The Friends of St Clement Danes

Registered Charity No. 1048757

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O&L Publication
Daniel Kettle Esq (*Manager*)
Iza Seabrook (*Editor*)

The Friends of St Clement Danes

Issue No. 56
Autumn 2023

ROYAL AIR FORCE St Clement Danes Church

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"Enabling the sacrifices of the past to support the challenges of the future."

Editorial Note

Iza Seabrook



It is my pleasure to edit the current issue of Oranges & Lemons.
Much is changing at the Church, but the ethos remains the same. As we head into the winter season I hope you are able to visit us at St Clement Danes where you will be warmly welcomed. We look forward to seeing you.

If you have articles or pictures you wish to see published, please email me: iza.seabrook@gmail.com



Trustees' Book

Located within the crypt at St Clement Danes is The Trustees' Book. The book contains the names of people who have died since leaving the Royal Air Force. Names can be included at the request of family members of the deceased, for which a fee of £40 is payable. To apply for an entry in The Trustees' Book please email: info@stclementdanesraf.org and request an application form.

ROYAL AIR FORCE Music

The Friends of St. Clement Danes
Annual Concert 2023

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment and Choir of St. Clement Danes

Thursday 30th November, 7pm

St. Clement Danes Church, The Strand, London, WC2R 1DH



Tickets – for which a donation is suggested – are available by emailing **concert@fscd.org.uk** (please say how many tickets you would like)

Or by post to:
SCD Annual Concert, c/o Scott Williamson, Laerdal, Fetterdale, Tayport, Fife, DD6 9PF

Tickets also available at the door on **Nov 30th**

Donation suggested





Registered Charity No. 1048757
(The Band plays by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council)

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Chief of the Air Staff

Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton KCB ADC FREng



Brought up in Derbyshire and educated at the local Comprehensive School, Air Chief Marshal Knighton joined the Royal Air Force in 1988 as a University Cadet and studied Engineering at Clare College Cambridge. He spent his early career in frontline roles working on Nimrod Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Tornadoes and in several roles on the Harrier Force. He has served as the Station Commander at Royal Air Force Wittering where he was also the RAF's Logistics Force Commander.

He has held a range of staff appointments in the Ministry of Defence, Air Command and in equipment acquisition and support. He has been closely involved in strategic and capability planning for the Royal Air Force and Defence. He was the Assistant Chief of Air Staff during the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, where he was responsible for the strategic coherence and co-ordination of the Royal Air Force and planning for the RAF100 Centenary.

The most senior role he has held in the Ministry of Defence was as the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability. Before his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff, he was Deputy Commander Capability and People at Air Command, responsible for the strategic planning and delivery of all aspects of Royal Air Force capability including people, equipment, infrastructure and training.

Air Chief Marshal Knighton took over as the Chief of the Air Staff on 2 June 2023. He has completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course, the Royal College of Defence Studies, the UK Pinnacle Course and the joint UK/US Rising Leaders Course. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineers and has an Honorary Doctorate from Derby University. He is an ambassador for the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust and the Royal Air Forces Association, and is President of the Royal Air Force Winter Sports Federation, Hockey Association and Powerlifting Association. He was appointed to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath as a Commander (CB) in 2017 and as Knight Commander (KCB) in 2023.

Chairman's Letter

Group Captain Mark D Heffron MA FCG CMgr FCMI RAF



I am delighted that the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, has agreed to take over the position of Patron of The Friends of St Clement Danes. He is knowledgeable about the church building and during our discussion about The Friends, applauded the work we do covering day-to-day matters, which are not supported from elsewhere. I thanked him on your behalf for his support.

Members are also aware that we enjoy

the immense support of our Patron-In-Chief, HRH The Duke of Gloucester so, as the Resident Padre would put it, we are truly blessed!

On a sad, but grateful note, we will say goodbye at the end of the year to two of our Trustees. Firstly, Peter Neville-Lewis, who has been on the Board for many years and has been involved in every aspect of the Friends and co-ordinated the Annual Concert last year. No, we did not break him with that event; we knew this time would come! Thank you Peter for all you have done. Secondly, we bid farewell to Daniel Kettle, who took over the production of Oranges & Lemons from his father, Peter Kettle. Daniel has worked tirelessly to produce the two editions each year covering, as indeed in this edition, items of church and RAF interest, details of Church matters and the work of the Friends. We are indebted to him for his efforts, a first-rate production, every time. As I mentioned last time, this now brings our Board down to below the number I would like to have in order that we can share the various tasks and responsibilities. Would you be willing to sit on our Board too? The task would involve four meetings a year and supporting some events and the Church. If you are interested, do not hesitate to let one of the current Board know; thank you in advance!

I will take this chance to thank the recently retired Church Manager, Sharon Hardwick, for all her efforts in supporting the friends from within the church itself. Sharon has worked with us for over 13 years, has been utterly dependable and often has been the one to spot things requiring our attention. For her service, she was recently awarded The Chaplain-in-Chief's Commendation; we congratulate and thank her for all her work with the Friends.

Finally, may I remind you of our annual Concert, the details of which are in this edition. Do please come along and bring all your friends! I look forward to welcoming you on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 7pm.

From the Resident Chaplain

Reverend Mark Perry



How does one express the feeling of conducting a Thanksgiving and Reconciliation service for the 80th Anniversary of the Dambusters Raid? Well, with emotion, I think! The Victoria Cross (VC) of Guy Gibson was in pride of place during the event, and it was a truly moving experience.

What made the occasion even more acute was the presence and participation of the German, Australian, and USAF Attachés. We were able to come together and honour the memory of those who lost their lives, while also acknowledging the importance of reconciliation and healing.

As a Life Friend of Coventry Cathedral, and the Central Church of the RAF's partnership with its own Cross of Nails, I am delighted to play a part within the International Community of the Cross of Nails. Their three guiding principles of healing the wounds of history are: learning to live with difference, celebrating diversity, and building a culture of justice and peace. These are as important today as they were when first set.

