

# THE ALDWARE CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Royal Air Forces Association York Branch



**STAY AT HOME  
PROTECT THE NHS  
SAVE LIVES**

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Club opening hours: Thu: 7.30 pm to 10.30 pm, Sat: 11.30 am to 3 pm

Branch Charity Number 500974

Current membership: 491

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## YORK BRANCH & CLUB OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR 2020-21

President:	Mr Richard W Gray
President Emeritus	Air Commodore W G Gambold RAF (Retd)
Life Vice-Presidents:	Mr H R Kidd OBE Mr J J Mawson
Vice-Presidents:	Mr J Allison BEM Ms S Richmond
Branch Chairman	Mr B R Mennell <i>chairman@rafayork.org</i>
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Membership Secretary	Mr R Woods
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Branch Standard Bearer	Mr G Murden
Deputy Standard Bearer	Mr A Gunn
Public Relations Officer	Mr A M Bryne
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Website Manager	Mrs M Barter <i>webmaster@rafayork.org</i>
Club Chairperson	Mrs M Barter
Club Deputy Chairperson	Mrs P Harrington
Club Hon Secretary	Mrs J Potter
Club Hon. Treasurer	Mr A Ramsbottom
Club Bar Manager	Mrs J Snelling
Club Deputy Bar Manager	Mr S Edgar
Club Fundraising Officer	Mrs G McCarthy
Club Social Secretary	Mr J Forrester
Club Tea Bar Manager	Mrs D Mennell
Club Trustees:	Ms S Richmond, Mrs K Woods , Mr R Webster
Aldwark Chronicle Editor	Mr A M Bryne

**Please address all general enquiries to the Branch Secretary.**

***On the Cover: A media photo of a seemingly deserted York taken on a beautiful Spring day in late March during the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions.***

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### DISCLAIMER

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### EDITORIAL

I will commence this editorial with some sad news regarding the previous Chronicle Editor. David Taylor's funeral took place on Thursday 12 March at York Crematorium. Members of the York Branch of the RAF Association and the RAF Seletar Association were amongst the congregation and both the association standards were present. At least we were able to give David a proper RAFA send-off, something that we have been unable to do since the Coronavirus pandemic emergency regulations came into force on 20 March.

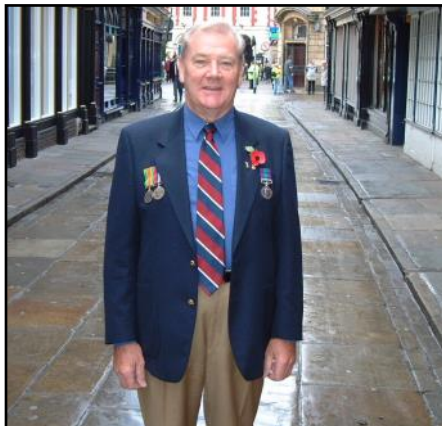
Our Branch Club in Aldwark closed on 19 March (we were very lucky to be able to hold the AGM on 14 March) and we do not know when it will reopen. We will, of course, take advice from the Government and from HQ RAFA as and when received. Similarly, all the usual Branch activities, such as Wings Appeal collections, Turning of the Page ceremonies and attendance at the usual Service commemorations and parades have ceased for the foreseeable future.

Stay safe.

Andy Bryne

## David Taylor 1936 – 2020 An Obituary

*The accompanying text has been taken from the RAF Seletar & RAF Tengah Association's Website with kind permission of its author and one of David's many friends, Chris Puxley.*



*(David in 2001)*

David was born in 1936, in Scarborough, Yorkshire. His family were all publicans and his dad followed the line, running his own pub in Norton, between Scarborough and York.

During Dave's formative years through World War Two, Yorkshire was saturated with RAF airfields. His eyes were lifted to the skies, watching numerous aircraft flying over his head, and possibly at that time, a seed was subconsciously planted in his mind.

As he grew up, he developed a keen interest in aviation and the possibility that it might offer him a chance to travel and see some of the world. As a starter, he joined the local Air Training Corps, which must have further whetted his appetite for all things aeronautical.

His first job was as an engineering apprentice, then at age 16 he joined the RAF as a Boy Entrant. On completion of training in 1953 and following his dream, he began his life of endless travel, worldwide.

Dave served at RAF Seletar, Singapore, through 1957 and 1958, firstly on aircraft instrument maintenance with 205/209 Squadron, operating the Short Sunderland flying boats. His time with Sunderlands in the Far East included a detachment to Hong Kong.

