

**ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**  
**SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250)**  
**2011 NEWSLETTER**

*Dear Member*

1. Well, 2011 has been another busy year for the Branch, and the Committee do hope that you found something in our wide ranging program to suit you. If not please let us know and we will do our best to develop an event to reflect your interests. Don't forget it is **your** Branch and it needs to reflect your requirements. But busy, oh yes, there has been the usual round of ceremonials where your Branch has been represented. We attended the Mayor's Sunday Service, the Annual Battle of Britain Parade and Service in Shrewsbury, the Area Battle of Britain Parade and Service at RAF Cosford, the Remembrance Day Service in Shrewsbury Square at 1100 hrs on 11 Nov 11 and the subsequent Remembrance Sunday Service at St Chad's. Members were in attendance and Al Poole our 'temporary' Standard Bearer excelled; the Branch was to the forefront; thanks to all those who attended and 'marched'.
2. Branch representatives also attended Regional Meetings, the Area Annual Conference and the Association's Annual Conference at Eastbourne where contributions were made to the furtherance of the Association. There were two highlights at the Area Conference, Al Poole was elected to the Area Council for the first time; and he also won the Lightning Trophy as the best Welfare Officer in the Area. It is comforting to know that we are being looked after by the best in the business – please let Al know if you, or anyone you know, has a welfare problem.
3. Amongst all this success, however, there has been some sadness as we have lost a number of outstanding Branch members during the year. Eileen Sandford, our recent past President died in May; a very popular lady who was very well known, not just to us, but through her work in local politics. Many members of the Branch attended her funeral, and the subsequent Memorial Service; Al was prominent with the Branch Standard, and a number of favorable comments were received from the family and local authority for our involvement. We also lost Dave Law in February. Dave was a long term member of the Branch, he had been a Committee Member for many many years, always to be seen holding court in his corner of the Branch meetings; he will be much missed. Following his funeral his family forwarded just under a £1K to the Branch for use in support of Branch activities. Your Committee is using this money to subsidise events; such as the Lunch at the Lord Hill in September. Bruce Spurr, a Life Vice President, died recently; a regular attendee at our Meetings, he too will be sorely missed. Finally Ian Hockley also passed away during the year, and we received a sizeable donation from his family towards our Wings Appeal total.
4. What else has happened? We had a visit from the Association's Mobile Exhibition Trailer (the MET) in January. It parked up on the Square for a day, the Mayor visited, we raised the profile of the Association and our Branch and raised over £100 in donations; thanks to all those who helped. (We are hoping to have the MET back at the end of March this year – look out for more details). Our outstanding RAFALO, Marie, organized a super Games Night at RAF Shawbury and we fielded teams. I don't remember many games being played, but it was certainly an enjoyable and convivial evening with a chance to meet many serving personnel and to hear about what is really happening in Afghanistan. We have maintained our close link with 1118 Sqn of the ATC, and they have supported us through the year, especially with musical support at our Annual 1 April event at the Shrewsbury Cemetery War Graves. We had a stand at the Shropshire Show, the weather was very poor, and we didn't raise much money, but we did raise our profile. We continue to develop stronger links with the Shropshire Air Crew Association, and a number of joint events have been planned. Please watch out for details. Our Chairman attended the RAF Shawbury Annual Reception, the last for the Station Commander Group Captain 'Bunny' James before his posting out. Group Captain 'Bunny' was very supportive of our Branch and the Association in general, and will be missed. He is replaced by Group Captain Chris Luck.
5. Al Poole and I attended a presentation ceremony in the Guildhall in the middle of the year where we picked up a Shrewsbury Community Trophy for the Branch's work in the community. It was pleasing to be



recognized by the Town Council for the contribution which the Branch, you, make to the life of our County Town. Well done to us all. Our Branch was also recognized by the Association's Area Council who chose our Branch as a location for an Area Seminar in November. To finish on two very enjoyable social events; mention must be made of the successful Branch Lunch at the Lord Hill in September, thanks to the Chairman for masterminding that. And a number of members again took themselves off to Worthen for the Annual RBL parade, service, and afternoon tea fest; but mainly the afternoon tea!

6. In conclusion I would encourage you all to let any of the Committee know if you have any ideas for events, for improving the Association, for increasing membership, or areas where we should look to deliver Welfare. I am on the Association's Central Council and Executive; and Al Poole and I both serve on the Area Council, so any ideas that you may have will quickly get to the 'top'. Let us know your views.

