



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION  
NORFOLK BRANCH**

**NEWSLETTER NO.236 December 2019**

President: Squadron Leader Paul Bruning (Rtd)  
Chairman: Mr. Tony Leonard + Standard Bearer  
Vice Chairman: Mr. Paul Rainbird + Programme Secretary  
Secretary: David McEwen  
Treasurer: Gill McEwen



DEAR MEMBER,

The President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee, wish all members and their families a Very Happy Christmas and Healthy and Peaceful 2020.

**SEPTEMBER BRANCH MEETING**

Today we had a very interesting meeting with the East Anglian Air Ambulance, who gave us a demonstration relating to CPR and how to use a Defibrillation unit which was amazing, having not seen one of these machines in operation before. The members donated £75 to East Anglian Air Ambulance.

**BRANCH MINUTES.**

Chairman's Report: Nothing to report.

Secretary's Report: No Report and no communication received from HQ.

AOB: Report from a Committee meeting on 12th September at the Feathers Inn, to discuss the kind donation of £1,000 to the Branch by one of our members, to open a Welfare Fund for Branch members.

It was agreed that in a treasurers report it will show a Welfare Account which will be separate to the current account and business account, It was agreed that where possible some of the money from the raffles should go into the Welfare Fund.

Changes in the Association Rules. A copy of the letter showing a number of proposed changes for consideration prior to the AGM on the 12th October 2019 was circulated to members. It was understood no Branch members will be attending the meeting. Copies of the changes will be given to members at the next meeting. (Copies of the proposals with this Newsletter).

David McEwen had advised the Committee meeting that sadly he cannot carry on as Branch Secretary due to illness. We all understand the situation and David Falla agreed to carry on as Secretary until the next AGM, also Gill our Branch Treasurer advised that she must step down due to David's illness with immediate effect. Paul will liase with Gill until the AGM.

All members wish David a speedy return to good health.

Re- Branch weekend at Gt Yarmouth in February 2020 . The 14th-17th February has been pencilled in and Paul will discuss with members in the next few weeks

Next Branch meeting is on 15th October, with a talk by Richard Mann.

Dedication and Commitment said.  
Meeting closed at 2.15pm

**EAST ANGLIAN AIR AMBULANCE**

Visit to the Branch on 13th September 2019.  
Report by Paul Rainbird.

We had a very interesting visit from Douglas Penry of the EAAA, who gave us a demonstration on how to carry out CPR and use a defibrillator.

We all found it very informative and members felt that with this talk and demonstration they now understood how to react to a situation, should it occur.

The EAAA is a charity providing a helicopter emergency medical service for the people of East Anglia.

Since its launch in 2000 they have attended over 23,000 life saving missions, being tasked an average of 227 times per month this year.

**AUTUMN BRANCH LUNCH**

1st October, Old Rectory Hotel, Crostwick.  
Report by Paul Rainbird.

Thirty nine members and friends enjoyed the first class service from all the staff and management at the hotel. The food was excellent and everyone had lots to talk about and enjoyed the day.

Thanks to generous members the raffle raised £153 for Branch funds.

The Branch has reserved the Old Rectory Hotel for a Spring Lunch on the 7th May 2020 and Autumn Lunch on 1st October 2020. We look forward to the pleasure of your company.

## The Birth of an RAF Regiment Squadron.

For some 15 months a Flight of British Ground Gunners without any officer had served with a 417 R.C.A.F. Fighter Squadron. Together they had advanced out of Egypt westwards in North Africa.

Now in March 1943, half the Defence Flight in charge of Sgt N, were stationed at Malaha and Sgt D, had charge of the forward section at Ben Gardane just inside the Tunisian border. (It would be interesting to know if the section at Ben Gardane could have been the most advanced Unit of Ground Gunners supporting the 8th Army prior to the Mareth Battle).

However, without any previous warning and just before the push for Mareth, the forward section of Gunners were ordered back to Malaha. There, reunited with their British comrades they settled down for the night speculating about the reason behind their movement.

Early next day the Flight were aroused by the sound of shouted orders indicating that preparation was being made to evacuate the camp. 417 Squadron were on the move again. But whatever was happening no orders had been given to the Defence Flight.

Eventually, it was revealed that the Canadians were to join the forward section at Ben Gardane but the Gunners were to remain behind at Malaha. No provision had been made in the movement order as to what was to happen to them.

