

THE ALDWARE CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Royal Air Forces Association York Branch



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Branch Charity Number 500974

Current membership: 409

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YORK BRANCH & CLUB OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR 2022-23

President:	Mr R 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	
	Mr B R Mennell	
	Ms S Richmond	
Branch Chairman	Mr A M Bryne	<i>chairman@rafayork.org</i>
Branch Vice-Chairman	Mr R Ford	
Branch Hon. Secretary	Mr S Pearson	<i>secretary@rafayork.org</i>
Branch Hon. Treasurer	Mr C Thorpe	<i>treasurer@rafayork.org</i>
Membership Secretary	Mr R Ford	
Welfare Officer	Mr R Ford	<i>welfare@rafayork.org</i>
Wings Appeal Organiser	Mr I Smith	
N. Area & Annual Conf. Rep.	Mr R Ford	
Branch Standard Bearer	Mr G Murden	
Deputy Standard Bearer	Mr A Gunn	
Public Relations Officer	Mr A M Bryne	
Buildings Officer	Mr R Webster	
Website Manager	Mrs M Barter	
Club Chairman	Mrs D Edgar	
Club Deputy Chairman	<i>Vacant</i>	
Club Hon Secretary	Ms S Richmond	
Club Hon. Treasurer	Mr S Edgar	
Club Bar Manager	Mrs J Snelling	
Club Deputy Bar Manager	Mr S Edgar	
Club Fundraising Officer	<i>Vacant</i>	
Club Social Secretary	Mr J Forrester	
Aldwark Chronicle Editor	Mr A M Bryne	

Please address all general enquiries to the Branch Secretary.

On the Cover: *The Escape Lines Memorial at Eden Camp Museum on Saturday 24 April after the Annual Escape Lines Memorial Society Service. The distinctive RAFA York Branch "Roundel" wreath can be clearly seen.*

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the May edition of the Chronicle. I am pleased to be able to report on a number of Branch and Branch Club events that have taken place since the last edition, which shows that we are, at last, cautiously moving away from COVID-19 restrictions and starting to enjoy a more normal (and positive) existence. Our Branch and Branch Club annual general meetings took place at the Club on Saturday 26 March and the 2 new committees are now settling in with their duties.

Whilst we have been able to continue with Wings Appeal collections for some time (thanks to Ian Smith and his fellow collectors) we have only recently been able to attend some externally-organized events such as the ELMS memorial service at Eden Camp. We will be attending the RAF East Moor memorial event in May and the Joint RBL/RAFA church service at All Saints Pavement in June, so things are beginning to look up again! We have also been able to run more social events at the Branch Club, which is good news.

We are reminded that time marches on and it is hard to believe that the Falklands Conflict took place forty years ago. This year also marks the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen and we will be celebrating this at the Club on Saturday 4 June.

Andy Bryne

CHEQUE PRESENTATION AT ROTHBURY HOUSE



Some time ago, RAFA York Branch Committee agreed that a donation of £1000.00 should be made to the RAFA respite care home at Rothbury in Northumberland. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the presentation was delayed and, during that time, the RAF Association Council decided that the Rothbury facility be retained, but reconfigured as a residential home for RAFA members.

We agreed that the donation should still be paid to Rothbury, as it would benefit members of the RAF family, so, on Monday 14 March, our Welfare Officer and acting Chairman, Ron Ford, went to Rothbury and presented a cheque for £1000.00 to David Dick (Rothbury House Manager). He was the only one present as the building works are not yet complete and the facility is not expected to open until May, possibly the 30th.

TURNING OF THE PAGE CEREMONY - 1 APRIL 2022

The first page-turning ceremony of 2022 took place in York Minster on Friday 1 April 2022 at midday. This date is chosen as it marks the anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force.



Branch Secretary Steve Pearson turns the Page of Remembrance.

The ceremony was overseen by our Branch President, Dick Gray and, for the first time for some while, face coverings were not required. The Raison d'Étre was read by Branch Vice-President Brian Mennell and the Page Turner was Branch Secretary, Steve Pearson. There were two standards on parade on this occasion, Gordon Murden with our RAFA Branch Standard and Tim Kitching with the Royal Observer Corps Association Standard.

