



Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund



THE RAF
BENEVOLENT
FUND GARDEN

RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2022
Show Garden 289
#RHSCheelsea #rafbf



STANDING SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE RAF FAMILY

We're the RAF Benevolent Fund, and we're here to support people who are serving – or have served – and their families, when they need it most.

We are very excited that we are able to unveil our first ever garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2022.

The garden has been designed by multi-award-winning designer John Everiss and funding for the garden is being provided by Project Giving Back, a new support scheme enabling charities to create a garden at the world-renowned show.

Commemorating the Battle of Britain, the garden has been designed to allow you to reflect on the service and sacrifice of all RAF and civilian personnel and we hope this will inspire you to explore your own history and speak to family and friends about your possible connections to the RAF.

89-year-old RAF veteran and Fund beneficiary Reg Lawrence discussing garden plans with Flying Officer Edgar from RAF Queen's Colour Squadron.

INTRODUCING OUR DESIGNER

We are thrilled to be working with RHS award-winning garden designer and sculptor John Everiss.

John, whose father served in the RAF, previously designed the D-Day 75 Garden at the 2019 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, and the Evaders Garden in 2015.

The garden reflects on the service and sacrifice of RAF personnel during the Second World War. It is particularly poignant as John's father Stan, a navigator in Stirling bombers, survived being shot down over occupied France in 1943.

Initially unable to walk, he hid in a ditch, took a photo of the crash site and buried his watch and camera. After being hidden by local resistance fighters, Stan was eventually guided over the Pyrenees and reunited with his family after four months. In 1947 he was amazingly able to retrieve his camera and watch.



Stan with full crew in front of his Stirling bomber, 90 Squadron RAF Ridgewell.



The signatures of the crew of 'The White Squirrel', from Stan Everiss' log book.

“They were ordinary people in extraordinary times, all involved in one story to try to protect the nation.”

John Everiss



Crash site photo taken by Stan.



To find out more about this fascinating story visit rafbf.org/garden

THE SCULPTURE

Designed by John and modelled on his son George, the garden features a sculpture of a Flying Officer looking up at the sky. The sculpture shows the young pilot holding a mug of tea, watching the air battle above, waiting for his call to fly again in the Battle of Britain.

Standing at 12 feet tall and constructed from 223 individual layers of marine grade stainless steel, the state-of-the-art sculpture is a moving tribute to all those who have served and continue to serve in the RAF.

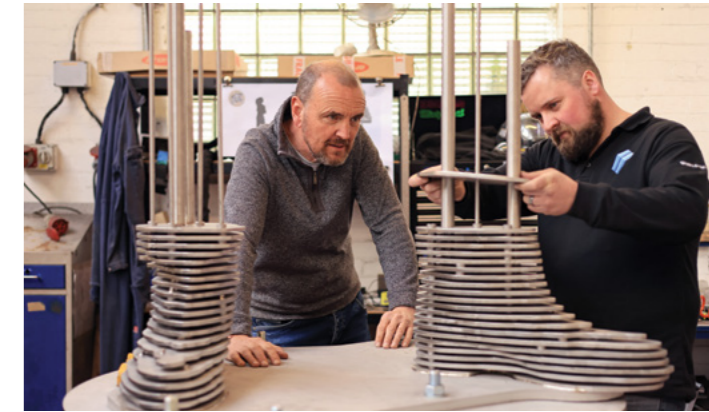
Weighing over three tons, each layer is supported by hollow stainless-steel spacers eight millimetres apart, allowing each layer to be welded to adjacent layers. The figure has incredible details showing every crease and fold in the clothing and equipment, his face tense after many days in the air.

The base is formed from a single solid piece of Portland stone, used in many of London's historic buildings including the RAF Benevolent Fund's London office. It weighs over four tons and is brimming with thousands of marine fossils.

