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Wales, Midland & South Western Area

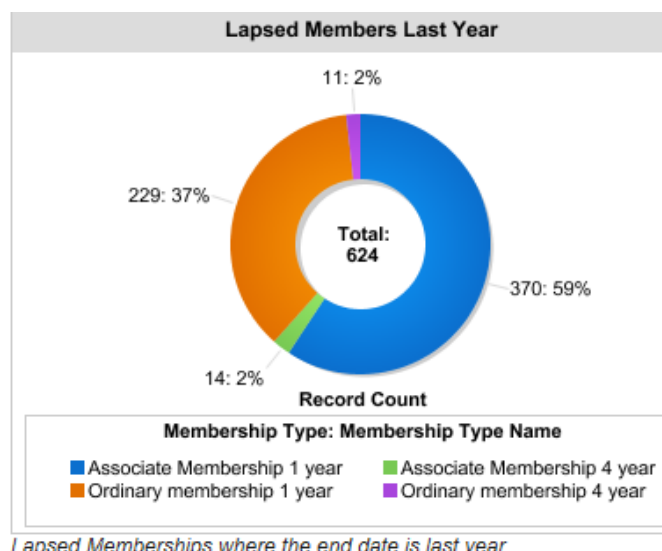
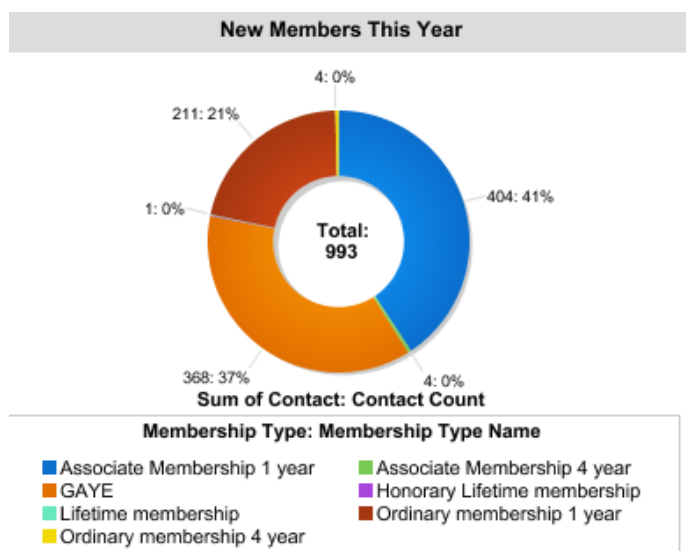
AUGUST 2016

Newsletter

Organising a Brew for the Few is a great way this summer to socialise, raise funds for Wings Appeal, find new members...and eat cake!

1. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our Area is blessed with 87 active Branches and 5 Registered Members Groups (RMGs), a few in need of help but many getting stronger and providing a constant source of friendship and support to its members. Interestingly our Area lapsing figures are as low as they've been for some time; a clear indication of your hard work at Branch level and the results of our 'Keeping in Touch' Campaign. There is still much to do if we are to achieve our membership growth aims by the end of the year so please continue to be creative with your ideas – or simply ask a friend to join right now (keep that application form in your back pocket and don't leave till it's been filled out!). Let's work together to find those 700,000 ex-RAF in our communities – bring them in and give them a reason to stay! We are very much focussed on today's serving RAF and you'll be pleased to know the Area team is busy targeting units across our patch.



Lapsed Memberships where the end date is last year.



2. AREA WELFARE SEMINARS – AN UPDATE

Last month's Newsletter needs correcting! Our apologies but unforeseen events with our hosts has meant that we need to swap the locations/dates, so here's your corrected information:

- Tue 18 October 2016 – RAF St Mawgan, Newquay, TR8 4HP.
- Wed 26 October 2016 - Defence Medical Services, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, WS14 9PY.

It remains an objective of Area Council to provide Welfare Seminars each year and 2016 is no different, so in an effort to work even closer with today's RAF we are happy to provide these venues. Enclosed with this Newsletter is more information and an opportunity to submit your return.

3. TODAY'S RAF AND THE ASSOCIATION WORKING TOGETHER

Armed Forces Day events took place across the Area and our Association was at the forefront of many. Thank you for your support and for engaging with your local communities. AFD Exeter was no different with a marching contingent from RAF Brize Norton complementing our marquee.



4. FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE – WESTMINSTER ABBEY GARDENS – 3 NOVEMBER 2016

We have once again been asked to participate in the above ceremony by the Royal British Legion (RBL) and Branches are asked to give this special occasion their best possible support by ordering crosses to be planted by their representatives wherever possible.

