

THE ALDWARE CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the Royal Air Forces Association York Branch



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Branch Charity Number 500974

Current membership: 403

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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	
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 Administrator & Aldwark Chronicle Editor	Mr A M Bryne	
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	

Please address all general enquiries to the Branch Secretary.

On the Cover: Rothbury House, Northumberland, on the day of the official reopening of the building as a RAFA residential facility, 12 October 2022. (Photo courtesy of RAFA HQ)

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EDITORIAL

'Few hearts like her with virtue warmed, few heads with knowledge so informed.'

Quote from Robert Burns' "Epitaph On My Own Friend."

Since the publication of the previous Chronicle, many changes have taken place in the UK. However, the largest impact for most people was the news of the death of our Sovereign and our Patron, Queen Elizabeth II, on 8 September. Protocol dictated that several events scheduled for the month were cancelled, including the All Services Parade and Service at Eden Camp on 11 September and the Battle of Britain service & Turning of the Page ceremony in York Minster on 18 September. The City Centre Wings Appeal street collection was rescheduled to Sat 24 September. Our planned visit to the National Memorial Arboretum on 21 September was also cancelled, but this was not due to the period of National Mourning but because of insufficient interest combined with the withdrawal of some members due to illness.

However, you can read about some of the events that did take place in this edition and also the 3rd and final article on personal experiences of the Falklands by one of our Branch members.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II - 1926 - 2022



Our thoughts and prayers for King Charles III and members of the Royal Family at the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

We give thanks for our beloved Queen in her faith and her dedication of 70 years of service to our nation and the Commonwealth. As we mourn her death, may her example continue to inspire us.
May she rest in peace in the loving arms of God. Amen.

Revd David Simpson
Hon. Chaplain RAFA York Branch.

ROTHBURY HOUSE PLAQUE



In recognition of our Branch's donation to the refurbishment of RAFA Rothbury House. Ron Ford, Branch HWO, attended the event on 12 October 2022.

DINING IN NIGHT AT THE CLUB 21 JULY 2022

The theme for our Dining-in Night on 21 July was, “Burns Night – The Sequel.” This might seem somewhat curious until the date of the occasion is linked to the Scottish Bard’s death, on 21 July 1796. So, the theme was chosen by Dick and Gill Gray to celebrate Robert Burns’ life and to mark his death (at the young age of 37).



Pre-dinner drinks in the lounge.

Twenty-three Branch members attended the Scottish-themed meal in our dining room, which had been suitably laid out with tartan patterned table decorations. The Dedication was read by Branch Chairman, Andy Bryne and Ian Smith delivered the Selkirk Grace. The starter course was Cullen Skink (a fish & potato soup) followed by a “Yorkshire-style” Haggis with short rib of beef in red wine gravy. The dessert was a choice of trio of chocolate (which seemed more like a small mountain than a trio to many diners!) or Scottish cheeses with oat cakes. For those diners with any capacity left, the meal was completed with coffee, liqueurs and Scottish shortbread.

Many thanks to Dick and Gill Gray for another excellent dining-in night. The “Irn-Bru” drinks were an interesting addition!

DEDICATION OF HALIFAX CRASH MEMORIAL - HOLTBY



The Holtby Memorial.

On Thursday 8 September 2022, a small group of RAFA York Branch members attended a short ceremony in the beautiful village of Holtby to mark the 70th anniversary the loss of a Halifax bomber which crashed nearby. The ceremony was organised by Wing Commander Greg Smith from the Chief of the Air Staff's Department, who lives in Holtby. Sadly, later the same day, we learned the news that our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, had died.

HP Halifax W1228 crashed near Holtby on 8 Sep 1942, killing all the crew. This aircraft was built by English Electric Co. Ltd. at Samlesbury. It was initially taken on charge by No 78 Squadron on 23rd July 1942 but was then transferred to 76 Squadron at Middleton St. George the following day.

At 19.58hrs on 8th September 1942 this aircraft took off from RAF Middleton St. George (now Teeside Airport) to undertake an operational flight to bomb Frankfurt. Twenty minutes after taking off and while flying just east of York at 8,000 feet the photoflash that was carried in the bomb bay detonated. A photoflash was a pyrotechnic device dropped by aircraft which would ignite and light up the target to allow a photograph of their bombing to be taken. The detonating photoflash unfortunately caused the bomb load within the aircraft to explode, and the aircraft disintegrated with wreckage falling

around the village of Holtby.

A brilliant flash was seen by people on the ground and wreckage was later found spread over three square miles. Sadly, all on board were killed. An investigation found that it was likely that the photoflash had detonated in the bomb bay when burning fuel from damaged fuel lines that ran across the fuselage floor just above it had caught fire. Just two days previously the same thing had happened to a No 115 Squadron Wellington over Norfolk and following an investigation it was suggested by the Accident Investigation Board that the placing of photoflashes in bomb bays be discontinued.

The crew who died were as follows:

Pilot - F/Sgt John Eric Nicholson RAFVR (1023368), aged 28, of Pendleton, Salford, Lancashire. Buried Barmby Moor Churchyard, Yorkshire.

Second Pilot - P/O Alfred Norman Thompson RAFVR (902444), aged 22, of Hornsey. Buried Tottenham Cemetery, London.

Flight Engineer - Sgt John Taylor Murray RAF (536790), aged 26. Buried Barmby Moor Churchyard, Yorkshire.

Navigator (/Bomb Aimer) - F/O Arnold Robson RAFVR (123276), aged 26, of Howden-le-Wear. Buried Howden-le-Wear Churchyard, Durham.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt Laurence George Harvey RAFVR (1256530), aged 22, of Dagenham. Buried Eastbrookend Cemetery, Dagenham, Essex.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt Ronald Leonard Stevens RAFVR (1182379), aged 20, of Morden. Buried Morden Cemetery, Surrey.

Rear Gunner - Sgt Cecil Richard Rundle RAFVR (778696), aged 31, of Southern Rhodesia. Buried Barmby Moor Churchyard, Yorkshire.

RAFA York Branch was represented by the Branch Chairman, Branch President, and by Patricia Harrington, John Mawson, Ian Smith and Gordon Murden, who acted as Standard Bearer. Many Holtby residents attended as did the Lord Mayor of York and the Lady Mayoress. The Station Commander from RAF Leeming also attended later, having been delayed due to events elsewhere.



Wreaths laid during the ceremony.

The ceremony began at 3pm when Wing Commander Smith welcomed those present and gave a short introduction. This was followed by the reading of a contemporary poem, written by a young man during the Second World War after witnessing another Halifax bomber crash. This was followed by the Exhortation, the Last Post, two minutes' silence and then Reveille. Following the Kohima Address, three wreaths were laid at the memorial, the first by the Lord Mayor of York, Councillor David Carr, the second by Susan Cole, the daughter of the aircraft's captain (Eric Nicholson) and the third by Andy Bryne, RAFA York Branch Chairman.



Susan Cole.

Susan Cole never knew her father, who perished in the aircraft on 8 September 1942, having been born 3 months after her father's death. Therefore, for her this was a particularly special event.



After the ceremony (photos via Wg Cdr Smith).

The weather had been particularly stormy prior to the event but, throughout the proceedings, the Sun shone, and it became much warmer. After the ceremony, we were invited to Holtby Village Hall for refreshments, which we heartily accepted.



BATTLE OF BRITAIN WINGS APPEAL STREET COLLECTION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

This year's Battle of Britain Wings Appeal collection was due to take place on 17 September but was delayed for a week due to the Mourning period for our late monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. On Saturday 24 September, fourteen Branch members took part in the street collections in York City centre and an impressive total of £1995.29 was raised. Dorothy Mennell controlled the issue of tins and Ron Ford looked after the Bar as people came in for a break during the day. Our President, Dick Gray, beat his own personal collecting target and broke the £500.00 barrier by collecting a brilliant total of £503.08.



The photo shows Ian collecting outside the York Mansion House when his grandchildren visited.

Our Wings Appeal officer, Ian Smith, collected £305 and Barry Snaith collected £367.56. Ian Smith offered his heartfelt thanks to all who took part. The weather was also relatively kind to us. We had hoped to collect sufficient donations to achieve the target of £15000 for this year but fell

short by around £380. Therefore, Ian booked another collection at Morrisons Supermarket on Friday 7 October where, hopefully, we could collect enough donations to meet our target., which we did!

DINING-IN NIGHT - 27 OCTOBER 2022

A Halloween-themed dining in night was held at the Club on Thursday 27 October and was very well attended as usual. Dick and Gill Gray served an excellent three-course meal (although the menu description was a little scary!) followed by coffee and mints. Before dinner, the dedication was given by John Mawson and Brian Mennell said the grace. A vote of thanks was given on behalf of those present by Andy Bryne.



The Halloween themed décor was really impressive and gave a great ambience to the evening. Our thanks go to Dick and Gill for a really great event.



THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT FORTY YEARS ON PART 3



Ron all kitted up and ready for duty.

Our third and final part of a look back to the Falklands conflict in 1982 is provided by Ron Ford, our Branch Hon. Welfare Officer. Ron served in the Falklands Conflict in 1982. At that time he was based at Ascension Island, which was used by British forces as a huge staging post. The second tour of duty was much later, 1997, and involved a six-month detachment to the Falkland Islands themselves. This is Ron's story of his detachment in his own words.

During my detachment to the Falkland Islands from January to June 1997 I was the British Forces Falkland Islands (BFFI) Cryptographic Control Manager for the supply and secure delivery of cryptographic codes for:

1. The Islands' aircraft pilots in relation to the flight protection of the Islands where they were using IFF (Identify Friend/Foe) codes.
2. Communication Cryptographic codes for weekly issue to the 'Remote Radar Sites' on Mount Kent (by road) and Mount Alice & Mount Byron which were delivered with the assistance of the Bristow's Helicopter Service.

3. Cryptographic codes to the Governor's Residence in Stanley which included the responsibility to insert these codes into his telephonic communication system which was linked directly to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. I was responsible for ensuring that the system was fully functioning with a brief telephone call to the Downing Street operator at a designated day and time every week.
4. The supply and delivery of BATCO codes to the 'Resident Army Battalion' for them to conduct 'Tactical Evaluation' (TACEVAL) exercises.
5. The supply and delivery of Cryptographic Codes to the FI Communication Centre located in British Forces Falkland Islands (BFFI) HQ.
6. The supply and delivery of Cryptographic Codes to South Georgia which entailed a six-day boat trip to the island where a change of personnel was also conducted and then a six day boat trip back to the Falkland Islands.

I was on duty six and half days a week with just Sunday afternoon off. In addition, I was also on call 24/7 as a precaution for errors by operators. I issued codes for seven days, and each operator inserted a new code every day, but occasionally an operator commencing duty would accidentally press the delete button on the equipment and this deleted ALL the codes. This necessitated an immediate 'call-out' for me to issue replacement codes. This happened on more than one occasion, so using my initiative, I proceeded to stick black 'gaffer tape' over the delete button on each piece of equipment to prevent accidental deletion, and this worked!



A moment of relaxation in the Governor's Residence at Port Stanley.

For my efforts whilst on detachment, I was very fortunate to be invited by the Governor to a reception in Government House to celebrate the Queen's birthday as a "thank you."



Port Stanley waterfront in 1997.

SECONDARY GLAZING FITTED AT THE CLUB

Whilst the fitting of secondary glazing to all the main windows at our Branch Club at Aldwark might not be a very exciting event, it was certainly an important one. Back in the long, hot Summer, the Committee decided that we should invest in secondary glazing to minimize draughts and external noise and, most importantly to reduce the heating bills, which were only going to rise.

The secondary glazing panels (which are secure but can slide) were fitted at the end of October. The panels were fitted in the ground floor hall window, the 3 main windows on the first floor (and the small window on the first floor hallway) and the 3 main windows on the second floor. A thank you goes to our Branch President, Dick Gray, for sourcing an excellent contractor for the work.

ROYAL CYPHERS AND CROWNS

Most people in Britain and the Commonwealth have only known one monarch, Elizabeth II. Her death has touched people all over the World, not just in Britain and the Commonwealth. The passing of Queen Elizabeth and the accession of her eldest son, King Charles III, affects our lives in many ways, some of them seemingly unchanging to our eyes. Examples include the images on postage stamps, coins and banknotes. Whilst military uniforms will also change in recognition of our Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Some of these changes will be implemented quickly whilst others, such as the issue of new coinage, will not occur until 2024 with the exception of a collectors' £5 coin (Crown) and a 50p coin, which will be issued in November 2022.

King Charles III has chosen a royal cypher featuring the Tudor Crown in an apparent nod to the reign of his grandfather, George VI. The cypher, unveiled on Tuesday 27 September, will adorn buttons, liveries, military uniforms, passports and post-boxes as it is gradually unveiled in the months and years ahead. The design consists of the Tudor Crown, below which the King's initials CIIIR - for Charles III Rex - are interlinked. The design marks a shift from the St Edward's Crown that was used by Queen Elizabeth II and has become part of the national identity. Instantly recognisable, it is replicated everywhere from government buildings and state documents to police uniforms - and is the only one in living memory for most people.



Royal Cypher for King Charles III

The cypher is the personal property of the King and was selected by His Majesty from a series of ten designs prepared by the College of Arms, which

is responsible for creating and maintaining official registers of coats of arms and pedigrees. A Scottish version of the cypher features the Scottish Crown and was approved by Lord Lyon King of Arms. The “R” for Rex or Regina was added to a monarch’s cypher from the reign of Henry VIII.

While broadly following the same pattern, successive monarchs have each taken their own approach to choosing a cypher. A stylised version of the St Edward’s Crown was chosen by George II, George III, George IV and later by Elizabeth II. Therefore, the myth of a “king’s crown” and a “queen’s crown” is just that, a myth.

The St Edward’s Crown, which is kept in the Tower of London’s Jewel House, is reserved for the act of coronation. Featuring two dipped arches topped with a jewelled monde and a cross pattee, it is studded with 444 precious and semi-precious stones. The original was thought to have belonged to Edward the Confessor, who was canonised by the Catholic Church in 1161, but was destroyed after the execution of Charles I in 1649. The current version was made for the coronation of Charles II in 1661 and used at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

The Tudor crown was depicted on the cyphers of Edward VII, Edwards VIII, George V and George VI. It was worn by monarchs since the reign of Henry VIII, it features two arches surmounted by an orb. When Oliver Cromwell abolished the monarchy in 1649 and beheaded Charles I, historians feared the crown was lost forever. Cromwell had ordered that the crown, weighing 7lb 6oz, be melted down, minted and sold as coins. Its 344 precious stones were sold separately while other parts of the crown were passed on intact. The centrepiece was found under a tree by an amateur detectorist in 2017, ending a 400-year mystery over its whereabouts.



Tudor Crown
Replica made in
2012 by the retired
royal jeweller Harry
Collins.

The decision to replace cyphers will be at the discretion of individual organisations, and the process will be gradual. However, the cyphers featured on the gold coats of State Trumpeters and the front of house curtain at the Royal Opera House are expected to be changed imminently.

The cypher is perhaps most regularly seen on post boxes across the UK, which can be used to date the time of their creation. When a sovereign dies, post boxes are not replaced but any new ones introduced from this point on will feature the King's cypher.

We should expect to see stamps bearing the King's head in the next few months, but the Royal Household has directed that existing stocks of stamps featuring the late Queen should be used up first to avoid wastage.

WINGS APPEAL SUMMARY 2022



Thanks to the hard work of York Branch members and the organisation and dedication of our Branch Wings Appeal Officer, Ian Smith, the Branch managed to raise in excess of £15000 during the 2022 collection period.

The last collection for the period took place on Friday 7 October at Morrisons supermarket at Foss Islands Road. The team of collectors (Ian, Graeme and Barry) collected a massive total of £730.46. This was the highest amount collected at that particular venue and ensured that we would reach our target of £15000 for the year. The final total for our Wings Appeal 2022 was, in fact, **£15450.19**.

Ian is now planning the 2023 Wings Appeal collections and intends to apply for three City street collections again, as follows:

1st April 2023: the 105th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force

24th June 2023 :Armed Forces Day

16th September 2023: Battle of Britain Day.

(All the above dates for 2023 are to be confirmed.)

RAFA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

The 2022 RAFA Annual Conference took place over the weekend of 21-23 October at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel at the National Exhibition Centre. This was the first “real” Conference since 2019 as COVID-19 restrictions had meant that the 2020 and 2021 conferences had to be held online via video links. It was noted that there were twice as many delegates present at the 2019 Conference than at this year’s Conference. Ron Ford attended the Conference as our Branch voting representative and your Editor and Pat Harrington attended to see how Conference works in practice and to meet old and new acquaintances.

The Conference commenced on the Friday evening with the standard welcome address and a H&S Briefing followed by an informal dinner. We were then given an illustrated briefing on the current Royal Air Force by the RAF Presentation Team. On Saturday, the Conference opened at 0855 hrs with the marching in of branch standards and the RAFA National Standard and the National Anthem. The President (Sir Baz North) welcomed delegates and attendees. There followed a presentation of the Annual Conference Committee’s Report by the Chair of the Annual Conference Committee (Taff Rees) and the announcement of the results of the Elections of Area Elected Trustees by the Secretary General (Nick Bunting OBE). The financial and auditor’s report for 2021 was given by the Hon. Treasurer (Phil Tagg) who noted that there had been a 10% fall in income during 2021 but that the Association’s reserves were still good. The Annual Report for 2021 was presented by the Chair of Council (John Cliffe). This was John Cliffe’s last presentation as Council Chairman and your Editor found it to be a most impressive and expertly delivered description of the challenges faced by the Association during the period.

The Secretary General gave a presentation on the subject of ‘2021 and the future’ and this was followed by Resolution 6, namely the Election by Acclaim of AVM Alastair Reid as Chair of Council 2022 – 2025. This was passed by much applause. At this point the Conference was running early so the President invited delegates to carry on with some Conference business before lunch. This meant that Resolutions 1 to 3 were discussed, and votes cast before lunch. All three resolutions passed.

After lunch, Conference business resumed and Resolution 4 (Associate members taking up Ordinary membership after 5 years’ dedicated service, nominated by their Branch) provoked some interesting discussions. It was pointed out that widows and widowers of deceased Ordinary members were already entitled to take up Ordinary membership if so desired. The resolution did not gain the 75% approval needed and so fell. Indeed, it was

the only resolution at the Conference to fall. The two discussion papers that Conference requested approval to send out to branches both passed. There was some lively discussion regarding the discussion paper at Resolution 8 (Enfranchising the Membership) but it was passed by 94% as most delegates felt (as our Branch did) that such matters should be discussed at length by branches before the 2023 conference.

After the main business was completed, we were addressed by Air Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, Deputy Commander Capability and Air Member for Personnel and Capability on current RAF issues both personnel and materiel. We found his presentation to be very interesting and very honest, particularly given some of the recent media scrutiny of the RAF during 2022. Personally, it was the most honest briefing I have ever witnessed from a VSO!

The final presentations were an update from RAFA liaison officers and an update on Rothbury House, the latter including thanking support provided by branches (including York Branch) to financing the conversion of Rothbury House to residential accommodation. After the formal closure of Conference, the Standard Bearers Competition took place and RAFA National Presidential Certificate recipients attended a drinks reception hosted by The President and Council

The final highlight of the day was the Annual Reunion Gala Awards Dinner, which included the presentation of the National Presidential certificates. The meal was excellent although the musical accompaniment by two (albeit very talented) "pub singers" left your Editor somewhat bemused!

The following day there was a Drumhead Service at 0930 hrs and several RAFA workshops were available for delegates until 1115 hrs. This was your editor's first attendance at a RAFA Annual Conference and I found it to be a very interesting experience and a well-run event. It also served to dispel some of the rumours and myths that sometimes arise between HQ and branches.

Events for RAFA York Branch - 2022-2023

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.

2022

Sun 13 Nov	Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service - York.
Sat 26 Nov	Christmas Lunch at the Club - 1200 hrs.
Fri 9 Dec	Wings Collection - Tesco Askham Bar.
Fri 16 Dec	Wings Collection - Tesco Clifton Moor.
Sat 17 Dec	Christmas Draw at the Club from 1200 hrs.
Fri 30 Dec	Turning of the Page - York Minster - 1200 hrs.

2023

Fri 10 Mar	Wings Collection - Asda Monks Cross .
Sat 11 Mar	Branch AGM at the Club - 1200 hrs.
Fri 31 Mar	Turning of the Page - York Minster - 1200 hrs.
Sat 6 May	Coronation Day.
Fri 9 Jun	Turning of the Page - York Minster - 1200 hrs.
Sat 24 Jun	Armed Forces Day.
Sun 25 Jun	Joint York RBL/RAFA Church Service, All Saints Pavement 1030 hrs.
Sun 17 Sep	Battle of Britain Service & Turning of the Page - York Minster - time tbc.
Fri 29 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: www.rafayork.org. For timings etc, contact the Club on 07495 651849 (Thu evenings and Sat lunchtimes only).