

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL “Tour Guide Presentation”



Chapter 1 - The College and its Evolution

# Graduation Parades



College March

At the front of the College building is a unique parade square, known colloquially as the Orange. This is where the cadets learn to march in readiness for a variety of parades: the Queen's Birthday; Remembrance Day; Battle of Britain Day; the College's Founders Day; of course, the one parade they all look forward to, their own Graduation Parade.

Whilst the formats of each parade differ, there are some common themes. For example, the Squadron's march on to the 'College March'. The Colour Party marches onto the 'Lincolnshire Poacher', and you will find in the library formal permission granted by the Colonel of the Lincolnshire Regiment for the College to adopt the tune for marching on the Queen's Colour.

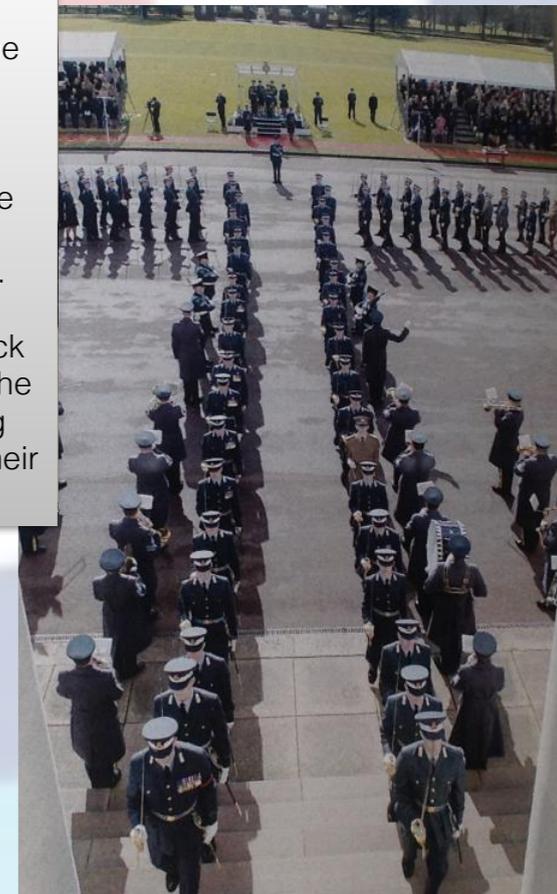
At Graduation Parades, the squadrons will march past the Reviewing Officer in slow and quick time, the former to the evocative strains of Aida's 'March of the Pharoes'. But the pinnacle of the Graduation Parade is when the Graduating Squadron marches off in slow time to 'Auld Lang Syne' - the first time that the cadets are permitted to pass through the front doors, signifying their rite of passage into the RAF as commissioned officers. Hoorah!



Lincolnshire Poacher



AIDA slow march



Auld Lang Syne

# The 'Forbidden' Carpet of College Hall



Whilst under training, cadets are forbidden to walk through the front doors or on the carpet laid in the Rotunda of the College. It is something of a rite of passage into the RAF, and is judged as the moment cadets are actually commissioned

Until they graduate, they must walk around the carpet if requiring access to the reception and/or the ante-rooms and the wings connected to the rotunda.

Slow marching to "Auld Lang Syne" at their graduation parade, up the College step and into the Rotunda, they step on this carpet for the very first time.

# Commandant-in-Chief

On entering College Hall, you are greeted by the portraits of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, painted by Norman Hepple in 1960 - the year HM The Queen consented to become the Commandant-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force College..

Through the arch, you will see a plaque recording the creation of the RAF College.

Further down the corridor of West Wing is a portrait of Prince Charles, painted by Mara McGregor.



This portrait includes Prince Charles' car parked on the Orange near his room, which caused some consternation at the time given the increasing threat from the IRA in mainland UK.



When presented with Prince Philip's portrait for her approval, HM The Queen asked why it was so much smaller than hers, a discrepancy she wished to be rectified.

If you look very closely, you will note the inserted 'background' pieces at the top and bottom of the portrait to make good the deficiency.

# Formation of RAF



Formed on 13 April 1912, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the air arm of the British Army until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) on 1 April 1918 to form the RAF.