So where did that leave the Brits? No information was forthcoming as to how the abandoned Flight was to obtain rations, medical treatment, accommodation or pay. What about sanitary arrangements and to what chain of command did they now belong? A request, a plea really, from the two Sergeants to the Squadron acting C.O. resulted in the Brits being allowed to retain a large (EPEP) tent for the storage of their arms and ammunition and also a 30 cwt truck. The Canadians then departed leaving the Defence Flight to fend for themselves.

The Gunners in their wanderings had been accustomed not to expect too much out of life but had never envisaged being left in such a situation as they now found themselves.

After some discussion (more democratic than military) Sgt N took himself off to the nearby R.A.F. Station at Malaha. There he

was able to arrange meals and the facilities of the Sick Quarters on a temporary basis for the Gunners. But Malaha would not accept responsibility for their supervision, pay or accommodation.

Consensus of opinion now was that it could be a welcome change to have only the two Sergeants as the ultimate command. Pay too need not be a problem as facilities for spending money were practically non-existent.

As for sanitary arrangements, it would be a matter once again of having to rely on a couple of spades in the Flight's possession. Yes, the main concern now was to acquire some tents.

Sgt D. made himself responsible for providing them by fair means or foul. Fair means was ruled out. Even had the location of a Maintenance Unit been known, the necessary requisition form and even more important signature was not available and nobody was going to listen to a sob story.

There was only one thing for it - the tents would have to be stolen. The Sgt and eight men set off in the truck down the Sabratha road to where it was known a R.A.F. Salvage and Repair Unit was located. Arriving there the guard on the gate waved the thieving detail through without question. (I am glad to report he was not a Ground Gunner.)

Once inside the S and R compound and keeping well away from what appeared to be the Admin H.Q. the party made a wide sweep of the sandy waste and soon came to the section of the camp where many tents were laid out on the ground. The airmen acting on the loud assured orders of the Sgt, who pretended to consult a blank piece of paper, quickly loaded several tents and any other item considered useful. To give some authenticity to the operation, two airmen by arrangement, were scrounging having a smoke on the blind side of the truck.

Returning to the vicinity of Malaha the Gunners chose a suitable site and settled down to their isolated existence. It seemed as though they had been forgotten.

Several trips to R.A.F. H.Q. in Tripoli drew blank. With no other duties than a night guard on their camp and daily visits to the Mediterranean coast for bathing the Gunners could be forgiven for thinking that fate had decreed that this was to be their lot. Forgotten until the end of the war.

Nearly six weeks later the Flight was informed via R.A.F. Malaha that they were to be 'inspected' by an officer of senior rank next day. So it was that the Flight, neat, clean and very tidy were paraded for the occasion. The visitor turned out to be an Army Major. (was he wearing 'Regiment' shoulder flashes? I can't remember).

His message to the parade was that they were to become 'E' Flight of a recently formed 2921 Squadron R.A.F. Regiment. Flights 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were already in existence and engaged in various duties in and around Tripoli. It was Command's intention to make soldiers of us. We were to become to the R.A.F. what the Marines were to the Navy. But for the time being we were to take up duties with 'B' Flight at an M.U. at Zavia westwards of Tripoli.

So it was that 'we came in from the cold!' Someone, somewhere had decided to take us out of limbo and we had been adopted into the order of things again. Both 'D' and 'E' Flights were still without officers but a Regiment Squadron had been born.

Unfortunately the new structure did not bring with it ideal organisation. Soon the recently designated 'E' Flight was obliged to to steal once again tents for their accommodation.

But that is another story in the short life of 2921 Squadron. After being fully trained to operate very efficiently as either A/A or a Field Unit they were disbanded a year later in May 1944.

The following is taken from Centurion 2010.  
CORPS TRIBUTES

Henry Kirk.

President RAF Regiment SEAC Association.

Former RAF LAC Henry Kirk, died on 13 April 2010 after a short illness. He was the founder and President of the RAF Regt South East Asia Command (SEAC) Assoc and the initiator of - and driving force behind - the History of the RAF Regt in the South East Asia Command (SEAC). 'Constant Vigilance' by Dr Nigel Warwick.

