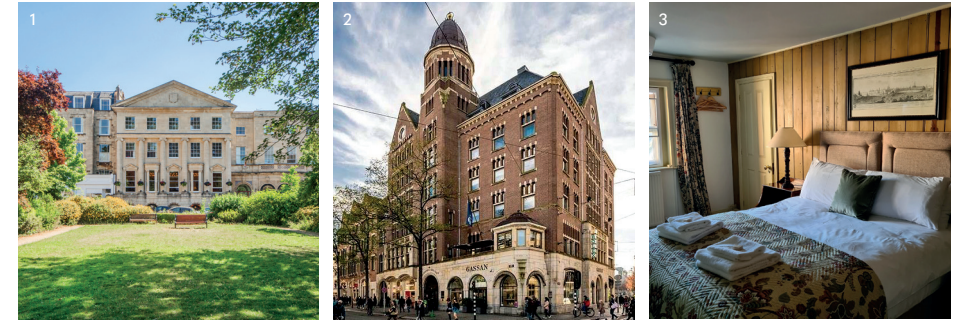
Marathon Runners

The Club hosted a Staff Quiz to raise money for the chosen charities of our Meeting and Events Executive, Charlotte Dennison, and Apprentice Chef, Laurie Ballard, who both ran the London Marathon on 23rd April, 2023. Charlotte and Laurie dedicated themselves to months of training to prepare for the event, and their hard work paid off as they both crossed the finish line with incredibly impressive times.



With Club Electrician Steve as our very talented quiz master, alongside a raffle and bar profits, we managed to raise £830. The evening was organised by our 'Charity and Social' team, made up of representatives from all departments who came together to support our runners.

If you would like more information about becoming a part of our wonderful team here at the RAF Club, please visit our [Careers page](#) via our [website](#) to see current vacancies or contact hr@rafclub.org.uk.



RECIPROCITY

Reciprocal Clubs

We're pleased to announce reciprocal arrangements with three new Clubs

1. The Clifton Club

Founded in 1818, Bristol's oldest premier private members Club provides unrivalled hospitality in luxurious regency surroundings. Situated in Clifton Village, overlooking the beautiful Mall Gardens – just a stone's throw away from Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge – the Club has an array of rooms to relax, dine, work and hire for private functions and wedding ceremonies.

The Clifton Club is best known for its traditional heritage, opulent interiors, and reputation for providing the highest quality food served in the Dining Room, using only the finest locally sourced ingredients by their resident Head Chef.

www.thecliftonclub.co.uk

2. Royal Industriele Groote Club

Founded in 1976, with the motto: "Let your mind thrive", Royal IGC boasts a beautiful Clubhouse in a historic building in the heart of Amsterdam and is a place for conversations, knowledge exchange and inspiration.

Facilities include: Bar, Dining Room and private meeting room hire.

www.igc.nl

3. The Norfolk Club

Review by Wg Cdr Paula Willmot MBE on behalf of the Membership Committee

Just a short walk from Norwich train station you will find a Regency house in a small square by Norwich Cathedral,

this is the Norfolk Club.

The atmosphere on entering is immediately warm and inviting, a little baggy at the seams, but I felt very welcome. Touring the Club I immediately got the impression of a small, quiet but well run bolt hole where one could recover from the many tourist and visitor attractions Norwich has to offer. The four bedrooms were warmly furnished with lovely views. There is an extremely busy events programme and a number of small, beautifully furnished rooms for meetings and celebratory gatherings.

The Dining Room is rather on the grand scale with historic and local fine art on show. There is also a stunning Billiards Room on the top floor that can be hired for private events. Food is pub style with a small bar just off the entrance where one can sip a glass of wine (in beautiful Riedel glasses) before going in for lunch or dinner.

Parking can be booked at the front of the Club (four spaces) or behind where there are numerous spaces.

With approximately 400 members, this has the feel of a small Country Club in the city and perfect for a stay in this lovely part of England.

www.thenorfolkclub.co.uk

For more information, to view our full list of reciprocal clubs or to obtain automated letters of introduction, visit www.rafclub.org.uk/reciprocal



FUNDRAISING

Friends of the RAF Club

“It is my privilege and pleasure to donate to the RAF Club and I shall certainly be continuing to do so for as long as is welcome and helpful. It truly is a home from home.”

Club Member and Silver Friend

The Royal Air Force Club is founded on philanthropy, conceived from the goodwill of Lord Cowdray, who wrote the first cheque for the Club’s inception in 1918 to: “ensure a permanent Club Home worthy of the airmen and their brilliant and superlatively heroic work”.

It is this ethos of generosity which enabled the Club to survive one of the most challenging periods in the Club’s history during the recent Covid pandemic, the effects of which are still being felt today.

As a Registered Charity, any surplus from the Club’s operation is reinvested to improve the facilities and services for Members, with capital projects now augmented by the Friends of the RAF Club and any legacy gifts.

The Trustees and Staff thank the many Members who have additionally supported the Friends of the RAF Club to help us fulfil the major

refurbishments that were put on hold during the Covid pandemic whilst we continue to rebuild revenues. The Friends annual levels are currently: £120-£499 (Bronze); £500-£2499 (Silver); or £2500+ (Gold Friends).

We are delighted that the first capital project funded by the Friends of the RAF Club is now complete. The new, secure front doors and Lobby Project were unveiled in March and have been received well. Club Member and Silver Friend said:

“I was much impressed with the new doors and entrance hall and I am sure everyone will agree it is a huge improvement. I take this opportunity to send you my best wishes for the continued success of the Friends’ Appeal.”

The Club is now fundraising to support the urgent renovation of the crumbling façade, to restore it to its former Georgian glory and prevent any health and safety incidents. The projected cost of this project has almost doubled due to significantly increased building costs post-pandemic and we remain very grateful to all new and existing Friends for their contributions.

Gold and Silver Friends of the RAF Club Dinner and Speech on The Monarchy by Club President AM Sir David Walker

6 March 2023

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed the second Friends of the RAF Club event in March, kindly hosted by both the Club President and Club Chair.

Some 100 Friends of the RAF Club gathered for drinks and a fine dinner, as well as the pin presentation of new Gold and Silver Friends, enabling us to acknowledge our gratitude. Following dinner and a rousing speech by Club Chair AVM David Murray, Club President AM Sir David Walker spoke of his privilege to serve HM The Queen culminating in his prestigious role as a pallbearer in HM funeral in September (see page 6).

