

TRENCHARD'S LEGACY

A NEW RAF MEMORIAL LOCATED AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

CASE FOR SUPPORT

RAF HALTON APPRENTICES' ASSOCIATION

Old Haltonians is registered under the Charities Act, 2011, No. 292523

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Mr Lawrie Haynes CBE

Friends of the Association:

The Viscount Trenchard DL

Lady Gretl Armitage

Air Vice-Marshal Patrick O'Reilly

Mr Francis Hanford BA

VISION

Our vision is to pay tribute to the boys from all parts of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries who began their Service lives at 15 to 18 years of age, as Royal Air Force Apprentices at RAF Halton between 1922 and 1993, through:

- The creation of a new memorial at the Halton Grove, located at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.
- Acknowledgement of the outstandingly successful aircraft apprentice training scheme developed by Winston Churchill and Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard in 1920 and concluding in 1993.
- Acknowledging one of the finest apprenticeship schemes ever developed, fostering in young men the skills and life qualities to serve in hugely diverse roles inside and outside of military service.
- Creating the first step in a Heritage campaign to preserve the memory of achievements of ex-Halton Apprentices fondly known the world over as Trenchard's Brats.

HISTORY

Ex-Halton apprentices have rightly cemented their place in the annals of RAF History.

In its early days in 1919, the Royal Air Force was in danger of being swallowed up by its original parents the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Navy. Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for Air and War, had other ideas, and recalled Major General Hugh Trenchard to be Chief of the Air Staff and to lay the grounds for the establishment of a permanent Royal Air Force.

At that time the newly created Service had no traditions or culture of its own, on which its permanency as an independent Service would depend. This is what Trenchard set out to change as a matter of urgency. His first recommendation to Churchill was that the new Service should train its own Officers at Cranwell.

As most air mechanics who had been trained in WWI were leaving the service for better prospects in the rapidly developing civil aviation, he proposed that it should train its own in-house. Churchill agreed that suitably educated boys should be recruited to undergo a three-year apprentice course at Halton, and it is that important historical event that created the Halton Apprentice Scheme.

Boys aged 15 to 18 years, from across the UK, were recruited and trained in aircraft engineering, with the emphasis on quality professional training and the development of leadership and personal skills. By the time the scheme ceased in 1993, some 45,000 boys had been trained at Halton; of these, over 100 attained Air Rank and over 30% were commissioned. World-wide, the exploits and achievements of Trenchard's Brats (as they became known) are widely recognised. Perhaps the most famous ex-Brat is the inventor of the Jet Engine, Sir Frank Whittle. Ex-Halton apprentices took part in the famous Dam Buster raid, and others were executed for their part in the Great Escape. Many battled and survived years as prisoners of the Japanese in the Far East and thousands served throughout the Cold

War keeping the United Kingdom safe from the threat of nuclear attack. Following WWII, Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten said, **“One thing is absolutely true, the air battles of Burma were won in the classrooms and workshops at Halton; won not just by knowledge and skill of your maintenance crews, it was won by the spirit that Halton produced”**.

In August 1943, dozens of Polish boys arrived at Halton to be trained as aircraft apprentices. Despite the language and cultural difficulties, these boys very quickly adapted to their training. They participated keenly in sports like football and boxing where they enjoyed a good measure of success. They joined many clubs and learned to play chess and operate wirelasses. The scheme was a huge success, and many boys went on to contribute hugely to the war effort.

The Old Haltonians or RAF Halton Apprentices' Association (RAFHAA) was formed to provide a focus for ex-Halton apprentices to maintain contact with friends made in the infancy of their careers. Current membership of the RAFHAA stands at 2000+. In 2000, a memorial to ex-brats who had taken their final postings was created at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire. The centrepiece is a 60ft diameter Apprentice Wheel surrounded by a circular pathway of inscribed terracotta pavers dedicated to the memory of ex-Halton apprentices. It is known as the Halton Grove and while it is one of the most popular visitor attractions at the NMA, the tribute does not make clear the fundamentals of training given.

The RAFHAA Council now wish to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Halton Grove by creating an additional memorial featuring a large bronze sculpture by renowned military sculptor Tim Potts, with engraved sketches depicting all aspects of Halton apprentice training throughout its history. What better name could there be for such an inspirational edifice than 'Trenchard's Legacy'. It should not be forgotten that large numbers of boys from Commonwealth countries like Australia, New Zealand and Ceylon sent boys for training, and dozens of Polish boys attended RAF Halton as their Alma Mater.

In 1967, administrative apprentices trained as Nursing Attendants at the Medical Training Establishment (MTE) No 1 School of Technical Training, RAF Halton. The nursing element was undertaken at PMRAF Hospital Halton. At the same time, 100 administrative apprentices were trained in Medical Secretary duties. Dental Technician apprentice courses commenced in 1970 and ran until 1977. Entry numbers 119 to 124 were allied to the Aircraft Technician Entry number, joining, and graduating at the same time. Two trainees came from Nigeria.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage KCB CBE Patron of the Halton Apprentices' Association 1983 to 2022 said “The Halton Apprentice story is not merely about the ground crews the scheme produced. It is also about the spirit of the Halton training that so strongly guided its graduates in peace, war and even into careers such as politics, high levels of industry, Home Office service and colonial administration.”

The Viscount Trenchard DL, Honorary Air Commodore, 600 (City of London) Squadron says:

“Trenchard's Brats made an outstanding contribution to the Second World War, sadly at a great cost of life. Their courage, loyalty and devotion to duty was recognised by the award to former apprentices of over 3000 decorations for gallantry, including a Victoria Cross and five George Crosses. My grandfather always wanted the Royal Air Force to recruit the very

best people, regardless of background, and to provide them with the opportunity to develop their skills to the best of their ability.”

From the first apprentice recruited in 1920, George Morgan Wiles who later became Flt Lt, MBE, and who was initially trained at RAF Cranwell while new accommodation was built at RAF Halton. Until the late-60's, new apprentices were issued with a six-figure Service number and throughout their service they were readily identified by their peers as ex-Brats. For the record, the last Halton Apprentice was Richard Waylen of 155 Entry. Another feature of apprentice training was that 'under-training' boys would wear on their uniform the traditional RAF eagle and a small brass wheel badge as depicted below. The wheel badge has become an important symbol to all boy entrants to the RAF.



Finally, another feature of Halton Apprentices was the unique Entry Number that each intake of apprentices was given. Boys were very proud of their Entry Numbers, and graffiti in and around RAF Halton often depicted these numbers. Some boys in the 1950s and 60s even printed small stickers advertising their numbers: stickers were posted all over the world from London phone boxes to Bugis Street in Singapore! Even now, grown men frequently refer in banter to their entry number and anyone from a higher number than theirs is regarded as a 'rook'!

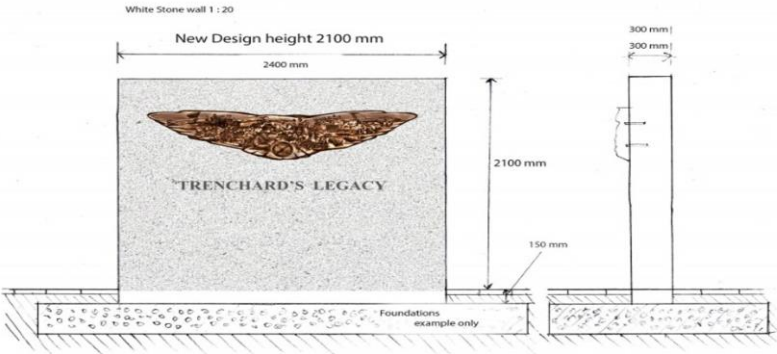
On 25 July 1952, No 1 School of Technical Training, RAF Halton received the highest accolade that any unit in the RAF can receive – the award of a Queen's Colour. This Colour is unique in being the only one to be awarded to a youth training school in any of the armed forces and, having been received from Her Majesty by a sergeant apprentice, a unique custom was established that it may, on occasions, be carried by an NCO. This custom continues at RAF Cosford, the current home of No 1 School of Technical Training, where young men and women are trained as aircraft engineering technicians on a modern apprenticeship course. In all other settings, a Colour is always carried by a junior officer. About 40 ex-Trenchard Brats remain in uniform today and many others still have important roles in the aerospace industry.

Lawrie Haynes CBE, Chair of Magnox, says: **"My time at RAF Halton provided me with self-confidence besides being hugely formative. I have used that remarkable time at Halton throughout my career leading several large engineering companies. The Halton apprenticeship gave confidence: from the certainty and discipline of the different phases of the year, working within a close-knit team of characters, being on time and the 'drumbeat' of that simple routine and the discipline. All this added up over the months to turn me**

from being a naive teenager into well-trained young man. Halton gave me the strongest foundation upon which to build a career, and I am extremely grateful for my time as a Brat.”

THE MEMORIAL

Trenchard’s Legacy Bronze by renowned sculptor Timothy Potts.



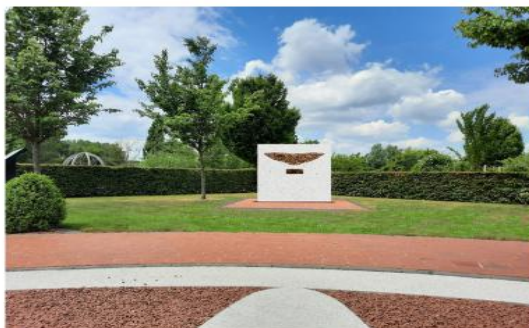
Aerial photo of Halton Grove showing proposed Memorial placement



Features:

- An 1800mm-wide bronze sculpture depicting the skills and trades taught on the RAF Apprentice training scheme at RAF Halton between 1922 and 1993, mounted on a vertical wall (2100mm high, 2400mm wide and 300mm deep) of Portland White Limestone.
- The base of the memorial is to be of terracotta square block paving bordered by rectangular grey block paving. 4300mm x 1800mm.
- The sculpture is named “Trenchard’s Legacy”. This name will be engraved into the Limestone wall beneath the bronze. No other engravings, names or markings will be on the memorial, apart from an appropriately positioned QR code directing visitors to the RAF Apprentices’ Association website (OldHaltonians.co.uk).
- This sculpture adds to the Apprentice story by showing sketches in bronze of the training and lives of apprentices while at RAF Halton.
- The memorial is to be positioned perpendicular to the centre line of the lower left propeller of the 15m diameter Apprentice Wheel (viewed from the Halton Grove main entrance), at the centre of the Halton Grove and 6m from the outer circumference of the current pathway.

Trenchard’s Legacy from centre of Halton Grove ‘Wheel’.



In 1944, Lord Trenchard said in the House of Lords:

“...the Halton-trained men provided the nucleus on which the great expansion of the air force was centred. Surely the efficient maintenance of aircraft has also been one the outstanding features of the war, and that has been made possible by the Halton training of our men.”

THE COST

The budget to design, produce, install, and maintain the new Trenchard’s Legacy Memorial is £100k.

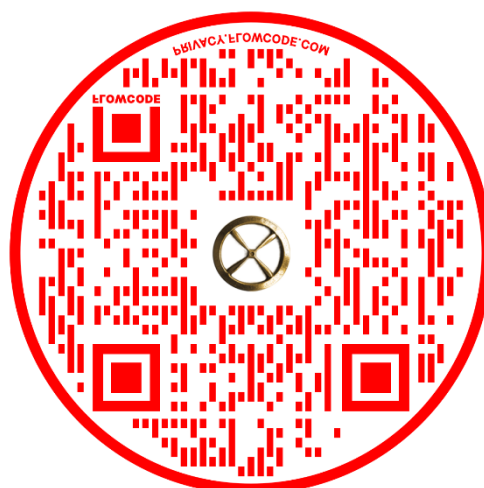
Item	Cost £
Design, production, and installation of bronze	82k

Design, production, and installation of plinth	5k
Maintenance programme inperpetuity	7k
Appeal administration	2k
Insurance, professional and contingency	4k
TOTAL	£100k

THE TRENCHARD'S LEGACY APPEAL

The Appeal committee aims to raise the total cost of this project from donations from ex-apprentices, their families, and aerospace companies worldwide who employed ex-Brats at the end of their Service. Further, it is hoped that the High Commissions of the countries who sent young men into the RAF Apprentice scheme will recognise how much their people benefitted from the training provided and the friendships formed in the foothills of the Chilterns. Presently, there remain over 40 ex-Apprentices serving in the RAF. This Appeal is therefore current, and it is hoped that active RAF bases will contribute along with the aerospace industry worldwide.

The Appeal committee has engaged Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) to be the donation platform. Low cost and well organised, CAF direct donations within a couple of days to a RAFHAA bank account earmarked for fund collection only. Importantly, Gift Aid of 20% may be claimed by donors who are suitably qualified. There are several methods by which donations may be made. For institutions and companies, a donation payment may be made by bank transfer to RAFHAA, Sort Code: 20-03-18. Account No: 83875628. If a Credit/Debit card is to be used, please phone RAFHAA General Secretary, Les Shardlow, +44 (0) 1296 696 896. If a donation is by cheque made payable to RAFHAA, post to The Secretary RAFHAA, 1 Pipit Gardens, Watermead, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 0GF. The QR code below will connect donors to the CAF platform link. These details are also shown on our web site www.oldhaltonians.co.uk.



<http://www.cafdonate.cafonline.org/23376>

Over the years, members of the Royal Family have been trained on RAF aircraft maintained by engineers of whom many were ex-Apprentices. Members of the armed services and their

families have been safely transported to overseas destinations in aircraft flown or maintained by ex-Apprentices. And dozens of civilians have escaped the pain of uprisings around the world in RAF air transport that was most certainly supported by ex-Apprentice ground crew. Earlier this year, the UK government issued the following statement following a military operation to evacuate staff from Khartoum. **“The UK has undertaken a military operation to evacuate British embassy staff from Khartoum, due to the escalating violence and threats against foreign diplomats and embassy property.”** Since 1922, wars and operations involving UK servicemen, and in particular ex-Apprentices, are too many to list here. Nonetheless, everyone will remember events like the Berlin Air Lift, the Suez crisis, the Indonesian confrontation, the Northern Island troubles. and the South Atlantic Conflict. Most of the great British public has been touched in some way by these events in a direct or indirect way by ex-Halton Brats. Our current membership of some 2000+ ex- Halton Apprentices frequently recall stories of their participation in other extremely difficult situations supporting the UK Civil Authorities. These include being crewmen on helicopters saving lives at sea, manning the army Green Goddesses when firemen were on strike or assisting children and old people whose homes became uninhabitable because of floods. Later, we will recount stories of ex-Apprentices’ careers from ‘Brats’ now living in all parts of the UK.

There is no doubt, the achievement of ex-Halton Apprentices since 1922 has been a remarkable story of education, personal development, loyal and courageous service. Chairman of the RAF Halton Apprentices’ Association Frank Denton-Powell MBE has said: **“Most people can recall times in their lives when they were directly or indirectly connected with activities involving ex-Halton Apprentices. It could be their route-lining at one of the major ceremonial events the UK is renowned for, or a military operation protecting the lives of our citizens in some remote location or, closer to home, assistance with overcoming natural disasters or providing aid to our civil authorities. By today’s standards, this Appeal does not have a target that is an impossible dream but is realistic and quite achievable if everyone digs a little way into their pockets to find a few pennies or pounds to contribute. Thank you all in advance. We will retain a list of everyone who contributes to the Appeal”.**

Patron of the RAF Halton Apprentices’ Association Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller KBE says of the Appeal: **“Following the coming launch of the Trenchard’s Legacy Appeal culminating with the unveiling of a new memorial sited in the Halton Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum in late Spring 2025, I shall write to His Majesty King Charles III and to other senior members of the Royal Family with a connection to the Royal Air Force, to inform them of the work being undertaken to provide lasting recognition of the ‘ordinary lads who went on to achieve extraordinary things’, Trenchard’s Brats, many of whom still serve in the Royal Air Force today. This is an exciting programme which should prove pivotal in marking our heritage and the vital part played in our continued freedom as a Nation.”**

LEGACY

The new memorial will add gravitas to the outstanding tribute to ex-Halton Apprentices. It is already a hugely popular visitors’ attraction at the National Memorial Arboretum. Opened in

2000, it is called the Halton Grove and features a 60ft round Apprentice wheel made of small pavers, each one inscribed to an ex-Trenchard Brat who has taken his 'final posting'.