Henry Kirk was a most remarkable man who followed two significant paths in his career; first, his wartime RAF Service and then his civilian Police Service. He never advanced higher than Leading Aircraftman (LAC) in the RAF, nor Constable in the Police Service. He was never in the RAF Regt. Yet he was honoured at his funeral by a large

congregation of RAF Regt and other Joint Service Veterans. including a number of senior officers, WOs, NCOs and men, together with many veterans organisations Standards, that included the Burma Star Association, the Royal British Legion, and the RAF Regiment Association.

Former RAF Regt Air Cdr Mickey Witherow paid tribute to this remarkable man at the funeral: he and all who knew him retained the upmost respect. The reader may well ask 'why' to all the foregoing assertions and also 'why the RAF Regt in particular'?

Henry Kirk volunteered for the RAF early 1940 and on completion of his basic training, he served at RAF Benson during the Battle of Britain. He was then posted to Burma in 1941, where he was appointed to the ground defence flight of a flying sqn.

This led eventually to training as an armourer when 20mm light Anti-aircraft guns were introduced. Notwithstanding the training, he was assigned to 2944 (Fd) Sqn RAF Regt as an armourer, but not with the LAA guns. He assimilated rapidly into the Squadron and stayed with it throughout the war.

Because there were no NCO armourers in RAF Regt sqns in those days, he declined promotion to Cpl more than once, in order to stay with his unit. In consequence, he saw and participated in much action against the most vicious enemy of the War in the dreadful jungles, mountains and near-deserts of the most inhospitable land, with a climate to match of extreme heat and rainfall.

Because of the 14th Army's unique and total dependence on the RAF and US Army Air Force air support in all its forms, but especially logistics, the new RAF Regt had an indispensable role in securing and defending the many forward airstrips and landing grounds close to the forward troops.

Henry Kirk continued as an armourer throughout, but also frequently participated in the fighting. Altogether, he and his Sqn marched about 2,000 miles during the campaign as the war moved up and down the length of Burma, more often than not through dense jungle and constantly across high jungle-clad mountains.

Kirk's only absence from his Sqn throughout his years in Burma arose from a severe bout of Malaria contracted in the jungle, for which he refused repatriation, so as to be able to return to his Squadron.

Upon demobilisation, Henry returned to his home town of Kingston-on-Hull and joined the local Police Force. He was ideally suited to the role, for his commanding appearance and his natural qualities of leadership immediately inspired respect. However, there was more to him than that, for he soon proved his bravery-repeatedly.

During the course of his Police career, which embraced Hull docks, the British Transport Police as well as Hull City, he was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Commendation for Life-Saving, The St John's Ambulance Meritorious Service Award for Services to First Aid and, for the action which earned this, involving saving a man trapped under an overturned locomotive in a marsh, at grave risk to his own life, the unique award of an engraved silver salver from British Railways North East Region.

Finally, having rescued an unconscious man drowning and trapped between a ship and the harbour quayside in near freezing sea water on a foggy November night, he was awarded HM Customs Commendation for Life-Saving through resuscitation. No-one knows, especially with such a history of inspiring leadership and courage, why he was never advanced in the Police Service.

His records contain many plaudits, albeit less formal, from senior police officers and there is no trace of any problem. He simply regarded duty and service to his fellow human beings and his community, be it Service, Squadron or City, as his personal calling. Such men are rare, but it does fit well with his natural modesty.

In the mid-1980s, after his retirement from the Police Service, Henry, already a leading figure in the Burma Star Assoc in the North East of England, inspired a group of like-minded former RAF Regt Burma comrades in setting up the SEAC Assoc of the RAF Regt. He then preceded the formation of the RAF Regt Assoc itself, creating with his colleagues a National organisation, with Branches across the UK and a legally drafted constitution.

Their Standard, which unusually for a veterans association bears 'battle streamers' in the style of those in the US Forces-was often to be seen at the major Remembrance Services and other appropriate events, until such time as the years rendered it impossible for their members to parade.

LAC Henry Kirk, founding President of the

RAF Regt SEAC Assoc thus held a position normally held in such Assoc at the national (as opposed to branch) level by retired officers of field (or higher rank); ie sqn ldrs /major or above. It was not as though they were without such officers in this association; it was that even the ex Burma wg cdrs and other officers who joined voted for Henry as President, in recognition of his inspired leadership and organizing ability.

Thus, several years before eligibility for Membership of the Order of The British Empire was extended to all ranks, Henry Kirk was justly honoured with his MBE, as appropriate to his Presidential Office.