Plans are afoot to host the next Friends' event later this year with ACM The Lord Peach as speaker.

“I just wanted to thank all at the RAF Club for the splendid Dinner for the Friends of the RAF Club. It was a wonderful occasion. The food, wine and service were, as always in the Club, superb. I am also very grateful for the Gold Pin; I will wear it with pride. As usual, all at the Club did us proud.”

Club Member and Gold Friend



The Friends’ Fund New Doors and Lobby Project

“On behalf of the Front Office Team, thank you to all the Friends of the RAF Club for making this amazing lobby possible. We are all very happy with the elegant new lobby and I love coming to work!”

Danny Burchi, Front Office



Leave a Legacy

There is no better way to give something back to the RAF Club than to help others enjoy it in the future. Leaving a Legacy can make a lasting difference and perpetuate your memory to future generations of Club Members as well as being a tax efficient way of donating from your estate, however large or small the donation.

“Both my wife and I have had the Club in our wills for many years. We much admire your efforts to keep the Club going as well as possible in these troubled times.”

Club Member, Australia

If you would like to find out more about the Friends of the RAF Club or discuss leaving a Legacy to the Club then please contact Director of Fundraising Claire Dakin T: 020 7399 1082 or email claire@rafclub.org.uk. Thank you.

THANK YOU

We would like to acknowledge all Bronze, Silver and Gold Friends of the RAF Club, including those supporters who wish to remain anonymous. Due to the volume of Bronze Friends, we will write to them separately to acknowledge our grateful thanks.

GOLD FRIENDS

Capt A Budagher; Mr G Bunker James; Mr C Downey; Mr P Eddleston; Gp Capt N Gillingham; Sqn Ldr V Gupta; Dr H Kendrick; Mrs P J Moore; Sqn Ldr B S Naidoo; Mrs E Rex; Mrs P Spaight; Mrs G Summers; Flt Lt B Thompson; Mr R M Williams; Dr R Williams

SILVER FRIENDS

Mr D Allday; Mr M Allen; Dr J Ashwood; Mr A W Barnett; Sqn Ldr R Barraclough; Mr S Bartlett; Flt Lt C S Bell; Maj T Benke; Lt Col S Blair; Gp Capt J Brock; Mrs E Burns; Mr G Butler; Mr G Calder; Wg Cdr A D K Campbell; Mr L Carr; Sir J Cheshire; Wg Cdr K Claxton; Mrs D Cleaver; Mr P Cole; Mr B Cooper; Lord Craig of Radley; Wg Cdr I S Craig; Sqn Ldr A T Crichton; Mr A Davis; Gp Capt N Davis; Sqn Ldr G Day; Gp Capt K R J de Belder; Wg Cdr B Dibb; Flt Lt D M Embrey; Mrs M Foot; Mrs L Fulton; Mr M Gibson; Mr I Godfrey; Mr P Gorman; Ms A Graham; Mrs C Graham; ACM Sir Michael Graydon; Mr M J Green; Mr N Grenfell-Marten; Ms DJ Guthrie; Dr J S Hall; Mr B Haskins; Mr T Hawkins; Wg Cdr C J Hill; Sqn Ldr M J Hollingsworth; Air Cdre J Houghton; Mrs H Hoyle; Mr P Huxley; Mr A C Jackson; Sqn Ldr M K Johnson; Major S R Johnston; Dr G Jones; Mr S Kassum; Flt Lt A Kay; Sqn Ldr M Kelson; Mrs B Keun; Mrs M J King; Wg Cdr J N Kirk; Flt Lt F B Kirkland; Mr E Lindsay-Smith; Mrs V Marshall; Mr J McGarvey; Capt A H McKibbin; Air Cdre J A McLoughlin; Wg Cdr R Metcalfe; Air Cdre R Montague; Mrs H Moroney; Air Cdre S Moss; Wg Cdr J Mumford; Gp Capt A Naismith; AVM R P O’Brien; Sqn Ldr K Ottaway; Wg Cdr F E Parker; Mr T C Patrick; Gp Capt A R Read; Mr C Richardson; Mr S E Robottom-Scott; Wg Cdr S G Rowley; Mrs E Ryle; Lt J S Schaefer; Flt Lt J D R Shaw; Mr NJ Sharrard; AVM T B Sherrington; Lt Col W T Shearer; Sqn Ldr M L Sinel; Mr C Spurrier; Dr A C E Stacey; Gp Capt G Stockhill; AM P O Sturley; Dr I F Symes; Sqn Ldr R J Taylor; Gp Capt A Terrett; Ms HMW Townsend; Lady Tunncliffe; Lord Tunncliffe; Wg Cdr C E Upton; Mr T Vary; The Wasu Charitable Foundation; Sqn Ldr D Whatling; Mr IL Whittle; Mrs J Williams; Mr RA Wright; Mr P W Yockney.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The Birthday House Trust; The Estate of Ursula Bilek (dec’d) Club Member 1998-2021; The YPO

HERITAGE

RAF Cranwell Initial Officer Training: Then and Now

RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire was the world's first Air Academy and today, it continues to select and train the next generation of RAF officers. We take a look at its history and its long-standing relationship with the Club

The Beginning

Following the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service to form the RAF in 1918, RNAS Cranwell became RAF Cranwell and the world's first Air Academy. The College has a history steeped in the training of officers across a broad range of disciplines which are integral to the professional development of the next generation of leaders in the RAF. During the 1930s the College Hall Officers' Mess (CHOM) was completed (1933) and College Hall was opened in 1934 by the then Prince of Wales, Prince Edward.

From the 1920s to the 1960s courses varied between two and three years in length, in which time cadets were taught the skills required of a military officer whilst also receiving flying training. However, in 1938, with war fast approaching, courses were shortened and became solely focussed on flying training.

RAF Cranwell at War

With the declaration of war, RAF Cranwell ceased its intended function and was formed into a Flying Training School. This large expansion saw RAF Cranwell become a huge training base, hosting a wide variety of flying and engineering units throughout the war and the secret trials of the Gloster Whittle Jet in 1941.

