

The Aldwark Chronicle

Newsletter of the Royal Air Forces Association

- York Branch



**ROYAL
AIRFORCES
Association**

The charity that supports the RAF family

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Club opening hours: Thurs - 7:30pm to 10:30 pm; Sat - 11:30am to 3pm

Our Website is at: www.rafayork.org

Current Membership: 496

York Branch & Club Official Appointments for 2018

President:	Mr J J Mawson	
President Emeritus:	Air Commodore W G Gambold DL FCMI RAF (Ret)	
Life Vice President:	Mr H R Kidd OBE	
Vice Presidents:	Mr J Allison BEM Ms S Richmond	
Chairman:	Mr B R Mennell	<u>chairman@rafayork.org</u>
Vice Chairman:	Mr Richard Gray	<u>depchair@rafayork.org</u>
Hon Sec & N Area Delegate:	Mrs M Barter	<u>secretary@rafayork.org</u>
Hon Treasurer:	Mr D Pollard	<u>treasurer@rafayork.org</u>
Dep Treasurer	Mr A Ramsbottom	<u>webmaster@rafayork.org</u>
Membership Secretary:	Mrs K Allison	
Welfare Officer:	Mrs C Hanson	<u>welfare@rafayork.org</u>
Dep Welfare Officer:	Mr R Ford	
Wings Organisers:	Mrs M Smith & Mr I Smith	
Branch Standard Bearer:	Mr G Murden	
Dep Standard Bearer:	Mr I Smith	
Bar Officer:	Mr R Gray	
Ass't Bar Officer:	Mr G Murden	
Social/Fundraising:	Mrs G McCarthy	
Public Relations/Press Officer:	Mr A Bryne	<u>andybryne@rafayork.org</u>
Buildings Officer:	Mr R Webster	
Newsletter Editor	Mr D Taylor	<u>newsletter@rafayork.org</u>

Please address all general enquiries to the Hon Secretary

Editorial

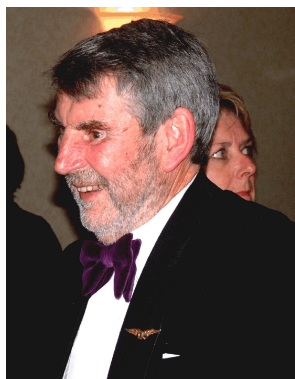
As yet another year bites the dust, well almost, the Committee would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. How fast they seem to fly by as you get older, and there was I, approaching the Millennium 18 years ago, wondering if I would actually make it to 2000! Not only did I make it, seems I was much more intelligent than the masses who spent millions on software so as to prevent their computers crashing at midnight 1999. I just figured if I changed the date manually, the computer would figure it out. Which is exactly what it did!

But what a busy year this 2018 has seemed to be; always something going on at the Club, with people coming and going, in both senses! One of the highlights has to have been a 100 year old pilot, DFC, Turning the Page in September for the RAF's 100th birthday celebration! And didn't he do well, standing there for around twenty minutes. Even I, with the seat in front to hang on to, was feeling somewhat jaded by that time. Unfortunately, John passed away at the end of October. He was a member for only a few short months, but he became a regular attender, and what a privilege it was to meet him.

Due to restricted page size, photos contained herein are necessarily small. Anyone seeking larger versions, they are available on request, but only via email.

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GOODBYE "MAC"



Robert McCallum Mathieson, known affectionately to friends as Mac, passed away on 7 August 2018 aged 96. Mac was a member of RAFA York (past Chairman, and Vice President), and the White Rose Aircrew Association (ACA), and had a distinguished Second World War record as a pilot with RAF Coastal Command. Post war, Mac suffered major facial injuries when the windscreen of the Lancaster he was flying imploded, qualifying him to become one of Archibald McIndoe's 'Guinea Pigs'; so called due to the experimental work that was performed on them, over many painful operations, and years, until their faces and hands were reconstructed. They formed themselves into the Guinea Pig Club, the idea being to help in readjustment. McIndoe instructed people around the hospital not to stare, or make a fuss, but to help them reintegrate back into the community. They thus gained confidence in going to the pub, or when out walking.

Mac's funeral took place at York Crematorium on Tuesday 28th August. Twenty Branch members were in attendance, three of whom were also ACA members. Some formed a guard of honour as the Branch Standard preceded the RAFA draped coffin into the packed Crematorium. Representatives from No 72 Squadron, RAF Linton on Ouse, and Blind Veterans UK were also amongst the congregation.

