



The Royal Air Force Club

ISSUE 88 AUTUMN 2017



Club Dinner with Chief of Defence Staff

SEE PAGE 10 FOR DETAILS

Pictured: CEO & Club Secretary Miles Pooley;
Chair of the Board of Trustees, AVM Sue Gray CB OBE RAF;
Chief of Defence Staff ACM Sir Stuart Peach GBE KCB ADC DL
and Trustee & event host, Group Captain Wendy Rothery.



Sip in Style
New limited edition
Centenary mugs
now available



In Pictures
Club Dinner with
Professor Brian Cox OBE



**Christmas
at the Club**
Everything you need to know
about the festive season



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

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DESIGN

Zed
www.zedpublishing.co.uk

Published by the Board of Trustees of the Royal Air Force Club. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board. Registered Charity No: 1108295. Company Limited by Guarantee No: 5321353. Registered Office: The Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY. Registered Charity No: 252720

Club Art



Portrait of AVM James 'Johnnie' Johnson

On 28th September 2017, Club member Michael Oliver presented an important and celebrated portrait of Air Vice-Marshal James 'Johnnie' Johnson, by artist Leonard Harry Wells.

Michael is well known in RAF and RAF Club circles and over the years has generously contributed to RAF charities, and in particular to The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF) and RAF veterans. Along with his donations to the Club, Michael's long term support of the RAFBF and the Bomber Command Association has helped fund an annuity to pay for the annual maintenance of the Bomber Command Memorial (opposite the RAF Club in Piccadilly) illustrating his determination to recognise those who lost their lives serving our country. The Bomber Command Memorial bronze Maquette, in the foyer of the Club, was also donated by Michael and is a further example of his ongoing commitment and generosity.

Credited with bringing down at least thirty-four enemy aircraft, James Edgar "Johnnie" Johnson was the top scoring RAF fighter ace of the Second World War. In addition to these victories were seven 'shared', three 'shared probable', ten damaged, three 'shared damaged' and one aircraft destroyed on the ground.

He flew operational sorties, virtually non-stop, between 1941-45 seeing action

in the Dieppe Raid, on numerous fighter sweeps over occupied France, the Battle of Normandy, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge and the invasion of Germany. By the end of the war he had flown seven hundred missions and was hit by the enemy on just the one occasion.

In presenting this rare portrait of 'Johnnie Johnson' to the Club, a testament to the spirit and talent of one of the most successful RAF pilots of the Second World War, Michael Oliver helps us reflect on those individuals, whose skill and courage contributed so much to the tradition of the Royal Air Force as it approaches its centenary in 2018. The work now joins the impressive collection of portraits in the Churchill Bar on the ground floor of the Club.

With thanks to Macconnal-Mason for background and image reproduction.

Above: Pictured from left to right, Arts Committee Chairman, Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert; Vice-Chairman Air Cdre Rick Peacock-Edwards; Air Mshl Sir Rob Wright; Mr Michael Oliver; Mr Mark Oliver; Air Mshl Sir David Walker.

Below: Johnson meeting Churchill, Normandy, July 1944



Welcome

A welcome from our Chair of the Board of Trustees

Since my inaugural foreword in the Club's Newsletter in the spring, regular visitors to the Club will have noted that much activity has taken place at 128 Piccadilly in the intervening months, with the Centenary Building Project progressing to schedule. Demolition of the squash courts took place over the summer, with the installation of a 53ft crane in July, necessitating the closure of Piccadilly itself. The project has now moved into the building phase with completion expected early summer 2018. Members will of course be updated as the work progresses.

As we move towards the end of year, the increased tempo of activity in the Club

is discernible; September's Battle of Britain weekend was a particular busy highlight. It really is 'business as usual' at the Club as members' functions fill the event spaces and the Dining Room and Cowdray Lounge enjoy a lively, bustling atmosphere. If you have stayed away from the Club this year, concerned about encountering a building site, do not worry, the Club heads towards Christmas with its excellent service, surroundings and offering very much intact.

Building work aside, the Centenary year beckons, with only a couple of months to go until we reach that milestone year. Exciting plans are afoot with Trustee, Group Captain Mark Heffron leading

the Club's special Centenary Committee. Learn more about the official Club events and memorabilia planned on page 4.

Battle of Britain weekend also saw another exciting highlight of the Club's calendar - the sell-out Dinner with Professor Brian Cox on 16th September. As a passionate advocate for the promotion of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), within education and across the RAF, I would argue that there can be no greater ambassador than particle physicist Professor Cox, who regularly brings science to life in living rooms across the nation. To our delight, Professor Cox enthusiastically entertained a packed Ballroom of members and guests with theories of deep space and the universe, even staying to continue the discussion in the Cowdray Lounge after dinner.

Finally, the summer months also brought another legend to the Club, with the visit of 100 year old member and ex-Stalag Luft III inmate, Jack Lyon. In August, retired navigator Jack, joined us to celebrate 50 years of membership and members and staff were privileged to spend time with him in the Club, before he hopped on the 38 bus to head home!

I am often reminded that it is members like Jack that make the Club such an iconic and special place. So many great men and women have graced us with their presence over the years and many of them as Club members. We look forward to welcoming members old and new as we head into a very special year in 2018.

Sue Gray

Air Vice-Marshal Sue Gray



Right: Left to right, CEO & Club Secretary Miles Pooley; Club President, Air Chf Mshl Sir Peter Squire; Professor Brian Cox, Trustee & Chair of Events Committee, Gp Capt Wendy Rothery



The project crane being levered into position back in July

"Professor Cox enthusiastically entertained a packed Ballroom of members and guests with theories of deep space and the universe"



CENTENARY PREVIEW

With 2018 almost upon us, and the 100th anniversary of our formation, a very important year for both the Club and the Royal Air Force itself, we are delighted to introduce to Club members a flavour of what's in store during the centenary year. Trustee, Group Captain Mark Heffron, is leading the Club's Centenary Committee. Read on and learn more about the special events and memorabilia planned to get all members in a celebratory mood.

Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

The Club is in discussion with Buckingham Palace to hold a centenary Garden Party in May 2018.

Centenary Summer Ball Saturday 28th July

An evening of celebrations, live music and much more.

Royal Reception & Stained Glass Window

The Club's Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, has kindly accepted our invitation to a private reception in the latter half of 2018. During the event, she will officially open the new 'Centenary Wing' and unveil the specially commissioned 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 at this reception.

Centenary Reception

To draw the centenary to a close, the Club is intending to hold a Members' Reception across the first floor of the Club.