At St Clement Danes, we are privileged to have opportunities for thanksgiving and reconciliation services, such as this. May the lessons of the past guide us as we work to build a better future.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the esteemed members of the Friends of St Clement Danes. Your invaluable support, regardless of its scale, greatly contributes to the vital ministry and work of the Central Church of the RAF. Let's continue to grow and learn from each other, growing together in hope. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your commitment.



Pictured above: Guy Gibson's Victoria Cross medal.

COVER STORY The 35th Anniversary of the Unveiling of The Lord Dowding Statue

Karen Day-Milne



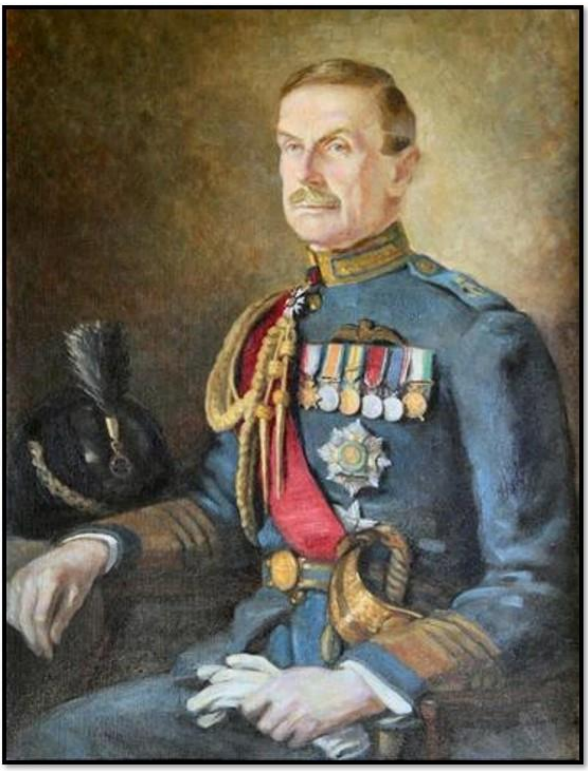
The Lord Dowding statue shortly after the unveiling: photograph by Caroline Irwin, from London's Immortals, 1989.

This autumn marks the 35th anniversary of the unveiling of the memorial statue to Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, which took place on the 30 October 1988, the Sunday before All Soul's Day. This towering bronze statue, some nine feet high, and mounted on an almost six-foot-high stone pedestal, guards the main west entrance to St Clement Danes, from its position on the south side of the paved area in front of the church – a familiar and reassuring sight to all those who attend or visit the church.

But what were the circumstances surrounding the erection of this long-awaited memorial to our greatest Royal Air Force commander, who as Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command was the architect of victory in this nation's most important air battle in history, the Battle of Britain in 1940.

During the autumn, when our thoughts turn to remembrance, it seems appropriate to look again at those circumstances; moreover,

to reflect on the remarkable fittingness of the memorial site. For ACM Lord Dowding was a most faithful defender of our country, a man for whom Christian beliefs and values formed the framework to life; and in his service to the RAF he was the early embodiment of the ethos and values of the new third service.



Portrait of Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding GCB GCVO, 1st Baron Dowding of Bentley Priory, by Faith Kenworthy-Browne, 1945. Reproduced by kind permission of David Whiting, Lord Dowding's stepson.

In 1978 Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris became chairman of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association and as a former Battle of Britain Hurricane pilot, he led a campaign to set up a fund to secure a memorial to ACM Lord Dowding. As he later stated at the unveiling ceremony, he felt that it was '*a matter of surprise and concern, or perhaps even shame, that no memorial has been raised in nearly fifty years*.'

ACM Foxley-Norris contacted the various local associations of

Battle of Britain fighter pilots worldwide to secure funding for the proposed memorial, including the Canadian senator and Royal Canadian Air Force Battle of Britain pilot, Senator Hartland de Montarville Molson. Molson observed: '*Had Fighter Command of the RAF not been led at the time by the innovative and imaginative Lord Dowding, the outcome of World War II may have been very different and there may have been no possibility of honouring Allied heroes by erecting a statue beside the Thames'*.

Hansard reveals that between March and October 1987 the matter of a public memorial to Dowding was discussed in the House of Lords and, indeed, the government response to possible government funding of the statue was negative. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of the Environment, Lord Skelmersdale, answering a question on the matter from Lord Dean of Beswick, advised the House that any monument would have to be applied for, and that applicants '*would need to show that there was a sufficiently influential body of public opinion to support the proposal and to raise enough money to pay for the erection of the statue and its future maintenance*'. He later added that consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment would be required under the Public Statues (Metropolis) Act 1854. William Waldegrave (later Lord), Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, confirmed in a House of Commons written answer a week later: *'It has been the policy of successive Governments since 1956 not to sponsor further memorials to leaders of the Second World War*'.

The strength of feeling within the House of Lords in favour of the long-overdue memorial to Dowding was widespread, as was frustration at the government's seemingly lukewarm official responses - not least because many of the members had been alive during WWII, and some had fought in it too, including Lords Balfour, Irving and Harvington. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

did note however the: ‘expression of solidarity … from all parts of the House’ in the matter, indicating that an application would be ‘sympathetically entertained’ by the Minister. Lord Dean typified the mood of the House and the fulsomeness of the tributes paid to Dowding when he asked, ‘*Does he (the Minister) not also understand that the winning of that battle ranks to us as a nation with Waterloo and Trafalgar in determining our future as a free and sovereign nation?*’

There were other hurdles to be overcome too: planning permission had to be received from Westminster Council, the Royal Fine Art Commission had to be involved in discussions over a proposed site; and the church authorities had to be applied to and a decision received from the Chancellor of the London Diocese.

Regarding a possible site for the memorial, which was to give appropriate national recognition for Dowding’s service to his country, Lord Morris mentioned in the House of Lords ‘the admiral space’ between the statues of Lords Tedder and Trenchard in the Embankment Gardens behind the MOD, which he had ‘always presumed was reserved for Lord Dowding’. However, Westminster Council gave planning permission for a space between St Clement Danes and Australia House.