Floral tributes included an anchor - not only had Mac spent many arduous hours flying over the ocean with Coastal Command, he had also been a keen

sailor from his youth on - and a wonderful representation of an Avro Lancaster, constructed from dried flower heads; very moving tributes to a very special airman, and branch member.

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Chairman's Report

Another year draws to an end and we should look back on a very good year all round. Our membership is a fraction under 500 and once again our Wings Appeal has raised over £10,000. Many thanks go to Maureen and Ian Smith. Unfortunately, due to Maureen's illness, they could not be as active as they were in the earlier part of this year, but Dick Gray and other members; such as Don Gunn, Ron Ford and Barry Snaith, grabbed the reins and took us over the £10,000 target. The final collections at the York Railway Station and the City Centre collections were described by Dick to me as follows: "We did £1142 over the two days at the railway station and 10 RAFA volunteers turned up for the street collection and raised £1682.44 between them, allowing us to sail through the £10,000 for the year. Myself, Barry Snaith and Don Gunn raised £1240 between the three of us. It rained at 3pm so cut short our potential for the day as the 3 RAF volunteers came late in the afternoon due to other commitments, but they raised £64.69 before rain stopped play, but every little helps, so our total for Saturday was £1768." Well done and thanks to all who helped.

On the repairs front, we have finished the kitchen and dining room; the electrics have been sorted throughout the building and are fully certified; the fire precautions are being updated; shelving has been installed in most rooms for storage and the Gent's toilet has been tiled. A lot of work has been carried out by Dick Gray and we thank him very much for his unstinting efforts. Painting both in and outside the building may be the calling of early 2019.

Gill Gray is still doing a fabulous job in feeding us at weekends and on Dining in Nights. Many thanks to Gill for her excellent kitchen skills and fantastic meals.

I have noticed of late on television that many big charities are asking people to leave money to them in their wills. I would like to say that we have mainly kept going these last few years because of such donations and would urge any of our members who may feel so inclined as to leave us any money in their wills, to do so, ensuring they put down **RAFA York Branch** as the recipient. Finally, we shall soon be approaching AGM time and the voting for the coming year's committee. I will be happy to put myself forward again as Chairman, should you want me, and I am hoping that most of the current committee, who do such an excellent job, will stay with me. I already know that Maureen Barter wishes to stand down as Secretary after five years of excellent service to the Branch/Club. Many thank's Maureen from all of us. However she has agreed to stay on the committee as our web administrator and that will be brilliant. Should anyone wish to stand as Secretary, or in any other position please let me know. The lists will go up in January.

I wish all our members a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and if next year, Club/Branch wise is as good as this year then we will go on from strength to strength.

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RAF 100th CELEBRATORY DINNER

Friday July 20th saw forty-three members and guests - along with three special guests - attend a formal dinner at Middleton's, York, to mark the Centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force.

After pre-dinner drinks and a chat in the evening summer sunshine, we proceeded to the Sawmill Restaurant. Here we were welcomed by Chairman, Brian Mennell, before the Branch Standard was marched in, and the Dedication pronounced. Grace was by the Branch Life Vice-President, Ray Kidd, prior to our being seated for an excellent meal.

The aim of this event was to mark the Centenary of the Royal Air Force, as well as fulfilling the role of Annual Dinner, the speeches therefore reflected historical significance. After the Loyal Toast, proposed by our Vice-Chairman, Dick Gray, the Chairman gave an insight to the early difficulties and threats facing our Nation which led to the formation of an independent Air Force in 1918, whilst reminding us of the debt owed to RAF veterans, such as Battle of Britain pilot Geoffrey Wellum, who passed away earlier in the week. After proposing a toast to the Royal Air Force on the occasion of its Centenary, the Chairman handed over to the Officer Commanding, RAF Linton-on-Ouse, who continued the RAF historical theme, highlighting various key episodes.

The President then spoke briefly about York Branch, with particular reference to recent improvements to the Club infrastructure, and of the challenges ahead. He then proposed a toast to the Royal Air Forces Association coupled with the York Branch. The response was by RAFA Director of Membership, whose speech covered the successes in recruiting new serving RAF members, coupled with the need to try to attract members from the mid-range age group.