The RAFHAA Council is determined there should be an extended legacy to the 45,000+ young boys who passed through the apprentice training scheme between 1920 and 1993. Located at RAF Halton, there is a Tribute to these boys unveiled by her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1997. The Council would like to create a visitors' centre housing the extensive range of memorabilia currently held at RAF Halton. It is hoped when RAF Halton is decommissioned (scheduled for 2027), MOD will offer RAFHAA the opportunity to develop St George's military church into a community centre dedicated to Halton Apprentices. Therefore, should the Trenchard's Legacy Appeal exceed its target of £100,000, excess funds will be ring-fenced to develop the Visitor's Centre scheme.

Air Cdre Martin, who trained as an ex-apprentice and reached Air Rank in a very successful career, says **...Be it the rolling and unassuming Chiltern hills or the quiet and attractive village of Wendover or the stunning and sprawling Rothschild estate...in the combination of these parts has nestled for decades the premier RAF engineering training establishment which proved pivotal to setting the standards and practices expected across the UK's RAF front line and professional operational support globally.**

Aligned with a vision to recruit from all quarters of life and society, to both train and educate aspiring technicians for the RAF, Lord Trenchard set in place a unique training scheme in the most exclusive boarding and training school of its day with a brand that proved global. This centre for training, education, team building and developing moral fibre opened the door for thousands of career opportunities both inside and outside of the RAF. The scale of success and impact of the apprentices is particularly worthy of note, recognising the thousands who successfully embraced the ranks and challenges over decades at NCO, SNCO, WO, commissioned and Air Rank level truly a testament to both Lord Trenchard's vision and the ability for young technicians to embrace the opportunities to maximize their careers.

The unique impact of the apprentice programme has offered and continues to offer unquestionable benefits, not only as a bedrock for the RAF but also to drive and influence outstanding careers globally across all facets of business, industry, and commerce.

Without question a unique vision and a unique investment offering a unique and quality product, for which there has been a truly global impact far greater than the individual parts and to which I am both proud and humbled to belong.

CAREER STORIES OF EX-TRENCHARD'S BRATS

Mick Patrick, Arundel Chichester

Having failed to get into farming and having a father, mother, brother, and aunt as predecessors in the RAF, I joined in 1960 as an Airframe Apprentice. I honestly cannot say that I enjoyed Halton that much and it was a long three years. My first posting was to St. Mawgan on Aircraft Servicing Flight working on Mk 2 & 3 Shackletons. In 1964, I got my next posting to Seletar, firstly with 209 Sqn on Single and Twin Pioneers then onto 34 Sqn with the

Beverley. Whilst on 34 I had many detachments to Borneo and elsewhere and loved every minute of it. Homecoming was to St. Athan in South Wales on Vulcans. Later, I was posted to Leconfield on a Lightning holding unit. Whilst there, an opportunity for discharge in my trade and rank of Corporal came up so I forked out lots of money to pay my way out and left for civvy street!

My first job was as an engineer with Aviation Traders at Stansted where I worked mainly on Canadair CL44, Britannia and B707. I got licensed on the 44 and became an inspector. Then redundancy happened in 1973 and I moved to Transmeridian Air Cargo. In 1976 they trained me as a Flight Engineer on the 44, and I became a training engineer soon afterwards. By '79 that folded as well so off I went to live in Larnaca, Cyprus, and worked for Cyprus Airways on the sole CL44 as F/E. At the end of 1980 that crashed at Akrotiri when the landing gear refused to lock down. Returning home, I was employed by BCAL on the B707 and later onto the DC10 where again I was a training engineer and simulator instructor. BA took over BCAL and I remained on the DC10 till retirement at age 55.

By that time, I had obtained my UK and USA commercial pilot licences and was employed on a Beech King Air ambulance which I flew until I was 62. During that time the company needed an Instructor for Aviation Security, Dangerous Goods and Crew Resource Management and I was given approval for those based on the training received from the airlines. Also, there was a need to establish a quality system for maintenance and flight operations, so I was dispatched to get trained and became the firm's auditor. All that came in useful later as after leaving the company I became self-employed and delivered training and auditing to many big and small operators. To add to that, I requalified as a DC10 simulator instructor/examiner and went on to work with the Netherlands Air Force and Bangladesh Airlines until the closure of the simulator in 2004. At the time IATA had just set up an Operational Safety Audit system with the airlines and I was taken on by the UK agency for those audits which took me far and wide, including a spell in Tripoli just before the warring factions destroyed the airport. I made it to the age of 79 still doing the IATA audits but had to quit on my second encounter with the Big C. I had intended to quit at 80 and I nearly made it! It has been interesting and "so far so good" as the man said passing the 13th floor...

My book "From Jacks to Joysticks" was published by Pen and Sword in 2015 and is available on Amazon. I hope you enjoy it.

David Bowden, Macclesfield

I was detached briefly to RAF Aldergrove in the early 1970s. Belfast and Northern Ireland was a depressing place to serve during the Troubles, although it did have its lighter moments.

Number 23 Maintenance Unit at RAF Aldergrove was a high value target at the time as the Unit was responsible for maintenance and conversions on Phantom aircraft arriving from the USA for service in the RAF. I recall one night shift as duty officer, located in the guardroom, at a time when there was a general air of tension as a few weeks earlier a local country pub had been badly damaged when an IED exploded. On this occasion, there was a report of suspicious movement detected close to the airfield perimeter. An armed RAF Regiment Unit was despatched to the scene to take up positions ready for action. Fortunately, their search light revealed nothing more dangerous than a herd of cows. What a relief!

Steve Bowden from the Midlands

I joined the RAF as a Halton Apprentice in 1972, aged 17, as an Aircraft Technician. I came from a humble council house background and, frankly, life was a bit of pain at home! Only achieving the minimum of four O levels at school, I think I was accepted via the psychometric testing at the CIO in Manchester. I didn't have English Language so had to re-sit it at Halton 'schools', eventually only reaching Grade 6, but at least it was a pass!

The apprenticeship was a challenge. I struggled with the classroom subjects except Technical Drawing, but when it came to workshops, understanding systems and fixing aircraft, I found my place. The next 10 years saw me complete my apprenticeship, then five years at Honington on first line Buccaneers and Hunters and two years at Marham on Canberras. In both places I started off working as a technician but ended as the Flight Line Controller - Halton training reaping its rewards!

I am very vocal in telling people that those ten years made me as a person and gave me the life skills that I enjoy today. From the RAF I went into Aviation Sales and Marketing with Smiths Industries and an American Company called Moog, ending as a director, before starting my own marketing and corporate entertainment business in 1991. It was the organisational skills that made it successful, but I had a parallel career training people in advanced off-road driving skills and inland waterways boating, resulting in the formation of two separate successful businesses.

I am now semi-retired but head three businesses with an excess of £4m turnover and live and semi-work on our 40 acres of canal-side land in the Midlands where we have narrowboat moorings and holiday accommodation. The Halton apprenticeship gave me the confidence, ability, professional and personal skills to enjoy a successful career in and out of the RAF. I have a loving family, great surroundings, and an enjoyable lifestyle that others from my roots may not have achieved.

Wg Cdr Barry Neal, Hampshire

During the 1974 Turkish Invasion of Cyprus, from 20 July to 18 August I was a Victor K2 Air-to-Air Refuelling captain deployed with my crew, and several others, to Luqa, Malta. We were on standby to help recover aircraft forced to leave RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, and return to the UK. That never happened and we returned to the UK on 20th August without ever flying! Sounds like an impromptu 11-day holiday in the sun at HM The Queen's expense but, in truth, one could never relax!

Another story, perhaps of interest, Operation Bacton in 1991 involved the recovery of a Beirut hostage. I was deployed with a VC10 CMk1 and substantial support team to RAF Akrotiri awaiting the release of Jackie Mann, all under the guidance of a UK Foreign Office 'minder'. Eventually we flew to Damascus, Syria, on 24th September to collect Jackie. On departure, an undercarriage malfunction forced us to divert back to Akrotiri, get the problem fixed, and only then return to the UK.

Christopher Miles, New Zealand

It was seventy years ago, on 28 April 1953, that I became an Apprentice Airframe Fitter. I was in the 74th Entry and we route-lined the Coronation of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Training was not easy, and I remember well walking up into the Chiltern Hills with Air Publications, newspapers, and periodicals to study for exams. I learnt technical knowledge and skills that have lasted me my lifetime, besides equally important life skills. I enjoyed shooting and had several successes at Bisley in the fifties.

In 1956 I was posted to Germany, where I eventually became seconded to the German Air Force. I still remember how the German personnel would salute me! My job was to service a helicopter flown by Major Schmidt, (ex-WWII). He was an absolute gentleman, and I very quickly learnt German and gained wide ranging skills that helped me later in life. In 1957 I was posted to Buckeberg and took charge of the Publication Library. Later, I was moved to Laarbruch and worked on the design of an algorithm for the modification of Hunter main-plane leading edges. This was very interesting, and I learnt much about organisation, technical and personnel matters. In 1959 I found myself in the HQ at München Gladbach managing mods and technical instructions.

Returning to the UK, I was posted to Ternhill on Piston Provost aircraft. Someone recommended me for Instructor duties and after selection and training I arrived at Weeton where, on collecting my black armband with INST in red on it, I recall being told that the abbreviation meant '*I never stop talking rubbish.*' I enjoyed instructing and passed a Civilian Technical Teachers course in Blackpool. In 1962 I was posted to Thorney Island where I became a Senior Technician and entered the Sgts' Mess. Outside of doing work on Hastings, Beverley, and Argosy aircraft, I taught engineering drawing to GCE classes and gained an HNC from Worthing Technical College.

I left the RAF in 1966 and immediately started reading for a BSc (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering, graduating in 1969. In February 1970, I emigrated to South Africa where I was appointed as a lecturer in the Natal University, Durban. I yearned for wider application of my skills and by 1971 I had become an employee of ESCOM at a power station. I passed examinations on Industrial Law and soon took charge of the station on a regular basis, becoming a CEng, MIMech E and MIProd E. Looking for pastures new, I decided to emigrate to New Zealand in 1976. Life here has not been easy, having been made redundant and experiencing some difficult personal issues, but now I am settled again and enjoying retirement. I often think of UK, the many friends I had there, and how my professional career began as a Halton Apprentice.

Wg Cdr Frank Denton-Powell MBE, Newbury

I served from 1958 to 1992 and in that time was committed to a variety of events that now form part of history. In 1962, I was posted to a small jungle clearing in Malaya that is now the large airport of Kuantan in Malaysia. Our Canberra B15 bombers flew sorties against the terrorists in a campaign known as the Indonesian Confrontation. We lived under canvas and were more concerned about tigers attacking us from the jungle than being shot by the insurgents. In 1966 I was sent to Nairobi to support the RAF transport fleet moving barrels

of oil from Nairobi to Lusaka when Rhodesia blockaded road transportation. Serving with the Harrier fleet in Germany in 1970-1972, at the height of the Cold War, we were forever on exercise dressed in Nuclear Biological and Chemical suits donning Gas Masks. Sleeping in this protective equipment was very difficult. In 1978, I found myself in charge of six Green Goddesses in the valleys of South Wales during the firemen's strike. I shall never forget the generosity of Welsh people on Christmas Day when they brought Christmas fare for the 75 men sleeping in camp beds in village halls from Bridgend to Merthyr Tydfil. In 1982, I was connected with the removal of specialist navigation equipment from British Airways VC10s stored at RAF Abingdon and refitted to Vulcan bombers and Victor refuelling tankers used in the Falklands War. Later in my career I served in Switzerland, working with Pilatus aircraft manufacturers, in Oman arranging the sale Jaguar aircraft from India to the Sultan of Oman's Air Force, in Ecuador resolving Jaguar airworthiness problems with their Air Force and finally in Saudi Arabia on the hugely important defence sales project, Al Yamamah. Many ex - Halton apprentices experienced similar career stories but in different parts of the world and in different operations.

Roger Margetts, Lincoln

On discharge in January 1983, following 13 years' service, I joined the Prison Service, an unusual choice for an ex-Halton Apprentice Engine Fitter but I wanted a complete break from aircraft and engineering. I spent nearly 22 years as a Prison Officer at various prison establishments, including a Junior Detention Centre, a London Cat B Local (Pentonville), a Cat C Training Prison and, for over 12 years, the Cat B Local/Training Prison at HMP Lincoln.

I enjoyed most of my 'time' inside, with specialist roles in Welfare, Civil Prisoner, Special Unit and Pre-Release Training. Working with individuals who generally didn't want to be there could be stressful, but at times rewarding. Unfortunately, it is one of the few jobs where you never see your successes, only your failures. I left the prison service following the Lincoln Riot in 2003 and spent the next couple of years in an employment limbo, taking on various work, including taxi driving, car sales, and general assistant for a garage owner.

In 2008 I became employed as an Installation Technician for a Photocopier Company, travelling all over the UK installing and demonstrating photocopiers of all sizes, from desktop to big digital presses. After two years I applied for the Manager's role and was successful. I spent the next 9 years until my retirement working in an office, with occasional forays to oversee large rollouts.

I have now been happily retired for 5 years, enjoying cycling at every opportunity to stay fit and meet people.

David Papworth, Swindon

I served just nine years once out of training. The enhanced promotion system didn't work for me: wrong place and wrong bosses! Thus, I entered civvy street earlier than most of my contemporaries. Following a couple of short-term jobs, specialist plastic bag factory supervisor and food machinery engineer, I got into optical fibre cable manufacture, first with QC and night school to get an HNC in Quality Assurance that led me to a QA role. Some of the cables I tested can be seen wrapped around the earth wire of the UK power grid system.

After 25 years, I moved into quality surveillance, mostly of electrical cables and power components. I am still working and lead a busy life with lots of travelling.

I watched King Charles III Coronation with great interest! Whilst stationed at Brawdy, I was selected to man a display Hunter for the visit of Prince Charles, who was doing a whistle-stop tour of Wales following his marriage, the first-time around. Due to poor weather all the displays were placed inside a hangar. On the day, the entourage stopped outside and Charles, the Station CO plus a few hangers-on stepped into the hangar through the small access door. Then something rather odd happened. Charles walked over to the Hunter, while the CO and everyone else went the other way. After a smart salute I introduced myself and we talked about the Hunter. After about ten minutes, Charles turned round, realised he was on his own and said, "Good Lord, you will get me the sack; I had better go and join the others"!

William Young, deceased, by David Papworth

My Great Uncle Will was an Apprentice at Halton as a member of the 23rd Entry, Jan 1931 to Dec 1933. Will mentioned that the CO at the time was Air Commodore Bonham-Carter, who apparently could not walk very well due to an injured leg, so was given an Apprentice Orderly to help him out. Will got on well with him during his stints as the Orderly and found Bonham-Carter to be very amiable. While at Halton, Will and a couple of others had motorcycles which at the time were banned from the camp; however, Will got to know the village Vicar who turned out to be an enthusiast himself! The result was that Will, and the others were able to keep the bikes in a shed on Church property, without 'the powers that be' at Halton ever finding out.

Will's first posting from Halton was to 33 Squadron, which operated Hart aircraft and he soon found himself in Ismailia, Egypt, where he stayed from 1936 to the end of WWII. While in the Middle East, Will took many photographs, most of them pre-war as presumably there was a war-time ban, although that wouldn't have bothered Will too much! Will was always getting into scrapes with authority. Despite this he was apparently well-liked and was good at his job. He got to the rank of Corporal (several times), and eventually left the service in that rank.

Will was never keen to recount his RAF exploits, but he did recall a few anecdotes.

Whilst in the desert everyone was issued with a daily gallon can of water, which also had to be used for washing and shaving. So, water was pooled, meaning that several people washed and shaved in the same water, leaving as much as possible for drinking!

The squadron was sent to flush out rebel tribesmen, not sure where but the successful action resulted in a single medal being awarded to the ground crews. The CO, not knowing who to give it to, had everyone draw straws to determine who would receive it. A few months later a similar operation took place and again a single medal was awarded. The same guy drew the right straw on both occasions.

During the war, Will and most of his colleagues disliked the locals, mainly because they were uncooperative. It is worth saying that he was not a 'PC' person. He told me that he was given the job of getting a small power station at Aboukir up and running, with him running one of the shifts. On arrival the local workers all sat down refusing to move. Will apparently picked up a large stick, found the foreman and said something along the lines of "you will get this big stick if you don't get this power station running straight away". Apparently, they all got up and had the power up and running in no time.

When Will left the RAF, he got married and lived for a while in Birmingham teaching at a technical college. Later he taught in Trowbridge and finally at Witney technical college before eventually retiring. When I took my O levels, I managed to fail the critical ones: maths, and physics. I was dispatched to Will and his wife Kathleen for most of the 1973 summer break, where I was re-taught both subjects. At the re-sit the following year, not only did I pass both, but I also got very good grades. This of course allowed me to apply for my own Halton apprenticeship, so I am forever grateful for his teaching skills.