Initially, the statue was to occupy the same traffic island to the west of SCD as the Grade II listed memorial to W E Gladstone, a structure on quite a different scale with a total height of almost thirty-three feet, twice the height of the proposed Dowding memorial. The benefit of this position was that it would have negated the need for permission from the church authorities. However, after discussions with the Royal Fine Art Commission, including a site visit by its then chairman, Norman St John-Stevas (later Lord), the Commission’s

insistence that a site closer to the church would be preferable, prevailed.

ACM Foxley-Norris, who was in communication throughout this period with the Department of the Environment, finally received notification of Government support for the project in September 1987, having given confirmation to the Under-Secretary of State in March that '*the matter of Government sponsorship … does not arise in this case'*. The sum required for capital and maintenance of the memorial, which was expected to be £50,000 would be the responsibility of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association, with the help of public subscription.

Government consent in place (end of October) ACM Foxley-Norris visited the studio of Faith Winter, the chosen sculptor, to view a scale model of the statue. Winter is noted for her public statues of military and other figures, including those of MRAF Sir Arthur Harris and General Sikorski. A late work, sculpted in her eightieth year is that of AC Sir Frank Whittle, hand cupped above his head, looking towards the skies.



The final statue of ACM Lord Dowding appears to be partly modelled on a photo of him taken in 1940, gloves held in one hand; prepared and watchful; eyes searching the skies for aircraft; listening for aircraft too; a man with

the responsibility for the defence of his country. Jack Dixon, in his book, *Dowding and Churchill*, describes the image: '*as a characteristic pose in 1940*' – and a similar photo is reprinted here. John Blackwood, the author of *London's Immortals*, a reference work on London's outdoor statues, describes the pose as '*deliberately unheroic*'.



King George VI and Queen Elizabeth escorted by ACM Sir Hugh Dowding, visiting Fighter Command, RAF Bentley Priory, September 1940.

Towards the end of 1987 as the tedious and frustrating administrative processes were continuing, there was some pleasure in the House of Lords when the Government confirmed its

understanding (as per press reports) that HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother had been invited to officiate at the unveiling ceremony. This could not have been more fitting. HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother became first Patron of the BBFA in 1958, when Dowding was made first President. She had lived through the Blitz in London. She was aware of her husband, King George VI's suggestion to the Secretary of State for Air, in 1942, that ACM Sir Hugh Dowding should be promoted to Marshal of the Royal Air Force on retirement since: *'… it has always seemed to him that Dowding performed a really wonderful service to this country in creating, and putting into practice, the defence system which proved so effective in the Battle of Britain'.*


The Queen Mother with Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris after unveiling a statue of Battle of Britain leader Lord Dowding

Battle of Britain fighter chief is honoured at last

Photo from the Telegraph 31.10.88, cutting kept by Shirley Day.

The Queen Mother knew that, sadly, His late Majesty the King's wish had not been acted upon forty-six years before. Furthermore, there was another connection: Dowding had been her husband's trusted Principal Air Aide-de-Camp for six years.

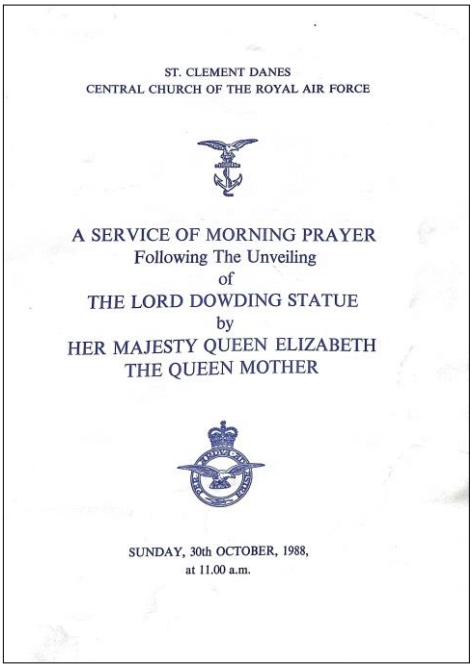
Thus, on the morning of Sunday 30 October 1988, all formalities having been completed, the official unveiling of the Lord Dowding Statue by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother took place at 10:35am, followed by a Service of Morning Prayer at 11am. During the unveiling ceremony, a single Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flew overhead. The Service of Morning Prayer which followed the unveiling was arranged with great thought. Whilst the congregation was assembling for the service, The Central Band of The RAF played William Walton's *Spitfire Prelude*, conducted by Sqn Ldr A R Mossford, Director of Music.

After the first hymn, the congregation remained standing for the RAF Call, followed by A E Simms' rousing *Superna Petimus,* at which time The Battle of Britain Ensign was paraded and placed on the altar, where it remained until after the blessing. The choir sang Vaughan Williams' anthem *Let us now praise famous men.*
ACM Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris read the first lesson; Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir John Grandy, the second.

After the Blessing, as the Battle of Britain Ensign was returned to the Bearer and paraded out of the church, the Central Band played the *Royal Air Force March Past* by Sir Walford Davies and Sir George Dyson. This was followed by Addison's *Reach for the Sky* and lastly Purcell's *Trumpet Tune and Air,* after the Clergy had processed to the west door.

The Service of Morning Prayer was conducted by The Reverend M J Stokes QHC RAF, Resident Chaplain of SCD.

The Address and the Blessing were given by The Venerable B N Halfpenny MA QHC RAF, Chaplain in Chief of the RAF. The organ was played by Martindale Sidwell, Organist and Director of Music of St Clement Danes.



ST. CLEMENT DANES
CENTRAL CHURCH OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

A SERVICE OF MORNING PRAYER
Following The Unveiling
of
THE LORD DOWDING STATUE
by
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH
THE QUEEN MOTHER

SUNDAY, 30th OCTOBER, 1988,
at 11.00 a.m.

In his role as Chairman of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association, ACM Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris had written letters to all Guild members of St Clement Danes church prior to the service, seeking their understanding that the pilots of the BBFA should wish to be seated together on such a unique occasion, and thanking them for allowing the pilots to be seated in the nave of the church.