After the speeches, most made a return outside, into the somewhat cooler night air, some to drift away, others continuing with the chat and a nightcap.

No doubt many took away memories of a pleasant evening, and of speeches which had reminded us of the many achievements of the Royal Air Force in only its first century of existence.



Andy looking worried



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RAF LINTON ON OUSE FREEDOM OF THE CITY PARADE - YORK

On an unexpectedly bright and sunny morning of September 23rd RAF Linton-on-Ouse exercised their right of Freedom of the City by marching through the streets of York, led by the Band of RAF College, Cranwell. This parade was followed by the Battle of Britain Memorial Service / RAF 100th celebration in the

Minster, including the Turning of the Page Ceremony that is customary at this time of year. In a last minute change, the page was turned by 100 year old John Hartley DFC, accompanied by RAF Linton's Commanding Officer, Grp Cpt Keith Taylor, along with Flt Sgt Hunter (miss), of the Air Cadet Organisation (formerly ATC). FS Hunter is Grp Cpt Taylor's Cadet for the year. Also in attendance at the service was RAFA President Air Marshall Sir Baz North.

Prior to the Minster service the various groups: The Royal Air Force, Air Cadets, and Royal Air Forces Association, along with their standard bearers, formed up and marched to Duncombe Place where the inspections, formalities, and a 9 ship Tucano flypast were performed, before departing to parade the Freedom Scroll and 72 Squadron's Standard around the City Streets, an additional attraction for the throngs of tourists.

After the service many RAFA personnel retired to the Club in Aldwark, whilst the dignitaries attended a reception in the Minster's Chapter House. Some of us then sloped off across the road to the Golden Slipper, for lunch and a drink, or two!

Dave Taylor

Photographs by the author. Unfortunately, whilst perfect placed to get a shot of the flypast, as I removed my hand from the lamp-post I was using for support, I almost fell, being saved by a member of the RAF Police, but missing the opportunity of that award winning shot!

Page Turning photos, and flypast, courtesy of RAF Linton-on-Ouse,.



RAF College Band



RAFA contingent



Standards



RAF Linton & that Snowdrop



100 yr old John Hartley DFC



Thanks to RAF Linton, the flypast I missed

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An Easy War?

York born Warrant Officer Ron Murray joined the RAF at age 19 in late 1941, and began his flying training at EFTS Carlisle that October on the Miles Magister.

He then travelled to 35 ETFS Neepawa, Canada on 31st March 1942, where he trained on the DH82 Tiger Moth for two months, soloing on April 17th. Next came a move to 39 SFTS Swift Current, Saskatchewan, at the end of June,

and an upgrade to the North American Havard. Still on the Havard, October 3rd saw a transfer to 37 SFTS at Calgary, Alberta, where he was awarded his wings on the 16th.

Back in the UK in Dec 1942 there were seemingly innumerable postings, the first to 17 Advanced Flying Unit at Watton, Norfolk, flying the Miles Master. Next came 55 OTU Annan, Scotland, training on the Hurricane; all flights naturally solo! Then came a month in Gibraltar, seemingly delivering Hurricanes to various units in North Africa, with a couple of forced landings to liven things up, one turning out to be precautionary, the second not. Between flights he was ferried around in a DC3.

Return to the UK in October was by civilian Liberator, then it was off to Scotland, flying Hurricanes from Tealing and Kinnell with 577 Sqn, who also had a detachment at Sealand, where he served some time. During this period Ron also accrued hours on the Oxford, these aircraft also on squadron strength.

On Sept 1st, 1944 he was on his way once more, this time to 61 OTU Rednal, Shropshire, converting to the Spitfire V. Whereas most seemed to find the Spitfire difficult to land, this apparently came easy to Ron; it was the swing on take-off with which he said he had problems, though with assessments in his logbook seeming to err on the side of "Above Average", point to him being a very proficient pilot.

A month later and he was on the move again, this time to 3 TEU (Tactical Exercise Unit) Chedworth, Gloucestershire - a satellite station for RAF Aston Down - and another change of aircraft, this time to the Mustang. Next came his first squadron posting, No.65 at RAF Andrews Field, Essex (Originally RAF Great Salling, it was renamed when in use by the USAAC; after an American AF General, killed in a 1943 Liberator crash in Iceland: Lt Gen Frank Maxwell Andrews, at the time of his death, Commanding General US Forces Europe.) Andrews AFB, Washington DC, was similarly named after him.

