

**BRANCH
MEMBERSHIP
204**

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**

The charity that supports the RAF family

RAFAGEN

THE NEWSLETTER & MAGAZINE OF THE LETCHWORTH, HITCHIN &
DISTRICT BRANCH (now with Stevenage)

Winter 2022

Photographed by Elliot

Branch formed 15th October 1946

Association Registered Charity: 226686 (England & Wales) SC037673 (Scotland)

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RAFAGEN

The official newsletter and magazine of the
ROYAL AIR FORCES' ASSOCIATION
LETCWORTH , HITCHIN & DISTRICT
BRANCH OFFICIALS FOR 2022

Now including Stevenage



Hon. President Viscount Lord Trenchard

Chairman:- W.O. Shaun Griffin

Vice Chairman:- Ken Needham

Secretary:- Marie Mahoney

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Branch Welfare Officer: Vacant

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Branch R.A.F.A.L.O. Warrant Officer Shaun Griffin

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(email kwn056@btinternet.com Telephone 01462671534)



VISIT OUR
WEBSITE

rafa-leitchworth.org.uk



The Branch are delighted and hugely honoured to announce the appointment of Viscount Lord Hugh Trenchard as our Branch Honorary President.

Lord Trenchard served in the British Army from 1972 – 1980 as a Captain in the 4th Bttn, the Royal Green Jackets. In 2006, he became Honorary Air Commodore of 600 (City of London) Squadron RAuxAF. Furthermore, Lord Trenchard served as a member of council and trustee for our sister charity the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund from 1991-2003 and again from 2006 – 2013.

Lord Trenchard has been a loyal supporter of the Branch for many years, most recently joining with the Branch in our B of B Church Service; RAF 100th anniversary celebrations back in 2018; and Willian Road Memorial 100 year anniversary in 2012.

Of course, being the grandson of the ‘Father of the Royal Air Force’ Marshall of the Royal Air Force Hugh Montague Trenchard GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO – the honoured bestowed on our Royal Air Forces Association Branch is of the highest order – we look forward to many years of your Honorary Presidency.



It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of member Roy Newbury in Addenbrookes Hospital.

Roy was 94

A few words from Ken Needham

I first knew Roy when he joined the branch in 2008. At that time we had just lost our Standard Bearer, and Roy volunteered for the post. After his first funeral, it wasn't long before he had written a procedure on funeral duties, as he thought that such an important duty must be perfect. Whenever a vacancy in a branch position came up, Roy didn't allow it to stay vacant for long, as he would stand in with his usual enthusiasm. He was finally appointed Vice Chairman, a position he held until age caught up with him, and he didn't think he could do the position justice.

Roy was one of the main contributors to the 100 year ceremony of the William Memorial. Whilst I did the admin side, he arranged for the pilot's families to attend, and with the help of our then RAFALO invite the RAF 3 Sqn Colour Party from RAF Coningsby.

I remember on a branch visit to RAF Honington and the RAF Regiment museum, Roy was inspecting one of the exhibit of the Middle East, just after World War II, and spotted an error, which he pointed out to a member of the staff. It was quickly corrected. Why was Roy so sure about the fact, well he was there at the time. Roy had many stories of the Middle East just after the war.

Roy we will miss you.



NEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As I was to be on holiday when the Autumn issue of RAFAGEN was to be published, I prepared it ready to send before my holiday began. Little did I know that whilst away we would receive the sad news of the death of our Queen.

I know I may be a little late after the millions of words that have been said, but I would like to offer a few more on behalf of the readers of RAFAGEN.

Our sincere condolences go out to his majesty and family members of our great Queen Elizabeth II. She has served us very well and will be greatly missed by all. She gave us hope, hope for a better future, hope for a better world. We are ever grateful for her service and her great example towards humanity. Rest in eternal peace



MORE COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR'S

I was looking in the archives of a similar magazine I once compiled for a group of RAF Police personnel, when I came across a selection of Christmas Day menus from stations across the world during the middle of 1900's.