Subsequently, he became President of the Hull Branch of The Burma Star Assoc and in 2008, was honoured by the RAF with his selection to be presented to HM The Queen during the RAF's 90th Anniversary Review, as one of the RAF's selected veteran, each representing a different year of the RAF's existence, during which they had served.

Most recently, in 2009, he was awarded the Commendation of the CG RAF Regt for his outstanding and long service to the Corps and to the Regt's historical record.

Henry may have never been a Gunner in the RAF Regt, nor ever worn its shoulder badge, but in mind and spirit as well as in acceptance by the Regt, he was indeed a 'Rock', in every favourable sense of the word.

During 2009, as an expert in chrysanthemum breeding, he learned that a bloom he had developed had been named 'Henry Kirk' in his honour. The world centre of excellence for chrysanthemum is Japan and all recognition and naming has to be approved in Japan.

He remarked that after his initial delight at the notification, the irony of it struck him - Japan!

Henry was survived by his widow, Margaret, who herself supported him at every stage but particularly during the declining years of the RAF Regt SEAC Assoc, when she effectively became its Secretary.

They had no children. Sadly Margaret passed away in Sep 10, just five months after Henry, and their ashes will be interred together in a single service. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family. MSW.

Editor: A truly remarkable story. Regiment History.

## THE LAST POST

From a member of the Association.

Many will have been to, or seen, a military funeral at which The Last Post was played, but where did it originate?

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if he was Union or Confederate soldier the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him towards his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own line, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was already dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock, in the dim light he saw the face of the soldier, it was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down, since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

The wish was granted. The haunting melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

Day is done, Gone the sun  
From the lakes, From the hills,  
From the sky. All is well,  
Safely rest God is nigh.

Fading light Dims the sight.

And a star Gems the sky  
Gleaming bright From afar  
Drawing nigh Falls the night.

Thanks and praise For our days  
'Neath the sun, 'Neath the stars,  
'Neath the sky. As we go,  
This we know, God is nigh!

I too have felt the chills while listening to 'The Last post' but I have never seen of the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse. I also never knew the story behind the the song and didn't know if you had either, so I thought I'd pass it along.

I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

## TIME FOR CULTURE

This poem was first published in 1937 in 'The Overseas Airman'.

## ADEN

(To be carried in the hand of every Airman on arrival in England from ADEN.)

They've sent me to Blighty, I think as a test,  
To see if change and a few years of rest  
Will bring back the brains that the sun has sent West,  
Of the Airman who served in Aden.

If I seem strange, if my actions seemed queer,  
If I look like a wanderer, never fear;  
I'm perfectly harmless, that's why I came here  
On demobilisation from Aden.

If I should do things that seem senseless to you,  
You'll find there's a method in all things I do,  
I'm a marvel at catching Flies, Fever and Flu,  
They teach it out there in Aden.

So if I look lost in some street,  
With Cap in hand and kit-bag at feet:  
Just pity me kindly and say it's the heat  
And the Barren Rocks of Aden.

And if in the Strand I'm found charging a bus  
Or otherwise making a fuss,  
If I'm squashed or smashed up, don't stand by and cuss,  
I'm only a madman from Aden.

Take me up tenderly, treat me with care,  
I'm one of the crowd England sent over there  
To live in the Rocks and say - 'Beware!'  
To Old England's enemies round Aden.

There's no disease known that's not thrived  
there somewhere  
That heat fries the blood, and the ink on  
your pen,  
And the dust covers hundreds of Englands  
white men  
In that damnable 'Crater' at Aden.

And if when I die I'm sent for a spell,  
To some place where stained souls are made  
clean and well,  
Pray to Peter in mercy to send me to hell,  
But-not back to Aden.

H. B. Jones.

Computers don't make mistakes - do they?

OMNISCIENT PC

Eye have a spelling chequer  
it came wiv my Pea Sea,  
It plainly marks for my revue  
mystakes eye cannot sea.  
I've run this poem threw it  
Eye am shore your plea's too no,  
its letter perfect in its weigh  
my chequer tolled me sew.

FANCY A NICE CUPPA

PG Tips it ain't-the £500 pot of afternoon  
tea.

At about £166 a cup, it is not the sort of  
strong brew that will keep you builders  
building.

But real tea-lovers now have the chance to  
try the UK's most expensive pot of tea - for  
£500.

The upmarket Rubens At The Palace Hotel,  
located next to Buckingham Palace has  
created its own blend, Golden Tips Tea.