Those surviving pilots, finally seated together in the nave, had been determined that ACM Lord Dowding should be 'honoured at last' (and these were the words echoed in newspaper headlines the following day) - and never forgotten. As Ron Lowman, a WWII pilot himself had written in 1987 in The Toronto Star: '*His pilots, once young and vibrant, now old and gray, are determined to erect a statue in London of 'Daddy', or 'Stuffy' Dowding as he was known affectionately in the service. They were incensed, and still are, that Dowding, a World War I pilot who died in 1970, was never given the supreme accolade: the rank of Marshal of the Royal Air Force*'.



Photo reproduced with kind permission of the Moffat museum.

It was of course one Battle of Britain pilot, however, who had led the campaign to achieve what had not been possible for forty-eight years. ACM Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, pictured with Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in front of the statue, had been determined throughout prolonged negotiations to find ‘a Place for Lord Dowding’ (the title he gave to a later article he wrote on the matter); one that gave appropriate national recognition for his extraordinary service to his country. The strength of feeling which drove ACM Foxley-Norris’ determination had been expressed during an interview given at the Imperial War Museum in early October, just weeks before the unveiling, in which he described Dowding’s leadership as ‘*absolutely outstanding*’, continuing ‘e*ven the junior people, like myself, had enormous confidence in him. He was a sort of father figure … and you felt that whilst he had his hand on the tiller, all was going to be well*’.

The pilots’ affectionate descriptions above of Dowding as ‘Daddy’ or a ‘father figure’, were mirrored by Dowding’s own description of his pilots (which included his own son Derek) as his ‘boys’. And indeed, ACM Lord Dowding was a father of the RAF in a broader sense.

He had been in at the beginning of the newly formed service in 1918, having developed his interest in aviation whilst in the Army, serving in the Royal Flying Corps throughout WW1. As he later wrote in his 'Personal Notes' to his first biographer: '*I felt that there was a great future in the RAF and I wanted to remain in it … flying had become my career*'.

Dowding had learnt much from his service as a WW1 pilot and was still young enough to embrace and help forge the new requirements of a different era. Throughout ACM Lord Dowding's RAF career he was the embodiment of its ethos, values, and culture. He was a moderniser, a humanitarian, enlightened in many ways: believing in progress by merit alone, prioritising the welfare of his men, with an early understanding of mental fatigue; and he was supportive and appreciative of the new women under his command in the WAAF. He was a natural engineer with great scientific understanding. Furthermore, Dowding created a happy, family atmosphere at Fighter Command, Bentley Priory. One member of staff under Dowding's command, Sqn Ldr Griffiths, later remarked on the particular culture there: *'… at Bentley Priory we were an extremely happy set of people … Esprit de Corps and morale were of the highest order'*. The value he himself placed on his RAF service is demonstrated in his choice of Bentley Priory as the territorial designation for his barony, becoming Lord Dowding of Bentley Priory in 1943.

It is fitting that Dowding should be memorialised outside the Central Church of the Royal Air Force, to which Service he showed the utmost loyalty and gave the greatest service. But even more so because he was a man of great faith, whose values and character

reflected his Christian belief. He described his touchstone as: '*what good will this do and whom may it help?*' He came from a family of many priests, seven in his close family: two uncles, three great uncles, one grandfather, one great-grandfather, and his grandmother was the grand-niece of a bishop! Christian values of integrity, kindness, compassion, self-discipline, courage, humility and above all resilience were the foundations of his service, and it was this resilience which enabled him to stand fast for his beliefs and thus defend his country. Dowding alone, for example, understood in May-June 1940 that enough fighter aircraft must be reserved to defend the homeland, rather than ultimately be lost in the Battle for France – and he alone stood against Churchill and the rest of the War Cabinet on this pivotal matter.

The inscription on the Lord Dowding statue records the immensity of his achievements at Fighter Command, concluding: '*To him the people of Britain and of the free world owe largely the way of life and the liberties they enjoy today*'. Faith Winter's statue of ACM Lord Dowding is one of a defender: watchful, prepared, determined, one with clarity of thought and purpose, and it encapsulates in bronze his philosophy – which proved so true – that the first and foremost need must always be the 'Air Defence of the home country'.

(Front cover photo reproduced by the kind permission of David Whiting)

Church Diary

Sunday services take place weekly at 11am unless stated otherwise.

05 Nov	Choral Eucharist with Baptism
12 Nov	Remembrance Sunday Service (start time 10:50)
19 Nov	Choral Eucharist
26 Nov	Choral Matins
03 Dec	Choral Eucharist
10 Dec	SCD and 601 Carol Service
17 Dec	Choral Matins
24 Dec	Midnight Mass (start time 23:00)
25 Dec	Christmas Day Service 2024
07 Jan	Choral Eucharist
14 Jan	Choral Matins
21 Jan	Choral Eucharist
28 Jan	Choral Matins
04 Feb	Private Service (closed to the public)
11 Feb	Choral Matins
18 Feb	Choral Eucharist
25 Feb	Choral Matins
03 Mar	Choral Eucharist with Baptism
10 Mar	Choral Matins (Mothering Sunday)
17 Mar	Choral Eucharist
24 Mar	Choral Matins
31 Mar	Easter Sunday Service
07 Apr	Choral Eucharist
14 Apr	Private Service (closed to the public)
21 Apr	Choral Eucharist
28 Apr	Choral Matins

News from the Parish Registers

We are delighted to share in families' excitement when they come to St Clement Danes for a Wedding or a Baptism. We share in their grief as they pay their respect and say goodbye.

Baptisms

Finnan James Metcalfe (7 May)
Farah Penelope Rose Cookson (4 June)
Percival William Templer Richardson (4 June)
Alexander Charles Knight (2 July)
Arabella Grace Knight (4 July)

Weddings

Natasha Kurth to Josh Turner (30 Sept)

Funerals

Flt Sgt Peter Brown (23 May)

Requests for Baptisms, Weddings, Marriage Blessings and Funerals should be made to the Resident Chaplain.