Despite the cold, but sunny weather, there was a good turnout from York Branch members and guests, including serving member Wing Commander David Melmoth from RAF Leeming. After the ceremony was completed, members made their way to the RAFA Club in Aldwark for refreshments.



Turning the Page Ceremony at the Astral Clock.



Members and guests prior to the Ceremony.

(All photos courtesy of Roz Pearson).

No 100 SQUADRON DISBANDMENT



The Hawk T1 aircraft of No 100 Squadron have been a familiar sight over North Yorkshire for many years. The squadron was expected to retire its Hawk T1 aircraft in 2027, however, an announcement in July 2021 confirmed that apart from the RAF Aerobatic Team, all other Hawk T1 aircraft in the British military would be retired by 31 March 2022. Consequently, the Squadron disbanded at RAF Leeming on Thursday 24 March 2022. Currently, the only remaining Hawk T1 aircraft in RAF service are those with the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows. It was, therefore, fitting that the “Reds” performed a flypast at Leeming on the day.



No 100 Squadron has a long and proud history. It was established on 23 February 1917 at Hingham in Norfolk as the Royal Flying Corps' first squadron formed specifically as a night bombing unit and comprised elements of the Home Defence Wing. The unit was mobilised and crossed from Portsmouth on 21 March 1917 to France and was first based at St Andre-aux-Bois, where it received twelve Royal Aircraft Factory F.E.2Bs aircraft on complement. These aircraft had been withdrawn from other units where they had operated in daylight, so modifications were required to adapt them for 100 Squadron's operational role.

On 1 April 1917, the unit moved to Izel-le-Hameau and took a further four aircraft on complement, in the form of BE2es. The squadron began operations on the night of 5/6 April 1917, when eleven FE2b aircraft attacked a Brayelle Airfield, Douai, where Manfred von Richthofen's Flying Circus' was

based. Four aircraft hangars were reported as having been set on fire and one of the attacking aircraft was lost. On 4 March 1918, the squadron was sent to Ochey, near Nancy, to form the nucleus of the Independent Air Force under Major General Hugh Trenchard. In August of that year, the unit converted to Handley Page 0/400 heavy bombers and therefore longer range sorties over industrial sites in Germany became possible. The squadron conducted these raids throughout the rest of the war and an aircraft from the unit was the last in wartime to return to base (on the night before the Armistice) from a raid.

The squadron remained on the continent until September 1919 as a cadre before transferring to RAF Baldonnell, near Dublin and re-forming to full strength, re-equipping with Bristol F.2 Fighters for army co-operation. Close air support operations were flown during the Irish War of Independence. Following the end of hostilities the squadron was moved to Spitalgate, Lincolnshire in February 1922, and converted to bombing, this time with Vickers Vimys and DH9As.

In January 1934, No 100 Squadron was deployed to RAF Seletar in Singapore. The squadron was put at readiness shortly after war was declared but, for the period to December 1941, there was little involvement operationally whilst still based at Seletar. In November and December 1941 detachments were sent to Fisherman's Bend, in Victoria, Australia. Intended replacement aircraft (Bristol Beauforts) for the remaining squadron were not forthcoming and, as part of operations against advancing Japanese forces, the unit's obsolete Vildebeest aircraft were used in strikes against enemy shipping. Because of this, during January 1942, the squadron lost most of its aircraft in engagements with Japanese fighters. Despite several attempts to remain operational as a combined unit along with No 36 Squadron RAF, as Japan made advances in the Far East theatre, most personnel eventually became prisoners of war.

On 15 December 1942, No. 100 Squadron RAF proper was re-formed in the UK, at RAF Grimsby, near Waltham, as a night-time heavy bomber squadron and was part of No. 1 Group RAF, RAF Bomber Command. In January 1943, the squadron received the first of its new complement of Avro Lancasters; the first operation of the squadron was on 4 March 1943 against a U-boat base at St Nazaire. A few days later the squadron was involved in a raid against Nuremberg in Germany and from then on, as part of Bomber Command's strategic role against Germany, took part in every major raid.

On the night of 16/17 December 1943, the squadron received orders to attack Berlin. The raid became known as 'Black Thursday' as Bomber Command lost 25 aircraft on the raid and 28 in crashes at fog-shrouded airfields. That night, 100 Squadron lost their commanding officer, David

Holford, who crashed landed approaching RAF Grimsby. On the night of 5 June 1944, the squadron bombed heavy gun batteries in support of the D-Day invasion.