With 65 Squadron's Mustangs he was soon in the thick of things, flying fighter sweeps, and escort sorties to Bomber Command on the 1000 bomber raids. By Ron's reckoning the brave guys were the bomber crews, and he found it difficult to watch them going down in flames, brought down by flack as he flew above in the relative safety of altitude, waiting with his Mustang to escort the survivors back home.

Dec 7th 1944 found Ron at Biggin Hill, now back on the Spitfire with 131 Squadron.

Although only awarded the standard WWII medals, plus the Burma Star, he seems to have had a very busy time of it in the Far East, moving between squadrons (131 & 607), flying the Spitfire, strafing and bombing Japanese troop positions, etc, even if, from his modest point of view, he did think he'd had an easy war!

(Ron, and his fiancée, Mollie - a supervisor at York Telephone exchange - had arranged for their wedding to take place at Heworth Church, York, on Jan 1st 1945, but on arrival at Biggin Hill his Commanding Officer had told him this was not possible as he and his squadron were posted to Burma with immediate effect. The only way round was for them to take out a Special Licence, which with some haste they did. Ron duly travelled from Biggin Hill to York overnight, married the next day, then travelled on his own back to Biggin that same night, so no Honeymoon. He was not to see Mollie again for two years, on his return

to the UK. So how could that ever have been an “easy War”!)

His last act in Burma was to fly across enemy territory to meet up with and escort the aircraft carrying the Japanese generals coming to Rangoon sign the surrender agreement. He was not too pleased when advised his Spitfire would be unarmed, with his personal sidearm also having to be forfeited for the trip.

Back in the UK in September 1946, his last posting was to 631 Squadron at Llanbedr, Wales, again flying Spitfires, now the Mk XVI. Before being demobbed in 1948 Ron was selected to stand alongside a Hurricane on Horseguards Parade, London along with a Spitfire and Meteor, and their representative pilots. Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Tedder was also in attendance. Ron always assumed he had been selected for this honour as he had more hours on type than any surviving pilot.

Aged 23 when he left the RAF with 917 hours to his credit, Ron spent the next 72 years around York. He played rugby for York RUFC, and ended up being rewarded with an Honorary Life Membership.

When in his seventies, Ron and Mollie went over to visit son, Brian, who was at the time working in Germany. A flight was arranged at a flying school, and rather than the offer of an aerobatic flight, Ron opted fly with the family in a Cessna. After flying around a while the pilot offered Ron the controls, observing his flying. Brian, in the back, doing the translation - the pilot did not speak much English - noticed the pilot was soon sitting back, arms crossed, feet pulled clear of the rudder pedals. Wondering when he was going to take over again, he was surprised when the pilot said to ask if Ron would like to make the landing, much to the consternation of Brian and Mollie - Brian advising the pilot his dad had not flown an aircraft for fifty years! They needn't have worried as he pulled off a greaser of a landing, Brian not even aware of when they had touched down! This caused the German pilot to pass comment on Ron's flying, “You have lost nothing in the last fifty years!”



Ron, with ACM Sir Arthur Tedder



Pilots at Horseguards



Japanese surrender group

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Looking back through past editions I came across this piece from September 2002 by past member Albert Hodgson, thought it justified a repeat in view of a proposed trip to the area.

AN EVACUEE EXPERIENCE

"Cum an' tak a leerk at this lads," my uncle Les called from the back door. My brother Dennis and I, along with our cousin David, eagerly scampered out into the farmyard. Easily able to decipher the words, David was first to react, my brother and I, being cockneys, finding difficulty in coming to terms with the broad North Yorkshire dialect. It was just after 9 am on Sunday February 3rd 1940, and my brother and I had been evacuated from London to my granny's farm just above Dunsley, near Whitby, and on the very edge of the Yorkshire Moors. Four months earlier had seen us taking part in a rehearsal for the mass exodus of

