

CLUB CENTENARY
*An exciting year of
celebrations to mark
100 years of the Club*

OVER BERLIN 1944
*With Mosquito
Pilot & Club Member
Flt Lt Colin Bell*

128

THE MAGAZINE OF THE RAF CLUB SPRING 2018

ORLA GUERIN
*A first-hand account
of front line reporting
in the Middle East*

THE ARCHIVES
*Stepping back in time
with Club Trustee
Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert*

Lord Cowdray and the birth of the Royal Air Force Club



ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB
— CELEBRATING 100 YEARS —



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— CELEBRATING 100 YEARS —

The Royal Air Force Club,
128 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY

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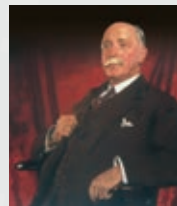
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FRONT COVER

THE ORIGINS OF 128

In October 1918, the first Viscount Cowdray, President of the Air Board, sent a letter outlining his practical support for the establishment of an RAF Club to the then Chairman of the Royal Flying Corps Club, Sir Sefton Brancker. Enclosed was a cheque for £100,000 "...sufficient to ensure a permanent Club House worthy of the airmen and of their 'brilliant and superlative heroic work.'"

Brancker, unsurprisingly, immediately accepted Lord Cowdray's generous offer of help, his response concluding:

"A more valuable form of assistance at this point in the history of the youngest of the Services could not have been conceived, and your name will go down to the coming generations of airmen, not only as their first Minister, but as their greatest personal benefactor."

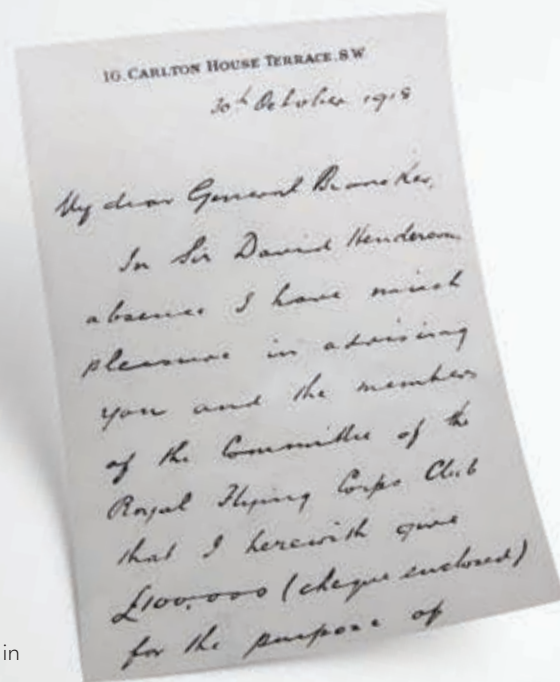
The Air Council also paid tribute to Cowdray's generosity in their reply and as a *raison d'être* for the Club, its terms are as valid today as they were then:

"The Council feels strongly that the establishment of such a club as Your Lordship contemplates will not only be a boon to the officers individually but that, apart from social amenities and intercourse it will offer, it will also contribute powerfully to securing full unity in spirit and in feeling in the now unified flying services of the Crown."

Work then commenced in finding and securing a suitable premises to house this new RAF Club. Cowdray discovered

that the home of the London Lyceum Club, at No 128 Piccadilly, was on the market and "influenced by its proximity to No 6 Park Lane, hitherto used for carriage stables, horse stables and livery yards... would provide the space needed to extend the main building, and Cowdray duly acquired the ground leases for both properties."

And so, thanks to the foresight, generosity and passion of one man, Lord Cowdray, the Royal Air Force Club was born. A portrait of Lord Cowdray, along with the original letter of intent, dated 30th October 1918, can be viewed above the far fireplace in the Club's Cowdray Lounge.



For the full account of the Club's early years, '128' The Story of The Royal Air Force Club by Air Commodore Henry Probert and Wing Commander Michael Gilbert, priced at £13.50 www.rafclub.org.uk/shop



Looking forward to the next 100 years

This year, both the Royal Air Force Club and the Royal Air Force celebrate the 100th anniversary of their formation. The Club & the Royal Air Force grew in tandem, with the Club's mission to support the serving and former serving Officers of the RAF being a core principle of its foundation. Today, the RAF Club still maintains this ethos, endeavouring to provide the very best Club in London for its members, families and their guests.

Over the years, from its foundation by Lord Cowdray, to the present day, the Club has always moved with the times, continually refurbishing, improving and enhancing the member offering. 2018 brings fresh innovation with the Club's Centenary project to develop an additional 17 bedrooms, Fitness Suite and new Business Centre progressing to schedule, with expected completion in the summer and official opening in autumn 2018. This project, the most ambitious to take place in the Club's 100 year history, will enable the Club to move into our second century with enhanced facilities and accommodation for the benefit of all our 25,000 members.

Along with the fabric of the building, the Club also offers much more than bricks and mortar. Embodying the true 'esprit de corps' of the RAF, where else in the UK can members network, socialise, dine and be entertained in such a setting? 128 Piccadilly has been visited over the years by members from all walks of life, all of them united in their unwavering commitment to the RAF and all of them made welcome and entreated to make the Club their 'home from home'.

To celebrate 2018, the year will also of course be marked with special events including a Centenary Summer Ball on Saturday 28th July - an evening of Champagne, live music and much more and we encourage members and their families



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to join us for one of our social events in this iconic year.

The year cannot pass without ceremony and in the latter half of 2018, we will be holding a private Royal Reception with the Club's Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, as guest of honour. During the event, Her Majesty will officially open the new 'Centenary Wing' and unveil the Club's new stained glass windows, recognising women in the service of the RAF. A portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, specially commissioned for the Club Centenary, will also be unveiled. The Club was in discussions to hold a Royal Garden Party in May of this year, but unfortunately due to other national events, approval was not given.

We hope this latest and relaunched edition of the Club's magazine gives you a taste of what's in store during 2018 and we look forward to sharing this Centenary year with all our members; adding a further layer of unique RAF history to the Royal Air Force Club's long lasting legacy.

ACM Sir Peter Squire
GCB, DFC, AFC, DL, DSC, FRAeS

Finally, it is with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of the Club's wonderful President, ACM Sir Peter Squire in February. Admired by all who met him, Sir Peter had served as Club President since 2013, and will be greatly missed by the Trustees, Staff and Members of the Club. A tribute to Sir Peter follows on page 5.

S C Gray

AIR VICE-MARSHAL SUE GRAY
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

NOTES FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Exciting Times Ahead

The build up to 2018 has seen much hard work and dedication at every level throughout the Club, to ensure an incredible year of activity and to leave an even longer lasting legacy for our next 100 years and beyond.



To echo the sentiments of Air Vice-Marshal Gray overleaf, 2018 is the Club's opportunity to showcase our unique history and celebrate our wonderful membership and strong relationship with the RAF itself. Like the RAF, the Club has continually evolved with the times and continues to do so, most recently in the form of the new Centenary wing, to be unveiled later this year.

The Club prides itself on taking heed of members' feedback, and it was they who called for enhanced bedroom capacity, as the popularity of the Club grew in recent years. The existing Study was no longer adequate for the diverse needs of the membership, many more of whom now use the Club for remote working when in

London, and for those for whom leisure is the top priority, the new state of the art fitness centre will add immeasurable benefit to membership.

We are very much looking forward to unveiling the new wing in the late summer, after what will have been a year and a half of back of house disruption. Staff have worked in temporary offices and the kitchen and back of house teams have made a small temporary canteen function remarkably well from an operational perspective.

At times the building noise has affected us all, and we thank members for their patience during those times of unavoidable disruption. We have come a very long way in eighteen months and very soon, we will all be able to enjoy the benefits of our new, exciting Club facilities.

The past eighteen months have also seen a noticeable focus on staff recruitment, talent and retention across all departments of the Club. When staff

inevitably move on, there is an ongoing commitment to continue to recruit high calibre professionals.

The development and engagement of the Royal Air Force Club team at every level is a huge priority and we are very proud of our exceptional achievement ranking 30th in this year's Sunday Times Top 100 Not for Profit organisations to work for. Read more on page 11.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the wide range of fantastic Club events in the calendar to celebrate this year's Centenary. From Club Dinners with renowned speakers, exceptional members recounting their heroic achievements to a Centenary Summer Ball and a Members' Birthday Party scheduled for late October, there has never been a better time to be a member of the finest Club in London!

Miles Pooley FIH MI
Chief Executive & Club Secretary

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
Site of the old Squash Court, September 2017; temporary roof and crane on 5th Floor, March 2018; 5th Floor of the development, April 2018.



OBITUARY

President of the Royal Air Force Club

Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire GCB, DFC, AFC



It was with great sorrow that we learnt of the death of our Club President, Sir Peter Squire, who died on 19 February 2018 aged 72.

Sir Peter, a former flight cadet at the RAF College Cranwell, was a fighter pilot and flying instructor during his early career. In 1975 he converted to the Harrier and flew with No 3 Squadron in Germany but it was his time in command of No 1 Squadron during the Falklands War that brought his name into the public domain.

Flying from the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes, he led his squadron against ground targets on twenty-six occasions

and his leadership and courage was recognised when he was awarded the DFC for his; 'outstanding valour and steadiness under enemy fire'.

In November 1986 he was promoted to command RAF Cottesmore, the home of the Tri-National Tornado Training Establishment (TTTE). The unit trained RAF, German and Italian aircrew to fly the new Tornado aircraft.

Identified as an officer likely to rise to the top of the RAF he filled a succession of high-profile operational appointments in the MoD and at the headquarters of RAF Strike Command where he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in March 1999. In 2000 he became the Chief of Air Staff, a post he held for almost three years.

Highly professional, personable and much admired, there was a steadiness and reliability about Sir Peter's manner that gave great confidence to those that worked with and for him. People were always at the forefront of his thinking. He was a very compassionate and thoughtful commander who had a deep interest and concern for the welfare of all ranks and their families. An excellent listener, he had a very good antenna for their issues and sought regular briefings in order to gain an insight into people's concerns, aspirations and their motivation.

In retirement, Sir Peter led a busy life. For five years he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Imperial War Museum and was also the Vice-Chairman of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for three years.

Sir Peter Squire, Oil Painting, artist Theo Platt, 2013.



In 2013, Sir Peter became President of the RAF Club. He was the perfect President in many ways, going out of his way to be present at Club functions, and in particular to always attend the Staff Christmas Lunch each year, where he would present awards and always had inspirational words for the staff. He took an interest in everything at the RAF Club but never interfered.

Sir Peter had time for everyone and to many he was both a friend and a wise counsel. He was undoubtedly a people person, who took time to get to know those involved with the RAF Club.

During his time as President, Sir Peter presided over many historic events. On 3rd March 2016, he welcomed the Duke of York at the unveiling of the Search and Rescue Triptych on the Ground Floor, and was present in 2015 when the Royal Family were in attendance at the Club for the Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary commemorations.

He was appointed KCB (1997), advanced to GCB in 2001 and made Air Aide-De-Camp to HM The Queen in 1999.

Lady Squire, who survives him with their three sons, gave Sir Peter great support throughout his long and distinguished career. Sir Peter was always the model officer and gentleman, a distinguished pilot, a man of achievement, and he will be greatly missed by all at the Royal Air Force Club.

With thanks to Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork and Vice-Chairman, Air Commodore Rick Peacock-Edwards

CENTENARY HIGHLIGHTS

To celebrate the Club and the RAF's centenary, a whole host of events, launches and memorabilia has been planned. From the Summer Ball through to a new Club Malt Whisky, take a look over the next five pages and turn to page 20 for a complete events listing for this momentous year.



CENTENARY BIRTHDAY PARTY

The Club is delighted to announce it will be holding a very special Birthday Party on the occasion of its 100th birthday in late October 2018. The Club will be welcoming members throughout the day and offering mini Birthday Afternoon Teas, a celebratory 'Birthday' menu in the Dining Room, live music across the Club and entertainment along with '128' cocktails and tours of the new centenary wing.

Afternoon Tea will be available to pre-book and reservations will be taken for the Dining Room as usual. Members are encouraged to drop into the Club and celebrate this momentous occasion with Trustees, staff and fellow members. Further details, and a confirmed date will be communicated very shortly.

RAF 100 CELEBRATIONS: 1ST APRIL 2018

On the stroke of midnight on Saturday 31st March, RAF 100 was toasted at the Club with chilled Champagne in the Cowdray Lounge. Executive Chef Michael Dutnall and his talented Pastry Chef Zsuzsanna Tóth created a beautiful selection of RAF and Easter inspired cookies for members to enjoy after a sell-out RAF 100 Brunch, in the Dining Room. The Club was bustling with members, many of them uniformed – exactly as Lord Cowdray would have wished for when the Club was formed almost 100 years ago.



THE CLUB'S CENTENARY COCKTAIL

The '128' – created to celebrate the Club's 100th Year



INGREDIENTS

15ml jasmine flower tea infused Gin
10ml sugar cane syrup
15ml grapefruit juice
2 drops of Angostura bitters
Champagne

METHOD

1. Infuse the Gin with jasmine flowers for seven days, adding a floral touch to the cocktail
2. Strain the jasmine flowers from the Gin
3. Pour the Gin into the Champagne flute
4. Add the sugar cane syrup, grapefruit juice and the Angostura bitters
5. Top up with Champagne & serve



ROYAL AIR FORCE BOARD CENTENARY EVENT

On the evening of the 3rd January 2018, 100 years to the day from the first meeting of the Air Council, the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Enterprises held a dinner at the RAF Club for all serving and former members of the Air Force Board. Over 50 guests, including, Chief of Air Staff, Sir Stephen Hillier; Chief of Defence Staff, Sir Stuart Peach and Former Chief of Defence Staff, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Craig of Radley, and their hosts enjoyed the ever-impressive RAF Club cuisine with background music provided by the Royal Air Force Salon Orchestra. Images courtesy of SAC Nick Egan, RAF Photographer.



CENTENARY GIN LAUNCH

On Monday 5th March, the Club's Centenary Gin was officially launched in the Cowdray Lounge. This batch of Dry London Gin, our most popular spirit, was distilled a few miles from the Club and means we have the rare distinction of being one of only two Clubs to sell their very own gin.

On the evening, members enjoyed complimentary G&Ts and canapés, sampling the unique

Club gin recipe created exclusively for the Club. Artisan Gin Distillers, Johnny Neil and Matt Servini of Marylebone Gin were on hand to share a few tricks of the trade and toast the limited edition batch.

Bottles of gin are now available to purchase via the website www.rafclub.org.uk/shop priced at £60.00, collection only, or enjoy in the Club as part of your gin and tonic.





CENTENARY HIGHLIGHTS

CLUB CENTENARY SUMMER BALL

Saturday 28th July 2018, 1900 for 1930hrs

Following last year's resounding Summer Ball success, join us for an even bigger and better 2018 Centenary Summer Ball extravaganza! This 1920's themed evening includes live music, casino with Club prizes, cocktail bar and a delicious buffet created by Executive Chef Michael Dutnall and his team.

Entertainment includes the talented Great Gatsby-inspired 'Mississippi Swamp Dogs Jazz Band', glamorous 1920's starlets the 'Satin Dollz' and 'blink and you'll miss it' roaming magic courtesy of Darren Delaney.

DETAILS

Price: £100.00 members / £110.00 guests including cocktail on arrival, buffet and Club wine throughout the evening. Summer Ball Package including a ticket for the Ball & one-night bed & breakfast for only £170.00 per person member's rate, £203.00 per non-members.

MEMBER OFFERS THE ROYAL AIR FORCE DAY BY DAY 1918-2018



The History Press is delighted to offer copies of Club member, Air Cdre Graham Pitchfork's *The Royal Air Force Day by Day* to members at a discounted price of £35.00 instead of £50.00 usual selling price, including free p&p to UK addresses.

This re-issued and updated account of the RAF's key milestones from 1st April 1918 onwards is a hugely informative read, and presents the "rich tapestry of the history of the Royal Air Force, made up of countless other less publicised aspects that also contribute to the traditions and ethos of the Service. The history of the RAF is not only about aircraft and operations. People are the essence of a fighting service and so their gallantry, dedication and achievements are given prominence."

To order your copy, please email: MacmillanDirect@macmillan.co.uk, or telephone: 01256 302699 and quote offer code: RDD. The offer is open until 31st May 2018.

ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO

Taking place on July 13-15, 2018, the air show will mark the Royal Air Force's 100th anniversary with a full eight-hour flying programme on the Friday that will include a dramatic RAF centenary flypast and a Royal Review of aircraft. The Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Enterprises would once again like to offer members tickets to the VIP Aviation Club Enclosure at a specially discounted rate of £115.00 (usual rate £145.00) on Friday 13th July 2018.

Please use promotional code AVF2018 at checkout. Visit www.airtattoo.com/airshow/visiting/airshow-tickets/aviation-club or call the ticket line on 01285 713456 (8.30am - 5.30pm, Mon - Fri).



CENTENARY HIGHLIGHTS

CLUB CENTENARY MALT WHISKY

Not to be outdone by the new Club gin, or to leave Whisky drinkers without their favourite drop, the Club has also developed a limited edition 10 year old Glenfarclas Whisky.

This classic Speyside Malt combines the sweet depth of flavour that ageing in top quality sherry wood gives, and a firm approach to the palate is softened with a long lingering finish.

With only 400 bottles produced, purchase now and experience this special dram bottled exclusively for the Club.

Purchase at www.rafclub.org.uk/shop priced at £45.00 per bottle or sample in the Club at £3.20 for 25ml.

Lead Crystal Whisky Decanter & Glasses

New to the Club Shop: Specially commissioned lead crystal whisky decanter set, with elegant cut pattern and engraved Club crest. A superb RAF Club gift for any occasion - weddings, retirement, birthdays, anniversaries, or a simple thank you. Why not pair with a bottle of the Club's Centenary Whisky for an extra special gift?

Decanter Set: £129.00. Decanter Set & Bottle of Club Centenary Whisky (while whisky stock lasts): £169.00. Pair of Whisky Glasses: £39.00. This item is collection only, but can be reserved via the Club Shop.

SIP IN STYLE

Don't miss out on a Club keepsake with the Club's limited edition centenary mug trio inspired by the Club's décor, façade and iconic crest. Designed and manufactured in the UK by Stoke-on-Trent-based Bone China specialist, William Edwards, who counts The Ritz, Claridges and Fortnum & Mason amongst his many clients. The individually boxed Bone China mugs are priced at £15.00 per mug and selling fast.

Visit www.rafclub.org.uk/shop for all the Club's centenary merchandise.





CENTENARY HIGHLIGHTS

RAF Centenary Concert 100 Years of British Music at the Barbican Hall

When the Club learnt last autumn that the RAF 100 celebrations would include a new classical composition and performance of the work by the London Concert Choir, we quickly snapped up tickets for members to attend. What we didn't realise was that new Club Trustee Air Commodore Dai Whittingham, a member of the London Concert Choir, was the mastermind behind the project.

The London Concert Choir (LCC) will be commemorating the RAF Centenary with a concert at the Barbican on 11th June that will include the first performance of this major new choral work by Roderick Williams. The work, which has been commissioned by the choir and sponsored by RAF100, is intended to form part of the legacy of the centenary celebrations; illustrating the full history of the Service to date with music and accompanying vignettes, the work will be narrated by the BBC's Sophie Raworth. There will also be music by Parry and Walton, and the RAF Central Band is performing throughout.

Some of the inspiration for the work has come from an anthology of aviation

verse ('Give me the Wings' by Martin Barraclough) but the rest comes from the RAF's rich history itself with the composer hoping to use the sound of a Merlin engine as part of the work. As part of his research Roderick has recently been flying with The Blades (courtesy of Wing Commander (Ret'd) Chris Norton, a Club member) but another significant source of inspiration has been the Club itself.

Roderick has visited the Club twice for meetings and has been shown the Club's rich artwork collection as an illustration of our history.

The work is being completed in the spring and the piece is likely to start with the sound of rushing air as the prelude to flight itself. The spoken vignettes will be selected by the RAF to ensure the complete span of the last 100 years is represented. There will also be a children's choir involved - a reference to the future they will enjoy as a result of sacrifices made in RAF service. As for exactly how the composer will put it all together, that is an entirely different question. All will be revealed on 11th June.

For full details of the evening, see right.



Composer Roderick Williams

Photo Credit: Simon van Bostel

RAF CENTENARY CONCERT

**Monday 11th June 2018,
1615 for 1645hrs**
Price: £80.00 members /
£85.00 guests
Dress Code: Smart Casual

Join fellow members at this Royal Gala to mark the Centenary of the Royal Air Force at Barbican Hall, celebrating 100 years of British Classical Music. This unique evening will include an early two course dinner & wine at the Club, all coach transportation to the Barbican Hall and some of the best seats in the house. To book any Club Social event, please visit www.rafclub.org.uk/events, call 020 7399 1042 or email events@rafclub.org.uk.

CLUB COMMUNICATIONS

New Club website launching summer 2018

The Club is pleased to announce that, along with the newly designed magazine, the Club's website will also be boasting a fresh new look later this summer.

Including existing functionality, the new site offers an improved member and non-member experience and a flexibility to promote the Club and its breadth of activity to members and potential members in 2018 and beyond. To ensure you receive a unique login link to the new website, please ensure you register your current email address with the membership team by 20th May 2018.

NEW GDPR LEGISLATION MAY 2018
On 25th May 2018 the laws surrounding email communication and data protection are changing. To ensure you receive our newsletters and other important Club updates, please sign up for the Club's e-newsletter by visiting the members' area 'My Account/ My Contact Details' of the current website and selecting 'Email Preferences' by 20th May 2018.



Royal Air Force Club Makes The Sunday Times Top 100 List

The Club is delighted to announce that we have been ranked the 30th Best Not for Profit Organisation to work for in the UK 2018. The prestigious Sunday Times Top 100 listing was revealed in February at an awards ceremony in London, with the Club making the top 30 in its first year of participation.

The awards are based on a number of criteria, recognising an organisation's approach to

factors such as employee engagement, work life balance, training and development, leading to an overall employee satisfaction score, following an anonymous staff survey.

We are hugely proud of this achievement and recognition in our Centenary year and congratulations to the entire team for making the Club such a special place to work.

View the full listing here www.b.co.uk/the-lists/non-profit

A warm Club welcome

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER

Sophie MacLeod
Sophie joins us as the Club's new Front Office Manager. Sophie was previously a Front Desk Manager at the London Marriott Hotel Kensington and will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Club.

RUNNING HORSE SUPERVISOR

Lionel Delmas
We are delighted to announce that Lionel has been appointed as our new Running Horse Supervisor. With over 20 years' experience, Lionel started his international career with Crystal Cruises where he travelled the world. He then went on to take management positions in restaurants in New York and Miami before returning to the UK to work for the Restaurant group Aubaine.

Congratulations to both Sophie & Lionel and welcome to the Club.



MEMBER OFFERS

Summer Packages

This summer, take advantage of the Club's attractive room rates and fabulous location with a week day overnight stay in August for all the family.



**‘Summer in the City’
Weekday Overnight Package**

Spend time in the heart of London, hit the West End sales or sample a few hours of art and culture, as the Club lies only a stone's throw from all the City's main attractions.

Included are pre or post-dinner cocktails in the Cowdray Lounge and a two-course dinner and wine in the stunning Dining Room. If that were not enough, you will then be spoilt with the Club's legendary buffet breakfast.

Especially designed for those seeking a lazy London experience and fine food; enjoy the delights of summer at an all-inclusive members' price.

- One night Bed & Breakfast in a standard double room (Mon to Thurs check in only)

- Two pre/post dinner Cocktails in the Cowdray Lounge
- Two-course dinner in the Dining Room plus bottle of Club wine
- Prices for a standard double room for two people sharing start from £203.00, other room types including family rooms are also available
- Applicable dates: 1st August to 31st August 2018

**August ZSL London Zoo
Family Package**

Visit the Club in August and benefit from our family-friendly overnight stay and trip to ZSL London Zoo. Keep the children amused with the amazing array of animals and exhibits at one of the world's finest zoos, combined with all the comforts of the Club. Package

for two adults plus two children under twelve years of age, starts from £331.00 and includes a £50.00 food and beverage voucher for the Running Horse.

- One night Bed & Breakfast in a family room (Mon to Thurs check in only)
- Entrance to ZSL London Zoo for family of four
- £50.00 food & beverage voucher for the Running Horse
- Prices for a family room for two adults and two children under twelve, sharing start from £331.00, other room types are also available
- Applicable dates: 1st August to 31st August 2018

TO BOOK
Email reservations@rafclub.org.uk
or call 020 7399 1010.



RAF BENEVOLENT FUND

Standing side by side with the RAF family



The Royal Air Force Club is always proud to support the RAF 'Family' and works closely with the RAF Benevolent Fund across the year. With shared charitable aims and ethos, the Club is happy to work alongside such a special organisation. This 100th year shines an even greater spotlight on those men and women who are so deserving of additional support from the Benevolent Fund. Learn more here.

The RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF's leading welfare charity, has stood side by side with members of the RAF Family since 1919. Back then we spent £919 helping young airmen get back on their feet.

Today we spend almost £18m every year helping veterans, serving personnel and their dependants in their time of need – from a young Regiment Gunner

injured on patrol, to a World War Two veteran who needs support to stay in his own home.

Support for RAF veterans

The RAF Benevolent Fund can help RAF veterans with a range of issues including financial assistance, support with care home top-up fees, domiciliary care, mobility aids, Friendship Groups or a welfare break at its respite centre in West Sussex. Its recently launched Advice and Advocacy and Individual Support Service provides tailored assistance to the vulnerable, isolated or bereaved ensuring they get the help they need.

Supporting serving personnel

The men and women who serve our country today and their families often face unique pressures such as long

periods of separation and frequent relocations but the RAF Benevolent Fund's support aims to ease the pressures of service life. The charity assists serving personnel and their families with everything from childcare and relationship support, to injury, disability, financial hardship, illness and bereavement. It continues to fund special Citizens Advice Bureau sessions on RAF stations and its youth support programme, Airplay, has recently been extended and now includes children aged 5-17.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you, or somebody you know, is in need of support contact the RAFBF today on 0800 169 2942 or visit www.rafbf.org/help

A CELEBRATION OF CLUB MEMBERSHIP

COLIN BELL

To fully understand the importance of the Club over the past 100 years, one must only look to the rich experiences of its incredible members. Men and women, many of whom have become part of the fabric of 128 Piccadilly, since its formation in 1918.