Members will be advised as soon as dates are announced for all the Club's centenary events via the website, e-newsletter and a centenary edition of the Club's magazine in early 2018.

THE ART OF DINING

Members and their guests using the Club's Dining Room will soon see the start of a process that will transform its appearance; indeed on completion the room will have become not only a centre of culinary excellence, but also of artistic distinction.



Main: Tim O'Brien GAVA painting a 'pochade' oil sketch at RAF Cranwell. From left to right: Pencil sketches of RAF Musicians; drawing members of the Band of the Royal Air Force College.

1918-2018
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Following the Dining Room's refurbishment in 2014, it was clear that the décor would not lend itself to a random selection of images from the Club's existing art collection, so thought was given to commissioning a series of paintings specifically for the room. After an unavoidable delay, the Trustees agreed to award the commission to Tim O'Brien GAVA, a leading figure over the last 30 years in aviation art. Happily around the same time, the Club was lucky enough to be gifted a legacy by the family of former member Flight Lieutenant Peter Levy, which was quickly earmarked to help fund the project.

Tim has a clear vision informing his approach, which, when realised, will add 25 new works, whilst retaining the existing fine painting of St Clement Danes by Ken Howard OBE, RA.

The collection will respect not only the splendour and tradition of the

RAF's heritage, but also the fact that the space is a dining room, not an aviation museum. In Tim's own words "battle scenes, explosions, dogfights.....are not appropriate backdrops when dining, as members need to feel relaxed."

The work will be completed in five stages, culminating in the unveiling of its centre piece: a commemoration of the Centenary Fly Past over the Mall planned for July 2018. Other images will include iconic RAF landmarks in the UK, such as RAF College Cranwell (pictured) and musical and ceremonial scenes. Once all the works are in place, a plaque will be installed to commemorate the generous gift by the Levy Family.

Members in the coming months, therefore, will be privileged to see the gradual transformation of the Dining Room into a venue for fine dining and also a unique artistic tribute to the first one hundred years of the Royal Air Force.

*Wing Commander Michael Gilbert,
Chairman, Art Committee*

MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Donations and legacies help maintain the Club's excellent art collection and support numerous other projects, such as the centenary stained glass window. For further information on leaving your longstanding legacy at the Club as we approach our centenary year, please contact Club Manager, Kathryn Cooper at kathryn@rafclub.org.uk or call 020 7399 1036.

1918-2018
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS



Johnny Neill of Marylebone Gin, a descendant of eight generations of gin distillers. His grandfather was aviator and diplomat AVM Neill Charles Ogilvie-Forbes (inset)

RAF Club Centenary Gin

To complement a year of celebrations, members can now raise a glass to the Club with our very own recipe London Dry gin

In 2016, the Club began discussions with several artisan gin makers to create a bespoke London gin to help celebrate the Club's centenary year with a swing. Gin is the Club's biggest selling spirit, with members and guests consuming around 420 litres of gin over the course of an average year. The UK's gin market reflects this, with huge growth over the past decade, with premium gin

infused with botanicals being the tippie of choice for discerning drinkers. One local company, Marylebone Gin, stood out from the crowd for a variety of reasons, not least of them taste.

Johnny Neill, the man behind Marylebone Gin has a fitting pedigree, a descendant of eight generations of gin distillers, his ancestor Thomas, founded the Greenall's Distillery in 1762.



Distilled in Marylebone, a mere mile from the Club, Johnny's signature gin is distilled in small batches in a tiny distil pot and offers a "delicate and complex flavour" with "floral overtones."

VITAL INGREDIENTS

Juniper Berries

The essential oils contained within juniper berries are the signature of all gins. Only the finest berries give the fullest expression. The berries used in the Club gin are grown and harvested in the hill-top regions of Italy, and only the most perfect are selected to give a distinctive bitter sweet flavour.



Sweet Orange Peel from Turkey

The mild climate and year-round sun of Turkey's long Mediterranean coast produces the world's juiciest citrus fruits. Crisp, fresh, sweet orange peel gives an invigorating citrusy nose, helping to balance the spiciness of the coriander and lifting the aromas of the other botanicals.



Coriander Seeds from Romania

Coriander was grown in Persia 3,000 years ago and fragrant the hanging gardens of Babylon. It's even mentioned in the Bible, in Exodus, where manna is described as being 'like a Coriander Seed'. Fragrant Coriander seeds sourced from Romania impart a gingery, peppery overtone and add to the citrusy blend.



Along with a fine gin provenance, Johnny also revealed in early meetings some interesting RAF family connections, which soon piqued the interest of the Club team. Johnny's grand-father was Scottish aviator and diplomat Air Vice-Marshal Neill Charles Ogilvie-Forbes, OBE, who from a Pilot Officer in 1922, ended his career in 1955 as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Intelligence). Neill's sister, Marion Wilberforce, née Ogilvie-Forbes, a graduate of Somerville College, Oxford, was also a 'flyer' and notably one of the first eight members of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA). She flew many aircraft including Spitfires, Hurricanes, Wellington and Lancaster Bombers and the Mosquito, rising to deputy commander of the No. 5 Ferry Pool at Hatfield, and later commanding No. 12 Ferry Pool at Cosford, one of only two women pool commanders in the ATA. Johnny's great uncle, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, KCMG, chose a career in the diplomatic service, holding two key postings in the years leading up to the Second World War, as chargé d'affaires in Spain 1936-37 and as Counsellor and chargé d'affaires in Berlin 1937-1939. He was known for his humanitarian efforts in both roles and in 2008 his name was included on a plaque in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Once the tangle of RAF and diplomatic connections had been established, Johnny was quickly dispatched to begin work on a delicious limited edition Club Gin, to be ready for a centenary launch. Stringent tasting has now taken place, distilling is about to commence with bottling soon to follow and a small batch will be produced ready for exclusive sale to Club members in early 2018. The sophisticated and subtle blend, includes, alongside the obligatory juniper, lemongrass, liquorice, coriander seed, clove, lemon balm and sweet orange and makes a perfect G&T or gin cocktail.



To reserve your limited edition bottle, priced at £60.00 for 70cl, visit www.rafclub.org.uk/shop. Orders will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

Centenary Preview

CENTENARY MERCHANDISE

Sip in style!



Treat yourself to a Club keepsake in 2018 with the Club's new limited edition centenary mug set inspired by the Club's décor, façade and iconic crest. Designed and manufactured in the U.K by Stoke on Trent based Bone China specialist, William Edwards, who counts The Ritz, Claridges and Fortnum & Mason amongst his many clients – the difficulty will be in choosing which one to buy.