#### **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

7. The Chairman writes:

*I can hardly believe that I have now had the honour to be your Chairman for nearly 2 years. The steep learning curve that I referred to in my previous message is now levelling off but I remain extremely grateful to the more experienced members of our Committee for keeping me on the straight and narrow (most of the time!).*

*Your Committee and I remain committed to running the Branch, in accordance with the original intent of RAFA, as a comrades association where we can meet, talk and be entertained whilst also doing what we can to help those of the Royal Air Force's family that may be in need. We are fortunate to receive strong support from RAF Shawbury and in particular our RAFALOs. Shortly after Christmas we say goodbye to WO Marie Kennedy as she heads off for an Out of Area Tour but she has found us a worthy successor in the form of Sgt Peter Booth who we look forward to getting to know better in 2012.*

*Our Branch meetings continue to be the focus of our Branch activity with the regular attendance remaining strong. I do believe that those meetings are aided by the friendly support that we receive from Steve Harris (Club Steward) and his team including Di and the girls who have transformed the catering we receive on at the meetings. We had another successful Wings Collection again this year (well over £5,000 as I write) and my personal thanks to all those who helped to contribute towards that total. The Battle of Britain Luncheon at the Lord Hill Hotel was very enjoyable but we do plan to offer a few additional activities in 2012 which I hope that you will all think worthwhile.*

*The Circle of Life has definitely been felt this year with the passing of quite a number of some of our longstanding comrades who will be sadly missed both in the Branch Meetings and the Committee Room. However, we have been very fortunate with Air Cdre John Burke volunteering to take up the role of our President and we have had a number of younger members signing up to the Branch and attending our meetings*

*I have already mentioned you're excellent Committee, who work tirelessly on our behalf with some holding down wider more demanding RAFA related tasks outside the Branch. We are not at crisis point yet and it is always heart-warming to hear that visitors enjoy our meetings as much as ourselves (including Tecwyn's jokes!) but if some of you do feel that you may have some time to help in 2012, your assistance would be very welcome.*

*Finally, I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.*

*Paul Sharp*

#### **DETAILS OF YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE**

8. Present Committee members are as follows:

- a. President  
Air Commodore (Ret'd) John J Burke BSc CEng FIEE DipEL MRAeS RAF

- b. Chairman  
Paul Sharp
- c. Vice Chairman  
John Tisbury MBE
- d. Secretary  
John Tisbury MBE (Phone 01939 250351 ext 7123)
- e. Treasurer  
Pam Small
- f. Welfare Officer  
Al Poole
- g. Assistant Welfare Officer  
Paul Martin
- h. Membership Secretary  
Paul Martin
- i. Wings Appeal Organiser  
Roy Dolton
- j. Assistant Wings Appeal Organiser  
Alex Madely
- j. Social Secretary  
Tecwyn Roberts
- k. ATC Liaison Officer  
Tecwyn Roberts
- l. RAF Liaison Officer  
Warrant Officer Marie Kennedy RAF (Phone 01939 250351)

9. The Branch also benefits from the wisdom of our Life Vice Presidents:  
Mr Jack Knowles, Mr Jim Penny, and Mr Brian Sidebotham.

10. Please contact any of the above if you have any questions or concerns about the Association or your Branch.

### **DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

11. The following events are programmed:

2012	9 January	- New Year Meeting
	6 February	- Clocks – Brian Goodwin
	5 March	- Annual General Meeting
	9 – 11 March	- Area Conference – Swansea
	1 April	- Shrewsbury Cemetery Service
	2 April	- Folklore Animals and Birds – Raymond Rush
	18 April	- Visit to Shropshire Regimental Museum
	14 May	- Title TBC – Sqn Ldr Tommy O’Flaherty
	18 – 20 May	- Annual Conference – Blackpool
	11 June	- Queen’s Jubilee Lunch – Lord Hill (Prov)
	25 June	- Armed Forces Day



- 2 July - Visit to Sleaf Airfield and Museum with Lunch – Roy Dolton
- 6 August - Wings Appeal Preparation
- 3 September - War Aircraft Recovery Group – Mick Grant
- 9 September - Battle of Britain Parade – Shrewsbury
- 16 September - Battle of Britain Sunday.
- 1 October - The Battle for Malta – Alan Scott
- 5 November - Scams and Rogue Traders – Trading Standards
- 3 December - Christmas Social

2013 7 January - New Year Meeting

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

12. Please remember that monthly meetings are held at the Reman Club, Albert Road, Sundorne, Shrewsbury on the first **Monday** of each month commencing at 1230 pm. (If the first Monday is a Bank Holiday, the Branch will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday). One of the principle aims of the Association is comradeship, and we would like to welcome more of you to our meetings.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

13. The Membership Secretary writes:

*The membership of our Branch has remained quite strong over the year totalling 192, made up from Life, Ordinary, Associate and Branch Associate Membership. We are fortunate to be so close to RAF Shawbury that we benefit from Serving Members stationed at RAF Shawbury to keep our more youthful membership going. However, as with many Ex-Service organisations our active membership is almost entirely made up from retired members, their spouses and friends. We are also very pleased and grateful for the active participation of serving personnel from RAF Shawbury attending our monthly meetings from time to time.*

*Please note the membership fees for 2012. If your membership is due for renewal on 31 December 2011, please note the rates below. Paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership annually. Alternatively, please pay by cheque directly to RAFA; if this is not practical, please give your subscription to Paul Martin who will forward it to RAFA via Pam Small, our Treasurer.*

One year Annual Ordinary Membership	-	£18.00
Four Year Ordinary Membership	-	£67.00
One Year Full Associate with 'Air Mail'	-	£12.50
One Year Full Associate without 'Air Mail'	-	£7.50
Four Year Full Associate with 'Air Mail'	-	£48.00
Four Year Full Associate without 'Air Mail'	-	£26.50
One Year Branch Associate	-	£5.00

