

**ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**  
**SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250)**  
**2013 NEWSLETTER**

*Dear Member*

1. As we move to the end of 2013, it is time to look back at what your Branch has achieved this year; and to look forward to 2014. There are some good words on both aspects below from your committee; and you can always keep up to date on our new website; our outstanding Web Master keeps it right up to date and it is very informative.
2. 2013 saw the usual round of parades and ceremonial and your Branch was represented at them all, with frequent parading of the Branch Standard. A major event this year was the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association that took place as part of the Military Tattoo at the Birmingham NIA at the end of November; we took a coach full of members to watch; but Shawn, our new Standard Bearer, was our star representing us down on the arena floor, and a great job he did too! Thanks Shawn. On a sadder note our Standard was also present at a number of funerals during the year as some of our members took their final posting, our condolences to their families.
3. This year we were fortunate in gaining a reasonable sized grant from the Big Lottery toward our celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association. This enable us to provide a celebratory meal at the Wroxeter Hotel early in the year, to purchase some more fund raising equipment to help Alex in her Wings Appeal effort next year, to provide a coach to take members on a trip to the Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, and to fund our Christmas Social. So thanks to the Big Lottery (a National Lottery funding outlet) we were able to enjoy a number of social events and obtain some much needed Wings Appeal equipment.
4. On the 'business' side, your Branch was represented at both the Area Annual General Meeting at Torquay, and at the Association's Annual Conference at Eastbourne in 2013. We continue to 'parade' around 20 to 25% of our membership at our very enjoyable monthly meetings, but there is plenty of space in the room for more, so why not come along and join us during 2014, we would love to see you.

**FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

5. The Chairman writes:

*Dear fellow Members of Shrewsbury & District Branch Royal Air Forcers Association*

*It has been another busy year within our Branch with a multitude of visits and events in addition to our regular monthly meetings. Following on from a year that contained a Golden Jubilee, Royal Wedding and London based Olympic Games I had thought that we may have found 2013 to be a little quiet but I hope that you will agree that this has been far from the case.*

*One of our major events was the Lunch to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Royal Air Forces Association at the Wroxeter Hotel which was held on the 18th April. This lunch was attended by just over 80 people and served not only as an opportunity for a jolly nice meal but also allowed us to raise the profile of our Branch and recruit some new members (welcome all). The lunch, and some additional activities this year, were supported by a kind Grant from the National Lottery which was organised (another word for mountains of paperwork and forms) by our excellent Branch Secretary who in his spare (?) time also hold senior and demanding posts elsewhere in the Association.*

*One new development this year is the creation of our very own branch website that can be found at: [www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk](http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk). In addition to day to day information about our activities it also contains a number of pages of historical information about the Branch and other related articles. If you have not yet visited the site I urge you to do so, we regularly receive over 1500 visits a month with a surprising number coming from somewhere in Russia (they are watching us!). The Webmaster (Mike Farmer) would be*

*delighted to receive any information, photographs or news that you might like to share with others.*

*Your Committee continues to work hard to bring you enjoyable and informative meetings and trips and my thanks goes to all of them. In addition to our regular social meetings a great deal of work goes on behind the scenes ranging from welfare activities to organising our annual Wings Appeal collections for which work has already started in preparation for 2014. Our Branch is represented at other groups around the County and indeed the Country often with our Standard on show. I am delighted that we found a ~~conscript~~ volunteer this year to take over as our main Standard Bearer (thank you Shawn) to allow Al some time to concentrate on his welfare and wider Association responsibilities.*

*We continue to benefit from strong support from RAF Shawbury and in particular our RAFALOs. Sgt Peter Booth remains our main point of contact, with until recently FS Andy Hunt coordinating all RAFALO activity at the Station. Andy has recently left Shawbury to pastures new and he is being replaced by FS Stu Mason who looks forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the RAF Shawbury Games Night which will take place next year.*

*Finally, I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.*

*Paul Sharp*

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

6. Present Committee members are as follows:

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



- I. ATC Liaison Officer  
Tecwyn Roberts
- m. Web Master  
Mike Farmer
- n. RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer  
Flight Sergeant Stu Mason and Sergeant Peter Booth

