

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

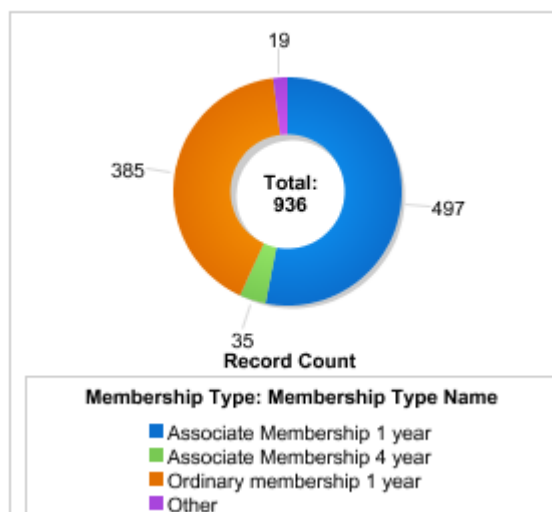
JUNE 2015

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. AREA MEMBERSHIP

We do hope you are getting used to this donut which represents the number of lapsed members in our area on 28 May 2015. It is encouraging to see the totals falling month-on-month with another 52 members coming back to us in May. Please continue to seek out those who have lapsed at branch level; there may be an underlying welfare need.

Lapsed Members Expired 2014



For those amongst you that enjoy using digital social platforms, Facebook is a great way of spreading the word of the Association and attracting new members. According to research last year by the Royal British Legion, there are around 500,000 RAF veterans in the UK. Of course, we have roughly 61,000 of them as members, so a little way to go! Maybe you can consider putting a message on your Facebook page telling all your friends and family about the Association and how they can help simply by becoming a Member. The following is an easy cut and paste, complete with links – why not give it a go:

To all you RAF and ex-RAF types and supporters out there... please help me find more new RAF Association Members. Being a member of the Association means that you can help people like Andrea <https://www.rafa.org.uk/.../person-centred-welf.../andreas-story> and Pauline & Doug <https://www.rafa.org.uk/.../person-ce.../pauline-and-dougs-story>

Joining the Association also means that you can stay part of the RAF family if you have served, or lets you show your support to the family if you haven't. To find out more about the benefits of being a member, click here <https://www.rafa.org.uk/members>

If you want to join and be part of the charity that supports that RAF family, just click here <https://www.rafa.org.uk/members/become-a-member>

2. BRANCH CLOSURES

Sadly we must report the closure of 2 Branches from our Area over the last couple of months. Cardigan Branch officially closed on 1 April followed by Warminster on 1 May. Both have decided to move to RMG status thereby very definitely staying part of our family. It is hugely to the credit of the retiring Committees at both Branches that closure has been handled with dignity and professionalism.

3. CONGRATULATIONS TO MR JOHN MASON – WORCESTER & DISTRICT BRANCH

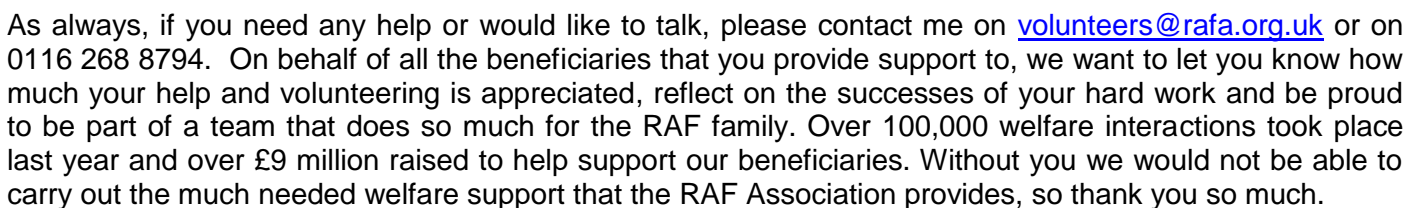
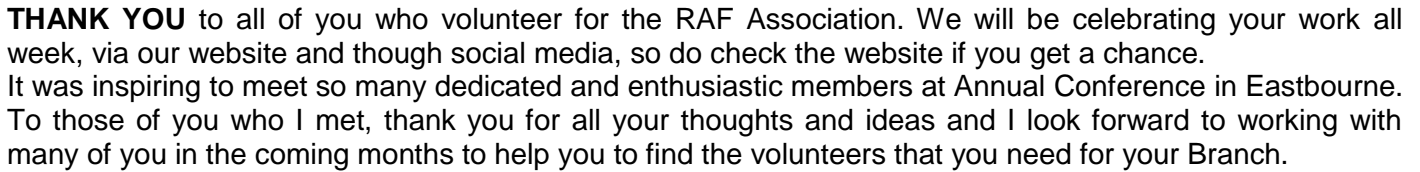
Representing the Area President, Mr David Norbury, Vice-President, was pleased to present a certificate to Mr John Mason, Chairman of the Worcester & District Branch of the RAF Association, to acknowledge with grateful and sincere thanks his outstanding service rendered to the Branch. To mark this special occasion the Branch chose to conduct their regular monthly meeting at the impressive Stanbrook Abbey where Branch members gathered with guests to enjoy the afternoon. Speaking at the event, Paul Baker, Area Director, applauded the efforts of John and his fellow Branch members, which has led to an upturn in fortunes, a strengthening Wings Appeal return, together with a vibrant and interesting Branch Social Programme. Paul took the opportunity to highlight some of the recent achievements of the RAF Association. Congratulations John!



4. ALLIED AIR FORCES MEMORIAL DAY, ELVINGTON, YORK – SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2015

Although not on our patch you maybe interested in the Allied Air Forces Memorial Day at Elvington, York, which will take place on Sunday 6 September with a Service and Parade marking the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. More informaton is enclosed with this Newsletter.

It is National Volunteers Week and we are delighted to say a genuine and heartfelt 'thank you' to all of you who tirelessly volunteer your time for the RAF Association and who spend significant amounts of your own time volunteering, ensuring that members of the RAF family who need our help are supported.



6. UPCOMING EVENTS!

Plans are coming together to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain across our Area and we would like to draw your attention to a couple of key events on the calendar.

On the evening of Friday 21 August our RAF Association Concert Band will be performing in Wells Cathedral, accompanied by the Cheddar Male Choir. This iconic setting will provide a dramatic backdrop for what we hope will be a very enjoyable evening of music and harmony. Tickets will be going on sale towards the end of June and posters will be distributed to all Branches, towns, communities throughout the South West (and Wales and the Midlands if there is interest!). Please do all you can to support this event, spread the word (when you get the posters!) and maybe even consider filling a coach from your Branch! All our profits will go to support Wings Appeal in our Area.



Truro Cathedral will play host to a Service of Commemoration for the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, on Sunday 13 September at 1400hrs. The RAF Association will be taking a lead role together with RAF St Mawgan and dignitaries from the City of Truro. Music support will be provided by the Royal Air Force Regiment Band and this occasion will also be an opportunity for the newly formed No 505 (Wessex) Sqn Royal Auxiliary Air Force to raise their profile.

Here's the important bit.....we want to create a visually spectacular honour guard of Branch Standards at the steps of the Cathedral. Can your Branch commit its Standard and Bearer(!) to this event? Is there enough interest from your Branch to fill a couple of cars? Access to the Service will be by invitation only and we have a number of seats allocated to the Association. This will be free on a first-come-first-served basis and promises to be a memorable occasion but please make sure you express your interest through the Exeter Office. Please don't just turn up as you will be disappointed. This event is open to all Branches across our Area, conscious, of course, that Truro is a considerable distance for many. If there is sufficient interest we might also form a marching flight of RAF Veterans in order to raise our profile with the Cornish public.

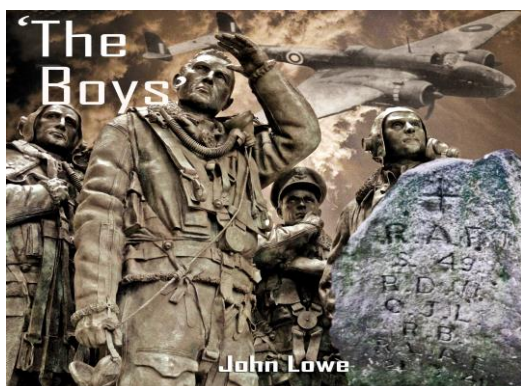
After the Cathedral Service, members of the RAF Association will be able to transit over to Boscowen Park and take part in the Truro Open Day where our 'mini' MET will be engaging the public.

Please don't hesitate to call us if you wish to chat about these 2 events.



7. THE BOYS

Repeat article...



An hour before midnight on Friday, 21st March, 1941, a returning Royal Air Force Bomber crashes onto Dartmoor.

And so begins the fascinating and often emotional story of *'The Boys'*. This fully illustrated presentation captures the mood of 1941 and relates the story that lies behind the stark granite memorial that now honours the final resting place of the Royal Air Force Hampden aircraft that crashed there.

John Lowe gives a vivid and moving presentation and is happy to do so at your Branch. Please make contact with John if you wish to pursue this as an additional speaker on your Branch roster of talks.

John Lowe, 01395 278279 or 07967887368, john@ifclowe.co.uk, www.hameldownboys.com

8. E-MAIL ADDRESSES.....



Repeat article.....Do we have your e-mail address? If you are not sure and you are happy to allow us to update your membership record then please get in touch. Electronic communications are so much more efficient and enable us to drive down our postage costs. Debbie Byam in the Exeter Office will be pleased to take your details (Debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk - 01392-462088 option 4).

9. BRANCH AND BRANCH CLUB ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2014

Thank you to those Branches who responded by sending in their Branch and Branch Club Annual Accounts for 2014. The outstanding list is shrinking but we have still to receive the following. Please contact the Area Director if you are experiencing any difficulties with your accounts.

Barnstaple & N.Devon Branch	Camborne, Redruth & Illogan Branch	Haverfordwest Branch	Sherborne Branch and Club
Chepstow & District Branch	St David's & Solva Branch and Club	Corsham & Chippenham Branch	Market Drayton Branch
Brecon Branch and Club	Dudley Branch	Evesham Branch	Yeovil Branch

10. THE RAF ASSOCIATION CONTINUES TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

The Battle of Britain webpages are now live at www.rafa.org.uk/battleofbritain and here you can find more information about Battle of Britain commemorative events around the country and stories from those that remember this important time in history.

The Service at St Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday 15 September is open to all RAF Association members and tickets are also being made available to the public. You can register your interest in attending the service at St Paul's on the webpage. The closing date for applications is Monday 20 July and names and contact details are required for each individual that wishes to attend. Further information will then be sent out in August.

We are hoping for a good turnout of Branch Standards at the St Paul's service and are inviting Branch Standard Bearers to participate in this event. Any Standard Bearers who wish to be involved should contact Mick Larkman, Branch Support Officer at mick.larkman@rafa.org.uk or call 0208 286 6667

Any other queries can be directed to battleofbritain@rafa.org.uk or by post to:

Battle of Britain Commemorations
RAF Association
117 ½ Loughborough Road
Leicester
LE4 5ND

11. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at the Aberdare RAFA Club - 6 June 2015 (2pm).
Cornwall County Armed Forces Day Thanckes Park (The Lawn) Torpoint – 20 June 2015.
Northern (Midland) Region Meetings at the County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 24 June, 29 July, 30 September, 28 October, 25 November.
Mid Wales Region Meetings at Cardigan on 8 July, Brecon on 24 October, Tywyn on 26 March 2016 all starting at 2pm.
North Wales Region Meeting at RAF Valley on 15 August, Wrexham RAFA Branch HQ on 21 November and Llangollen RAFA Club on 9 April 2016 – all starting at 2pm.
RAF Association Concert Band performing at Wells Cathedral (7.30pm) – 21 August 2015.
Wreath Laying at Sea. Bodmin Branch will be holding their annual Wreath Laying ceremony at sea on the 6 September 2015, assembling on the Quay at Padstow at 1315hrs for sailing at 1345 hrs. For further details contact Parade Co-ordinator Peter Marlow at whippet258@btinternet.com or 01208 76373.
Ellesmere Branch Garden Party and BBQ in aid of Wings Appeal at Nesscliffe Three Pidgeons Hotel/Pub – (1.30pm to 6pm) 12 September.

Please contact the Exeter Office if there are significant events/dates you would like promulgated that maybe of interest to the wider membership. Many thanks.

Paul Baker – Area Director

Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon....

Enclosures:

1. Allied Air Forces Memorial Day, Elvington, York – Sunday 6th September 2015.