

Fleet Air Arm Association Newsletter
Spring 2024 Issue



Note from the editor

Hello and welcome to this first issue of the revived Fleet Air Arm association newsletter.

Spring is in the air, the flowers are beginning to bloom and the trees are showing their leaves to the world. It seems to have been a very wet and cold start to the year – so here is hoping that spring will bring some warmer and drier weather. I hope this finds you all well and looking forward to the rest of the year.

We currently have over 400 members in the Fleet Air Arm Association and we are always looking to add to our numbers, so if you know any shipmates that have not yet joined, give them a nudge or better still a joining form!!

I welcome any news items that you want to include in future editions, such as shipmates you would like to contact, articles you would like researched, and any events that you have coming up in your branch, and anything else you can think of.

I hope you enjoy the content I have included this time, and please know you can contact me direct by email editor.faaa.newsletter@gmail.com or leave a message on the Fleet Air Arm Association website at www.faaa.org.uk for future editions. I would love to hear what you would like to see featured in your newsletter. Deadline for inclusion in the Autumn edition is the end of October 2024.

Association Officers

Patron:

**Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB.
CBE. ADC**



President:

Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE



Vice Presidents:

**Fred Wadley, Ben Worship, Peter
Murray**

Chairman:

Dave Smith

Vice Chairman:

Jeff Cook

Treasurer:

Alan Key

Secretary:

Jim Moulson MBE

Membership Secretary:

Mick Wyatt

Committee Member:

Mike Foote

Committee Member:

Gerry Jackson

Committee Member:

Bob Rideout

Standard Bearer:

Mick Wyatt

Branches

Daedalus

This is the HQ branch , for those who do not have or don't want to join their local branch.

Branch Secretary: Mick Wyatt
01582 608828
daedalus.sec@btinternet.com

Bristol and District

Branch Secretary: Ronald Sandry
01179 509638
ronniekenway@gmail.com

Great Yarmouth

Branch Secretary: Mike Denton
01493 664177
colbeck.roy@tiscali.co.uk

Kent

Branch Secretary: Mike Foot
07789 080258
m.j.foote@btinternet.com

Solent

Branch Secretary: David Whymark
whymark1@gmail.com

South Downs

Branch Secretary: Carole Sharpe
01903 213671
vergcarben2@outlook.com

Weymouth / Portland

Branch Secretary: Ian Tate
01305 826623
faaa.wpsecretary@outlook.com

Telford & Wrekin District

Branch Secretary: Mrs M E Fairley
01952 274738
liz.fairley@blueyonder.co.uk

Yorkshire

Branch Secretary: Bob Hayden
01924 471689
bob360vod@hotmail.co.uk

Branch updates

South Downs Branch

The branch meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month from January to September with the exception of June, and the 3rd Wednesday in October to December. The meetings take place from 11.30 to 13.00 at The Castle Inn Hotel, Bramber, West Sussex. The meetings generally start with coffee, apologies, updates and business (stories, funny tales, news) then a speaker. Some members stay on for a bite to eat.

The AGM etc take place at the January meeting – it is a great time and place for ideas etc to be discussed and to wish the new year in with a toast!

The meeting in June is replaced with the branch summer outing and this year they are boating along the Arun & Wey Canal after lunching at a local hostelry – all are welcome, it will be held on Wednesday 26th June. Contact South Downs branch secretary for more information.

The meeting in October is for Trafalgar Luncheon, and in November is the Taranto Luncheon.

An extra excursion for this year is on a Saturday in September to the Miniature Steam Fair, Amberley chalk Museum.

For more details of the outings please contact the branch secretary directly.

Bristol Branch

Bristol branch meets at Patchway Sports and Social Club at 12:00 ish on 2nd Saturday of the month if members are available.

Since November they have attended Armistice parades with their branch standard, and have also attended some funeral services of former FAA servicemen.

Their chairman will hopefully be attending the Woodlands Memorial Service which is held annually to remember Service Personell who have passed away whilst in service. Their standard bearer is due to have a knee operation, but if all goes well he hopes to take the standard to IWGC at Heverlee in Belgium later this year.



Events in History

100 years ago

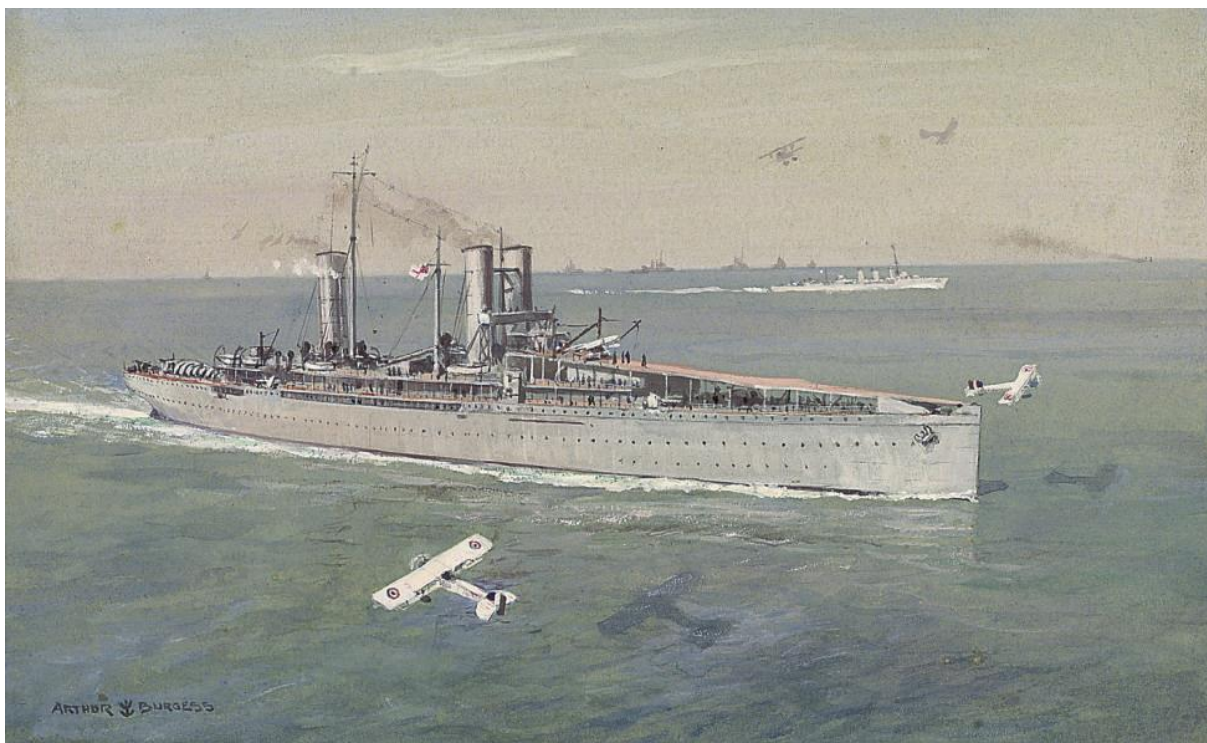
The Fleet Air Arm was formed on 1 April 1924, as a specialised branch of the Royal Air Force, covering RAF squadrons operated from aircraft carriers and the fleet, battleships and cruisers. This coincided with the commissioning of HMS Hermes, the worlds first tailored aircraft carrier.

On May 24, 1939, the Fleet Air Arm was placed entirely under Admiralty control, becoming independent of the Royal Air Force. It officially became the Air Branch of the Royal Navy, responsible for naval aviation operations, by September that year it comprised of 20 squadrons with 232 frontline aircraft and 191 trainers. Of course the war unleashed British air industry and in 1945 the Fleet Air Arm comprised no less than an astounding 59 aircraft carriers, 3700 aircraft and a staff of 72000 officers and men plus 56 Naval air stations.