1941 Appeal Update

Jules Sherwood



If you have recently been to the church, you will have noticed that the 1719 James Gibbs Gothic Steeple has now been encased in stainless steel netting. These emergency works were necessary after the latest inspection by the steeplejack specialists who conducted the six-monthly inspection of the steeple in January. They reported that the steeple had deteriorated significantly over the last winter and now there is a real risk of falling masonry.

If you kindly supported our call for help with the £10,000 cost of the emergency work, thank you. Your donations are incredibly important to us as we work tirelessly to raise the funding needed to start the restoration works.

In January Heritage England visited the church to inspect the steeple, and the result of that visit will be that St Clement Danes will be included in the November up-date of the national ‘At Risk Register’. All the team at the church and the Development Office are working hard to raise the funding needed for the Steeple Restoration and we are making slow but steady progress.



So if you are able to help further or may be considering a donation towards the steeple or leaving St Clement Danes a gift in your Will, please do not hesitate to contact Jules in the Development Office who will be delighted to assist you.

Finally, thank you again for your continued support and for further information and news of events and services at the Church please sign up for the Church newsletter ‘Eagle & Anchor’ which is emailed or posted free each quarter.

Retirement of Church Manager, Sharon Hardwick



After an incredible 13 years at St Clement Danes and over four decades within the MOD Civil Service, Sharon has recently retired from her official position as Church Manager. However, we welcome her role as a Steward, continuing to contribute her wisdom and expertise.

Believe it or not, Sharon initially applied for a position at St Clement Danes simply for ‘interview practice’. Little did she know that her application would be eagerly snatched up by those forward-thinking individuals who recognised her talents. Right from her very first day, Sharon approached her duties with dedication. When she asked for a job description, she was handed a blank piece of paper. Undeterred, she embarked on the task of not only fulfilling the requirements of her role with practicality and resourcefulness, but also aligning Civil Service policies, diocesan processes, and the building's fabric issues.

Sharon's contributions over the years have left a mark on St Clement Danes. Her strong work ethic, coupled with her ability to navigate systems, has made her an invaluable asset. We are grateful for her continued presence as a Steward, and we know that her warmth and expertise will continue to enrich St Clement Danes for years to come.

Resident Chaplain Padre Mark Perry says, ‘*The entire St Clement Danes community expresses our gratitude for Sharon's remarkable*

contributions. Her accomplishments throughout the years have been truly exceptional. In recognition of her outstanding achievements, she was awarded a 2 Chaplain-in-Chief's Commendation on The King's New Year Honours list for 2023. Congratulations, Sharon! Your departure will undoubtedly leave a void, but your arrival in your new capacity as a steward will always be eagerly anticipated'.*

New Church Manager Appointment



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Katya Johnston as our new Church Manager at St Clement Danes Church. With a background in classics, she was eager to work in a role with a historical as well as current context, so she jumped at the chance to work at the Central Church of the Royal Air Force. Graduating in Classical Studies from nearby King's College London, she also gained the Associateship of King's College. Thereafter, she graduated with a Masters in Classics at Girton College, University of Cambridge.

After working on a historical research project, and in various hospitality roles, Katya worked as a researcher in TV documentary production. She was credited on five documentary series, including 'World War II in Colour: Road to Victory'. She is passionate about all things related to heritage, and has a keen interest in music, art and dance.

Resident Chaplain, Padre Mark Perry says, '*We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have found someone who wholeheartedly embraces the values, heritage, and purpose of the Central Church of the Royal Air Force. As we navigate the complexities of our distinct ministry: serving the RAF's family and wider public benefit. Katya will be joining a team of dedicated volunteer and paid professionals who will offer her unwavering support as she assumes this managerial position'.*

Annual General Meeting of the Friends of SCD

Thursday 30 November 2023 at 5pm
To be held in The Crypt Chapel, SCD, Strand

All members of the Friends are entitled to attend and vote. It is hoped that as many as possible will be able to attend.
Notice is issued by Christopher C K Priebe, Secretary

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks
4. Election of Council Officers and Members
5. Minutes of the 1 December 2022 AGM
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Membership Secretary's Report
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of Next AGM

As in previous years, audited accounts will be available at the meeting and will be published with the minutes in the next Oranges & Lemons. A copy of the Friends of St Clement Danes Constitution will also be available.

Life of Air Vice Marshal Derek Arthur "Dusty" Saunders CBE

14 November 1933 – 11 February 2023

Ailsa Knightley – Daughter

Dusty was born on the 14 November 1933 at Rose Cottage, Nacton nr Ipswich to Arthur William Edward Chaplin Saunders and Dorothy May Helen Saunders (née Ives). He was an only child. His father was a gardener in service of Mr Scott of Rose Hall and his mother was a former housemaid, he thinks, at Orwell Park. Shortly afterwards his father took up employment with Lord de Saumerez of Shrublands Park, Needham Market (still in the de Saumerez family's ownership today). In 1936 they moved to Leatherhead in Surrey to work for Mr Cullen, a London grocer, because his father felt that educational opportunities would be better near London.

Dusty started school at All Saints C of E School in 1938, but after one term he was moved because of a catchment area change to Poplar Road C of E School near the parish church, which was fortuitous because it had a good record of 11+ successes.

In 1944 Dusty earned a place at Dorking County Grammar School, now the Ashcombe School. At Poplar Road his particular friends had been Peter 'Pete' Rogers, Roy 'Gus' Guthrie and Mike Brown. It was Pete who gave him his nickname 'Dusty'. It started as 'Sorbo' Saunders, then became 'Sawdust' Saunders, which rapidly translated to 'Dusty'. It stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Dusty loved maths, the sciences and French and Latin. He was a regular churchgoer and choirboy at All Saints Church and he carried on singing in choirs throughout his life, finally as a founder member of the Stewkley Singers.

In 1949 Dusty sat for the School Certificate and did reasonably well, getting passes and credits in eight subjects. His parents were approached by the Headmaster for him to stay on in the 6th Form to sit the Higher School Certificate in Pure Maths, Applied Maths, Physics and Chemistry because by that time he knew he wanted to be an electrical engineer. This was a difficult decision for them because his father's income was £4 10s (£4.50) per week and his mother was working part-time as a home help.

