



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force

Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch

Volume 1 2022

Chairman's Report

Firstly, let me wish you all a very Happy New Year and hope that 2022 will be a good year for us all. It will also be the 55th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden. Your Branch is planning to remember this very important event on 29th November 2022.

Despite some Covid restrictions your Branch were fortunate to take part in a number of events in November and December.



Michael Compton, in conjunction with Padre Brian Woollaston and Cheltenham Borough Council, organised a service for the 54th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden. This took place at the Municipal Offices and at the War Memorial in Cheltenham's Long Garden. The Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Steve Harvey, and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant Col Andy Hodson TD BA attended. Padre Brian Woollaston conducted the service, the lessons were read by Michael

Compton and David Gearing. Chris Price delivered the Act of Remembrance. The Branch Standard was carried by Robert Parrant. It was a success with a number of members attending and enjoying a coffee afterwards.

The following week, on December 8th, over seventy people attended our Christmas Lunch in the Orangery at Tortworth Court. This was organised by our Social Secretary Jean Stubley. Sheila Gibson made boxes for chocolate for the ladies, whilst Rose Longhurst, Dorothy Blick, Jane Wathern, and Judith Compton organised and ran a very successful raffle. Denis Sparrow and Chris Blick put up the display boards, so that memories of Aden could be seen by members and guests as they entered the Orangery. Our main guest was the Mayor of Cheltenham Councillor Steve Harvey, who told me how much he had enjoyed the event. Other guests included the Gloucestershire Guards Association, the Clevedon RBL Branch, and Gloucestershire Age UK. We enjoyed meeting old friends and making some new ones, and we enjoyed a good meal. The Branch Standard was paraded by Dennis Flamson, accompanied by the Clevedon RBL Standard, entering the Orangery to The Barren Rocks of Aden. My thanks go to all who were involved in ensuring that this was a highly successful event.

Unfortunately, as you will know, 2022 started with the cancellation of our January Branch meeting and quiz. However, we will be starting our

Wednesday lunches in February, thanks to Jean Stublely. I hope that many of you will be able to attend. Details are in this newsletter.

You will also find comprehensive details of the Weymouth Veterans weekend (17th to 20th June), sent to us by Katie Johnson of the West Dorset Branch, and early details of the Aden Veterans Association Reunion and AGM in Blackpool (9th to 11th September) sent by Clive Candlin. I hope that some of you will be able to attend these very important events in our calendar.

A note for your diary Armed Forces Day will be celebrated in Gloucester on the 25th June 2022.

Finally, your committee is in the early stages of planning a special event to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden. This will be held on the 29th November in Matson, Gloucester. Sally Welzel has kindly offered to help with the organisation, and planning of the event. Her experience on both the 45th and 50th Anniversaries will be invaluable. The format, guest list and timings will be discussed at the next committee meeting in February. Further details to follow.

Rick Rutter Branch Chairman

Branch Secretary's Report

Despite the effect that the pandemic has had on our activities during 2021, we managed to finish the year on a high note; the Christmas lunch was a great success, so I want to pay a special tribute to the efforts made by Jean Stublely on our behalf. Apart from the overall



organisation of meeting the requirements for a minimum of 70 so that we could use the Orangery, - involving other organisations and such – the actual event itself was a tribute to Jean's attention to detail. So well done and thank you.

I had hoped that we would begin 2022 with our scheduled meeting on 5th January, but after discussions with Rick Rutter and the management of the Carlton Club prior to Christmas, it was thought prudent to cancel it. It seemed wrong that, after a period where we had been successful in having the Act of Remembrance and the Christmas lunch, we should have to bow to our concerns over the latest variant of Covid. However, at the time we had to make a decision, the rapid progress of

Omicron with little knowledge at that time of the consequences of being infected, cancellation seemed the only safe option. Since then, we have seen a massive peak and subsequent drop in infections; this together with the push for booster jabs will mean, I hope, for a calmer rest of the year. We are therefore continuing with our programme of events as previously planned.

After the service and parade last 29th November, some of us went to the Everyman Theatre bar for a coffee, where Sally Welzel made the informal proposal that we celebrate the 55th anniversary with a more formal occasion in the same way as we had celebrated the 45th anniversary. Because the meeting in January was cancelled, I have had to canvass by phone, a number of members including the Committee, for their opinions and all have been in favour. The proposal is, that there be a service of remembrance at St Katherine's Church, Matson followed by lunch at the Robinswood Hotel, which is very nearby. It is also intended that attendance be open to other members of the AVA; our friends in Weymouth have already indicated they would be interested in attending and some members of the National Committee have indicated their support as well. Now that the risks of Covid infection are on the wane we intend to hold a branch committee meeting in February to decide on the main details, which can then be put to the members at the April meeting in Stroud.

A few days before last Christmas, I received a telephone call from a company called Noon Films. They stated that they had a contract with Al Jazeera to convert some black and white films into colour as part of series of programmes about 12 cities in the Middle East. The 18 minutes of short films had been provided from archive material held by Associated Press. Most of the films were about our last 6 months in Aden including the riots in Crater, pictures of British Dignitaries leaving Aden, and finally a film showing our esteemed Foreign Secretary, George Brown (saying that "the withdrawal went quite well really"). All the snippets of film were out of sequence. However, with Colonel Mitchell's book provided by Graham Harper's selection which he has passed on to us, and with help from Denis Sparrow, I was able to establish location and times for most of the films so that they could be put in order. Noon Films then asked that I be filmed commenting on the films. It took 4 hours of questions, comments, and taking copies of my original slides! I have been promised that I will be given a copy of the final 3 or 4 minutes of the film, when it has been edited. For those of you may be interested I hope to be able to share it with you.

Michael Compton Branch Secretary

Treasurer's Report

David Gearing Treasurer February 2022

It was disappointing that we were not able to go ahead with our January Quiz meeting. The COVID situation around Christmas and the New Year made it very unwise to hold the event.

However, in the last few weeks, things seem to be on the up and I hope we can look forward to better times.

The Branch Committee will be meeting shortly, but as we have no further full Branch Meetings, it is unlikely there will be a significant number of transactions in the remaining months, other than some administrative expenses.

The headline numbers are:

Income	£2,896.00
Expenditure	£2,820.33
Bank Balance	£1,496.24.

It is interesting to note that our bank balance on 31/3/2020 (at the end of the “last normal year”) was £1,466.97, so it’s almost “as we were”.

Postscript A few days ago, as I was giving thought for this report, I was reminded that late in the afternoon of 18th January 1967, I boarded a British United Airways VC10 at Gatwick for Aden, via a refuelling stop at Bahrain. Little did I realise then, that, 55 years on, I would belong to a “band of brothers and sisters” keeping alive memories of our times there, never forgetting those we left behind.

David Gearing Branch Treasurer

Branch Social Secretary’s Report

Despite the lockdown restrictions in 2021, we still managed four AVA lunches – The Fleet at Twynning, The Carpenters Arms, Westrip, The Tudor Arms at Slimbridge and The George at Frocester. The Tortworth Court Christmas lunch was well attended, with the addition of invited guests to swell the numbers and make for a festive ambience. The turkey brought some comments as it was rather minimal. The texture wrapped round a blob of stuffing did leave some room for improvement. I guess most hotels at Christmas do en masse catering to keep costs down rather than their usual standard. On a positive note, the raffle raised £260.



As you may know, there will not be a Christmas lunch for 2022 as it is so close to the 55th Commemoration of the Withdrawal from Aden at the end of November. Despite missing our first Quarterly meeting in January, we are underway with the start of a proposed programme for monthly lunches for 2022. By the time you read this, many of you will have

enjoyed the hospitality of The Aviator at the back of Staverton Airport on 2/2/22 (interesting date!). I believe Sally organised a Christmas lunch there some years ago, so some of you may well remember it. For 2/3/22 I have booked the Highwayman which is towards Cirencester, just off the A417. Our previous AVA Chairman John Wathern, used to regularly attend meetings at this venue. It has been under new management for the last four years, and the hosts seem very genial. I hope you will come and enjoy their hospitality.

Like everything else, prices have gone up but a straw poll of some of the AVA members reveals that you prefer the monthly lunches to be of a good standard and something to look forward to in convivial surroundings, rather than cheap and cheerful. If anyone feels that further discussion is required, please let me know. I have not yet arranged any further lunches, but the next one is not required until May, so time to consider our options.

Thank you all so much for your support and making the events so enjoyable. Feel free to contact me if you have any issues or pub suggestions.

Jean Stubley Branch Social Secretary

Editor's Report

Hi all welcome to the year Twenty Twenty Two. I hope to pack in a few goodies about National Service, Joining Forces, Military Charities and a few others, such as: Weston Super Mare 10th Anniversary, Falklands 40th Anniversary, Earthcott Green, Armed Forces Day, Weymouth, Blackpool, Battle of Britain, Cenotaph and our own 55th Anniversary withdrawal celebrations. Plus a new feature on Military Charities.

National Service

Chris Blick, has seen information on the AVA website on the Forum page.

I believe it will be of interest to members, especially those who were conscripted.

