The Friends of St Clement Danes

Registered Charity No. 1048757

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Squadron Leader Gavin Turnbull Membership@fscd.org.uk
Co-opted: Reverend Mark Perry RAF – Resident Chaplain

O&L Publication
Iza Seabrook (*Editor*)

The Friends of St Clement Danes

Issue No. 57
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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



This will be our last printed issue of Oranges & Lemons with all future editions being sent electronically to our Member's email addresses.

Please get in touch if you would still like a paper copy.

If you have stories you would like to share, please email me: editor@fscd.org.uk



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.

Chairman's Letter

Group Captain Mark D Heffron MA FCG CMgr FCMI RAF



It is with great sadness that I must advise members of the passing of Mr Scott Williamson, our Treasurer. Scott was taken ill suddenly and died at home. In this edition of O&L, you will find his obituary, which I recommend you read. It shows a person who gave so much to so many organisations and charities, ours obviously included. Scott joined the Friends many years ago and came onto the Board of Trustees in 2020 as our Treasurer.

Last year he coordinated the Friends Annual Concert, which incidentally since COVID19, turned a small profit. His dedication and attention to detail shone through in all he did, and you will see the huge range of his work as you read the details surrounding his life. I have been in touch with his family, a member of our Board attended the funeral, and prayers were said in St Clement Danes. Scott used to always say, after having updated us on the finances, "so to sum up, is this face bothered!" His light humoured way of indicating that if he was not concerned, nor should we be. In all he undertook for the Friends and with wider responsibilities, we will be forever grateful. His family remain in our thoughts and may he rest in peace.

On Friends' general matters, may I thank all who attended the Annual Concert and the AGM last November, and do please note the date for the next concert, details of which are later in this edition.

Finally, may I welcome our new Board member, Mr Simon Denny, who has kindly agreed to coordinate this year's events in November. With a tribute to Scott, the concert will be a rousing event, as always.

.



From the Resident Chaplain

Paths of spiritual growth: Discovering the inner self at St Clement Danes

Reverend Mark Perry



The Central Church of the Royal Air Force is a tourist destination. Upon entering, visitors may be intrigued to learn more about the divine inspiration behind the creation of this impressive structure, its history, heritage, and its role in serving the Royal Air Force and wider community. As they do, it is not uncommon for folks to feel moved and start to ponder their purpose in the world and their personal significance whilst here.

It is truly an honour to accompany and assist folks as they navigate their spiritual journey, particularly when they are in search of faith, calling and what that means as a vocation. Supporting, guiding, and providing helpful resources to people is a genuine privilege.

In the vocational journey, various aspects contribute to this exploration, and one significant element is the study of Scripture, not least the book of Jonah. Despite its brevity, commentators suggest that the book of Jonah has sparked extensive debate and intrigue throughout the ages. Approaching the totality of only two pages with a contemplative mindset, akin to the practice of *Lectio Divina,* allows for a profound exploration of the spiritual journey that unfolds within this narrative.

Lectio Divina, a monastic tradition, involves the intentional reading, meditation, and prayerful reflection upon scriptures. Through this approach, one seeks communion with the divine and a deeper understanding of God's Word. The book of Jonah, in its concise yet compelling form, offers an opportunity for such a meditative exploration, delving into the depths of the spiritual life.

Jonah himself embarks on a voyage, both literally and metaphorically. He sets sail on his troubled ship, and we, the readers, are invited to accompany him on a journey that traverses not only the physical realm but also the intricacies of the human heart. Beneath the surface, this narrative unveils profound insights into the complexities of faith, obedience, repentance, and divine mercy.

While the brevity of the book may initially seem limiting, it is precisely within these constraints that its power resides. With every word a rich tapestry of meaning unfolds, inviting us to delve into the depths of our own spiritual landscapes. The story of Jonah serves as a catalyst for introspection and contemplation, encouraging us to reflect upon our own spiritual journey and the lessons that can be gleaned from Jonah's experiences.

We ourselves as the reader, encounter a prophet who, despite his resistance, ultimately embraces his calling and experiences transformation. This narrative serves as a reminder that, even in the face of adversity and personal shortcomings, redemption and growth are possible. It beckons us to examine our own lives, to confront our fears and weaknesses, and to embrace the transformative power of divine grace.

If you’re seeking to examine the travails of your pilgrim journey, may I encourage you to delve into the book of Jonah. Approach it with an open heart and a willingness to be challenged and transformed. Seek to uncover the timeless truths and lessons that lie within its pages.

