



The Association of
No 43 (Fighter) Squadron,
Royal Air Force

Newsletter – March 2022



Introduction from Our President

Dear Fellow Fighting Cocks,

With a much-anticipated return north of the border well and truly in train, I write to encourage you to make the trip to our most recent stomping ground of RAF Leuchars and sign up for this year's Dinner in September. The committee are working hard to make the whole weekend worthwhile and you will see from the programme below that it is far more than a one trick pony on the Saturday night. We also hope to encourage many of our diaspora from the Fife shires and if you are not a regular attender of our London events then we would be delighted to see you. There will clearly be a very great deal to catch up on as we meet up again, possibly after several years and at least 12 months after our first post-COVID dinner last September which was such an encouraging and enjoyable occasion. These events don't happen by themselves and the Chairman tells me that he is looking for a couple of additional committee members, particularly to represent our wonderful Hunter era and the early F4. So, if you have some time to commit to supporting the Association then please get in touch. I much look forward to seeing many of you once again in September, including on the golf course! In the interim I continue to enhance the Squadron's visibility at Tangmere where we have been central to the latest edition of the Museum's magazine.

The Return of the Fighting Cocks

Annual Reunion Weekend

Saturday 24 Sep 2022

Golf match. To register contact Sir Simon Bryant at, simonbryant791@me.com

Montrose Aviation Museum Visit. A tour of the Montrose aviation museum and in particular a chance to view their latest exhibit, a Hunter in 43(F) Sqn markings and the Association's collection of four Hunter paintings. To register contact Gill Howie at, gill.squadronprints@mac.com

Leuchars Airfield Visit. A walk down memory lane with a tour round the airfield. To register contact Matt Paterson at, matthew-paterson@hotmail.com

Pub Lunch. In the absence of the traditional 'Grapes' pub lunch and afternoon beers, we hope to nominate a suitable watering hole to gather on Saturday. Sadly 'Ma Belles' is no longer with us but alternatives are available. Look out for further details on the website or Facebook.

Annual Reunion Dinner 2022 – 1830hrs for 1930hrs on Saturday 24th Sep at the Leuchars Station Officers Mess.

2022 Reunion Dinner: The Fighting Cocks Return

Assorted pre-drinks

Scottish Smoked Salmon Roulade

Griddled Fillet of Angus Beef

Foret Noire

Coffee and Petits Fours

Wine and port served with the meal

The cost is **£60** per person. Dress: Lounge suits and squadron ties or equivalent.

Please register by making a bank transfer to Sort Code: 83-18-33 Account No: 15053992 Account Name: Jones SP with your surname & initials as the reference. (Sam has created this account specifically for this dinner with the Chairman, Derek Johnston, as a second account holder for oversight and transparency.) Then email Sam, 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 11 Sep 2022 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 samjones43@googlemail.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 the possibility of pick-ups/drop-offs on the main road through to Leuchars. Register for a place on the coach by contacting campbelljim01@gmail.com by 31/08/22.

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 - 01334857395 (dawn.byrne102@mod.gov.uk)

Sergeants Mess - 01334857395

Transit Accommodation - 01334857181

Sunday 25 Sep 2022

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: Mid to late morning; look out for further details on the website or Facebook.

REUNION 2021

Despite the postponement to Sep and the pandemic restrictions we enjoyed a great reunion last year, with around 60 members joining us for dinner. Our theme was the Battle of Britain and our guest speaker Andy Saunders, who gave a most informative talk centred around the thoughts and experiences of two pilots; one from the Royal Air Force and the other who flew for the Luftwaffe. It put across an unusual perspective and gave a revealing and thought-provoking insight into the mindset and emotions that these young men had to adopt as they faced the enemy. The Beedle Trophy was awarded to Jim Campbell for his solid support to the Association over many years, so well done once again to Jim.

Once the meal and talk were concluded it was off to the bar for socialising and “Fighting Cocktails”, the ingredients kindly supplied by the ‘Singly’ contingent, mixed by Mrs Campbell aided by Steve

Smith and downed by just about everybody, including a couple of waifs and strays who wandered in from another function.

