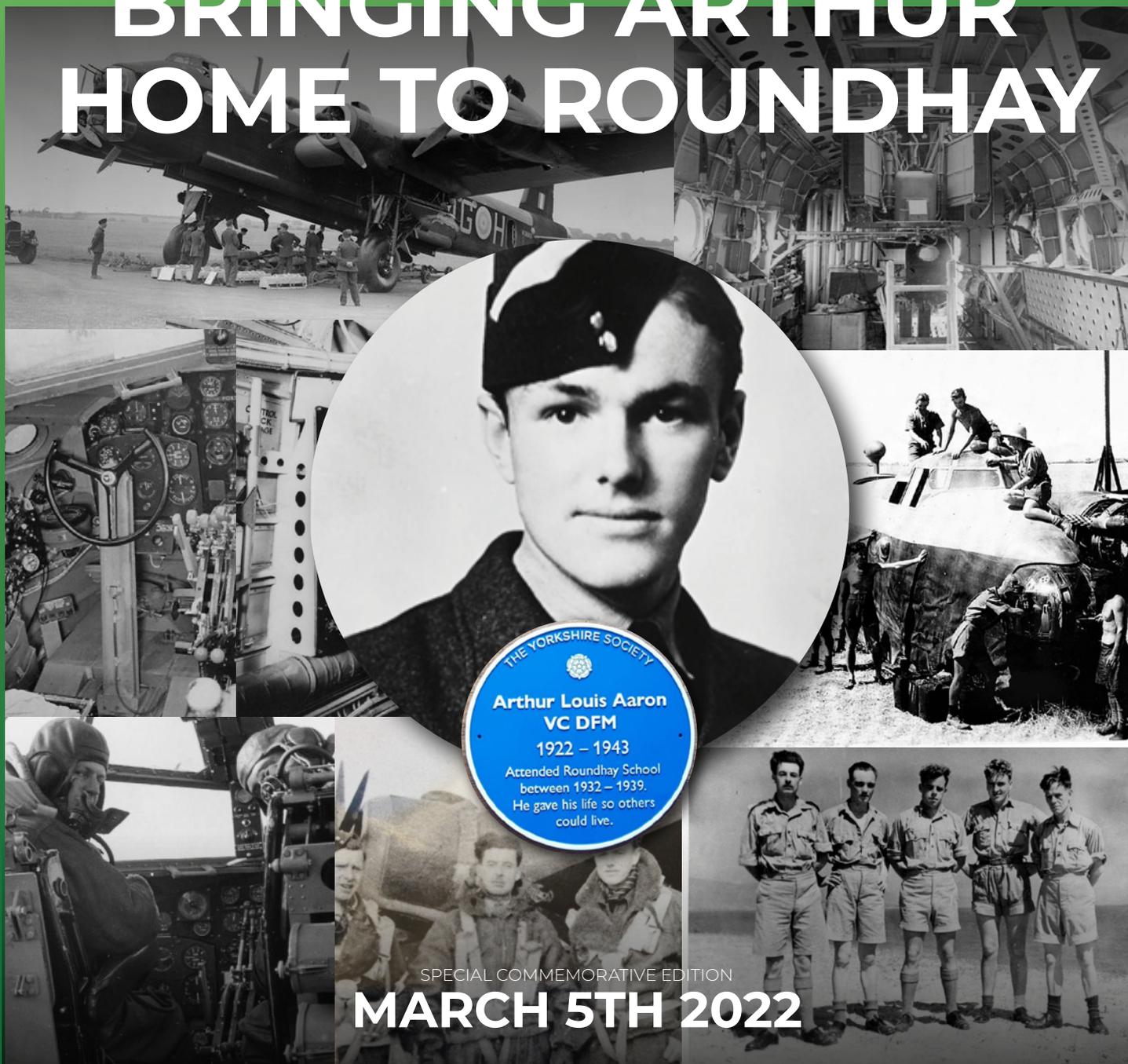


BRINGING ARTHUR HOME TO ROUNDHAY



THE YORKSHIRE SOCIETY

Arthur Louis Aaron
VC DFM
 1922 – 1943
 Attended Roundhay School
 between 1932 – 1939.
 He gave his life so others
 could live.

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION
MARCH 5TH 2022



Overview of the Day

11am

Welcome from Headteacher, Matthew Partington

11:05am

A short dedication and reading by Stewart and Michael Manning

11:10am

Welcome by the Yorkshire Society and unveiling of plaque by Iain Macniven
Pupils from Roundhay will perform 'The Last Post' and read 'For the Fallen'

11:30am

Reception in the school hall where photos and memorabilia from school's history will be on display, tours of the school offered, and light refreshments served.

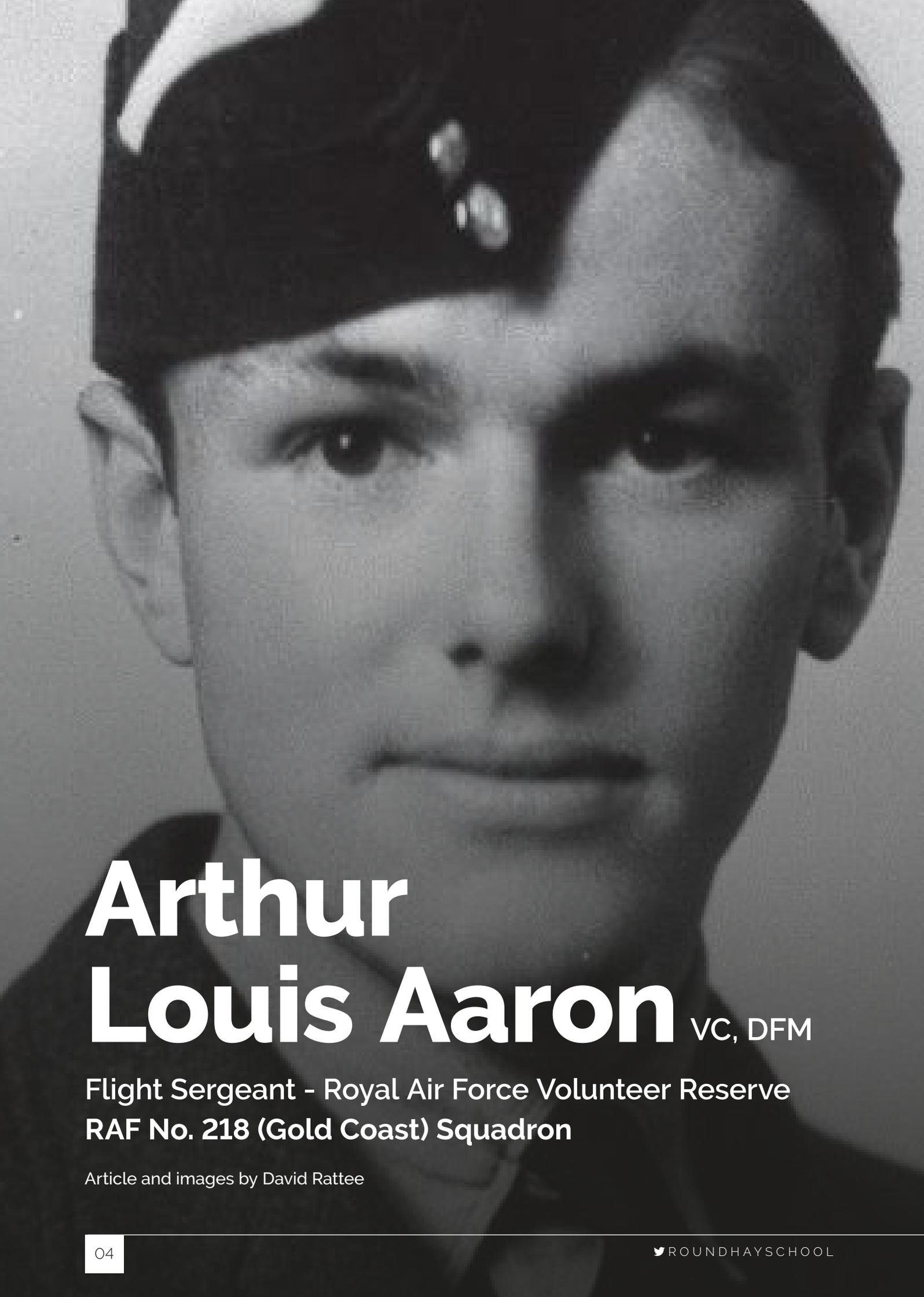
There will also be a raffle, with some wonderful prizes, all in aid of St Gemma's Hospice

St Gemma's Hospice is a Leeds-based charity providing expert care and support for local people with life-limiting and terminal illnesses. We offer care to patients and their carers in the Hospice's In-Patient Unit, through the St Gemma's community team and via our day services, which includes a Day Hospice and Out-Patient Department.

St Gemma's welcomes and provides care to everyone regardless of people's age, gender, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or diagnosis. Our care is always completely free of charge.

St Gemma's is the largest hospice in Yorkshire and one of the largest in the UK.





Arthur Louis Aaron VC, DFM

Flight Sergeant - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
RAF No. 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron

Article and images by David Rattee



In my opinion, never in the annals of the RAF has the VC been awarded for skill, determination and courage in the face of the enemy greater than that displayed by your son on his last flight.

Sir Arthur Harris
(Commander in Chief, RAF Bomber Command)
from his letter to Arthur's parents.
On display in the Leeds City Museum.

Arthur Louis Aaron was the only member of the Royal Air Force to be awarded both the Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Flying Medal, and in World War Two he was the only person born in Leeds to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Arthur was born on 5th March 1922 at 40 Hartley Grove, Woodhouse. His parents were Benjamin Aaron and Rosalie Marie (nee Marny). Benjamin was born in Hunslet in 1891. Rosalie was born in Estavayer-le-Lac, Canton Fribourg in Switzerland in 1892. Arthur was baptised at St Mary's Catholic Church in Knaresborough. He had an elder brother, Frank Emile Aaron who was to become a Cross Country runner of renown. Arthur's family ancestry can be traced directly back for over 200 years living in Yorkshire and as far as William Aaron, a farm labourer born circa 1802 in Hillam, South Milford, and Faith Harrison. William's family lived initially in Sherburn in Elmet and it was Arthur's great grandfather who in about 1858 moved to Hunslet.

Benjamin and Rosalie Aaron with their two sons lived on Thorn Lane, Gledhow. Both boys attended Roundhay School. Arthur previously attended Gledhow National, the old primary school on Gledhow Lane at St Margaret's View. He started at Roundhay School, Old Park Road, on 13th September 1932 when he was 10 years old and finished on 21st July 1939, age 17. The Second World War for the UK started on 3rd September 1939 two days after Germany invaded Poland.

In 1939 Arthur won a Scholarship for a Diploma course and attended the Leeds School of Architecture. In early 1941 he was one of the cadets in the inaugural Flight of Leeds University Air Squadron formed at Sherburn in

Elmet coincidentally from where Arthur's family originated. In September that year he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve intending to train to be a pilot and hoping to fly the Spitfire fighter aircraft.

With his brother Frank and father Benjamin Aaron, Arthur had a passion for mountaineering including climbing the Alps in Switzerland the country where his mother was born. When attending flight training school in the USA and on leave Arthur was able to explore the mountains there and in a letter home he wrote;

I fancy going by myself this time to Santa Fe, in the Rockies and into Colorado. If not, there are plenty of high mountains around Santa Fe.

I intended to spend my leave in the Rockies and I did get two days there. I was hitching towards Santa Fe but gathered that Colorado Springs was the best place to see the Rockies. So at Amarillo I headed North instead of West and after about 2 ½ days I got to Colorado Springs, staying just outside in Manitou Springs. Unfortunately it was too early in the year for much mountaineering. The snow was still very deep on the mountains so I decided to try to climb Pike's Peak (14,100ft). Although I did not quite reach the top I got onto a small peak about 1,500 or 2,000 from the summit. It was very much like Switzerland. The mountain is rather like the Jungfrau, with a railroad to the summit, although shut owing to the snow.



In July 1942 after seven months at No.1 British Flying Training School in Terrell, Texas, Arthur was awarded his pilot's Wings and returned to England. His wish to become a Spitfire pilot did not materialise. Instead in November he was sent to No. 26 (OTU) Operational Training Unit at RAF Wing in Buckinghamshire to fly the twin engine Wellington bomber. This also involved him in selecting the men who were to be the first five in his aircrew. He is pictured in front of one of the aircraft with two of these men. On the left is Cornelius Brennan and in the centre Thomas McCabe. Arthur is standing on the right and it is clear that he is wearing his Roundhay School scarf.

In February 1943 Arthur and his aircrew went to No.1657 (HCU) Heavy Conversion Unit at RAF Stradishall in Suffolk

for training on the RAF's new four-engined Stirling heavy bomber. While there the final two members joined Arthur's aircrew, the Mid-Upper Turret Gunner and the Flight Engineer.

The full aircrew now consisted of:

Flight Sgt Arthur Louis Aaron, Pilot

Flight Sgt Alan Larden, Bomb Aimer

Sgt Malcolm Mitchem, Flight Engineer

Sgt Cornelius Brennan, Navigator

Sgt Jimmy Guy, Wireless Operator and Gunner

Sgt James Richmond, Mid-Upper Gunner

Sgt Thomas McCabe, Rear Gunner

On completion of their training on the Stirling they were posted to No.218 (Gold Coast) Squadron, at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk. After only three familiarisation flights as second pilot accompanying experienced pilots on bombing missions Arthur at age 20 was appointed to Captain a Stirling bomber aircraft with his own crew of six men.

Initially Arthur's aircraft carried out various missions including minelaying off the Bay of Biscay and the Dutch and German coasts, and bombing raids into Germany targeting the steel making and armaments factories in the Ruhr Valley, and in July 1943 four concentrated attacks against Hamburg. Then at the end of the month came the bombing mission which led to Arthur being recommended for a medal.



DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT
				Up	Down	
1943 30th July	STIRLING MK. III. O. BK. 761.	Sgt. Aaron, A. I. Sgt. Brennan, C. A. Sgt. Guy, T. P/S. Larden, A. W. Sgt. Richmond, J. Sgt. McCabe, T. M. Sgt. Mitchem, M.	Captain. Navigator. Wop/AG. Bomb Aimer. M. U. Gunner. R. Gunner. Flt. Engr.	22.35.	03.05.	Bombed from 15,000 feet on Red T.I. Quite a lot of fires and much smoke up to 8,000 feet.

The Distinguished Flying Medal

From the above crew report it would appear to have been an uneventful 4 hours and 30 minutes.

In fact, on 30th / 31st July 1943, a force of 273 RAF aircraft was assembled to attack the town of Remscheid to the east of Dusseldorf in Germany. 22 Pathfinder aircraft were evenly spaced through the bomber stream which included 87 Stirling bombers. Arthur's crew report notes that his aircraft bombed from 15,000 feet on Red T.I. which were red flares used as Target Indicators so that the pilot and bomb aimer could see their designated target. There was haze over the target and no moon. Visibility was described as moderate. Target marking by Mosquito aircraft was continuous throughout the attack which happened in three waves. Target defences were reported weak and ineffective, with only a few searchlights in evidence; heavy and light flak was described as slight.

15 aircraft failed to return, with 7 losses due to flak, 6 shot down by enemy fighter aircraft and 2 due to unknown causes. However, in the space of little more than 30 minutes, 871 tons of bombs fell on Remscheid with devastating effect. The bombing and ensuing firestorm almost completely destroyed the town.

One may wonder what occurred on that flight to merit Arthur being awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal. Fortunately, we have the detail as recalled by members of his crew.

“

We were late on our timing. We were delayed due to being “coned” by searchlights near Amsterdam, entailing losing height and direction to evade them then regaining height whilst still loaded. We were cutting off corners to get around Dusseldorf to get to the target and back into our bomb slot time for our wave and height. We never did catch up and going in to the target the gunners were told to keep their eyes peeled watching above for higher waves of aircraft going in.

Sgt Malcom Mitchem
Flight Engineer

Flying in formation at night with aircraft at different altitudes was a perilous activity and due to being out of position Arthur's aircraft was hit by three incendiary bombs dropped from another RAF plane flying above them. Two 4lb bombs penetrated the starboard wing between No.2 and No.4 main fuel tanks. Fortunately, they did not ignite. A 30lb incendiary bomb penetrated the fuselage roof and landed on the floor where it fractured hydraulic pipes and ignited. The bomb had landed close to Sgt Guy who was pushing wads of “Window” (the radar countermeasure material) down the chute. He called up on the intercom to report that the aircraft was on fire, the bomb having set light to hydraulic fluid gushing from the fractured pipes.

The aircraft filled with thick black smoke and acrid fumes. Flames roared along the floor and up through the fuselage and out of the gaping hole in the roof, trailing a great flare from the aircraft. Arthur and Flight Sergeant Alan Larden (the Bomb Aimer) pressed on with the task of reaching and bombing the target. The trail of flame spewing from the aircraft and the fire glowing inside the fuselage attracted the searchlights which again “coned” the plane. Having dropped the bombs, Arthur put the aircraft into a diving, twisting descent to avoid the anti-aircraft flak. Flak was giant charges fired by ground based anti-aircraft guns and which would explode sending shrapnel in all directions like a “star burst” capable of severely damaging and bringing down aircraft, injuring and killing air crew.

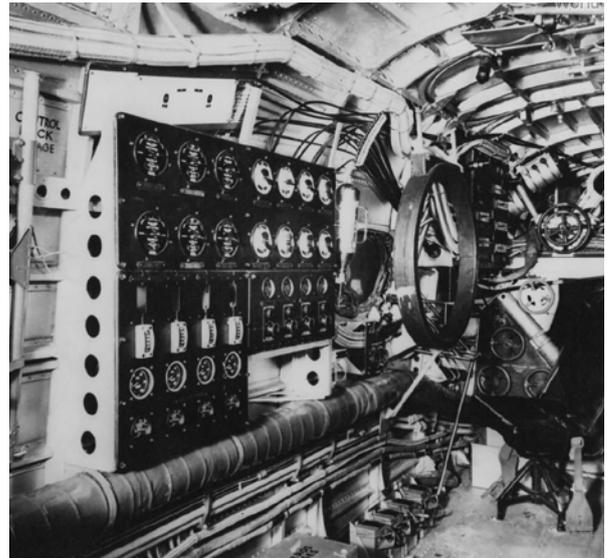


Arthur had opened his side window to force the smoke to the back of the aircraft and by then “Jimmy” [Thomas] Guy and I were able to work our way back along the aircraft to Jim Richmond in the mid-upper turret. Jim had been trapped there above the fire. With the aid of portable oxygen cylinders, we were able to help him to the front of the aircraft to recover.

Flight Sgt Alan Larden
Bomb Aimer



Ladders to Mid-Upper Turret



Flight Engineer's Station

Sgt Malcolm Mitchem, Flight Engineer, was off the intercom system and confused about the state of the aircraft.



With all the diving and turning I thought that the aircraft was out of control and that maybe all the others had bailed out. I began to return up front to reach my own parachute when I met Alan and “Jimmy” Guy coming back with more extinguishers after they had moved Jim Richmond forward. The incendiary had burnt its way through the floor and had fallen out [of the aircraft]. We were able then to extinguish what remained of the fire around the hole left in the floor.

Sgt Malcolm Mitchem
Flight Engineer

By now Arthur had brought the aircraft lower to escape the anti-aircraft fire. He then piloted it towards the Cologne/Dusseldorf gap in the searchlight belt spread across Germany and they eventually escaped the glare of the searchlights. They had lost a lot of height and flew fast at low level across Holland. Only when out over the North Sea were they able to open flasks of coffee and help Malcolm Mitchem who was coughing and retching from the smoke and extinguisher fumes.

As the Flight Report noted they landed back at RAF Downham Market at 03:05hrs. It does not mention the two incendiary bombs that were found still embedded in the starboard wing.

Two nights later, on 2nd August, Arthur and his crew took off at 23:45 as one of 15 aircraft from RAF Downham Market detailed for a bombing raid on Hamburg, Germany. The Squadron Operations Record Book (SECRET) notes: "3 aircraft believed to have attacked target. 1 returned early, 2 brought bombs back and 9 jettisoned. Severe icing was experienced."

Arthur's report simply states: "Jettisoned bombs. Port outer engine U/S". Landed at 04:00.

There were three recommendations for Arthur to be awarded the **Distinguished Flying Medal**.



From:

*Squadron Commanding Officer,
RAF No. 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron*

"This NCO has completed 19 successful operations, the majority of which have been against the most heavily defended areas in Germany. He has avoided trouble by his skill in anticipating enemy action and taking correct evasive action.

He has proved himself an exceptional captain and leader. I wish to recommend him for the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal."

From:

*Station Commanding Officer,
RAF Downham Market*

"This NCO is highly imaginative and rather highly strung individual. The fact that he is always doggedly determined to reach and bomb the target in any circumstances is considered doubly commendable."

From:

*RAF Bomber Command,
Air Officer, Commanding 3 Group*

"On the night of 12/13th August 1943, after this recommendation was first made, Sergeant Aaron completed his 20th sortie with a bombing attack on Turin and was wounded in action. The award of the Distinguished Flying Medal is recommended."



In early August Arthur was on leave and back home in Roundhay, Leeds. On return to the Squadron his next mission was to be his last and resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross.



The Victoria Cross

On the night of Thursday 12th August 1943 at 21:35, Arthur's aircraft, code letter "O", number EF-452, was the eighth of 13 aircraft from RAF Downham Market to take off to join a formation of 152 other aircraft which set out flying in close formation at a cruising speed of about 184 miles per hour at an altitude around 15,000 feet across occupied France, across the Swiss Alps and heading for Turin, Italy. This was to be a flight of about 608 miles to bomb the Fiat factory which was making armoured vehicles and aircraft for Nazi Germany.

In the Squadron Operations Report Book (SECRET) in the Operational Summary it notes:

"The target was Turin. 11 attacked primary target. 2 aircraft "O" and "Y" outstanding". [i.e. missing].

For Arthur's aircraft a second Squadron Operations Report Book (SECRET) simply states:

"Landed in Algiers. Sergeant Brennan, Navigator killed."



RAF Stirling Bombers in daylight formation

There are three official public accounts of what happened to Arthur Louis Aaron and his crew. They are the citations for Arthur's award of the Victoria Cross, the citation for the award of the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal to Flight Sergeant Alan William Jessup Larden (Royal Canadian Air Force), who was the Bomb Aimer, and the joint citation for the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal to Sergeant Thomas Guy, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve the Wireless Operator and Air Gunner and to Sergeant Malcom Murray Mitchem, Royal Air Force, Flight Engineer. What follows combines all three citations into a single new narrative and with additional detail from the aircrew provides an even more remarkable account of the events.

At about 1:20 am on Friday 13th and nearing the target in Turin, Arthur's aircraft was raked by machine gun fire. It was reported officially that they had been attacked by an enemy fighter aircraft. The damage to Arthur's plane was extensive. The windscreen on the pilot's left side of the cockpit was shattered causing a considerable in-rush of air. Two of the gun turrets were put out of action. Three of the 4 engines were hit and one of them rendered useless. The elevator system which controls the horizontal attitude of the aircraft was damaged causing the aircraft to become unstable and difficult to pilot.

The Navigator, Warrant Officer Cornelius A. Brennan, from Canada, was killed. The Flight Engineer sustained three bullet wounds and the Bomb Aimer was wounded twice. A bullet struck Flight Sergeant Aaron in the face, breaking his jaw and tearing away part of his face. He was also wounded twice in the lungs and in his right arm rendering it useless. He slumped over the control column pushing it forwards and as a result the aircraft dived several thousand feet.

Sergeant Mitchem, the Flight Engineer was sitting in the right-hand seat alongside Arthur. The role of Flight Engineer on Stirling bombers included assisting the



A Stirling Bomber Cockpit

pilot at the engine throttle control levers in the centre of the cockpit when taking off and landing the aircraft. Although not himself a qualified pilot Sgt Mitchem managed to regain control of the aircraft pulling up and levelling out at only 3,000 feet. By this time they were way off target.

Flying a crippled bomber, with one engine out of action and damage to the controls and with the pilot severely wounded and the navigator killed, presented a serious challenge. It was apparent that the aircraft would be unable to gain sufficient height to fly back across the Alps and return to England and the route would not be straightforward.



A Pilot on Left & Flight Engineer on Right

Knowing that the Navigator had been killed, and when evaluating their options Arthur with his left hand and on the back of a piece of the blood-stained navigation chart wrote;

"How can we navigate?"



Reproduced by Permission of the Royal Air Force Museum, London

Instead of attempting to return to England it was decided to take the accepted “escape” route for damaged bombers over Italy and attempt to fly south the 838 miles across the Mediterranean to try to reach North Africa where there was an RAF airfield. On reaching the Italian coast their flight path took them towards the important city of La Spezia which at the time was the main base for the Italian Navy and hence a valid alternate target. When over the harbour Flight Sergeant Larden released the bomb load.

Arthur was helped out of the pilot’s seat and down from the cockpit through the bulkhead door and across to the Flight Engineer’s station and to the small “cot” where he could be attended by other members of the crew.



An example showing the cramped conditions.

Unable to speak, Flight Sergeant Aaron urged Flight Sergeant Larden, by signs to take over the controls as he was the best person to try to fly the aircraft.

Having been treated with morphia Flight Sergeant Aaron rallied and, mindful of his responsibility as Captain of the aircraft, insisted on returning to the pilot’s seat in the cockpit. He had to be lifted into his seat and helped to place his feet on the steering rudder control bar.

Twice he made determined attempts to take control and hold the aircraft to its course but his weakness was evident and with difficulty he was persuaded by the crew to desist. Though in great pain and suffering from exhaustion, he continued to help by writing directions with his left hand.

As they flew across the Mediterranean, Arthur continued to encourage his crew and wrote;

“Don’t ditch the plane, stick to her”

Five hours after leaving Turin and with the fuel level running very low, at about 06:30 am and still dark, they reached the coast of Algeria and were able to see the flare path of burning kerosene lamps at RAF Bone (modern Annaba). At this point Flight Sgt Larden was attempting to pilot the aircraft from the right-hand seat to avoid the buffeting from the wind blowing through the shattered window on the left side of the cockpit. Because he could only view the airfield and runway from the right side he flew the aircraft in right hand, clockwise, circuits while searching for somewhere safe to land.

This flight pattern was in the opposite direction to the pattern flown by RAF aircraft with the pilot normally at the controls from the left-hand seat and it caused some consternation on the ground as they could not identify the aircraft. They suspected it was possibly an attack by a German plane and it was indeed fortunate that the ground defences did not try to shoot down Arthur’s aircraft.

If they had persisted in flying the Stirling in this right-hand pattern and tried to land they would probably have crashed into aircraft parked on the perimeter track, close to the runway.

Arthur could feel that the aircraft kept banking over to the right and sensing that something was wrong he wrote;

“Put me on the bridge”.

Despite protests from the crew Arthur somehow summoned his failing strength and resumed his rightful place in the pilot’s left-hand seat, from where he could see that the undercarriage had not been lowered.

The runway at RAF Bone was short as it was the base station for a fighter aircraft squadron. It had been made shorter by the presence of a crashed Wellington bomber. Attempting a wheels-up landing on the steel plank runway would have ripped up the runway and destroyed the Stirling. Arthur determined that the only option was to crash land off the runway on the sandy grass.

A number of attempted landings were made but each time Arthur realising they were coming in “too long” and running out of landing area reached across with his good left hand to the engine speed control levers and pushed them forward so that the aircraft would gain sufficient speed to lift up and to circle around and make another attempt at landing.

After three unsuccessful attempts, Sgt Mitchem warned that there was not enough fuel remaining to complete another circuit and they had to land this time.

At this point as Arthur was attempting to control the airspeed again using his left hand to reach across to the engine throttle control levers, he was unfortunately pushing the controls causing the aircraft to veer. The situation required correcting urgently and in order to get Arthur to sit back away from the control column Flight Sgt Larden thumped Arthur in the chest, where he had already suffered multiple bullet wounds. Arthur was not best pleased at this and being unable to speak gave Flight Sgt Larden a fierce glare which Flight Sgt Larden later said;

“

That glare went right through me and will stay with me the rest of my life.

Flight Sgt Larden

The aircraft crash landed and slid across to the right of the runway for over a quarter of a mile before eventually coming to rest at the outer edge of the airfield, just before the beach and the Mediterranean coast. Fortunately the aircraft did not break up or catch fire.

Sgts McCabe, Richmond and Guy climbed up out of the aircraft through the mid escape hatch onto the roof. Sgt Jim Richmond apparently said in his broad Yorkshire accent;

“

Eee, we've had worse rides on a double decker bus!

Sgt Jim Richmond

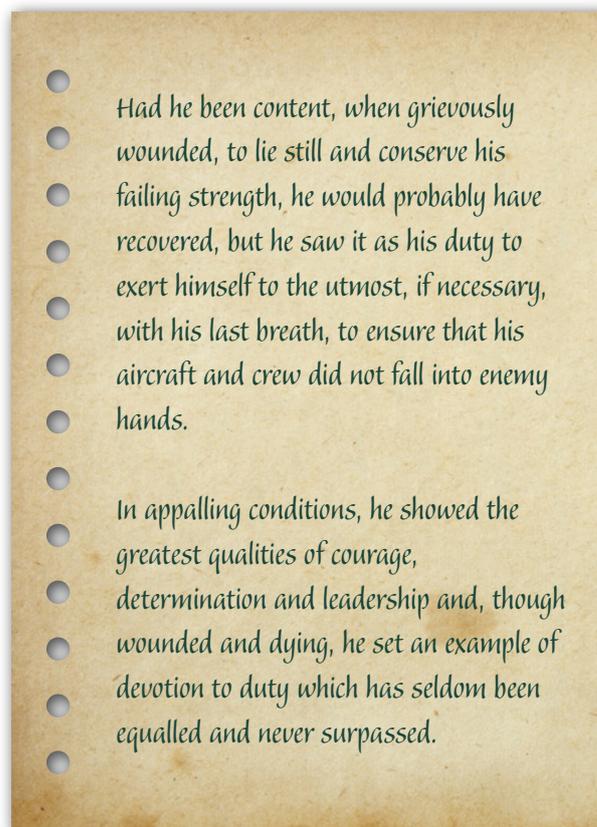
They crawled along the top of the fuselage to the forward escape hatch which they opened. From the cockpit Larden and Mitchem had lifted Arthur from the pilot's seat and got him back through the fuselage to the forward escape hatch. Somehow they managed to get their seriously wounded and utterly exhausted Captain up the ladders and through the escape hatch to the roof and into the hands of his other crewmen.

By this time the emergency services had arrived and Arthur was taken to hospital where he was operated on for the removal of the bullets.

Although initially Arthur showed some sign of recovery he succumbed to his injuries and nine hours after the crash landing, Flight Sergeant Arthur Louis Aaron died.

He was 21 years old.

The citation for Arthur's award of the **Victoria Cross** concludes:



In the picture of the aircraft being dismantled at RAF Bone, men of the ground crew are pointing to some of the many bullet holes.

Remarkably it was later discovered that a 1,000 lb delayed action bomb was still on board the aircraft having failed to jettison over La Spezia.

Flight Sergeant Larden's citation for the award of the **Conspicuous Gallantry Medal** (Flying) concludes;

"In the face of extreme peril, this airman displayed courage, coolness and resource of a high order."

The citation for the dual award of the **Distinguished Flying Medal** concludes;

"Throughout the return flight, Sergeants Mitchem and Guy did everything within their power to assist in the safe return of the aircraft. In the face of a very trying ordeal their exemplary conduct and unswerving devotion to duty were beyond praise."

As to the character of Arthur Louis Aaron we also have the recorded memories of his aircrew, ground crew, and his family. When your safety and your life can rest on the decisions and actions of people you work with, especially in times of war, those shared experiences create a very special bond not easily understood by those who have not experienced such things.

Arthur's father described his son as;

"Serious minded, yet enjoyed the company of his fellows."

"Arthur loved the outdoor life. Cross-country running and mountain climbing were in his blood."

"He possessed a steely determination to see a job through to the end, no matter how testing."

"He put others before self. He was a quiet and thoughtful person."

If there is one story about Arthur from the war which illustrates the depth of his character it is this as recalled by Corporal Johnny Wortley who was leading the ground crew servicing Arthur's aircraft at RAF Downham Market. Arthur was known as "Art";



"I remember "Art" asking me if I had a surveyor's tape measure. I asked him what he wanted it for and he said; "To measure a Nissen Hut." I told him that the NAAFI [refreshments] van was on its way over and that he'd feel better after he had paid for "char and wads" [RAF slang for tea and sandwiches] for me and my ground crew and had had a cup of tea himself. He did pay for the tea and wads and while we sat enjoying it, I asked why he wanted to measure the hut. "Art" said he was just wondering how they could be converted into a two-bedroom dwelling with living room, kitchen and bathroom.

He pointed out that it could be done after the war on the sites used by the WAAF's [Women's Auxiliary Air Force], aircrew and airmen of other trades and which might very easily become a village community. As I was crew "Chief" I had a tape measure of the sort Arthur needed and loaned it to him and he returned it later after he had taken all the measurements. Arthur then left to go on leave, [home to Leeds on what would be his final leave].

When Arthur returned from leave he brought with him a set of plans which he had drawn and a shoe-box containing a model house he had made. When the corrugated roof was lifted off the model it revealed an interior that was exactly as "Art" had talked about. When the ground crew saw it, we all said "You can put my name down for one". One of the ground crew who had connections in civvy street in the building trade asked Arthur to keep in touch. Arthur replied; "I shall always keep in touch through Johnny, at least I'll try, because we have a long way to go before we can think about housing".

Someone on Downham Market Council got to know all about it and not long after the war the site that "Art" had mentioned was turned into an estate with its own shop and Post Office. The story of the Downham Market transformation of the Nissen huts must be recorded somewhere".

Corporal Johnny Wortley

King George VI at Buckingham Palace on presenting the posthumous Victoria Cross and Distinguished Flying Medal to Arthur's parents was minded to say:

"Your son did a very brave act."

Arthur's mother said;

"Medals do not count for me. I am very proud of my boy."

Alan Larden said about Arthur;

"He should be the Patron Saint of Air Cadets, I often wondered if there are any awards to Air Cadets that recall Arthur's sterling qualities".



Left to Right - Sgt Tom McCabe (Rear Gunner) - Sgt Jim Richmond (Mid Upper Gunner) – Flt Sgt Alan Larden (Bomb Aimer) – Sgt Malcolm Mitchem (Flight Engineer) – Sgt Jimmy Guy (Wireless Operator / Air Gunner)



Warrant Officer
Cornelius A. Brennan (Navigator) (RCAF) –
Killed in Action - 13th August 1943



Bone War Cemetery, Annaba, Algeria

One member of Arthur's crew who survived the raid on Turin, Sgt Thomas Michael McCabe was Killed in Action on 31st March 1945 when his Lancaster bomber crashed near Hamburg. He was a Flying Officer Air Gunner. He is buried in Becklingen War Cemetery. **He was 23 years old.**

During World War Two (1939 to 1945)

An estimated

55,000

aircrew from RAF Bomber Command were killed.

Another

9,800

became Prisoners of War, many of whom were wounded.

On the night of 12th August 1943, 10 minutes after Arthur's aircraft took off from RAF Downham Market, it was followed by another, code letter "Y", number MZ 263. For that aircraft the Operations Record Book (SECRET) states; "Landed in Algiers. Nothing else through." The aircraft had lost a propellor and engine gear over Turin. The one good engine from Arthur's crash-landed Stirling was used to replace the damaged one to enable MZ 263 to fly home on 1st/2nd October 1943.

By remarkable coincidence also on 12th August 1943 a Halifax bomber from No. 427 Squadron while on a raid on Milan, Italy, lost an engine and also diverted to RAF Bone. After replacement with a smaller Merlin engine taken from a Hurricane fighter aircraft the bomber flew the Aaron crew survivors back to England on 15/16th September 1943.

Of the four members of Arthur's crew who survived the war;

Sgt Thomas "Jimmy" Guy DFM

during the war at the age of 35 was the "old man" of Arthur's crew. Jimmy died in 1968, age 61.

Sgt James Richmond

was one year older than Arthur. James died mid-afternoon on Friday 13th August 1993, 50 years almost to the minute after Arthur's death. James was age 72.

