

ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250) 2021 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member

ANNUAL ROUND-UP

1. Covid continues to impact the activities of the Branch with changing guidance from the Government (and as I write further concern over the Omicron variant); however the Committee liaised throughout 2021 to ensure that the Branch kept abreast of the Association's governance requirements, provided support and welfare where required and kept under consideration when it might be possible to recommence Branch meetings. With the assistance of the Harlescott Club, Branch meetings finally recommenced in September; and it was an absolute joy to welcome everyone back to well attended meetings.
2. We held the Branch's Annual General Meeting 'virtually' via Zoom on 1 March, of necessity it was somewhat truncated, however we managed to meet all the legal requirements, and thanks are due to all those who took part. The Branch was also sent returns and was represented at both the 'virtual' Area Conference and the 'virtual' Association Annual Conference in October. Our Chairman represented the Branch and laid wreaths at our Annual 1 April remembrance event at Shrewsbury Cemetery; at the Shrewsbury Battle of Britain commemorative event at the Quarry, and at the annual Remembrance Sunday event. It was interesting to note the massive turn out by members of the public at the Remembrance Sunday event, and we hope that some of you were in amongst the crowd. Members of the Branch also attended and supported the RAF Shawbury Families Day event where we managed to raise a few hundred pounds towards our 2021 Wings Appeal total. Collecting was severely curtailed due to Covid restrictions so that income was most welcome.
3. Covid has presented a number of challenges to us all through 2021; and I fear that it may not be over yet; however your Branch has remained as active as possible, and through the year have continued to provide welfare support to those in need, collected some funds towards the Wings Appeal, and managed to welcome many of you back to our Branch meetings when they recommenced in September. Through this somewhat 'bumpy' year the Committee has been grateful to our Branch Chairman for his pragmatic and excellent leadership; thank you Paul.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

4. The Chairman writes:

Dear fellow Members of Shrewsbury & District Branch Royal Air Forces Association

As we approach Christmas this year it does seem that life is finally returning to some form of normality. Our monthly meetings have restarted at the Harlescott Social Club, held on the first Monday of every month at 1230 (unless a Bank Holiday in which case it will be the second Monday), please do come and join us if you can. We hold regular raffles and enjoy a wide range of speakers on many different topics. If you would like to hear about a particular subject, please let Mike Bradbury know and he will try to include it in future plans. Wreathes were laid on behalf of our Branch at The Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday Parades in the Quarry and we do intend to hold our Memorial Service at Shrewsbury War Graves on the First of April 2022.



Your committee has been able to hold face to face meetings and we continue to balance the administration required with running our Branch (which is a Charity in its own right) and planning our social activities and monthly meetings. I am fortunate to have the services of hardworking and dedicated committee members but many of us are double hatted and we would welcome any members who may wish to consider joining the committee to help share the tasks.

The various lockdowns and restrictions have severely impacted on our planned Wings Appeal activities. Store collections could not take place however; we were represented at the RAF Shawbury Families Day and received some funds from static collecting boxes which have allowed us to contribute £314.03 to the Annual Wings Appeal.

For those of you that are contactable by email this will remain the primary form of communication; for others we will continue to send information in the post (although if you are happy to receive information via email please do pass your email address to the Membership Secretary as this helps to reduce our costs). Also, for those with Internet Access, the latest information will be provided on our Branch website that can be found at:
www.raflashrewsbury.org.uk.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Paul Sharp

DETAILS OF YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

5. 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
Paul Martin
- g. Iain Davison
- h. Membership Secretary
Paul Martin
- i. Wings Appeal Organiser
Paul Sharp
- j. Social Secretary
Mike Bradbury
- k. ATC Liaison Officer
Mike Bradbury
- l. Web Master
Mike Farmer

RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer – Squadron Leader Gary James

The Branch Standard Bearer is Shawn Marston and his deputy is Eric Blackie.

6. The Branch also benefits from the wisdom of our Life Vice President Ms Rose Davies.
7. Please contact any of the above if you have any questions or concerns about the Association or your Branch.

DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8. The meeting dates for 2022 are as follows:

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|-------------|---------------|---|--|
| 2022 | 10 Jan | - | Hostelries in Shrewsbury – Nigel Hinton |
| | 7 Feb | | Shrewsbury Flax Mill and Maltings – Marianne Blaaboar |
| | 7 Mar | - | Branch AGM |
| | 1 Apr | - | Remembrance Service Longden Cemetery at 1800 hrs |
| | 4 Apr | - | An Introduction to Physical Geography – Graham Bradbury |
| | 9 May | - | The Glider Trust |
| | 2-5 Jun | - | Queens Jubilee Weekend |
| | 6 Jun | - | The RAF Hornchurch Heritage Trust |
| | 25 Jun | - | Armed Forces Day |
| | 4 Jul | - | The Aeries Flights from RAF Shawbury – Kim Leach |
| | 23 Jul | - | Area Conference |
| | 1 Aug | - | TBC |
| | 5 Sep | - | History of Shrewsbury Prison |
| | 18 Sep | - | Battle of Britain Sunday |
| | 3 Oct | - | TBC |
| | 22/23 Oct | - | Annual Conference |
| | 7 Nov | - | TBC |
| | 5 Dec | - | Christmas Social |
| 2023 | 9 Jan | - | New Year Meeting |

Our Social Secretary is poised – as always – to fill the above dates with events. As always it should be noted that the programme is subject to change; however we will always arrange a talk or event at each meeting.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

9. Social meetings are held at the **Harlescott Social Club, Roseway, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4HW** meetings are held 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 every one of you to our meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

10. The Membership Secretary writes:

*Shrewsbury and District Branch Membership Numbers:
Life 56, Ordinary 92, Associate 27, GAYE 200: Total 375*

The membership of our Branch has remained largely the same over the last year, made up from: Life, Ordinary, Associate and Give As You Earn (GAYE) members; however, there has been an overall small decrease in our non-GAYE membership. We are fortunate to be so close to RAF Shawbury that we benefit from Serving Members stationed there, which boosts our membership total. However, our active membership is almost entirely made up from retired members, their spouses and friends. We have a very welcome, significant number of Associate

Members. 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 that, for most of us, our membership fee for 2022 will be due for renewal on 31 December 2021. Paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership; alternatively, please pay by sending a cheque directly to HQ RAFA using their pre-addressed envelope; however, if this is not practical, please give your subscription to Paul Martin or Pam Small, our Treasurer, who will forward it to RAFA HQ. The Membership fees from 1 January 2022 are:

Ordinary: £24.50, Ordinary 4-Year: £92.00,
Associate: £17.00 (Non-Air Mail: £13.00). Associate 4-Year: £66.00 (Non-Air Mail: £52.00 (Please note that, if you're paying for a 4-year membership, to continue to benefit from the reduction in membership fees you must renew your 4-year membership before it runs out).

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic had severely curtailed our social activities. Nevertheless, this brought out the best in our membership who willingly telephone-befriended others and also helped in other ways with social inclusion, such as shopping.

We have now returned to our normal activities, and we are most pleased to be able to re-invigorate our monthly meetings at the Harlescott Social Club, [17-43 Roselyn, Shrewsbury, SY1 4LP](#). We plan to continue to meet there on the 1st (non-holiday) Monday of every month. Our Monday, lunchtime, meetings have always been a most enjoyable way of spending time with friends over a light meal and a drink in a warm and pleasant environment. The meetings include a raffle and an interesting talk by a guest speaker. If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings regularly, please remember that your Branch is always here to help so please keep in touch with your RAFA.

If you have any questions about RAFA or our Branch. Please see our Branch's Website:
<http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk>

Paul Martin
Membership Secretary

WELFARE

11. The Welfare Officer writes:

Our Branch's welfare work has continued during the last year; however, RAFA has not permitted face-to-face meetings and all the welfare work has had to be conducted over the telephone or by email. Clearly this has not been as effective as personal contact with people requesting assistance; nevertheless, much good work has been completed.

Our RAFA Welfare Region West (WRW) team at Weston-Super-Mare has been busy, working mainly from home, maintaining RAFA's welfare commitments in difficult circumstances.

Making payments from our welfare accounts to welfare beneficiaries has become more difficult as it is not recommended to handle cash and it may be difficult for recipients to pay cheques into their bank accounts. WRW has been able to help by paying awards directly into recipients' bank accounts by bank transfer.

Normal befriending has been overtaken by telephone befriending. Not only have our Branch Befrienders been kept busy but, additionally, RAFA has recruited volunteer Branch members to make regular telephone calls to people who otherwise would have had little or no personal contact. Our grateful thanks go to all who worked hard to ensure that vulnerable and lonely people have been kept socially included. Sadly, those with significant hearing difficulties have largely been left-out because RAFA still prohibits face-to-face contacts.

Providing RAFA welfare during these difficult times has been challenging. Your RAFA and Branch welfare teams continue to work hard to help members of the RAF Family in times of need.

Paul Martin
Honorary Welfare Officer

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Harlescott Social Club on Monday 7 March 2022 commencing at 1230 pm.***

NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS

13. 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

14. 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 be able to attend our monthly meetings during 2022.

In Friendship One to Another

John Tisbury

Keep up to date with your Branch by visiting our website at www.rafa-shrewsbury.org.uk

Shrewsbury and District Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association is Registered Charity No: 1073201