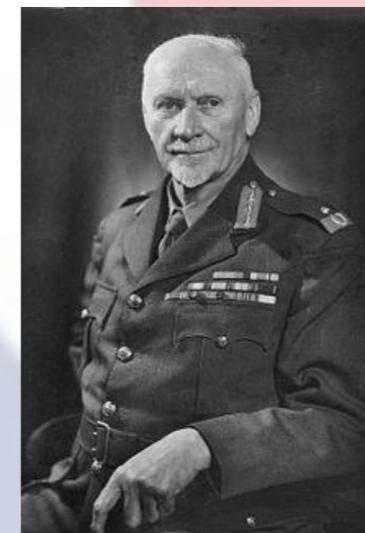
During the early part of the war, the RFC supported the British Army by artillery co-operation and photographic reconnaissance. This work gradually led RFC pilots into aerial battles with German pilots and later in the war included the strafing of enemy infantry and emplacements, the bombing of German military airfields and later the strategic bombing of German industrial and transport facilities.

The Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) was the air arm of the Royal Navy, under the direction of the Admiralty's Air Department, and existed formally from 1 July 1914 to 1 April 1918, when it was merged with the British Army's Royal Flying Corps to form a new service, the Royal Air Force, the first of its kind in the world.

During its first year it continued to be the Naval Wing of the joint Royal Flying Corps (which had been set up in 1912), but was administered by the Admiralty's new Air Department; on 1 August 1915 the RFC became the flying branch of the British Army while the RNAS became "an integral part of the Royal Navy".

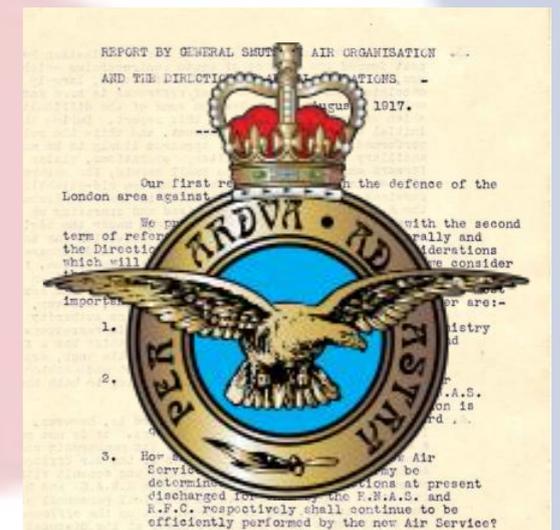


Marshal of The RAF, Viscount  
**Hugh Trenchard**  
GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO  
'Father of the RAF'  
(b 1873, d 1956)



Field Marshal  
The Right Honourable  
**Jan Smuts**  
OM, CH, ED, PC, KC, FRS  
Author of the White paper on  
proposing an RAF  
(b 1870, d 1950)

Lord Trenchard - often referred to as 'the Father of the RAF' - saw the need for an independent Air Force during his time as Commander of the RFC in France during WW1. He possessed the drive and determination to press his belief in the formation of the RAF and became the Services first Chief of the Air Staff in 1918.



Field Marshal Smuts - the Chairman of the Cabinet on Air Organisation in July 1917 - shared Trenchard's belief and, in simple terms, wrote the White Paper that justified an independent Air Force, convincing the War Council that air power had the potential for the 'devastation of enemy lands and the destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale'

1912

1914

1917

1918

# Formation of HMS Daedalus, Cranwell



The RFC had constructed its Central Flying School in 1912, on an elevated site of training gallops, about 1.5 mi east of Upavon village, near the edge of the Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. The RFC site was unusual, in that it was bisected by a public highway, the A342 – with the airfield and hangars on the south side of the road, and all the administrative (and some technical) buildings and accommodation on the north side. Though fit for the RFC's purpose, it could not accommodate RNAS training, when the RNAS formed in 1914



The Admiralty was thus forced to seek alternative accommodation and selected Cranwell as it was close to existing air stations on the east coast and, being in the middle of nowhere, it was far away from possible extra curricular distractions.

In keeping with RN tradition, personnel posted to a shore base had to be borne on the books of a naval vessel. In the case of Cranwell staff, they were borne on a renamed Medway hulk - HMS Daedalus - a depot ship for RN personnel serving ashore on Britain's east coast.