The Club's individually boxed Bone China mugs are available from the Club from January 2018, priced at £15.00 per mug.

To place your advance order, visit www.rafclub.org.uk/shop. Please note these items will not be available before Christmas.

The RAF Commemorative Anthology

Taking on the accurate documentation of 100 years of RAF history through anecdotes, photographs, archive material and memorabilia is no mean feat; but this is exactly what avid RAF supporter, writer and publisher Martin Morgan has set out to achieve.



A magnificent volume, to commemorate and celebrate the RAF centenary, produced in association with RAF100 and the RAF Museum, will raise funds for the centenary charities. Here Martin describes the 18 month journey undertaken, to reach completion of this epic tome.

When I was invited to review the archives at the RAF Museum, Hendon with a view to creating an RAF anthology I thought it might take some five days or so – in the event it took less than 5 minutes to realize the depth and breadth of the amazing archival collection.

The team has now spent the past year and a half based at Hendon, and in the Air Historical Branch, preparing to tell the RAF's 100 year history in some 700 pages. From General Smuts's original memorandum on the need for an RAF to the latest operational reports and the ephemera of everyday RAF life, the book illustrates every facet of the Service. In choosing the materials to include, some documents reveal what we have come to think of as key RAF characteristics.

Masterly understatement is revealed in Flt Lt Herman's operational report of 4th November 1944 which reads, "I baled out in company with my mid-upper gunner Fg Off J. M. Vivash", whereas he might have written – I baled out of my aircraft into pitch darkness without a parachute and was lucky enough to grab hold of the legs of my mid-upper gunner.

Douglas Bader's secret letters from captivity reveal another deeply engrained characteristic – sheer bloody-minded persistence. Not as you might imagine in his continuing to fly, but in his later ongoing escape attempts. He writes to his girlfriend, "Request German Luftwaffe Ober Lt. uniform disguised as RAF be sent me in clothing parcel. Suggest badges, epaulettes, piping etc. be hidden in the back of a hair-brush for e.g. Will tear to pieces anything marked with my name spelt with one 'L'".

For mind-boggling inventiveness then we must turn to the report of Flt Lt Ralph Henry Lucky, who decided that he was going to force his captors to repatriate him on medical grounds. Not so lucky at first, his initial attempt to fake scabies resulted only in a romantic adventure and a broken rope made from bed sheets.

His second attempt, faking sinus trouble only resulted in a completely unnecessary operation on his nose, which prevented his escape.

His final effort, faking heart trouble was doubly inventive. He smoked crushed aspirins to give himself palpitations and then took an enormous dose of stolen

caffeine tablets before his examination. He was subsequently repatriated on medical grounds – there was absolutely nothing wrong with him.

The final word and my personal favourite must go to great escaper Sqn Ldr Denys Maws writing to his godson. His is the poetic side of the Service. "I have flown over Lake Ontario in Canada in the middle of the night with the whole of the Northern sky a mass of blue, green, purple and red light from the Aurora Borealis. I have flown high up on a cold winter's night when the stars are so many and so brilliant you would never believe it, and I have flown on nights so dark you can see nothing but your cockpit lights and the occasional prairie town with their lights like brilliant jewels on a black velvet cloth."

These documents and many, many others will feature in the anthology and will help to tell the story of the RAF in a way that has never been done before. We hope that you will find it a fitting commemoration and a fascinating celebration in the RAF and the Club's 100th year. Members can view the beautiful, leather-bound book in the Club's Library from November 2017.

RAF Club members are being given the chance to purchase one of only 1500 copies of the limited edition RAF Centenary Anthology at a discounted rate of £750.00 (RRP £950.00). Each handmade, leather-bound copy, measures an impressive 39 x 27cm and features some 700 pages of documents, maps, photographs and ephemera. www.extraordinaryeditions.com



Royal Air Force Club Golf Day 2017

Many thanks to Sonning Golf Club for providing the superb venue for this year's annual Club Golf Day on Thursday 20th July. The Club has run the event since 1926, and this year, nineteen members and guests competed for the three major trophies and a place in the prestigious Bath Club Cup team.

Despite the overcast and damp conditions in the morning, guest Mr David Blood went round in an excellent gross score of 81 (25 points scratch), playing with member Flt Lt Tim Evans who scored 82 (24 scratch) and won the Club Scratch Championship, followed by Wg Cdr Gordon Varley (same score but beaten on countback). For the Handicap Cup, Mr Alan Myles scored 33 points, winning on countback from Wg Cdr Ian Rodgers, who had travelled over from Australia for the event!

Wg Cdr Gordon Varley came third with 32. The prize for Best Lady went to Flt Lt Jackie Pelling, with 28.

The weather improved later in the day, and the afternoon Foursomes Trophy, played over 11 holes, was won by Gp Capt Peter Bedford and his wife Naomi (pictured), with 23 points. In second place were Mr Phillip Brigstock and Mr Mike Illingworth, with 22, and in 3rd place were Lt Col Jack Schrandt (on a brief visit from the USA) and Flt Lt Jackie Pelling (21).

Sonning looked after Club members superbly, and RAF Club and Sonning member Wg Cdr Malcolm Middlemist did much of the groundwork, in liaison with the Events Team, and ensured that the whole day ran like clockwork. The prizes were presented by Gp Capt Peter Bedford during afternoon tea, rounding off a most enjoyable day.



Welcome

Regulars to the Dining Room will have noticed two new enthusiastic faces joining the Club's food and beverage team, Darryl Patrick, Assistant Dining Room Manager and Vess Feldmanis, Dining Room Manager (pictured). Both bring expertise and a passion for fine dining to the Club.

Back of house, in May this year we welcomed Rachel Matthews to the Human Resources team as HR Manager. Rachel has joined the Club following a 13-year career with Marriott International. Her colleague Dan Soliman, who has been at the Club for almost three years, has recently enjoyed a very well deserved promotion to HR Officer.

Rachel and Dan will spend time over the next year executing their HR strategy for the Club which includes a commitment to training and development, staff engagement and wellbeing.

Last, but not least, the Events & Marketing team have also seen some recent changes with Charlotte Gray now leading the Club's marketing, membership and events as Head of Marketing & Communications, and Charlene Jinguenaud now managing the Club's popular events programme, dealing with daily member events enquiries and bookings in her new role as Events Manager.

Welcome to all the new faces and congratulations to those moving into new roles.