The decision to support him in the 6th Form was life changing. He was offered a provisional place at King's College London and was awarded a State Scholarship. He was sure that his success in exams was due greatly to the excellent teaching and support he received from 'Brute' Bradshaw (Maths & Sixth Form), 'Spud' Hayter (Physics) and 'Chemie' Rollat (Chemistry).

He joined the Engineering Faculty at Kings in October 1951. On Bonfire Night on 5 November 1952 he met Margaret whilst 'rioting' over the failure of the authorities to provide a suitable site for students' festivities. In his words: '*my life changed for ever on that night*'.

He graduated in 1954 and had gained a graduate apprenticeship with the British Thomson-Houston Company in Rugby. This gave him his first experience of aviation systems which was very useful when he joined the RAF for his National Service.

Margaret graduated from Kings in 1955 and took up an appointment to teach Maths at the Wyggeston Girls School in Leicester.

His apprenticeship came to an end in June 1956. He was called up for his National Service and elected to join the RAF. A new era was starting which became a career of more than 33 years.

Dusty began his National Service, after being kitted out at RAF Cardington, by being sent to the Isle of Man where they were met by two Warrant Officers, one complete with a waxed moustache. He remembers the food being truly awful and the weather being particularly challenging. He trained as an Electrical and Instruments Officer and gained an A1 Pass.

Margaret and Dusty married on 27 April 1957. Dusty had to seek permission from the Station Commander because he was under 25 years old! They bought a mobile home which they sited on a farmer's field near Rugby, as they couldn't afford a house.

He was posted to RAF Coltishall in August 1957, working with technicians solving problems with Venom Night Fighters and later Javelin All-weather Fighters. It was during this time that Dusty decided to apply for a permanent commission. He had to undergo the whole Officer selection procedure again at Cranwell and was awarded his permanent commission on 9 September 1959. He went to RAF Technical College Henlow in April 1959 to convert from an E&I Officer to Engineer Electrical Officer, adding Radar, Wireless and Signals to his previous qualification. He was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on 10 October 1959.

Their eldest son, Andrew, was born at Bedford North Wing Hospital on 23 November 1959. In December 1959 Dusty was posted to the

Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough to the Radio Introduction Unit.

Their second son, Mark, was born on 30 August 1962 at the Princess Louis Margaret hospital in Aldershot. Margaret had to endure the rigours of an Army hospital!

In 1962 Dusty attended courses at Cranfield and gained a Class II Diploma of the College of Aeronautics which was subsequently converted to an MSc. He received his Masters Diploma from the Duke of Edinburgh.

It was at this time they bought their first house, in Gowers Field in Aylesbury, so Dusty could commute daily to London. It was also at this time that Dusty became a full member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers. Their daughter, Ailsa, was born at the RAF Halton Hospital on 23 December 1964, where Margaret was looked after very well over Christmas.

Various short courses and postings followed until in April 1969 when the family were uprooted and moved to Munich not returning to Britain until 1972, after enjoying the Munich Olympics! Dusty claims that this was the best tour of his career. He was posted to Munich to join the project office for the MRCA – Multi-Role Combat Aircraft, but the Brits quickly renamed this Mother Riley's Cardboard Aircraft! The aircraft which was being developed later became known as the Tornado which was in service with the RAF from 1979 to 2019. Dusty served as an Avionics Specialist in the Systems Engineering Division. It was during their time in Munich that Margaret and Dusty developed their lifelong love of caravanning.

Dusty was promoted to Wing Commander on 1 January 1970. After returning to England he went on an Air Warfare Course and was then posted to the MOD, in an administrative role to the Directorate of Signals.

In 1972 they decided to buy a house in Aston Clinton from where he could again commute daily to London. In former times it had been a teetotal Temperance hotel, and was in poor condition – that was why they could afford to buy it. They owned this house until they moved to Stewkley in 2001.

In February 1974 the family once again moved to Germany to RAF Rheindahlen. By this time all three children were at boarding school. In Germany they joined the Services Caravan Club (Germany) and Dusty became its Chairman for two years. In Rheindahlen he was promoted to Group Captain and was responsible for all ground and airbourne electrical, electronics and photographic systems and personnel in the Command. The aircraft flown in the Command included a Harrier, Phantom, Jaguar, Buccaneer, Pembroke and a pair of Chipmonks in Berlin. During this time he formed one half of the Joint Signals Board Germany, the other half being an Army Major General.

In January 1977 Dusty was made Commanding Officer at RAF Stanbridge. He was the last Group Captain Commanding Officer at RAF Stanbridge. During this tour Dusty made proposals for the re-organisation of Support Command Signals in preparation for the introduction of digital systems, which were adopted. At the end of the tour he was posted supernumerary to the Telecommunications Branch of Support Command Signals HQ to start the transformation.

Dusty was then offered a place on the very prestigious Royal College of Defence Studies Course, during which he made friends with those destined for influential positions across the friendly world. This also meant he was awarded the symbol RCDS in the Royal Air Force List.

In January 1980 he was promoted to Air Commodore and became Air Commodore Signals at RAF Benson. He was the RAF member of the Defence Signals Board. It was whilst in this role that the Falklands Conflict occurred. Dusty remembered that communications were a particular problem and the signals staff rose to the occasion magnificently.

In 1983 Dusty was posted to Brussels where he was responsible for the new telephone and telegraph systems being introduced to connect all the NATO Headquarters and foreign and defence ministries, and included the encryption systems needed to protect the communications links.

In 1985 he was made a CBE in the New Year Honours List. This was awarded for his work during the Falklands conflict, where he had been Director of Signals. In June 1987 he was promoted to Air Vice Marshal with his final posting being back at MOD in London as Chairman of the Defence Signals Board. Dusty retired from the RAF on 4 April 1990 not long after the Berlin Wall came down. He had served for the whole of the Cold War. By the time Dusty retired from the RAF they had moved house 22 times.

