

RAF Halton Trenchard's Legacy Dedication and Reunion 2025

On Wednesday 2nd July 2025 a few hundred Halton brats assembled at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas for the 2025 Halton Triannual. This was to include the unveiling and dedication of Trenchard's Legacy on Halton Grove.

On arrival my daughter and I were directed to the registration desk, where the efficient volunteers issued us with our hot meal ticket, the cheap seats, or a wrist band for the VIP luncheon. We were also handed a pin badge memento of the Trenchard's Legacy.



Pin Badge memento.

Having arrived early despite traffic hold ups we required a coffee. The cafe was already busy and while in the queue Shep tried to push in, nothing new there. However, it was good to see a fellow 223 entry member and although we kept an eye out for others, but we were the only two. I had the chance to catch up with some of the volunteer gardeners who continue to give up their time to have a coffee and a chat, oh a bit of tidying up on the Grove.

During coffee we were entertained by the Golden Oldies, before making the short walk to Halton Grove. On the left as you enter is the Portland Stone Wall on which is mounted the Trenchard's Legacy Bronze. Almost two metres wide the cast was split into three sections with each part cast separately. These were then welded together, polished, and patinated.

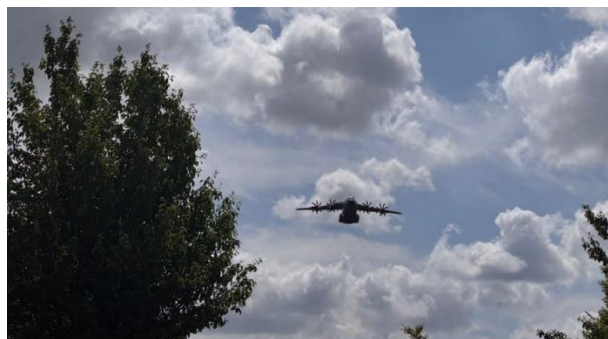
Unlike true RAF timing, the ceremony was late starting and as Sir Dusty Miller was in the middle of his welcoming speech, an Airbus 400M Atlas ZM417, call sign Dread 30 flew over at 300ft at a speed of 170kt (Info from Flight Radar)



Who has the scissors?



Sir Dusty before the flypast and sculptor on his right.



The interruption XM417 Airbus A400M Atlas

Lord Trenchard, the grandson of Lord Trenchard, yes confusing isn't it, who founded the Apprentice Scheme, that's Lord Trenchard, not Lord Trenchard, I'm sure you follow, then cut the ribbon of Trenchard's Legacy. That is the grandfather not the grandson, anyway, moving swiftly on, a short dedication service followed which included the Halton Apprentices prayer.



Lord Trenchard had the scissors all the time Trenchard



ACM Knighton, Timothy Potts Sculptor, Lord

To finish the formal proceedings Lord Trenchard spoke about his grandfather and his vision of well-trained engineers to repair and maintain the ever-changing advancement in aircraft design. He then spoke about his own relationship with the RAF and the RAF Benevolent Fund the latter as was a member of council and trustee, chairman from 2006-2013 and deputy chair from 2014 to present.

With the official part over the Apprentices then formed up to march behind the Golden Oldies. 223 knew our place towards the back. So far back, we couldn't hear the band. But did meet up with the last Apprentice Richie Waylens 155th, and an ex-apprentice Warrant Officer who is still serving.

The salute was taken by Air Chief Marshall Sir Richard Knighton, cannot get any higher? well from the 27th June 2025 he was appointed Chief of Defence Staff. The parade was so long that before we young ones got to the plinth the band had stopped playing and the rest of the parade had run out of room and come to a stop, so we never made it! I lost Shep at this point not to be again.

However, it did put my daughter and me in an advantageous position for the café and somehow, I got near to the front of the queue. There was a choice of three main meals and a hot or cold drink, one server!! for three hundred plus attendees. The queue was longer than that in the mess having returned for lunch from workshops/schools. It did not seem to get any shorter for the 30 minutes or so before we left. In fact, it looped from the servery past the drinks island, through the seating area and out the door. The VIP fayre will go unreported, but they had probably finished and returned home before the last brat in the cheap seats got served. Something for Council and the caterers to consider next time perhaps.

As a side note, the oldest Apprentice was a 99-year-old Polish Apprentice from the 49th entry if memory serves me correct. A round of applause greeted that announcement. On viewing the 223 web pages that would put him arriving at Halton in July 1944 as an 18-year-old.

Dave Squires