Are you a keen golfer

Why not participate in the Club's Golf Day 2018, with high scorers going on to potentially represent the Club in the historic Bath Club Cup?

Date: Thursday 19th July 2018, price £70.00 members/£75.00 guests.

Email events@rafclub.org.uk to book your place now



NEW CLUB TRUSTEES

Following the Club's outreach back in the summer seeking members interested in filling Governance roles, we are pleased to announce that we have three new Club Trustees.

Congratulations to Sqn Ldr John Peters, Sqn Ldr James Poynton (current member of the Arts Committee) and Air Cdre Dai Whittingham. We are delighted to welcome them to the Board of Trustees ahead of a historic centenary year.



Club Dinner with Chief of Defence Staff, ACM Sir Stuart Peach GBE KCB ADC DL

On Wednesday 18th October 2017, Club members enjoyed an insightful after dinner address and Q&A by Chief of Defence Staff, ACM Sir Stuart Peach.

Deftly covering a multitude of topics from current defence threats and new technology, to RAF squadron camaraderie, Sir Stuart entertained and informed a full house, an audience which included serving RAF officers and veterans.

The Club was honoured to welcome Sir Stuart, on the eve of the Club's centenary year in 2018, with Sir Stuart himself taking on a new role as Chairman of the NATO Military Committee from June 2018.



BRIZE NORTON *Families' Day 2017*

The Club was proud to support RAF Brize Norton Families' Day in September with a prize for the 'Best Stall'. The winners were the Met Office, an imaginatively themed stall, where the team offered face painting and encouraged the children to understand clouds; designing maps with different cloud formations across the Atlantic. Overall a worthy winner and we look forward to welcoming the Met Office ladies for their winner's treat of Afternoon Tea in the Cowdray Lounge.

Library News

The Club Library continues to grow through donations from members and purchases.

Recent acquisitions include books listed in the annual Chief of the Air Staff's Reading Lists, issued by the RAF's Centre for Air Power Studies. The lists give details and reviews of books on air power and related topics, and are intended to help serving personnel develop their professional knowledge; we hope that they will also be of interest to members who are no longer serving but wish to explore current thinking on air power.



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING AT YOUR CLUB?

The volunteer librarians seek new, enthusiastic members of the team, who can help to manage the library inventory. No previous experience is necessary, and anyone who can spare one or two Thursdays a month would be very welcome. Reasonable travelling expenses are paid, and volunteers also receive a light lunch in the Running Horse. For further information contact the team via library@rafclub.org.uk

Orbis Flying Eye Hospital *UK member tour update*



As reported in the last Club magazine, in March this year, a group of Club members, hosted by Vice-Chairman Rick Peacock-Edwards, had the privilege of visiting the Orbis Flying Eye Hospital during its European Tour at Stansted airport. Orbis welcomed over 1,000 visitors to the aircraft, including HRH the Countess of Wessex, Patron of International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. A month after its visit, the Flying Eye Hospital then moved onto Vietnam, where Orbis volunteers and staff spent four weeks transferring skills and knowledge to local doctors and treating adults and children in need of eye care.

Orbis has so far received almost £60,000 in donations as a result of the week-long event – donations that will help Orbis continue its sight saving work. This rare visit to the UK also launched "Operation Sight", Orbis's two year campaign to raise £18m to strengthen more than 30 eye hospitals and fund a million eye care treatments. Thanks to all Club members who have already supported Orbis and its their life-changing work.

www.operationsight.orbis.org



DIARY

For 2018, the Club is actively supporting the official RAF Diary. With a charitable donation to the RAF100, informative content, and historical fact for the day, the diary is a great purchase for any RAF supporter and will help you keep track of those Dining Room bookings for only £12.00!

Purchase from the Club Reception or online www.rafclub.org.uk/shop/

OUT OF THE BLUE: *The Final Landing*

This is the last in the highly successful aviation series from members Ian Cowie, Dim Jones and Chris Long, and is surely destined to be as well received as the first two books, Out of The Blue and Out of The Blue Too that, to date, have raised more than £60,000 for military charities. To purchase <https://shop.rafbf.org/products/out-of-the-blue-the-final-landing>

100% of the sales profits will be donated, with 50% to the RAF Benevolent Fund and 50% divided between ABF and RNRMC equally. Copies of the books can also be found in the Club Library.



Security Procedures at the Club REMINDER

All members are asked to kindly note that for reasons of security, when arriving at the Club, all membership cards must be placed on the card reader on the Hall Porters' Desk.

Any non-members must sign in using the Guest Book in reception. If meeting a non-member at the Club, the Hall Porters must be notified in advance and the guest directed to wait in the Lobby until the member arrives to receive them. Thank you.



A Voyage of Discovery

The Club has always been feted for its artwork, this worthy addition to the collection lives up to its promise.

This summer, the Vice-Chairman, Rick Peacock-Edwards, was delighted to accept an original oil painting by aviation artist Anthony Cowland on behalf of the Club. The vibrant and varied scene 'Voyager with Typhoons' was commissioned and generously gifted by AirTanker, the supplier of Voyager aircraft to the RAF. Director of Flight Operations at AirTanker and Club member Iain Cullen, tells the story of the painting's inception, creation and subsequent unveiling in July.

I was originally briefed on the 'painting project' by Keith Filbey in November 2015. Keith was Managing Director of AirTanker Services at the time and known to many as AVM Filbey, AOC 2 Gp and President of the RAF Club 1998 to 2000. Keith's vision was for a new work of art to be hung at his beloved Royal Air Force Club, representing the vital, but often unsung side of the RAF's daily activity, transportation,

refuelling and logistics. What a challenge, as I knew nothing about commissioning fine art, let alone a painting worthy of display at 128 Piccadilly!

A good deal of internet research followed, along with guidance from the Club's Arts Committee. My first approach was to Keith Warner, whom I have known for many years and subsequently with Wing Commander Michael Gilbert,

Chairman of the Art's Committee. Central to these discussions was the Club's insistence that any new work must focus on the people behind Voyager, the 'unsung heroes'.

It was while visiting the Falklands that I first noted aviation artist Tony Cowland's 30th Anniversary painting in the Officers Mess at Mount Pleasant and was greatly impressed by the vision and skill displayed by the artist. Over summer 2016, I became increasingly sure that Tony would be the right choice for such an important work and so we agreed to meet during a visit to the Guild of Aviation Artists 'Aviation Paintings of the Year' Exhibition. This meeting sealed the deal and six months of research trips with Tony then ensued.