For the last month of the war, the squadron moved to Elsham Wolds in Lincolnshire. In the latter stages of the war and post-war, the squadron was involved in the humanitarian Operations Manna and Exodus. At the end of December 1945 the squadron moved to RAF Scampton, being the last squadron on that station to operate the Avro Lancaster. The squadron then departed for RAF Lindholme, near Doncaster, in May 1946.

Between 1946 and 1950 the squadron was based at RAF Hemswell operating Avro Lancasters and later Avro Lincolns. The squadron left Hemswell in 1950, relocating to Malaysia where it was involved with Operations Firedog and Musgrave. In January 1954, the unit deployed to Eastleigh in Kenya during the Mau Mau Uprising. Returning two months later, the squadron was re-equipped with English Electric Canberras, moving to Wittering in Cambridgeshire. It was disbanded on 1 September 1959, but re-formed at Wittering on 1 May 1962, equipped with Handley Page Victor B.2s, which, from early 1964, carried the Blue Steel nuclear weapon.



Canberra B2 of No 100 Sqn at RAF Wyton in October 1986.

Disbanded again on 30 September 1968, the squadron was re-formed as a target facilities unit in 1972, utilising Canberra aircraft at RAF West Raynham, in Norfolk. 100 Sqn combined with 85 and 98 Squadrons and operated 26 Canberra aircraft from RAF Marham before moving in 1982 to RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire. In 1991, the squadron converted to the Hawker Siddeley Hawk T1. On 31 August 1994, the squadron moved to RAF Finningley in South Yorkshire. After the news that RAF Finningley would be closed, No 100 Squadron moved to RAF Leeming.

DINING IN NIGHT - 31 MARCH 2022



A dining-in night was held at the Club on Thursday 31 March to commemorate the 104th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918. Our hosts for the evening were Dick and Gill Gray and we were treated to a lovely 3-course meal with a rather special addition of chocolates on the tables too!



Prior to the Dining-in, we gathered, as is customary, in the Lounge Bar where some platters of very tasty hors d'oeuvres were available. After being

called forward for dinner, the RAFA Dedication was given by Life Vice-President John Mawson and then Chairman Andy Bryne said grace. All in all, it was a very convivial evening and a pleasant way to mark the anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force.

THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT - FORTY YEARS ON



The Falklands conflict began in early April 1982 and hostilities ceased on 14 June of that year. Since then, the United Kingdom has maintained a significant military presence on the Islands, including the construction of a new airfield and military base at Mount Pleasant, which became operational on 1 May 1986.

I never served in the Falklands Campaign, nor had a tour of duty there during my time in the Services. However, I do have clear memories of the aftermath of the conflict, as I was based at HMS Sultan (Gosport) at the time. I saw several of the Task Force ships depart and most of them return.



HMS Glamorgan (with battle damage) returns to Portsmouth on 10 July 1982.



HMS Invincible arriving Portsmouth on 17 September 1982.



HMS Bristol arriving Portsmouth on 17 September 1982.. (photos: Editor)

I will publish some material from a couple of our members who actually served "Down South" in the next edition all being well.

RAY ASHBY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT THE CLUB

Associate member Ray Ashby was our main focus of attention at the Club on the evening of Thursday 7th April when we celebrated his 95th birthday. Dick Gray arranged the bunting and Jean Snelling produced a lovely home-made birthday cake. Branch Chairman Andy Bryne presented Ray with a bottle of Woods Navy Rum to mark this auspicious occasion.



Ray Ashby with son Adrian (on the right).

Although those present were relatively few in number (as is normal on a Thursday evening unfortunately), we all helped Ray to celebrate his birthday. Ray's son, Adrian (also a Branch member) was present to look after Ray and Jean.



Ray and his birthday cake.

