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 **ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**

The charity that supports the RAF family

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Royal Air Forces Association
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Christmas and New Year Edition 2017/2018

Wales, Midland and South West Area Newsletter

Wishing all our Members, Branches and Clubs a very happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful and prosperous New Year....and don't forget to book your spot at the Area Annual Conference and Reunion in Cheltenham!

AREA CONFERENCE AND REUNION 2018 – CHELTENHAM CHASE HOTEL, BROCKWORTH, GLOUCESTER

Area Council is delighted to advise that accommodation bookings can now be made for next year's Area Conference and Reunion which will take place over the weekend Friday 23 March to Sunday 25 March 2018 at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Shurdington Road, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4PB.

The Chase proved to be a popular venue in 2016 – please don't be disappointed by leaving your booking too late – rooms will be taken up on a first come first served basis. Here are the details you need for your booking:

Please call 0845-034-5777 and quote the date of your arrival followed by 'RAF Association

preferential rate'. The following rates have been agreed:

- £130 per person for 2 night's dinner, bed and breakfast when sharing a double or twin room. Both evening meals will be a 3-course dinner.
- A single supplement of £30 per room per night will apply.
- For those wishing to stay for just the Saturday night (24 March) – dinner, bed and breakfast rate sharing a double/twin room - £80 per person.



You will be asked to make a 25% deposit at the time of booking.

- For those planning to attend Conference as non-residents and looking to have the Saturday evening dinner - £35 per person. Please call the Hotel direct on 01452-519942 and ask for Hayley Cannock who will maintain a list of Saturday evening dinner requests.

For those who are considering attendance for the first time at the Chase, you'll find plentiful parking on flat and level ground, with very few steps inside the hotel and with elevators that work!

Council will come out to branches and members in due course with more detail regarding the content of the weekend; suffice to say, there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss plans for next year's RAF Centenary, to receive updates on business and governance aspects, to hear from today's Royal Air Force, to meet members of the local Branch at Gloucester and, most importantly, to catch up with old friends and have fun!

RAF ASSOCIATION DOING US PROUD - OUT AND ABOUT IN BRISTOL ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC AND BUSINESSES

The public thoroughly enjoyed the music from our very own RAF Association Concert Band in Bristol generating a lot of interest and really nice feedback from the general public and surrounding businesses.



Thank you very much Peter and all members of the Band.

The RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND CHRISTMAS DATES/VENUES

See separate enclosed/attached RAFA Band Newsletter for information.

BODMIN, CORNWALL RAF100 BRANCH NEWS

On 8th April 2018, the Bodmin Branch will be holding a Thanksgiving Church Service at St Petroc's Church, Bodmin. The church is the largest in Cornwall and can hold 500 in the congregation.

Later in the year, on the 15th of September Bodmin Branch will be hosting a Garden Party in Priory Park, Bodmin where they will be offering entertainment, education, food and drink and lots of fun for people of all ages. The idea of the Garden Party is to celebrate, commemorate and inspire, much like the overall goal of RAF 100 up and down the country whereby RAFA branches have been encouraged to organise their own ideas for the day. The Area RAF100 Token will be making its way through from Plymouth and the party is due to fall during the week commemorating the Battle of Britain, which will feature in the party in the form of re-enactors. There are also plans to have a bouncy castle, drinks, hot and cold food, a face painter, a photo display board provided by the local museums, a Punch and Judy show and St John's Ambulance, a replica Spitfire, the mobile Association's exhibition trailer, the town band, music from the 40s, as well as speeches of the era played over a sound system, an ice cream van and a military police officer with a dog. Plus as time goes on nearer to the date, lots more could well be added to the list.

What amazing events, all are welcome to attend!

WRAF 'WOMEN 100'

Members of the WRAF Branch were very honoured to be invited to take part in this year's Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the "Women 100" celebrating 100 years of women in the Armed Forces. The ladies who took part found the experience emotional and one they will never forget. It goes without saying how very proud our Branch were to see our members representing the Women's' Royal Air Force and the Royal Air Forces Association at such a big occasion.



OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Concert with The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment – Wednesday 13 December at Millfield School, Concert Hall, Street, Mid-Somerset. Doors open at 7pm, seated by 7.30pm. Tickets £15.00, available from the following; Millfield School 01458-444320, Wells ATC 1955@aircadets.org and Street Tourist Information Centre 01458-447384.
- Plymouth Branch Members Christmas Lunch at 12.30pm on 16th December at Raffles Club, Ermington Terrace, Mutley, Plymouth.

ANNUAL (NOT AREA) CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM SERVICE DETAILS

Please be aware:

- Registration for Conference is here: rafa.org.uk/annualconference
- Accommodation bookings are being taken by phone through our reception team - 0116 268 8750 and not online this year.
- Guests/ Delegates of Conference have a place reserved for the NMA Service (as tickets are strictly limited), **but they do still need to register** their ticket and donation here: rafa.org.uk/nma/
- Guests/ Delegates attending Conference will be expected to make their own way to the NMA Service on the Sunday (unless they are traveling by Public Transport then we will provide a coach).

COMMEMORATE, CELEBRATE, INSPIRE – RAF100

As part of the RAF100, four of the RAF associated charities will work together under the banner of the RAF100 Appeal; bringing together each charity's proud history of support, to fully realise the fundraising opportunities the Centenary offers.



As valued members of the RAF Family, you can play a part in making the Centenary a special year. The [RAF100 website](http://rafa.org.uk) has details of major events and how to get involved at a local, regional and national level. Help us to **commemorate** those that have gone before, **celebrate** the skills and talents of those currently in the Service and **inspire** a future generation to help write the next chapter in our astonishing history.

MILITARY VETERANS TO TAKE PART IN NEW STUDY EXPLORING HOW THEY MAKE THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Military veterans and their families will take part in a new University of Exeter study which will explore how they experienced leaving military life behind and transitioning back into civilian society. Former servicemen and women, and their families, are invited to tell their personal stories to researchers, who are investigating the challenges and

opportunities which arise when exiting the armed forces.

Since the start of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan it has become particularly important for policymakers to understand how servicemen and women make the transition to civilian life and what determines how successful that transition is. It is hoped the results of the research will help improve support available to veterans and enable a better understanding of transition. The project, Military Afterlives: Investigating veterans' experiences of transition, is run by Dr Sarah Bulmer, from the department of Politics at the University of Exeter and is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. She has two veterans working in the research team, Dr David Jackson (former Royal Marine) and Dr Richard Davis (former Army Officer).

Dr Bulmer said: "Most research on transition has looked at how servicemen and women cope after leaving the military by analysing employment figures, reliance on state benefits and their health outcomes, such as rates of alcoholism, PTSD, and other impairments. Our research is different. "What we want to know is how they have experienced their transition to civilian life by listening to their stories, told in their own words. Our interviews will be conversational and will allow veterans and their family members to reflect on what has happened to them. We want to understand their individual views, without working from pre-set questions or looking only to investigate certain issues that are pre-determined."

The interviews will be conducted by a member of the research team. Those involved will be over 18. Researchers hope to speak to veterans now based in Devon and Cornwall with different levels of service, varying ages, different careers and with a range of reasons for leaving the Armed Forces. Researchers also hope to speak to their families and to under-represented groups, such as female veterans.

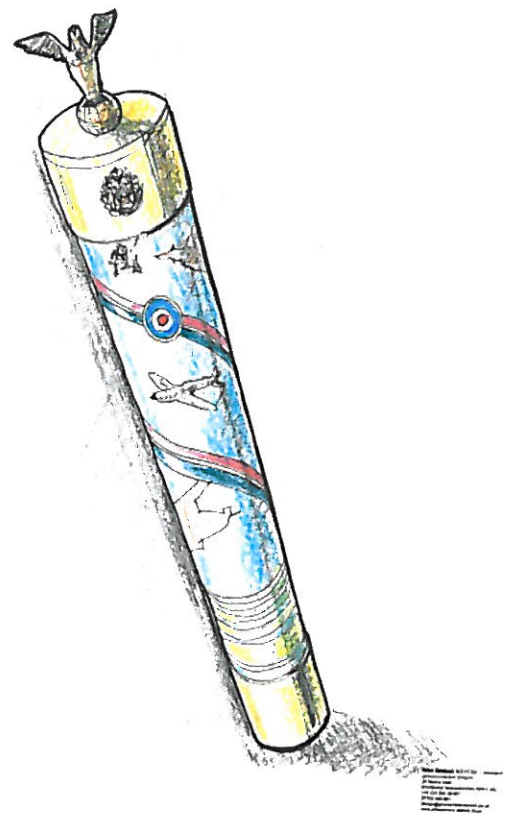
For further information and to register your interest in participating please go to <http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/politics/research/projects/militaryafterlives/>

Debbie Byam
Wales, Midland and South West
Area Administrator
Enc: RAFA Band Newsletter

AREA RAF100 TOKEN

Plans are coming together for the Area RAF100 Token, the details of which were signed off recently by Area Council and it remains their intention to have each token on display at the Area Conference and Reunion at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel at Gloucester in March where they will be blessed and sent on their way.

Each token will be approximately the size of a standard pull-up banner, with designs that tell the story of the RAF across the years with 'Eric the Eagle' sat proudly on the top. We will get more specific details to you when we can, especially the weight and dimensions but for now, hopefully, this image will help you visualise its appearance.



Nov-Dec 2017



Enquiries continue for the Band to provide music support **2018 is going to be very busy.**

Sat 21 Oct – Children's Hospice SW Concert—once again the Band were asked stage a concert to help raise funds for this Charity.

Thu 2 Nov – Poppy Launch, the Galleries Bristol – again we were invited to provide an ensemble to support the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Launch in the Galleries Shopping Mall Bristol.

Sat 11 Nov- Armistice Concert-The Royal British Legion Banwell asked the Band to perform. The Mayor of Weston & Local Dignitaries also attended the near capacity event.

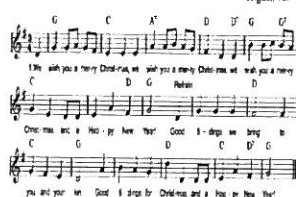
Sat 18 Nov – Poppy Ball Champagne Reception – the Bands Woodwind Ensemble were asked to play at this reception held in the Marriott Hotel Bristol. The musicians and an invited guests were then treated to a 4 Course Dinner! Guest of Honour was George 'Johnny' Johnson MBE; a supporter of the RAF Association Band.

Pictured below; Children's Hospice; Poppy Launch; Armistice Concert; Poppy Ball Reception.



We Wish You a Merry Christmas

English Carol



1. Now bring us some figgy pudding, (repeat 2 times)
And bring home our share
2. You won't get out as yet now, (repeat 3 times)
as bring it right here



FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS 2017

Sun 3 Dec – Christmas in the Air Concert, Start 3pm Victoria Methodist Church, WsM

Thu 7 Dec – Carols by Candlelight. Court de Wyke School. Start 1830hrs

Sat 9 Dec – Carols in Lloyds Bank, 1030 to 1200hrs.

Sat 16 Dec-Carols at Parklands Radio Wing, Start 1600hrs

Sun 17 Dec-Carol Service, Victoria Methodist Church, WsM Start 1600hrs

Sat 23 Dec-Carols at Bristol Airport, 1100 to 1400hrs

Band events can be found on Facebook or by visiting the RAFA Concert Band website

Look forward to seeing you at one of our **2017** Concerts & in 2018!!

Peter Skellon BEM HND MD RAFA Concert Band

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