

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

APRIL 2013

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 25 March 2013 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 13	All Losses
5965	5386	2119	13470	214	1420

It is recognised by membership organisations that it is far easier to retain members than it is to recruit new members. Our Area has Branches and members that are hugely determined and enthusiastic and I would ask you all to carry this spirit to the challenge of engaging our lapsed members, just as many of you did last year. Lapsed letters are sent from Area HQ but there is nothing stronger than personal contact from the Branch. You may uncover a welfare need in so doing. Is it sufficient that Area HQ provides you with a lapsed list in the hope that each Branch can make contact with those listed? We value your feedback as we look for ways to increase membership. Don't forget, also, that your Branch will have the services of an Area Councillor.

2. BRANCH CLOSURE

Regretfully I must report the formal closure of the Denbigh & District Branch of the Association in North Wales, with effect from 1 April 2013. Throughout, the Branch made a significant contribution to the aims of the Association over a period spanning more than 67 years. Branch members have been given options for membership transfer.

3. WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA – NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – SATURDAY 9 MARCH 2013

Forty five Branches were officially represented at the 9th Annual General Meeting of our Area in Torquay and helped to make the Conference and Reunion Weekend a success. Minutes of the AGM are enclosed with this Newsletter and include confirmation of your newly elected Area Council. You will also find the Minutes online at www.rafa.org.uk/what-we-do/News/Area-News-for-March. Keep an eye out on the website for a report and images of the Weekend!

Celebrating 70 Years 1943-2013

4. ANNUAL CONFERENCE – EASTBOURNE – A FINAL RALLYING CRY!

This is our last call for Annual Conference at Eastbourne over the weekend 10 to 12 May 2013 and for Branches to confirm their delegates.

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.

5. ARCTIC STAR AND BOMBER COMMAND CLASP

Further to last Month's Newsletter and a brief reference to the Arctic Star and Bomber Command Clasp, the Ministry of Defence has stressed that the message is not getting out to the relevant people. So here goes again! You are invited to follow this link for more information:

<http://www.rafa.org.uk/What-we-do/News/Arctic-Star-and-Bomber-Command-Clasp>

The following may be useful background. It has been announced by the Minister of State for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Mark Francois that all the details have been confirmed for the Arctic Star and the Bomber Command Clasp and the application process has now opened. This follows Sir John Holmes' independent medal review and the announcement by the Prime Minister, on 19 December 2012, that these awards should be made in recognition of the great bravery of those who contributed to two very significant campaigns of World War Two.

Her Majesty The Queen has approved designs for the new awards on the basis of recommendations made by the Royal Mint Advisory Committee. The design for the Arctic Star is based on the other World War Two Stars and the Bomber Command Clasp, to be worn on the ribbon of the 1939 to 1945 Star, follows the design of the Battle of Britain Clasp.

Production of the new Arctic Star and Bomber Command clasp will commence this week and could result in up to a quarter of a million veterans, and the families of those who have sadly died, applying to receive the new awards in recognition of their unique contribution protecting Britain during World War II. Priority in issuing the awards will be given to veterans and widows who could receive their awards in a few weeks. Other next of kin may also apply now but will have to wait slightly longer to receive their award.

Minister of State for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Mark Francois said:

"All those who served our country in Bomber Command and on the Arctic Convoys deserve nothing but the utmost respect and admiration from us. That's why I am delighted that these special individuals will in the next few weeks begin to receive the Bomber Command clasp and Arctic Star that they have so long deserved. I am also pleased to announce that the families of those no longer alive will also be able to apply for these awards in recognition of their loved one's bravery."

The qualifying period for the Arctic Star is "service of any length" recognising the particular severity of the conditions experienced by those who served in the Arctic. Whilst the primary intent is to recognise those who served on the Arctic Convoys, eligibility is extended to include all who served north of the Arctic Circle in World War Two. Those eligible will include members of all three Services as well of course as the Merchant Navy who crewed the ships taking the vital supplies to Russia.

