43(F)Squadron Association

NEWSLETTER 2026

Message from The President: Sir Simon Bryant KCB CBE

Dear Fellow Fighting Cocks

I hope our annual missive finds you hale and hearty this festive season and as we approach the turn of the year, it's time to plan our annual reunion **to be held on 18 Apr 2026 at Leuchars**. Details of the weekend and how to register for the dinner are outlined below. I encourage you all to put the dates in your diary and make arrangements now, don't let the small occasion of Christmas get in the way!

2026 marks the 110th anniversary of the Squadron, a significant milestone so we are keen to have a really good turn-out to mark this historic event. The theme will be '1916' to mark the formation of 43 Squadron RFC in the fields of Falleninch Farm, and this will be reflected during the dinner. For those north of the border, I would also like to draw your attention to the parade by 1019 City of Stirling ATC Squadron and the other squadrons in their Sector, at Fallenich on 15 Apr to mark the anniversary. This has become an annual event and 1019 have plans to make this one bigger and better with music and flypasts, including from a Sopwith 1.5 strutter. Updates for this and the other weekend activities mentioned below will be posted on our Facebook page.

Throughout the year your committee work to keep the Association running smoothly and to ensure we can continue to meet old comrades and tell tall stories in good

company. I would like to draw your attention to one piece of work which is looking at profiling our fund expenditure to the inevitable decline in our numbers over time, more in a piece below by Roy our Treasurer.

As ever, Committee members would love to get your feedback on this or any other topic including the alternating Leuchars and London programme.

Look forward to seeing you all in April, Gloria Finis.

Annual Reunion Dinner

This years' dinner will take place on **18 April 2026** in the Officers Mess, Leuchars Station.

18:30 for a 19:30 dinner.

The cost will be **£65 per head** including pre-dinner drinks, wine and Port with the meal. Please note that the cost of the meal is being subsidised by £15:00 per person utilising Association funds.

We are hoping to run transport from and to Dundee with selected pick-up points en-route. Seating allocation will be on a 'First Come, First Served' basis. Timings will be notified nearer the time. It has been decided that due to the costs involved with coach hire, a **£5:00 per head** contribution will be required. This should be included with your payment for the dinner. Once paid, could you please inform Jim Campbell (campbelljim01@gmail.com) of your accommodation details so I can let you know pick up/drop off points.

Menu Details

Assorted Pre-Dinner Drinks

King Prawn & Smoked Salmon

Grilled Fillet of Angus Beef

Raspberry & white Chocolate cheesecake

Cheeseboard

Coffee & Petit Fours

Please Note: If you need a vegetarian option, contact Sam Jones at time of booking.

Booking & Payment:

The cost is **£65** per person. Dress: Lounge suits and Squadron ties or equivalent.

Please register by making a bank transfer to: -

No 43(F) Squadron The Fighting Cocks Association

Sort: 20-60-55

A/C: 80371963

Account Name: No 43(F) Squadron The Fighting Cocks Association

with your surname & initials as the reference.

Then email Sam, **(43squadronreunion@gmail.com)** with your name and those of your guests, so that we have a list of those attending for access to the camp **when photo ID will be required**.

The **closing date** for payment and booking is **27 Mar 2026** but please book as soon as you can so we get an early idea of numbers. Questions or correspondence about the dinner including any dietary requirements to Sam at **43squadronreunion@gmail.com**

There is a variety of accommodation available in Fife and over the bridge in Dundee. We plan to run a coach from Dundee and return, with pick-ups/drop-offs on the main road through to Leuchars. As previously stated, £5:00 pp will be required. Register for a place on the coach by contacting **campbelljim01@gmail.com** by **27 Mar 2026**

Leuchars may be able to provide a limited amount of accommodation, particularly to those still serving. You can try them at the following numbers:

Officers Mess – 01334 857395

Sergeants Mess – 01334 857408

Transit Accommodation – 01334 857181

Annual Reunion Weekend

Saturday 18 Apr 2026

Montrose Aviation Museum.