Allow the journey of Jonah to illuminate your path of spiritual growth and communion with the divine. As you do, perhaps, visit St Clement Danes, the spiritual home of the Royal Air Force, and *'be'* in its sanctuary of stillness. By doing so, who knows, you may be surprised where your journey may take you as you delve deeper into your inner self.



A Tribute to Scott Wiliamson
Friends of St Clement Danes Treasurer



It's never easy to lose a trusted colleague and good friend and it is with sadness that we learnt of the sudden passing of our Treasurer, Scott Williamson in April.

Scott became a Treasurer of the Friends of SCD in September 2020 and most recently had been in charge of the Annual Friends' Concert on top of his regular duties.

What quickly became clear while talking to other Friends was how widely Scott was involved in other areas of our wider community. The following obituary gives a glimpse into the life and legacy of an amazing individual who will be deeply missed.

(From Scott's Family)

Former chairman of Blackadders Solicitors and Lord Dean of Guild of the Guildry Incorporation of Dundee, Scott Williamson WS, has died after being taken ill at home, aged 69.

The only son of the late Hugh and Florence Williamson, Mr Williamson was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1955 and spent his early years in Oban, where his father was an officer in the Royal Observer Corps.

He was educated at Oban High School then George Heriot's School, Edinburgh and the University of Dundee where he graduated in law,

before joining the law firm of Gilruth Pollock and Smith in Dundee. Having been seconded to the firm of the RW Mathewson & Co, he was swiftly assumed as a partner when the firms merged in 1980.

After various mergers, Mr Williamson became a partner and latterly chairman of Blackadders Solicitors, where he continued his private client practice, becoming accredited by the Law Society of Scotland as a specialist in trust law.

He retired as a partner after 40 years' service in June 2020, during the Covid outbreak, but remained as a consultant at the request of the firm for a further two years to assist in client service delivery at a difficult time.

Following in his father's footsteps, Mr Williamson also became an officer in the Royal Observer Corps, enjoying nights and weekends of his spare time in the service of his country. He continued to champion service charities throughout his life.

Mr Williamson was a stalwart of the Officers' Mess at RAF Leuchars, a member of the RAF Club in London and latterly treasurer of the Friends of St Clement Danes, the Central Church of the RAF.

He was an authority on military flags, insignia and medals and was regularly requested for information and history of rare or unidentified items.

Although he lived in Fife, he regarded Dundee as his adopted home city. He was active in civic life having been Lord Dean of Guild, president of the Rotary Club of Dundee, chairman of the Air Training Corp, president of Dundee Boys' Brigade, trustee of several organisations and member of many committees too numerous to mention.

His professional life involved the management of charitable trusts and he set up the Help Unit at Blackadders, a novel amalgam of appropriate trusts which allowed the making of direct grants to those in need in Dundee and the surrounding areas. In retirement, he retained his charitable trusteeships and attended his last meeting only last month.

He was honoured to be appointed New Zealand honorary consul, operating the consulate from his former firm's Edinburgh office. Mr Williamson's appointment was significant as a relative of Peter Fraser, former prime minister of New Zealand.

Mr Williamson's first marriage was dissolved, and he married his second wife Dorothy in 1998, enjoying the family life which resulted. The Williamsons travelled far and wide together, most recently to New Zealand for their postponed retirement trip.

He is survived by his wife Dorothy, his step daughters and their families and his sister, Anne.



Hold the date for Annual Friends of St Clement Danes Concert:

Thursday 28 November 2024 at 7pm



COVER STORY: Neither Rain nor Sand…

Michael Erkelenz



Understandably, the history of the RAF is indelibly associated with the wartime heroics of the “chosen few.” Perhaps less well known is the role RAF pilots played in pioneering air communications and travel during the early days of flight. The following excerpt from *The Long Way Home: The Life of Air Commodore Charles Ley King, MC DFC AFC*, a forthcoming book on his life and career recounts the efforts he and his fellow pilots made in December 1926 to fly the Christmas mail (and a few passengers) to Cairo from Iraq’s RAF Hinaidi in time for shipment to London.

Born in a remote Manitoba farming community and educated, under trying circumstances, in one of Canada’s : The Life of Air Commodore Charles Ley King, MC, DFC, AFC Native residential schools, King was hardly a likely candidate for flying in the RAF, let alone rising to the rank of Air Commodore. However, his early experiences learning bushcraft from the Indigenous pals with whom he absconded from school for weeks at a time and undertaking epic canoe journeys through the Canadian wilderness while fire-ranging for the

Ontario government equipped him with the resilience and self-reliance to thrive on mail-run and other RAF duties.