Ian Hicks, North-East, Derbyshire

I joined the RAF as a Halton Apprentice in 131st Entry, 1978 to 1981. During my time at Halton, many apprentices from Halton lined the route for Earl Mountbatten of Burma's funeral.

Many of my entry went on to be part of the Guatemalan Deterrence in Belize, before and after Independence.

Wg Cdr Phil 'Ginge' Sprinks, Huntingdon

On 16 September 1958 I was attested and became an engine apprentice of the 90th Entry. Following graduation, I had postings to RAF Cranwell on Jet Provosts and Varsitys, then the B15 Canberra of 45(B) Squadron, RAF Tengah, Singapore. This tour included detachments to Hong Kong and active service detachments to Borneo and primitive WWII airstrips in Northern Malaya where scorpions like to hide in aircraft chocks.

On return to UK, I joined 36 Squadron flying on Hastings to the Bahamas, Belize, Malta, and Cyprus. In 1973 I became a Junior Engineer Officer on 228 OCU (Phantom) and from there to HQRAF Germany with Lightning, Wessex, and Phantom aircraft to staff. 1978 took me to be the S Eng O of 11(F) Squadron at RAF Binbrook. During those early years I flew in the aircraft I had worked on as an engineering technician, including Varsity, Canberra, Hastings, C130, Phantom, Jaguar, and Lightning.

Four years at RAF St Athan came next, in 1982, recovering Harrier and Sea Harrier by critical path engineering, where we focused on aircraft returning from the Falklands Conflict. In 1986, I was posted to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, North Carolina, USA as MAP 1C.

I was based at the Naval Aviation Depot (NADEP) as an active-duty Marine. I joined 3,000 Marines and civilians involved in deep 3rd line maintenance on AV8 Harriers, plus a range of

Phantom and C130 aircraft. The USMC base totalled close to 25,000 personnel. My role was liaison with the aerospace companies and military of these 3 aircraft types in the USA, and with BAe and Marshall of Cambridge in UK. An amazing job! My ex-apprentice Wg Cdr boss was located at Crystal City, Washington DC, some 400 miles away, yet visited me regularly.

Those were the days before the Internet and Zoom meetings, so practical liaison meant on-site visits to exchange accident data, modification, and fatigue information. This was to avoid both US and UK users 'reinventing the wheel'. On one notable occasion, I carried two Phantom under-wing slab patch fatigue repair kits, in plastic carrier bags, from Cherry Point on civil airlines to a meeting at BAe Warton, delighting everyone with the solution to a potential fleet-grounding defect. The modification originated on the USAF fatigue rig at Hill AFB in Utah. On return to Cherry Point, I took C130 nose probe in-flight refuelling modification data, developed by Marshalls, to enable the USMC to modify their C130s at the NADEP.

At this time in the late eighties, the US military and the National Air Guard had some 750 C130s, 5000 Phantoms (yes, 5000) and many AV8s (100 at Yuma, Arizona, a similar number at Cherry Point, and 2 squadrons in Okinawa, Japan). There was a wealth of information to share. Composite materials were being developed at the NADEP and trialled on the AV8Bs. At Lockheed, Atlanta, the advanced black C130 had horsal and dorsal fins, 6000psi hydraulic systems and touch-screen cockpit panels. The workhorse Phantom had fatigue mods.

I travelled extensively every month and at the end of my tour, surprisingly, there was no successor for a handover, so we stayed to do another tour! My family and I finally returned to the UK in December 1990 to HQ Support Command, RAF Brampton as keen and experienced scuba divers, having had 4 brilliant years. Living and sharing engineering solutions with the US Air Force, US Navy and US Marines Corps was a privilege that we will ever remember. Semper Fidelis, Marines! I retired in 1997. My career was possible because I started as a Halton 'Brat'.

Alan Gordon, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex

To my own knowledge, ex-Apprentices played a significant role in industry, particularly the defence industries. I worked for Hunting-Perceval and Hunting Engineering, for GPS, and for Marconi Avionics. My RAF experience, and knowledge in both theory and practical, meant that as a quality manager I had the respect of the workshops tradesmen whose work I examined.

The Halton Apprentice bands drew huge respect for their music, repertoire, and turnout. Halton trumpeters played regularly at the Cenotaph, the pipe and brass bands played at the annual Royal Tournament, and all played at major ceremonial events across the country. In my time, we also performed at the Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance, the Farnborough Air Show and at various street parades.

At Farnborough we made a massed band with the RAF Central, the WAAF Central and various command bands. When one of these professional musicians complained to our Band Leader, Wg Cdr A.E. Simms, that they had not had a full rehearsal, he chided him by

saying that the Apprentice Bands, who were part-time, would not need more rehearsal. Incidentally, we were under canvas at Yewshot Camp and walked to the gharries in bare feet, carrying bulled boots and socks. We were offered cloths and warm water to de-mud our feet before donning footwear!

Gp Capt Min Larkin CBE, Halton, Bucks

I joined the RAF as an aircraft apprentice in 1949, remustering to aircrew as an Air Signaller/Air Gunner in 1953. Commissioned as an Air Electronics Officer in 1959, I flew in Shackletons with 224, 205 and 201 Sqns, and Nimrods with 201 Sqn as Air Electronics Leader. Other tours included Flight Commander at Locking, avionics development at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, and Deputy OC Brawdy. Staff appointments involved operations, search and rescue, training, and personnel management. I completed 45 years in uniform as Deputy Director of Personal Services. Since then, I have been Halton's historian and archivist and, in 1995, I founded the Apprentice Museum, later renamed the Trenchard Museum. In 2007, I created the Station Archives. I take a keen interest in the achievements of ex-Halton Apprentices and believe the Trenchard's Legacy Memorial to be located at The National Memorial Arboretum is a fitting tribute to the exploits of ex-Trenchard Brats.