*We are very pleased that so many of us manage to get to our monthly meetings at the Reman Club, which is a most enjoyable way of spending a Monday lunch-time with friends over a light meal and a drink in a warm and pleasant environment. So, if you have not already joined us there or have not attended for some time, please do make the effort to come to at least one of the meetings where you are assured a warm welcome.*

Paul Martin

## **WINGS APPEAL**

14. The Wings Appeal Organiser writes:

*In the spring of the year, Alex and I started to put together the system for collecting money for the 2011 Wings Appeal. This year we included 2 new venues, the Pride Hill Shopping Centre and the Co-op in Church Stretton, both of which added nicely to our total. We also doubled our income at the Shropshire*

*Show from last year. We collected £2 in 2010; but in 2011 - £4.10! A lot of effort for very little financial return, but we did publicise the Branch.*

*Without doubt a lot of effort was put in by everyone who collected. In spite of the 'credit crunch', we did better than last year with a collection total of £5,132.46, plus £280 collected at the RAF Shawbury Families Day, making a Branch Grand Total for 2011 of £5,412.46.*

*Well done and thank you to all the collectors!!*

*Roy Dolton and Alex Madeley*

## **WELFARE**

15. The Welfare Officer writes:

*As I write this a new day is dawning and, yet again it looks like it will be another mild day despite it being the end of November. Summer is long behind us and once more we are looking forward to Christmas but this time of the year also brings the threat of colder weather. DWP are just sending out the winter fuel payments to those who are entitled and, if you think you qualify and have not received your payment within the next couple of weeks check with the DWP pension office.*

*Talking about the winter fuel payment remember that I can get extra assistance for those ex-RAF members who are in receipt of benefits so please make sure I know about all the likely candidates. Above all do make sure that you have sufficient heat during any cold snaps.*

*Age Concern in Shrewsbury produce a really good booklet which contains a directory of all the local services which are available to the elderly, if you do not have a copy please ask at Age Concern in Mardol. There is a wealth of information available on the internet which some of you will not be able to see as you are not connected to the internet – Do not worry as help is at hand. Contact Lisa at Get Shropshire Online (01743 342177) for information on how to learn and gain access to the internet or ask at your local library. You never know if you get hooked on the information available you may decide to get connected at the library or get going on the youngster's computer!*

*U3A is the 'University of the Third Age', there are lots of courses and activities for the elderly which are both recreational and intellectual, ranging from enjoying a bracing walk in the beautiful local countryside to learning a new skill. The walking groups cater for all levels of ability and are a means to meet other people as well as keep active. The educational courses cover the complete range of subjects that can lead all the way up to a degree if you wish! There is something of interest for all in the curriculum so do have a look at the list of opportunities.*

*If you know of someone who is losing their sight and they still want the contact that the magazine Air Mail brings please let me know as the association provides a talking version of the magazine in CD format. I can arrange for copies to be sent to them.*

*Finally, Tricia and I wish you a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.*

*Alan Poole*

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

16. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Perkins Club on Monday 5 March 2012 commencing at 1230 pm.***

## **NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS**

17. Attached to this News Letter is a nomination form for Branch Officers. Branch Officers, who are nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting in March, organise the various events, and manage the assets of the Branch. Your Committee would be pleased to welcome new members to the Committee.



We are also still seeking a replacement Standard Bearer to take over from Gerry Fellows, who stood down due to doctor's orders last year. Al Poole has stood in temporarily, and has performed magnificently through the year but a permanent replacement would be most welcome; so please consider taking on this ceremonial role. Present Committee members would be pleased to give you details of what is required. The tasks are not onerous and there is always someone to help, so don't be shy - apply today. Just fill in the form and return it to the Secretary as soon as possible.

### **CONCLUSION**

18. In conclusion, and on behalf of your Committee, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas, and all the best for the New Year. We do hope that you will find time to attend our monthly meetings (Reman Club, Albert Road, Sundorne, Shrewsbury on the **first Monday** of each month. Meetings commence at 12.30 pm) during 2012.

In Friendship One to Another

*John Tisbury*

**SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH**

**ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**

**NOMINATIONS FOR BRANCH OFFICIALS**  
**AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2012**

The following individuals are nominated for the posts shown:

<b>NOMINATED FOR THE POST OF</b>	<b>NOMINEE</b>	<b>ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINEE</b>	<b>PROPOSER</b>	<b>SIGNATURE OF PROPOSER</b>	<b>SECONDER</b>	<b>SIGNATURE OF SECONDER</b>
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>						
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b>						
<b>SECRETARY</b>						
<b>TREASURER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>						

Notes: See Over.

Notes:

1. Volunteers for any post other than those named (ie. Wings Appeal Organiser or Membership secretary) should stand as a Committee Member as these are posts that the Committee appoints from its number.
2. Completed forms should be passed to the Secretary before 24 February 2012.
3. Full Associate Members may stand for the Committee, but must be proposed and seconded by Full Members.