The second phase of his Far East deployment involved a move 'up country' to Malaya, servicing and flying with Westland 'Whirlwind' Mk 4 helicopters, operating in and out of jungle clearings, supporting British troops during the 'Malayan Emergency', an exciting time by all accounts.

After 11 years in the RAF, working on and flying in many different types of military aircraft and travelling the world at the taxpayer's expense, he left the RAF and began searching for a different means of satisfying his inner hunger to fly and see more of the world.

It took him just 3 months from hanging up his RAF 'Blues' to find a job in the oil industry. His specialisation in electronics and radio maintenance, along with a knowledge of navigation and survey procedures, meant that he was an ideal team member in oil exploration operations, in some pretty remote but attractive parts of the world. It was during this phase of his life, that he was awarded the 'Goldfish Club' badge, have been aboard a helicopter that had to ditch in the sea!

Dave became a member of the RAF Seletar Association in 1998, making many new friends and soon took up active roles on the Committee, serving at various times as Membership Secretary, 'Searchlight' Editor, Singapore Tour Organiser, Chairman, and finally as the President. He also organised local reunions in Yorkshire and for a couple of years he was involved in the organising of the national Annual Reunion. David was also a life member of the York Branch of the RAF Association.

Dave was a font of extensive knowledge regarding RAF Seletar, to the extent that he wrote a detailed history of the Base, entitled 'Seletar – Crowning Glory', (The history of the RAF in Singapore). He also produced a number of DVDs, with profit on sales donated to the Association.

He obviously enjoyed writing during his retirement, producing a couple of 'crime/thriller' novels and other works. His book 'A Suitcase full of Dreams', which describes his working life in great detail, lists some 100 different countries that he visited, and during which he had flown in more than 140 different aircraft types. I would say that this man, David Taylor, certainly fulfilled he dream and surely must have satisfied his lust for travel.

Now we say to him, 'Bon-Voyage', as he undertakes his final journey, to wherever it is that his spirit now takes him.

## THE SONG THAT WROTE ITSELF.

*“They have builded Him an altar in the evening dewes and dampes...”*

The history of the song in the title begins with the American Civil War and it has endured to become one of the most popular and stirring hymns ever written, especially in the United States. It reduced both President Lincoln and President Reagan to tears, and it is one of the key songs in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s portfolio today. To put its creation into context, we need to examine the circumstances at the time it was written.

Just four days after the Confederate Army fired on Fort Sumter, the 12th Massachusetts Regiment marched through the streets of Boston on their way to the railroad station. All were volunteers, and proud of it, and everything that was youth and eagerness and adventure was in the air that April day as they passed in review for the crowds to see and cheer. This was the great crusade, and the boys in new blue uniforms, with their glistening guns and bright bayonets, were on the march to make things right. As this segment of the army of America’s youth stepped off on what it confidently considered the road to glory, rather than a brutal and destructive conflict, all the ingredients of romance and chivalry went with it. Their cause was just; they had a shining new silk flag to follow, and a band as good as any regiment could boast. To cap it all, they had a song—a truly great marching song that every outfit in the Union Army would be singing before long. Not many troops knew it, but this music had been composed by a Southerner named William Steffe. It had started life about ten years earlier as a camp meeting hymn in Charleston, South Carolina, and Steffe called it, “Say Brothers Will We Meet You Over on the Other Shore?” One way or another, the regulars of the 2nd U.S. Infantry had picked up the melody, fitted new words to it, and brought it along with them to Fort Warren in Boston. That was where the 12th Massachusetts learned it, and anyone who saw them on their way to war and heard them boom out the words, “John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave, His soul is marching on,” could tell it was their favourite. Somewhere in the crowd that day was a small, attractive woman, just past forty, and the song she heard the soldiers sing was one she never forgot.

In 1861, only a stranger to Boston would have asked who Julia Ward Howe was, but the replies would have been as varied as the points of view. Most people knew her as a staunch opponent of slavery and the wife of Dr Samuel Gridley Howe, reformer, abolitionist, and director of the Perkins Institution for the Blind. Old friends from Park and Beacon streets had a different version; Mrs. Howe had been the wealthy Julia Ward of Bond Street, New York. An authentic New York belle, red-haired Miss Julia Ward

had descended upon Boston society several times a year to captivate young men with her operatic voice and wicked wit, and nearly everything she did both shocked and fascinated her father's Boston friends.