This is a new podcast using oral history narratives from veterans about their time in National Service from 1947 to 1963. The project is designed to preserve and share the living history of these conscripted personnel. These podcasts can be found on the following link.

www.samebutdifferentcic.org.uk visual storytelling National Service Remembered

This will take you to the online exhibition featuring photographs from National Service veterans, video interviews and narratives.'

World At War Weekend Weston-Super-Mare {2nd & 3rd April 2022}

The Branch has received an invitation to attend this event, with our display boards and Standard. It will be held at the Helicopter Museum in Weston-Super-Mare. The event will

celebrate their 10th Anniversary as well as the 40th Anniversary of the end of the Falklands war.

Any member of the Branch wishing to go will be able to attend at group concession rates and enjoy a guided tour of the museum. Further details to follow. The parade will be at 1700 hours on Saturday 2nd April. If you wish to attend, please contact your Branch Chairman Rick Rutter on rickrutter72@gmail.com or 0775625976.

Falklands War, 40th Anniversary National Arboretum, 14th June 2022.

Visit the Royal British Legion website for further details.

Earthcott Green Woodland Memorial {15th June 2022}

Event starts at 10:00 hrs If you wish to attend contact Michael Compton Branch Secretary on 01452 864467.

Armed Forces Day {25th June 2022}



Events on the day will happen in Gloucester Docks and the Jet Air Museum in Staverton.

Weymouth Weekend (17th to 20th June 2022}

Weymouth weekend event hosted by the Aden Veterans Association West Dorset Branch, we begin our weekend of

fun with a meet and greet on Friday evening (17th June 2022) at the Rembrandt hotel with members of the West Dorset branch meeting members from different branches from the north to the south, the evening includes lots of laughs and music being played in the background some attendees may even decide to enjoy a sing song.

Saturday 18th June 2022 is Gala Dinner evening hosted by the West Dorset Branch, this evening is attended by many dignitaries present and past, even the Lord Lieutenant or Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset makes an appearance to enjoy the event hosted by the branch. The evening starts with the standards being paraded into the function room followed by a three course meal.

The other main event of the weekend is the Armed Forces Parade hosted by the Weymouth Town Council on Sunday the 19th June 2022 where many organisations from the Navy, Army, Air Force, Merchant Navy and many more other organisations can meet up and march down the Weymouth Esplanade. The event is attended by thousands of people who come down from all over.

On Monday at the Council Office there will be a flag raising ceremony of the Armed forces Flag. This will be followed by a Buffet Lunch in the Centenary Club next door. For lunch reservation contact Sylvia Johnson.

Should you wish to come along to Weymouth use the link to fill below in the form.

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ca464ebf-8c2b-4c61-9836-265646e5f09b/downloads/2022%20AVA%20Consolidated%20Booking%20Form.pdf?ver=1641851797728>

Blackpool Reunion And AGM 2022 {9th to 11th September 2022}

Initial details of the 2022 Reunion and AGM have been sent by Clive Candlin (Events Organiser), who sends his best wishes to all Branch members.

The Gala Dinner will be held on Saturday 10th September with a choice of two or three courses. Estimated costs for two nights dinner bed and breakfast including the Gala Dinner will be £125 for two courses and £130 for three. Extra nights will hopefully cost £30 for dinner, bed and breakfast.

Negotiations over concessionary bar prices are taking place. Unfortunately, they will not be as generous as in previous years, due to the effect of the Covid pandemic.

Andy Patton is hopeful that the Pipe Band will be there to play at the Drumhead Service on Sunday morning.

Battle of Britain Day 82nd Anniversary Sunday 18th September 2022.

55th Anniversary Aden Withdrawal {29th November 2022}

There will be a special service and lunch to celebrate our 55th Anniversary of leaving the Colony.

A religious service will take place at 11:00 hrs Saint Katherine's Church, Matson Lane, Matson, Gloucester, GL4 6OX.

Followed by a Lunch at the Robinswood Hotel, Marlstone Close, Matson, Gloucester, GL4 6EA. **This event will probably replace the Xmas lunch.**

Military Charities Section



Blind Veterans UK was formed in January 1915. It was formed in response to the significant numbers of blinded Soldiers and Sailors from various WW1 conflicts.

The Charity was founded by Sir Arthur Pearson who, had lost his sight through glaucoma and was determined that blind people should live an independent and fulfilling life.

Formed as the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Care Committee, it soon became known as St Dunstan's, after moving into a large property of that name in Regents Park, London.

Blinded veterans were trained to read and write in Braille, they were also offered a variety of occupational training of their choosing. Mat making, poultry farming, physiotherapy and telephony being but a few on offer.

