



## RAFHAA NEWSLETTER April 2022

\*\*\*\*\*

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller, one of our Vice-Patrons, became the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire for the coming year. At the Annual Legal Service in Gloucester Cathedral, he made a solemn declaration to 'truly and faithfully support the Judiciary and all who maintain The Queen's Peace, who administer justice, and who protect and support their fellow citizens'.

The High Sheriff, a role dating back over 1000 years, is appointed annually by The Queen and is the sovereign's representative for matters relating to the judiciary and the maintenance of law and order, though sadly Dusty is no longer empowered to raise the hue and cry to chase vagabonds (stand easy all ex-brats), as his medieval predecessors would have done. I sent Sir Dusty a note of congratulations on behalf of all members of our Association. Attached is a photograph of Sir Dusty in his RAF uniform that he chose to wear for the occasion.



*Copyright Paul Nicholls Photography*

\*\*\*\*\*

On 15<sup>th</sup> March, the RAFHAA Council met at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire for the March Council meeting. In the two years since the new council formed, this was the first-time members had met each other as a group, face to face. Covid led us to holding our meetings by video link and the arrangements have been so successful that we intend to continue with virtual meetings in the future. After our meeting in the NMA conference facilities, Council members met with and thanked warmly the 17 volunteer gardeners who maintain the Halton Grove at the NMA. All of them are ex brats or their partners, wives, widows, or children. The Grove looked magnificent and the NMA was a place of tranquillity bathed in Spring sunshine and scattered with clumps of cheerful daffodils. The attached picture shows members of the Council with the Halton Grove gardeners.



\*\*\*\*\*

Good progress is being made with planning for Reunion 2022 on 6th August. We have over 460 currently attending with numbers expected to increase before the event. Our website ([www.oldhaltonians.com](http://www.oldhaltonians.com)) now includes a Blog listing all the Entries with representatives attending the reunion.

We are delighted to confirm that Viscount Trenchard (grandson of Lord Trenchard) will be attending, and members will be pleased to know that weather permitting, a BBF Lancaster will make a triple pass over 1 and 2 Wings shortly after lunch. The first activity will be a service in St Georges Church when RAF Cosford trainees will parade the Queen's Colour of No 1 S of TT. Later in the morning, in the old 1 Wing Tank over a bevvy or two, we will be entertained by the D Day Darlings (picture attached). Luncheon boxes will be available in 1 Wing Mess from midday onwards and arrangements have been made for the Falcons to drop in before the traditional sunset ceremony and march past later in the afternoon. We are very pleased to announce that the Ceremonial Pipes and Drums of the RAF will be supporting the Golden Oldies and the distinctive rhythms of the Bear are sure to lift the hairs on the back of your necks!

We are aiming to make this 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Halton Brat a very special occasion; we hope to video record the square from above the Lancaster using drones, and make copies for sale online after the event. Talking of sales, various items of memorabilia will be available to purchase in 1 Wing Tank and we will be promoting sales of miniature copies of the proposed heritage bronze we call Trenchard's Legacy. Announcements on special car parking arrangements will be made in due course.

If you have not yet booked, please use the Application Form attached to this Newsletter and forward to Les Shardlow General Secretary ([secretary@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:secretary@rafhaa.co.uk)). Online payments can now be taken.

## RAFHAA REUNION 2022





**AT RAF HALTON**  
**6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2022**

ON THE DAY:

- THE GOLDEN OLDIES
- THE D-DAY DARLINGS
- THE RAF FALCONS
- BBMF LANCASTER FLY PAST
- THE RAF CEREMONIAL PIPES AND DRUMS





\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you to everyone who commented so positively about the last issue of the Haltonian that you should now have received (except overseas members). Barry Hathaway 100<sup>th</sup> (our Editor) plans to produce our Summer 2022 edition for delivery at the end of June. This issue will contain the latest information about Reunion 2022 and documentation relating to our AGM planned for 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (more later). Barry says he could do with more content for the next issue, so please put pen to paper and drop Barry a line ([haltonian@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:haltonian@rafhaa.co.uk)). Copy deadline 1 May 22.

I have mentioned before in our Newsletters about members who have not adjusted their annual Membership dues to meet the arrangements agreed at AGM 2020. I regret that the time is now coming where almost 100 members will not be receiving the June issue of the Haltonian mentioned above. The cost of postage alone is almost £3.00, and the production costs are even higher. In 2020, we all agreed that to keep the high quality Haltonian magazine in hard copy form should be a priority of the Association. Council has therefore decided NOT to post out copies of the Magazine to members who have not updated their subscriptions, but their membership will NOT be cancelled. We will post out separately your AGM literature so you may participate in the AGM if you wish. Over the past 2 years, we have contacted everyone with a payment shortfall by letter; however, If you have any doubts about your annual remittance being correct, please contact Mike Colcomb ( [membership@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:membership@rafhaa.co.uk)).

While on this subject, might I say, there remain a very large number of Life members who continue to enjoy the magazine and other features of the Association at no cost beyond what they paid for Lifetime membership, many years ago. If you are one of these, may I suggest you consider inwardly the need to opt in for Heritage Life Membership at £15.00 per annum or do as some of your colleagues have done, and donate to cover magazine costs in this present day and age. Please contact Mike Colcomb if you wish to take either action.

\*\*\*\*\*

Council has decided to opt for a hybrid AGM this year. That is, voting will be cast digitally and by post in advance of a face to face (f2f) meeting that will also be broadcast by video link. To ensure a complete viewing event, we plan to use St Georges Church as the venue. This will enable us to seat the Council around a conference table where members can be easily identified. We will use the church's catering facilities to provide pre meeting refreshments. More

information to follow in due course. This meeting will afford another chance to be entertained by the Golden Oldies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Over the past year we have made regular pleas to membership inviting younger members to serve on the Council. Several of the current team are getting past our sell by date and new ideas and energy from younger members will help ensure our Heritage is in safe hands. Therefore, I am delighted to announce that three well qualified younger members have stepped forward in the last few months to take on important new council roles increasing the strength of the team that will have the onerous responsibility for Heritage when RAF Halton finally closes. At the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022, it was unanimously agreed that Al Bennett (219 entry) would be co-opted to the Council as Apprentice Archivist and Rob Rodham (223 entry) be co-opted as Public Relations and Media Member (PR &MM) both with immediate effect. Both would be nominated by the Council for these roles at the 2022 AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> September. At the same AGM, Council will propose that Garron Clarke-Darby (222 entry) will replace Min Larkin (standing down) as Heritage Member. All three nominations are therefore subject to membership approval.

Alan Bennett joined 219 Entry in Oct 1970 as A Fitt (P) passing out in Oct 1972. Postings to Abingdon, Brize Norton, Laarbruch, Scampton and Binbrook culminated in arriving back at Brize for 14 years as Aircraft Ground Engineer on VC10 and finally 216 Sqn TriStars. Al left the RAF after 27yrs and commenced a second career in Power Generation at the Gas Power Station at Didcot followed by 10 years in corporate industrial Safety and Training. Married for 44 years with two grown up daughters and two grandsons Al is currently living in Carterton, Oxfordshire, within touching distance of Brize runway! Al joined the RAF Voluntary Band when at RAF Abingdon and has played in Brass Bands ever since. He currently plays and is on the committee of Witney Town Band. He learned to Tenpin Bowl at Jardines in Aylesbury (won first cup in 1971) and still bowls in the league at Astra Bowl Brize Norton. His interest in apprentice history was focussed when researching his father's wartime service and he was pleased to join Min Larkin and team at the Halton/RAFHAA Archive. He is very keen to pursue this aspect of our Heritage in the future.

Rob Rodham joined 223 Entry at Halton on 1 Jul 1971 as a Ground Electrician passing out in June 1973. Posted to Station workshops at Coningsby he later moved to 41 (F) Recce Sqn maintaining specialist photographic and associated equipment. Jan 1977 posted to 2 (AC) Sqn R.I.C. Laarbruch followed by a tour at TTTE Cottesmore in 1980 when the Tornados were arriving. Worked on selection of GSE for Tornado with various civilian manufacturers before instructing tradesmen on the new equipment. Left RAF in 1984. Rob became an instructor in Saudi-Arabia for BAC, followed with telecoms work with Siemens and Marconi. After being made redundant, Rob worked with various companies before becoming an instructor at Rolls-Royce, Derby where he achieved formal teaching and assessor qualifications. He retired (officially) in 2020 after employment with various colleges and training providers. Since then, Rob has been working 4-8 days a month undertaking End Point Assessments on behalf of two awarding bodies on apprentices at the end of their 3 or 4 year courses. Rob's skills will help the Association develop a STEM programme for youngsters as part of our Heritage commitment.

Garron Clark-Darby joined 222 Entry as a Craft Apprentice (Weapons) in 1971. After postings to Chivenor, Brawdy, Upavon, Gutersloh and Scampton he left the RAF in 1988. He discovered he had a talent for contractual matters and trained to become a Legal Adviser, working for Rediffusion Flight Simulators, ABB Robotics and Mercedes-Benz. Later, he also qualified as a Certified Data Protection Officer (DPO) and became Senior Legal Adviser and DPO for Deutsche Telekom, covering commercial and contract management, telecommunications licensing and data protection. Garron is married, with three adult children, and lives in Wing,

Buckinghamshire, where he provides armaments advice to the Wing Airfield Trust. In 2019, Garron became a volunteer at the Trenchard Museum, where he is now Assistant Curator. He still finds time to shoot his collection of military rifles and is a committee member for the Lee Enfield Rifle Association (LERA). He also enjoys driving his Austin Healey. Garron is ideally placed to take over from Min Larkin as our Heritage member.

\*\*\*\*\*

One of our objectives as a charitable association is to make donations to suitable needy causes. At the Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March, those attending agreed unanimously to gift £5k to the Disasters Emergency Committee who are working in conjunction with the British Red Cross Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. We feel certain you will all endorse our action.

\*\*\*\*\*

Phil Sprinks reports that the 500 Club continues to attract new followers that has now reached 366 players. It is hardly surprising really because most ex-brats are canny and can spot a good deal! Should any member wish to join the 500 Club, please contact Phil at [500club@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:500club@rafhaa.co.uk).

The winners for March 2022 were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize of £732 went to Rob Rodham (again) of the 223<sup>rd</sup> with lucky number 7 (again). Rob won the first time in June 2021...
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize of £366 goes to Dick Richardson of the 81<sup>st</sup> with lucky number 485
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize of £183 goes to Mark Philpotts of the 138<sup>th</sup> with lucky number 64.

The April 2022 results are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> prize of £732 goes to Phil Sprinks of the 90<sup>th</sup> with lucky number 237. Founder member.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize of £366 goes to Mike Pond of the 82<sup>nd</sup> with lucky number 3

3<sup>rd</sup> prize of £183 goes to Tony Green of the 216<sup>th</sup> with lucky number 32. Tony won the first time in February 2022...

\*\*\*\*\*

April 23<sup>rd</sup> (St Georges Day) marks two years since the new Council (with the agreement of the Charity Commission) took over the reins of our Association. Much has been achieved in that time and I am so pleased that Reunion 2022 is now a reality! And the future looks so much brighter with the new volunteers stepping up to the plate. I look forward very much to meeting everyone on 6<sup>th</sup> August.

**Frank Denton-Powell**

**Chairman RAFHAA**

**90<sup>th</sup> Entry**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Reunion Note:**

Your **ticket** and **id** at the Reunion will be your **Membership Card** and you will be issued with a lanyard and plastic card holder at **Registration** when you arrive. If you have a guest they will also be issued at **Registration** with a membership style card with **GUEST** printed on it, lanyard and card holder. The RAF Police and the camp guards may ask for your id at any time during the day, particularly if you are not wearing your lanyard and they will have a list of attendees to cross check against. If they are not satisfied with your explanation you may be escorted off the camp or, after cross checking with myself, you will be detailed to report to the

Henderson/Groves Parade Ground Sweeping Party which will take place immediately after the March Past.

Please check that you have not lost or misplaced your Membership Card, if you have please contact the Membership Secretary ([membership@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:membership@rafhaa.co.uk)) who will facilitate a replacement for you. If you turn up on the day without your Membership Card you will be able to get a replacement at Registration for a small donation to the Heritage Fund.

Please click on the link below for a Reunion Application Form.

[https://mcusercontent.com/b2639fb6ea45e44c2829a5366/files/27c56096-53b7-c6bb-7ab5-fc4a9b362e37/REUNION\\_2022\\_APPLICATION\\_FORM.02.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/b2639fb6ea45e44c2829a5366/files/27c56096-53b7-c6bb-7ab5-fc4a9b362e37/REUNION_2022_APPLICATION_FORM.02.pdf)

***Les Shardlow (103rd)***

***General Secretary RAFHAA***

\*\*\*\*\*

Finally, 'That's a nice picture' :



**'Preparing to Launch' -230 Sqn Sunderland, Calshot, circa 1952**

\*\*\*\*\*