Flight Sgt Alan Larden CGM, (RCAF)

born in Canada in 1916 died back home in 1994, age 78.

Sgt Malcolm Mitchem DFM

born in 1920 was the last surviving member of Arthur's crew. Present in Leeds at the unveiling of the statue in 2001 Malcolm died in 2010 age 90.

Compiled by David Rattee, January 2022, [Attended Roundhay School, 1963 to 1968] and who carried out original research into the Aaron family genealogy and the ancestry of Arthur Louis Aaron.

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Acknowledgements

First, grateful thanks go to Martin Cocker, who knew members of the Aaron family and Arthur's air crew, and for allowing large parts of his extensive research into Arthur's life story to be included in this compilation. Martin kindly proof read this compilation and added significant detail not in the public domain.

Thanks also to;

- Steve Smith, Historian of the No. 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron Association for permission to use pictures from the Association archive.
- Stephen Mulhern for permission to use the picture of his uncle, C. A. Brennan.
- The Victoria Cross & George Cross Association for their assistance.
- The Imperial War Museum, London for permission to reproduce photographs from their archives of Official War Photographs under their academic research rules and to the National Archives, London for the extract from the No. 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron Operations Record Book for 30th July 1943 for Arthur's Stirling bomber.

Extracts from the article, "For Valour – The Story of the only ex A.T.C. cadet to win the Victoria Cross" are copyright of the author Bryan Philpott.

A very special thank you to the Royal Air Force Museum, London for permission to reproduce the picture of Arthur's hand written message "HOW CAN WE NAVIGATE?" and the piece of the navigation chart.



The piece of navigation chart on which Arthur wrote. Showing the co-ordinates 46 54N – 05 23E, north of Chambéry, France, on the flight path to Turin

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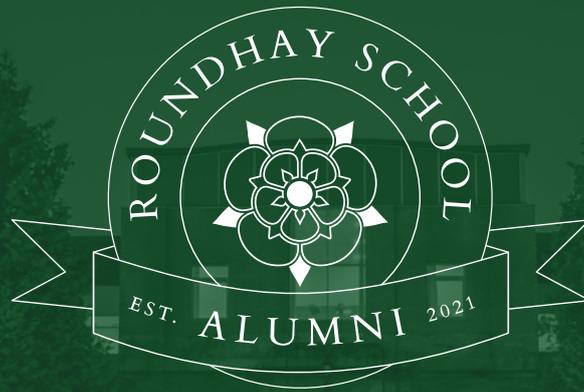
Patrons



Name	Years	Description
Stewart Manning	1961-1967	In loving memory of Cyril Zermansky (Manning) 1933-1938. Arthur Aaron's classmate and friend
Michael Manning	1965-1972	
David Rattee	1963-1968	
Michael Davidson	1963-1970	
Robert Clive Goldstone		
Geoffrey Lipman		
Howard Serr		
Brian Burnell	1952-1955	
Chris Nickson		
Scott Wolstenholme	1959-1966	
Michael Sayles Fox		
Andrew Saffman	1969-1971	
Robert Loudon MBE	1964-1971	
Peter Shkurko	1967-1974	
David Taylor		
David Marks		
Christopher Wolstenholme	1956-1964	
David Karanovic		
David Kissman OBE	1960-1968	
Ian Green	1964-1971	In memory of Auntie Pam
Philip Solity		
Fiona J Millns	1968-1975	
Roger Nicholson		
Samantha Prince-Clayton		
John Rawson	1961-1966	

Name	Years	Description
The Ousby family		who were part of the Roundhay family, as pupils and staff members, from 2000 - 2015
Rosalyn Ramsey		
Tony Abramson		
Bernard Bloom		
Tony Kessler		
Doug Harrison	1958-1965	
David Gabbitas	1942-1946	
Louise Escott		In loving memory of my father, Albert Escott, who served in RAF 138 Squadron 1943-1947
David Miller	1965-1972	
Lloyd Bergen	1964-1971	
David Wise	1958-1963	
John Beaumont		
Alan Rutledge		
David Welch		
David Rose		
Gerald JJ Vyvyan		Vouloir c'est pouvoir'
Neil Brosgill		
Brian Bartle	1957-1965	
Colin Breckenridge		Teacher of History and Media at Roundhay School 1979 -1992
Ian Chappell		Pupil at Roundhay School 1957-1965. Teacher of History and School Librarian at Roundhay 1971-2005.
Stella Leathley		Behaviour Manager at Roundhay School 2004-2017
Ann Salama		Member of staff at Roundhay 1966-1975
Ian Wright	1970 -1977	





COMING SOON!

We welcome all our former Roundhay students to be part of an alumni network, which we hope will be an active inspiration to future Roundhay generations. Established in 1903 Roundhay School has a rich history that we are proud to be a part of and we recognise that each and every one of our former students has contributed to this heritage.

With so many students achieving such a success in countless fields and job sectors, we now feel it is time for the past and present to inspire the future generations of Roundhay School. It is our collective aim that this alumni network will play a leading role in raising achievement, aspirations and creating positive relationships within our local school community.

Wherever your path has taken you in life we would love to hear from you. This is your opportunity to catch up with old friends, potentially give something back to school, hear about the latest news and events or simply belong to a proud alumnus that we call Roundhay.



roundhayalumni.org