Above: Mr Iain Cullen congratulating artist Mr Antony Cowland on his stunning final work. Main: Refuelling mid-air. Below: Lower panel depicting the hive of ground and cockpit activity.

At a trip to RAF Brize Norton, we toured the AirTanker Services maintenance facility and Tony was able to get 'up close' with Voyager. We reviewed possible formats and eventually settled on the current Voyager with Typhoons refuelling offset by a stunning Falklands Islands background.

Mindful of the Club's desire to focus on the people as much as the aircraft itself, we included scenes of maintenance, the flight deck and boarding activity. Operations in the Falkland Islands are a key element of Voyager capability and having made this decision on location, it was obvious that the Typhoons featured should be 1435 Flt Aircraft based at RAF Mount Pleasant. Work on the painting continued over winter 2016/17 and the finished painting was collected from Tony in February 2017. The painting was presented to the Club by AirTanker on 20th July and now hangs proudly in the main corridor, adding another dimension to the Club's art collection and celebrating all those working tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the RAF machine moving so efficiently. I enjoyed working with Tony enormously on the project and do hope that Club members derive as much pleasure from the work as we did creating it.

COOKING UP A STORM

Club Kitchen talent showcased

The arrival of talented new Executive Head Chef, Michal Dutnall in 2016 heralded a new era for Club dining and this creative impact was quickly felt across all areas of the kitchen. In February of this year, under the guidance and mentorship of Michael, new Commis Chef, Lee-James Hickey entered and was successful in reaching the UK & Ireland finals of the S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2018 competition. As this is the first year that the Club has competed, this achievement is testament to the talent and skill of the Club's kitchen brigade at every level.

With his ambitious 'Curried British Cod and Pulled Pork Bonbons, with Spiced Purple Corn and Cauliflower Puree' (pictured), Lee-James demonstrated to the judges not only a competency but passion, creativity and an eye for detail with his delicate presentation.

This global competition, recognising leading young culinary talent from across the world takes place over 18 months with a Grand Final in June 2018, where finalists will compete for the title. The Club is incredibly proud of Lee-James, competing against peers from top establishments such as The Savoy and Gordon Ramsay and wish him all the best for the next stage of the competition in November. Whatever the outcome, members will be delighted to learn they can sample the talents of Lee-James and the next generation of top chefs in the Club's Dining Room for breakfast, lunch and dinner, seven days a week.



Celebrating 50 years & THE GREATEST OF ESCAPES

The Club's 50 Year Receptions are always a memorable occasion, but this year, Club members were joined in their celebrations by an extra special guest, 'Great Escapee' Jack 'Tiger' Lyon.

The Club was privileged to welcome Club member, Jack (Tiger) Lyon at one of our lunchtime receptions in the Cowdray Lounge last August, to celebrate 50 years of Club membership. With a fast approaching 100th birthday early in September, a sharp memory, keen dress sense and impressive knowledge of current affairs, Jack also retains an all-important sense of humour and vitality for life and was happy to meet other '50 year members' throughout the afternoon.

The host for the event, Membership Committee Chairman, Wg Cdr James Hill presented Jack with a small gift and card on behalf of the Club and the team was also lucky enough to spend time with Jack before he departed 128 Piccadilly on the No. 38 bus!

Read about his amazing life story and join us in wishing him a 'Very Happy 100th Birthday'.

Jack was a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft III, drew the number 79 in the ballot to escape through the tunnel, and acknowledges that he is a very lucky man to be with us today as, of the 76 'escapers', only three reached their homeland and of those recaptured, 50 were shot by Germans as a reprisal.

'Wings' as Harry Day was known, was considered a serial escaper by his captors both during WWI and WWII, planning and organising the Great Escape

"All escape activity was on a 'need to know' basis – the Escape Committee did not go out recruiting!"

along with Roger Bushell. Jack was with Harry in Stalag Luft III and it was he who gave Jack the name 'Tiger'. They formed a friendship that was to last for over 30 years.

Always with one eye on an adventure, Jack has travelled far and wide during his lifetime, both for pleasure and as a result of his 30 years employment with Shell, citing Switzerland as his favourite destination, first visiting in 1937.

Jack's watchword is 'I walked it', and he firmly believes walking is the finest all round exercise one can take, notably once completing 20 miles from Okehampton to Launceston at the age of 79 years to raise funds for the North Cornwall Branch of the Royal Air Force Association. Jack is also a great supporter of the RAF Benevolent Fund and cares greatly about animal welfare.

Jack recalls: "In 1939, at the age of 22, I was working for Shell as a Junior Accountant and their war time plans meant I was classed as 'non-essential' and given indefinite leave. I joined the RAF on 30th December and reported to No 1 Initial Training Wing at Downing College, Cambridge."

After a posting to 190TU Kinloss it was on to 58 Sqn based at Linton on Ouse flying Whitley V bombers, where I gained my Commission on completion of my training and was the only commissioned member of the crew.

We took part in a raid on Dusseldorf in June 1941, were caught in searchlights, the aircraft was hit by ground fire and we abandoned the aircraft. I jumped, my parachute opened and I landed on hard ground in a large open space on the outskirts of a town called Goch. There was no cover

and after a few minutes a soldier on a bicycle appeared and called on me to surrender. With no other means of transport he rode his bike back to the town with me, as his prisoner, sitting on the cross bar. My destination was to be Dulag Luft transit camp.

It was not until September 1943 that I went into the North Compound of Stalag Luft III on being moved from the East Compound. All escape activity was on a 'need to know' basis – the Escape Committee did not go out recruiting! I was asked whether I wished to take part. I became a 'stooge' which means surveillance, keeping track of Germans in the camp, both day and night. I did not know, though I worked out, that Hut 104 (I lived in Hut 106) was the centre of activity.

Most of us did adapt as POWs. Within the camp the lovers of football constructed makeshift pitches, gymnasts had vaulting horses and parallel bars and walkers pounded the circuit in all weathers. Stalag Luft III had theatrical talent, up to 'repertory' standard. The brightest strand on the multi-coloured tapestry of prison life was without doubt education. It was possible to learn just about anything and there were many qualified teachers. I studied Spanish under Tom Kirby Green (born in Tangier), meteorology under Len Hall (himself a Cambridge Maths Graduate) and trained in the RAF on the subject. I even took an exam for Part I of the Final of a Professional Body."