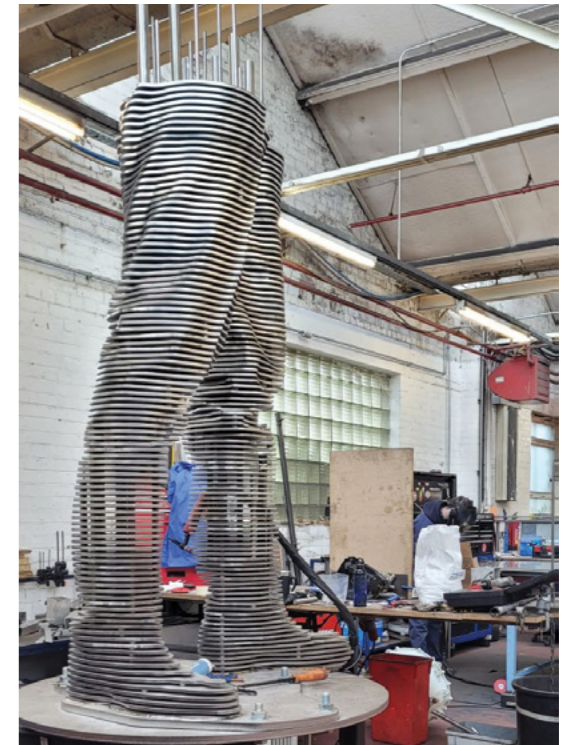
“It feels amazing to be involved in such a significant project – the garden has such a powerful story and we're proud that we're able to help tell it.”

John Everiss

George Everiss, John's son, modelling for a 3D scan for the sculpture in genuine period clothing, including his grandfather's watch.



John checking on the sculpture being constructed a layer at a time.



The sculpture under construction at metal fabricator Fitzpatrick's UK.

FEATURED PLANTS

TREES

Betula nigra
Crataegus monogyna
Camellia sasanqua 'Cleopatra'

PLANTS

Ajuga reptans 'Catlins Giant'
Anthriscus sylvestris 'Ravenswing'
Bergenia ciliata
Digitalis ferruginea
Digitalis purpurea 'Sutton's Apricot'
Disporopsis pernyi
Euphorbia cyparissias 'Fens Ruby'
Euphorbia palustris
Geranium 'Brookside'

Geranium phaeum 'Samobor'
Libertia chilensis
Polygonatum verticillatum 'Rubrum'
Sanguisorba minor
Saxifraga umbrosa
Tellima grandiflora
Thalictrum pubescens
Tiarella 'Spring symphony'

FERNS

Matteuccia struthiopteris
Osmunda regalis

*Due to the weather and plant conditions,
this is not necessarily the final plant list.*

“A canopy of trees creates areas of dappled shade with pockets of light, with an understory of shade and acid tolerant planting that envelops the steel panels.”

John Everiss



See the final
plant list at
rafbf.org/garden

*John Everiss choosing plants for the garden
with Fund beneficiary Stu Robinson.*



THE GARDEN

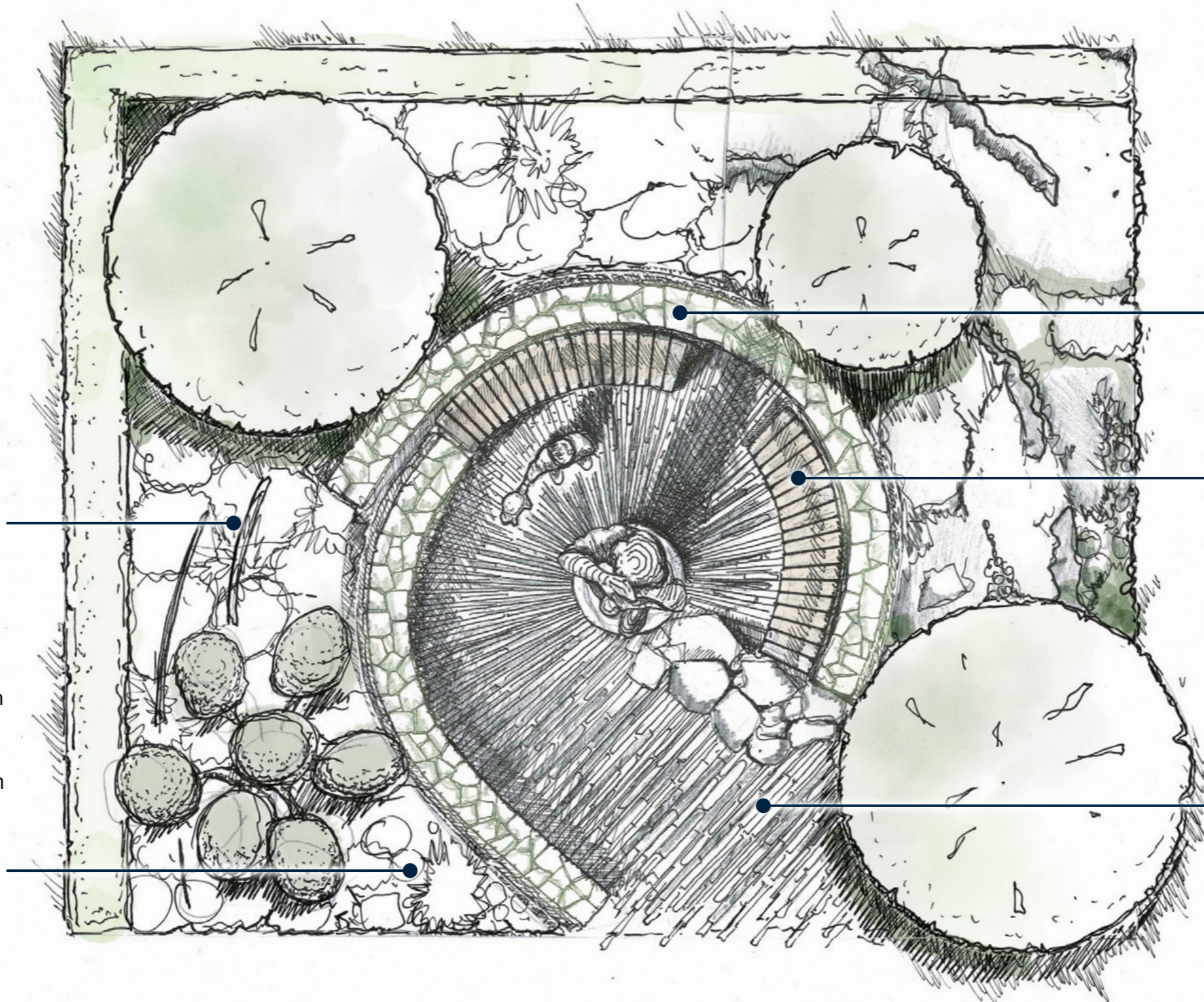
Working together with lead planting designer Rossana Porta, John Everiss has created a beautiful garden which is a fitting tribute to the Battle of Britain.

STEEL PANELS

Large steel panels radiate from the seating area within the wall and appear to be slowly corroding away, perhaps representing the fuselage of a long abandoned aircraft, and provide unique views deeper into the garden.

BOULDERS AND ROCKS

Large boulders and rocks are strewn throughout the front of the garden. Amongst them, fine pieces of pottery, carved stone and brick form fragments of the materials' previous lives and remind us of the homes and lives that the towering airman above was trying to protect.



DRYSTONE WALL

Wrapping around the central sculpture is a curved Purbeck Portland stone mortar-backed drystone wall, imitating the protective concrete walls built outside factories and airfields. Small steel slits built into the wall provide windows from its enclosed protection into the wildness of the planting beyond.

LARCH BENCHES

The two benches are unique to the garden and are constructed from over 60 slabs of larch, which is the most sustainable wood grown in the UK.

PATHWAY

Olive clay paving fans around the central sculpture becoming interfaced with veins of Purbeck Portland stone before melting away into an entirely stone surface at the end of the pathway.

GARDENING AS NATURAL MEDICINE

The RAF has always been a big part of Amileigh's life, as the daughter of an RAF serviceman and as the wife of a Corporal.

Amileigh, who has been helped by the RAF Benevolent Fund's provision of polytunnels at RAF Leeming, said: "Gardening has helped me massively, especially during the lockdowns. I'm someone that suffered with my mental health from a young age. My dad served in the RAF when I was a child and, as result of moving, I suffered with alopecia from about the age of 10 from stress."

She added: "Then, growing up as an adult, I've suffered with depression and anxiety. Coming to the polytunnels gives me a sense of escape from the real world. It eases the burden and takes the weight off my shoulders."



To find out more about our support, call **0300 102 1919**, email **mail@rafbf.org.uk** or visit **rafbf.org/help**

// Gardening provides me with an escape from the real world"

Amileigh Salt

Amileigh Salt and designer John Everiss sharing their love of gardening at RAF Leeming.





“Without the Fund I would feel totally lost and alone, and my quality of life as it is now would not exist.”

Andrew (Harry) Harrop

HOW WE ARE THERE FOR ANDREW

Falklands War veteran Andrew (Harry) Harrop left the RAF in 1988 when he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Andrew said: “My MS has worsened over the years. In the early stages, I began tripping over because I was unable to lift my feet properly. I’m now virtually quadriplegic. However, I have 24-hour care, so can continue to have a normal life.

“The Fund is a truly wonderful organisation, and one I cannot thank enough for all the help it has given me.”

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we’ve helped to source and fund suitable equipment for Andrew, including an electric bed and powered wheelchair, enabling him to live independently.



With your support we can offer these vital services to RAF veterans in need.

Visit rafbf.org/donation or call 020 7580 8343

COMMEMORATING THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

The 15 September 1940 was named Battle of Britain Day as it was the day when RAF Fighter Command claimed a decisive victory over the German Luftwaffe.

The Battle of Britain was characterised by brutal dogfights in the skies above Britain.

Spitfire and Hurricane pilots scrambled to their aircraft when Britain came under attack, bravely in defence of their country. Ground crews below slept under the wings of the aircraft they serviced, ready to respond at the ring of a bell. The Bomber Command crews were flying sorties over Germany targeting the Luftwaffe on the ground.

We are proud to commemorate the Battle of Britain with our garden and hope to ensure their sacrifice and extraordinary courage will be remembered by future generations.

To find out more about the Battle of Britain, visit rafbf.org/battleofbritain

“The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is part of the conscience of the British nation. A nation without a conscience is a nation without a soul. A nation without a soul is a nation that cannot live.”

Sir Winston Churchill's appeal on BBC radio in the aftermath of the Second World War





AFTER THE SHOW

Following the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, the RAF Benevolent Fund Garden will be relocated to a permanent site at London Biggin Hill Airport, enabling the legacy of all those involved to live on.

Sir Winston Churchill viewed the former RAF Biggin Hill as 'the strongest link' during the Battle of Britain, and the garden will be renamed as this when it relocates to its permanent site at the airport.

The moving and commemorative garden provides a powerful link between the RAF Benevolent Fund's history and our future. We've been here for over 100 years and will continue to be here for as long as the RAF Family needs us.

THANK YOU

Thank you on behalf of the RAF Benevolent Fund to all our supporters, suppliers and volunteers for your generosity and commitment.

DESIGNER

John Everiss
Design

PLANTING DESIGN

Rossana Porta

CONTRACTORS

Peter Gregory Landscapes

George Everiss Design

Fitzpatricks UK

HISTORICAL IMAGES

MoD Air Historical Branch

ADDITIONAL THANKS TO



SPONSOR

Project Giving Back is a unique grant-making scheme that provides funding for gardens for good causes at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Find out more at givingback.org.uk.





For more information
about our garden, tips and
behind the scenes, visit
rafbf.org/garden

If you know someone who
may need our support:
CALL 0300 102 1919
mail@rafbf.org.uk
rafbf.org/help



@rafbf

#rafbf

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
67 Portland Place
London W1B 1AR

The RAF Benevolent Fund is a registered charity in
England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SCO38109)