Under the command of Cdre Geoffrey Paine, the RNAS students at Cranwell effectively became part of the ship's company of HMS Daedalus

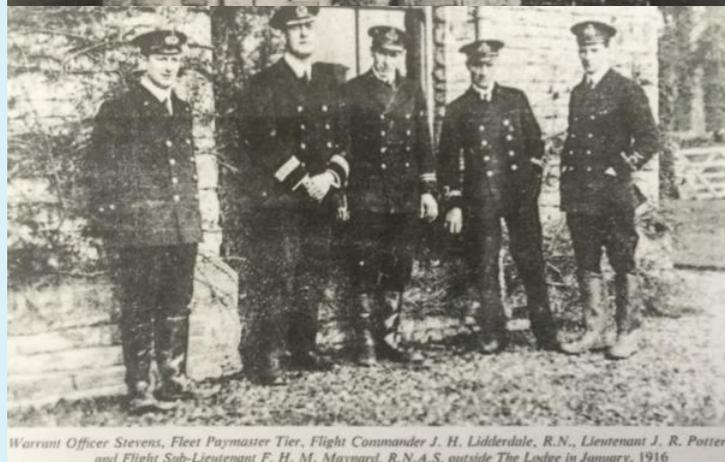


The Lodge Farmhouse

Cranwell Lodge Farm was commandeered from Mr Usher Banks for the Admiralty by CPO Whitlock on 23 November 1915. Accommodation for the men comprised three cottages and the outbuildings. Cranwell Avenue was, at that time, a cart track.

The Lodge was used as the Commandant's accommodation and also the Officer's Mess, or Wardroom in RN parlance, until early 1916 when the Mess building was completed.

With the infrastructure completed, the RNAS Central Training Establishment formed on 1 April 1916 and, in late 1916, RNAS Cranwell was fully established, equipped and operational.



Warrant Officer Stevens, Fleet Paymaster Tier, Flight Commander J. H. Lidderdale, R.N., Lieutenant J. R. Potter and Flight Sub-Lieutenant F. H. M. Maynard, R.N.A.S. outside The Lodge in January, 1916



RAF Cranwell looking along Cranwell Avenue to the west

# Foundation of the RAF College



1

Marshal of The RAF, Viscount Hugh Trenchard



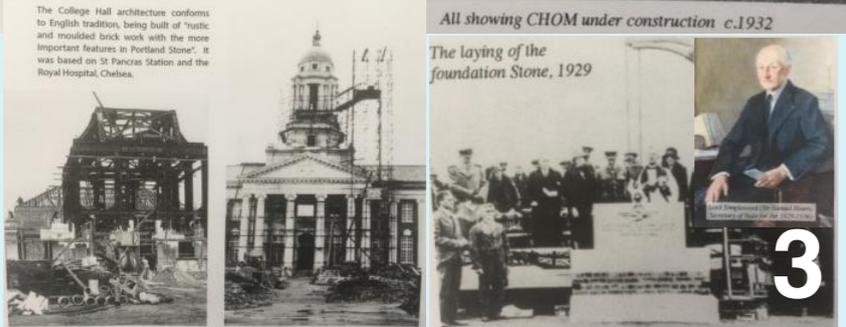
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6



5



3

The College Hall architecture conforms to English tradition, being built of "rustic and moulded brick work with the more important features in Portland Stone". It was based on St Pancras Station and the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