In this country it was just after second World War, and food rationing was still in force. I remember that it wasn't turkey on the Christmas Day table, it might be a chicken, if you were lucky. I have reproduced on following pages, a few of the menus I have collected, and just take a look at the meal the RAF personnel were eating, and most of these menus are from the Airmen's mess. Remember all this would be table service, with the Officers acting as waitresses.

I suggest you take a look at the one from 107 MU Middle East. This one includes an evening buffet, which includes SPAM. The thing to remember is the year — 1944. The War was still being fought.

Do we have any Chefs amongst us who can remember what they served up at Christmas time?



My friend Pat did his National Service as a Military Policeman. Recently another friend, an ex Army Officer told him he was entitled to receive the recently issued General Service Medal for his service in the Canal Zone.

Pat did not want to bother, but the friend persuaded him. So he wrote to the appropriate department. Several weeks later he received a letter from the medals awards department. "Before we consider your application for the award of the North Atlantic Medal, will you please supply documentary evidence for the time served north of the Arctic Circle and west of the Urals during the years 1939 to 1944".

Pat wrote back ! I have never been north of the Arctic Circle; in fact I try not to go north of Watford. Furthermore during the years 1939 to 1944 I was still at school". He reiterated that his application had been for the GSM for the Canal Zone. e added a PS "Lloyd George knew my father".

MORE NEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

He received a reply apologising for the error, the request had been forwarded to the wrong department, and the writer assured him that his request has been forwarded this time to the correct department.

The writer also added a PS “The fact that the Right Honourable David Lloyd George MP was acquainted with your father will have no bearing on the committees’ decision in this matter”.

I guess some civil servants DO have a sense of humour after!!.

Pat has now received his medal.



That little antidote reminds me of the first time I attended the Remembrance parade in Letchworth, I had just received my white beret denoting my trade in the Royal Air Force, and this was the first time I was proudly wearing it. It certainly made me prominent in the crowd, as a number of ex RAF Police came up to me for a brief chat.

One person approached my wife and said “I didn’t know that Ken had served in the Arctic Convoys. I may be old, but not that old.

For the record, my beret is off white, whilst the members of the Arctic Circle’s berets are pure white.

Merry Christmas!!!!!!!!!!

NEW MEMBERS

Information supplied by the Membership Department of RAFA

Message from HQ regarding the mony we collected for the 2022 WINGS APPEAL.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you and everyone that has supported your branch's fundraising efforts this year. I am happy to confirm that Letchworth/Hitchin and District Branch has raised £1,845.19

Director of Marketing, Fundraising and Trading

As a Branch we would have liked to have collected more, but events over the year, effected us in setting up the RAFA Gazebo in our towns.

It was agreed by the Committee that this year we would not request any rebate as the figure was lower than we expected, nor did we claim any out of pocket expenses.

Let us hope that the 2023 Wings Appeal will be more fruitful.



BRANCH SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND REDEDICATION FOR VICTORY IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

SUNDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2022

After a wonderful service, guests sat down for tea and biscuits





Churchill had spent the day watching the operators and commanders directing planes to meet German threats, and he told Major General Hastings Ismay that he felt “deeply moved” by what he had seen.

After a few minutes of silence, he said, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

LAST NAAFI BREAK OF 2022



Happy
Christmas
from all
NAAFI
Breakers



Next NAAFI
BREAK

Wednesday
January 25th 2023

10.00 hrs



COMMITTEE NEWS

**SEPTEMBER &
NOVEMBER 2022**

At the September meeting both the Chairman and Vice Chairman were otherwise engaged. Therefore the Rev. Lindsay Dew was given the task of chairing the meeting.

The main discussion at the meeting was to ensure that everything was ready for the Battle of Britain Church Service on 2nd October. I don't know what they were worrying about, as those who attended knew that it would be a great success.

The Secretary told the meeting of the timetable for the Wings Appeal collection day in Hitchin. As we now know this had to be cancelled due to the death of Her Majesty.

