

RAF HALTON AIRCRAFT APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION 2015

Saturday 28th March 2015 was it a whole year since I last attended the Halton Apprentices Association AGM? How quickly time passes. Unlike last year when the big yellow thing shone this year was overcast but at least dry. Planet Rock” which kept me company previously was replaced by Radio 2, I must be mellowing.

Again arrival at 1230 to drinks and buffet in the Sergeants Mess prior to the AGM in Kermod Hall. Handy I suppose as it was only a short walk between the two. The oldest entry present was the 36th.



The Golden Oldies performing outside Kermod Hall before the AGM with our Chairman central beckoning people forward

The Golden Oldies assembled outside the entrance and played a couple of tunes prior to the proceedings I am sure the tunes would be more than familiar to our band members.

I am not a minute taker and shorthand (arms) is something that goes with deep pockets when it is my round. Therefore the following is a brief resume of the notes taken in long hand which I now cannot decipher!

The proceedings started with the Apprentice Prayer, which until I played golf with the Association I was not aware of. This is said as Grace before the after match meal. I make no apology in repeating it below.

*Teach us good Lord, to be thankful
For all the good times we had
The skills we have learned
The friendships we have shared
And the companionship we have enjoyed
May all who have served the apprenticeship of the Wheel
Be ever mindful of the needs of one another*

Amen

The usual agenda items began proceedings with the Chairman Duncan Grant taking centre stage. Minutes for 2014 passed no matters arising and then to business. The first item was an amendment to the constitution. The

Association is supported by enthusiastic volunteers some of whom are not ex apprentices. There is nothing in the constitution that covers this so a motion was passed that non apprentices can serve by invitation of the Council.

We as an Association are not big enough to have to forward full accounts to the Charity Commission of England and Wales apparently so as long as money in and out and assets are recorded that is all I think. Every time finance is mentioned my eyes glaze over and I have selective hearing.

Further to the first item our new treasurer is Tony Whittaker. Tony is not an ex apprentice hence the change. With a background in banking Tony is ideal for the job. In addition his father was one of the Dambusters', from my own research there was a Whittaker and Whitaker involved. As Tony's surname has double t then I. Whittaker was navigator of ED909 AJ-P on the first wave on the Dambuster raid.

Min Larkin has stepped down as editor of the Haltonian. This leaves a vacancy along with membership secretary. There were no volunteers from those present so neither vacancy was filled. It is proposed to invite Min to become Honorary Vice President of the Association.

The re election of current Council members was passed.

Finance Denis O'Brien 99th: Over the years the Association has had a healthy balance however as expected there is a steady fall in numbers of 3099 currently the majority are life members some who paid £20 many years ago. Therefore the annual income is diminishing. There are obvious challenges ahead and there was a short discussion regarding life members possible paying an annual supplement.

Membership Peter Brown 96th: Currently 3099 but losing faster than recruiting, over the last year 67 died, 4 resigned, 25 lapsed and 8 lost, moved home?

Haltonian and Trenchard Museum Graham Booker 107th: The Haltonian will reduce from the current 3 issues to 2 but supplemented by a newsletter. The main magazine will however increase from 32 to 36 pages. The current editorial team finish at the end of 2015. A new team is needed to lead up to the 2020 centenary year.

It costs £10000 to publish and post The Haltonian and a question was raised regarding generating income from advertising similar to Gateway magazine at Brize Norton. Unlike the Brize Norton publication which is local the Haltonian is international and as such would not appeal to "local" advertisers. The size of the magazine may also have to increase. Postage is the majority of the £10000 costs

The Museum has had over 10000 visitors in 2014 and the James McCudden Heritage Flight Centre on the ground floor of what used to be No 2 Wing

Grove Mess is now open and developing rapidly. They are currently restoring a Link Trainer so if anyone worked on one or has one in their shed!!

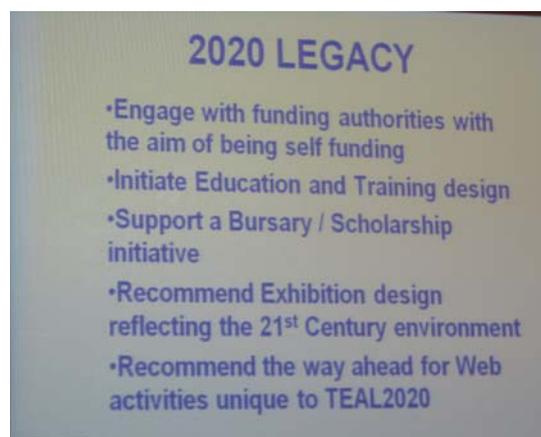
Welfare Andrew MacKenzie 76th: Of the small number of welfare issues all had been resolved.

A request from the RAF Benevolent Fund for their Seaside Cottage Appeal £500 donation voted for unanimously to be put to Council

Cycle ride Paris to London 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain cycling on a supplied Brompton! Request for volunteers? If not donation of £500 to be put to Council. Voted for unanimously unless someone enters

Halton Grove:

An update was given by Ron Priest 207th regarding the site. To allow an easy flow through our Grove a footpath has been included at the rear so that persons can get to Yeomanry Avenue. 2 new plant troughs have been purchased for the In Memoriam crosses. Further research is being carried out to commemorate the various air forces that came to Halton for technical training. So far we have Poland, Venezuela, Burma, Pakistan, Rhodesia, Ceylon, Malaysia, New Zealand and Zambia. No doubt pavers will follow.



Some of the power point slides

Chairman's report Duncan Grant:

The Association has moved from the airfield and is now on the main camp 3 wing!! Apparently it was a request from the MOD.

The Chairman spoke about the importance of our **legacy work**, the desire to ensure the history and significance of the RAF Apprentices is not forgotten. and the strands currently in progress.



Halton Grove



Apprentice Award



Proposed International Bomber Command Centre

- Halton Grove which most of you have visited
- The Apprentice Award 1 S of TT now Cosford of course, which will be presented annually.
- Centenary celebrations how this should be celebrated and exploited
- Trenchard's Engineering Apprentice Legacy TEAL 2020
- International Bomber Command Centre Lincoln due to open by a Royal guest June 8th 2016. Like the NMA the Association has been involved during planning and there will be a number of pavers at the location outside the Chadwick (Lancaster designer) Centre 10 pavers and the wheel that will tell the story of Halton Apprentices and the part they played both in aircrew and ground crew with Bomber Command 1 and 5 Group. Cost to take forward £5k voted for unanimously to be taken to Council.

Our President Group Captain Burns the current Station Commander, then gave a rousing speech regarding the importance of our legacy and how the Royal Air Force is dealing with its continuing commitments far and wide.

Finally the meeting was brought to an end with a short message read by Sir "Dusty" Miller from our Patron Air Chief Marshal Mike Armitage 56th entry.



The RISE ethics now in place with the RAF