Following the evacuation of Stalag Luft III on 27th January 1945 Jack was part of the 'Long March'. They left the camp shortly after midnight, carrying what they could (including one Red Cross parcel per man). Before he left Stalag Luft III he had, he says, 'legitimately' acquired a pair of American army boots, so good that he did not have a single blister from the March! Some four to five days of travelling brought them to the outskirts of Bremen to a place called Tarmstedt. "After a mile or so in fairly heavy rain we reached a POW camp called 'Marlag and Milag Nord'. When the Allies crossed the Rhine they were on the move again. The weather was good, the pace not forced and food was plentiful with more Red Cross parcels than they could handle. They crossed the Elbe by public ferry. By the beginning of May the town of Lubeck was within sight.

They were billeted in farm buildings and on 2nd May a Captain and Sergeant drove into the courtyard in a scout car, commenting: 'I believe there are some POWs around here', to which the reply was 'Yes, maybe 600 or so'. The German guards carefully piled their rifles together on the ground and so captivity ended."

"Jack returned to England from Rheine airfield in a Dakota, landing at Dunsfold Aerodrome, to be greeted by the WVS serving great quantities of tea and cake."

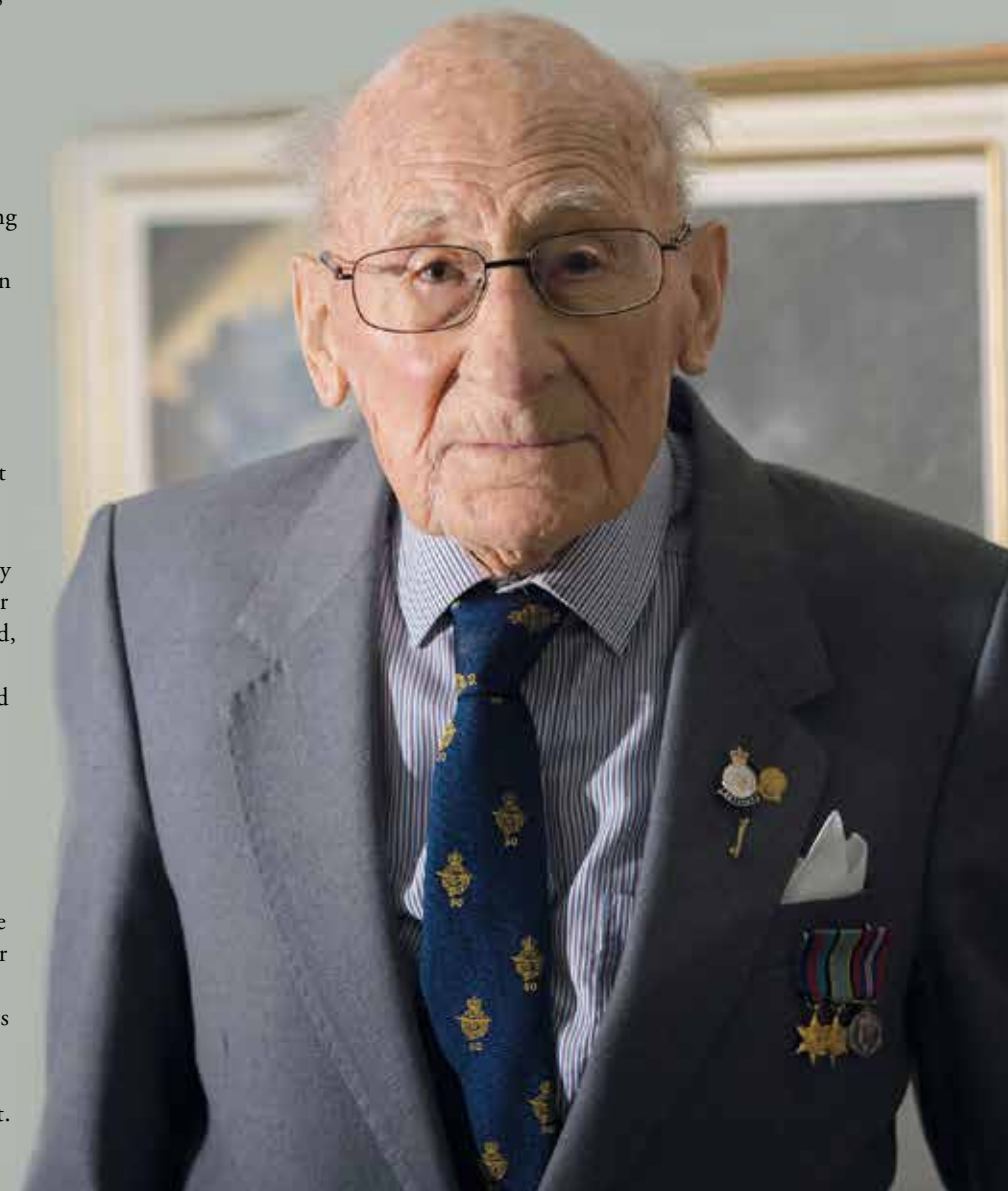
Jack was a prisoner of war for almost 4 years, liberated on that day, 2nd May 1945.

Jack returned to England from Rheine airfield in a Dakota, landing at Dunsfold Aerodrome, to be greeted by the WVS serving great quantities of tea and cake. Within an hour he and others were on the train to RAF Cosford for an overnight stay, change of clothing (his treasured boots disappeared), a debrief, 28 days leave pass and a rail warrant to get back to his home in London, arriving there on 9th May 1945. After the War, Jack accepted the option of rejoining Shell (as did colleague Douglas Bader) and, as for thousands of veterans repatriated back home after years of indescribable hardship, everyday life resumed.

With thanks to Patricia J Welsh, Squadron Leader RAFVR(T) Ret'd.



Left to right: Member Jack Lyon as a young navigator; Trustee and Chair of the Membership Committee, Wg Cdr James Hill greeting members in the Cowdray Lounge and presenting Jack with an early birthday gift of Club wine.



May 2017
Club Lunch with
Flt Lt Colin Bell (Ret'd)

This sell-out lunch in the Ballroom featured a wonderfully evocative talk by 96 year old member Colin Bell on his daring Mosquito raids over Berlin 1944/5. The Club also hosted the RAF Communications team who interviewed Colin and even filmed the event for posterity.



July 2017
Club Dinner with Mark Lancaster TD MP,
Minister of State for the Armed Forces

Mark Lancaster MP joined us in July to share insights into his role as Minister of State for the Armed Forces. He spoke candidly about his background, which included learning to fly with the RAF, and the challenges and opportunities the RAF faces in the present day.

Above: Mark Lancaster TD MP centre, pictured with Gp Capt Wendy Rothery and new Trustee, Air Cdre Dai Whittingham.



July 2017
Royal Air Force Club Summer Ball with
Benoit Viellefon & the 'Hot Club' Band

The Club was pleased to re-launch the popular Summer Ball concept for over 120 members and guests this year. Featuring live Jazz and Swing, Casino, Sipsmith cocktails and a BBQ buffet, the event will now be a permanent fixture in the events calendar.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for a fantastic event. All your preparation and attention to detail made it a very classy and fun night. My friends were so impressed by all the staff and the different activities. The Band was an excellent choice!"



August 2017
'Through the Looking
Glass' Alice in Wonderland
Children's Summer Party

This new summer event proved a big hit with the children and adults alike. Children were entertained by Alice and the Mad Hatter and enjoyed a buffet lunch, 'Time for Tea' cupcakes and freshly spun candyfloss, whilst the parents were topped up with Club wine!



September 2017
Club Dinner with
Professor Brian Cox

On a busy Battle of Britain weekend the Club was privileged to welcome Professor Brian Cox for a captivating after dinner address. The event was hosted by Gp Capt Wendy Rothery, with a vote of thanks by the Club's President, Air Chf Mshl Sir Peter Squire. After thrilling the audience with his expert musings on time and space, Professor Cox then happily joined members in the Cowdray Lounge for after-dinner drinks.



September 2017
Battle of Britain Dinner

Club Vice-Chairman, Air Cdre Rick Peacock-Edwards hosted this year's commemorative dinner and shared how his father's Battle of Britain heroics, helped shaped his own illustrious RAF career.



FESTIVE SEASON AT THE CLUB

Christmas Family Day - 'Fantasy & Fairy tales'

Calling all families, celebrate the festive season at the Club's annual sell out Christmas Family Day. Enjoy a festive buffet in the beautiful Cowdray Room followed by an array of activities as Father Christmas and his elves spread the joyous cheer. The themed 'Fantasy & Fairy tales' day includes family fun for all with special guest appearances, a yummy Gingerbread House, Santa's Grotto and gift for every child.

Date: 17th December, 1200 for 1215 hours

Dress code: Lounge Suit/Christmas Party Wear

Price: £45.00 members/guests/children
Cash Bar



Annual Club Christmas Lunches

Indulge in a traditional Christmas lunch with fellow members and friends at the annual Members' Christmas Lunches. With mulled wine on arrival at the Club followed by a traditional festive lunch with all the trimmings, this is a marvellous occasion, not to be missed.

Dates: 18th & 19th December, 1200 for 1230hrs

Dress code: Jacket and tie

Price: £40.00 members/£45.00 guests
Cash Bar



'1940's Christmas Afternoon Tea with Heather Marie Little'

Join us for a seasonal 'Christmas Afternoon Tea with Heather Marie' in the Club's Cowdray Lounge this December. Heather Marie will be performing classics from the 40's and 50's along with festive favourites as you enjoy our limited edition Christmas afternoon tea.

Date: Sunday 26th November, 1500 to 1730hrs

Price: £20.50 per person including Afternoon Tea and a Christmas cocktail



CLUB SHOPPING

Royal Air Force Club Christmas Card 2017

This year's RAF Club Christmas card features two stunning winter scenes by renowned aviation artist and friend of the Club, Anthony Cowland. A pack of 10 cards of both designs is priced at £5.00, with 10p per pack donated to the RAFBF.

Purchase from the Club Reception or online
www.rafclub.org.uk/shop/



CHRISTMAS LUNCH PACKAGE

Christmas Eve 24th December –
One Night Option (breakfast, Xmas lunch)

Christmas Eve & Day 24th &
25th December - Two Night Option
(breakfast, Xmas lunch, breakfast)

This Christmas, why not spend time at your Club soaking up the festive atmosphere with family and loved ones?

- One or two nights bed and breakfast in a single, double, or family room
- Traditional five-course Christmas Lunch in the Dining Room, including ½ bottle of club wine and a glass of Champagne
- Late check out on Monday 25th & Tuesday 26th December
- Single room at £119.00 for one person for one night, £242.50 for two nights (member rate)
- Double room for two people sharing at £213.00 for one night, £347.00 for two nights (member rate)
- Family room for two adults, two children for one night at £339.00, two nights at £489.00 (member rate)

To book call 020 7399 1000 or email
reservations@rafclub.org.uk quoting
'Xmas Lunch Package'



JANUARY SALES OVERNIGHT PACKAGE

Planning on staying at the Club in the first two weeks of January? Why not take advantage of our January Sales package inclusive of one night bed and breakfast and dinner in the Dining Room*, late check out and a complimentary newspaper? Prices for a double room for two people sharing start from £176.00 for one night, a single room at £105.00 and a family room for two adults, two children from £229.00. Package available from 1st - 15th January 2018. Prices quoted are member rates.

**Dinner includes two course Club Menu including half bottle of Club red or white wine per person.*

To book call 020 7399 1001 or visit
www.rafclub.org.uk/rooms/special-offers

For full terms
and conditions visit
www.rafclub.org.uk/rooms/terms-and-conditions

CHRISTMAS DINING AND OPENING TIMES

The Club will be open during the Christmas period, although the Running Horse is closed on Christmas Day. Some restrictions will apply in the Dining Room and Cowdray Lounge. Normal service is resumed across the Club on Wednesday 3rd January 2018. Bedrooms are still available for the Christmas period.

Christmas Eve Lunch

Brunch only including daily roast, £22.00 pp

Christmas Eve Dinner

Four-course set menu including a glass of Champagne £35.00 members, £40.00 guests. No a la carte or Club menu

Christmas Day Lunch

Five-course set menu including a glass of Champagne and half a bottle of Club wine pp £60.00 members, £70.00 guests. No a la carte or Club menu

Christmas Day Dinner

1830-2115hrs Buffet only £30.00 members, £35.00 guests. No a la carte or Club menu

Tuesday 26th December - Tuesday 2nd January inclusive

Lunch, Club menu only (inc daily roast), £25.00 no a la carte

New Year's Eve Dinner FULLY BOOKED

FACILITIES & OPENING HOURS

Dining Room

BREAKFAST	
Monday-Friday	0700 - 1000hrs
Saturday	0730 - 1030hrs
Sunday	0730 - 1030hrs
LUNCH	1230 - 1430hrs
DINNER	1830 - 2115hrs
BRUNCH	1200 - 1430hrs

Brunch: Saturday & Sunday Only (A la carte and Club menus not available)