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

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

### **DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

9. The following events are programmed:

- 2014
- 6 January – New Year Meeting with a ‘Pam Quiz’
  - 3 February – Battle of Shrewsbury – Martin Latham
  - 3 March – Annual General Meeting
  - 7 April – Shrewsbury Hand Bells
  - 12 May – Tales from the Fireside – Malcolm Castle
  - 2 June – The Home Front – Ken Ballantyne
  - 7 July – Captain Scott – Richard Jopling
  - 4 August – Wings Preparation
  - 1 September – Shropshire Badger Group – Jim Ashley
  - 6 October – Afghanistan – Alex Ford
  - 3 November – Surviving the “Weakest Link” – Martin Wood
  - 1 December – Christmas Social

2015 5 January – New Year Meeting

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

10. 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**

11. The Membership Secretary writes:

*The membership of our Branch remains quite strong, totalling 216, 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.*

*Please note the membership fees for 2014. If your membership is due for renewal on 31 December 2013, paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership, alternatively, please pay by cheque directly to RAFA (it saves a significant amount of duplication of effort in accounting). 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
4 Years Full Associate with Air Mail	-	£52.50
One Year Full Associate without 'Air Mail'	-	£8.50
4 Years Full Associate without Air Mail	-	£29.00
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. The meeting includes an interesting talk by a guest speaker, a raffle and amusing anecdotes from our Social Secretary. 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**

12. The Wings Appeal Organiser writes:

Another summer's collecting has shown the continuing support of local stores for which we are grateful. In addition, and for the first time, we were pleased to be chosen by Waitrose in Shrewsbury as one of their monthly charities for their Community Matters scheme. The public's interest locally in RAFA appeared not to have lessened although the size of donations was noticeably down at several venues. The Branch benefitted this year from a much greater response to our appeal for collectors, and to the efforts of several new members in taking on that role. In total £4305.05 was collected for the 2013 Wings Appeal thanks to their efforts.

Alex Madeley

### **WELFARE**

13. The Welfare Officer writes:

As we approach the end of another year it is normally time to reflect on what we have achieved over the past months and look forward to the future. Thankfully, the weather has given us a summer that was long overdue and, so far, the winter has been very mild. Let us hope it continues and that we can look forward to another lovely summer. Really! I hear you say; well maybe we can hope.

The foundations of our Association are based on 'Friendship, Help and Support and that is what our welfare organisation is trying to ensure on a day-to-day basis. You will see and hear more about that work over the next year as we will be trumpeting the whole welfare effort that comes from the heart of the Association. We will be telling you, former members of the RAF and the public at large about the work that we do and how we are making a difference to lives of many former and current servicemen and women. Aside from our monthly meetings there are other initiatives; from a simple telephone call for a chat to visits at home or in hospital. From helping to organise a short welfare break to providing practical support in the home or the community. There are many ways in which the welfare organisation can provide help and support, the list is endless and the range of available support constantly amazes me. So please make use of all that we can offer by letting any of the team know about your concerns.

During recent years we have all had to look closely at our finances and how we spend our money. You, me, RAFA and the RAF Benevolent Fund are not immune, and like us the Association and the Benevolent Fund have had to re-think some of the things which they do. The Benevolent Fund has adjusted its financial support for the jointly funded respite care homes at Flowerdown, Richard Peck House and Rothbury and, we in the Association have had to resolve that change in our income. We have successfully organised the continuation of the facilities for at least the next 5 years without any noticeable loss of service or benefit to our guests. In fact, we have improved the arrangements. Your breaks will now last for a full



seven days (or longer) and there will be opportunities to stay for shorter breaks if you prefer. We are keen to promote the homes and facilities and want to ensure that everyone who wants to use the service gets the opportunity. You only need to look in Air Mail to find letters singing the praises of the managers and staff at each of the homes to realise what a marvellous asset we own; the reputation which has been won over many years is one in which we take great pride. The homes have been referred to as our family jewels and like your diamonds and gold which you would not want to lose, we do not want to lose our assets so, please try to support the retention of the homes by visiting and finding out about the offers that are regularly available.

Your team of welfare officers will be waiting for your call if the weather turns cold and you find it becomes a struggle to get to the shops, keep warm or generally do things around the home – do call if you know of anyone who you think would benefit from a visit during the long dark months and, remember, it will soon get around to those longer days and the opportunities to go on our trips with Probus and U3A – we have already started planning for next year and we hope that we can find something to interest you.

In the meantime, and on behalf of Frances and Paul, I wish you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous, healthy new year.

Alan Poole

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

14. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Perkins Club on Monday 3 March 2014 commencing at 1230 pm.***

### **NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS**

15. 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.

### **CONCLUSION**

16. 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 2014

In Friendship One to Another

*John Tisbury*

Keep up to date with your Branch by visiting our website at [www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk](http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk)