

## RAF CENTENARY PORT REVEALED AT CO 33'S FINAL BEER CALL

**Irish eyes were definitely smiling last week after Andy Baron was presented with two going away gifts by the 33 Squadron Association**

At a St Patrick's themed beer call in the Hart's Head last Thursday there was an impressive turnout of aircrew and engineers from 33 and 230 Squadron, plus many other personnel from around the station, to say good bye to Wing Commander Andy Baron, the outgoing CO of 33 Squadron, who is handing over command at the end of the week. The lively audience gave the Station Commander a warm welcome when he took the stage and proceeded to give an excellent and humorous farewell speech about Andy, which received much appreciation and plenty of laughs from the raucous crowd. Andy then took the stage to pass on his heartfelt thanks for the support given to him and the Squadron throughout his two years at the helm., picking out the performance of the air and ground crews during Operation RUMAN for special praise.



**Andy appears pleased to receive his book and his bottle!**



During a brief lull in the proceedings the Association members in attendance took Andy aside and gave him two gifts and thanked him for his unstinting efforts to develop a strong working relationship between 33 Squadron and the Association. The first gift was a book for Andy signed by the author to mark the occasion. 'Gainsborough's War Story –Book 4– Through the Pages of the Gainsborough News 1917' by Peter E. Bradshaw, is another extremely well researched and fact-filled volume covering the effect of the First World War in the area, and this particular volume has an entire chapter dealing with the arrival of No 33 Squadron RFC arriving and settling in and around the area in 1916. The chapter covers up to the end of the war, and has provided the 'Loyalty' Editor with a wealth of information about the squadron, its personnel and its losses between 1916 and 1918. There are eight members of the Squadron buried together in Gainsborough General Cemetery from the period and Peter was instrumental in restoring all of their headstones to pristine conditions following many years of neglect and damage through vandalism.

After opening his first gift the members then presented Andy with his second gift, a limited edition bottle of port in a handsomely engraved box. This was the first bottle from an order commissioned by the Association with Advanced Engravers up in the north of England and the company who produced the hip flasks for us for the last Cenotaph Parade. Jez Reid is about to publish an order form for this limited edition, celebrating the RAF's Centenary on April 1st, which can be engraved with crests—RAF, 33, 230, 33 Squadron Association—in accordance with individual's wishes. It is unusual to see Andy Baron lost for words, but he was taken aback by the quality of the gifts and the generosity of the Association. The gifts were quickly hidden away in a safe place before the evening's entertainment commenced. It was a great evening and a fine send off for the man in the Shamrock suit, who goes OOA for several months—presumably so manning can work out where to send him next.

Job well done, Andy, good luck for the future!