To book email dining@rafclub.org.uk
or call 020 7399 1020

Cowdray Lounge

Christmas Afternoon Tea including a festive cocktail £20.50 pp (not available on Christmas Day)

LOUNGE	
Monday-Thursday	1000 - 2300hrs
Friday-Saturday	1000 - 0000hrs
Sunday	1000 - 2230hrs
BAR	
Monday-Thursday	1130 - 2300hrs
Friday-Saturday	1130 - 0000hrs
Sunday	1130 - 2230hrs
AFTERNOON TEA	
Daily	1500 - 1730hrs

To book email cowdray@rafclub.org.uk
or call 020 7399 1073

Running Horse

(Closed on 25th December)

Monday-Saturday	1200 - 0000hrs
Sunday	1200 - 2300hrs

Running Horse food served until 2115 daily

EVENTS PREVIEW 2018

The full calendar of centenary events will be announced in early 2018

EVENT	MEMBERS / GUESTS	DATE	TIME
Burns Night Supper	£70.00/£75.00	Friday 26 th January	1830 for 1900hrs
Phantom of the Opera Musical (Royal Circle Tickets) & Club Dinner	£90.00/£95.00	Monday 5 th February	1600 for 1630hrs
CENTENARY EVENT Cocktail Masterclass & Club Supper	£50.00/£55.00	Friday 16 th February	1830 for 1900hrs
New Members' Reception & Dinner	£40.00/£45.00	Wednesday 21 st February	1800 for 1900hrs
Club Dinner with Flt Lt (Ret'd) Colin S Bell DFC AE FRICS 'Over Berlin in a Mosquito Bomber 1944/45'	£50.00/£55.00	Thursday 22 nd February	1830 for 1900hrs
Jazz Night with the Adrian Macintosh Sextet	£85.00/£90.00	Thursday 1 st March	1830 for 1900hrs
Mothers & Sons Dinner	£65.00/£65.00	Saturday 10 th March	1830 for 1900hrs
Club Lunch with Mr Tony Blackman - 'Tales of Test Flying in the Fifties'	£40.00/£45.00	Tuesday 13 th March	1200 for 1230hrs
Literary Dinner with Dr Suzanne Campbell-Jones 'No Ordinary Pilot' supported by Bloomsbury Press	£50.00/£55.00	Tuesday 27 th March	1830 for 1900hrs
Shakespeare's Globe Private Tour & Club Dinner	£75.00/£80.00	Thursday 19 th April	1145 for 1200hrs
CENTENARY EVENT Spring Gourmet Dinner '100 Years of Club Cuisine'	£85.00/£90.00	Monday 23 rd April	1830 for 1915hrs
Club Dinner with Sqn Ldr Robert Tuxford 'Operation Black Buck'	£50.00/£55.00	Friday 27 th April	1830 for 1900hrs
Club Lunch with Adventurer & Everest Conqueror, Mrs Joanne Bradshaw - 'An unexpected life'	£45.00/£50.00	Thursday 10 th May	1200 for 1230hrs
Club Church Service, St Clement Danes	Complimentary	Sunday 20 th May	1100 Start
Dambusters 75 th Anniversary Club Dinner with Dambuster, Sqn Ldr Johnnie Johnson	£50.00/£55.00	Monday 21 st May	1830 for 1900hrs
CENTENARY EVENT Centenary Afternoon Tea & Song with Heather-Marie Little	£30.00/£35.00	Friday 1 st June	1500 for 1530hrs
Club Lunch with Mr Richard Williams 'ACM Sir Richard Peirse, One of the Unsung Heroes of WW1'	£45.00/£50.00	Tuesday 5 th June	1200 for 1230hrs
Visit to Kew Gardens & Club Dinner	£75.00/£80.00	Wednesday 13 th June	1200 for 1230hrs
CENTENARY EVENT RAF Club Murder Mystery Dinner 'Murder in the Officers Mess!'	£90.00/£95.00	Friday 15 th June	1830 for 1900hrs
Father's Day Dining Room Promotion		Sunday 17 th June	
Fathers & Daughters Dinner	£65.00/£65.00	Monday 18 th June	1830 for 1900hrs
Armed Forces Day		Saturday 30 th June	
Club Dinner with Surgeon, Dr David Nott OBE OSJ FRCS 'Humanitarian Surgery in a War Zone'	£50.00/£55.00	Tuesday 3 rd July	1830 for 1900hrs
Bletchley Park Excursion & Club Dinner	£95.00/£100.00	Friday 13 th July	0930 for 1000hrs
Annual Golf Day & Bath Club Cup Qualification	£70.00/£75.00	Thursday 19 th July	0800 for 0830hrs
CENTENARY EVENT Club Centenary Summer Ball	£100.00/£110.00	Saturday 28 th July	1900hrs for 1930hrs
50 Year Reception	Complimentary — invitation only	Wednesday 8 th August & Sunday 19 th August	1200 for 1230hrs
Children's Summer Party	£45.00/£50.00	Thursday 30 th August	1200 for 1230hrs
25 Year Lunch	£40.00/£45.00	Tuesday 4 th September	1200 for 1230hrs
CENTENARY EVENT Club Dinner with Arts Committee Chairman, Wg Cdr Michael Gilbert '100 years of Club History: the 128 Story'	£50.00/£55.00	Thursday 6 th September	1830 for 1900hrs
Grouse Dinner	£70.00/£75.00	Wednesday 12 th September	1830 for 1900hrs
Battle of Britain Dining Room Promotion		Sunday 16 th September	
Battle of Britain Dinner	£55.00/£60.00	Tuesday 18 th September	1830 for 1900hrs
New Members' Reception and Dinner	£50.00/£55.00	Friday 21 st September	1800 for 1900hrs
Winter Gourmet Evening - 'Classic Escoffier'	£85.00/£90.00	Tuesday 6 th November	1830 for 1915hrs
Remembrance Sunday		Sunday 11 th November	
Club Dinner with BBC Security Correspondent, Frank Gardner OBE, VR, FRGS	£55.00/£60.00	Wednesday 21 st November	1830 for 1900hrs
Thanksgiving Dining Room Promotion		Thursday 22 nd November	
Christmas Family Day	£45.00	Sunday 16 th December	1200 for 1215hrs
Christmas Lunch I & II	£40.00/£45.00	Monday 17 th December & Tuesday 18 th December	1200 for 1230hrs

To book any of these events, visit www.rafclub.org.uk/members/events
or contact Charlene Jinguenaud: 020 7399 1042; events@rafclub.org.uk