Shortly after his return from Cairo, King flew escort to the first-ever commercial flight from London to India, an event widely covered in the newspapers of the day. Eventually, he served as Air Officer Commanding of RAF Debden during the evacuation from Dunkirk and as Senior Air Staff Officer of No. 9 Fighter Group during the Battle of Britain.

Perhaps the most colourful activity in which Flight Lieutenant King participated was carrying the mail. The RAF established its Baghdad-to-Cairo service in 1921, when the armoured car companies it had deployed in Iraq to help keep the peace, created a desert track running from Ramadi in the east through the old Turkish fort town of Rutbah Wells and across Trans-Jordan into Palestine and Egypt. Since flying by instrument was still at a very rudimentary stage, pilots relied on this track to find their way.

Equally essential were the numerous landing grounds created along the route, numbered I to XI running east through Rutbah and lettered A to R running west from Trans-Jordan. These airstrips were little more than crude runways stocked with fuel and offering safe havens for aircraft requiring petrol or experiencing engine problems, a common occurrence. Depending on wind and weather conditions, the typical trip could take 12 to 16 hours of flying spread out over two or three days.

King first flew the route in March of 1926, not long after his arrival in Iraq. His most memorable trip occurred in December when he, Squadron Leader Hilton Keith and their respective co-pilots set out in two twin-engine, open-cockpit biplanes, a Vickers Victoria and a Vickers Vernon, to carry the Christmas mail on the first leg of its journey to Britain. As well as the mail, they were also carrying five passengers and two dogs for delivery to their owner in Cairo.

They took off on the morning of the 10 December with some anxiety, since bad weather had already delayed them and there was some concern that the mail might not arrive in Cairo in time for shipment to Britain by Christmas. Although the rain had stopped, a stiff wind still blew against them. By breakfast, they made it to Ramadi for re-fuelling, but, by mid-day, the wind picking up, they were forced down near Landing Ground V for yet more fuel.

By evening, having made only 56 miles per hour, they landed in a howling gale at Landing Ground D, well short of their planned destination, the village of Ziza 85 miles to the east. As Keith describes it in his memoir, the landing ground was an "*utterly desolate*" spot situated "*on the side of a mud lake*." There was nothing for it but dig wind shelters and sleep in "*flea bags*" under the wings of their aircraft. Dinner was fried sausages (cooked over a petrol tin) and coffee suitably "laced," which was just as well since the temperatures were chilly. Whether King on this occasion broke with his usual teetotaling practices and indulged remains unrecorded.

In the morning, the wind had died down, but a mist had descended. They attempted flying off but were forced back. Another windstorm eventually lifted the mist, and they made another attempt to get away but were forced back a second time. The pilots then spent the rest of the day in the blowing sand and grit miserably struggling to prevent their aircraft from overturning.

Things got even worse when King decided to test run a suspicious-sounding engine and saw it seize up entirely. With that, "*Joe*," as King was known to Keith and the rest of the squadron, "*was out of the running*." The mail bags in his Victoria were transferred to Keith's Vernon. After an uncomfortable night spent in the cramped hulls of the aircraft—so bad were the conditions outside—Keith flew off leaving the passengers behind with Joe, who was to patch up his engine as best he could. The mail simply had to get through.

Against a freshening wind, Keith managed to hedge hop his way to Ziza. Miraculously, Joe turned up not long after but not before having been forced down one more time. During this interval, to add insult to injury, one of the dogs escaped into the desert never to return. Happily, none of the beleaguered passengers chose to follow suit. At Ziza, it was determined that King's engine was well and truly toast. He and the passengers had to wait in what was a "*little railway station*" in a ruined "*native village*" while a new engine was sent down from Amman by rail.

Meanwhile, Keith and his co-pilot, "Lofty" Messenger (name is destiny), set off on the most challenging part of the journey, the flight over the 4,500-foot Moab mountains and then down across the Dead Sea. Flying below a 5,000-foot cloud ceiling into the unrelentingly stiff headwinds, both pilots required all of their strength "*to hold the controls*": "*Controls hard locked one way, we were chucked the opposite way, and up and down, like a bit of paper*."

By 5:30 in the evening, nevertheless, they had reached Abu-Sueir where a sandstorm forced them to land just short of Heliopolis, their ultimate destination. No matter, the mails were soon on a train to Port Said and Keith and Messenger were free to trip "*the light and fancy*."