All showing CHOM under construction c.1932

The laying of the foundation Stone, 1929



3

7

4



6

7

1. Realising Trenchard's vision for an RAF College on the lines of Sandhurst and Britannia, RAF Cranwell was officially formed on 1 November 1919 and opened for business on 5 February 1920.
2. The decision to replace the existing corrugated iron huts was made in 1922.
3. By 1929, plans had been drawn up, the final version of which produced the building which we see today. The Secretary of State for Air in Stanley Baldwin's Government, Lord Hoare, was highly supportive. The problem was that a general election (which Baldwin was expected to lose) was imminent and so Hoare pulled off what he described as "an act of bluff": Lady Maud Hoare - his wife - laid the foundation stone on 29/04/29 to the left of the entrance, in front of worthies that included Viscount and Lady Trenchard, AVM Longcroft (1st Commandant) and Sir James Grey West (Architect). The event was noted in the Statute Book and so, when the new Government was formed by Ramsay Macdonald, it seems that approval was assumed and building went ahead.
4. A tinned steel time capsule, held within the foundation stone, holds a record of all present and a special edition of the RAF Journal Vol IX No 1 with details of every cadet who passed through the College since its inception in Feb 1920.
5. Constructed in 1932, the RAF College design was based on St Pancras Station and the dining room on the long room at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The station canopy of the branch line terminus joining the main Cranwell station (currently the guard room) can still be seen from behind the kitchens.
6. The new College was first used by cadets in 1933, but not formally opened until 11/10/34 by HRH Edward, Prince of Wales - the honorary Air Commodore in Chief of the Auxiliary Air Force.
7. The Foundation & Commemorative Stones can be seen either side of the front entrance.

# The Keeper of the Lighthouse



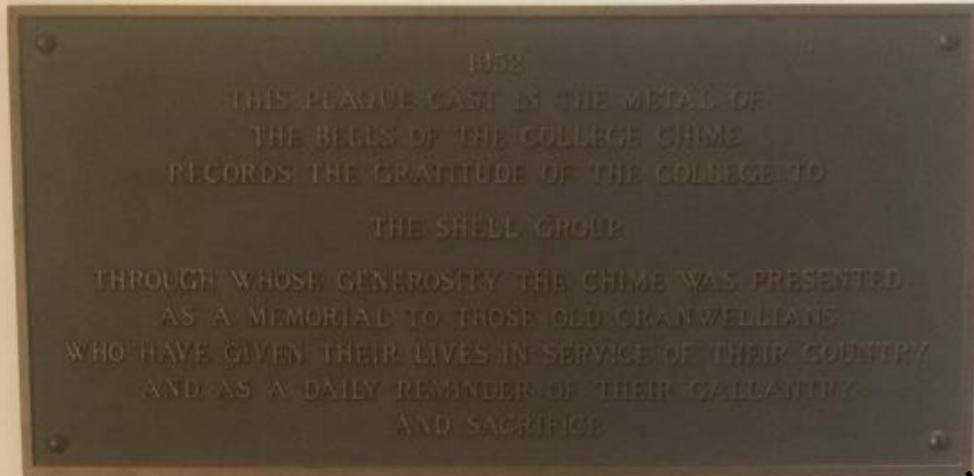
The cupola over the RAF College main hall houses the last operational aerial lighthouse in the UK, a legacy from days when RNAS aircraft operated between the east coast and Cranwell (HMS Daedalus).

In the 1920s and 30s, ahead of radio navigation aids, a network of aerial lighthouses had been set up to guide aircraft at night. In the dome is a light, which, in the early days, could be seen as far as thirty miles away as the UK's most inland lighthouse. The modern light is not so powerful and scans at 15 rpm.

To this day, the Commandant of the College assumes the responsibilities as 'Keeper of the Lighthouse'.