One such member is former Mosquito pilot, Flt Lt Colin Bell DFC AE FRICS RAF (Ret'd). Colin recently celebrated his 97th birthday at the Club and addressed a sell-out Club Dinner in February, describing his wartime exploits. Read on and learn what makes the Club so special for this favourite of Club members.

Flt Lt Colin Bell was born in Surrey in 1921 and joined the Royal Air Force towards the end of 1940. His flying training was carried out in the USA prior to their entry into the War in December 1941. Following Pearl Harbour and, having been commissioned into the RAF, Colin was retained by the American Army Air Corps as an advanced single engine flying instructor responsible for training American and British Cadets. On his return to the UK in 1943, he converted to twin engine Mosquito Bombers and joined 608 Squadron (Pathfinder Group) based at Downham Market in Norfolk.

During his tour of operations he carried out 50 bombing raids - all over Germany - 13 of them over Berlin. He experienced much action and survived many close scrapes, all with the wit and good humour still present today.

Here Colin describes some of his aerial adventures. "At the height of the Bomber Offensive, a heavy Bomber crew on a tour of 30 operations stood only a 25% chance of survival from being shot down, so, perhaps it was better to be - without imagination at all - in those dangerous days - even if you were flying a Mosquito.

608 was part of the Light Night Striking

Force, which ranged extensively over Germany, bombing industrial areas like Bremen, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Nuremburg, Dresden and, of course Berlin. Berlin was the most heavily defended City in the Third Reich and if you were going to be shot down it was more likely to happen to you over Berlin than anywhere else.

Berlin was ringed by special anti-aircraft guns, able to fire to great heights of 5 - 7 miles, with great accuracy and controlled (together with searchlights) by radar. The sole objective of a Mosquito Bomber Crew was to get in, bomb and get out. Mosquito bombers were completely unarmed - no guns. Their very high speed was partly attributable to a complete lack of armament - turrets, or anything that would add weight and of course their two Spitfire engines, and it was this high speed that was their defence against night fighters.

Mosquitos travelled so high and so fast that very few enemy fighters at the same altitude could catch them. But the Germans tried by stacking Focke Wulfe 190s over targeted cities at 30,000 feet or more to give them a height and diving speed advantage. Wild Boar squadrons



**COLIN BELL:
A LIFE IN THE RAF**

1921

Born in Surrey

1940

Joined the Royal Air Force

1941

Trained in the USA

1944

Converted to twin Mosquito Bombers and joined 608 Squadron. Carried out 50 bombing raids over Germany

1945

Transferred to ferry duties bringing back Mosquitos from Canada

1946

Ended full time service in the RAF and commenced career in Chartered Surveying

1987

Made a Freeman of the City of London

2013

Made a Freeman of the 7th District of Huntingdonshire

2018

Active Club member for over 30 years



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT
Colin in his flying days; with event host, Vice-Chairman, Air Commodore Rick Peacock-Edwards; 608 Squadron badge; Strike on Berlin by Anthony Saunders

the Luftwaffe called them. Even so, their first attack had to succeed. If they missed, it was generally too late to mount a second attack. So you, the Mosquito crew, had to spot them before they spotted you. It was reckoned that, for every Mosquito over Berlin, there was a German night fighter, up there waiting, hoping, to get a crack at it.

By now, I was a relatively experienced pilot, which helped, with my very experienced Canadian navigator, Doug Redmond, some years older than myself; that also helped a lot. But neither Doug nor I had any battle experience. Our first raid was on Hanover. When we arrived over the target it was shrouded in thick cloud.

This didn't stop the Germans sending up radar-controlled anti-aircraft fire, which was a bit scary for a couple of naïve aircrew who had never seen or experienced anything like it before.

We were looking for target indicators,

which were supposed to have been dropped by fellow Pathfinder markers. We couldn't see anything, so we hung around, trying to make up our minds what to do. Eventually, after losing height, we bombed on time and distance, dead reckoning, just as a solitary target indicator fell through a gap in the cloud. The in-board camera whirled automatically, took a photograph, and later on, back at base, we acquired a quite unjustified reputation as a press-on crew. It didn't last for long!

On our way back, we passed over Emden. We shouldn't have done it. The only time my brilliant Canadian navigator failed me, although it was my fault as well as his. We were completely inexperienced and naïve. Half a mile ahead we saw anti-aircraft shell bursts.

Doug said to me "who are they firing at?" A couple of seconds later we knew. They had got our range, they had warmed up their guns, they were firing at us and

very accurately too. Flashes and bangs all around. Much more intense than over Hanover. We were pretty shaken. Why? Because, we were inexperienced. I put the plane into a panic power dive at 25,000 feet and didn't come out until I was down to about 10,000 feet, and only then with some difficulty, with the aid of elevator trim.

That power dive exceeded all known safety limits for a Mosquito. It could have brought our tour of operations to an abrupt end, there and then. I discovered, not for the first time, that there is no substitute for experience, whether in war or in business.

We were quick to learn too, that anti-aircraft fire was really much more of a danger to Mosquito Bombers than enemy fighters, other than jet fighters. Propeller driven fighters were lucky to get near a Mosquito. But anti-aircraft fire, ever present over Targets - was usually accurate, deadly, and very

difficult to avoid. It then became a matter of chance whether you were hit and, if so, what damage might be wrought on you personally or the aircraft.

Any aircraft attacking a German target could expect a warm reception, but Berlin was in a class of its own. It was ringed by hundreds of searchlights and what seemed like thousands of anti-aircraft guns. Most of these guns were the formidable 88s and they could fire between 15 and 20 rounds a minute each - and reach up to 39,000 feet. They were lethal.

When a battery of these were targeted on you, and firing, it could give you one helluva fright. On one occasion after a particularly nasty experience I said to

"Any aircraft attacking a German target could expect a warm reception, but Berlin was in a class of its own. It was ringed by hundreds of searchlights and what seemed like thousands of anti-aircraft guns."

Doug "you aren't frightened are you Doug?" and he replied "No - I am bloody terrified" And that just about summed it up."

After the war, Colin was transferred to ferry duties bringing back newly built Mosquitos from Canada to the UK with stop-offs at Goose Bay, Labrador, Bluey West 1 (on the West coast of Greenland), Reykjavik in Iceland, and finally into Prestwick in Ayrshire, Scotland. He ended his full time RAF service in 1946 flying out of Blackbushe in Camberley carrying Diplomatic mail to Embassies situated in various parts of Europe and Africa.

Colin joined the Club some years after active service, initially attracted by the prospect of joining such a prestigious Service Club, and has now been a member for over thirty years.

"It goes without saying that the RAF Club has always been important to me but a short while ago I was asked "what it actually meant to me". That got me thinking. So what does the Club mean to me?

I have always been impressed by the high standard of accommodation, the Cowdray Lounge, meeting rooms, Dining Room, Library and even the 'Club Pub' - the Running Horse Tavern - down in the basement, unique for any London Club. All are so efficiently run with an outward looking Board of Trustees coupled with professional management and a welcoming friendly staff.

But more than that, the Club gave me - still gives me - a sense of belonging to a large, friendly family and I never visit the Club without meeting one or more members who join me for a chat, a meal, or drink (or two).

In addition, it has proved to be a fantastic meeting place for my own family and many of my service contacts and, since I am still in business, many of my clients who find the Club unique with all its facilities and service history. They positively queue up to be asked to accompany me to the many Club Dinners and other Social Events organised by the Events Team whose dedication to making a success of each and every event, of which there are many during the year, cannot be faulted. They have even invited me to speak on several occasions.

The benefits of membership are incapable of being measured in monetary terms. If they were, suffice to say that membership is of exceptional value. The pleasure gained from meeting other members, making new friends, catching up with old ones cannot be quantified and, if on reading this, you think I have gone OTT, it only proves to me that you have not yet fully understood what the RAF Club represents today and in the future."

Colin still practices as a Chartered Surveyor and, in addition, travels extensively throughout the country attending conferences and giving after dinner talks on his World War 2 experiences in the air. He is listed on the Military Speakers website. When staying in London, he can often be found in the Running Horse with a glass of red wine or a Spitfire ale.

With thanks to Flt Lt Colin S Bell DFC AE FRICS RAF (Ret'd)

CENTENARY HIGHLIGHTS

For full details of all the Club's centenary celebrations, including a Club Dinner with Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, turn to page 20.



HERITAGE

A CENTURY PAST

Longstanding member, Club Trustee and Chairman of the Arts Committee, Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert co-authored the definitive account of the Club's history '128' The Story of the Royal Air Force Club in 2004. Michael was, therefore, the obvious choice to pen a historical account of the Club from a modern perspective. Read on, step back in time to when the Club first opened its doors to members and visualise a very different '128'.

Today's New Members are offered a tour of the Club which will reveal its excellent facilities and its pervading Royal Air Force ethos. A similar tour of the 1920s Club would give a fascinating insight into a century of social change and the present Club's success in meeting those changes.

On entering from Piccadilly he – for only men could use this entrance – would know that here was a traditional London Club with an uncompromising masculine ambience. Ahead, the Main Corridor

was adorned with elephant tusks and nine assorted big game heads. To his right the Smoking Room (Dining Room) supplied with newspapers, its leather seating, mahogany tables and nineteen brass ashtrays catered for masculine ease lubricated by suitable liquor served by waiters summoned by eighteen easily located bell pushes. There was of course not an aeroplane in sight, but the King and Lord Cowdray were complemented by thirteen heads of big game.

Younger members' needs were accommodated by the provision of an

American Bar (Cloakroom) – much in vogue in '20s London. So successful was it that in 1928 the decision was taken to close it at 8.30pm "as it was the root cause of increasing numbers of members being intoxicated."

Opposite it were two more staples of London Club land: the Billiard Room (Churchill Bar) and Card Room (Library). Both were open to members staying at the Club, until 4.30am and as a consequence were the source of frequent complaints of rowdy behaviour, observed by a total of thirty stuffed heads and a tarpon.

LEFT

Visit of King George V and Queen Mary to the Club, 14 March 1922

RIGHT

Cowdray Lounge in 1967



To reach the First Floor, Members retraced their steps to the Main Staircase leading directly to the Dining Room (Cowdray Room) and Small Dining Room (Hodges Room). All was mahogany and dark blue leather, but at least diners were not overseen by dead heads. Through the inter-war years attempts to achieve an all-male waiting staff failed, so the Committee had frequent occasions to ascribe the "appalling service" to the "lack of intelligence among the waitresses."

The West end of the Dining Room was screened off, and was reserved for ladies being entertained by their hosts. Uniquely among London Clubs, ladies were permitted on the premises, but under strictly regulated conditions. Entry was via the Old Park Lane entrance, otherwise the preserve of tradesmen and rubbish, and they were provided with a small room to await their host. When collected, they gained access to their area via the Back Stairs. Under no circumstances were they to use the Ground Floor Corridor or Main Staircase for, as a member later remarked "no gentleman wished to be assailed by ladies' perfume when using the stairs". On the First Floor things had not gone precisely to plan which had designated the now Presidents' Room as the Ladies' Lounge, with the associated Ante-Room and Bar. However, Lady Cowdray had insisted on the Ballroom for the use of the ladies and had furnished it appropriately with much chintz and Chinese vases.

A shocked Committee did however manage to see off her proposal to hold regular 'Thés Dansants' as "a somewhat novel departure

for a Service Club." Ladies had to leave the Club by 10pm.

Should the member have booked a room, he would be accommodated in a room containing a three foot wide bed, a wardrobe, dressing table, washing facilities – and the necessary chamber pot, as there was but one bathroom for three bedrooms. There was no central heating on the bedroom floors, but electric heaters could be hired in winter.

Clearly the Club now is a very different place, but a study of its history shows how close it came to disaster resulting from the failure of successive committees in its first forty years of existence to adapt to the changing times.

With thanks to Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert – Trustee & Art Committee Chairman

BELOW
The Smoking Room in the 1950s
and a brochure from 1930



'100 YEARS OF CLUB HISTORY: THE 128 STORY'

If you are interested in learning more, Michael joins us in September for a Club Dinner from a historical perspective. From its founding in 1918, the influence of Lord Cowdray, to wartime tales and the 'Colonels' Revolt' of the 1960s up to the present day, Wg Cdr Gilbert will highlight that even in its most solemn and serious moments there is a fund of entertaining anecdotes and unconscious humour to be quarried from the quartz of the Club's history.

'100 Years of Club History: The 128 Story', Club Dinner with Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert
Thursday 6th September 2018, 1830 for 1900hrs
Price: £50.00 members / £55.00 guests

To book for any Club Social event, please visit www.rafclub.org.uk/events, call 020 7399 1042 or email events@rafclub.org.uk.

CLUB EVENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON



A1 Locomotive Trust Club Dinner 'From Dream to Steam – Tornado, the 100 mph Steam Locomotive'
Wednesday 23rd May 2018
1830 for 1900hrs
£50.00 members/£55.00 guests
Dress Code: Jacket & Tie

In 1990 a group of people came together to share an extraordinary ambition – to construct a brand new Peppercorn A1 Pacific Steam Locomotive. After nineteen years of incredible effort, the No 60163 Tornado, moved under its own power for the first time in 2008.
This Club event tells the story of Tornado's construction, an amazing tale of cooperation, skill and sheer hard graft which defied the critics who said it could never be done. Join us for a three-course dinner followed by a talk by Graeme Bunker-James, Lt Col (Retd) Huw Parker and Sqn Ldr Tom Benson, who have been closely involved in the construction of the locomotive.

RAF Club Murder Mystery Dinner
Friday 15th June 2018
1830 for 1900hrs
£90.00 members / £95.00 guests
Dress Code: Black Tie/RAF-themed attire

Immerse yourself in a totally different dining experience and put on your 'Sherlock Holmes' hat for this entertaining, yet deadly evening of dining and crime at the Royal Air Force Club! The Scenario: A murder has taken place and you and fellow members will be the protagonists in charge of solving this tricky case and catching the murderer on the loose! The gripping story line plays out in 'real-time', meaning everything happens before your eyes.... including the murders. Are you keen-eyed enough to spot the killer? Join us for what promises to be an unforgettable evening. This classic murder mystery dinner includes a three course Club dinner with wine, along with professional actors in full theatrical costume, who will join the dinner for hours of RAF-themed murder mystery.



Club Dinner with Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier KCB CBE DFC ADC MA RAF
Monday 2nd July 2018, 1830 for 1900hrs
£65.00 members/£70.00 guests
Dress Code: Mess Dress/Black Tie with miniatures

In July, we welcome Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, to the Club, for what promises to be a highlight of our Centenary year.
In command of the RAF since July 2016, Sir Stephen leads a force of some 35,000 Regular and Reserve personnel and nearly 5,000 Civil Servants, supported by thousands of contractors. He is personally accountable for the safe and effective operation of over 700 manned and unmanned aircraft and for meeting the airpower needs of Defence on operations world-wide. The evening will include a Champagne reception, a three-course dinner with wine, followed by keynote speech and Q&A.



To book for any Club Social event, please visit www.rafclub.org.uk/events, call 020 7399 1042 or email events@rafclub.org.uk.

FULL EVENTS LISTING: MAY – OCTOBER 2018

Details for every event taking place at the Club through to October. Keep up-to-date via www.rafclub.org.uk/events

MAY Club Lunch with Adventurer & Everest Conqueror, Joanne Bradshaw - 'An Unexpected Life' Thursday 10th May 1200hrs £45.00/£50.00 Waiting List Only The Dam Buster Gala with Dan Snow at the Royal Albert Hall Thursday 17th May Waiting List Only Dam Buster 75th Anniversary Club Dinner with Dam Buster, Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson Monday 21st May A1 Locomotive Trust Club Dinner 'From Dream to Steam – Tornado, the 100 mph Steam Locomotive' Wednesday 23rd May 1830hrs £50.00/£55.00	RAF Centenary Concert (100 years of British Music) at Barbican Hall & Club Dinner Monday 11th June 1600hrs £90.00/£95.00 Waiting List Only Visit to Kew Gardens & Club Dinner Wednesday 13th June 1200hrs £75.00/£80.00 Centenary Event RAF Club Murder Mystery Dinner Friday 15th June 1830hrs £90.00/£95.00 Waiting List Only Fathers & Daughters Dinner Monday 18th June 1830hrs £65.00 Centenary Event Centenary Afternoon Tea & Song with Heather-Marie Little Friday 22nd June 1500hrs £30.00/£35.00 JUNE RAF WWII London Walking Tour & Club Dinner Monday 4th June 1330hrs £60.00/£65.00 Club Lunch with Richard Williams 'ACM Sir Richard Peirse, Setting the Record Straight on a RAF Hero' Tuesday 5th June 1200hrs £45.00/£50.00	Club Dinner with Surgeon, Dr David Nott OBE OstJ FRCS 'Humanitarian Surgery in a War Zone' Tuesday 3rd July 1830hrs £50.00/£55.00 Waiting List Only Bletchley Park Excursion with Lunch & Club Dinner Friday 13th July 0930hrs £95.00/£100.00 Centenary Golf Day & Bath Club Cup Qualification Thursday 19th July 0800hrs £70.00/£75.00 Club Centenary Summer Ball Saturday 28th July 1900hrs £100.00/£110.00 Package: £170pp including a night in a standard room B&B & the ticket to the Summer Ball AUGUST 50 Year Receptions Wednesday 8th & Sunday 19th August Invitation Only - Complimentary Children's Summer Party: The Lion King Thursday 30th August 1200hrs £45.00/£50.00
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MORE >



SEPTEMBER

Club Dinner with the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team: The Red Arrows
Monday 3rd September
1830hrs
£65.00/£70.00

XXV Year Lunch
Tuesday 4th September
1200hrs
£40.00/£45.00

Centenary Event
'100 years of Club History: The 128 Story' Club Dinner with Trustee & Arts Committee Chairman, Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert
Thursday 6th September
1830hrs
£50.00/£55.00

'The Play That Goes Wrong' & Club Dinner
Friday 7th September
1630hrs
£90.00/£95.00

Grouse Dinner
Wednesday 12th September
1830hrs
£70.00/£75.00

Annual Battle of Britain Club Dinner with Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Leader Squadron Leader Andrew Millikin & team
Tuesday 18th September
1830hrs
£55.00/£60.00

New Members' Reception and Dinner
Friday 21st September
1800hrs
£50.00/£55.00

OCTOBER

Club Lunch with Artist Mandy Shepherd
Tuesday 9th October
1200hrs
£40.00/£45.00

The Royal Air Force Club Centenary Birthday Celebration
October – date to be confirmed
See page 6



Lion King Children's Summer Party
Thursday 30th August 2018
1200 for 1230hrs
£45.00 members & children, £50.00 guests
Dress Code: Smart Casual/Children's Party Wear

Enjoy a family friendly Lion King themed afternoon, with relaxed buffet lunch, special guest appearances and entertainment, arts & craft activities, candy floss machine and face painting; and if that were not enough a goody bag for every child. The Lion King, by Disney, is set against the majesty of the Serengeti Plains to the evocative rhythms of Africa. The Lion King uses breath-taking theatrical magic to tell the story of Simba's epic journey to fulfil his destiny as King of the Pride lands and this family day will capture this African adventure through music, play and song.



Club Dinner with the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team: The Red Arrows
Monday 3rd September 2018
1830hrs for 1900hrs
£65.00 members/£70.00 guests
Dress Code: Mess Dress/Black Tie with miniatures.

Join us this September and enjoy a Club Dinner with a difference, as we enter the adrenaline filled world of The Red Arrows. We are delighted to announce Sqn Ldr Martin Pert, (Red 1 & Team Leader) will be our guest speaker and will be joined by other members of the Red Arrows, who will discuss the thrills and spills of life in the world's premier aerobatic display team. Beginning with a Champagne reception, followed by three course dinner and the main event - discussion with members of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, the evening is guaranteed to sell out quickly.

Highlights for the rest of 2018

Saturday 3rd November: Houses of Parliament Blue Badge Tour and Club Lunch
Sunday 4th November: Waiting List Only - Club Dinner with Professor Brian Cox OBE
Tuesday 6th November: Winter Gourmet Evening- 'Classic Escoffier'
Wednesday 21st November: Club Dinner with BBC Security Correspondent, Frank Gardner OBE VR FRGS
Sunday 16th December: Christmas Family Day
Monday 17th & Tuesday 18th December: Christmas Lunch I & II

CLUB EVENTS

IN PICTURES

PRESENTATION OF RAF 100 BURNS DIRK

Bob Pooley MBE, owner of Pooley Sword Ltd, presented a magnificent Piper's Dirk (pictured top right) to the Royal Air Force Club to be used in 'Addressing the Haggis' at the annual Burns Supper 2018. The Dirk, beautifully inscribed to mark the Centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force, was accepted on behalf of the Club, by Group Captain Bob Kemp, Chairman of the Burns Supper (pictured top left). Lady Coville used the Dirk most effectively to stab the Haggis at this year's Burns night and it will continue to be used for many more years to come. A date for the 2019 Burns Supper will be announced in autumn 2018.



CRAFTSMANSHIP, HERITAGE AND TRADITION

Pooley Sword is a family owned and operated business and has an outstanding reputation for craftsmanship. They are a leading supplier to the British Armed Forces, as well as many Commonwealth and Overseas Defence Forces. Pooley Sword has produced a specially etched commemorative sword for the RAF centenary available to purchase now until 31st March 2018.

For further information on Pooley Sword Ltd, please visit www.pooleysword.com or email enquiries@pooleysword.com 01273 467277.

POOLEY SWORD IS PRIVILEGED TO DONATE:

- 100th Anniversary Royal Air Force Sword
- The Royal Air Force Sword of Honour at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell and The Royal Air Force International Sword of Honour



CLUB EVENTS

Front Lines, Fault Lines and Deadlines

Club Dinner with Orla Guerin MBE

The Centenary programme planned by the Events Committee got off to an unforgettable start on 13th February, with Orla Guerin as the first guest speaker in a remarkable year.

Orla Guerin is the Middle East Correspondent for the BBC and many of you will have seen her broadcasts from a variety of hotspots – most recently Syria, Iraq, and the Yemen.

Illustrating her address with video clips, she spoke eloquently about her life and motivation as a journalist, the dangers of reporting from war zones, and the personal impact of witnessing and reporting on human suffering in all its forms.

It is not an over-statement to observe that everyone who heard her speak was deeply moved by what she had to say. As a result, we asked her to share some of her words with the membership and Orla has kindly agreed. You will find some extracts from her address here.

Frontlines

“Above all else, I think that this is our job – to tell the world, to bear witness. In the words of the incomparable Martha Gelhorn – who covered many wars in her distinguished career – “war happens to people one by one.” And by telling individual stories we hope to bring a corner of a foreign field back home to the audience.

Telling those stories is a privilege, but there is a price. Like those who serve in the RAF, it is our job to go into harm’s way, and we leave on trips knowing we may not come back. Though probably unlike the RAF, we do have a choice about accepting dangerous assignments.

In every trip to a war zone there are small moments and simple decisions that can change everything – to go down a road, or turn back,

to try to film one more interview or decide you have enough, to rush to a frontline area, or wait until the dust settles. Risk comes with the territory. It is the uninvited companion that joins you on every trip.”

New Fault Lines

“For more than two decades I have covered wars, and their aftermath, in the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East and Africa. I have seen conflicts devour societies like a flame consuming a page. And over that time warfare has mutated. We now live in an age of the do-it-yourself-Jihadi, of militants inspired by and groomed by the Internet.

The conflicts of today have no code of conduct. As we all know only too well the frontlines can come to us. Attackers can strike in tube stations, and at airports, on London Bridge or at a concert hall in Manchester.

Now a new fault line has erupted beneath us threatening our security and exposing our vulnerabilities. I believe it is not a divide between Christianity and Islam, but between modernity and barbarity, between civilisation and savagery.”

Deadlines

“For me pressure provides a kind of insulation. In many ways deadlines are the scaffolding of our lives – everything else is built around them. And when you have to focus on the clock, it means you can’t get lost in what is in front of you. That can be a blessing. In our business we don’t just count the hours and the minutes, we count the seconds.”

With thanks to Orla Guerin MBE and the Club’s host for the evening, Trustee, Air Commodore Dai Whittingham.



"Risk comes with the territory. It is the uninvited companion that joins you on every trip."



Event host & Trustee, Air Commodore Dai Whittingham; Chair of Events Committee & Trustee, Air Commodore Wendy Rothery; Orla Guerin MBE (Hons), GEO & Club Secretary, Miles Pooley.

16TH FEBRUARY

Cocktail Masterclass & Club Supper

The Club was proud to introduce its first Cocktail Masterclass in February. A small group of cocktail-loving members gathered around the Churchill Bar, to learn more about professional cocktail making with our expert mixologist followed by a buffet supper in the Library.



10TH MARCH

Mothers, Sons & Daughters Dinner

Following last year's inaugural Mothers, Sons & Daughters Dinner, over 30 members and guests joined us again this year to celebrate this ever so special relationship the evening before Mother's Day itself. With exceptional dining courtesy of Executive Chef Michael Dutnall and team and wonderful hosting by Trustee Group Captain Mark Heffron, the evening was an unqualified success.



22ND FEBRUARY

Club Dinner with Flt Lt Colin Bell (Ret'd) DFC AE FRICS

Following his sell-out Club lunch in 2017, member Colin Bell joined us again in February, speaking on the topic of '1944, Berlin at Night in a Mosquito Bomber'. Colin regaled members with the nail-biting exploits experienced on operations over enemy territory, as a Bomber Pilot during WWII.





1918 2018

ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB

— CELEBRATING 100 YEARS —

100 Years of Royal Air Force History

2018 marks the centenary of the Royal Air Force and its very own 'home from home', the Royal Air Force Club. Membership offers a whole host of benefits, including use of the Grade II listed club in central London, accommodation, exceptional dining and eight elegant private banqueting rooms perfect for reunions and celebrations.

Join us in our centenary year and experience a unique setting, impeccable service and the warmest of welcomes.

For further information on the Club's conference and banqueting facilities, please visit www.rafclub.org.uk or call 020 7399 1005



The Royal Air Force Club,
128 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY
www.rafclub.org.uk