Bathing and then "*leaping into dress clothes*," they rushed off to the French Club in Ismalia, where they spent a sociable evening having "*found many of No. 208 Squadron and their wives*." The next day, while King was still cooling his heels in Ziza, they were off to Cairo for a delectable lunch at Jimmy's followed by a delightful tea at Groppi's. In the evening, they attended the famous 'Pelote Basque' (the venerable Spanish-French court and racquet game) and ran into an old friend, Pat Davis, the AOC's ADC. The next day, (King still at Ziza) they "*did the pyramids à l'américaine*." "*In the evening Pat collected some English girls, and we ran a cheery party in some unspeakable haunt*." The next day, time having flown, yet crawled along…

"*Joe staggered in*," very much the forgotten man. Writing to Mary from his Cairo hotel, he described his state: "*I've been sleeping in the desert in my tunic & breeches[,] no shave[,] no wash. I sure did look an awful sight*." No doubt after a shave and a wash, he did then get in on his share of the frivolities. There was another lunch at Jimmy's, a tour of the pyramids by air, a party at Shepheard's followed by a dance at Groppi's, "*where we met McKean, who commands No. 216 Squadron at Heliopolis, and 'Taffy' Jones and Charles Scott and many other old friends. It was a goodly night*."

In the morning with the wind now at their backs, they set out for Hinaidi, accomplishing the journey in a single day. Having brought with them "*several cases of kippers from the Nile Cold Storage Co.*," they breakfasted the day after with several "gate crashers," the delights of the kipper not normally being on the menu at Hinaidi. At least for one more day, Cairo's luxuries prevailed.

A few weeks before his Cairo mail run, King came to the rescue of a starving Nairn Transport convoy stuck in the mud after heavy rains. The story was covered in the *London Illustrated News 1927*. Pictured below.



Minutes of the AGM of the Friends of St Clement Danes, held in the Crypt Chapel

Thursday 30 November 2023

Present

Gp Capt Mark Heffron RAF – Chairman
Wg Cdr Chris 'CJ' Hill – Trustee
Wg Cdr Di Bentley
Ms Katya Johnstone – Church Manager
Mr Daniel Kettle
Mr Peter Kettle
Mrs Margaret Kettle
Mr J W Mitchell
Flt Lt Ian Perring RAFVR (T) – Trustee
Rev Mark Perry RAF – Resident Chaplain
Mr Christopher C K Priebe – Secretary
Mr David J Savage
Sqn Ldr Gavin Turnbull – Membership Secretary
Mr Scott Williamson – Treasurer
Mrs Peta Walmesley
Mr E Robin G Youle
Mrs Jennifer M Youle

Apologies

Ven Canon Ray Pentland – President
Mr John Bayles
Gp Capt Peter Bedford
Mr Artur Bildziuk
Mr Michael Collas
Mrs Mary Holtby
Mr Peter Holtby
Mrs Elspeth Kerr
Mr Hugh Kerr
Mr James McKinley
Mr Peter Neville-Lewis – Trustee
Mrs Gwynfa Podgorski
Ms Susan Weaver

1. Prayer
The Resident Chaplain opened the AGM with prayers.

2. Apologies
Apologies were noted.

3. Chairman's Opening Remarks
The Acting Chairman welcomed those present to the AGM and apologized for not attending the two meetings prior to this one. He is stationed in Berlin.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Friends Patron in Chief, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, was unable to attend, but sent his best wishes. Additionally, a new Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, had been appointed and was "honoured" to be the new Patron. Sadly, he too was unable to attend this year's AGM and Concert.

Two Trustees would be stepping down – Peter Neville-Lewis and Daniel Kettle. The Chairman thanked them for their many years of service to the Friends. Daniel was responsible for the production of the semi-annual Friends magazine, Oranges & Lemons (O&L), having replaced his father in the role of O&L Manager. Peter and Daniel's departure created a need for new Trustees. The Chairman appealed for volunteers to act as Trustees, those with relevant skills would be particularly welcome.

The Chairman highlighted the reduction in Friends funds. He explained that expenditure exceeded receipts. Cost saving measures were being implemented, for example around the concert, and these would be explored further in the coming year. However, the Friends have a reasonable amount of money in the bank that Trustees consider the Friends should be utilizing.

Member numbers have come down, principally as Friends have passed away. An exercise had been conducted to contact Friends, to ensure that membership records were up to date.

4. Election of Officers and Trustees
The Acting Chairman thanked Trustees for their service over the past year. Peta Walmesley proposed, and Peter Kettle seconded, the election of the following Trustees for the coming year:

The Ven Canon Ray Pentland – President
Gp Capt Mark Heffron RAF – Chairman
Wg Cdr C J Hill
Flt Lt Ian Perring RAFAC
Mr Chris Priebe – Secretary
Sqn Ldr Gavin Turnbull – Membership Secretary
Mr Scott Williamson – Treasurer

Additionally, Iza Seabrook, who was already contributing to the Friends as Editor of O&L Magazine, would become Trustee and O&L Manager

Co-Opted
Revd Mark Perry RAF - Resident Chaplain
Katya Johnstone – Church Manager

The resolution was passed unanimously on a show of hands.

5. Minutes of Last Meeting
The minutes of the last AGM had been made available via the Spring 2023 edition of O&L Magazine and the Chairman asked if there were any questions. There being none, the minutes were accepted unanimously on a show of hands, C J Hill proposing and Scott Williamson seconding.

6. Treasurer's Report
Copies of the Receipts and Payments Account (CC16A) for the year to 30 June 2023 were distributed (see Attachment 1).

The Treasurer detailed the various sources of cash inflows and outflows. Receipts totalled £11,038 (versus £15,357 last year – boosted by a £5,000 legacy), and included £6,514 of member subscriptions, £1,963 of Concert suggested donations, £908 of regular donations and £888 of tie and other merchandise sales. Meanwhile,

total payments came to £22,115 (versus £26,462 last year) of which £4,400 were grants to the church, £6,000 related to the spire appeal, £5,965 for publishing and mailing O&L Magazine and £1,187 for restocking merchandise. As a result, a deficit of £11,077 was reported for the year. As a result, the total cash balance of £69,238 that existed at June 30, 2022 had fallen to £58,003 on 30 June 2023.

The Treasurer asked if members had any questions on the accounts.

- The absence of receipts from Gift Aid claims was queried. The Treasurer explained that submission of the relevant forms was in hand.
- The absence of the charity's name on Form CC16a was noted. The Treasurer indicated for some reason the writing had not come out on the photocopied version.

The Treasurer explained that as total receipts for the year were under £25,000, a formal audit of the accounts was not required under Charity Commission rules. Approval of the accounts was proposed by C J Hill, seconded by Gavin Turnbull and passed unanimously on a show of hands.

7. Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary reported that last year membership numbers were estimated to be 484. However, following an excellent response to an extensive GDPR outreach exercise to members, he was confident the correct figure is actually 349, made up of: 165 Life Members, 2 Honorary, 166 Annual Members paying their subscription fee by direct debit and a further 11 by cheque / standing order, with 5 corporate members. The GDPR exercise yielded 329 returns. Of the remaining 20 non-respondents, all are paying their annual fee, even though 7 are marked as "gone away". As they continue to pay, they are still counted as members.

The effort to find new members continues.

The Membership Secretary presented to the RAF Chaplains annual conference with a view to getting some ideas as to how we could connect with the RAF and he came away with some good suggestions,

which he will be following up on during the new year.

As the Membership Secretary has said before, he firmly believes the best advert for the Friends is word of mouth and he asked all members to actively look out for family, friends, neighbours, etc. who might be encouraged to join. Just email the Membership Secretary their details (membership@fscd.org.uk) and he will gladly send out the forms.

Subscriptions
Member subscription fee levels are reviewed biannually. It was agreed at a recent Trustees meeting to recommend an increase in the Friends annual subscription by a small amount, to £28 for single and £43 for joint membership. Approval of the increase was proposed by C J Hill, seconded by Di Bentley and passed unanimously on a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business
A member with arthritis pointed out that the last two steps coming down to the crypt were difficult as there was no handrail. Would it be possible to add one on the left-hand side?

Another member asked what led to tickets for the Concert being paid for as a discretionary donation. It was explained that setting a firm ticket price, would result in RAF Music Services have to charge the Friends for the band.

Last year the suggested donation for the Concert was £20, what is the amount this year? £22.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

Friends AGM – Thursday 28 November 2024 at 5pm in the Crypt Chapel.

C C K Priebe
Secretary

Group Captain M D Heffron
Chairman

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Friends of St Clement Danes Church

No (if any): 1048757

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date: 01-Jul-21	To	Period end date: 30-Jun-22

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	908	-	-	908	834
Donations for Spire Appeal	500	-	-	500	600
Legacies	-	-	-	-	5,000
Christmas and other card sales	15	-	-	15	-
Ties and misc sales	888	-	-	888	55
Concert ticket donations	1,963	-	-	1,963	1,410
Concert misc donations	139			139	
Easter service	-	-	-	-	-
Misc income inc Gift Aid				-	1,068
Bank interest	111			111	3
Subscriptions	6,514			6,514	6,387
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	11,038	-	-	11,038	15,357
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	11,038	-	-	11,038	15,357
A3 Payments					
Grants to St Clement Danes Church	4,400	-	-	4,400	1,210
Spire Appeal Donation	6,000	-	-	6,000	13,527
Friends Concert payments	2,950	-	-	2,950	3,395
Easter Service	245	-	-	245	150
Ties, etc Purchases	1,187			1,187	
Music Purchases	279	-	-	279	248
Friends Service	-	-	-	-	-
Oranges & Lemons	5,965	-	-	5,965	6,075
General Charitable Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Support Costs - Trustee expenses	54			54	832
Support Costs - Printing & Stationery	347			347	247
Bank Charges	688			688	778
Sub total	22,115	-	-	22,115	26,462
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	22,115	-	-	22,115	26,462
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 11,077	-	-	- 11,077	- 11,105
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	- 11,077	-	-	- 11,077	- 11,105