Its waiter will use gold tweezers to weigh  
out the leaves-small shoots that have been  
hand-picked at sunrise in the highlands of  
Sri Lanka and then sun-dried on a velvet  
cloth-which is served in a silver pot.

Customers who pop in for afternoon tea will  
also get freshly baked scones, pastries and  
finger sandwiches..

The tea is said to have a smooth, light,  
mellow texture with hints of fruity notes,  
although it can be infused with water three  
times, with the flavour profile changing each  
time.

The £500 cost woud buy about 30,000  
normal tea bags-lasting about 27 years, with  
an average of three cups a day.

Editor: We used to have something similar at  
RAF Dumfries in 1954.

A shark was enjoying the waters just of  
Cornwall, when he noticed a squid drifting  
around. 'What are you doing here' he said  
'You are miles from home.'

'I feel really poorly' said the squid, 'I think I  
have fish flu.'

'We need to get you back home' said the  
shark. 'Hop on my shoulder and I'll take you.'

After two days they arrived at the squids  
home waters where the shark noticed a  
barracuda, he swam across to him and said  
'Here you are Barra, here's the sick squid I  
owe you.'

DID YOU KNOW?

St. Lucia is the only country with a female  
name.

The 50p coin is the only 7 sided coin in the  
world.

October 2019, Lisa Williams from Trinley St  
Mary, Suffolk, became The World Porridge  
Making Champion. At the contest held in  
Scotland, Lisa beat sixty contestants from  
eleven countries.

Editor: Another lady we could have done with  
at RAF Dumfries.

TIME FOR A LARF.

'Doctor. every time I see pennies. I have a  
panic attack.' 'Don't worry.' the doctor  
replies. 'You're just afraid of change.'

Why did the monastery remain closed?  
Because they didn't give a monk keys

Why did the jellybean go to school?  
Because it wanted to be a Smartie.

'To the thief who stole my glasses.  
I will track you down...I have contacts.'

The other evening I called round to see my  
friend, he was wearing his pyjama bottoms.  
He said he was semi-retired.

A man was in the queue at a supermarket  
when he sees this very attractive blonde lady  
staring at him.

He can't believe she is staring at him, then  
she starts waving.

'Excuse me do I know you ?' he asks.

'Yes, I think you are the father of one of my  
kids' she says.

The man thinks back to his one act of  
infidelity and says, 'Are you the lady I spent  
a night with five years ago at a hotel, when I  
couldn't get home due to the bad weather.  
No she replies. 'I'm your son's English  
teacher!'



## OCTOBER BRANCH MEETING

'Odd and Interesting' Part 1, was the title of the talk by Richard Mann. He told us of odd and unusual things people have invented, odd objects and unusual accidents. An interesting and humorous talk. Part 2 is in July next year.

## BRANCH MINUTES

Chairman's Report: Nothing to report.

Secretary's Report; There was no report or communication from H.Q.

AOB: The Welfare Fund was discussed and members were delighted to hear that on the 14th October 2019, the Branch had purchased a walking aid for Alf Newton at a cost of £149. Alf says this has really helped his mobility and along with Joyce and his daughters they say a sincere 'thank you' for all being so helpful.

A copy of changes in the Association Rules were given to members at the meeting. The visit to Tower of London was mentioned and at the November meeting we will ascertain how many members wish to make the trip.

Also how many members are likely to attend the weekend break at the Carlton Hotel, Gt. Yarmouth, 14th-17th February 2020.

Next meeting 19th November, when Branch member Laurie Rooke will give a talk called 'The Blindman's Gate.'

The Dedication and Commitment was said. Meeting closed at 2.20pm.

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE

Again the weather was kind to us and the large support by the youth organisations and people of Wymondham. Our Branch Standard was paraded by our Chairman Tony Leonard and the wreath laid by our President Paul Bruning. Wymondham Abbey was of course full to capacity.

## BRANCH CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Tuesday 17th December 2019 - 12 Noon. If you will be joining us, please let Paul Rainbird know ASAP on 01328 856560 - to arrange for catering. Thank you.

## NOVEMBER BRANCH MEETING

Today we had an entertaining. interesting and well presented talk by Branch member Laurie Rooke, about a pub called 'Blindman's Gate'.

The pub was a red brick building, set back from the A146 (Lowestoft to Norwich road) on the Barnby Bends, just outside Lowestoft. In the 1950's it was 400 years old. Now long gone and in its place a Car Wash.