From those early formative years to current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Naval personnel and aircraft have played a leading role.

The ability to rise above the sea, stay airborne, and carry crew and weapons has shaped history and continues to be a vital part of modern warfare.

The Fleet Air Arm's story is one of sacrifice, comradeship, invention, and achievement. Its pilots' ultimate flying skill – landing on carriers – has been a defining aspect of British aviation.



60 Years Ago

On 28th May 1964, the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton first opened its doors to the general public. The museum was formally inaugurated by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Naval Air Service.

The Fleet Air Arm Museum is a must-see attraction with its wide range of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft exhibits, some of which date back over 100 years.

To celebrate the museum turning 60-years-old visitors can delve into the archives and find out more about the museum and its incredible history with a new digital exhibition – The Fleet Air Arm Museum at 60.

This enlightening exhibition will be exclusively available on our Collections Explorer App between 28th May and 1st September.

Our Collections Explorer app is free to download and can be accessed from the comfort of your own home or at the museum. See their website for details. Your membership card gets you a discount on entry.



10 Years ago

On 22 July 2014 HMS Illustrious returned home to Portsmouth for the last time. Waiting to greet her were hundreds of maritime enthusiasts. After 30+ years 'Lusty's' White Ensign was lowered for the last time at a decommissioning ceremony at its Portsmouth's Naval Base. It was also a symbolic occasion in the history of the Royal Navy – this was the last time the Ensign was to be lowered on the Invincible Class Aircraft Carrier. HMS Illustrious was launched by Princess Margaret in December 1978. Lusty was replaced by HMS Ocean, following its £65 million refit.



Recent events

Fleet Air Arm Association AGM and Reunion Dinner

In April the association hosted its AGM and reunion weekend. It was good to see that the numbers attending was up on the previous year, and it would be great to see even more of you there next year.

The event was held at the Holiday Inn Southampton, and members and their guests could stay from 1 to 4 nights at the hotel at specially negotiated prices.

There was an informal dinner on the Friday night, followed by a quiz and some music. It was great to see people catching up with old friends and comrades and making new acquaintances with other members of the association.

On Saturday morning the AGM was held.



At the AGM meeting there were some amendments to the constitution made and a roundup of what the officers had done in the previous year. Peter Murray was awarded the position of Vice President of the association in recognition of the service he has done for the association over many years. Peter said he “was both surprised and honoured to become Vice President, and couldn’t wait to tell his wife!”

On Saturday evening more members came along , including the association President Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham and its Patron Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns for the Gala Dinner and disco. A raffle was also held and a ‘roll a pound for the bottle of rum’.

Attendees were very positive about the event and thanks was given to Alan Key and Dave Smith for organising it.



Fleet Air Arm Memorial Service

Telegraphist Air Gunners (TAGs) served in Fleet Air Arm aircraft from 1922 – 1950, providing communications by Morse Code and manning the rear gun.

Three thousand TAGs were trained in the 28 year life span of the branch. 507 were lost through enemy action and/or flying accidents, 69 became Prisoners of War. Most TAGs served only for the period of WW2, returning to civilian occupations in 1945/46. TAG's were awarded 2 CGMs, 115 DSMs, 20 BEMs and 134 Mentions in Dispatches.

They served in 77 different Aircraft Carriers. Each year the Association presents the TAGA Trophy and Medal to the outstanding Air Engineering Mechanic of the Year chosen by the Air Engineering staff at HMS Sultan.

The Telegraphist Air Gunners Association has held a Memorial Service on the third Sunday in May since 1953 when the Duchess of Kent unveiled the Fleet Air Arm Memorial at Lee on Solent.

Since 2013 when the TAG's Association dissolved, the service has been organised by the Fleet Air Arm Association.

This year the event fell on Sunday 19th May.

It began with a lunch at the Lee on Solent Golf Club. There was a welcome by Chairman of the FAAA, and introductions by Vice President Peter Murray. Grace was led by Valerie Sayer, and the toasts were given by FAAA secretary Jim Moulson and FAAA Patron Sir Adrian Johns. There was also a short speech by Lt Hayley McDermott RN.



