

ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250)
2012 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member

1. Well, what a year. What with the celebrations around the Queen's Jubilee, the wedding of Flt Lt Wales, the Torch Relay, the Olympics and the Para-Olympics it is perhaps easy to forget that, through it all, the Shrewsbury and District Branch of the Association – your Branch – was busy and active across the District and wider afield. I will try to capture the highlights, but I think that we can safely say that there was a lot on offer and it was good to see the level of participation. Make sure that you don't miss out on anything during 2013 by staying in touch and attending the Branch meetings, which are always enjoyable, and Tecwyn insists that he always sells everybody who attends a winning raffle ticket!
2. Nationally it was wonderful that Al Poole was appointed to the Central Council of the Association where he joined me; we must be the only Branch in the Association that has two members on Central Council! Please let Al or me know if you have any points that you would like to raise on how the Association is run. We were represented at the Association's Annual Conference in Blackpool and our Standard was paraded. We participated in Area activities, attending the Area Conference in Swansea, where again our Standard was in evidence; we were also represented at a most informative Area Seminar in Wolverhampton, where those attending were updated on the Association's welfare and fund raising work. As I was away on holiday, Al Poole had to take my place as the RAFA Flight Commander at the annual Area Battle of Britain Parade at RAF Cosford in August. All these events are open to any member who wishes to attend, and they are all very social in nature, so if you are interested in seeing how your Association goes about its business, and visit other locations please speak to any Committee member.
3. Closer to home we had a busy calendar of events outside of our monthly meetings. Perhaps the highlight was the 31 March event in Shrewsbury Town Square which was enhanced by the presence of the Association's Mobile Exhibition Trailer, a large number of our members turned out in support and the Mayor came along to see us. 1119 (Shrewsbury) ATC Sqn entertained onlookers with their band and drill team, and the RAF Recruiting trailer and team added a third dimension. We really took over the Square showing all the RAF family, youth, serving and veteran. During the day we also had a visit from Para-Olympian John Butterworth who signed autographs and talked to visitors about his Olympic preparations. It was wonderful to see him subsequently win 3 Silver Medals in the Veladrome. Other events included a guided tour of Shrewsbury Castle which was followed by a convivial lunch in the Beaconsfield Club; RAF Shawbury organized a RAFA Games Night in the Sergeants Mess where our team sadly did not do much to trouble the scorers, but it was nice to buy a drink at Mess prices for the night. There was a coach trip to Liverpool Docks in May; to the Black Country Museum in September and to the Morgan Car factory in November. We had a Branch Lunch at the Lord Hill in June that was attended by the Association's Secretary General, Jayne Easton. We really pulled in the Association's 'top brass' during the year as not only did we have Jayne at our lunch, but we also managed to arrange a visit to the September Branch meeting by the Association's National President, Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller, during which he presented the Branch with a 75 year tassel for our Standard. The 75 year tassel has only just been introduced and we were the first Branch to receive it; quite a coup!
4. On the formal side members attended the Remembrance event at Shrewsbury War Graves on 1 April, the Mayors Service in May, the Battle of Britain Service in August and the Remembrance Parade and Service in November. A large contingent attended the Worthen RBL Parade and Service in July again this year; the quality of the post Service tea continues to be outstanding! Branch representatives also liaised with other ex-Service organizations at the annual RBL County AGM in January.
5. A busy Wings Appeal period saw our members all over Shrewsbury supported by our new advertising banners and contact cards; money was raised, details below, and we beat our 2011 total. The monies collected support our welfare work and the Branch welfare team has been busy supporting those in need; and we also made a donation of £650 to the RAF Shawbury Contact House.

6. We maintain an excellent, and close, relationship with 1119 (Shrewsbury) Squadron of the ATC through our liaison officer Tecwyn Roberts. The welfare team has increased to 3 with the recruitment of Frances Martin, and we are shortly to launch our very own Web Site so things are happening. As I am sure that you are aware 2013 marks the 70th Anniversary of the Royal Air Forces Association and events are planned both locally and across the Country to highlight the Association and its work in support of the RAF family, so watch for details in Air Mail and on the Web Site. The main National event will be in the NIA in Birmingham on 30 November and 1 December 2013 so make a note in your diary now.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

7. The Chairman writes:

It hardly seems more than a few weeks since I sat down to type my last Christmas Message but reviewing the minutes of our monthly committee meetings has reminded me of what a busy year it has been for us all.