Other acquaintances remembered Julia Ward Howe as a poet, whose first-published book, *Passion Flowers*, had set Boston on its collective ear. This was followed by a short-lived play produced in New York, which had tongues wagging all the faster. It was about a "fallen woman!" Dr Samuel Gridley Howe looked upon his wife's achievements with decidedly mixed feelings, perhaps because he shared her capacity for causing comment. Older Bostonians recalled the doctor as a dashing young hero who, spurred on by the example of Byron and a blighted love affair, had sailed to aid the Greeks against Turkish oppression. He never met Byron, his hero died before he arrived, but Dr Howe bought the poet's helmet at an auction of his effects and brought it home with him after serving six years in the Greek cause. He returned also with a well-earned Knight of St. George Cross—to be called "Chevalier" by his friends. All this was behind him when, at the age of 42, he married the New York heiress Julia Ward who was almost half his age. Turning his back on military adventure, Dr Howe devoted himself to the teaching of blind children, and his pupil Laura Bridgman was the first blind and deaf child to learn to communicate with the world around her.

When news of the fall of Sumter reached Boston, it was like Howe to write to Governor Andrew: "If I can be of any use ... (save that of spy), command me." The doctor was now sixty years old and got no war horse to ride, but he was appointed to the United States Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the American Red Cross, and to this task he devoted his enormous vigour. His first assignment was in Washington, as a member of a commission to supervise the distribution of supplies for Massachusetts volunteers, where, in November 1861, he went with Governor Andrew, Mrs. Andrew, the Reverend James Freeman Clarke, and Mrs Howe.

As their train pulled into the Capital, Julia Ward Howe caught her first glimpse of the huge army which had made Washington an armed camp. Along the roadway she saw the faces of pickets caught for an instant in the light of their campfires, and her first impression of the city was of soldiers everywhere. "Mounted officers and orderlies galloped to and fro," she recalled, while men marched incessantly through the dusty streets. Ambulances weaved back and forth through the traffic of hacks and private carriages, and outside her window at the Willard Hotel a billboard advertised the embalming and shipping of soldiers' bodies to their homes.

One of the high points of their stay was an interview with the President. Mrs. Howe recorded a vivid impression of Lincoln seated on a sofa, directly below

Stuart's portrait of George Washington. While the men talked of war and politics, she occupied herself in contrasting Washington's calm features on canvas with Lincoln's furrowed cheek and brow. "The President was labouring at this time under a terrible pressure of doubt and anxiety," she said. "I remember well the sad expression of Mr. Lincoln's deep blue eyes." They were, she thought, "the only feature of his face which could be called other than plain."

On November 18, 1861, a picnic was planned for Mrs. Howe and the other members of Governor Andrew's party. Supplied with a carriage and coachman and a hamper of lunch, off they went to see a review of the troops which took place "some distance from town," as Mrs. Howe described it. In fact, it was across the Potomac river, in territory occupied until recently by Confederates. Carriage after carriage filled with gentlemen in high silk hats and ladies in crinolines, drove out of town over the bridge and along the narrow road.

Unfortunately, the review was interrupted by the appearance of Southern skirmishers, and Mrs. Howe watched "a detachment of soldiers gallop to the assistance of a small body of our men who were in imminent danger of being surrounded and cut off from retreat." Her coachman wheeled the carriage around and headed for Washington at a gallop—a pace which soon became a crawl as all the other drivers attempted the same thing and troops marched back along the same road. Although she heard the bugle sound retreat, apparently Mrs. Howe was unaware of the danger, and she remembered that "to beguile the rather tedious drive, we sang from time to time, snatches of the army songs so popular at that time." One of them was the song she had heard the 12th Massachusetts sing when the Civil War first began: "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, His soul is marching on."

Julia Ward Howe had a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice. In girlhood she had had musical training equal to that of an opera star, and as she joined in the singing the soldiers called out, "Good for you, Ma'am." The Reverend Mr. Clarke leaned forward to speak to her. "Why don't you write some better words for that stirring tune?" he asked. "I have often wished to do so," she replied.

That night, Julia Ward Howe went to bed at the Willard Hotel and "as usual slept soundly." Troops marched in the streets below, but she was not conscious of hearing them. "I awoke in the grey of the morning twilight," she recalled, "and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of a poem began to twine themselves" in her mind.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord ..." —line by line, like the measured cadence of marching feet she had heard so often, the



words began to come to her. Intermingled with some of the great phrases of the Old Testament was a vision of the long blue lines, the pickets huddled around campfires, and the righteousness, the anger, and the dream which the nation's youth had taken into battle.