A tour of the Montrose aviation museum is well worthwhile whilst you are in the area, in particular a chance to view the 43 Sqn exhibits; a Hunter in 43(F) Sqn markings, a selection of the Association's paintings and the Sqn's kills board from the First World War.

Leuchars Airfield Visit.

It is hoped to organise a walk down memory lane with a tour round the airfield. If you are interested, please contact Matt Patterson:
matthew-paterson@hotmail.com

Pub Lunch.
We plan to nominate a suitable watering hole to gather on Saturday. Look out for further details on the website or Facebook page.

Sunday 19 Apr 2026

Act of Remembrance.

An informal act of remembrance at Leuchars cemetery war memorial followed by the chance to lay flowers at the graves of former 43 Squadron personnel. All welcome. Time: 1100

Further details will be notified as they become available. Please keep an eye open on the Association Website

Last Function

Another splendid evening held in the RAF Club Piccadilly. Although numbers were slightly lower than hoped for, those who were able to make it had a great evening. Reduced attendance allowed people to strike up longer conversations with friends and colleagues, old and new. We were joined by many familiar faces and some that were new to the Association.

The President addressed the gathered members and guests, thanking everyone for their continuing support, particularly Gill Howie (who was recently awarded the BEM, many congratulations) and husband Berry. He also gave mention to Ian “Huggy” Hughes, who has retired after a most successful career leading the RAF Central Scotland Pipes and Drums and being an instrumental (pardon the pun) member of the RAF Pipes and Drums. Sir Simon then went on to remind us of how the Association came about and paid particular tribute to Jimmy Beedle for laying the foundations of the Association and to the Fighting Cocks who keep it going to this day.

In keeping with this years’ theme of “The Hunter”, the Chairman highlighted the fact that 43(F) were the first Squadron to operate this iconic aircraft and described some of the milestones, including the formation, by the Squadron, of the first Hunter display team. This nicely segued into the introduction of Gwyn Williams, who, although not expecting to speak, gave a most informative, interesting and humorous talk about his time on the Hunter. Some of the anecdotes of his time in Aden had us in stitches. Many thanks Gwyn.

Reunion Planning

We have noticed a reduction in numbers during the last 2 London based dinners. We would like to hear from you, our members, to ascertain if a London reunion and dinner is still something you look forward to and want to attend.

Remembrance Day 2025

The Association continues to build a close relationship with 1019 City of Stirling ATC who now regularly parade each year with the Dunblane and Alloa units at the

Falleninch memorial, to commemorate the founding of the Squadron. They have now taken on the duty of laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday at our memorial in the Church of the Holy Rude. Well done to Sgt Olivia Dixon of 1019 Squadron (Stirling) who laid a wreath at our memorial in the Church on Remembrance Sunday.

1019 Squadron (City of Stirling) Air Cadets – Falleninch Memorial Parade

A big thank you to 1019 Squadron AC for conducting their annual memorial parade to commemorate the founding of the Squadron in Apr 1916. 1019 Squadron have taken on this role with great enthusiasm planning to make the event bigger and better each year. The 2026 parade looks to be a memorable event so if you can lend your support, please do. Keep an eye on the Association Facebook page for more details.

Deaths:

It is with great sadness we notify you of the passing of the following Fighting Cocks:

Iain "Scud" Berry. AirframeTechnician Late 80's early 90's

Passed away Apr 25

Geoff Rosenbloon Hunter Pilot

Passed Away March 25

Allan Pollock. Notorious Hunter Pilot, famous for flying through Tower Bridge

Passed away July 25

Norman Browne. F4 Navigator. Flew with Aerobatic Display A/C

Passed Away July 25

Frank Shelton. Avionic Trade Manager Late 80's

Passed away Aug 25

Frank Hall. SEngO Late 80's

Passed Away Oct 25

Roger Beazley. F4 Display Pilot

Passed away Oct 25

Jock Heron. Hunter Pilot. Association Committee member for many years.

Passed Away Nov 25

Informal Reunions

The annual Tornado F3 reunion will take place on Friday 15 May 26 in London, venue tbc.

The annual Phantom reunion will take place on Friday 6 November 26 venue tbc.

The Association's Finances

The title and the fact that this comes from the Treasurer may trigger many of you to skip past to something more interesting. However, what I have to say will have a direct effect on you, the remaining members of the Association. I say remaining because, as you will all be aware, we happy band are reducing in number inexorably as each year passes. There will come a time when our numbers are such that the Association no longer becomes viable in practical terms.

In the beginning (1947) the Association was setup with four principles (set in stone – to quote the original secretary):

1. Membership open to all ranks.
2. No joining fee.
3. No Annual subscription.
4. No rule book (constitution).

These have been rigorously applied and defended through the years, despite several attempts to amend – most often the question of annual subscription. The cost of the annual dinner was met by those attending and helped by some who chose to donate a little more to help others not as well placed. These extra donations were not restricted to the annual reunion but were received throughout the year and helped build a small fund that the Association could call upon to maximise membership attendance by giving financial aid where needed.

That situation improved significantly in 2008 when the Association received a very generous legacy from the estate of Alan Morton, a former wartime member of the Squadron. Since then, the Association has been able to fulfil Alan's wish of helping members, particularly the most junior to attend the annual reunion through subsidising their costs, whilst also discounting the cost of the dinner for everyone

to encourage attendance. The level of subsidies is agreed by the committee, but in real terms the amount spent has been little more than the annual interest earned. In other words, the Association still holds the bulk of Alan's legacy, which currently sits around £30k. Current Fund guidance also allows for financial support to significant anniversaries, festivals and special events, last used to offset the costs of the Centenary celebrations in Stirling. Finally, any capital remaining when the Association is dissolved, is to be donated to the RAFBF.

Given that the Association has a finite lifespan, the Committee are undertaking work to profile the use of the Fund in line with the principals above to a horizon that you the members are broadly in agreement with. Currently we are thinking 10-15 years, but is that too short or too long? Let us know, so that we can make the most of this fabulous and incredibly generous legacy to see the Fighting Cocks off into the sunset.

Roy Macintyre

Hon. Treasurer

A Request

One of the stipulations of the bequest from Alan Morton, mentioned in Roy's statement, was that the fund be used to help Fighting Cocks to attend reunions should they find themselves particularly financially disadvantaged. If you know of anyone who meets this criterion, please let one of the committee know so that we can reach out and assist if necessary.

The Memory of 43(F) and the Association can only keep going with your support. If you have any ideas, events, memories (suitable for publication) please let one of the committee members know so that we may carry on the legacy left to us.

Derek Johnston:	Chairman	Email: dh.johnston60@gmail.com
Roy MacIntyre:	Treasurer	Email: roymaci43@gmail.com
Jim Campbell:	Secretary	Email: campbelljim01@gmail.com
Sam Jones:	Events	Email: samjones43@googlemail.com
Aaron Wood:		
Jules Bourn:		
Colin McShane:		

A Bit of History

43(F) Squadron re-equipped with the Hunter Mk 1 in September 1954 and was the first Sqn to fly this new aircraft type. The first Hunter in the Flight Authorisation Book appeared on 17 September. The 18th was Battle of Britain day and the demo pilot, Sqn Ldr Le Long, generated a sonic boom as part of his display routine. Other pilots emulated this during normal sorties until, as a result of numerous complaints and insurance claims for damaged greenhouses, the instruction that all supersonic dives should only be carried out over the sea was issued.

Sqn Ldr Le Long re-formed an aerobatic team in March 1955 with himself, Sgt Tom Lampitt and Sgt Norman Lamb making up the team. Although personnel changed over time, many high profile displays were undertaken and the Sqn starred in the very popular film “High Flight”.

More of the exploits of 43(F) operating the Hunter can be found in Jimmy Beedle’s book “43 Squadron, A History of The Fighting Cocks”, from where the above was taken.

Gloria Finis