On the wider stage we have experienced the Golden Jubilee celebrations a wonderful Royal Wedding and a stunning Olympic and Para-Olympic Games (quick quiz answer for you: the "Para" stands for "Parallel" as I found out at the last quiz I attended). The last 2 of which miraculously seemed unaffected by the wettest summer for many a year! Within the Branch our monthly meetings continue to be well attended and the quality of the guest speakers and raffle remains high (thank you Tecwyn). The talk by Shrewsbury Trading Standards on Scams and Rough Traders prompted a lot of interest and a short list containing advice and potential contact points provided by our speaker is included in this annual letter. A particular highlight for me was the visit by our National President, AM Sir Dusty Miller, to give us an overview of the Association's activities and his vision for the future. During his visit he also reported that our Branch was to receive recognition of 75 years continuous operation and presented us with a 75 year tassel for our Standard (the first to be presented, I understand).

Comradeship and support remain the main aims of the direction your Committee takes and we have done all that we can to provide additional events during the year. Our lunch to mark the Jubilee was attended by the Association's Secretary General, Jayne Easton, who remarked on what a happy and friendly group of people she had met. We are hoping to arrange something even more special for next year's lunch to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Association. In addition to wider national duties with the Association, being a hard working Welfare Officer and continuing to act as our Standard Bearer, Al Poole came up with the concept, organised and ran a major RAFA Event in Shrewsbury Town Square (I don't think that Al has quite got the hang of being retired yet!). The event helped to raise the profile of the Association and Royal Air Force in the area and we are grateful of the support provided by the RAF Shawbury Stn Cdr, Gp Capt Chris Luck, and the ATC Regional Commander Gp Capt Dick Allen who has a long association with our Branch.

We are fortunate to continue to benefit from strong support from RAF Shawbury and in particular our RAFALOs. Our longstanding RAFALO, WO Marie Kennedy, departed, and safely returned, thank goodness, for a tour in Afghanistan. This resulted in FS Kev Scullion moving up to replace her as the senior RAFALO co-ordinator with Sgt Peter Booth taking over as our official point of contact. We definitely have an agile Air Force as Kevin is now moving again, this time on promotion to WO and a new role at Boscombe Down. Congratulations Kev, we look forward to working with your successor, FS Andy Hunt, during the coming year.

Sadly it has been another year where we have lost some old friends who will be sadly missed but we have been fortunate in gaining some new members who support our meetings and to you I say welcome, and I hope that you enjoy your time with us.

Finally, I pass my thanks to all the Committee members who work hard throughout the year on our behalf and I wish them and you and your loved ones a peaceful and Happy Christmas and 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 01952 201902)
- e. Treasurer
Pam Small
- f. Welfare Officer
Al Poole
- g. Assistant Welfare Officer
Paul Martin
- h. Membership Secretary
Paul Martin
- i. Wings Appeal Organiser
Alex Madeley
- j. Assistant Wings Appeal Organiser
Roy Dolton
- k. Social Secretary
Tecwyn Roberts
- l. ATC Liaison Officer
Tecwyn Roberts
- m. RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer
Flight Sergeant Andy Hunt (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:

- | | | |
|------|--------------|--|
| 2013 | 7 January | - New Year Meeting |
| | 4 February | - Talk by WO Marie Kennedy on her tour in Afghanistan. |
| | 4 March | - Annual General Meeting |
| | 8 – 10 March | - Area AGM Torquay |
| | 1 April | - Branch Memorial Service Shrewsbury Cemetery |

- 8 April - Shrewsbury Abbey – Ken Vine
- 18 April - Branch Dinner. RAFA 70th Anniversary
- 10 – 12 May - Annual Conference Eastbourne
- 13 May - 20th C Shrewsbury from the Air – David Trumper
- 3 June - Witchcraft and Superstitions – Raymond Rush
- 29 June - Armed Forces Day
- 1 July - Test Flying in the RAF – Alan Scott
- 5 August - Wings Appeal Preparation
- 2 September - Shropshire Wildlife – Graham Burgess
- 9 – 15 Sep - Battle of Britain Week
- 15 September Battle of Britain Sunday Service
- 21 September Wings Day
- 7 October - Paddling further into the Past – Dr Nigel Baker
- 4 November - World Trip – David Bowie
- 10 November- Remembrance Sunday
- 30 November/1 December – RAFA National 70th Anniversary Event at the NIA
Birmingham.
- 2 December - Christmas Social

2014 13 January – New Year Meeting

MONTHLY MEETINGS

12. Please remember that monthly meetings are held at the Reman Club, Albert Road, Sundome, 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 2nd 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 remains quite strong, totalling 191, 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 there. As with many Ex-Service organisations our active membership is almost entirely made up from retired members, their spouses and friends. We are exceptionally grateful for the regular attendance of our RAFA Liaison Officers from RAF Shawbury who keep us in-touch with the news of RAF Shawbury and the wider Service in general.