Laurie told how at 17 years old (under age) he used to bike to the pub and nip in for a drink. (he was a big lad). There he met real old Suffolk characters, with tales to tell.

He recalls the publican was a lady who always wore a long black dress, The floors were stone and there was oil lamps in the bars.

Many stories were told of spirits from the past including a highwayman who was tall and wore a long dark riding coat with a pistol at his side. A poacher, a small man who wore a coat that was too big for him. An infantryman in a red coat. A large well built seaman - who was on his way to Lowestoft. Plus a cart with a Chandler on board. Laurie you are a great story teller.

## BRANCH MINUTES.

Chairman's Report: Nothing to Report.

Secretary's Report: No communication from HQ during the past 3 months.

AOB: Three members cards were circulated. They were from Gill and David McEwen thanking the Association for the wonderful roses and looking forward to being with us again in the near future. From Betty Thompson wishing all members best wishes for Christmas and New Year. And from Alf and Joyce Newton wishing all the best for Christmas and New Year. Also a big 'thank you' for the mobility walker which Alf is finding very useful.

Our annual Branch visit to the Carlton Hotel Gt. Yarmouth is on the 14th-17th February 2020. The cost £90pp for a double room. Supplement for single room.

Also discussed was a visit to Tower of London in the spring of 2020.

Henry Linford advised that he has a friend who has a 19 seater coach. A day visit to the National Memorial Arboretum next year was mentioned. Awaiting travel costs.

Branch Social in on 17th December 2019 - 12 noon Feathers Inn, when we have our usual buffet and exchange Christmas cards.

If you will be joining us please give Paul a call on (01328) 856560, for catering;

Dedication and Commitment was said.  
Meeting closed at 1.45pm.

CHRISTMAS - Did you know?  
Christmas is Christmas is Christmas.

Actually, the name for the festive period was considered too Catholic for the liking of the post Civil War English Puritan Parliament during the 1640's because of the 'mass' in its title. So the name of the season was changed for a while to Christ Tide, during which the people had to fast rather than feast.

Great Britain has always celebrated Christmas.

No. Puritan Oliver Cromwell cancelled it when he ran the country. He felt the singing of carols, the Christmas dinner and other celebrations of the season were sinful holdovers from Catholicism and distracted from devotion to the Lord.

When the monarchy returned in 1660, so did Christmas and Cromwell's body was dug up and his head stuck on a spike outside Westminster Hall for 20 years. That's what you get for trying to scrap the good old fashioned British Christmas.

Good King Wencesles looked out.  
Actually, he wasn't a king he was a duke. Oh, and despite inspiring a popular Christmas carol there wasn't much to sing about for this 10th-century Duke of Bohemia. He was murdered by his own brother, Boleslaus the Cruel, who ran him through with a lance.

Jingle Bells is a Christmas song.  
No. It was first written as an anthem to celebrate America's Thanksgiving holiday by church musical director - and sleigh racing

enthusiast - James Pierpoint in the 19th century. It was only adopted as a Christmas song many years later

Jingle Bells was also the first song sung in space when astronauts Wally Schirra and Thomas Stafford performed it while orbiting Earth on Gemini 6 in December in 1963 and reported sighting a UFO. They described a pilot in a red and white suit and on a craft being guided by eight objects.

BRANCH AGM - March 2020.  
If you have any items for the Agenda please send to Paul by 1st March 2020. Thank you.

### STAMPS

Remember to save the postage stamps from your cards and letters not just at Christmas but throughout the year. There are many charities who still want them.

### LOOKING BACK

Editor: I was demobbed from the Regiment in 1958. Little did I think that 61 years later I would be sending out Newsletters to members of an RAF Regiment Association. It does say so much about the comradeship of those we served with and whom we have met since and become good friends.

2019 was the 25th Anniversary of the formation of Norfolk Branch. We are still going strong thanks to the very loyal support from our members over many years. So 'thank you' gentlemen, with a special thanks to our ladies. We couldn't do it without you.

The Branch looks forward to the future with continued confidence. That's nice. That's Norfolk!

That's all for now folks! We do hope to have the pleasure of your company at the Christmas Social on the 17th December 2019 and Branch meetings and Events in 2020.

So to everyone a Happy Christmas and Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

(Keep taking the pills and don't mention Brexit).

Colin and family.