The Treasurer may not have been in attendance, but he did leave a copy of the accounts for the Committee to peruses. There seemed to be no problems as they were approved.

At the November meeting the Vice Chairman was back standing in for the Chairman who is still looking after the RAF.

Not a lot to discuss outside of the usual housekeeping work. The meeting Chairman did thank those who organised the Battle of Britain service. This was the first one we had ever held, and it was such a success that we look forward to another next year.

This year we would be laying Remembrance Day Wreaths at Letchworth, Baldock, Hitchin and Stevenage on behalf of the Branch and the Association.

Upon checking to see if there have been any updates on applying for the Veteran's ID Card, I find that it has not been updated since February 2022, which has already been passed on to you. That is to say it is only being giving to serving personnel as they leave the forces.



Christmas Cracker Jokes!!!!!!?

A man walked into a bar? - ouch

Father Christmas said, doctor, I feel so unfit, - the doctor replied, you need to go to an elf farm.

Have you heard the joke about the broken pencil? - There's no point in telling you

How did the human cannonball lose his job? - He got fired

How do you hire a horse? - Stand in on four bricks

How do you keep cool at a football match? - you stand next to a fan

If money does not grow on trees, how come banks have so many branches

What are two rows of cabbages called? - A dual cabbage way

What award goes to designers of door knockers? - A no bell prize

What bee can never be understood? - a mumble-bee

What cereals do cats like? - Mice crispie

A wonderful Christmas song told me to Deck The Halls....so I did. Mr. and Mrs Hall were not very happy.

Sorry

STORMY WEATHER

Reflection of his military service by Ken Needham

Over the past few months we have seen the devastation caused by storms in the Americas and the Far East.

During my tour of duty in Ceylon I was once involved in helping in the relief to the population of that country after a hurricane hit the island.

In January 1958 a Minister had made a speech in the House of Commons. The following is taken from Hansards of that time.

"I wish tonight to call attention to the devastation and hardship caused by the appalling floods which occurred just before my arrival in Ceylon. In the third week of December, rains which have no parallel in recent records caused widespread and extensive damage throughout the island. The death roll exceeded 300, and at least 300,000 people, many of them the poorest peasants, suffered as a result of the floods through the destruction of their paddy lands, the loss of their homes, and the loss of all their livestock, The damage caused is now being investigated, but a provisional estimate suggests that it will cost in the neighbourhood of £40 million or £50 million to restore.

The floods were caused by continuous rains during the north-east monsoon. At one place I visited, I was told that there had been eleven inches of rain in twenty-four hours, a thing difficult for us in this country to appreciate. Such rains as these caused the breach of bunds of several of the larger irrigation reservoirs in the North, Central and Eastern provinces. These are the main rice producing areas of Ceylon, and

in many cases the floods completely wiped out all the harvest which was expected this year"

We were aware of the storm, and a small amount of damage had occurred on the Royal Air Force Katunayake camp, but we only realised the amount of devastation there was up country, when planes from countries all over the world landed bringing much needed relief supplies.

The call went out to all RAF personnel for volunteers to help on the supply drops to the cut off areas. I know there is a saying in the forces "Never volunteer", but I wanted to do my bit to help in this disaster. I was told to report to movements at 07.00 hrs the next day. There were quite a number of volunteers turned up. I and four others which included a Flight Sergeant were allocated to a Valetta aircraft.

There was very little room for us as the whole body of the aircraft was full of sacks. The aircraft door had been removed. The Flight Sergeant told us to fasten ourselves to the harnesses on the side of the fuselage.

We took off and flew at a fairly low level, and as we travelled further north we could see just what damage the storm had done. The water was still laying many feet deep in places.

En route a platform was pushed into the space where the door should have been. Finally the aircraft started to circle, and as we did the plane started to bank very steeply.

I was not good at heights, but usually I was fine in a plane. Wrong! My legs started to weaken. But I was a policeman, I could not let the side down in front of these airman. It got worse. The Flight Sergeant pointed to me and another volunteer and yelled over the noise "You two, one foot on the staging, you

others start handing them the bags when I say". The plane started to bank more, I was now looking almost straight down. "Now" came the command and I was handed the first sack. I took it, and threw it out.

By the time I had released the first sack, the second was ready. I quickly got into a routine, but was wishing that the next bag would be the last. To my amazement none of the sacks bust open on landing. To stop myself being sick I had to keep concentrating on what I was doing, but I could hear in the distance, above the noise such comments as "See if you can hit that chap with the green shirt" I just ignored them, anyway I couldn't have hit anything if I was trying, if they only knew how scared I was. Once all the sacks had gone, which seemed to take forever, the plane levelled and the platform was brought in, and we were back to normal, or as normal as it could be until we landed.

There was nobody more relieved than me when that plane came to a stop.

I didn't volunteer for any further relief work.






Royal Air Force Station,
Netheravon, Wilts

DINNER
Christmas Day, 1951

MENU

Tomato Soup
* * *

Roast Turkey Stuffing Bread Sauce	Roast Pork Apple Sauce Chipolatas
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Roast Potatoes Brussels Sprouts	Carrots Peas
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* * *

Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce
* * *

Cheese biscuits, Fruit and Nuts
* * *

Beer Minerals Cigarettes ✱

The Station Commander wishes All Ranks
A Very Merry Christmas



CHRISTMAS MENU.

Creme of Tomato Soup.
Roast Turkey.
Bread Sauce.
Mashed Potatoes-Roast Potatoes
Green Peas-Spring Greens
Christmas Pudding,
Brandy Sauce.
Mince Pies.- Fruit - Nuts.
Beer - Cigarettes.



CEYLON 1943

MENU

11TH DECEMBER 1948.

CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP

CHEESE OMELETTE

ROAST PORK
APPLE SAUCE
FORCEMEAT STUFFING
ROAST POTATOES
GREEN PEAS
VICHY CARROTS
BROWN SAUCE

FRUIT GATEAUX

COFFEE



107 MW. R.A.F.
MIDDLE EAST
CHRISTMAS
1944

MENU

DINNER
TOMATO SOUP
SALMON MAYONNAISE
ROAST TURKEY, STUFFING,
ROAST PORK, APPLE SAUCE,
GREEN PEAS, CAULIFLOWER,
ROAST OR CREAMED POTATOES,
BROWN SAUCE.
XMAS PUDDING, BRANDY SAUCE
FRUIT, NUTS, SWEETS
1 BOTTLE OF BEER OR LEMONADE,
CIGARETTES.




COLD BUFFET 1800-20.00hrs
COLD MEAT, SPAM,
ASSTD SANDWICHES, CAKES,
PASTRIES, SARONES ON TOAST,
TRIFLE, MINCE PIES,
TELLIES,
BLANC MANGE,
XMAS CAKE.

SIGNS.

49 SQUADRON

In the Field Christmas 1918

MENU

Pica Picures.

Patage
Concombre P924

Entree
New Turkey 1817 A.D.
Mutton Bones. Wing

Sauces


Legumes
Brussel Flappers
Pommes Granite (small)
Rumic de Terre

Sauces
Filles on Toast

Entremets
Tarte Chu Chu Chow
Ye Olde Christmas Sickness

G.H.O. Cheese. Butter
Nuts & Raisins. Naughty Wife
Cigarette etc. Bolo

R.A.F. Station Christmas 1944
Cangmere



*The Commanding Officer & Officers
wish you all A Happy Christmas*

MENU

Tomato Soup

Roast Stuffed Turkey
Roast Pork Sausages
Apple Sauce


Roast Potatoes Brussel Sprouts

Christmas Pudding
Brandy Sauce


Mince Pies Whipped Cream

Dessert Apples Nuts & Raisins

Minerals Ales Cigarettes



**No.1. Apprentice Wing
Christmas Dinner & Celebration
ROYAL AIR FORCE LOCKING**
16th December, 1957. 18:00 Hrs



MENU

Cream of Tomato Soup

Roast Norfolk Turkey
Stuffing Bread Sauce
Chipolata Sausage
Thick Giblet Gravy

Roast & Creamed Potatoes
Garden Peas Brussel Sprouts

Christmas Pudding Brandy Sauce
Ice Cream & Mincepies

Apples Nuts Oranges
Minerals & Cigarettes

R.A.F. PERSHORE



**Christmas
1944**

"I wish you all that you would wish yourselves. A Happy Christmas, Good Luck, Prosperity and Peace in the New Year"

GROUP CAPTAIN M. D. CRICHTON-BIGGIE, D.F.C.

No. 41 Movements Unit (E.M.B.)
ROYAL AIR FORCE.
Colombo,
Ceylon.

**CHRISTMAS DINNER
1953.**

Cream of Tomato

Fried Fillet of Seer & Lime

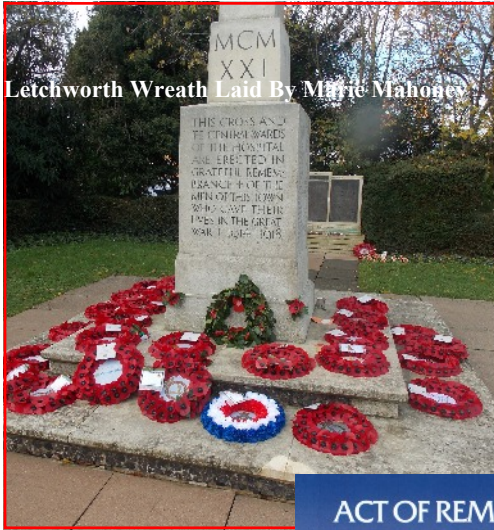
Roast Turkey & Chipolatas
Roast Pork, Apple Sauce Stuffing
Baked & Creamed Potatoes
Peas, Cauliflower

Christmas Pudding, Brandy Butter
Fruit Salad & Cream

Mince Pies, Dessert, Nuts, Chocolate
Cheese & Biscuits

Beer, Minerals, Cigarettes
Coffee.

"A Very Happy Christmas to You All"



ACT OF REMEMBRANCE
AND COMMITMENT SERVICE





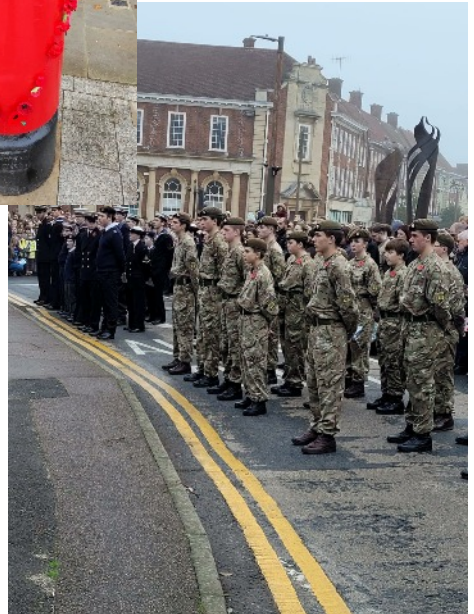
Stevenage



Baldock



Hitchin



Letchworth Garden City



Hello again,

It hardly seems possible that it'll be next Sunday that the church begins a new year with the observance of Advent. Another year almost gone and Christmas is fast coming towards us. Where did the last year go to. The long summer days (sometimes boiling hot) seem a long time ago now as we begin to feel a real chill in the air

Advent is the season that can often get 'lost' and forgotten in the mad rush towards Christmas so it's good to be reminded that there are 4 Sundays in Advent which create a pathway towards Christmas. Last Sunday was 'stir-up' Sunday the last Sunday of the Church's year and the old Collect was used in many churches. 'Stir up O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people, that they richly bearing the fruit of good words may by Thee be richly rewarded'. A prayer inviting God to stir us up to good works. Not to earn our way to heaven but rather to reveal the love which He has for us which turns our lives around and changes us as we recognise that His love changes everything. As we enter the season of Advent we call to mind and prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus born as a Babe in Bethlehem, and also to prepare our hearts and lives to greet him when He comes again in power and glory bring judgement and mercy for all. The idea is that we will use Advent to prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus, so that we shall be the more ready to greet Him when he comes again.