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £
B1 Cash funds	HSBC Current Account	19,358.00	-	-
CCXX RT accounts (SS)	1			11/12/2023

	HSBC Deposit Account	14,175.00	-	-
	Unity Trust Account	24,470.00	-	-
	Total cash funds	58,003	-	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	M D Beffrey	30/11/23
	C F S Williamson	30/11/23

St John Ambulance & Fg Off Edward H Francis A Story of Loss

Brian L Porter OStJ, Heritage Lead, St John Ambulance, East London District

Whilst researching the St John Ambulance Barnet Division I found mention of Flying Officer Edward Herbert Francis, a St John Ambulance Brigade Member from Barnet, who was based at RAF Chigwell in Essex and who died in 1944. This prompted me to look further. The 1911 Census shows Edward Herbert Francis living at 8 Orchard Road Barnet, aged 6. His father was Herbert Charles Francis, an Heraldic Artist, Coachbuilders, own account. His mother was Mary Ethel Francis. On 14 April 1935 Edward H Francis married Esther Elisabeth Jorgensen. Esther was born in Frederiksberg, Denmark on 17 May 1907.

By the time the 1939 Register was completed, Edward, along with his father Herbert and brother Geoffrey, were all shown as Heraldic Artists. Their mother Mary was also listed along with Esther Francis (Hart) [1,] as living at the same address (as above). Geoffrey was noted as a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service BUDC [Barnet Urban District Council] Driver 152, whilst Esther, Edward's wife, was listed as a British Red Cross Nurse 931 BUDC [Barnet Urban District Council]. Edward himself was recorded on the register as a St John Ambulance Brigade/ 839 Stretcher Party Barnet Urban District Council. He subsequently joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve as a Flying Officer.

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1 After Edwards death Esther married Wilfred D Hart in April 1966. Esther lived in Worthing till her death in the April 1976. Source: Civil Registration Death Index

An entry for Edward Herbert Francis records his date of death as 7 November 1944, aged 38 years old and a Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve Officer attached to the Base Signal Radar Unit.

He trained at Chigwell, the RAF school for training in RADAR[2], which provided Mobile Signals, Radar, and Signals Servicing Units manned by RAF personnel (2nd Tactical Air Force) for Landing Craft on Omaha Beach on D-Day and beyond. The casualties sustained are well documented and remembered. The RAF's No 21 Base Defence Sector included the Ground Control Interception (GCI) mobile Radar Unit – they located enemy aircraft and directed fighter patrols from the 2nd Tactical Air Force to intercept them and provide air cover for the beaches. These units were dispersed throughout the American Sector until September 1944.



Following the D-Day landings, in November 1944, Edward's unit moved to the Essex Coast and onwards to Ostend. They embarked with Mobile Units, Equipment, RAF Personnel & Crew onto the landing ship tank LST-420 (a US Navy LST-1 class tank landing ship transferred to the Royal Navy.)

2 Information accessed on website 11/08/2023 www.therafatomahabeach.com

A storm prevented them from landing, so the LST-420 turned for home and the sheltered waters of the Thames Estuary, but as she turned she hit a mine off the Ostend coast. She went down with the greatest loss of life of any British Landing Craft during World War II[3].

Edward, along with 320 others were lost at sea, as the LST-420 exploded and broke in two near the coast of Ostend, Belgium. Of the 320 Officer and Men recorded as killed, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records show 14 Officers, 3 Warrant Officers, 27 Flight Sergeants & Sergeants along with 191 Men from the RAF and Royal Canadian Air Force. Others included 55 Officers and Crew including the Captain, 12 Men form 335 Provost Company of the Royal Military Police, 6 Members of the No 111 General Hospital Royal Army Medical Corps, 9 Members Royal Army Service Corp, 2 Royal Engineers and a Member of the Army Catering Corps.

In the book 'Not All Airmen Fly – The Story of RAF Chigwell' by Jenny Filby and Geoff Clark[4], a brief mention is made of the incident. *High Sprits turned to sadness in November [1944] when on the 23rd, a memorial service was held on the station for all the MSU personnel who had fallen in action and especially for the 12 officers and 220 airmen who lost their lives when their transport ship was sunk in the Channel.*

Burials are spread from Ostend and Blankenberge to as far north as Kiel in Germany. Those without graves are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. The majority were members of "No.1 BSRU". Edward Herbert Francis is buried in the Oostende New Communal Cemetery**.**

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3 Details accessed, 23 January 2024 from website Belgians-remember-them.eu

4 Not All Airmen Fly -The Story of RAF Chigwell by Jenny Filby and Geoff Clark Published by Epping Forest District Council 1994 Printed by GB Print and Graphics.

Church Diary

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

02 Jun	Choral Eucharist with Baptism
09 Jun	Choral Matins
16 Jun	Choral Eucharist
23 Jun	Choral Matins
30 Jun	Choral Eucharist
07 Jul	Choral Eucharist
14 Jul	Choral Matins
21 Jul	Choral Eucharist
28 Jul	Choral Matins
04 Aug	Choral Eucharist with Baptisms
11 Aug	Choral Matins
18 Aug	Choral Eucharist
25 Aug	Choral Matins
01 Sept	Choral Eucharist with Baptism
08 Sept	Service at St Mary le Strand
15 Sept	Battle of Britain Service
22 Sept	Choral Matins
29 Sept	Choral Eucharist

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

Elodie Rose Durnin (1 Oct)
Philippa Charlotte Rose Roden (1 Oct)
Ava Rezazadeh-Wilson (5 Nov)
Otto Rafferty Ratcliff (5 Nov)
Max Arthur James MacEwen (4 Feb 2024)
Dorothea Rose Holt (3 Mar 2024)

Weddings

Raymond Rucroft and Fiona Weir (10 Nov 2023)

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











Corporate Events at the RAF Club

Benefit from a wonderful Grade II listed building with beautiful meeting and events spaces. Our enviable location, opposite Green Park and the Bomber Command Memorial, means we are perfectly placed for the public transport hubs of Hyde Park Corner, Piccadilly and Green Park.

We offer a wide range of versatile function rooms suitable for meetings, conferences, networking events, product launches and business lunches, with catering options that suit your needs.

All our menus are devised with passion, attention to detail and your budget in mind. The food is always exceptional and the Club's usual excellent service can be expected each and every time.

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Visit www.rafclub.org.uk/meetings-events and take a look at what we have to offer.

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The Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY
www.rafclub.org.uk



The 100th Operation

Ernest Wall OBE

With casualty rates extremely high in both aircraft and men during World War Two, it was unusual for a plane to reach the recorded number of one hundred operations. It was even more remarkable that a Glenn Martin B26 Marauder aircraft should aspire to this figure considering its disastrous introduction to wartime aviation.



To begin with, war fever caused the US Air Corps to forego a prototype test stage, and bombers went from the drawing board straight into production. The outcome was deadly for initial aircrews flying the Martin bomber. In May 1943, the USAAF operated eleven Marauders unescorted from Southern England, lost all eleven in an unsuitable raid over Jjmuiden, Holland, this leading to a change in policy. The USAAF

threatened to withdraw the aircraft from combat, but Marauder crews stuck with their airplane.

No 24 Squadron SAAF was the first of five South African Squadrons to be equipped with B26 Marauder medium bombers, which they accepted in December 1943. Previously, the Squadron had flown Bostons.

Marauders were vulnerable over heavily defended targets as bombs had to be dropped at around 10,000 feet and no higher. In two raids in March 1944 over Suda Bay in Crete, the Squadron unescorted, was attacked constantly by groups of German aircraft (ME109s and FW190s) and eight Marauders out of twelve were shot down, the remainder suffering severe damage. Further losses became known in Squadron lore as the "Marauder Massacre" and confirmed that the Marauder targets had to be carefully chosen to suit the aircraft's capabilities. One good point made was that the Marauders could not operate properly without fighter escorts. With some reluctance by High Command these were eventually provided.

How then, was it ever possible for a B26 Marauder to survive long enough to complete over 100 operations? The answer came in the shape of an aircraft allocated to our Squadron and designated the letter 'W'.

In May 1944 whilst the Squadron was stationed at RAF Gambut (situated in Libya halfway between Bardia and Tobruk) aircraft B26 F-6 MA serial No HD588 arrived to join the Squadron, it was given the letter 'W' after alc of similar letter had been shot down over Santorini Island (North of Crete) in March 1944.