There were also ample social activities, talks, music and dancing. Most important on the recovery curriculum was sport, rowing, running and a form of football was amongst the most popular of all.

At the appropriate time the veterans would return to live at home with their families and enter back into a suitable civilian occupation.

This would not be the end of St Dunstan's involvement. There would be regular home visits and opportunities for further advanced training in London.

Sir Arthur Pearson tragically died in 1921 aged only 55. His successor was Captain Ian Fraser, {later Lord Fraser of Longsdale}, who had been blinded at the Battle of the Somme. Fraser was already involved with the Charity's 'after care' work and he became Chairman at 24 years of age. He remained in post for 53 years and had a huge influence introducing new technology into the charity, such as talking books. His leadership saw the charity through an increase of blind veterans from WW2 and the many conflicts that followed.

Fraser was instrumental in the creation of a new centre in Brighton and pursued collaboration with other organisations to help the wider blind community in the UK and abroad.

He encouraged blind veterans to engage with the charity on a voluntary basis and also join as members of the staff.

The move to Brighton was necessary due to training developments and an increase in the numbers of blind veterans. The Brighton Centre was in Art Deco style, the architect was Francis Lorne, his design, was unique for blind people. From a distance it looked like an aeroplane, each floor was identical with straight passages and rounded corners and the stairs had self-closing swing gates.

There has since, been further improvements, an arts and crafts centre, a swimming pool and improved accommodation.

Another centre opened in 2011 in Llandudno.

The Brighton Centre facility was moved to Church Stretton in Shropshire at the beginning of WW2 and moved back to Brighton 1946.

Following WW2, due to many other conflicts, Palestine, Korea, Malaya, Suez, Borneo, Kenya, Aden, Northern Ireland, First Gulf, Bosnia, Iraq, & Afghanistan. Many more blinded ex-servicemen and women joined the charity.

By the millennium the majority of WW1 men had passed away, so it was decided to widen the charity's remit of entry. All those veterans who had lost their sight, irrespective of the cause, could now become a member of the charity.

In 2012 the name of the charity was changed from St Dunstan's to Blind Veterans UK and a campaign was launched to reach out to more veterans.

Over the charity's 104 years, over 16,000 veterans have received assistance plus more than 20,000 family members.

For Members Seeking Assistance

“Anyone in Gloucestershire looking for support with Later Life issues could always start by contacting the Age UK Gloucestershire Help Team on 01452 422660 or email helpteam@ageukgloucestershire.org.uk. The Gloucestershire Older Veterans Information Guide is also available on their website

[:https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wp-assets/globalassets/gloucestershire/our-services/gloucestershire-older-veterans-information-guide.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wp-assets/globalassets/gloucestershire/our-services/gloucestershire-older-veterans-information-guide.pdf)

With Sadness

Several Members of our branch including our Branch Standard bearer said farewell to the late wife of Jim Major.

Isobel Major passed away on 6th January 2022. Isobel was an associate member of our branch and her funeral service took place at the Gloucester Crematorium on Friday 28th January 2022.

After a moving service, some mourners stayed on for light refreshments in the Crematorium’s Tea room. ***Our Sincere Condolences to Jim and all the family.***

Finally

We end this news letter with a little humor, to cheer us up on these cold winter days, from our resident comedien, CB

The following few questions were set in a GCSE examination
These are genuine answers (from 16 year olds)..... ..and they WILL breed.

Q. Name the four seasons?

A. **Salt, Pepper, Mustard & Vinegar.**

Q. What happens to your body as you age?

A. **When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental**

Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A. **He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery**

Q. What is artificial insemination?

A. **When the farmer does it to the bull instead of the cow**

Q. How can you delay milk turning sour?

A. **Keep it in the cow**

Q. Give the meaning of the term 'Caesarean section'?

A. **The caesarean section is a district in Rome**



Some pics from the Editor. (L) Aircrew Hotel Khormaksar, (C) 78 Sqn Wessex on its way up country, (R) under slung load for Habilayn

Breaking News

Congratulations from the Branch to Major Clive Candlin on his appointment as Chairman of the National Association.

Services Rugby

The Army are playing the RAF on 26th March, KO 15:00. Tickets for veterans are available. Speak to Editor for further information.

Stroud & Stonehouse Veterans Breakfast Club

The club is planning a trip to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire on 28th May. 8 Places have been reserved for Aden Veterans. The coach will depart The Old Nelson @ 08:00 and return around 18:00, followed by a meal in the Old Nelson. Let the Chairman know if you wish to go.

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