Another splendid evening enjoyed by all who attended.



Drinks in the bar.



Andy Moir (Right) presenting Jim Campbell with the Beedle Trophy. Looking on in the background (from L-R): Brett Martin, Peter Bedwin, Andy Kirk, Fred Moir, Jon 'Walter' Watts.



Beedle Trophy winners (from L-R): Gill Howie, Deano Johnston, Jim Campbell, Andy Moir, Kim Eades (nee Clifford).

Anniversary of the Squadron's Formation 2021

1019 Squadron ATC laid a wreath at our Falleninch memorial in Apr. This has become a regular feature of 1019's calendar for which we are extremely grateful. On this occasion, due to COVID restrictions, the event was limited to OC 1019 and your chairman but it is OC 1019's intention that her squadron will carry out a short parade and act of remembrance around the 16 Apr each year. We will circulate the date on the Web site and our Facebook page, all are welcome to attend.



Remembrance Day 2021

Due to COVID restrictions there was limited representation at the Remembrance Day service in the Church of the Holy Rude in Stirling. A wreath was laid at the Squadron memorial in the church by Stephanie Johnston. This event is now well established in the calendar and all are welcome to come along.



The Expedition – Endurance 22

Our latest news is that Kerry Taylor, a former F3 groundcrew SNCO, was a key part of the team that discovered Shackleton's Endurance in the Weddell Sea just recently. More information on the expedition can be found at this link – [The Expedition - Endurance22](#) Well done Kerry.

Squadron Paintings

Some of you may be aware that the Association inherited a significant number of the Squadron's paintings when it was disbanded and most of these are being temporarily stored with the RAF Museum Reserve Collection at Stafford before being moved to a more permanent home. We own 18 paintings which depict scenes covering most of the Squadron's history. It is the Committee's plan to get as many of these paintings as possible on display somewhere suitable. We plan to approach the following establishments to see if they would take some or all of the paintings but if you have any good ideas on where you would like your artworks to be displayed then please pass your thoughts to the Committee.

Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre
Tangmere Military Aviation Museum
The Gloucester Aircraft Museum
La Gorgue Museum, France
National Aviation Museum of Scotland, East Fortune

Web Site

The Committee still plans on updating and improving the web site, a task that has suffered due to the friction of the pandemic. If there is anything you would like to see on the site then please let us know.

Deaths

It is with great sadness I have to report the death of several fine Fighting Cocks. First, Dave Manley passed away last August after a long illness. Dave was a stalwart of both the Squadron and Association having served on the Squadron in the 70s and 80s with the Phantom and then in the 90s with the Tornado. He also did a long stint on the committee, latterly as Secretary and Treasurer and was a dual winner of the Beedle Trophy. A good number of Association members made the journey to south Wales to see him off in style. Our thoughts remain with his daughters Tracey and June and his partner Pat.

Secondly, we had to say goodbye to Grant Carroll after his sudden death in Jan. Grant was a much-loved figure with a particular affinity for the Squadron having served with 43 on and off from 1969 till his retirement in 1989. Grant rarely missed a reunion and his *bon homie* and good humour will be sorely missed. He was given a good send off from the Balmerino church where he was married and our thoughts are with his widow Marina.

Finally, we heard recently of the death of Dave 'Smash' Ashley in an aircraft accident in Italy. Dave was a nav' on the squadron briefly, in the late 90s, before he gained a pilot crossover. Our condolences go to his family.

Informal Reunions

The annual Tornado F3 reunion will take place on Friday 20 May at the Knights Templar in Chancery Lane, London.

We expect the annual Phantom reunion will take place on Friday 11 November at the Lord Moon on the Mall, Whitehall, London.

The groundcrew are hoping to have their traditional meet up in Edinburgh 19 November. Look out for further info'.

Reunion Planning 2023

Following our foray north this year we plan to return to the RAF Club on the traditional date next year, 20 May.

Gloria Finis

Derek Johnston

Chairman

43 (Fighter) Squadron Fighting Cocks Association

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