



RAFHAA NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021

With only a couple of weeks to go before Christmas, this Newsletter will be our last of 2021. Your Council has had another busy year and good progress has been made on many fronts. While 2025 is still the published date of RAF Halton closure, there is a shortfall in MOD plans to cement this timescale in place. Our discussions with MOD on disposal of assets, particularly our interest in St Georges church as a long-term

location for a heritage centre are ongoing but we have been forced to delay publication of our Heritage Business Plan (originally anticipated for October) because of delays in our discussions with MOD. We will keep you informed as new information emerges.

I am sure you would all like to know that Min Larkin (63rd) and long-time supporter of RAFHAA in many roles was taken seriously ill on 5th November. Following outstanding care in High Wycombe Hospital, Min has now returned home where we all hope his recovery continues to gain strength.

Our Annual Remembrance Service and Tribute event took place at RAF Halton on 10th November. Following a simple service of Remembrance led by Padre Ashley Mitchell, AVM Nick Kurth (231st) and Gp Capt D Startup Stn Cdr RAF Halton laid wreaths at our Tribute. The Golden Oldies played their magical music, a guard of honour of immaculately presented trainees from RAF

Halton provided fond memories of our days long past and the Last Post and Reveille were sounded beautifully by Cpl WRAF Sharon Chinn, RAF Halton Voluntary Band. Afterwards, attendees gathered in the Sergeants' Mess for lunch. The photograph below is of AVM Kurth laying a wreath at the Tribute.



Many of our members turned out for Remembrance events all over the world. Les

Shardlow and thirty ex Apprentices and Boy Entrants were in the leading RAF party at this years' Cenotaph Parade.

A few of whom are pictured below.



HRH Prince William who took the salute.



Attached is a photograph of Clive Brooks (93rd), our IT and Web site Council member, carrying the wreath that he laid at St Michael's Church Halton village, note his forage cap with light blue ex-apprentice head band.



Rob Knott (86th) sent me the little anecdote

below that should bring a smile to your faces. I am a veteran and ex RAF.....I've mopped and bumpered, polished, bulled, FOD plodded, dusted, litter picked the universe, been messed about, fun starts, fun stops, paraded for the parade before the parade, marched up, down and back again, got on the bus, got off the bus, guarded gates, knocked off, Egyptian PT, BFT's, endured bollockings , long stands, NAAFI breaks, SRO's SSO's, numerous extras, pulled up a sandbag, swung lanterns, frequented the trailer of knowledge, 'Happy Hours' in Squadron bars, witnessed the dance of the flaming a#*eholes, dambusters, hanger footy, mess rugby, surfed ironing boards & drank my body weight on many occasions . I speak fluent abbreviation and acronym, 1250, 252, S6G, compo, SHQ, SMO dreaded SWO, gizzits, buckshee, basha, dhobi, bevv, champagne breakfast, walk of shame and done a little bit of military stuff as well.

Plans for our 2022 Reunion on 20th August 22

continue apace and over 300 members have already registered to attend. We are delighted to announce that Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston has written to our Vice-Patron Sir Dusty Miller confirming that as the event also coincides with 100th anniversary of apprentice training at RAF Halton, priority has been given to reflect RAF interest in our plans. We are therefore hopeful that the RAF Event Participation Committee will agree to some significant representation on the day. Meanwhile, our planning team has decided to ask members who are owners of Vintage, Veteran and Classic cars to park their vehicles on the Henderson Grove car park to form a display feature on the day. Anyone willing to participate in this idea please contact Les Shardlow General Secretary (secretary@rafhaa.co.uk). It goes without saying that for members yet to book for the reunion, please do so now. For ease, we attach an application form to this newsletter. Finally on this subject, I should like to ask for

a few volunteers to help on the day. Please drop Les a line if you are willing to lend a hand.

Council is also pleased to announce the introduction of a new category of RAFHAA Membership with effect from 1st January 2022. In accordance with the CIO Constitution approved at the 2021 AGM we are introducing a category of membership that will be known as “Friend” of the Association. This new category will be for next of kin of deceased ex-brats who wish to remain in contact with, and participate in, the activities of the Association. We already hold a list of people who have expressed an interest in this type of membership and going forward it is our families who will assume responsibility for the long-term heritage of our association.

Clive Brooks, our IT and Website member has been working hard on upgrading our Old Haltonian website. Early in the New Year we

will be launching a completely new version of our website that will include all the old features besides many new ones. One new feature will include a “donations.” page using the “Wonderful” platform. This platform ensures we maximise returns, including gift aid, from any donation received.

The 500 Club has contributed over £5000 to our Heritage fund over the past year and first prize is now over £700 per month. There are few lotteries that give such good odds, so it is not surprising new members are joining each month.

Results of the November 2021 draw are as follows:

1st prize of £718 goes to Anthony Whiting, (68th) with lucky number 97

2nd prize of £359 goes to Chris Prior (100th) with lucky number 109 (Unfortunately Chris has taken his Last Posting since these results - RIP Chris).

3rd prize of £180 goes to Ken Bannister

(103rd) with lucky number 136.

Results of the December draw are as follows:

1st prize of £720 goes to Andrew Baker of the 217th with lucky number 219

2nd prize of £360 goes to Tony Birtwell 216th with lucky number 5 – early bird

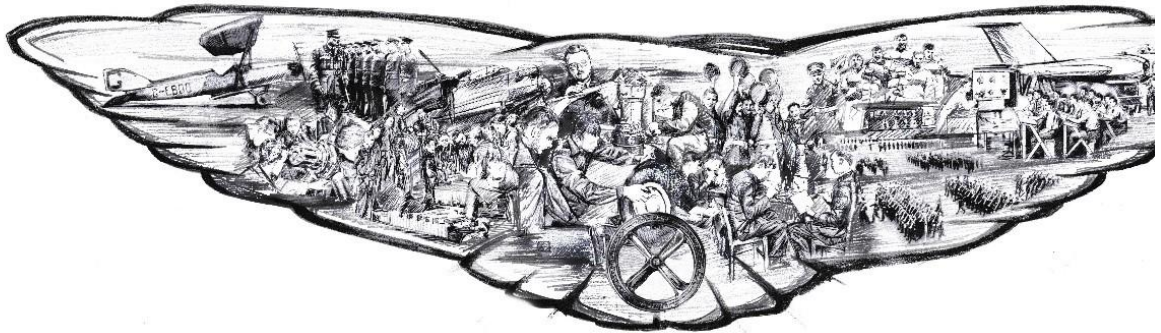
3rd prize of £180 goes Peter Priscott 84th with lucky number 370 – late bird as Peter only became a player last month.

Of note, the 500 Club has now been going for a year and received just under £20,000 since last December. Members have received £12,791 in prize money

Please contact Phil Sprinks 90th (500club@rafhaa.co.uk) for more information.

At the Council meeting on 24th November 21, Council approved a final version of a design for Trenchard's Legacy, a large bronze plaque that will be mounted on a plinth of significant dimensions, near our future Heritage centre, wherever that maybe. We are investigating

production of printed canvas replicas of the design (shown below), for sale as memorabilia in a fund-raising campaign for the Trenchard's Legacy initiative.



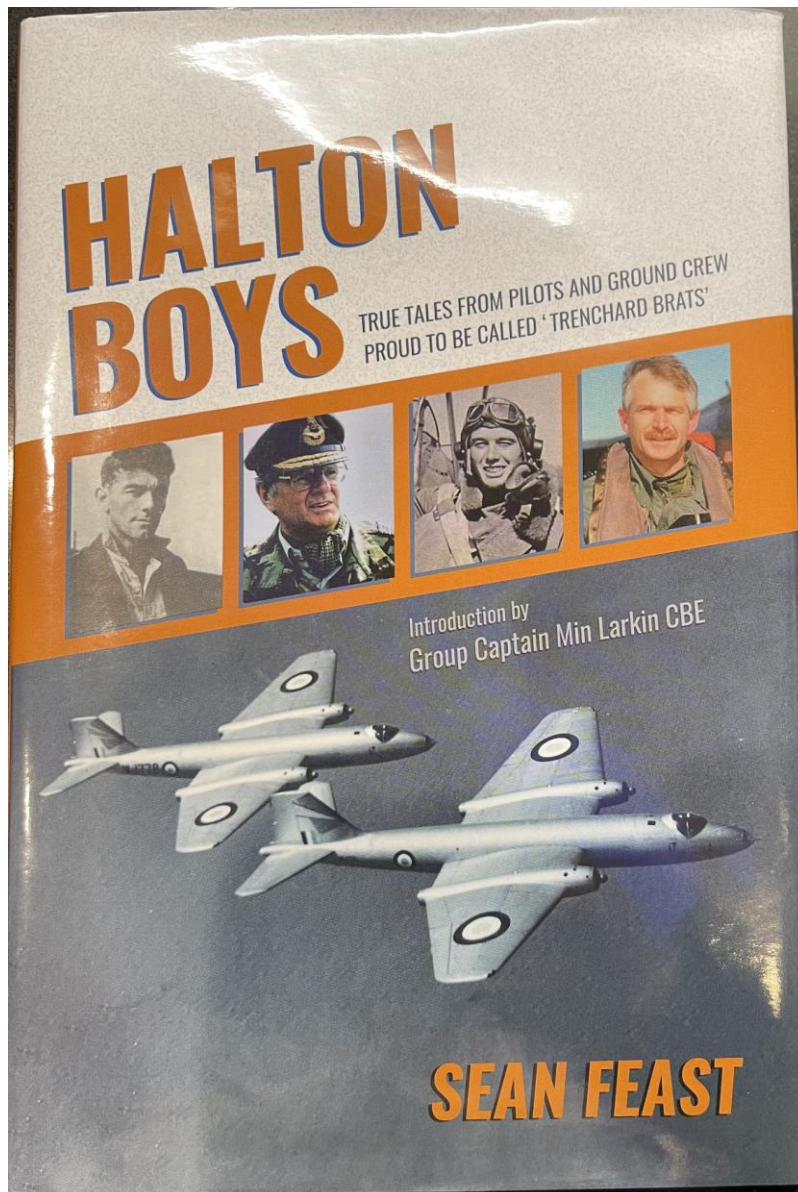
One note of interest that caught my eye in recent news coverage is the upgrading of the RAF'S early warning aircraft. The first two of three E-7 Wedgetail airborne early warning aircraft for the RAF are starting to take shape. STS Aviation is converting three Boeing 737 airliners into E-7 Wedgetail airborne early warning aircraft at its facility at Birmingham Airport. Wedgetail is an airborne early warning and control system, commonly known as AWACs or AEW&C. They are designed to track multiple targets at

sea or in the air over a considerable area for long periods of time. This aircraft is replacing the E-3D Sentry. The picture below shows an E-7 Wedgetail of the Royal Australian Air Force.



Sunday the 28th November 2021 saw a book signing by a few of the "Halton Boys" whose careers are featured in the book Halton Boys. From left to right they are Sean Feast (Author), Lawrie Haynes (216th), Min Larkin (63rd), Sir Dusty Miller (210th), Peter Goodwin (62nd) and Wally Epton (92nd).





The book signing was held at the Aces High Gallery in Wendover who also made a generous donation to the RAFHAA Heritage Fund for which we thank them.

Halton Boys is a fascinating insight into the diversity of the lives led by ex-Halton Apprentices and if you would like to buy a copy this can be obtained from the

**publishers Grub Street,
www.grubstreet.co.uk ISBN: 9781911621942.
Grub Street publish many books on Aviation History but another one that caught my eye was Ground Crew Boys of which there are two volumes (understandable I suppose as a lot happened on the ground!). To this end they have agreed to have a stall at the Reunion next year and the Association will receive 10% of the sale proceeds for our Heritage Fund.**

Regularly, I use these columns as an advertising medium to try and recruit new members to the Council. And the same goes for this Newsletter! As we move nearer to the closure of RAF Halton, the more we need good people to shape the future of the association to mastermind the development of a Halton Apprentice Heritage centre housing some of our museum assets and to create a digital visitor's attraction. We have already received an architect's report on how we might expand St George's church to add a

second storey and mezzanine viewing platform for the stained-glass windows. Funding such ambitious plans will be the key to our success as will be creative and professional management of the scheme. I feel certain there are many younger members of the association who as they now approach retirement have the skills and energy to help. These are challenging and hugely rewarding opportunities for ex-Halton apprentices to give something back. Please think seriously about how you may help and drop me a line at chairman@rafhaa.co.uk .

All that remains now is for me on behalf of your Council to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Covid remains a continuing threat to our lives so please stay safe and guard your loved ones.

Best wishes

Frank Denton-Powell 90th

Chairman RAFHAA

chairman@rafhaa.co.uk

[RAFHAA Reunion 2022 Application Form](#)