

A RETURN TO St CLEMENT DANES



Sunday 10 April 2022 was Palm Sunday and also the day for the Service to Commemorate the Formation of the Royal Air Force. We left home it was cool and crisp but no sign of the threatened April showers. The RAF Regiment took charge of the Standards outside the Church and changed the instructions but The Services Instructional Techniques were apparent as the mantra goes tell



them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and then remind them what you have told them. Looking at the age of the Standard Bearers, the continuous briefing may have been necessary to keep us in order. Standing in the Spring sunshine was a bonus I had not expected. The arrival of the congregation and VIPs went well and then we paraded into Church behind a piper

The music in Church from the Organist and the band of the RAF Regiment was excellent. With the Oranges and Lemons theme incorporated freely whenever possible. The Choir were in fine voice seemingly celebrating performing to a very receptive audience. The service followed the well-trodden path that all those who had attended in the past remember well despite the absence over the past couple of years. When the twenty-six Standards reformed outside as the congregation emerged, the Chief of the Air Staff spoke to one RAFA Standard Bearer and then noticed Tim Kitching carrying the ROCA National Standard and Terry Giles carrying the No 1 Group Standard, who were standing next to each other. Sir Mike Wigston came over to comment that he had happy memories of his time as a sixteen-year-old Observer in North Wales between his time in the ATC and joining the RAF. We are recognised in high places as part of the RAF Family

There wasn't the usual Reception in the Royal Courts of Justice but the chance to chat to some of the RAFA Standard Bearers who we hadn't seen since before the first lockdown revealed the toll the pandemic had taken. We were all wondering what else might be in store for the Jubilee year. I managed to contact the RAFA Headcorn Standard Bearer and have since gained an invitation to their Battle of Britain Service at Chart Sutton.

Dave Arnott. National Vice Chairman and Treasurer together with his wife Anne went off for afternoon tea on a bus, I am sure there will be stories to tell next time we meet them. Tim with his wife Katherine, Jacqui and I walked along the Strand to Somerset House for refreshments before making our way home.

It was good to be out and about once again with friends and colleagues. Hopefully 2022 will see former Observers coming out of their "holes" and being out more. Hopefully in the good weather we enjoyed in London.

Terry Giles