children from London at the outbreak of war, all carrying our square, cardboard gas mask boxes, and thronging round the double-decker buses that would ferry us to the railway stations, thence to our various destinations, my brother and I being scheduled for somewhere in the West Country. The government were playing safe, expecting the bombing to start at any time. As it turned out, it was the start of six months of the "Phoney War," and many children returned to London, only to experience many air raids by the Luftwaffe, some of those children paying with their lives. Having learned of our imminent departure for the West Country, my gran, and uncle Les and aunt Lucy who ran this farm, sent a telegram (remember those?) Saying in essence, "Send the lads up here to us." Wheels were set in motion, and uncle George, who ran a garage in Whitby, very kindly offered to come down to London and take us back to Yorkshire; no small task back then when the journey down the A1 was ten to eleven hours one way! Dennis was five and I was seven. The rest of the of the family, Dad, Mum, two younger sisters and another brother, were staying on in London, so it was a tearful farewell as we set off for an uncertain future. At this juncture you might well ask what it was Uncle Les had asked us to "Tak a leerk at." Well, with similar thoughts in mind, we rushed out into deep snow and looked down towards Whitby. About half a mile away we could see the dark shape of what turned out to be a Heinkel 111. It was in a shallow dive, trailing smoke from one engine, and so low we actually looked down on it; it was obviously about to crash-land. In close attendance, three Hurricanes buzzed around the stricken plane like bees round a honeypot. We saw near enough where the aircraft came down, and pleaded with Uncle Les to take us to the crash site. This he promised to do after he had finished milking the cows, and if we could get there along snow-bound roads. The bomber had come down at Banmal Flat Farm, barely seventy-five yards off the highway, close to the A171/A169 Sleights road junction, just short of the gardens behind the two farm cottages. When we eventually got to visit the site we were quite disappointed not to be allowed near the Heinkel, although we could view it from a few yards away, and had to be content with that. As the Whitby Gazette later commented, this was the first German aircraft to be brought down on English soil in the second World War, and I had witnessed history in the making.

Flt/Lt Peter Townsend - who, as a Group Captain, was to be romantically linked with Princess Margaret after the war - led the flight of three Hurricanes scrambled from RAF Acklington, Northumberland, and his account of the engagement (probably from his book, *Duel of Eagles*) reads as follows: "On the morning of 3rd February I plodded out in a cutting wind with the other pilots of my Flight to our aircraft dispersed at the far side of the airfield. Far away, at Danby Beacon Radar Station the Duty Operator picked up the telephone. It was 9:03am. In the cathode ray tube the observer had seen one blip then another. Unidentified aircraft some sixty miles out to sea were approaching the coast at one thousand feet. Within minutes the telephone jangled in 43 Sqn dispersal hut. *'Sector Ops here. Blue section 43 scramble base. Angels one.'* Moments later I was climbing away from Acklington airfield, Folkes and Sgt Hallows in my wake. *'Vector 190. Bandit attacking ship off Whitby. Buster.'* Our throttles wide open we raced south at wave-top height, spread out in search formation, Hallows on my left, Tiger on my right. I searched the low cloud-base anxiously. Then suddenly there it was, a Heinkel, above and to my right. *'Tally Ho! Two o'clock.'* There was not a second to lose for the Heinkel was just below

the cloud. I banked right in a climbing turn. Now the Heinkel was in my sights, my thumb on the firing button.... Then I was firing at Missy, Wilms, Leuschake and Meyer, who at Schleswig only a few hours earlier had been shovelling snow and enjoying coffee and sandwiches. It never occurred to me at the time that I was killing men, I saw only a big Heinkel with black crosses on it. But in that Heinkel Peter Leuschake was already dead, and Johan Meyer mortally wounded. Closing in fast on the Heinkel I passed it as it entered cloud... a vague black shadow uncomfortably close above. Folkes, the Heinkel and I tumbled out of the cloud almost on top of each other. And the German turned shorewards with a trail of smoke behind him."

In 1968, the year I moved to York, Peter Townsend visited the survivors in Germany: pilot, Herman Wilms in Dusseldorf, and gunner Karl Missy in Munchen Gladbach. Only when reading *Duel of Eagles*, thirty-five years later, did I realize I was reading about an event I had witnessed, but had long since forgotten about.

Being the first German aircraft to be brought down on English soil in WWII, this made Albert witness to a significant aspect of history in the making.

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THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Found in a copy of the Air Crew Association Gen, February 1987, when the ACA used to attend RAFA meetings.

Out in the wilds of Yorkshire, where t'pubs shut three o'clock sharp
Lives a piteous, wrinkled ex airman, whose bite is far worse than his bark
Where he comes from, nobody worries, where he goes to, they worry still less
But since he's been living in Yorkshire, the place is one h... of a mess.

Gets up every morn with the sparrows, to begin his day's honest task
They can hear him rant up in Scotland, when he finds he's forgotten his flask
He scoffs down his eggs and his bacon, picks up his snack for midday
Pecks his wife on the cheek, if she's handy, then goes out to work for his pay.

He gets home tired and worn out at teatime, soaks for an hour in the tub,
Eats his meal, reads through his newspaper, then goes out again, to the pub.
But on t'second and fourth Monday evenings, he wends his way into York
Takes his wife with him too, if she's lucky, t'RAFA Club, in Aldwalk.

Inside he meets his old buddies, ex-aircrew, known by their talk
Who come for a pint and a natter, with ACA White Rose Branch, York
The wives form a circle at one end, round t'fire, to keep themselves warm
Lads hold the bar up at t'other, to make sure t'beer comes to nay 'arm

They re-live the days in the 40s, when they were young, bright eyed, and aware
When they fought in the skies in their Spitfires, and their Hali's and Lanc's, "Over there"

For two hours, twice monthly they gather, to recall those days long gone past
To line shoot, and gossip, and wonder, and recall old so and so's past

This then is my tale of an airman. Of it's truth I can honestly swear
And should you be passing by Aldwalk, call in, you'll find us all there.

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And here is a Christmas Ghost story I wrote some years ago, was reminded of the Mason's Arms, where I used to be an "occasional regular", at the October RAFA lunch.

REUNION AT THE MASON'S ARMS

As it was still early, I positioned myself at the bar. I preferred that when alone. Only one other customer stood. A bit scruffy. Farmer by the looks of things, local by sound. He was obviously a regular, though I didn't recall seeing him before, and I wasn't exactly a stranger here. He was deep in conversation with Jack, the landlord; name attested to by a sign over the entrance - J. Trump. Licensed to sell beers, wines, and spirits.

'Ran like it only had three legs last time out. Got cows that'd give it a race.'

Jack laughed at that, breaking off to serve two newcomers; both male, local. They settled at a nearby table. As usual, opening remarks concerned themselves with the quality of the beer.

'Ah. Not a bad drop', remarked one after taking a deep draught, back of his hand wiping away a froth moustache.

'Aye, keeps a good pint does Jack. Allus did', agreed the other. Next came the weather. No doubt the economy and general ineptitude of the government would eventually follow. The Mason's Arms was like that. A popular pub on a busy route. A focal point, even if outside the City Walls. Comfortable, and genuinely old, which suited its customers fine. Non of your modern, pseudo-oldness here, either. Oak beams were substantial, blackened and cracked only with the passing of time. They criss-crossed the walls and ribbed the ceiling. Wall panels had been rescued from the old castle, upon demolition. Upholstery was polished by use. Leaded windows - warped and yellowed - unoriginal only where repairs had been necessary; which, of course, meant one would expect the place to be cold. It wasn't, thanks to a crackling log fire in the inglenook; autumn yielding to the onset of winter with customary melancholy.

Naturally, I was left to myself. I was waiting for someone, felt sure this would be the night. Almost knew.

The farmer looked my way, a perplexed kind of look. He was unshaven, seemed to stare right through me, didn't say a word. There again, I wasn't exactly a picture of sartorial elegance. Rather tatty, in fact. But I had an excuse. He didn't.

Then he turned to the landlord! 'Gi's a refill, Jack. And tek for yan thissen.'

I drifted off to a corner, checking the time on the clock behind the bar. Antique. Been there forever, that clock. At least a hundred years before my time. Random thoughts to shorten the wait. Still too early. It was becoming busy now so I decided to have a little fun.

The sound of breaking glass and running liquid was clearly discernable above the babble. The bar was awash, farmer having split his pint.

'Damn, Jack! Nay need ti throw it ower me.' The words dropped into one of those sudden brief silences which now and again fall over an assembled company.

'Me! Nowt, Fred, I were no where near. Must'a' copped it wi' thee elbow.'

'Nivver spilt a pint i' fifty bloody years,' he asserted. 'Anyway, gi's another.'

On the far side of the room a woman caught my attention. Well.... more the style of her dress, actually. It appeared to have been designed so as to kill all sexual interest. Achieved by the simple expedient of skilfully re-landscaping her shape into that of a mobile marquee. Yet she wore a hat that looked as if it

should have had HM the Queen beneath it.

Harry Rogers entered. A regular I recognised.

'Where's t'dog, Harry?' Jack enquired. 'First time I've seen thee without him in a while.'

'Had t'leave him tied outside! Damnedest thing, Jack. Refused ti come in! Cowering out there wi' his tail between his legs. I'll just have a quick un', then tak' him home. Happen 'e's ailing for sommat.'

'Ailing nowt,' Farmer Fred stated. Though he didn't elaborate.

I glanced at the clock again, as if that would help speed the passage of time. Apparently it did, for the door opened and a girl entered, seemingly hesitant at first, then confident. As though having to drum up courage. She'd felt the need to return, I knew. Just as I had returned.

Crossing the room she drew looks from all. Deserved to, for she was young, had quite a stunning figure, and was elegantly dressed, even if, at present, she seemed a little distraught. I'd imagined she would be.

'Ey up!' I heard Fred mutter, almost under his breath.

Long-limbed, she moved with the supple grace of a cat. Today - dressed in rather sombre colours - her brown eyes held a glazed look. She'd been far away recently, still appeared to be so. She contemplated the middle-distance, but I knew those eyes focussed only what was going on in her head. She ordered a Calypso. I'd known she would, she was a Calypso type. I knew a lot now. Much more than before.

The album was in it's usual place; on the bar, wedged between oak pillar and large bottle of coins; RAFA Wings collection.

'May I...?' she asked, somewhat reluctantly, reaching for it.

'Well... yes, Janet, of course,' Jack answered, serving her. 'But...'

Eyes staring, lips parted, she removed it, diamond within a twist of gold sparkling on the third finger of her left hand. Tucking the book under an arm, she paid and wandered off. Securing a table, she sat, back to the room, taking a rather perfunctory sip of Calypso before opening the cover. Press cuttings. Local paper. Pictures and words.

Tears! Her picture. No doubting that. I'd seen it many times. The accompanying words explained how her fiancée - Richard Devereaux; twenty-nine, jovial, well dressed - had departed this pub not too far in the past. A wild, rainy night. Kind of weather which made you wonder why people were out at all. While she visited the Ladies room he'd gone to bring the car round. As he stepped out, another car - teenage joyriders - mounted the curb, out of control. Death was immediate. His body crushed against the wall.

I drifted over to stand close, placing a hand on her shoulder, squeezing reassuringly. 'Thanks for coming, love,' I said.

She crossed her hands over her breasts, hugging herself, as though cold. Then she looked up, uncertainty etched upon her features; nose, a superior little turned-up affair, hair brief and curly, accentuating her face. Diamonds also graced her earlobes. I looked into sad, tear-lined eyes. Mascara had streaked; war-paint on an Apache brave. But she gave me a gallant, if watery, smile.

Obviously, she couldn't see me, couldn't hear me, but I felt she knew I was there.

* *

Only In USA

This actually took place in Charlotte, North Carolina.

A lawyer purchased a box of very rare, expensive cigars, then insured them against, among other things, loss due to fire.

Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of these great cigars, the lawyer filed a claim against the insurance company, stating the cigars were lost 'in a series of small fires.'

The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious: the cigars had been consumed in the normal fashion.

The lawyer sued and WON! Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company that the claim was frivolous. The judge stated nevertheless, that the lawyer held a policy from the company, in which it had warranted the cigars to be insurable, and also guaranteed it would insure them against fire, without defining what is considered to be unacceptable 'fire', and was obligated to pay the claim.

Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for his loss.

The best part

After the lawyer cashed the cheque, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of ARSON! With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property, was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

Moral: As you Sow, So shall you Reap.

* *

A farmer went to a local bar and ordered a glass of champagne.

The woman sitting next to him said, 'How about that? I just ordered champagne too!'

'What a coincidence' the farmer said. 'This is a special day for me. I'm celebrating.'

This is a special day for me too, I am also celebrating,' said the woman.'

'What a coincidence!' said the farmer. As they clinked glasses he added: 'What are you celebrating?'

'My husband and I have been trying to have a child and today my gynaecologist told me that I am pregnant!'

