

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

MARCH 2013

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 28 February 2013 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 13	All Losses
6676	5395	2615	14686	133	101

This year we shall be focussing again on our lapsed members and looking for all those local initiatives that are going on in your Branch so that we can share best practice. Our lapsed rate fell last year thanks to your efforts but we are looking to do the same in 2013. We are about to be joined by a new member of staff, to be known as our Branch Support Officer and one of the key functions of this post will be to support Branches with lapsing members. More to follow!

2. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

It is with sadness that we record the passing of Air Commodore Brian Opie who was the last Midland Region President and Area Life Vice-President. Also, Hubert Spight who was a Vice-President at Neath Branch, former Chairman of Region and Wales Councillor. As always, we send our sincere condolences to family and friends.

3. BRANCH CLOSURE

Regretfully I must report the formal closure of the Blaby Branch of the Association in the South East and Eastern Area with effect from 31 March 2013.

4. WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA – PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

In recognition of their meritorious service to the Association, the Area President has been pleased to award his Certificate of Appreciation to the following:

Mr and Mrs Terry and Margaret McKeown	- Barry Branch
Sergeant Simon 'Wilky' Wilkinson	- Camborne & Redruth Branch (RRH Portreath)
Mr Chris Quinn	- Birmingham Sheldon Branch Club
Mr Alan Winspur	- Birmingham Sheldon Branch Club

Celebrating 70 years 1943-2013

Certificates will be presented at the Area AGM in Torquay or as individually arranged. Many congratulations to all.

5. AREA MEMBERSHIP TROPHIES - 2012

Trophies have been awarded to the following Branches for their membership achievements in 2012. The trophies will be presented at the Area AGM:

<u>Highest % Increase in Membership</u> (Branches with 150 Members or less)	Pontardawe & District Branch
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<u>Highest % Increase in Membership</u> (Branches with over 150 Members)	Taunton Deane Branch
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<u>First Branch to achieve 100% Renewal of Members</u>	Falmouth Branch
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6. AREA WINGS APPEAL TROPHIES - 2012

Trophies have been awarded to the following Branches for their Wings Appeal achievements in 2012. The Trophies will be presented at the Area AGM:

<u>Highest Gross Per Capita</u>	North Cotswold Branch
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<u>Highest Gross Collection</u>	Solihull Branch
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<u>Highest % Increase in Gross Collection</u>	West Bromwich Branch
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In addition, £10,000 Wings Certificates will be presented at the Area AGM, or as individually arranged, to Birmingham Moseley, Cheltenham, Christchurch, Melksham, Plymouth, Tamworth, Weston-super-Mare and Wrekin Wellington. A £15,000 Certificate will go to Swindon Branch, a £20,000 Certificate will go to our Branches at Poole and Torquay and, of course, a fantastic £25,000 Certificate will be presented to Solihull. Many congratulations to all these recipients.

7. AREA BRANCH EFFICIENCY COMPETITION – 2012

The Winners of the Area Branch Efficiency Competition 2012, who have been put forward to the National Competition were as follows. Trophies will be presented at the Area AGM.

Branches with 150 Members or less @ 31 Dec 11	Melksham Branch
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Branches with over 150 Members @ 31 Dec 11	Swindon Branch
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8. AREA BRANCH CLUB EFFICIENCY COMPETITION - 2012

The Winners of the Area Branch Club Efficiency Competition 2012, who have been put forward to the National Competition were as follows. Trophies will be presented at the Area AGM.

Clubs whose parent Branch had 200 Members or less @ 31 Dec 11	Penarth Branch
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Clubs whose parent Branch had over 200 Members @ 31 Dec 11	Torquay Branch
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Celebrating 70 Years 1943-2013

9. AREA WELFARE TROPHY - 2012

This is now the fourth year our Area has been pleased to present the Lightning Trophy for the individual or organisation who has made the biggest contribution to welfare in the Area over the past 12 months. Congratulations this year goes to Mr John Williams, HWO at Anglesey Branch. John is a most deserving winner of this award in recognition of his welfare work.

10. WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA – NINTH AGM – SATURDAY 9 MARCH 2013

Final arrangements have now been made for our Area Conference and Reunion in Torquay. Forty eight Branches are to be represented at the AGM which is a super effort! The Agenda and Annual Report has been distributed to all Branch Delegates under separate cover. A copy of the Annual Report is enclosed with this Newsletter and will also appear on the Association website.

