

The Royal Air Forces Association
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Wales, Midland & South Western Area

FEBRUARY 2016

Newsletter

A New Year – a new membership recruitment target! Thank you for your continued support

1. HONOURS AND AWARDS

We are pleased to announce the following awards in conjunction with The Queen's New Year Honours List 2016:

- Mr Bill Robinson, Spalding Branch – MBE.
- Reverend Alan Knox, Causeway Coast Branch – BEM.
- Mr Ian Wroe, Halifax Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mrs Maud Whitelaw, Ayr & Prestwick Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr Norman Hiscock, Basildon Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr Ray Smith, Sudbury Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr Graham Timms, Basildon Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr & Mrs Jim and Linda Doyle, Barry Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr Tony Edmunds, Sturminster Newton & Gillingham Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Mr Alan Hartley, Coventry Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Air Vice-Marshal Pat O'Reilly, Melksham Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Air Vice-Marshal David Whittaker, Larne Branch – National Presidential Certificate.
- Corporal William Runciman – RAF Henlow.

Our congratulations go to all recipients.

2. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We've started 2016 with a very positive outcome in respect of new joiners during the month of January; 575 to be exact, 202 of which are within our Area. Off to a flyer! This is due largely to Branch Clubs converting their members and is an initiative we need to continue to the point where all our Branch Clubs have signed up their members. There are 2 main objectives this year in respect of membership: support and help strengthen our Branches and get busy recruiting. Put formally, we are looking to increase our Area net total membership by 10% and increase the percentage of serving RAF members to 50% of the RAF. One of our main challenges in 2016 will be lapsing and we will be helping Branches with updated membership lists once the appropriate paperwork is in place regarding data protection; a vital tool to welcome new members and encourage those who have lapsed. So – we are trying to get the Area net total up to around 16,300 by year end. You've already achieved 202; I'll let you do the arithmetic!



3. WINGS APPEAL

We are pleased to announce that the total amount raised by the Wings Appeal 2015 from our Area was a fabulous £417,411.51. A great effort! Our sincere thanks go to all Branch members, their families and friends, Service personnel and Air Cadets who gave their time to help organise events and raise funds throughout the year.

Please find enclosed the RAF Association's Public Liability Insurance which we would ask you to pass to your Branch's Wings Appeal Organiser. This document may be requested by businesses and organisations when securing collection locations for this year's Appeal. Please be advised that although we encourage fundraising all year round the date for Wings Day this year - when the majority of Street Collections take place - is Saturday 17 September with Battle of Britain Sunday being Sunday 18 September. Thank you!

4. AREA REUNION AND AGM – THE CHELTENHAM CHASE HOTEL, BROCKWORTH – 4-6 MARCH

Arrangements are well advanced for our Twelfth Area Reunion and Annual General Meeting which will take place at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Brockworth, Glocs, over the weekend 4-6 March 2016. Thank you to those Branches who have already notified us of their attendance and provided delegate information. Area Council is pleased to see that more than 50% of our Branch strength will be with us. Please remember - if you are representing your Branch as a delegate, we have removed the Pooled Fare Scheme in favour one BACS payment to cover delegate travels expenses. We will not be coming out to Branches post-AGM for re-imbursement. Accommodation is still available for any last-minute.com interest by calling the hotel on 01452-519988. Final details will be released immediately following Area Council's next Meeting on 10 February. See you there!

For anyone travelling by train to Cheltenham, 'our man' Graham operates a very useful dial-a-cab service with wheel chair friendly and disabled access vehicles. Don't forget to mention you are with the RAF Association and a cheaper ride may come your way! Graham's contact number is 01242-242424.

A reminder of the deal:

- Based on a double or twin room for double occupancy, 2 nights dinner, bed and breakfast, 3-course dinner on Friday and Saturday evening - £125 per person per weekend.
- Single occupancy supplement - £30 per room per night.
- Saturday only – 1 night stay, 3-course Saturday evening dinner and breakfast - £77.50 per person.
- Dinner only on Saturday evening - £35 per person.

5. THANK YOU TO OUR STANDARD BEARERS

As many of you know, Area, Region and Branch Standard Bearers are so often the public face of the Association and many have already paraded their Standards at funerals during January. We know you are busy people and it is often a challenge when we ask you to attend a funeral, often at short notice. Thank you for your professionalism – we are hugely grateful. We often receive glowing comments from bereaved families who say the Standard Bearer's presence meant so much.



Photographer – Jamie Booth

6. PROTECTING OUR DATA

We hear much about data protection nowadays, with many negative stories in the media about data that has been lost, stolen or sold on. The RAF Association is committed to making sure that our members', beneficiaries' and supporters' personal data is only ever used as they have asked us to use it and in accordance with the law. We take privacy extremely seriously and will never give or sell information to third parties for their own use.

Having reviewed our processes and systems we need to make some changes to the way we conduct our business, across all our activity areas.

With immediate effect we are only able to share personal data with those who have received, read, understood and signed a copy of the Abbreviated Data Protection Policy for Branches, Branch Clubs and Volunteers. Leicester is about to send you this detail. The full policy and supporting document is available on the portal (go to www.rafa.org.uk, member resources>member and branch resources>data protection pack) - which provides straightforward practical advice to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

7. CHALLENGE YOURSELF!



Photographer – Sarah Hall

2016 will see a new era in fundraising at the Association. As the charity of the RAF Family we have highlighted high profile challenge events the length and breadth of the UK and overseas. Enclosed with this Newsletter you'll see challenging opportunities from the Virgin London Marathon to trekking over the highlands of Peru, just one challenge available from our overseas challenge provider, all of which are personally rewarding as well as raising money for a well-respected charity. Take a look – give it a go!

8. RAFALO UPDATE

The latest edition of the RAFALO Update, which includes information on changes to the RAF, is enclosed with this Newsletter.

9. RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND

What a busy time for our Concert Band with a rip-roaring finish to 2015 and an ever growing programme in place for this year.

- Sunday 6 March – Area Reunion and AGM, Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Brockworth.
- Saturday 23 April – Music in the Air, Spring Concert, Blakehay Theatre Weston-super-Mare.
- Saturday 21 May - Concert in the Helicopter Museum, Weston-super-Mare.
- *Date yet to be decided* - to play at the opening of the refurbished 'Ferry Pilots' Crew Room on the old Weston-s-Mare Airfield.
- Sunday 12 June – Part of HM The Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations at the RBL Bishopsworth.
- Friday 17 June – National Memorial Arboretum, RAF Association Annual Service of Dedication.
- Sunday 24 Jul - Concert at Weston-super-Mare Community Show.
- Sunday 31 Jul - Concert at the Bandstand, Grove Park, Weston-super-Mare.
- Saturday 1 Oct - Movie Night Concert, Blakehay Theatre, Weston-super-Mare.

- Thursday 3 November – Poppy Appeal Launch at Bristol Airport.
- Friday 11 November – Armistice Concert, Blakehay Theatre, Weston-super-Mare.
- Sunday 11 December – Annual Christmas Concert, Blakehay Theatre, Weston-super-Mare.



10. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR LOCAL ATC

Over the last few weeks Area Council has sought written clarification on precisely how Branches may support their local ATC Sqns financially and the Secretary General has provided a most helpful response which is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact the Area Director if you need further advice or clarification, as we look to embrace as much creativity as possible within these boundaries.

11. ANNUAL SERVICE ST CLEMENT DANES – SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2016

The Annual Service to commemorate formation of the Royal Air Force will be held at St Clement Danes Church the Strand London on Sunday 3 April 2016.

Royal Air Forces Association Standard Bearers have been invited to attend the Service. The format is the same as last year with Standard Bearers marching from Lincoln's Inn Field to St Clement Danes Church headed by the RAF Halton Pipe Band. Any Standard Bearers wishing to attend should contact Naz Angha in the *South East Office*, Tel: 020 8286 6667 or by e-mail to naz.angha@rafa.org.uk no later than Friday 5th February 2016.

Ticket allocation for the Service as in previous years is on a first come first served basis but unfortunately, only invited guests will be allowed to attend the reception after the Service. Any members wishing to obtain tickets for the Service only should contact Naz no later than Friday 5th February 2016. The Service will commence at 11.00 hrs.



12. RENT SMART WALES – REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF LANDLORDS AND AGENTS

Important changes to the private rented sector are being introduced in Wales. These changes will require every landlord who owns a property in Wales to be registered by 23 November 2016, along with details of the property. In addition, anyone letting or managing a property in Wales (regardless of where they are based) will also need a licence to undertake those activities.

For any Branches in Wales that rent out residential property or operate a domiciled tenancy, it is our intention to seek one central registration and one central licence and Area HQ will look to cover these costs. However, there will be a requirement for one individual at each location (usually the branch Chairman or whomever has signed the tenancy agreement on behalf of the branch) to undergo landlord training. This training will be made available from 1 March 2016, online, at www.rentsmart.gov.wales. There will be a modest cost which you should consider as a legitimate Branch expense. Please do not attempt this online training until the Area Director has confirmed registration and licencing. Thanks.

13. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Mid Wales Region Meeting at Cardigan on Sat 16 April at 2pm.
- North Wales Region AGM at Llangollen RAFA Club on Sat 9 April at 2pm.
- Devon Region AGM at the Dawlish RAFA Club on Sat 13 February at 2.30pm.
- Cornwall Region AGM at Truro RBL on Sat 20 February at 2pm.
- East Glamorgan & Gwent AGM at Chepstow Athletic on Sat 27 February at 2pm.
- Area Conference and Reunion, Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Brockworth, 4-6 March 2016.

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

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

Enclosures:

1. RAF Association's Public Liability Insurance 2016.
2. Fundraising Challenge Events for 2016.
3. RAFALO Update.
4. Secretary General's Letter on the ACO dated 9 December 2015.