When Christmas comes and the church both individually and collectively greets the birth of Jesus and we greet Him again into a world that had entered a time of war in Europe. The unjustified invasion of Russia into Ukraine has changed the world – at least for those of us living in the West, although change will be occurring almost everywhere as a direct result of the Russian invasion.

A world facing disruption, fear, heartache and sadness. It was into this same kind of world that Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago - a world of uncertainty, a world of sorrow and sadness, a world with a mix of human failure and success. The message that Jesus came to live and to show was the message of God's love. His presence with us in our joys and in our sorrows and to love us so much that He would draw us back to a living experience of the His love which makes all the difference.

So as you prepare for Christmas 2022 do remember to hear the story again and to say 'thank you' for all the good things we have received not least health and wellbeing. As we prepare, with all haste towards Christmas, I hope that all of us might be encouraged to spend some time in opening of lives to the wonder of God's love in the birth of His Son.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a joyful, peaceful New Year.

Whether you are someone with a faith or not, I am more than happy to be contacted if you think I can offer support and friendship, help or advice. I will usually be at the monthly Branch meetings, and the NAAFI Break, as well as serving on the Committee. You can ring me on 07545878082 or email me on lindsaycharlesdew@gmail.com

Cheers & blessings

Lindsay

Revd Canon Lindsay Dew



Stir up Sunday

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Branch members

Shawn Griffin (Chairman)

Ken Needham (Vice Chairman)

Marie Mahoney (Secretary)

Rev. Lindsay Dew (Branch Padre)

Lesley Starr (Committee Member)

John Airey (Committee Member)

Eric Dagless (Wings Appeal Officer)

Jim Box (Committee Member)

Members of the Funny Hat Brigade



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Information supplied by Membership Department of The Royal Air Forces Association

Mr John Tunesi of Liongam from Baldock

In order that the Officers of the Branch can keep up to date with information on our members, they need to obtain such details from the Association Head Office. This information is used only so that we can keep our members up to date on the Branch news.

We are finding that in some cases the information we are given is out of date. The Head Office information is only as good as the information they receive from YOU.

If you have changed your address, telephone number, or e mail address over the past year, and not informed RAFA Head office, may we ask that you do so, in order that we can contact more of our members.



The home of the Branch NAAFI BREAK

Last Wednesday morning of each month 10.00 hrs til noon

ALL MEMBERS OF THE RAF FAMILY WELCOME



Photographed By Elliot

Contemporary Photographic Art

Thanks to
Elliot for
supplying some
of the photos in
this issue of
RAFAGEN



Find me on



or email me on...

photograpedbyelliott1@outlook.com

The RAFAGEN is produced every quarter and sent to members of the Letchworth, Hitchin & District branch of the Royal Air Forces Association.

If you would like to tell your story in RAFAGEN or have any comments about the magazine, the branch or the Association, we would like to hear from you. It can either be by hard copy through the mail, (any photographs will be returned immediately) to Ken Needham 68 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth Garden City, Herts SG6 3HJ, or via email to kwn056@btinternet.com

The next issue will be published in Late January 2023

NAAFI BREAKS and events for the next few months are as follows :-

DECEMBER NO MEETING

25th JANUARY NAAFI BREAK

**22nd FEBRUARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by
NAAFI BREAK**

29th MARCH NAAFI BREAK

Should you wish not to receive the regular issues of RAFAGEN, would you please advise the branch secretary on secretary@rafa-letchworth.org.uk, who will arrange for your address to be deleted from our list.