At this time he learned that Aylesbury High School was advertising for a bursar. It was the school where Ailsa had spent the Sixth Form, so he applied and was appointed to bring the new Local

Management of Schools Initiative to fruition, where state schools were given their own budgets and expected to manage them. After six years he retired again, but continued to work with the school for some time in a voluntary role.

Margaret and Dusty moved to Stewkley in 2001 and soon settled in to the village. They joined the Church, the Stewkley Branch of the Royal British Legion, and Dusty became Chairman then President. He was a founder member of the Stewkley Singers and enjoyed many of the village events, especially the Christmas Band Concert, the Coffee Stop and the Mutual where he and Margaret gave a few talks over the years.

Margaret and Dusty carried on camping visiting Norway, Sweden, and Hungary as well as several trips in the UK and France. On returning to the UK after Rheindahlen they joined the Services Caravan Club Germany Exiles, being exiles from Germany! They changed from caravans to campervans, starting with a VW camper nicknamed Biscuit, due to its colour, then a VWLT and in March 2015 they bought a Ford Globecar. Margaret never manged to camp in the Globecar but Dusty was camping with the SCCG (Exiles) until 2022 when, with support from the group, he managed two trips.

Dusty spent the last few years living with Ailsa and her family in, as he described it: '*a splendid modern house'.* It was built on the site of the bungalow Margaret and Dusty had lived in since 2001.

Dusty leaves three children and six grandchildren, who were a constant source of joy to him and he was very proud of all their various achievements.

Our Family Connection

Mary-Jane Priebe (née Kay)

My father joined the RAF in 1926 on a short service commission. At the time he stayed with an aunt and her family outside London. His eldest cousin, Second Lieutenant William Gerard Talbot Clifton, 11 Squadron Royal Flying Corps, was killed over France on 31 March 1917, at the age of 23. It made a big impression on my father. William's name is in the first volume of the Books of Remembrance in St Clement Danes.



FLYING OFFICER C. E. KAY, of New Zealand, who flew to the Antipodes when on leave in 1930, was married at St. Clement Danes, Strand, to-day.

My parents, Flying Officer Cyril Eyton Kay, a New Zealander, and his English bride, Florence (Pat) Armfield, were married at St Clement Danes on 21 April 1932, by Reverend Pennington Bickford. The church was well known to them, being close to New Zealand

House (then located at 415 Strand) and loved for its charm, history and famous bells and, above all, its kindly vicar.

After the ceremony, they were surprised to find the Press waiting outside to take their photo for the morning newspapers. Back in 1930 my father was given leave by the RAF to make the flight from England to Australia, with his co-pilot and fellow New Zealander, Harold Piper, in an attempt to break the record of 15 days. Due to engine problems (among other things) they arrived at their destination after seven weeks. They were the first New Zealanders to make the attempt.



AIRMAN WEDS.—Bride and bridegroom leaving St. Clement Danes yesterday after the marriage of Mr. Cyril Eyton Kay, the New Zealand long-distance airman, to Miss Florence Armfield, of Hardwick, Cambs.

The wedding was followed by a small family reception at the Strand Palace Hotel and the next morning my parents sailed for New Zealand – a voyage of six weeks.

In 1932, my father's six-year short service commission came to an end and he found himself at a crossroads regarding his career. Going back to New Zealand, he once again attempted the London to Melbourne air race, this time with fellow

New Zealander, Jim Hewett. They arrived fifth to Melbourne and first to fly ‘all through’ from England to New Zealand. In 1935, he was offered a short service commission in the Royal New Zealand Air Force. He accepted and was back in uniform.

In 1939 my parents and sister, Diana, came back to England. The plan was for my father and his colleagues to ferry six Wellington bombers back to New Zealand. At the outbreak of war the decision was changed and the bombers were placed at the disposal of the Royal Air Force. The New Zealand Flight, as it was called, was to retain its identity and operate as a separate unit within Bomber Command. Other New Zealanders were then posted under its new title of No 75 (New Zealand) Squadron. My father was squadron CO in 1940 – 1941 and later, in the 1970s and 1980s, President of the 75 (New Zealand) Squadron Association.

I was born in July 1940 in Cambridge and christened in 1941 at St Clement Danes by the Rev Pennington Bickford. Mine was supposedly the last christening before the church was bombed. In the 1950s it was restored by the RAF under its sponsorship with the help of funds raised by the Commonwealth Air Forces as The Central Church of the RAF.

The family returned to New Zealand in 1942 and my father continued his career, but we were back again in the UK in 1946 – 1947 and 1950 – 1953. My father retired from the RNZAF in 1958 after becoming Chief of Air Staff, as Air Vice-Marshal, CB CBE DFC.

My parents retired to England in the 1970s to be near my sister Diana and her husband Anthony Mattock, and myself and husband Robert Priebe, an American, and our three children Belinda, Christopher and Amanda. All three were christened at St Clement Danes. Our son, Christopher, is currently Secretary and Trustee of the Friends of St Clement Danes and co-Church warden.

Belinda married her Canadian husband, Blake Goldring, at St Clement Danes in 1989 and their eldest daughter Georgina, my parents' great granddaughter, was christened there in 1992. More recently in August 2023 another great granddaughter Arabella married Tom Reynolds, an Englishman, at St Clement Danes; so hopefully our family connection with this lovely old church will go on!



296 Stoke Newington Squadron

Flying Officer Avtar Singh



It's been a busy summer for the staff and cadets of 296 Squadron. Our newly appointed officers and NCO were kept busy with many events and outings.

We also welcomed the new Sqn Chaplain, Fr David Lambert, Parish Priest of St Matthias Church in Stoke Newington: *'I've been at St Matthias for over 17 years, and it is a great joy and privilege to be asked to become the Chaplain at 296 Squadron. Although a very new task and role for me to undertake, it's very endearing to work alongside a fantastic group of young, energetic and eager cadets and to be a part of the dedicated, committed team of leaders and volunteers. As much as being involved with the cadets, it is very enriching to join community and cadets together, whereby outreaching and embracing the richness of culture and diversity, that Hackney brings together. It is a real privilege to serve one another in the spirit that we are called'.*

The squadron managed to get some flying experience over the summer as Fg Off Avtar Singh and CI Richard Schunemann took a group of cadets to RAF Whittering for a great day of flying.