BEWARE INVESTMENT FRAUDSTERS – AN RAF VETERAN’S TALE

Editor’s note: This article is based upon a BBC Radio 4 interview on 26 March by BBC reporter Dan Whitworth. Whilst I would not normally plagiarise a radio interview transcript, I felt that this incident was very “close to home” shall we say. It involves a stalwart member of the RAF Association (not a member of York Branch) who, after a rewarding career in the RAF, aimed to enjoy retirement and to increase his financial situation – something we are all advised to do given the problems of inflation and the cost of living. However, it is a very sobering story and proof that internet thieves can be very clever creatures. In my view it was very courageous of Mr Stagg to share his traumatic story.



In March 2022, RAF veteran Graeme Stagg was interviewed by BBC’s Money Box Live radio programme about the moment when he realised that he’d been the victim of an investment fraud, the most comprehensive and devastating fraud ever investigated by the BBC Radio 4 Money Box team. It illustrates the dangers of going “online” when investigating investment opportunities. There are so many scams out there. It started in August 2021 when Graeme wanted his savings to work harder for him. He began researching online and came across a company called NCapital, which has since disappeared. It was offering to help people invest in crypto currencies.

Graeme is a widowed 77-year-old but served 22 years in the RAF and retired as a squadron leader, so felt he knew what he was doing. *(Editor: yes, but ask your kids first – they will probably know much more about the perils of the Internet than you do!)*

He began by investing a small amount, just £50, but was told the more money he invested the better deal he'd get. (*Warning, Greed alert!*) The next day he put in £10,000, and in just a few weeks Graeme had been groomed by the criminals so completely that he had transferred well over £100,000 worth of savings.

By this stage Graeme was becoming desperate. However, the criminals used that desperation to pull him even deeper into their web. The fraudster convinced Graeme there was a problem with the company he'd invested with, but that a second man, who called himself Geoff, could help him get all his money back - but they'd need more money to do it.

In Graeme's desperation he began throwing more good money after bad. By now he was tens of thousands of pounds in debt. The next step for the criminals was securing hundreds of thousands of pounds of capital from equity release raised from Graeme's treasured family home. When that had gone, the criminal's final act was to persuade a now utterly lost and totally desperate Graeme to use a quick-sale company to sell his home - all with the promise of just one more investment to get all his money back. The fraudster promised Graeme that as soon as he sold his home, he'd buy it back immediately, and hand it over to Graeme, who would get his home and all his money back.

The day that the sale was supposed to happen was 8 February 2022, when Graeme got a message supposedly from Geoff's PA saying he'd been in a car crash. That was the moment when Graeme realised that he'd become the victim of a fraud losing nearly £800,000.

Graeme told the BBC Money Box interviewer, "I hadn't told my children. I'd basically given away my whole life to this individual. I pulled all the blinds and curtains down at my house, and my neighbour saw what I'd done, and she rang me up and she said: 'Graeme, what's the problem?'"

"My son came over to my house and... it all broke and I admitted what I'd done. I was a complete and utter mess. I could not believe what I had done. I'm 77 years old. I'm a mature man, I've fought in two wars, I've had a commission with the RAF for 22 years. I've flown around the world, I have experienced death, and yet I have committed this gross error. It's very, very difficult to explain."

Graeme's daughter Liz stated that her world was turned upside down when she found out what had happened to her dad.

"Everybody was in complete shock. When something like this lands on you, you just don't know what to do. These people are like thieves, but to me they're worse, they're like murderers, because they're actually killing somebody's future life and it's not just one person, it's the ripple effect it has on the victim's family."

Even though Graeme's case is being investigated by the police, it's unlikely there will be any arrests, let alone charges or convictions. In England and Wales 4.6 million people are affected by fraud each year and around 700,000 will go on to suffer profoundly, an October 2021 report by the Victim's Commissioner suggested. According to the report, fraud is 39% of all crime. However, a 2021 report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service into how police handled fraud concluded "that too many victims still receive poor service and are denied justice". That report said only 2% of police resources are allocated to fraud, with fewer than 8,000 prosecutions in 2019.

Liz says the reason she and her dad decided to speak out is to try to warn others about how dangerous fraud can be. "It's like we're living a different life since 8 February. I cannot tell you how overwhelming this is and how much it has taken over the family. So, I would just like everybody to be fully aware of the evil people that are out there and how easily people, who don't believe they are vulnerable, can so easily succumb to this and be groomed by these people. It is heart-breaking and I do not wish this on absolutely anybody else."