# Bell Chimes donated by Shell

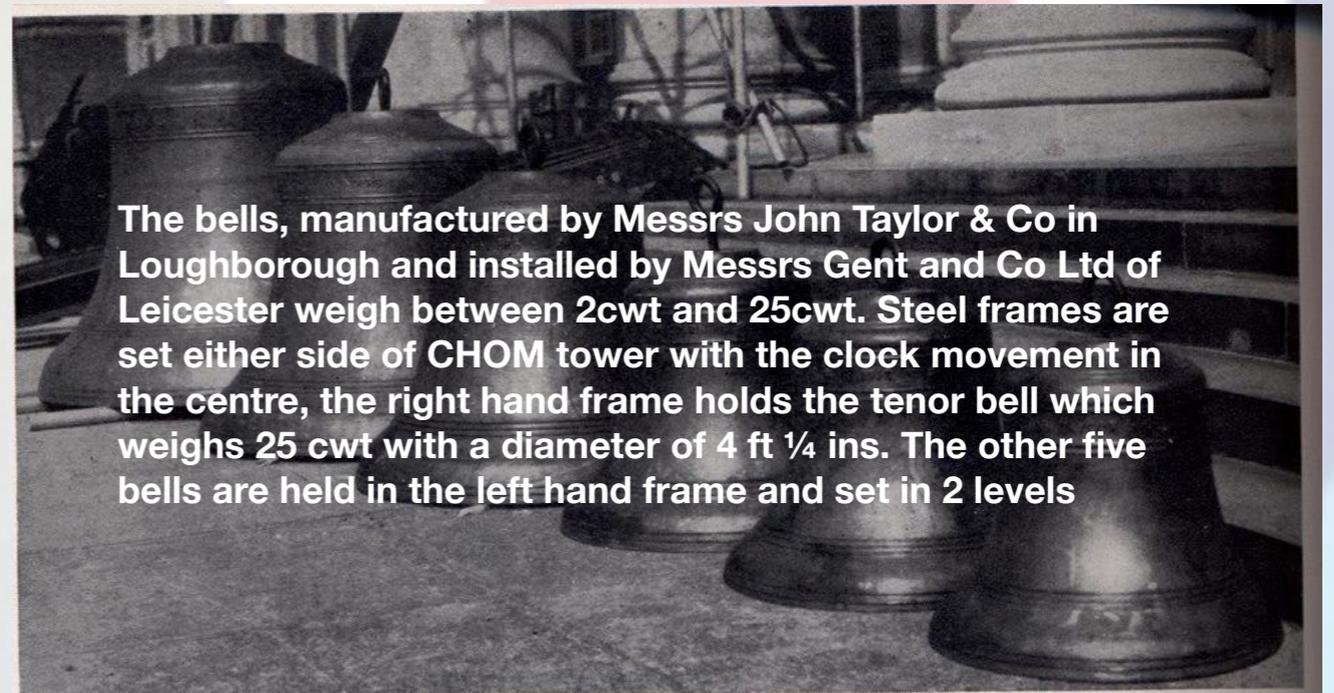


1952

**THIS PLAQUE CAST IN THE METAL OF  
THE BELLS OF THE COLLEGE CHIME  
RECORDS THE GRATITUDE OF THE COLLEGE TO**

**THE SHELL GROUP**

**THROUGH WHOSE GENEROSITY THE CHIME WAS PRESENTED  
AS A MEMORIAL TO THOSE OLD CRANWELLIANS  
WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY  
AND AS A DAILY REMINDER OF THEIR GALLANTRY  
AND SACRIFICE**



The bells, manufactured by Messrs John Taylor & Co in Loughborough and installed by Messrs Gent and Co Ltd of Leicester weigh between 2cwt and 25cwt. Steel frames are set either side of CHOM tower with the clock movement in the centre, the right hand frame holds the tenor bell which weighs 25 cwt with a diameter of 4 ft ¼ ins. The other five bells are held in the left hand frame and set in 2 levels

Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader CBE DSO\* DFC\*  
Flight Cadet 1928-30

Managing Director of Shell Aviation when the Shell Group presented the College Chime  
31 July 1952

# The Rotunda of College Hall



A unique feature of the College is its Rotunda. Aloft hang the standards of temporarily disbanded squadrons and the boards announcing previous cadet prizewinners

Squadron standards, which are permitted a maximum of 8 battle honours, are consecrated items that may be touched only by the ungloved hands of the monarch or clergy. Standards of fully disbanded squadrons are held in the church or cathedral closest to the squadron's base.

Prize winners displayed include those of leadership trophies (e.g. Sword of Honour) and those for exceptional flying, engineering, supply and secretarial skills.