A final reminder if I may! Our RAFA Club in Torquay is open for business during Conference and will assure you of a warm welcome (should you wish to escape the Derwent at any time!). Just a short walk away in Scarborough Road, the Club is open as follows:

- Friday – 1200hrs to 2330hrs.
- Saturday – 1200hrs to 2300hrs.
- Sunday – 1200hrs to 1530hrs.

Branches are reminded that in accordance with Standard Branch Regulation 32, Accounts as at 31 December 2012, including a Report from the Auditor or Independent Examiner, for both Branch and Branch Clubs are to be received at Area Headquarters by 31 March 2013. Would Treasurers please help us by preparing their accounts in the format contained in Chapter 6 (Branch) and 15 (Club) of the RAFA Admin Handbook. Accounts are now being received so many thanks!

11. ANNUAL CONFERENCE – EASTBOURNE – 10 TO 12 MAY 2013

The letter giving details of Conference was despatched to Branch Secretaries in early December by E-mail and hard copy. It is important that the pro forma is returned direct to the Conference Organiser at RAFA Conference, PO Box 316, Leyland PR25 9AX (email margaret.duff@rafa.org.uk) and **not** via Area or CHQ. It is also imperative that it is returned by the due date (Friday 5 April 2013) as in recent years many Branches have not made contact until as late as the week prior to Conference. It is necessary to complete and return the form **even if accommodation has been booked direct** - again in recent years many Delegates have assumed that as they had booked their accommodation there was no need to return the pro forma.

12. AREA MARQUEES

If your Branch is planning to make use of the Area Marquees this Summer, then please give early consideration to making an appropriate booking with the staff. We have one marquee positioned in each of the Area offices so please ensure you make contact with the appropriate team:

- Wales Office – Barbara Howells or Andrew Carter – Tel No: 01495-249522.
- Midland Office – Tracey Khan or Jackie Broad – Tel No: 0121-4499356.
- South West Office – Fran Rowsell – Tel No: 01392-462088 Line 4.

13. AMENDMENT TO THE RAF ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK – AL 19

The nineteenth amendment to our Association Handbook has now been released and copies have been distributed to every Branch Secretary. Please ensure this amendment is actioned as soon as

possible so that you are up to date! You may wish to be reminded that a new copy of the Handbook can be ordered by Branches from RAFATrad Ltd at a cost of £6.12 and, of course, is considered a reasonable Branch expense.

14. ARCTIC STAR AND BOMBER COMMAND CLASP

You may wish to visit the following link if you have any questions regarding the Arctic Star or Bomber Command Clasp (application forms, information, eligibility etc):

http://www.veterans-uk.info/arctic_star_index.htm

15. PRESS RELEASE – RAF POLICE INVESTIGATION

We have been asked to publicise the following Press Release:

RAF POLICE INVESTIGATE ALLEGED CHILD SEX OFFENCES AT FORMER BASE

Historic allegations of sex abuse at a former RAF Base in Berlin are being investigated by the RAF Police Special Investigations and Intelligence Branch. The alleged offences, which occurred during the period 1981 to 1989, involve a former Royal Air Force Serviceman who was stationed in Berlin during that time.

Wing Commander Mike Dixon, Officer Commanding Number 2 Police Wing, who is overseeing the investigation, said:

“A man in his early 60s, from the London area has been interviewed by the RAF Police regarding allegations relating to the sexual abuse of children whilst he was serving in the RAF at an RAF base in Berlin in the 1980s. Enquiries continue.”

The RAF Police are appealing to potential victims or witnesses to come forward. Wing Commander Dixon added:

“Anyone who served at, or had connections with, the former RAF base at Gatow during the 1980s and early 1990s, who believes that they have any information relating to the alleged offences, is urged to contact us in absolute confidence.”

The Service Police Crime Bureau may be contacted on 023 9228 5170.

16. FORCES DISCOUNT CARD

Not seen in anyway as a challenge to our own online membership benefits package, you may be interested in the Defence Discount Service which has recently launched the Forces and veterans discount card. Please check out the following link:

<https://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk/>

17. WINGS COLLECTIONS – POLICY WHEN USING ATC CADETS

The following has been agreed with the ATC as a policy line in respect of the use of ATC Cadets who assist Branches with collections.

With regards to House to House Collections, the Association collects under our ‘House to House Collections Act 1939 – Order of Exemption Certificate’. The rules governing these collections do not state a minimum age for collectors only that we exercise due diligence to

ensure that persons authorised to act as collectors for the purposes of the collection were fit and proper persons. The general guidance to Branches should be (outside of street collections) that the minimum age of collectors used in collections is not set. Instead, Branches should ask the OC of any Air Cadet Squadron for help as required where it will then be the OC's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate duty of care is applied to their cadets. For collections governed by Local Authority regulations (Street Collections) any one under 16 should not act as a collector (i.e. hold the collecting tin and therefore have the responsibility for cash), however, they can be involved in the collection by giving out stickers for donations whilst someone of appropriate age holds the tin. I have checked with one council and they interpret the rule to the letter. A copy of each council's specific rules and regulations will have been sent to the Branches with their actual permits. With regards to other types of collections such as premises or Airshow collections (which are not governed by Local Authority regulations) we should always be applying the rule of 'Duty of Care' to our collectors. In these cases, if the environment is deemed to be a safe one and is well monitored by appropriate adults (or staff in the case of Air Cadets) then people under the age of 16 can act as the collector.

Our Wings Department at CHQ will be happy to discuss these details if you require any clarification (0116-268 8757).

18. MOBILE EXHIBITION TRAILERS (MET)

This year there will undoubtedly be a large number of events organised by Area and Branches to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Royal Air Forces Association. In addition to these there are the usual round of airshows and events that are organised by outside agencies that CHQ, Areas and Branches would look to attend to promote the RAF Association. You will no doubt be aware that there are two Mobile Exhibition Trailers (MET) at CHQ that are fully equipped for the purpose. Whilst primarily they attend the large airshows and events, they are available, subject to demand, to support other events throughout the year. We are currently drawing together the 2013 event calendar at CHQ in order to allocate the METs fairly and evenly throughout the Country. If you would like to have a MET attend one of your events, subject to availability, or require further information, please contact the Area Director in the first instance.

Whilst there will be dates requested that are in great demand (Armed Forces Day, Aug Bank Holiday weekend), the months of April, and from mid-September to December are generally quieter as are some mid-week dates throughout the year.

19. WAITROSE COMMUNITY MATTERS - FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Some of our Branches have already switched onto the idea of approaching Waitrose for local fundraising (you will have seen their system of a green plastic disc that shoppers use to pick their favourite local project). If you have a Waitrose within your Branch collecting area, wouldn't it be great to give it a try! Enclosed with this Newsletter is the Waitrose application form. Good luck!

20. PARTY IN THE PARK – ENMORE PARK GOLF CLUB, BRIDGWATER

What a super evening we have in store at the Enmore Park Golf Club on Monday 27 May (a Bank Holiday I hear you say – what better way to relax!). The Club has approached us looking to raise funds that will include our Wings Appeal. Our MET will be there. The enclosed poster tells all and it might also be possible to organise a round of golf during the day. Let me know if you'd like to play golf and if we get enough takers we can sort a charity rate and maybe raise even more for the Association. Please spread the word.

Celebrating 70 Years 1943-2013

21. A 'BIG THANK' YOU FROM TRACEY KHAN

Tracey Khan from our Midlands Office has asked us to pass on her thanks and appreciation for all your very kind words and gifts as she recuperates at home. Tracey is doing well and with a fair wind, will be back early to mid March.

22. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Treorchy Branch (2pm) – 2 March 2013.
Somerset Region Meeting at Taunton Deane Branch Club (2.30pm) – 2 March 2013.
Wiltshire Region Meeting at Swindon RAFA Club (1pm) – 2 March 2013.
Area Conference and Reunion at the Derwent Hotel in Torquay – 8 to 10 March 2013.
Mid Wales Region Meeting at Llanidloes Branch (2pm) – 23 March 2013.
Official RAF Association 70th Anniversary – 1 April 2013.
North Wales Region Meeting at RAF Valley (2pm) – 13 April 2013.
Area Council Meeting at Tamworth Branch Club (1045am) - 15 April 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (1.30pm) – 20 April 2013.
Association Annual Conference at Eastbourne – 10 to 12 May 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (2pm) – 13 July 2013.
Area Council Meeting – venue to be confirmed – 21 August 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (2pm) – 2 November 2013.
Area Council Meeting – venue to be confirmed – 20 November 2013.

Paul Baker – Area Director

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

Enclosures:

1. RAF Association Handbook – Amendment 19 (only by post to Secretaries).
2. Waitrose Community Matters Leaflet (only by post to Secretaries).
3. Party in the Park at Enmore Park Golf Club.
4. Area Annual Report 2012.