This was followed by the Memorial Service at St Faiths Church which was conducted by The Reverend Doctor Paul Chamberlain, vicar of St Faith's, and The Reverend Timothy Ndegwa, chaplain RN currently based at HMS Sultan, after which an informal wreath laying ceremony at the memorial itself.



It was lovely to have representatives from HMS Sultan join in with the memorial and wreath laying.



It would be great to have more association members come along to this annual event, so why not put it in your diary for next year, when it will be held on Sunday May 18th. I will print a reminder in the Autumn edition of the newsletter.

Armed Forces events in the Future

Friends of Tarrant Rushton Airfield Memorial

Saturday 1st June 2024 for D-Day +80 commemoration.

Friends of Tarrant Rushton Airfield Memorial, is a not for profit community group with the principle aim of preserving the memorial and history of the airfield and they are well placed to promote a wider knowledge of the special people and stories that are the airfield's history.

10:00 Gates open to the public

12:00 Parade members start to arrive

12:45 Gates closed to vehicles & parade forms

12:50 Lord-Lieutenant arrives

13:00 Welcome and parade inspection

13:30 Commemoration service & wreath laying

14:30 Dispersal and event closure



Tarrant Rushton Airfield
Marking the 80th anniversary of its part in D-Day 1944

Saturday 1 June 2024

Gates open 10 am and close 12.30 pm for a 1 pm start
at the 'Windy Corner' memorial, Tarrant Rushton,
(on the Witchampton road), Dorset DT11 8SB.

A gathering to remember & honour

Royal Air Force, Glider Pilot Regiment and Army veterans,
former Flight Refuelling airfield staff, their families,
friends - and anyone with an affinity with the former
airfield and its remarkable history - are warmly
invited to attend this special commemoration.
Those attending are welcome to bring chairs.

For more information, or to register your interest
in attending, email
tarranrushtonam@gmail.com

Royal British Legion

This year they have produced an exhibition to honour the service and sacrifice of the D-Day Generation. Legacies of D-Day will be on display at the site of the British Normandy Memorial in France and at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire from 6th June.

The exhibitions will be open to all members of the public. They will be hosting a service of remembrance on 6 June at 2pm and members of the public will be welcome to watch.

There are also all sorts of events going on in June around the country to celebrate D day - look out in local press for details.

Armed Forces Day

Armed Forces Day falls on 29 June 2024. It is a chance to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community: from currently serving troops to Service families, veterans and cadets.

Physical and virtual events are being held across the county . Check out the Armed Forces day website <https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/find-events/> For more details of an event near you.



Airshows

There are many airshows across the country, some including military planes. Some examples are:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| May 31 – June 2 | Midlands Air Festival |
| June 1 – June 2 | Shuttleworth Military Weekend |
| June 1 – June 2 | Duxford Summer Air Show ‘D-Day 80’ |
| June 1 – June 2 | English Riviera Airshow |
| June 5 | D-Day 80 Upottery Airfield |
| June 8 – June 9 | Daedalus D-Day80 |
| June 15 | Military Wings & Wheels |

There are many more to numerous to mention – but take a look on [British airshows in 2024: calendar with UK airshow dates.](#)

HMS Collingwood open day



HMS COLLINGWOOD
OPEN DAY Saturday 6th July 2024
0930 to 1700 - Last entry 1500

Featuring the **RNRMC Field Gun Competition**

FREE FAIRGROUND RIDES
INTERACTIVE/MILITARY ZONES
LIVE MUSIC
PARACHUTE AND MOTORCYCLE DISPLAY TEAMS
PLUS LOTS MORE

ROYAL NAVY & ROYAL MARINES CHARITY

Early Bird:	Full Price:
Family: £30	Family: £35
Adult: £12	Adult: £15
Child (over 3): £5	Child: £7

(family = 2 Adult and 3 children)

royalnavy.ticketsrv.co.uk

Capita | GHR GREATEST HITS RADIO

2401-0538-CWO

HMS Collingwood open day is back this year and will take place on Saturday 6th July. Tickets are now available for this event which features the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Competition .

This unique family event will also offer many fun-filled family attractions with entertainment and displays designed to capture the imagination of everyone, whilst giving an insight into HMS Collingwood, Defence Training, the Royal Navy and other Armed and Public Forces.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

August 2 – August 24

The Tattoo is an iconic Edinburgh institution, with music, dance and precision displays with the Massed Pipes and Drums, and Massed Military Bands, cultural troupes, singers and the poignant refrain of the Lone Piper against the stunning backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. Each Tattoo is different from the last and always embraces different themes.



Crossed the bar

We celebrate the lives of those who have Crossed the bar in the last 6 months

Lest we forget.

**Cdr Anthony (Tony) John Graham Hodgson 1936 – 2023
and his wife
WREN Lilian Wells (Hodgson) 1937 – 2024**



Craig Gibson LAEM (L) D235779R 1975 - 2023



Stan Richardson Ex CAM (E) FX80767 13/20/1919 to 01/12/2023



Terrence Gidman A/LAM (AE) 1940 – 2023



If you want to notify us of any members who have crossed the bar please inform Mick Wyatt the Membership Secretary – memsecfaaa@btinternet.com or 01582 608828

Obituaries for all former FAA personnel will be accepted to be placed in this newsletter and on the website. Please email the editor or leave a message on the website.

Welfare

Fleet Air Arm Association Welfare Fund

The welfare fund is administered by four officers serving on the National Committee. Branch secretaries have the full welfare policy guidelines and claims procedure. Any qualifying member requiring assistance from the fund should contact their Branch 'Almoner' or Branch Secretary. Contact will be in full confidence.

Help for Heroes

Offer a wide range of support, whether you're having money troubles, or need support with housing or applying for benefits. You might just need a listening ear, and they can provide that too.

Look at their website at www.helpforheroes.org.uk

The Veterans Charity

They can provide support to veterans who find themselves battling hardship and the distress it causes. Despite being a small charity, they operate nationally throughout the UK including Northern Ireland. They are able to assist with essentials such as food shopping, utilities support, clothing and footwear, household items and single appliances, smartphones/tablets and calling credit/data. They are available to anyone who has served within UK Armed Forces and can verify their service. They have formed a partnership with The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust to deliver immediate needs support where it is needed.

Contact them at www.veteranscharity.org.uk/sprtreq

SSAFA

SSAFA support forces through the transition process to joining civvy street. They also provide welfare services to the family members of the Armed Forces community, and give physical and emotional support to older veterans. They can give advice, social care and housing for the Armed Forces. They also support serving personnel, their families and veterans with anything relating to disability and also help with mental wellbeing on coping with bereavement, injury and other forms of stress.

Call them on 08002606767

Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is there to help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families. They support serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week.

Call on 0808 8028080 or email info@britishlegion.org.uk

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

They assist thousands of people who are serving or have served as warrant officers and below in The Royal Navy & Royal Marines, and their dependants, who find themselves in need or distress. Their aim is to help them enjoy a reasonable quality of life mainly by providing wide ranging financial assistance. They also care for older people in their own care homes and almshouse.

Email them on help@rmbt.org.uk or call on 02392 690112

Royal Naval Association

The Royal Naval Association is the biggest collective group of Royal naval veterans and serving personnel, with over 270 branches in the UK and overseas. The association provides those with a link to the Royal Navy access to a life-long community of like minded and supportive individuals. The community provides companionship, resilience, comradeship and unity to anyone and everyone with a Naval story, supporting them through life's highs and lows.

Check out their website to join www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust

This exists to provide worldwide advice and financial relief in cases of necessity or distress among its members and their dependants. They can also make grants for the education of members.

Email them on gransadmin@wrnsbt.org.uk