# The Queen's Colour for the RAF College



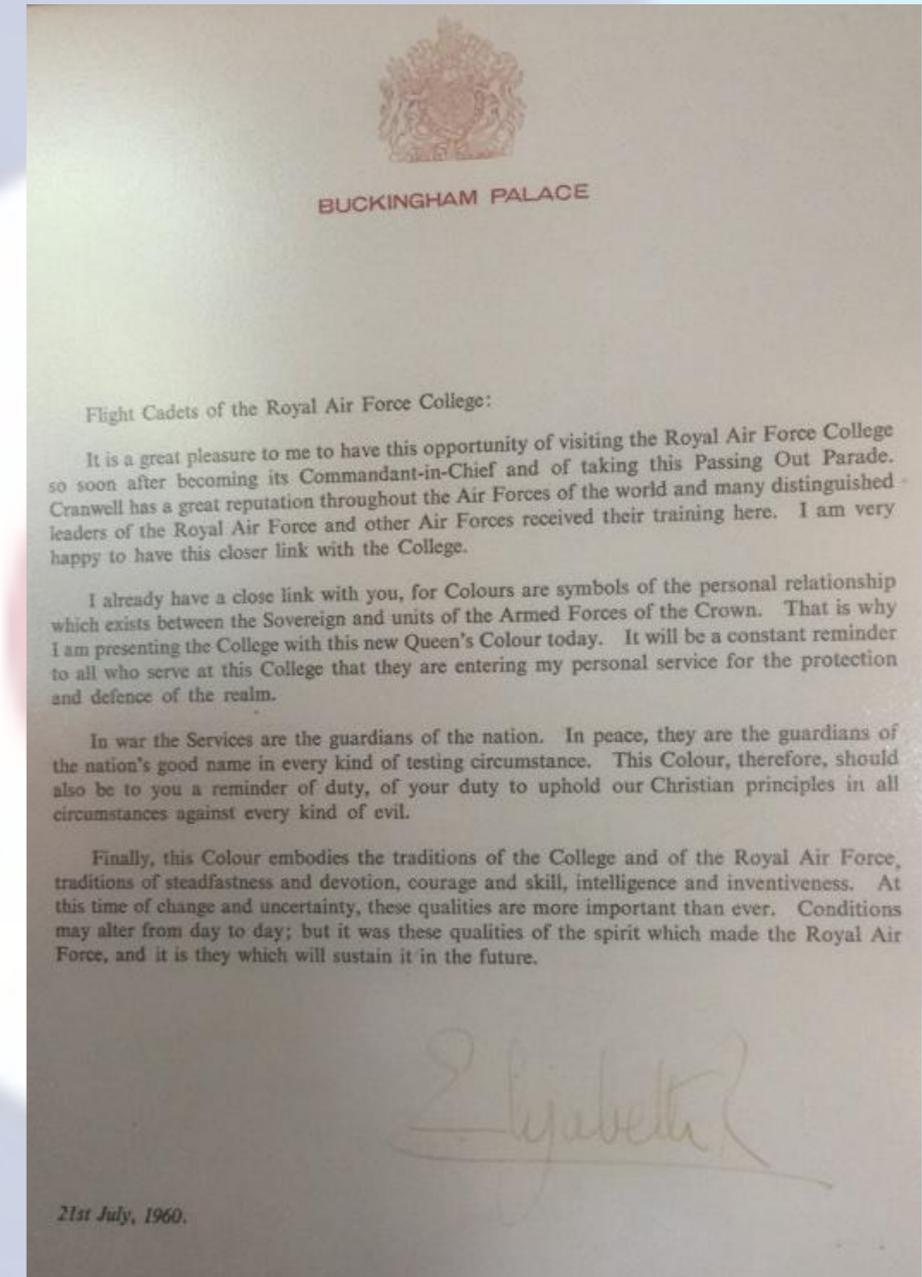
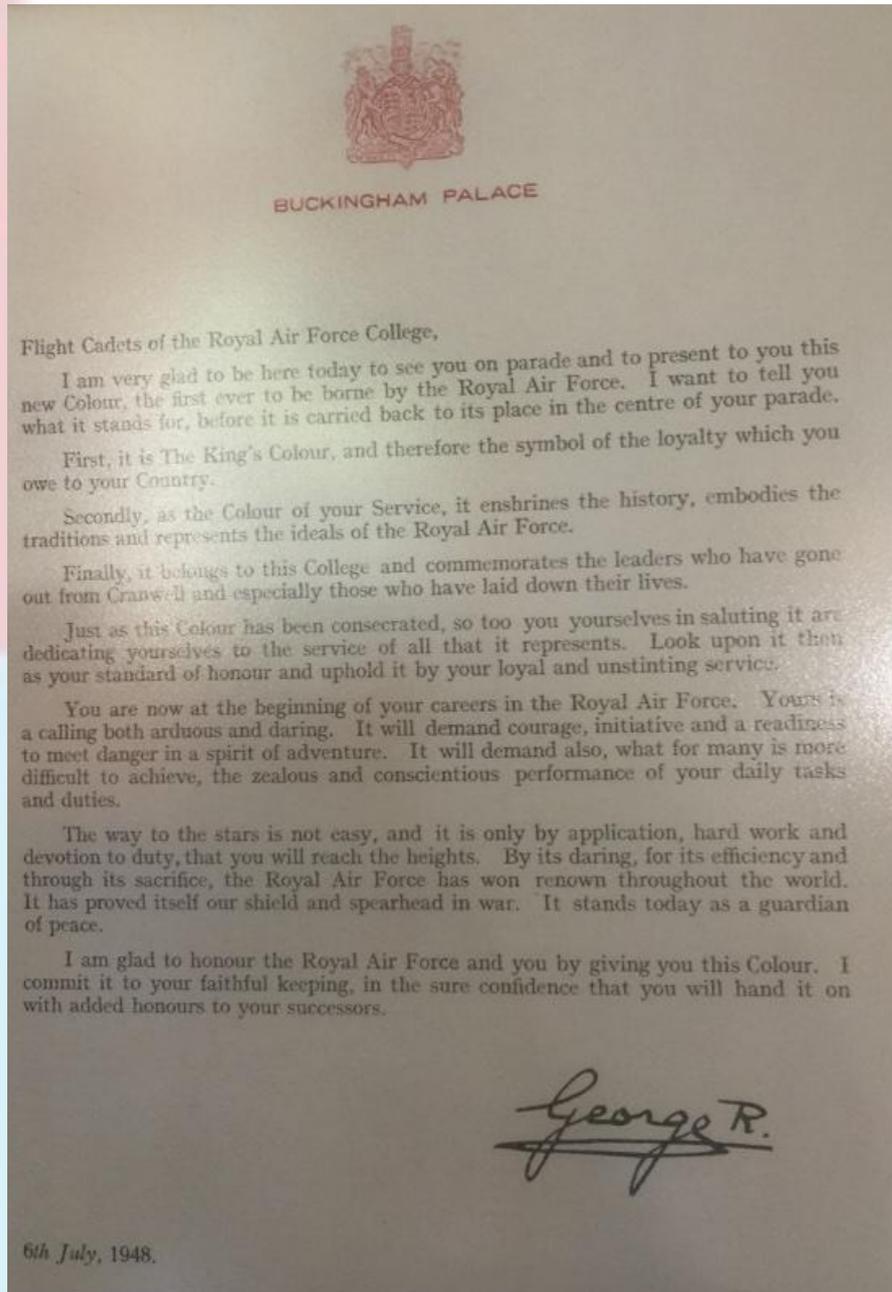
The heraldic portrait of the Queen's Colour is on the East Wall of the Rotunda. The actual colour is held by a large bronze eagle, donated by Sir Philip Sassoon - Secretary of State for Air 1933 - at the west end of the Dining Room.



HM the Queen has been gracious to award and renew the colour on five occasions. The first colour presented by HM The Queen in 1960 hangs in the Church of St Michael and All Angels, the College Chapel. The current colour was presented by HRH Prince Edward in 2016.



# The Sovereign's Colour - What It Means



# The College Arms and Armourial Bearings



Azure on a Chevron between three Cranes volant Argent as many Torteaux each charged with a Lion's Face Or and for the Crest on a Wreath of the Colours a Figure representing Daedalus proper. On either side standing upon a Scroll Or bearing the motto "Superna Petimus" in letters Azure two Eagles wings addorsed and inverted Argent beaked and legged Gules langued and armed Azure gorged with an Astral Crown Or charged with a Fleur-de-Lys Or the dexter fimbriated Vert the sinister fimbriated Gules."



Two plaques, one either side of the College front doors, contain the rites for the College to "bear arms". Dated 1929 and 1972, they represent the evolution of the College Arms as depicted today.