After crewing up on the Squadron, the first crew to fly 'W' re-named it 'We6' (the '6' being Pilot, 2nd Pilot, Navigator/Bomb Aimer, W/Op/AG and two Air Gunners). The aircraft's first operation was in early June 1944 attacking enemy shipping. Shortly afterwards, the Squadron was moved to Italy, initially to Pescara on the Adriatic coast, and later in 1944 to Lesi inland from Ancona.

From July 1944 to February 1945 (when reaching 100th operation) aircraft 'We6' had bombed various targets in Northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Southern Austria and despite numerous encounters with severe flak and enemy fighters managed to remain intact to proceed on its 100th operation. This was the first Marauder in the SAAF to reach its 100th raid. This operation took place on 21 February 1945, the target being a large sugar refinery at Sermide. Eight Marauders in two boxes of four led by Major Liddell DFC attacked the target successfully.

My crew were selected by the South African magazine 'Outspan' (on the CO's recommendation) to do a photo-shoot and interview; this although the crew had only flown 'W' on 24 operations. Aircraft 'W' flew on to the end of the war in Italy completing a total of 115 operations. This was a remarkable and totally unexpected achievement for any B26 Marauder taking into account its previous record under heavy fire.

My personal flying experience with the Marauder ended in late March 1945. I was called to the CO's office to be told that I was tour-expired after 69 operations. The length of operational time was at the CO's discretion, there being no set rules about grounding as existed in UK.

The B26 Marauder technical details were:

- Engine - Two Pratt & Whitney eighteen cylinder air-cooled radials
- Wingspan - 71 ft.
- Take-off speed -140 mph.
- Landing speed -130 mph (high!)
- Armour - Eleven 0.5 Browning machine guns.
- Bomb Load - 4,000 Ib (max).
- Max Speed - (with bomb load) 283 mph at 5,OOOft. 274 mph at 15,000ft (max)
- Range - 1,000 miles.
- Endurance - 5hrs (Approx) Heavy protection in crew cabin.
- Number Produced – 5157
- Designed by Peyton M. Magruder, Glenn L. Martin Company, USA.

Several modifications to the original' design helped the B26 survive. Flown by 13 very large USAAF Bomb Groups; 2 RAF Squadrons (14 and 39); 5 SAAF Squadrons and 3 Free French Squadrons. There is a large Marauder Museum and Library situated in Tucson, Arizona, and a thriving Marauder Historical Society.



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.296 Stoke Newington Squadron

Flying Officer A Singh RAFAC, Sgt T Whittington & Sgt D Kal

What a brilliant year it has been so far for the staff team and cadets of 296 Squadron. Starting with our Commanding Officer Fg Off Avtar Singh taking up the role of London Wing Ceremonial Officer, and our Sqn Adjutant Plt Off James Mack becoming the Aviation Officer for London Wing. Training Officer Sgt Phillips opened up lots of opportunities for outings and events for the cadets to enjoy, from rock climbing to VIP and GOH duties at the RAF v French Air Force Ruby match, and the cadets visit to the Tom Hanks Apollo moons missions experience.



The Squadron took part in the Wing cross country competition with two cadets going on to represent the Wing in the region competition.

Back in December 2023 the Squadron had their first, in a long time, annual Christmas sit down dinner. Thanks to the hard work of the Squadron's Civilian Committee Members and with the assistance of Senior Cadets and Squadron Padre Fr D Lambert. It was a memorable event with additional thanks going to all staff at St Matthias Church.

At the end of last year we welcomed our newly appointed Cadet Warrant Officer James Whittington. As well as a number of new NCO's, thanks to the recruitment efforts of our Training Officer. The additional promotion of three new Sergeants reflected the potential recognised in

the cadets and the hope is that the 10 new recruits form the basis of a new Flight.



Two of our NCO's and one of our civilian instructors were put forward for Cadet and Leader Awards at The Jack Petchey Foundation. Our winning cadet, CI Starr, used her grant to purchase new band equipment and this has meant the Squadron has been able to establish its first band in 15 years.



In March 2024, after a few months of training, we formed a shooting team which deployed on a sector two shoot at Barossa range, Sandhurst. The day brought a lot of sun, a bit of rain and hailstones and overall was a great experience for the cadets. Thank you to Fg Off Singh, Sgt Phillips and CI Schunemann for their hard work in making it happen.



RAF Northolt hosted the London and Southeast Region Seven-a-side football competition and our cadets performed brilliantly, achieving Wing Blues and going on to represent the Region at further competitions (pictured above).

On the 25 March this year, the Squadron received its annual informal



inspection from London Wing Commander C Braddy-Green and Wing Warrant Officer P Wright. We had a brilliant turn out with the increased cadet numbers and enjoyed the opportunity to showcase the progress and hard work put in by all staff.

Thank you to all.





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.