RAF Cranwell Today

Today, however, officer training courses at RAF Cranwell are delivered by the RAF Officer Training Academy (RAFOTA) and differ somewhat from what they have looked like in the past. Following the transition to a Modular Initial Officer Training Course (MIOTC), the training at RAF Cranwell takes on a much more modern structure. Each course runs over a 24-week period, consisting of 6-week modules.

The first module is the Military Skills Module (MSM) where vital knowledge is taught by the RAF Regiment to develop the resilience, teamwork and adaptability of cadets. This module contains numerous field exercises where cadets can test their skills practically. The modular nature of the courses allows

Opposite: North Sea Class Airship NS11 at RAF Cranwell
Clockwise from top:
CHOM in WWII; MIOT Graduation in 2022; Graduation Hall; Wg Cdr Louise Clarke



serving personnel to join following MSM to avoid unnecessary training.

The subsequent terms of Development 1 and 2 focus on embracing and developing the cadets' individual leadership styles and qualities, while also ensuring they meet the needs of the RAF. Cadets learn to know themselves, in order to lead a diverse Air Force throughout an uncertain future with decisiveness, flexibility and emotional intelligence. Cadets undertake numerous beliefs and values lessons with the Padres, as well as a week dedicated to care in leadership.

The final module is the Consolidation

module which sees cadets demonstrate their training in summative assessments in numerous differing scenarios. Those successful at this point will go on to graduate from RAF Cranwell. Equally, if cadets are unsuccessful during Consolidation, they can re-enter at predetermined points in the course that contain the specific aspects of training they require, before graduating.

Wg Cdr Louise Clarke, Officer Commanding RAFOTA, brings a wealth of experience to the role, overseeing the delivery of the MIOTC. She said: "Command here is an absolute honour

and I am proud to lead the Academy staff in delivering a world class experience for our next generation of Junior Officers. The course has changed significantly since I attended in 2003 and I recognise the improvements the Modularised Initial Officer Training Course has made to ensure that our Junior Officers are ready to face future challenges during their service within the RAF."

RAF Club and our links to RAF Cranwell

Wg Cdr Clarke has been a Member of the Club for over 19 years and sits on the Club's Membership Committee, maintaining and strengthening the close ties between the Club and newly graduating officers.

Those who graduate from RAF Cranwell receive an in-person briefing by Wg Cdr Clarke before leaving for their next ventures, where membership and all the benefits that the Club has to offer are explained in detail. The Club offer an

"The Club offers an introductory rate of £12.00 per year for the first five years for graduating officers"

introductory rate of £12.00 per year for the first five years for graduating officers, with joining rates between 50% - 70% from each course. By continuing to raise awareness of the Club at Cranwell, Wg Cdr Clarke hopes to increase this figure further.

The Club also generously provides a graduation prize for each course, acknowledging the Cadet who has throughout the course shown grit and unwavering perseverance, meeting every challenge with enthusiasm. The prize consists of an engraved crystal RAF Club decanter, two-night complimentary stay at the Club with breakfast and dinner, for two people. The Prizewinners' names and statements are displayed on the notice board in the Club lobby as the Club looks to maintain its strong relationship with its new graduating members.

WG CDR LOUISE CLARKE
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

In pictures

For photo galleries featuring the following events and more visit www.rafclub.org.uk/news



20TH AUGUST 2022

Junior Officers' Dining-In Night

100 Junior Officers and Younger Members were treated to a Champagne reception and sumptuous four-course dinner in the Sovereigns' Room for the Club's inaugural Junior Officers' Dining-In Night.

Glamorous guests enjoyed an 'Around The World In 80 Days' themed menu, magical entertainment provided by Magic Circle magician, Chris McGeever, as well as after dinner games and competitions. The food was superb with the Peshwari spiced rump of lamb being a firm favourite for many guests. The model aeroplanes included in each placemat gift also proved popular and were quickly zooming around the room and between tables, some bearing messages and mobile numbers! It was fantastic to see so many Junior Officers and Younger Members laughing and enjoying the Club's wonderful surroundings together.

The Events Committee wishes to thank the Junior Officers who helped make the night such a success, in particular Flt Lt Olafemi Xavier who presided over the night as PMC and Fg Off Graham Robertson who was our enthusiastic Mr Vice for the evening. Special thanks must also go to Flt Lt Daniel Chorley who kindly arranged parking at very short notice for one of the organisers who was affected by the train strike. The evening also celebrated the launch of the RAF Club's events specifically designed for Junior Officers and Younger Members: from curry nights and Christmas drinks to Pancakes & Prosecco and, of course, the second Junior Officers' Dining-In Night. Check out the Club's website for more details – we hope to see you there!

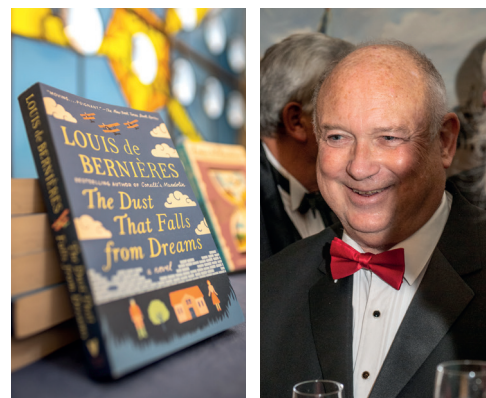
If you are a Junior Officer or Younger Member and have ideas for events that you'd like to see at the Club, please do contact the Club's Events Manager Emily Moss (emily@rafclub.org.uk).

25TH OCTOBER 2022

An Evening with Louis de Bernières

Last autumn we had the pleasure of welcoming internationally acclaimed author Louis de Bernières to the Club.

This special evening centred around his latest aviation themed novel *The Dust That Falls From Dreams*, which is a welcome return to the epic romance, heroism and history that made *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* a modern classic. The evening included De Bernières reading passages and hosting a Q&A and book signing, alongside a Champagne reception and delicious three course meal with matching wines.



DECEMBER 2022

Christmas at the RAF Club

On Wednesday 14th December, Members enjoyed a festive Afternoon Tea with a glass of Prosecco at the Club before attending the RAF Benevolent Fund's annual Carol Concert at the beautiful St Clement Danes Church, where they enjoyed the festivities with mince pies and mulled wine.

The following Friday, 16th December, Members and their guests looked red carpet ready at our Black Tie Members' Christmas Dinner. Executive Head Chef Michael Dutnall dazzled, with an impressive three-course menu including special festive twists. Alongside great food and company, the evening included a sing-along choir to ensure everyone was full of Christmas cheer.

Finally, our Members' Christmas Lunch proves to be so popular that we hold it twice. Guests indulged in a traditional three-course lunch as the festive atmosphere filled up our beautiful Sovereigns' Room with laughter, great conversation and carols. Club Chair, Air Vice-Marshal David Murray hosted the first lunch, while the following day the Chair of the Events committee, Air Commodore Dai Whittingham, welcomed Members and guests.

Make sure to book for this year's Christmas events early!

28TH JANUARY 2023

Burns Night Supper

The Club celebrated the life of Scottish poet Robert Burns at our annual Burns Night Supper. The atmosphere of our magnificent Sovereigns' Room felt as if it was transported to Scotland as Members and Guests, draped in their finest tartan, enjoyed a Champagne reception. This was followed by a fantastic four-course meal, paired with fine wines, Scotch Whisky, traditional piping in the haggis and address – all accompanied by the sound of traditional bagpipes.





21ST MARCH

Gardeners' Question Time comes to the RAF Club

Members joined a regular panellist from BBC Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time, Matthew Pottage, for a delicious Club Dinner and had all of their gardening questions answered.

Matthew, the youngest ever curator of RHS Wisley in the history of Royal Horticultural Society, is also a writer and broadcaster. The evening was kindly hosted by our Trustee, Air Cdre Barbara, CBE.



2ND - 6TH MAY

A Royal Celebration

At the Royal Air Force Club, we offer our heartfelt congratulations to King Charles III and Queen Camilla on their Coronation.

The Coronation of King Charles III marks the start of a new chapter in the history of the United Kingdom. We are confident that under his wise and steady leadership, the country will continue to thrive and prosper.

The Club's week-long celebrations started with a Coronation Celebration Drinks Reception on Tuesday 2nd May, hosted by the Club Chair, Air Vice-Marshal the Hon David Murray. The reception featured a selection of British-themed canapés specially crafted for the occasion and some of the finest British still and sparkling wines.

In his final RAF tour, David Murray was responsible for the Armed Forces' relationship with The Queen Elizabeth II for three years and served as a Senior member of the Royal Household. During his speech, David spoke about his relationship with The Queen. He is currently one of 10 Gentlemen and Lady Ushers to the King and in addition he is one of the Monarchs' Deputy Lieutenants for Suffolk. His insightful speech and anecdotes ensured this event was certainly a memorable one.

Over the Coronation week, the Club offered majestic menus in both the Dining Room and Cowdray Lounge, certainly fit for a King.

On the morning of the Coronation Day, a vibrant sense of patriotism permeated the Club as Members eagerly arrived to celebrate this historic occasion.

The Sovereigns' Room, equipped with a bar and large screen, was filled with Members and their families and friends,

who gathered to watch the broadcast, under the watchful gaze of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's portrait hanging above the screen. As the Club filled with joyful celebration, we ensured that all our members had access to the best viewing experience possible by providing additional screens in the Lancaster Room, Churchill Bar, and Running Horse Tavern.



"The sense of patriotic pride was palpable among Club Members during the celebrations"

During lunch, Members enjoyed a delightful and festive meal with the King's Feast Buffet, which featured a selection of delicious dishes such as Irish Beef Fillet Wellington, roast leg of Welsh Lamb, Chicken à la King, Coronation Chickpea and Pilaff, along with a variety of mouth-watering starters and desserts. The Club staff provided excellent service as always, ensuring that everyone had a memorable experience.

After lunch, despite the rainy weather, our determined Members gathered outside to witness the Coronation Flypast, which included a formation of military helicopters from the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, and British Army flying over Green Park. These were followed by the nine Red Arrow Hawks leaving their signature blue, white, and red trails in their wake as Members and Staff looked on with admiration and cheered. The sense of patriotic pride was palpable among Club Members during the celebrations, and we were delighted to welcome all members who visited us to be a part of this historic moment. We are proud to have received wonderful feedback from Members who stayed over the weekend such as below:

"Thank you and your staff for the amazing service for the King's Coronation today. It was exceptionally well organised, and we were made to feel very welcome with great food, drink and atmosphere. Watching the festivities on the large TVs in the comfort of the Club and then going outside for the flypast was a perfect day. Thank you to everyone that gave up their day to work to ensure others had an amazing experience. The Club certainly today met and surpassed pre-Covid standards and I felt proud to be a member" RAF Club Member and Serving Officer

We wish King Charles III and Queen Camilla all the best as they embark on their new roles as King and Queen of the United Kingdom and their other realms. May their reign be long and prosperous, and may they continue to embody the values of duty, honour, and service that have defined the British monarchy for centuries.

10TH FEBRUARY AND 6TH MARCH

The Taxi Charity

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. The charity, run by volunteer London black taxi drivers, celebrated with two events at the Club.

In February, thirty WWII veterans arrived for lunch, courtesy of volunteer cab drivers, where they were welcomed by Air Vice-Marshal Tim Neal-Hopes. The veterans, including 102 year-old Club Member, Flt Lt Colin Bell DFC, took the opportunity to catch up and share their wartime experiences with TV and newspaper journalists.

A month later the charity marked International Women's Day. The guest list included Colonel Jane Davis OBE QVRM TD DL, Vice Lord-Lieutenant Of Greater London, seven female veterans from WWII, Officer Cadets from Sandhurst and serving personnel from HMS Diamond, The King's Troop and The Household Cavalry.

Guests from the Netherlands included Martine Verhulst the Dutch Air Attaché, Els Schiltmans from the Dutch Army Recovery and Identification Unit, Agnes Schaap the Mayor of Renkum, Sophie ter Horst the daughter of the Angel of Arnhem and Hilje Van Eck who was awarded the BEM for her work with veterans.

Taxi Charity Vice President and Club Member, Frances Wyhowska, welcomed guests and spoke about the changing roles of women in the military and the special relationship between the charity and the Dutch people.

The Taxi Charity is the only Forces charity that focuses on providing fun and entertainment and arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across the UK. To find out more, visit www.taxicharity.org



CLUB EVENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

Club Dinner:
'Bomber Command'
with Roddy MacKenzie
Tuesday 27th June 2023
1830hrs – 2230hrs
£65.00 Members, £75.00 guests
Dress: Black Tie

This Club Dinner is focused on Roddy MacKenzie's book *Bomber Command – Churchill's Greatest Triumph*. Inspiration came from Roddy's father, Roland MacKenzie DFC, who was seconded by the RCAF to pilot a Lancaster for 34 combat sorties with 166 Squadron One Group RAF Bomber Command from 9th April until 11th August 1944.

Curious of his father's accomplishments, Roddy set out to research what the Bomber Command accomplished and his father's role, yet with no answers from allies, Roddy looked to the Germans for answers. The results were so astonishing, Roddy decided to capture them in his book. This three-course Club Dinner with wines will include a talk and Q&A.

Junior Officers'
Pancakes & Prosecco
Sunday 23rd July 2023
1200hrs – 1400hrs
£45.00 Members, £50.00 guests
Dress: Smart Casual

Enjoy a relaxed Sunday morning at the Club with other Junior Officers and Younger Members, for a delicious hot and cold buffet, with an exciting menu specially created by our Executive Chef Michael Dutnall.

The tickets include free-flowing Prosecco!

Club Lunch with Candida Adkins: 'Spitfire Girl' - The Original RAF Trailblazer
Thursday 28th September 2023
1200hrs – 1530hrs
£60.00 Members, £65.00 guests
Dress: Jacket and Tie

The Club is delighted to welcome member, Candida Adkins for a Club Lunch to share the story of her mother, an original RAF 'trailblazer', ATA pilot Jackie Moggridge.

Jackie was the original 'Spitfire Girl', who flew an incredible 83 different types of aircraft during WWII and helped pave the way for the generations of female officers to follow. Candida will also introduce her book *Spitfire Girl* describing Jackie's trials and tribulations of her life in the sky. The event will include a drinks reception and three-course lunch with wine.

Wine Tasting Series with Hayward Bros – Australia and New Zealand
Tuesday 24th October 2023
1830hrs – 1945hrs
£35.00 Members, £40.00 guests
Dress: Smart Casual

A fourth generation family-owned business established in 1932, Hayward Bros Wines specialise in importing a fantastic range of wines from select wineries around the world. The company is one of our key wine suppliers and Robert Hayward has hosted many wine dinners at the Club and will be familiar to many of you. Members will enjoy tastings of wines from Adelaide, Coonawarra, Barossa and Marlborough Regions.

Light snacks and nibbles will also be provided.



Club Lunch with Preston Smith
Spitfire: An American WWII
Fighter Pilot in the RAF
by Parke F. Smith
Tuesday 7th November 2023
1200hrs – 1530hrs
£55.00 Members, £65.00 guests
Dress: Jacket & Tie

Join Club Member Preston Smith for a drinks reception and three course meal with wine, followed by a talk about his father's book, *Spitfire: An American WWII Fighter Pilot in the RAF*. Parke F. Smith was the last US pilot accepted into the ranks of the RAF via their training exchange programme at War Eagle Field, Los Angeles. After completing his course, he sailed to England on board the HMS Queen Elizabeth, swore allegiance to the King, and was offered a coveted spot training as a fighter pilot. From 1942 to 1946, Smith flew 129 missions in North Africa, Italy, and over the North Sea. Amazingly, he made it home, unlike so many of his friends and comrades. It is to them he dedicated his writing.



Winter Gourmet Dinner:
'Nose to Tail'
Tuesday 14th November 2023
1830hrs – 2230hrs
£75.00 Members, £85.00 guests
Dress: Black Tie
LIMITED PLACES

Over the last few years, there have been calls for more sustainable ways of growing, cooking, and preparing food. The emphasis on using every part of the animal and letting nothing go to waste is an ethos which many restaurants and Chefs are now adopting. Executive Chef Michael Dutnall and his team have been working on a four-course menu to showcase how cheaper and less common cuts can be used to create a delicious culinary experience. Wines will be paired with each course.

FULL EVENT LISTING 2023

Details of events taking place at the Club this year.

Keep up-to-date via www.rafclub.org.uk/whats-on or by following the Club on its social media channels

JUNE

FULLY BOOKED

Sons and Daughters II
Dinner
Friday 16th June,
1830hrs, £75/£85

ONLY A FEW SPACES LEFT

Club Dinner:
'Bomber Command'
with Roddy MacKenzie
Tuesday 27th June,
1830hrs, £65/£75

JULY

FULLY BOOKED

Summer Gourmet
Dinner – '128 Gin
and Honey'
Tuesday 11th July,
1830hrs, £85/£90

Junior Officers'
Pancakes & Prosecco
Sunday 23rd July,
1200hrs, £45/£50

AUGUST

50 Year Reception
Sunday 6th August,
1230hrs, 'by invitation
only'

Junior Officers'
Dining In Night
Saturday 19th August,
1800hrs, £90/£90

25 Year Lunch
Tuesday 22nd August,
1200hrs, £55/£60

SEPTEMBER

FULLY BOOKED

Annual Battle of Britain
Dinner with Dilip Sakar
Thursday 14th
September, 1830hrs,
£70/£80

New Members'
Reception & Dinner
Tuesday 19th
September, 1800hrs,
£55/£60

Club Lunch with
Candida Adkins: The
Original RAF Trailblazer
Thursday 28th
September, 1200hrs,
£60/£65

OCTOBER

Gin Tasting with
David Wood
Tuesday 3rd October,
1830hrs, £45/£50

ONLY A FEW SPACES LEFT

Glorious Grouse Dinner!
Tuesday 10th October,
1830hrs, £75/£80

Junior Officers'
Curry Night
Thursday 19th October,
1900hrs, £35/£40

Wine Tasting Series
with Hayward Bros
– 'Australia and
New Zealand'
Tuesday 24th October,
1830hrs, £35/£40

NOVEMBER

'Attack on Sorpe Dam'
– 'Johnny' Johnson's
Dambusters Story
Wednesday 1st
November, 1830hrs,
£55/£60

Club Lunch with
Preston Smith -
Spitfire: An American
WWII Fighter Pilot
in the RAF
Tuesday 7th November,
1200hrs, £55/£65

Winter Gourmet Dinner
'Nose to Tail'
Tuesday 14th November,
1830hrs, £75/£85

DECEMBER

Festive Afternoon Tea
& RAFBF Carol Concert
Wednesday 13th
December, 1615hrs,
£50/£60

Junior Officers'
Christmas Drinks
Reception
Thursday 14th
December, 1830hrs,
£35/£40

Christmas Dinner
Friday 15th December,
1830hrs, £65/£75

Members' Christmas
Lunch
Monday 18th December,
1200hrs, £60/£70

To book for any Club Social event please visit: www.rafclub.org.uk/whats-on, email events@rafclub.org.uk or call 020 7399 1081



FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Our Award-Winning Team of Chefs

The RAF Club is privileged to have a talented team of chefs whose dedication to their craft produces award-winning dishes both in our Club Dining Room and in the competitive culinary sphere. The Kitchen team have won several prestigious awards and are constantly competing in various culinary competitions.

The strength of this team is testament to the leadership of our Executive Head Chef, Michael Dutnall. Chef Michael has forged a remarkable career, beginning with a prestigious apprenticeship at the Connaught Hotel in Mayfair and has since worked with renowned chefs at top restaurants and Private Members' Clubs in London and Yorkshire.

He is recognised in the culinary world for his exceptional skills in refining classic British dishes with a focus on quality as well as sustainability by sourcing local ingredients where possible. Alongside this, he is commended for his strong leadership and ability to inspire and mentor the next generation of talented chefs. He encourages his team to enter culinary competitions to challenge themselves, showcase their talent and refine their skills.

One of the outstanding Members of our Kitchen team is our Chef De Partie, Harry Donnelly. Achieving the Graduate award from the Craft Guild of Chefs in 2022, Harry has also qualified in successive years for the Regional Finals of the prestigious Roux Scholarship, a competition that recognises talented young chefs in the UK. In March Harry was one of 18 regional finalists competing for a place in the finals.

For the acclaimed panel of judges,

including Brian Turner CBE, Michel Roux Jr., Andre Garrett MCA and Claire Smyth MBE, Harry created a dish of aged heritage beef, ox kidney hotpot, confit endive, shallot puree and bordelaise sauce. Although he did not make it through, to get this far is an incredible accomplishment.

Also in March, our talented Sous Chef Jonathon Alexander achieved Bronze in the prestigious Lumina Lamb Challenge. Seeking out world-class chefs, the competition requires the Chefs' best lamb recipe using the high-quality ingredient of Lumina Lamb from New Zealand.

Jonathon was selected for the live final on the International Salon Culinaire stage at the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering 2023 event where he created a delicious dish of barbecued lamb, hispi slaw, potato bake, 'chakalaka', roosterkoek and corn.

Also receiving awards at the same competition were our Kitchen Apprentices Ratmir Plokhov, Mitchel Homden and Laurie Ballard who won Silver and Bronze awards in culinary skill categories such as Fish Filleting and Chicken Sautéing. In addition, three more of our Kitchen apprentices competed in the Annual Awards of Excellence in April.

We take great pride in our talented apprentice Chefs who are honing their skills and making a name for themselves

in the world of professional culinary arts. The skill and dedication of all of our chefs is evident in the glowing reviews of the remarkable dishes on our monthly menu that leave our Members and guests amazed.



CHEF'S RECIPE

We are excited to share Chef Michael's recipe for the delicious Poached Pear and Club honey Frangipane Tart.

Impress your dinner guests by simply scanning the QR code for the recipe including a Virtual Masterclass conducted by Chef Michael himself!



SUSTAINABILITY

Honey from rooftop bees

Revealing the Club's sweetest secret

Our Dining Room dishes are definitely worth the buzz. Two beehives thrive on our rooftop and are an enhancing element to our Kitchen's culinary creations. The honey harvested is used in many of our dishes from sweet desserts to zesty dressings, giving them a special touch. Not only is our honey delicious but it is just one of the ways that the RAF Club cares about the environment and sustainability.

What is the honey making process from the beehive to the bottle?

First, the worker bees collect nectar from flowers using their long tongues. They store the nectar in their honey stomachs and add enzymes that break down the complex sugars into simpler ones. Then, they regurgitate the nectar into the mouths of other worker bees, who chew it and add more enzymes. This process is repeated until the nectar becomes thick and syrupy, at which point it is deposited into honeycomb cells. The bees

fan their wings to evaporate the water content from the nectar, which causes it to thicken further into honey. Finally, the bees cap the honeycomb cells with wax to seal in the honey.

The Club beekeeper harvests the honeycomb filled frames twice a year and takes them to a processing area. Here, the honeycomb is prepared for extraction by removing any excess beeswax and other debris. Uncapping the Honeycomb, beekeepers use a hot knife or an uncapping machine to expose the honey-filled cells. The frames are then placed in an extractor that spins the frames rapidly, causing the honey to be forced out of the cells. The extracted honey is then filtered to remove any remaining



impurities such as bits of beeswax, pollen, or bee parts. The filtered honey is then allowed to settle in settling tanks. Once the honey has settled, it is ready to be bottled and labelled.

Can locally sourced honey cure hay fever?

The idea is that by eating the honey, your body gets used to the pollen and doesn't react to it as much. However, there isn't any scientific evidence to support this idea. The pollen in honey is different from the pollen that causes hay fever, so eating honey probably won't help much with your symptoms.

"The honey harvested is used in many of our dishes from sweet desserts to zesty dressings"

What are some of the favourite uses for honey?

Honey is a versatile and delicious ingredient that can be used in a variety of ways!

1. A natural sweetener, it can be used as a substitute for sugar in many recipes.
2. It has natural antibacterial properties and can be used in DIY face masks, scrubs, and other skin care treatments.
3. Honey can soothe a sore throat and reduce coughing. Mix it with warm water and lemon juice for a comforting drink.

We all use the phrase "as busy as the bee" – do bees sleep or rest at all?

Even bees need time off to recharge. They also take 'power naps' during the day! Bees spend their days buzzing around collecting nectar, pollen, and water, building and maintaining their hive, and caring for their young. They're always on the go!

So when the sun sets and it gets dark and colder outside, bees return to their hive and cluster together to stay cosy and warm.