Plt Off James Mack took a group of London Wing cadets to RAF Cosford for the annual Air Show, and we manged to fill two coaches with cadets and staff! It was an extremely hot day, but one enjoyed by all. On the subject of Air Shows, in addition to cadets volunteering at RAF Cosford on the flight line and marshalling duties, the squadron was invited by Lady Wigston to attend RIAT for a day. It was a truly wet day, but the cadets and staff had lots of fun.

Over the summer the cadets took part in the annual London Wing Athletics Day.

Cpl Whittington was selected for the cadet muster at RAF Benson, '*The Muster Parade was an amazing event to take part in on behalf of 296 Squadron. It was also brilliant to go on an air experience flight in a chinook with my fellow cadets. The view from the chinook was stunning and exhilarating thanks to the pilots keeping the back of the aircraft open – it made for one of the most enjoyable events to date. At The Muster there was a virtual reality area and different military vehicles as well as RAF staff to talk to and learn from about what they do on a day-to-day basis*'.

We undertook a number of civic duties, that included the flag-raising for armed forces day at the Guildhall in London and at Hackney Town Hall.

During the summer we managed to get the cadets to try rock climbing and take to the water for paddle sports. On both occasions the weather was very good and during the latter there were more staff getting drenched than cadets.

F/Sgt James Whittington, who is the brother of Cpl Whittington and the son of Sgt Jason Phillips attended Blue Warrior – a field craft week for London and Middlesex wing at RAF Halton.



Sgt Jason Phillips took on the role of squadron training officer and has led on recruitment. Thanks to the work done, the squadron has had a number of new cadet intakes increasing the size of the squadron.
Fg Off Avtar Singh was the Camp Commandant for our summer camp at RAF Waddington and along with a selection of staff from both the Squadron and the Wing we visited RAF Cranwell, RAF Coningsby, toured the BBMF and visited the Bomber Command Memorial in Lincoln. To top it off we managed to meet and see the Red Arrows in their aircraft.

Fg Off Avtar Singh and Plt Off James Mack attended the RAFAC Command & Leadership School at RAF Cranwell; both passing the course meant to prepare newly and recently appointed officers and SNCOs to undertake a uniformed role within the RAFAC.

Although summer is now behind us we still have lots of plans for the remainder of the year including many social events, gliding and Remembrance Day.

Who are the Friends?



The Friends were founded in 1976 by John Samuel Thomas then Resident Chaplain of St Clement Danes. John served in the RAF from 1941 to 1946 and then 1951 to 1976 achieving the rank of Group Captain and Assistant Chaplain in Chief, Air Ministry.

In 1996, under Air Commodore Felicity Peake's tenure of leading the Friends, the Friends achieved its charitable status.

We are a group of individuals who share a common goal in seeking to provide an important underpinning to the work and ministry of the Central Church of the Royal Air Force. We help to bring the church to life through our activities, including an annual concert featuring the choir of St Clement Danes and The Central Band of the RAF or The Band of the RAF Regiment. We have a Friends Service annually as well as the production of two editions of our publication Oranges & Lemons.

Our mission is to encourage growth in the membership of the Friends of St Clement Danes through promotion of what St Clement Danes provides spiritually, socially and culturally.

We consider the ongoing work of St Clement Danes vital and the need to keep the church resplendent. We must build on the successes of the past, continue to support the church and the wider Friends organisation, ensuring that we remain relevant and a force for good through the 21st century. We welcome new members from all walks of life.

Application to become a Friend of St Clement Danes

Please complete and return to: The Friends of St Clement Danes, Strand, London WC2R 1DH

Current categories to join the Friends are:

Normal Membership by Direct Debit

Corporate Rates please contact the Membership Secretary at the church.

Serving RAF Personnel please contact your Station Representative

Membership renewals are made from 1 July each year. Part-year subscriptions may be made initially to cover an intermediate period.

Please tick the category that you are applying for:

- ☐ **I wish to join as a single member** and authorise a Direct Debit of £26pa**
- ☐ **We wish to join as joint members** and authorise a Direct Debit of £40pa**

  ** *From my/our account until further notice; I enclose a completed Direct Debit instruction (page 46)*

- ☐ I enclose a completed **Gift Aid Declaration** (overleaf)

Name and Surname:

RAF Rank (if applicable):

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone: Email:

Signature: Date:

GIFT AID DECLARATION

I would like The Friends of St Clement Danes to reclaim tax paid on all donations and subscriptions I have made to this charity since 6 April 2017 and any such future payments. I realise that I can only sign this Gift Aid certificate if I have paid enough in Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to cover the amount that all charities that I donate to will reclaim for each tax year. Council Tax & VAT do not count and I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

I know I can cancel this declaration at any time by advising The Friends of St Clement Danes.

Signature: Date:

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

DIRECT Debit

Originator's Identification Number 9 4 2 2 6 7

Please fill in the whole form and send it to: Hon Treasurer, The Friends of St Clement Danes, Strand, London, WC2R 1DH

1. Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager

Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

2. Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

3. Branch Sort Code (from the top right hand corner of your cheque)

4. Bank/Building Society account number

5. Reference Number *(Hon Treasurer to complete)*

6. Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay The Friends of St Clement Danes direct debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with The Friends of St Clement Danes and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

FSCD Privacy Policy

1. The Friends of St Clement Danes will never sell or divulge your details to any other organisation.
2. We will only retain such information as we need to support the administration of the membership of the Friends and for no other purpose.
3. We may contact you by letter, email or phone including SMS unless you have told us otherwise.
4. You may change your preferences at any time by contacting the Membership Secretary by email at membership@fscd.org.uk or via the Church at: Membership Secretary, The Friends of St Clement Danes Church, St Clement Danes Church, Strand, London WC2R 1DH