Entrance to the Field will involve passing through Police Security checks. Everyone must bring two forms of ID of which one must include a photograph (e.g. passport). Sight of these may be required by the police or security officers. The South East & Eastern Area will be pleased to arrange for crosses to be planted on behalf of Branches not represented. Please be advised that all crosses must be planted by 09.30hrs on the day. Gates will open at 0845 hrs and close at 10.00 hrs. All participants must be in position by 10.00hrs. Staff from the South East and Eastern Area will be in attendance along with the National Standard Bearer on the day. A Badge Cross will cost £10.30 and a Leaf Cross (suitable for use by Branches) will cost £6.28

Orders, together with the appropriate remittance, should be sent to Cat Knott, RAFA South East & Eastern Area, 117 ½ Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5ND Tel: 0116 268 8784 E-mail: Catherine.knott@rafa.org.uk no later than **Monday 26th September 2016**.

Admission to the service will be for ticket holders only and members requesting tickets to attend the service should apply in writing to the South East & Eastern Area Office no later than 29th August 2016.

5. WELL DONE LUCY!

Our brilliant Christchurch Branch HWO, Lucy Eden, was recently given a Meritorious Award by the Borough of Christchurch in recognition of her tireless work for ex-service people and their families. Here's Lucy at the Council Meeting alongside the Mayor of Christchurch, Cllr Trish Jamison. Many congratulations Lucy!



6. YOUR LATEST UPDATE FROM THE VOLUNTEERING TEAM

Do you have a Wings Appeal collection planned for your Branch in the coming months?

If so, the Volunteering Team could help you!

After welcoming a number of new people to the Association this year, we now have even more people who could potentially support a fundraising event across the UK. If you have a street collection planned in your town centre or are collecting at your local supermarket, just let us know and we might be able to put you in touch with volunteers to help support the collection events.



If you would like us to advertise this to existing volunteers who may be close by to your Branch or to try and recruit some additional volunteers in your local area to support collections, simply email volunteers@rafa.org.uk or call 0116 266 8794 and we will gladly send you a short form to complete.

Is your Branch doing anything exciting in the next few months?

As part of our e-newsletter to volunteers, we like to tell others what our Areas have been up to. If you have something you feel would be of interest, please let us know and we may be able to slot it into one of our next mailings.

7. AREA CONFERENCE AND REUNION – MARCH 2017

Really! Are we really talking about Area Conference again!

Some of you have been very quick off the mark and already booked your accommodation at the Derwent Hotel in Torquay for our Area Conference and Reunion which will take place over the weekend 17 to 19

March 2017 (the diary tells us its neither Easter or Mother's Day – phew!). For those among us who need a gentle reminder, here's some detail to help you decide:

- Two nights accommodation (Friday and Saturday), dinner, bed and breakfast and Sunday lunch - £122 per person.
- An option to stay Sunday night is available at an additional £35 per person, dinner, bed and breakfast.
- There are a few single rooms available, when they've gone a £10 per night supplement will apply.

Please make your booking direct with TLH Leisure Group on 01803-400500 for the 'RAF Association Weekend'. They will request a 25% deposit.

We'll get more information to you during the autumn.

8. CHARITY GOLF DAY AT COTSWOLD EDGE GOLF CLUB – WED 28 SEPTEMBER 2016

In support of Wings Appeal, our very proactive Branch of Dursley and South Gloucester are holding their annual Charity Golf Day on Wed 28 September 2016 at the Cotswold Edge Golf Club, Upper Rushmire, Wotton-under-Edge, Glocs, GL12 7PT. Why not muster a team of 4 from your Branch and support this worthy cause. More details are available from Pat Eagle (01453-890516) or John Carter (07411-430818).

9. IN MEMORY OF AIR VICE-MARSHAL SIR JOHN SEVERNE

Members of Mid-Somerset Branch recently unveiled a Rose Tree and Plaque at Flowerdown House in Memory of Sir John Severne who passed away last year. Organised by Martin Leach, Branch Social Officer, a short ceremony took place which included a Reading that was originally given at his Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Air Vice-Marshal Sir John de Milt Severne KCVO OBE AFC DL.



10. RAFA CONCERT BAND – UPDATE

The latest Association Concert Band Newsletter is enclosed. Please keep supporting the Band and don't hesitate to enquire with the Exeter Office if you see an opportunity to bring the Band to your town.

One upcoming event, in particular, looks great and you might wish to consider attending. In partnership with our Teignmouth Branch, the Band will be performing at the newly refurbished Pavilions Theatre in Teignmouth on Sunday 18 September at 3pm, in order to commemorate the Battle of Britain and help raise much needed funds for Wings Appeal. Please take a moment to check out the Pavilions website where you can order tickets – www.pavilionsteignmouth.org.uk or on 01626-249049.

11. A SUPER OCCASION AT OUR WEST BROMWICH BRANCH

Many congratulations to our West Bromwich Branch which recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. Branch members were joined by the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Julie Webb and the Area Director, for a thoroughly enjoyable buffet lunch. Those present were also given a memento to mark the occasion. Pictured with the Mayor are the Branch Chairman, Mr John Sheldon and President, Christopher Morris.

The cake was great – thank you Mrs Morris! Here's to the next 5 years at West Bromwich in the hope we can present their 75th tassell!



12. TROWBRIDGE AND WEST WILTSHIRE BRANCH – A MEMORABLE VISIT TO THE ARBORETUM

On Friday 17 June a party of members from the Trowbridge and West Wiltshire Branch and their families visited the National Memorial Arboretum to dedicate a stone to Mike Fryer, one of the staunchest members of the Branch. The party consisted of his wife Lyn together with her family, the Chairman Peter Ford, Secretary Mike Sale and Phil Lobb, Deputy Chairman.

Mike was a member of the Association for 30 years, during that time he was involved in many functions, the most visible being Wings Appeal for the Branch which he carried out with enthusiasm for 27 of those years. Preparation for the Wings Appeal starts early and Mike would make approaches to the managers of the local supermarkets and shopping arcades to secure sites for the collections, and also securing the help of the Air Training Corps to help with the collection work. He organised the task of counting the money and paying it into the bank and he also arranged the religious aspects of the Battle of Britain weekend in partnership with the local vicar. In addition to the work for the Wings Appeal, Mike and his wife Lyn did a lot of work at home preparing and publishing the List of Members and the booklet of the Annual Social Programme; he was also the Press Liaison Officer and contact point for the Air Training Corps of which he was the Treasurer. This of course placed great demands on Mike's time and also that of his wife as the work required significant attention to detail and a high level of personal integrity.

For all of this Mike was awarded a Special Recommendation for his services to the RAFA in 2012, an award that he richly deserved. Mike was always present at the meetings and was always available for the parades through Trowbridge on the Battle of Britain and Remembrance Day where he invariably acted as escort to the Standard. He was always prepared to help and I as a newly elected Standard Bearer for the branch was advised by him on how to prepare for the various occasions on which the Standard would be required. A picture of Mike's family.

(Barry Gladman, PRO Trowbridge and West Wiltshire Branch).



13. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (we look forward to seeing you out there amongst all those potential new members!).

- Red Arrows display - Falmouth Wednesday 10 August 2016 at 6 30pm.
- Weymouth Carnival – 16 and 17 August 2016.
- Bournemouth Airshow – 18 to 21 August 2016.
- East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Llandaff & Ely Branch Club HQ – 2pm, Sat 20 August 2016.
- Mid-Somerset Show – 21 August 2016.
- The Falmouth Branch Battle of Britain Service will be held at the Falmouth Parish Church of King Charles The Martyr on Sunday 4 September 2016 at 10.30am.
- Truro Day (with involvement from the Association's Cornwall Region – Truro Branch has the lead) – 11am – Sun 11 September 2016.
- RAF Cosford Battle of Britain Parade and Service - Sun 11 September 2016.
- MoD St Athan Battle of Britain Parade and Service – Sun 11 September 2016.
- Wreath Laying Service at Sea on Sunday 11 September (date change from 25 Sep) sailing from Padstow Harbour at 11.30am (organised through our Bodmin Branch – this is a unique Service. Real flowers please as part of any wreath).
- RAF Cosford Battle of Britain Parade and Service – Sunday 11 September 2016 (Area Office will be providing details shortly).
- Wolverhampton & District Branch Battle of Britain Parade and Service – Sun 18 September 2016.
- RAF Association Concert Band Performance at the Pavilions Theatre, Teignmouth – 3pm on Sun 18 September 2016.
- Plymouth Branch Annual Battle of Britain Parade and Service at the Minster Church St Andrews (special opportunity to also celebrate ATC 75th Anniversary) – 1100am on Sun 18 September 2016.

Paul Baker – Area Director

When a door closes another door should open, but if it doesn't then go in through the window.

Enclosure:

1. Area Seminars.
2. Concert Band Newsletter.