This year I was asked to carry out a survey of some of our members whose continuing membership had not been confirmed to us by Central and Area HQs. This was an interesting exercise; as expected, almost all of our members had paid up-to-date. However, what it did highlight is that we have some members who are not able to attend our monthly meetings but nevertheless would very much appreciate being kept in contact with "The RAF Family". So, if you know of anyone in this situation please do make the effort to re-include them in the fellowship of RAFA.

Please note the membership fees for 2013. If your membership is due for renewal on 31 December 2012, 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	-	£19.50
Four Year Ordinary Membership	-	£73.50
One Year Full Associate with 'Air Mail'	-	£13.50
One Year Full Associate without 'Air Mail'	-	£8.50
One Year Branch Associate	-	£5.50

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:

The Shrewsbury RAFA began its annual Wings Appeal in July this year and continued over the summer collecting in familiar venues by many of our regular stalwarts. As with the vast majority of charities nationwide, we have been hit noticeably by the poor economic climate yet the public's interest appears just as strong. Our newly acquired pull-up banner, big and clear and obvious, was put to use at collecting points and proved a very convenient and easy way to advertise the Branch. A well attended event in the town's Square in the spring, organised by Al Poole, not only raised public awareness of the Association locally but helped to boost our Appeal funds greatly. The Wings Team greatly appreciates all who have given their time and energy again this year in order to keep those funds coming in; with your help we raised £4,574.90 during 2012, thank you.

Alex Madeley

WELFARE

15. The Welfare Officer writes:

It seems only like yesterday that I was writing my annual message for the branch newsletter but, with the dark nights and cold weather upon us, it has come around once more. It surprises me to realise that I have been doing this now for 8 years and it does not get any easier! We are all well aware of the changes that life has brought us, particularly over recent years, with changes in income and increased costs for all those essential things that we need to buy daily; the weekly shop never seems to go down despite all the banners in the supermarkets – 2 for 1, 'Price Drop' and all the other tempting offers so it is really good when you spot one that is a real saving! Here is one that we heard about some months ago but many of us have probably forgotten about. If you are in receipt of Pension Credit (or certain other benefits) you can get 36 stamps for your Christmas cards at last year's prices – ask at your local post office. I know it is not a huge saving but at least it is something!

So far winter (apart from the rain) has not been too bad but, if it changes for the worse with falling temperatures, frost and snow, remember to keep warm and keep an eye on those around you are possibly more vulnerable than yourself. There are a number of schemes to assist those who find it difficult to pay to keep themselves warm at home. Do not be concerned about asking me for details or guidance on how to get help; it is far better to ask early and be able to keep yourself warm without fear of running out of money. Energy companies are well aware of their responsibilities and provide genuine help to those in need.

Have you thought about a break at one of the Association's homes? Our homes provide a relaxing atmosphere in the familiar surroundings of a RAF community and are open for most of the year. These homes belong to you; they are very popular with many ex-RAF members who return time and again. They represent excellent value for money, especially for those who are less able, activities are organised throughout to week with excursions to local places of interest. There is always a lively evening to be had in the lounge with frequent entertainment and all this along with full-board catering is provided for a maximum of £390 per week (2013 rates). Many guests will qualify for discounted or lower charges and each individual pays a personally tailored charge for their stay. If you are interested in staying at one of these centres please ask me for details or apply to the area office. Details of all the offers that are available to all ex-RAF personnel can be found on the RAFA website www.rafa.org.uk, in the quarterly magazine Air Mail, through the Area offices (details on your social diary) or by simply asking any member of the branch committee.

We have had the chance to take 3 day trips this year and we are planning similar excursions for next year.

Do keep in touch with the branch by trying to get along to the monthly meeting of giving us a call. We are managing to fill the coach when we go off on these trips but there is always room for more. So long as there is interest the joint organisers (RAFA, Probus and U3A) will keep looking for different places to visit. If you have any ideas of places that you think may be useful to visit do let me know.

With the reduction in personnel in the RAF over recent years there have been corresponding reductions in association membership. We are looking very carefully at how we spend our funds to ensure that the association can continue to provide a high level of support to all ex-service. On the welfare front we are discovering more opportunities to share our facilities and support with other ex-service associations. We are expanding our welfare support across the country and are always on the lookout for willing volunteers to help. If you are interested in giving up some time to help just ask any of the welfare team. In the meantime we wish you all a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year that is full of good fortune.

Your welfare team.

Alan Poole, Frances and Paul Martin

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

16. The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Perkins Club on Monday 4 March 2013 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 2013.

In Friendship One to Another

John Tisbury

SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH

ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

NOMINATIONS FOR BRANCH OFFICIALS
AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013

The following individuals are nominated for the posts shown:

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

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 17 February 2013.
3. Full Associate Members may stand for the Committee, but must be proposed and seconded by Full Members.