"I must get up and write these verses before I forget them," she told herself, and she "found in the dimness an old stump of a pen" and some of her husband's writing paper with the letterhead of the Sanitary Commission on it. Later it seemed to Mrs. Howe as if the poem had come to her as a revelation from a source beyond herself. She had good reason to think so. For years she had studied and practiced the art of poetry, counting the syllables, labouring over her rhymes, working for hours on a single stanza. This was different. In this whole original manuscript she crossed out or changed only four words, and a final stanza was discarded because it spoiled the climax. With almost no conscious effort the poem sprang into being. After writing it down, she fell asleep for a while, and when she awoke, she could remember what had happened but found that she had forgotten the words. Although she felt humble in the presence of this miracle, Mrs. Howe little realized the importance of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Regarding her "Battle Hymn" as a poem rather than a song, Julia Ward Howe sent it to the *Atlantic Monthly*, where it appeared in February 1862. It was, she said, "somewhat praised," and the editors sent her a cheque for four dollars.

The stories vary as to when the Army began singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Probably it was taken up simultaneously by more than one regiment, largely through the efforts of Chaplain Charles Cardwell McCabe of the 122nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. A man with a fine baritone voice and dramatic ability, McCabe read the poem in the *Atlantic* and was so impressed with it that he memorized the words. Marching along with the Ohioans, he taught them the "Battle Hymn" to the melody he doubtless knew already as a hymn tune. Captured by the Confederate Army at Winchester, McCabe was sent to Libby Prison along with hundreds of other northern troops herded together in a great bare room. One night their jailers told them the rumour of a great Confederate victory, a complete disaster for the North. Wondering where, and how, and why, the Union prisoners sat dejected on the floor, talking quietly, if at all. Suddenly a black soldier, who brought food to the men leaned over and whispered to one of the groups. The rumour was a lie, he said: there had been a great victory, but the North had won it, at a place called Gettysburg. Like wildfire the news flashed through the prison. Men jumped to their feet, cheering, crying, embracing one another hysterically, and in the centre of the room Chaplain McCabe stood up and began to sing: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!" As he came to the chorus, every voice joined in, and the walls of Libby prison echoed to the thankful words of "Glory, glory, hallelujah!" as few other men

could have sung them. Julia Ward Howe was now becoming a famous woman, although, immersed in war work in Boston, she scarcely realized that people all over the country knew her name. Making an entry in his journal, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "I honour the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. ... She was born in New York City. I could well wish she were a native of New England. We have no such poetess in New England."

After the US Civil War, Mrs Howe became interested in the plight of war widows and fatherless girls in need of a livelihood, turned her energies to the struggle for higher education and the opening of professions to women, and became an influential leader in the woman's suffrage movement. She continued to write, turning out travel books, essays, and poetry, but no poem she wrote ever again reached the heights of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." In her long life (she was born in 1819 and died in 1910) Mrs. Howe never served a cause that was small or personal, and she was, in her last years, one of America's most admired and best-loved women. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was always sung for her when she appeared at public gatherings, becoming, in a very real sense, her theme song. No audience was likely to forget the sound of that music, the soaring words which captured the deepest emotions of the nation, and the sight of the handsome white-haired woman who had given it to them.

One of the great moments for Julia Ward Howe came on Memorial Day in 1899, at the dedication of a Civil War Memorial in Boston. There was drama in the choice of Major General Joseph Wheeler's carriage, in which she rode. Wheeler had fought on the Confederate side as a top-notch cavalry leader. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, General Wheeler offered his services to McKinley and was appointed a major general in charge of volunteers. He saw active service in Cuba and the Philippines, and he was, in 1899, a national hero symbolizing the reunited nation. When Julia Ward Howe died, eleven years later, the song that played the 12th Massachusetts off to war, which she had made into a mighty battle hymn for all Americans, North and South, was sung at her funeral by the blind children from Perkins Institution.

Chaplain McCabe and all the others have long since faded into history somewhat, but the inspiring music with its majestic words still brings back their million marching feet and the red haze of flame and agony in which they died to make men free.

Andy Bryne

## DOG QUOTATIONS

If I have any beliefs about immortality, it is that certain dogs I have known will go to heaven, and very, very few people. James Thurber.

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man. Mark Twain.

If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went. Will Rogers.

No matter how little money and how few possessions you own, having a dog makes you feel rich. Louis Sabin .

The poor dog, in life the firmest friend. The first to welcome, foremost to defend. Lord Byron .

A dog is the only thing that can mend a crack in your broken heart. Judy Desmond .

I've seen a look in dogs' eyes, a quickly vanishing look of amazed contempt, and I am convinced that basically dogs think humans are nuts. John Steinbeck.

If I could be half the person my dog is, I'd be twice the human I am. Charles Yu.



## BRANCH & CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 74th Annual General Meeting of the York Branch and Club took place at RAFA House, Aldwark on Saturday 14 March, starting just after noon. A total of 27 members (including Branch and Club Committee members) attended. The attendance was down on previous years due to the ongoing Coronavirus threat. The meeting followed the usual procedure with the exception that, for the first time in many years, there were 2 separate meetings (although following each other ) for the Branch and the Club as directed by RAF Association regulations. All those members putting themselves forward for election or re-election were accepted by the meeting.

Prior to the conclusion of the AGM, the President, Dick Gray, awarded Annual Branch Award certificates to the following: Kath Allison (unable to attend due to illness), Ron Ford, Catherine Hanson and Gill Gray. The meeting concluded at 1256 hrs, after which, some welcome refreshments were provided by Dick and Gill Gray.

We were somewhat fortunate in being able to proceed with the AGM this year as, a few days later, the situation with the Coronavirus pandemic in the UK worsened and both committees took the decision to close the Club with effect from Thursday 19 March until further notice. This was done in line with UK Government health advice and also upon guidance from the RAF Association HQ.



### VE DAY - 75 YEARS ON

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day and, to commemorate this historical landmark, the early May Bank Holiday was moved from its usual Monday observance to Friday 8 May. Our Branch and Club had not planned any activities to mark the event but there is no doubt that we would have got involved and arranged something. However, the anniversary was overtaken by the all-consuming Coronavirus pandemic, which led to Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, the VE Day 75 Pageantmaster, to post the following on the VE 75 Website, "I am afraid that the terrible Coronavirus emergency and consequent Government guidance means that we must advise participants to cancel or postpone the majority of the VE Day 75 community celebrations due to take place on the bank holiday weekend of 8th – 10th May. It is right and proper that people should be kept safe and healthy. My sincere thanks to everyone who registered their events

and were looking forward to celebrating VE Day 75. I know how disappointed you will be that these cannot now go ahead as planned. However, we are still encouraging solo pipers and town criers to continue to mark the occasion from a safe and suitable location. I am hoping that all the events you have carefully planned can be moved to the weekend of 15th – 16th August when we will be able to celebrate VE Day and VJ Day, both momentous points in our history.” Some VE 75 souvenirs, such as coins, are available but there will be no celebratory events in May.

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## **ONE CHARITY, ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE, THE BOGNOR RESOLUTION, RAFA CLUBS LTD & ALL THAT STUFF**

Until the Coronavirus outbreak pretty well put the brakes on RAF Association Conference business in mid-March, there were a number of initiatives and proposed changes to our Association, either ongoing or planned, to discuss and respond to at our Branch and Club Committee meetings. The first of these was the “One Charity” proposal, which didn’t fare too well at the 2019 Annual Conference. In a nutshell, One Charity would mean that individual RAFA branches would lose their individual charity numbers and the HQ would hold the charity number on behalf of all branches. Branch committee members would also lose their trustee responsibilities. After attracting the beady eyed attention of the Charities Commission, who were unimpressed with the way some branches handled their governance duties, it was decided that the risk was currently too great and that the One Charity proposal “be parked.” It was expected that more discussion and action on the One Member One Vote proposal (again fiercely debated at the 2019 National Conference) would continue at the 2020 Area Conferences and then National Conference but this has not happened for obvious reasons.

Proposed changes to the Association’s administrative structure have been ongoing for a while, including the need to restructure the current Areas, which do not reflect the situation “on the ground.” National Conference 2019 agreed (Resolution 15, proposed by the Bognor Regis Branch) that, “Council should examine and review the democratic and administrative structure of the Association as laid out in Articles 18 and 19 of the Royal Charter (Areas and Regions) Rules 23 (Decisions of Conference) Rules 24-26 (Areas and Regions), Byelaw 17 (Regions) and the Area Regulations so that it is fit and ready for the future and able to deliver on its charitable vision into 2030, reporting to Conference in 2020.” The plethora of documentation associated with this proposal was thrust into our Branch and Club Committee e-mail trays just before Christmas 2019. Just what we needed with nothing else to do over the festive period! Again, this has been paused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

In his letter to all RAFA Branch Chairs and Secretaries on 11 March, the Association Chairman included the following encouragement, *“For anyone who has not yet got the message, we face a serious situation. The fact that issues around charity governance at some of our branches came to the attention of the Regulator means we are under the spotlight. Failure to get our house in order could have dire consequences for our Association. The Branch Governance Action Plan must be implemented fully and in a timely fashion.”* I think we have all been told off!

Regarding Branch Club initiatives, the concept of “RAFA Clubs Ltd” first appeared in in 2019 and was established as a formal trading arm of RAFA. Several Branch Clubs have closed in recent years and, in September 2019, RAFA Council unanimously agreed to the establishment of RAFA Clubs Ltd. The vision, articulated by the Secretary General included, “We should aspire to have a professional presence in the high street, or nearby, but in the urban environment that will allow use during the day as a safe place for welfare drop-ins for the RAF Family or indeed other veteran charities and members of the public, with evening use also.”

On 30 January, Paul Baker, the RAFA Clubs Ltd Development Manager, visited the Club in Aldwark at midday. The Branch Chairman had invited a group of members to attend. Paul Baker explained the concept of RAFA Clubs Ltd and how it was planned to give a wider customer base than that currently offered by RAFA Branch Clubs. The concept was inspired by a group of café clubs (First Light Trust) founded by Dorinda Wolfe Murray and aimed principally at military veterans and “blue light” personnel. An example currently exists in Scarborough and around 6 other locations (so someone has already beaten RAFA to it). The aim of RAFA Clubs Ltd was to provide a similar experience to First Light on the “high street”. We felt that, given the location of our RAFA Branch Club, the fact that York was already virtually overrun with cafes, the fact that we do not employ paid staff and that Paul Baker confirmed that joining RAFA Clubs Ltd was not compulsory, the response was, thanks very much, but no thanks.

In summary, it has been an exciting time with all these initiatives and proposals flying around. However, for now, we will “Wait out” and see what happens when things return to normal in the World.

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## **WINGS APPEAL UPDATE**

At the end of March, when all collections were postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions, the Wings Appeal Officer, Ian Smith, reported that the total raised so far by our Branch stood at £5165.68.

## FIRST RAF BOEING P8 POSEIDON DELIVERED



The first RAF Boeing P-8A Poseidon arrived in the United Kingdom on 4 February 2020 with the second aircraft arriving on 13 March. Nine of the new maritime patrol and anti-submarine aircraft will provide the maritime strike and reconnaissance capabilities lost with the retirement of the Nimrod maritime patrol and strike aircraft back in March 2010. The first aircraft, ZP801, named Pride of Moray, was handed over on 12 July 2019, during a ceremony at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida, United States. Since then, the aircraft has been used for testing and crew training. The P-8A, known as the Poseidon MRA Mk1 by the Royal Air Force, flew to Kinloss Barracks, Scotland, on February 4, 2020. It will be based there while its permanent base at RAF Lossiemouth, undergoes a runway expansion to accommodate the aircraft. Based on the fuselage of the Boeing 737-800, with the wings of the 900, Poseidon is powered by two CFM56-7B engines from CFM International, giving it a range of over 3600 miles. It can be equipped, both internally and externally, with an array of armaments dedicated to submarine and anti-ship warfare, such as torpedoes, mines, depth charges and anti-ship missiles.

## A LESSON FROM THE PAST THE ASIAN 'FLU PANDEMIC OF 1957



Some Branch members may well remember the 1957 'flu pandemic. I freely admit to having no recollection of it as I was only 2 years old at the time.

In 1957, the World experienced a flu pandemic which, although very serious, caused far fewer deaths than the infamous "Spanish Flu" of 1917-1920. The 1957 Asian flu pandemic resulted in about 70,000 deaths in the United States. An excess of 30,000 deaths occurred in England and Wales of which 6,716 were ascribed to influenza itself. Estimates in the UK ranged from 1.3 to 3.5 deaths/1,000 cases. An estimate from 29 British general practices was 2.3 deaths per 1,000 cases attended.

In February 1957, the Asian influenza pandemic was first identified in the Far East. It originated from mutation in wild ducks combining with a pre-existing human strain. Immunity to this strain was rare in people less than 65 years of age, and a pandemic was predicted. In preparation, vaccine production began in late May 1957, and health officials increased surveillance for flu outbreaks. The 1957 pandemic is instructive in that the first US cases occurred in June but no community outbreaks occurred until August and the first wave of illness peaked in October. By November 1957 most of the UK military had felt the effects of the Asian Flu pandemic. Many RAF stations were forced to close as the Sick Quarters and medics became overwhelmed. One retired RAF aircrew officer recalls serving at RAF Church Fenton (not a happy place then apparently according to him!) on night fighters at the time when the Station closed down almost completely for several weeks. He was one of the lucky ones who get sent home fully fit but went down with flu the day before he was due to return to duty and had a further two weeks recuperating.



As this was a pandemic, British military personnel overseas were also caught up in the emergency. One National Service Royal Army Medical Corps doctor from Leeds spent 2 years based at St Patrick's Barracks in Malta. The medical officers responsible for the families had a very busy time during a major the flu outbreak. The Maltese people were significantly hit by the Asian Flu pandemic, which was first seen on the island in August 1957, soon after he arrived. The epidemic peaked the following month. After a decline, a second wave started in November. A total of 8,783 cases were reported and 11 people died of the infection. Although the epidemic remained quiescent throughout 1958, when only 39 cases of influenza were reported, this was followed by resurgences of the infection in 1959 and 1961, when more than 5,500 people were affected. The British Army medical officers were fully stretched with numerous home visits all over the island and their service came under considerable pressure and some criticism. They would visit the houses and check the patients had flu – they were mainly children because there were so many children in every Maltese family.

Unlike the virus that caused the 1918 pandemic, the 1957 pandemic virus was quickly identified, due to advances in scientific technology. The 1957 pandemic was associated with the emergence and spread of the H2N2 virus [this virus subtype stopped circulating in 1968]. Vaccine was available in limited supply by August 1957. The virus came to the USA quietly, with a series of small outbreaks over the summer of 1957. When US children went back to school in the autumn, they spread the disease in classrooms and brought it home to their families. Infection rates were highest among school children, young adults, and pregnant women in October 1957. Most influenza-and pneumonia-related deaths occurred between September 1957 and March 1958. The elderly had the highest rates of death. In 1957, up to 50% of British schoolchildren developed influenza, but even those schools which were severely disorganised had returned to normal 4 weeks after the appearance of the first case. In boarding schools in the UK, attack rates reached 90%, often affecting the whole school within a fortnight. By December 1957, the worst seemed to be over. However, during January and February 1958, there was another wave of illness among the elderly. This is an example of the potential "second wave" of infections that can develop during a pandemic. The disease infects one group of people first, infections appear to decrease and then infections increase in a different part of the population.

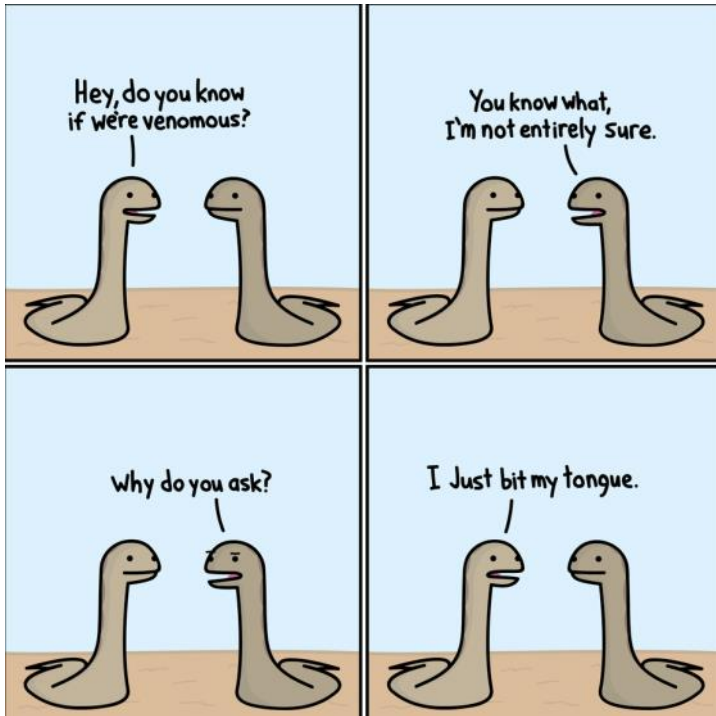
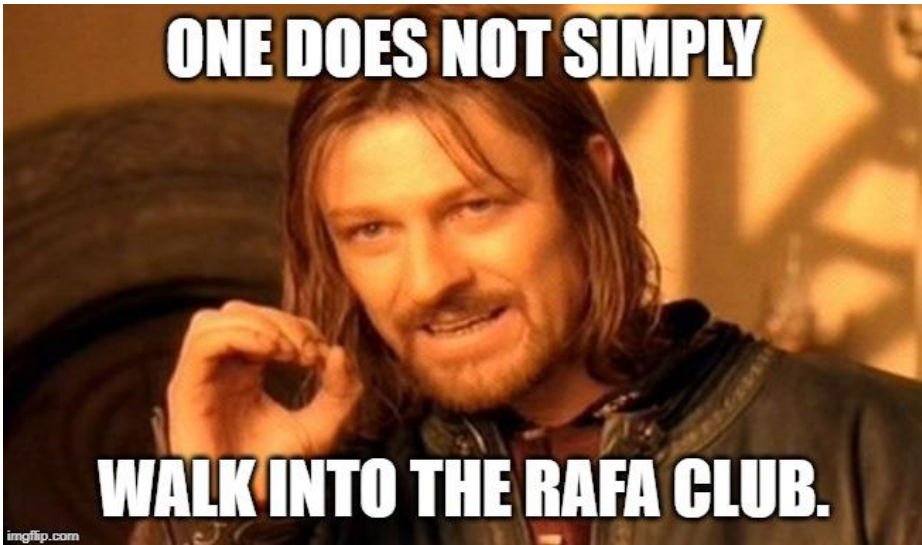
As with any pandemic, the key question is, what caused it? Conventional wisdom conveys China's "Great Leap Forward" famine as a man-made disaster where misguided economic policies precipitated widespread famine and world record-breaking population losses.

## RAF LINTON ON OUSE UPDATE



The photo above (via PPRUNE) shows Babcock contractor's personnel at RAF Linton on Ouse on 31 March 2020, after completion of the Tucano aircraft maintenance and disposal contract. A line of Tucano fuselages can be seen on the right of the photo whilst aircraft wings are stacked on the left hand side of the hangar. All 84 Tucano aircraft will be heading to the United States with RSW Aviation, of Phoenix Arizona ,acquiring them with full backing of UK MOD and Bombardier in Belfast. The Tucano will still be training pilots, but in United States' skies in future. The Tucano "Gate Guard" at Linton on Ouse will be relocated to RAF Syerston, near Newark, Nottinghamshire.

RAF Linton on Ouse remains an active flying station for the time being. It is the home of the Yorkshire Universities Air Squadron, equipped with Grob Tutor piston-engine training aircraft. The Station is still due to close at the end of this year, although this closure could yet be delayed due to restrictions caused by the current Coronavirus pandemic.



## Events for RAFA York Branch - 2020

Event dates will be updated on a regular basis on the Branch Website and Club Noticeboards.

Please note: it would be appreciated if you wish to attend any of the events listed below to inform the President so that we know what numbers to seat/cater for. A limited lunch menu is available most Saturdays.

***At the time of publishing we do not yet know when the Club at Aldwark will reopen or when any of our normal Branch activities will take place. Consequently, events already planned for the months of May and June will be assumed to have been cancelled.***

8-9 Jul	Wings Collection - York Railway Station.
Fri 24 Jul	St Crux.
Fri 14 Aug	Wings Collection - Morrisons Foss Islands Rd.
Sun 6 Sep	Allied Air Forces Memorial Day - Elvington.
Sun 13 Sep	Turning the Page & Battle of Britain Service.
15-16 Sep	Wings Collection - York Railway Station.
Sat 19 Sep	Battle of Britain Wings Collection - City Centre.
Tue 6 Oct	St Crux.
Sun 8 Nov	Remembrance Sunday.
Tbc Dec	Christmas Draw at the Club.

Regarding the Wings Appeal events listed above, an appeal for volunteers will be placed on the Wings noticeboard by the Wings Appeal Officer nearer the date of the event.

Please note that "themed dining in nights" may be subject to change/cancellation in order to avoid clashing with other more pressing Branch activities or events so please check the website: [www.rafayork.org](http://www.rafayork.org). For timings etc, contact the Club on 07495 651849 (Thu evenings and Sat lunchtimes only)