The criteria for the Bomber Command Clasp requires prior qualification for the 1939 to 1945 Star, to which it will be affixed, with the additional requirement to have flown at least one operational sortie with a Bomber Command operational unit. A clasp was deemed more appropriate, by Sir John, in the case of Bomber Command as aircrew had already received either the Aircrew Europe Star or the France and Germany Star and another medal would have constituted “double-medalling” for the same service.

Eligible veterans and next of kin are now encouraged to apply using the relevant **application forms**, which can be found on the web link, or by telephoning the MOD Medal Office on **08457 800 900** (a local rate number) for further details. An application must be made as it is simply not possible for the MOD to contact veterans or families of all of those who may be eligible going back almost 70 years.

We hope this helps!

6. CHARITY GOLF – AN EARLY ‘HEADS UP’

Our superb Branch of Dursley & South Gloucester has once again put together a Golf Day in aid of the Wings Appeal, taking place at the Cotswold Edge Golf Club on Wed 4 September 2013. Details are enclosed with this Newsletter. Please do all you can to support this excellent day.

7. AREA MARQUEES

A repeat article! 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.

8. THE NATIONWIDE BANK – NOMINATE YOUR BRANCH WINGS APPEAL!

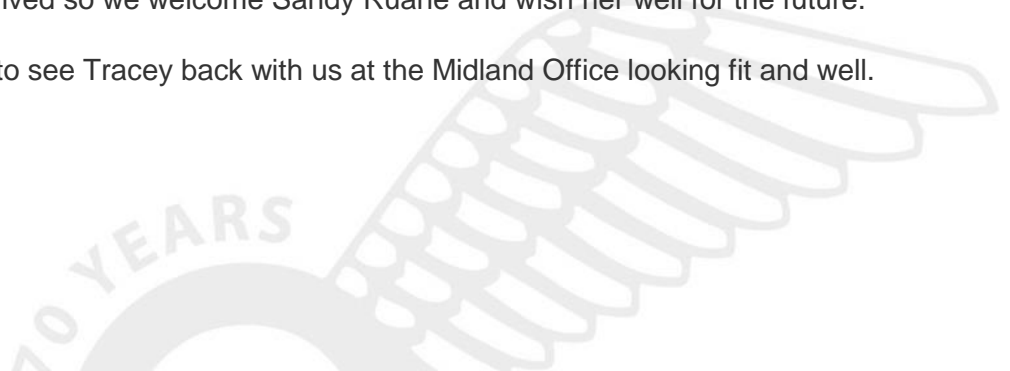
Last month we passed out details of the Waitrose Community Matters Project. It seems other commercial organisations have chosen to go for this plastic disc idea as a mechanism to support local causes. This is working in a couple of Branches – so why not give it a go! Enclosed with this Newsletter is a Nationwide application. Good luck!.

9. SOME STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to report that a new member of staff will join the Exeter based team on Monday 22 April, as the newly established Branch Support Officer. Jim Ritchie is a recently retired senior non-commissioned officer with many years of RAF Service. Please join us in welcoming Jim; you’ll see him out and about providing help and support with Branch membership and fundraising issues.

By the time you read this Newsletter, Dave Thompson, Assistant Area Welfare Officer in the South West, will have retired after 16 years service to the Association. Dave has been a stalwart of all our activity and he retires on 31 March – to get under Sandra’s feet – with our very best wishes. Dave’s replacement has already arrived so we welcome Sandy Ruane and wish her well for the future.

And finally, we are pleased to see Tracey back with us at the Midland Office looking fit and well.



10. STORYBOOK WINGS – AN UPDATE

Lisa Thipthorp, Storybook Wings Manager (Tel: **01780 783645**) storybookwings@rafa.org.uk has provided the following update which we hope you find useful.

Hello from me...

Dear all...having started back in the role of Storybook Wings Manager following a very extended maternity leave (my daughter is now 2!), I'm delighted to report I have my feet back under the table, stories are coming in -and going out again - thick and fast so I can now turn my attention to getting the monthly newsletter back up and running.

My intention is that this newsletter keeps everyone who has an interest in Storybook Wings—the fundraisers, the volunteer editors, the points of contact at the stations, the recorders, the PR and marketing team, our friends at the Families Fed and the Storybook Alliance—up to date with everything that is happening with the project—and believe me, there is lots to tell you about!

I am thrilled to be working on the project again and am at the office at RAF Wittering (Force Development Squadron) on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Feel free to give me a call, drop in for a chat or send me an email if you have any questions or want to discuss anything at all to do with this brilliant initiative!

Lisa

Happy families...

This is my favourite part of the newsletter— here are some recent messages from the families out there:

“Our story book CD arrived yesterday. Thank you so much, it's fantastic! My eldest has had it on repeat! Hope this is something they continue to do, it's a lovely idea! Thanks again.”

“Just to confirm that I have received the CDs. Thanks - they are great and were the first time we had heard Daddy's voice since he left!”

“We've received the CD for Jake. Thanks so much, he loved it.”

Month	No. of stories Received	Stories edited and posted	Total stories since beginning of project	Total stories 2013 so far
January	52	15	1855	121
February	34	30		
March	35	25		



Audacity has landed!

One of my main priorities when returning to Storybookwings was to review how we could get more volunteers on board to reduce waiting times for the stories. The main stumbling block has always been the cost of training and supplying the software. This problem was exacerbated when Adobe released a new version of Audition (the software historically used to edit the stories) which meant that we couldn't get hold of any more copies of the version we had been using.

Upgrading to the new version would mean re-training all current volunteers and having to spend over £220 per volunteer to buy the new software—not a conversation I was looking forward to having with our finance people! So I began looking at alternatives. After much research and testing, I decided Audacity would do the job we needed and, best of all, it's free! This change will I'm sure, transform the project. All restrictions on the number of volunteers has now gone.

It's been a tricky few months but this outcome means we can offer the service to many more parents, get many more volunteers involved in the editing, increasing the involvement in Storybookwings from both angles—and get more people involved in the work that RAFA does as a whole.

Volunteer News

Following completion of Audacity testing my first priority was to get in touch with the many people who have been waiting to get started as a volunteer—some of these stretch back to when I was in the role previously so, not surprisingly, priorities have changed for some of them and they are no longer able to commit to the project. However, I'm really pleased to report that I currently have 5 potential new editors who are working their way through the training document and test stories as you read this. Fingers crossed they all get to grips with the software soon so I can set them to work on some live stories.

I already have 2 new editors since February —Carina used to work on the project at Brize Norton so got up to speed with Audacity very quickly—she has already completed 6 stories for us; and Steve who is a family friend and was keen to get involved when I talked to him about the project in January—Steve has already completed 11 stories for us. It's great to have them both on board. I look forward to telling you more about our other volunteers in future issues.

11. RAFA CONCERT BAND UPDATE

On Saturday Sat 27 April, our RAFA Concert Band will host a Concert Band Workshop in the Blakehay Theatre, Weston-Super-Mare. There are a few places left so if you are interested in taking part then please contact the Musical Director, Peter Skellon, on 01934 820205.

12. BEWARE!

We've recently been made aware of a scam which appears quite dastardly and therefore worthy of a mention:

Please be aware that there is a bogus email being circulated from "Santander" asking the recipient to provide their online banking details, otherwise they will not be able to have access to their account. Messages have been received - all worded slightly differently – even to people who are not customers. They appear to use a cut-and-paste Santander logo. An example is as follows;

"Please note that starting from March 20, 2013 we will be introducing new online banking authentication procedures in order to protect the private information of all online banking users. You are required to confirm your online banking details with us as you will not be able to have access to your accounts until this has been done. As you're already registered for online banking all you need to do is to confirm your online banking details".

13. AIR SHOWS

Although not yet a definitive list, the following major events may be of interest as to where the Association is out and about this Summer:

EVENT DATE/S	EVENT	Location
23-Mar	Doncaster Races	Doncaster
30 Mar - 1 Apr	Festival of Power	Santa Pod, Northants
21-Apr	Thundersprint	Anglesey
24-Apr	Harrow Wings Workshop	North London
26 Apr - 28 Apr	VW Festival	Santa Pod, Northants
27 Apr - 28 Apr	Norfolk Game & Country Show	To be Confirmed
04-May	70th Anniversary Sky Dive	Co. Durham
03 - 05 May	Donnington Historic Flight	Donnington
10 - 12 May	Annual Conference	Eastbourne
16 - 18 May	Devon County Show	Exeter
18- 19 May	Haworth 1940s Weekend	Cheshire
25 - 27 May	1940s Wartime Weekend	Bury Lancs
26-May	Duxford Airshow	Duxford
27-May	Enmore Party in the Park	Enmore, Bridgewater
31 May - 2 Jun	Vintage Nostalgia Show	Stockton, Wiltshire
08-Jun	Folkestone Airshow	Folkestone
09-Jun	Cosford Airshow	Cosford
09-Jun	Welshpool Airshow	Welshpool
14 - 16 Jun	Pageant of Power	Cholmondeley, Cheshire
15 - 16 Jun	Wickenby Wings & Wheels	Langworth, Lincs
21 - 23 Jun	Whitehaven Festival	Whitehaven
22 - 23 Jun	IOW AFD	IOW
22-Jun	Heart of the Forest Festival	Tamworth
22-Jun	Thanet Airshow	Manston
23-Jun	RAF Lossiemouth	Lossiemouth
29 - 30 Jun	Nottingham AFD	Nottingham
29-Jun	Wales AFD	Cardiff
06 - 7 Jul	Waddington Airshow	Waddington
11 - 14 Jul	Goodwood Festival of Speed	Goodwood
13 - 14 Jul	Wales International Airshow	Swansea
15-Jul	Halton Open Day	Halton

16-Jul	RAF St. Athan 75th Anniversary	St. Athan
17 - 21 Jul	War & Peace Show	Hythe Kent
20 - 21 Jul	RIAT	RIAT
20-Jul	RAF Leeming FD	
24-Jul	Culdrose Airshow	
25-Jul	RAF Benson FD	
25-Jul	RAF Brampton/Wyton FD	
26-Jul	RAF Shawbury FD	
27 - 28 Jul	Sunderland Airshow	Sunderland
27 - 28 Jul	Festival of Flight	Cleethorpes
2 - 4 Aug	Car Fest North	Outlton Park Cheshire
3 - 4 Aug	Essex Military Flying Machines	To Be Confirmed
8 - 11 Aug	Bristol Balloon Festival	Bristol
12-Aug	Blackpool Airshow	Blackpool
15 - 18 Aug	Eastbourne Airshow	Eastbourne
17 - 18 Aug	Lytham 1940s Weekend	Lytham St. Annes
22 - 23 Aug	Clacton Airshow	Clacton
24 - 25 Aug	Wings & Wheels	Dunsfold
24-Aug	Car Fest South	Laverstoke Basingstoke
25-Aug	Air & Car Show	Little Gransden
29 Aug - 1 Sep	Airbourne	Bournemouth
30 Aug - 1 Sep	Chatsworth Country Fair	Chatsworth
31 Aug - 1 Sep	Rhyl Airshow	Rhyl
31 Aug - 1 Sep	Shoreham Airshow	Shoreham
06-Sep	London RAFA Street Collection	Central London
7 - 8 Sep	Duxford Airshow	Duxford
07-Sep	Leuchars Airshow	RAF Leuchars
06-Sep	RAF Brize Norton FD	Carterton
9 - 13 Sep	Jersey Airshow	St. Hellier
13 - 15 Sep	Goodwood Revival	Goodwood
14 - 15 Sep	Southport Airshow	Southport
14 - 15 Sep	Waterloo Show & Military Fair	Wimbourne St. Giles Dorset
13-Oct	Duxford Autumn Airshow	Duxford
09-Nov	Cannock Chase Tri - Service	Cannock
30 Nov - 1 Dec	Birmingham Military Tattoo	BIA Birmingham
7 - 8 Dec	British Military Tattoo	Earls Court

14. GET INVOLVED IN THE WORLD'S BIGGEST TEA PARTY!

2013 is the 70th anniversary year for the RAF Association and there are lots of exciting activities going on. One of our biggest plans is to re-launch our Brew For The Few initiative.

Brew For The Few has been running for a number of years and this year we are aiming to make it the World's Biggest Tea Party. It has been a great success, with previous Brew For The Fews being held in shopping centres, RAF stations and church halls. As part of our 70th anniversary celebrations, we want to use the initiative to help build public awareness of the Association and the fabulous work that we do. Brew For The Few will be launching in the last week of May. By running the initiative throughout the summer we hope that there will be more opportunities for people to hold an event.

We plan to hold a big launch event, after which we hope that you will all hold your own events nationwide. There will be resources available to download from the website to help promote your event and lots of ideas to get you started. You could have an afternoon tea party or a 1940's tea dance. If you are running your event in June or July, why not talk to your local school to see if you can join up with them – many schools run a sports day around that time at which you could offer afternoon tea in support of the RAF Association. Home baking has seen a surge in popularity – why not hold your own Brew For The Few Bake-Off? You could even run cupcake competitions or cake baking trials.

Please tell us about your plans so that we can help publicise them. You can reach the team at marketing@rafa.org.uk or call CHQ on 0116 266 5224. We would like to feature photographs from as many events as we can in our various publications so don't forget your cameras!

15. THE RAF ASSOCIATION HAS A NEW LOGO

The RAF Association logo has recently been updated by the Air Media Centre at Air Command. The team at RAF PR felt it was a necessary update so as to bring the Association logo in line with the new brand guidelines of the RAF and the wider RAF Family. The logos were presented to Central Council on 17th November 2012 who were content with the proposed update.

As we move forwards, all new items produced/printed/distributed should incorporate this amended logo. CHQ are in the process of replacing all printed collateral gradually with the new logo as the items run out. These items will be available from RAFATRAD throughout the year. Please continue to use current stock items until the end of 2013. Thereafter only the amended logo is to be used from 1st January 2014.

A new online brand guideline document and all RAF Association logos are available within the member area on the website: <https://www.rafa.org.uk/members-area/members-branch-resources>. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page you will see the branding resources section where you can download all logos as PNG files which will work within Microsoft. If you haven't already registered with the site, you will need to prior to accessing this section. You can do this on the homepage here: www.rafa.org.uk. Any problems or questions please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team on marketing@rafa.org.uk.

16. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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.
Devon Region Meeting at Torquay Branch Club (2.30pm) – 20 April 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (1.30pm) – 20 April 2013.
Association Annual Conference at Eastbourne – 10 to 12 May 2013.
Northern (Midlands) Region Meeting at Staff County Council Club (12.15pm) – 29 May 2013.
East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Aberdare Branch Club (2pm) – 1 June 2013.
Wiltshire Region Meeting at Swindon Branch Club (1pm) – 6 July 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (2pm) – 13 July 2013.
Devon Region Meeting (venue to be confirmed) – 20 July 2013.
Northern (Midlands) Region Meeting at Staff County Council Club (12.15pm) – 24 July 2013.
Area Council Meeting – venue to be confirmed – 21 August 2013.
Northern (Midlands) Region Meeting at Staffs County Council Club (12.15pm) – 25 September 2013

A large, faint watermark logo is visible in the background of the bottom half of the page. It features a circular emblem with a propeller-like design inside, and the words "70 YEARS" are written in a large, stylized font across the top of the emblem.

Devon Region Meeting at Plymouth Branch (2.30pm) – 19 October 2013.
Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (2pm) – 2 November 2013.
Area Council Meeting – venue to be confirmed – 20 November 2013.
Northern (Midlands) Region Meeting at Staffs County Council Club (12.15pm) – 27 November 2013.
Devon Region AGM at Dawlish Branch Club (2.30pm) – 1 February 2014.
Northern (Midlands) Region AGM at Staff County Council Club (12.15pm) – 26 February 2014.

Paul Baker – Area Director

If the temperature is zero outside today and its going to be twice as cold tomorrow, how cold will it be?

All staff in our Exeter, Moseley and Newbridge Offices wish Members a joyous and peaceful Easter Holiday.

Enclosures:

1. Ninth Area Annual General Meeting Minutes.
2. Cotswold Edge Golf Club – Charity Golf Day and Booking Form.
3. Nationwide Charity application.