CASE FOR SUPPORT

The RAFHAA Council sounded out its membership on the Trenchard Legacy concept and several members contributed to its title and design detail. At a Reunion in 2022 celebrating 100 years since training began at RAF Halton, members endorsed the final design and pledged financial support. The Appeal committee predict that over 50% of the cost will come from RAFHAA member's donations. The remainder will need to be raised from other sources.

Apprentices and Families. The appeal committee feels sure that ex-Apprentices, their families, and current serving personnel will donate generously to this Appeal. First, it an important step in developing a legacy to the Halton Apprentice scheme. Secondly, the new memorial will depict, through keenly presented sketches, the professional training and social activities that set so many young men on the path to successful careers and development of the life skills to navigate a sea of personal challenges. We know that ex-Apprentices and their families are truly grateful for the magnificent training they received as young men and how it set so many on the road to a successful life. We should not forget that many ex-Apprentices who died later in their service careers: men like John Turk 71st Entry who was commissioned as a Navigator and killed in a Canberra crash, or Hoof Proudfoot 90th Entry, commissioned as a Pilot, who lost his life in a flying accident in the Far East.

Public Gratitude. Ex-Halton Brats from many nations served with valour throughout WWII, many making the ultimate sacrifice. In the post war era, just as many served keeping us safe from tyranny all over the world. Ex-Halton Apprentices' loyalty and devotion to duty during WWII was recognised by the large number of decorations they received. Notable among them was Sgt Gray of the 20th Entry, an observer, who, along with his pilot Fg Off Garland, was awarded one of the first two air VCs of WWII. Over 1,000 other awards went to former

aircraft apprentices and some 3000 were Mentioned in Dispatches. The British public is likely to recognise the importance of their role in history, particularly safeguarding our motherland in war and peace, and wholeheartedly support this Appeal.

Industry. Thousands of ex-Apprentices joined almost every aspect of industry once their RAF careers came to an end. Their wide ranging technical and leadership skills made them ideal for recruitment into a broad spectrum of engineering, management, and commerce. Some achieved high status, others remained 'on the hangar floor', but all added huge value to the companies who employed them and continue to do so. Not surprisingly, many of our men turned from repairing aircraft to flying them. Many gained a commercial pilot licence outside of the Service, some with commercial airlines, and others with the emergency services or in a private capacity working for oil companies or other enterprises. Apprentices have gone into industry and the campaign invites corporate entities to recognise the contribution that apprentices have made to industry across the world. Ex-Apprentice Air Vice-Marshal Keith Bethell, who now works in Defence Equipment and Support MOD as a senior Civil Servant, says **"My three years at RAF Halton undoubtedly gave me the firm foundations on which my future career was based, and few days go by when I don't reach back to draw on the experiences, knowledge and personal traits that were formed during my time as an Apprentice. Throughout my career I have come across many fellow Brats, both serving and across almost every industry organisation I have worked with, who have shared this formative experience and taken it with them into their careers. In the finest traditions of the Apprentice scheme, they have formed part of the backbone of so many defence organisations and provided an invaluable service to our Nation and the industry partners that play such a vital role in keeping it safe."**

Institutions. We have on record that many of our members worked with the police, fire, ambulance, paramedic, and prison services as second careers. Loyalty to duty, punctuality, reliability, and honesty instilled during their time at Halton made them eminently suitable candidates for such work. Several 'Brats' forged new careers in the development of former Commonwealth nations, and others took to the cloth of their religion. In all roles, apprentices have contributed enormously to the success and stability of our public services and this campaign hopes that institutions will contribute to this Appeal.

Aid to Civil Powers. It is apparent how many ex-Apprentices worked in supporting communities in times of natural disasters or when services were withdrawn because of strikes. We have heard of men saving lives during times of flooding, manning fire engines, clearing waste rubbish, and even more recently, providing logistics help with the Covid outbreak. The appeal committee draws attention to this work to show the contribution 'Brats' have made to the public community at large.

Other Nations. The Appeal Committee recognises, especially through the Career Stories of members, that ex-Apprentices contributed enormously to the defence of friendly nations. On top of this, many nations sent their young men to train as Halton Apprentices and benefitted from the development of professional and personal skills of these men.

Ceremonial. Between 1922 and 1993, Halton Apprentices participated in ceremonial duties for the nation. On Coronations, Royal Weddings, the passing of Royalty and senior statesmen, plus occasions of visiting Heads of State, Halton apprentices were used for their marching quality, for security route-lining and, also importantly, the trumpeters, bagpipe and brass bands have always performed with great skill. The appeal committee wishes to acknowledge how well apprentices performed their duties, with immaculate turnout, and what a credit they have been, through the decades, to the Nation.

ENDORSEMENT

On 6th June 2023, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, KCB, ADC, Chief of Air Staff endorsed the Trenchard's Legacy Appeal saying ***"The RAF Apprentice Scheme and the RAF Halton apprentices played a foundational and critical role in the success of the RAF. This was particularly true in the early days of the RAF in the 1920s and 1930s, provided a key component that enabled the rapid expansion of the RAF during World War II. The RAF has always been at the leading edge of technology and has relied on well-trained and highly capable technical specialists to succeed. Commemorating the RAF Halton apprentices will stand as a fitting memorial to the critical role that they have played in the history of the RAF and its development"***.

FM DENTON-POWELL MBE
Wing Commander RAF (ret'd)
Chairman Trenchard's Legacy Appeal Committee

30th June 2023