'What a coincidence!' said the man. 'I'm a chicken farmer and all last year my hens were infertile, but today they are all laying eggs again.'

'That's great!' said the woman, 'How did your chickens become fertile?'

'I used a different cock,' he replied.

The woman smiled, clinked his glass and said "now that is a coincidence!"

* *

And **some one-liners** ...

Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

The last thing I want to do is hurt you ... but it's still on my list.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

We never really grow up – we just learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right, only who is left.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.

In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify.." I answered "a doctor."

Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they're sexy.

You don't need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

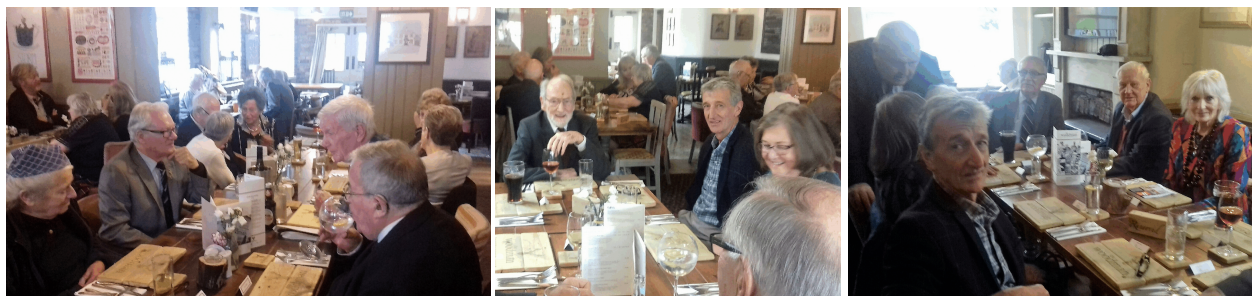
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BRANCH ANNUAL LUNCH

The Branch Annual Lunch for 2018 was held at the Woodman's Inn, Bishopthorpe on Wednesday 3 October. Around 40 members attended and, although seating was arranged in tables of 6 or 8, the atmosphere was most convivial.

As is usual with a less-formal function such as this, there were no speeches or presentations. The menu was extremely good value for money and many people commented upon the quality and the quantity of the food. It's definitely worth another visit in the future!

Andy Bryne



YAM intro by Harry Welch

ELVINGTON VISIT

A visit to the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington, organised by Fred Ullathorne for the White Rose Aircrew Association in conjunction with York RAFA for Wednesday October 24th turned out to be near perfect. Although disappointingly low in numbers, the weather turned it into a perfect day for both the visit and photography, with sun and clear skies.



Group in front of Hurricane replica

This left ample time for those who wished to wander where they would. I returned to T2 in time to see Friday The 13th being decorated with poppies for Remembrance Day & a photo session amongst the outdoor exhibits. As I said, a perfect day for it.

After a welcome talk in the chapel by our guide Harry Welch, he proceeded with the tour of the various displays, culminating in the T2 Hangar, after which came lunch in the NAAFI.



Fairey Gannet, neatly folded



Hidden away! Lightning & Javelin



Buccaneer - YAM has three!



Menacing, the HP Victor



Dressed for Remembrance Day



Fred & Harold in front of NAAFI



EE Canberra T4

EVENTS for RAFA (York) Branch 2018

Dates for 2018 (will be up-dated on a regular basis on website and Club noticeboard. Keep an eye open for Dining-In lists.)

Please note, it would be appreciated out of courtesy if you intend/would like to attend any of the events listed to inform the chairman so we know numbers to seat/cater for.

Limited lunch menu available most Saturdays

Thur Dec 6 th	Dining-In at the Club; Seasonal Delights
Fri Dec 7 th	Wings Collection, Tesco, Askham Bar
Sun Dec 16 th	Combined ex Service, All Saints Pavement 10:30
Sat Dec 22 nd	Annual Draw day at the Club, select numbers early

2019

Sun 3 March	RAFA Service at All Saints Church
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Please note that in relation to all the above Wings/Fund raising events, a list for volunteers will appear on the Branch/Club notice board nearer the event date (as times/confirmation details on some are yet to be ratified).

PS. Please note: 'Themed dining-in dates' may be subject to change/cancellation in order to avoid clashing with other more pressing branch activities/matters. Application list on Club notice board.

For the latest events list please check our website - www.rafayork.org