Do bees recognize their hive?

Yes! They can spot their hive from afar and distinguish it from others using sight and smell. When a bee sets out to collect nectar or pollen, it memorizes the hive's location, appearance, and scent. This allows it to find its way back to the hive with precision, even if it's hidden or moved. The bee then performs a special "waggle dance" to inform other bees about the location of the food source. This dance gives information about the direction and distance, making it easier for other bees to find the food.

As environmentally conscious consumers of honey, is there anything we should be mindful of when buying honey?

Purchase sustainable honey from local beekeepers – this way you support the health of the bees and the environment, and also enjoy the purest and most delicious honey possible. When you choose raw and unfiltered honey, you're getting all the natural goodness that Mother Nature intended, including essential enzymes and nutrients.

JEMIMA LYWOOD
MARKETING EXECUTIVE

BEE-SPECIAL! Would you like to become a 'Hive Hero' and sponsor the bees for £100.00 pa? The Club will invest donations into new planting on the roof and create a happy habitat for our bees to thrive. All 'Hive Heroes' will receive a gift pot of RAF Club honey. Please contact: claire@rafclub.org.uk.

PROMOTIONS

Member offers and the Club shop

Discounted tickets for the RIAT's VIP Aviation Club
enclosure and a new, limited edition Gin



Royal International Air Tattoo Friday 14th July – Sunday 16th July 2023

RIAT, the awe-inspiring home of flight, will this year be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first successful air-to-air refuelling between two aircraft. The operational theme for this year's Air Tattoo is SKYTANKER23, welcoming examples of all aircraft types in service across the globe today.

Once again, the RAFCTE, organisers of RIAT are offering Member of the RAF Club discounted access into the Aviation Club on Friday 14th July, and are also honouring last year's price of £125 (usual price £177.00).

The Aviation Club includes:

- On base guest car parking
- Private marquee, garden, grandstand and private toilets
- Light breakfast
- Two course buffet lunch
- Light afternoon tea
- Complimentary tea, coffee and infusions
- Complimentary souvenir programme

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.airtattoo.com/airshow/tickets/hospitality/aviation-club using promotional code FAC23 at the checkout. Or call 01285 713 456 (0900hrs - 1700hrs Monday - Friday). Please note that a general admission ticket is required in order to buy an upgrade.



The Cocktail Collection

The new 2nd edition hardback St Clement Danes Church Cocktail book is curated by aviation historian and Club Member, Hon. Group Captain Paul Beaver, containing over 40 RAF and St Clement Danes themed cocktails.

The proceeds from each sale go towards the St Clement Danes Church phase 1 of the 1941 Appeal to raise the urgently required funds to restore the 1719 James Gibbs Steeple (see below).

Members receive a 10% discount off the RRP of £20.00 by using code 1941spitfire10 at checkout. Visit <https://shop.stclementdanestraf.org>

St Clement Danes Church News of the 1941 Appeal

The three pillared 1941 Appeal is making steady progress since its launch last year, raising over £50,000 towards our £10 million target. Thank you to all who have supported the Appeal so far.

In February we had an inspection by the specialist Steeplejack company SWAT, who climb the steeple every six months to check on the structure and ensure the remedial work completed in 2018 is still safe.

Their report has made alarming reading. The degradation to the Steeple had accelerated over the winter months, new cracks have appeared in previously stable masonry and more pieces of stone have broken free.

The SWAT report has recommended that we take immediate action to further secure and make the Steeple safe. We have applied to the Diocese for an Arch Deacon's certificate to erect stainless steel netting to encapsulate the 1719 James Gibbs Steeple. We are having to undertake this work to ensure



there is minimal risk, should it collapse.

This is essential work, which will cost £10,000 of our limited resources, but has to be done urgently. As soon as we receive permission from the Diocese, the work will start and take about a week to complete.

If you are able to assist us by making a donation towards these unexpected costs, no matter how small or large, we would be very grateful to you.

Finally, thank you again to all our supporters. If you are able to make a further donation or have an idea how you may be able to help raise funds, please do contact our Development Director at: jules.sherwood@stclementdanestraf.org



Phyllis Court - Henley Royal Regatta Tuesday 27th June to Sunday 2nd July 2023

This year sees the return of the prestigious Henley Royal Regatta, with over 200 races, attracting thousands of visitors. RAF Club Members have the opportunity to buy tickets benefitting from the best views, plenty of space, privacy and excellent service at one of our Reciprocal Clubs, Phyllis Court Club in Henley-on-Thames.

There will be an array of dining options available to you and your guests. Paul Clerehugh, from The Crooked Billet and

The London Street Brasserie, will be providing all-day dining in the Riverside Pavilion. Tickets include a welcome glass of Champagne, canapés, three-course lunch and afternoon tea. Alternatively you can book to dine in the Clubhouse.

Please scan the QR code to browse the Reciprocal Member brochure and book your tickets.



CLUB SHOP

Exciting new additions!

Limited Edition 128 Orange and Clove Gin

Crafted with care by the Hawkridge Distillers, this unique gin captures the essence of freshly distilled orange, clove and honey from our Club's bees.



Stylish Baseball Caps

Made from premium materials, with a sleek design featuring our Club's logo, these caps are the perfect accessory to show off your club pride while keeping the sun out of your eyes at matches or when you're out and about.

In addition, we now have Champagne Flutes and Gin Glasses; Club Port; Chocolate Truffles; Club Notebook; Dome Silk Scarf and Military Genius Board Game.



Visit our club shop now and elevate your club experience to a whole new level!
<https://shop.rafclub.org.uk/collections/all>

The International Club for Air Force Officers Wives (ICAFOW)



Members and guests of ICAFOW enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch on 7th December 2022. This was the last meeting of 2022, so instead of a speaker they were entertained by members of the North London Military Wives Choir with a singalong finale (pictured).

On 1st March the ICAFOW held its first luncheon of 2023 and were entertained by an amusing speaker, Club Member Captain John Hutchinson, a retired Concorde Pilot. They were also joined by 100-year-old RAF WWII Veteran, Lawrence Henry, who has been assisting in the making of the film The Great Escaper with Sir Michael Caine. Inspired by true events it tells the story of a Second World War veteran who

escapes from his care home to attend the 70th Anniversary celebrations of the D-Day Landings in Normandy. It is set to be released in cinemas later this year.

ICAFOW meet for Lunch seven times a year and have a group outing in September. Membership is open to all wives / partners of serving or retired Royal Air Force Officers or Air Attachés at a cost of £20 per year or £15 for widows. Upcoming luncheons will take place on 19th July, 4th October, 1st November and 6th December 2023.

For further information please contact Denise Heath denise@theheaths.org.uk.

MEMBER STORIES

The White Hart Inn II

A former USAF pilot and a Club Member re-creates a tribute to the White Hart Inn in his Texan back garden

People passing by our home in Austin, Texas, often ask, "What's that English telephone booth doing in your back yard?" Well, it started about 50 years ago in England...

I have long been a student of military aviation history, particularly with regard to the Battle of Britain. So, when I was assigned to RAF Alconbury with the USAF's 30th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron in 1970, I took advantage of learning more about the history of the Royal Air Force.

In 1973, not long after the RAF Museum was established in Hendon, I visited the museum and was fascinated by a large piece of varnished plywood with 43 chalk signatures of fighter pilots from the Battle of Britain that had originally hung in The White Hart Inn at Brasted, Kent – a favourite watering hole for fighter pilots based at RAF Biggin Hill during WWII. Biggin Hill is one of the most famous air fields of No.11 Group Fighter Command, playing a key role during the Battle of Britain.

Taking a photo of the board, I carefully measured it and thought, "I can make a replica to hang with my growing militaria collection." After constructing the replica board, I projected the photo of the signatures onto the board and carefully traced out with chalk the 43 signatures from the original Signature Board. Then, the thought came to mind, "I wonder how many of the original signers were still living?" With the aid of the Battle of Britain Association, I wrote letters to as many as I could find, asking for their signatures on my Board. Thirteen graciously responded. I put the Board in the back of my little VW square-back and visited each one – AVM J.E. Johnson, Air Cdre A.C. Deere, Gp Capt C.B.F. Kingcome, Gp Capt R.W. Oxspring, Gp Capt R.F.H. Clerke, Gp Capt J.W. White, Gp Capt James Rankin, Wg Cdr R.R. Stanford-Tuck, Wg Cdr P.C. Barthropp,

Wg Cdr D.H. Grice, Wg Cdr J. Rose, Wg Cdr H.M. Stephen, and Sqn Ldr E. Mayne. After meeting each Battle of Britain pilot, I carefully erased the chalk replica signature and the original signer would re-sign on the spot of the original Board.

During that time, I visited the White Hart Inn and learned that one of the original proprietors, Mrs. Kath Preston, was still living in England. That led to a series of letters during which she supplied me with many photos of the war-time pub, showing where the Signature Board had been hung. While on one of my visits to the White Hart, I was informed that the original signed print of WWI RFC ace, Captain Albert Ball VC, which had hung adjacent to the Signature Board, as well as the "yard of ale" which hung over the bar, had recently been sold to an antique dealer in Brasted. I wasted no time and purchased both items.

"With the aid of the Battle of Britain Association, I wrote letters to as many as I could find, asking for their signatures on my Board"

Returning to the United States in 1974, I was later assigned to Bergstrom AFB in Austin, Texas. Looking for a home to purchase, we found a lovely house with a storage building in the back yard. Perfect! Now I had the location for my White Hart Inn II. My

wife and I laid a wooden floor and built ceiling rafters (where dozens of "horse brasses" were displayed). Using the WWII photo of the original pub as a template, we added a leather Chesterfield couch, bar and striped rug. My wife located an original English telephone booth at a nearby antique mart, and we placed an original London street lamp on a post outside the building.

We christened the pub with a short outdoor play written by my son-in-law, who also played the part of Sir Winston Churchill. We still enjoy hosting a Battle of Britain party on 15th September each year, and hoist a gin and tonic in memory of "the few."

MAJ. WARD BOYCE
CLUB MEMBER



TOP TO BOTTOM: Exterior of WHI II; Maj. Ward Boyce standing beside an RF-4C Phantom at RAF Alconbury; Interior of the original WHI; Original WHI Signature Board; Mary and Ward Boyce enjoying a gin & tonic in their pub.

RAF CLUB SUMMER PHOTO COMPETITION



WIN a one-night stay for two people with breakfast and Afternoon Tea

Send us a photo of your favourite memory at the Club by the end of summer (31st August) for a chance to win. The winner will be announced on 4th September 2023.

HOW TO ENTER

Follow us on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram and post your photo with the hashtag #RAFClubSummerSnaps and tag the RAF Club to enter! If you are not on social media, you can still enter via email by sending your entry photograph and a brief caption to: jemima@rafclub.org.uk

@royalairforceclub

@The Royal Air Force Club

TheRAFClub

TERMS & CONDITIONS: You must follow us on Facebook or Instagram and submit your entry by 31st August 2023. A winner will be announced and contacted on 4th September 2023. The prize must be redeemed together within 6 months of the announcement. The complimentary one night stay is for two people, in a standard double/twin room, inclusive of breakfast and Afternoon Tea for two. Bookings are subject to availability. By entering this competition, you are giving the RAF Club permission and rights to publish the photos on their social media platforms. This means that the RAF Club will be able to use, reproduce, distribute, display, and create derivative works based on the photos you submit for the competition, without any further permission or compensation to you. It's important to read the terms and conditions carefully before entering any competition, as they outline the rules and conditions that you must agree to in order to participate. If you have any concerns or questions about the terms and conditions, you should contact the competition organisers for clarification.



@sophieacassweddings



Celebrate your wedding at the Royal Air Force Club

Steeped in history, this glorious Grade II building in the heart of London offers rooms with striking original features and artwork and provides a unique ambience for your special day. Whether you plan to host a lavish celebration or a more intimate affair, the Royal Air Force Club has a selection of elegant rooms, rich in character, for you to choose from, along with two rooms licensed for marriage ceremonies.

Our experienced events team will ensure your wedding day is perfect and support you through every step of the planning process.

Visit www.rafclub.org.uk/weddings and take a look at what we have to offer. Full details on rates, menus and availability can be obtained from the Meetings & Events Team on 020 7399 1004/5 or email meetingsevents@rafclub.org.uk.



ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB
— FOUNDED 1918 —

