

Mildenhall Register AGM 13th May 2022 8pm Held at The Middleton Hall, RAF Mildenhall

- **Present:** Dee Boneham MBE, Smiley & Cherry Mildwater, Geoff & Debbie Reynolds plus veterans and guests.
- **Welcome & Chairperson's report:** Dee welcomed everyone to the meeting including those who haven't been before and gave thanks to the committee as the reunion wouldn't have taken place without them. Dee hoped everyone had enjoyed the base tour this afternoon and that it was good for people to meet the backroom boys and girls. All members of the committee are happy to continue in office. All were re-appointed unanimously.
- **Treasurers report:** The balances on in the bank account as at 13th May were £9363.85 in the current account and £2010.75 in the deposit account. Smiley said: Over the last three years I have, again, been overwhelmed by the generosity of the members, especially where the Stone of Remembrance is concerned. We have a double Stirling stone in place at a final cost of £5,000 for the Stone and £300 for the design fee. Back to normal and the bills to be paid i.e. the Saturday excursion to the IBCC, the catering for this AGM, tomorrow's Reunion Dinner and expenses amount to some £3,500. This will leave us with about £8,000 to carry over to next year. So, once again, we go into the next year in a healthy financial state. However, one source of income has been cut off. We can no longer, legally, carry out the raffle whilst on base. As we've had the prizes for the 2020 raffle gathering dust in our loft for the last 21/2 years we intend to raffle them off on the charabanc tomorrow. The silver lining to all this is that you will no longer have to sit and listen to me droning on and on!
- **Secretary's report:** Geoff said it was nice to see familiar faces and new faces. It's been a difficult 2 years. We have lost a number of members, none from Covid as far as we know. We have 280 members at the moment. 125 of those get the newsletter in the post, the rest get it by email, so that saves us a lot of money in printing and postage. There are 24 war time veterans on our books at the moment, including 2 WAAFs, 6 Ground Crew, 9 post war veterans including Bertie Jukes and Smiley. As a committee, we've been discussing how we should progress if no veterans attended. Should we continue to have a reunion on base? Do we meet in a hotel rather than on base? We could put an article in the RAF news.

Clare More said it had been difficult to put the reunion on this year and that it is time to reconsider what happens next year. Her personal view is that the Saturday reunion and the Sunday church service are very important. Can we achieve something off base? There was a show of hands for an off base reunion and a Sunday service. 40% said yes.

To have a base reunion is obligating the USAF and we are leaning on them a lot for such a small group. However, the young men and women on the base thoroughly enjoyed talking to people on the base tour, they love to do it. They won't get an audience like us unless we continue to come. They are taught that Great Britain gave a lot during WW2 and they want to give back. Smiley said we will sit down with the USAF and discuss it with them.

John Brookes said he spoke to a young airman and was told they thought of the veterans as special. This can't be substituted by a hotel reunion. There is lots of history here and he felt there was enough of us here to continue with the reunion on base.

Dee said it's held here for the families and is an emotional place for all and very important.

The website was started in 2017. In the 1st year there were 288 visits to it. By 2nd year this had risen to 3036, 3rd year 8500, and this year the total hits had reached 31359. It's a good research site, there for anyone to use and will continue until further notice. It's very cheap to maintain and the latest news is on there.

Tony Cox said the visits had been great and they do attract people. The presentations are and all different aspects of the reunion are appreciated.

Rowland said it had been an exceptional year and that it will take time to get back to normal. We should see what happens next year.

John Brooke said we should take into account the views of those present, we won't get the same response if we canvas the membership. To continue next year on base was proposed by John Brooke and seconded by Steve Kelly and voted for unanimously by those present.

After the AGM Smiley gave a very good presentation about Middleton VC.