The vast majority of the nearly £800,000 Graeme had stolen was transferred out of two accounts - one with Santander and one with Barclays. Barclays said they sympathised with Graeme but could not be held liable in this instance so had informed Graeme he could take his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Santander told the BBC they were also sympathetic and were reviewing the case.

So, the message is: beware of fraudsters!



That moment in the meeting when you know that the Boss has really lost it!



“Oh no! There’s a seal loose in the bathroom!”

HOW TO ACCESS BRANCH & CLUB MINUTES ONLINE.

RAFA regulations state that all Branch members should have access to Committee minutes. To access minutes from our RAFA York Website, please follow this process:

1. Go onto the RAFA York website.
2. At the bottom left-hand corner you will see the words "Log in".
3. Click on this.
4. User name is "committee."
5. Password is "committee2016".

Then click on the blue "Log in" box and this will take you to the members' page from where you can access minutes of committee meetings when they are published.

EASTER DRAW 2022

For the previous couple of months, York Branch and Club members had been purchasing spaces (at £1.00 each) on an Easter draw sheet displayed by the bar. The prize was a hamper full of goodies. The draw took place on Saturday 16 April and Don Gunn was the lucky winner.



The photo shows Don with his Draw prize. He was on bar duty, with Ron Ford, on the day, hence the location of the photo. Thanks to all who bought a ticket and to the members who organised the draw itself. In addition to the fun aspect of the event, more funds were raised for the Club. It is hoped that another draw will be arranged later this year.

ELMS ANNUAL REUNION AT EDEN CAMP



On Saturday 23 April, a number of RAFA York Branch members joined members of the Escape Lines Memorial Society for their annual reunion and service of remembrance at the Escape Lines Memorial at Eden Camp Museum, near Malton. Gordon Murden carried our York Branch Standard and a number of other standards were present (see photo above). This was the first ELMS service at Eden Camp since 2019, due to COVID-19 restrictions and, although numbers were smaller than in previous years, the event was still relatively well attended. The weather was a little chilly but at least it was dry!

The service commenced at 1100 hrs with an address by Mr Roger Stanton MBE, the Founder and Director of ELMS. The Act of Remembrance was led by the Rev. Canon John Manchester, the ELMS Padre. A number of wreaths were laid, including the RAFA York Branch wreath, laid by Andy Bryne. Due to restrictions with travel, there were no students from Italy or any representatives from the French Military present on this occasion. However, it is expected that they will be able to attend in 2023.

We had previously welcomed three ELMS members at the RAFA Club on the Thursday evening and it was also very heartening to be able to attend this very special memorial service once more, after 2 years of enforced absence.

Events for RAFA York Branch - 2022

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 Club Chairman or the President so that we know what numbers to seat/cater for.

A limited lunch menu is available at the Club on most Saturdays from 1200-1300 hrs.

Fri 13 May	Wings Collection – Langlands Garden Centre Shiptonthorpe.
Sat 14 May	RAF East Moor Memorial Service - 1430 hrs.
Fri 27 May	Wings Collection – Monks Cross Shopping Park.
Sat 4 Jun	Platinum Jubilee Celebrations at the Club.
Fri 3 Jun	Use of Club hallway for Street collection by York PRA.
Mon 13 Jun	Turning of the Page - York Minster - 1200 hrs.
Sat 25 Jun	Armed Forces Day Wings Appeal Street Collection.
Sun 26 Jun	RBL/RAFA Joint Annual Church Service – All Saints Pavement - 1030 hrs.
Sat 16 Jul	City Centre Street Wings Collection.
Sat 30-Sun 31 Jul	Area Conference – Atlas House, RAFA HQ, Leicester
Fri 12 Aug	Wings Collection – Langlands Garden Centre Shiptonthorpe
Sat 17 Sep	Battle of Britain Wings Appeal City Street Collection.
<i>Sun 18 Sep</i>	<i>Battle of Britain Service & Page Turning - York Minster 1600 hrs. (TBC)</i>
Fri 21-Sun 23 Oct	RAFA Annual Conference – Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel.
Fri 30 Dec	Turning of the Page - York Minster - 1200 hrs.

Regarding the **Wings Appeal** events listed above, the Wings Appeal Officer will contact those members who regularly volunteer prior to the collection dates.

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: