

ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250)
2014 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member

1. Merry Christmas, and my thanks to your local postie for struggling up your drive with the envelope containing this year's Newsletter from your Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association. Thank you for your continued membership and support. As 2014 draws to a close it falls to me to try to summarise what your Branch has achieved during another busy 12 months. Our regular meetings have continued with some fantastic speakers on a range of topics, it always amazes what hidden secrets there are around the local area, and speakers often leave one making plans to go and visit some other interesting place that had not been considered before. And, of course, the food is always good, and the beer readily available; I do hope that you all managed to drop by to a meeting on at least one or two months during the year.
2. Your Branch was again prominent in ceremonial events in Shrewsbury, and further afield; our Standard Bearer, Shawn Marston, polished his shoes, pressed his trousers and represented us wonderfully well at numerous events (and as the Deputy Standard Bearer for the Wales, Midland and South Western Area also smartly carried the Area Standard across the wider area); well done Shawn and thank you. In addition to the usual round of ceremonials, Battle of Britain Service, Remembrance Sunday and our 1 April memorial event at the Shrewsbury War Graves, the Branch was also represented at the Area Battle of Britain Parade and Service at RAF Cosford, and at the dedication of the Flanders Bed in Remembrance of WWI in the Dingle. During the year we also arranged for a Branch Memorial Stone to be laid at the RAFA Monument at the National Memorial Arboretum, and members attended the dedication ceremony. Look out for our stone the next time you visit the NMA.
3. We continue to be closely linked to 1119 Sqn ATC through the activities of our Branch Liaison Officer Tecwyn Roberts who has now been elevated to the position of President of the Squadron's Civilian Committee; make sure you treat him with due deference now! The Squadron continues to excel, and to support us in our efforts. Two of their cadets were selected for the IACE during 2014, and you will recall we made a small contribution to their costs through a couple of our raffles. We are arranging for one, or both, to come to one of our meetings during 2015 to tell us of their experiences. We also maintain our strong link with RAF Shawbury, our RAFALO, FS Pete Booth, attends most of our meetings and always brings a pile of Station Magazines and RAF News. The Station also entertained us at a Games Night during the year, and also welcomed us to their Families Day, much enjoyed by all those who attended. Talking of enjoyable occasions, must mention the excellent lunch at the Lord Hill where we dined splendidly and welcomed our Area Director Paul Baker as Guest of Honour and Speaker.
4. On the business side of the Association, your Branch was again represented at both Annual and Area Conferences, and at the Area Welfare Seminar, where we picked up lots of useful information. On the Welfare side we also made a contribution to the Area initiative to purchase a new vehicle for the Wings Home at Flowerdown. You will be delighted to know, I am sure, that our Web Site receives hits from all over the world, amazing really, and the automatic feedback system that our Web Master Mike Farmer monitors assiduously indicates that most of these foreign hits usually spend some time perusing the detail. Make sure that you have a look at our world 'famous' Web Site.
5. Finally, on a sad note, I must note the passing of two of our Life Vice Presidents during the year, Jack Knowles and Brian Sidebotham; our condolences go to their families.

6. I do hope that you all have an enjoyable Christmas and a healthy and happy 2015.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

7. The Chairman writes:

Dear fellow Members of Shrewsbury & District Branch Royal Air Forces Association

I can hardly believe that I have now had the honour to be your Chairman for nearly 5 years; during that time we have gained some new friends but sadly lost far too many of past stalwarts of this Branch.

Your Committee and I remain committed to running the Branch, in accordance with the original intent of RAFA, as a comrades association where we can meet, talk and be entertained whilst also doing what we can to help those of the Royal Air Forces family that may be in need. In doing so we try to provide a varied programme with speakers at our social meetings, visits to local places of interest, lunches and dedicated seating at Civic ceremonies etc. Something that is becoming increasingly apparent is that the take up for these activities (apart from our Social Meetings where attendance remains strong) has reduced quite markedly to the situation where I believe that we need to consider how to attack the future to ensure that the activities we plan meet with your wishes.

We are fortunate to continue to receive strong support from RAF Shawbury, in particular from our Branch RAFALO Flight Sergeant Pete Booth. I am also extremely grateful to all of the members of your excellent Committee, who work tirelessly on our behalf with some holding down wider more demanding RAFA related tasks outside our Branch and/or suffering from their own health challenges.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter the Wings Collection total achieved by your Branch this year was very impressive. Further details of which can be found on our Branch website that can be found at: www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk where in addition to day to day information about our activities it also contains a number of pages of historical information about the Branch and other related articles.

I remain proud to be your Chairman and would welcome any suggestions that you may have to help our activities in 2015.

Finally, I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Paul Sharp

DETAILS OF YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

8. Present Committee members are as follows:

- a. President
Air Commodore (Ret'd) John J Burke BSc CEng DipEL FIET
- b. Chairman
Paul Sharp
- c. Vice Chairman
John Tisbury MBE
- d. Secretary
John Tisbury MBE (Phone 01952 201902)
- e. Treasurer
Pam Small
- f. Welfare Officer
Al Poole

- g. Assistant Welfare Officer
Paul Martin
 - h. Membership Secretary
Paul Martin
 - i. Wings Appeal Organiser
Alex Madeley
 - j. Assistant Wings Appeal Organiser
Roy Dolton
 - k. Social Secretary
Tecwyn Roberts
 - l. ATC Liaison Officer
Tecwyn Roberts
 - m. Web Master
Mike Farmer
 - n. RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer
Flight Sergeant Peter Booth
9. The Branch also benefits from the wisdom of our Life Vice President, Mr Jim Penny.
10. Please contact any of the above if you have any questions or concerns about the Association or your Branch.

DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

11. The following events are programmed:

- 2015
- 5 January** – Quiz Time – Pam Small
 - 2 February** - Attingham Park - John Tisbury
 - 2 March** - Branch AGM
 - 20-22 March - Area AGM and Reunion
 - 1 April - Memorial Service, Shrewsbury Cemetery.
 - 13 April** - Antiques Road Show – Jeremy Lamond
 - 11 May** - Yeoman Warder Tower of London – Phil Parker
 - 15-17 May - Annual Conference
 - 1 June- Native American Navajo Indians – Eric Peake**
 - 27 June - Armed Forces Day.
 - 6 July** - Royal Observer Corps – Mike Bradbury
 - 3 August** - Members Stories.
 - 7 September- River Severn Trows and Boats – Dr Malcolm Dixon**
 - 19 September- Battle of Britain Parade St Chad's
 - 5 October** - Native Owls of the UK – Gillian Hayes.
 - 2 November** - Afghanistan – Alex Ford
 - 8 November - Remembrance Sunday
 - 7 December** - Christmas Social
- 2016
- 4 January** - New Year's Meeting

MONTHLY MEETINGS

12. Please remember that monthly meetings are held at the Reman Club, Albert Road, Sundorne, Shrewsbury on the first **Monday** of each month commencing at 1230 pm. (If the first Monday is a Bank Holiday, the Branch will meet on the 2nd Monday). One of the principle aims of the Association is comradeship, and we would like to welcome more of you to our meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

13. The Membership Secretary writes:

The membership of our Branch remains quite strong, totalling 202, made up from Life, Ordinary, Associate and Branch Associate Membership. We are fortunate to be so close to RAF Shawbury that we benefit from Serving Members stationed there. As with many Ex-Service organisations our active membership is almost entirely made up from retired members, their spouses and friends. We are exceptionally grateful for the regular attendance of our RAFA Liaison Officers from RAF Shawbury who keep us in-touch with the news of RAF Shawbury and the wider Service in general.

Please note the membership fees for 2015. If your membership is due for renewal on 31 December 2014, paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership, alternatively, please pay by cheque directly to RAFA (it saves a significant amount of duplication of effort in accounting). If this is not practical, please give your subscription to Paul Martin who will forward it to RAFA via Pam Small, our Treasurer.

One year Annual Ordinary Membership	-	£20.50
Four Year Ordinary Membership	-	£78.00
One Year Full Associate with 'Air Mail'	-	£14.50
4 Years Full Associate with Air Mail	-	£55.50
One Year Full Associate without 'Air Mail'	-	£8.50
4 Years Full Associate without Air Mail	-	£30.00
One Year Branch Associate	-	£5.50

We are very pleased that so many of us manage to get to our monthly meetings at the Reman Club, which is a most enjoyable way of spending a Monday lunch-time with friends over a light meal and a drink in a warm and pleasant environment. The meeting includes an interesting talk by a guest speaker, a raffle and amusing anecdotes from our Social Secretary. So, if you have not already joined us there or have not attended for some time, please do make the effort to come to at least one of the meetings where you are assured a warm welcome. If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings regularly, please remember that your Branch is always here to help so please keep in touch with your RAFA.

Paul

WINGS APPEAL

14. The Wings Appeal Organiser writes:

Our Wings Appeal total this year is up on last, by almost £1,000, the final amount being £5,214.97. This is a welcome improvement and thanks must go in large part to the great effort of all our collectors, and in particular, those who took on more than one collecting slot at the stores (in one instance, six sessions!)

As with each year, the bulk of our fundraising came from our presence at the main superstores in town and this year made up 69% of the total. We are grateful for their continuing support whether it is in allowing us to have a presence within their shops or through their community voting schemes.

But it is worth noting that 22% of our funds were raised through other sources: local businesses who had agreed to have tins and badges by their tills, fundraising carried out through the initiative of individuals, small change from home collecting boxes and some donations.

RAF Shawbury remains another great local support and the Families Day held this summer contributed a very valuable 9%. It was also immediately noticeable what a huge difference was made by having a uniformed presence in the superstores. Flight Sergeant Peter Booth, our Branch RAFALO from RAF Shawbury, accompanied several collectors at a couple of the superstores and not only vastly increased our takings but drew many more members of the public to us, people who were keen to share RAF news.

This year, through suggestions made by individuals, we were pleased to leave tins and badges at a few more local, independent businesses. Again, this is an opportunity we value since we are only too aware of how much space a collecting tin and a box of badges can take up by a till.

Although 2014 has seen an increase in our funds, we have had to work much harder to get there. We are increasingly dependent on the same small number of people to give up their time collecting at the main stores. If you can help in any way, perhaps by keeping a home collecting box in your hall throughout the year; by keeping an eye out for national businesses who ask for charity nominations (such as Nationwide, Asda, Waitrose); by holding a Brew for the Few or simply asking at a local independent shop you visit frequently whether they would take a tin and badges, it would all go to help the cause. And the cause is crucial – the support of local serving and ex-RAF personnel and their families in times of need.

Alex

WELFARE

15. The Welfare Officer writes:

Dear Reader,

Yet again it is time to blow the dust off all those Christmas decorations and start preparing for the festive season once more. This also means me sitting down and writing a note to you all to keep you in touch with all that we, in the association, are doing to support you. We help make life easier for those of you who are in need of some assistance regardless of how big or small your problem may be, the welfare team both in RAFA and the RAF Benevolent Fund are always available with a sympathetic ear and help where you need it. Just have a look in recent editions of Air Mail to see some of the fabulous work we do for the family.

First of all let me thank all of you for your help in generating the income for our Wings Appeal both within the branch and also in the wider area within the country. Without the efforts that you bring to the fundraising that goes on throughout the year we would not be able to provide the sort and amount of help that our welfare caseworkers provide to the RAF family. You will know that through our network of welfare caseworkers and officers we are able to reach many more than just those who are active members of our branches. I and my fellow welfare officers are always ready to assist and remain only a phone-call away. You can find us in the telephone directory under RAFA or the web at www.rafa.org.uk.

We continue to provide respite and holiday breaks for all ex-members of the service and their dependents at our 3 Wings Break centres at Rothbury, Lytham and Weston-super-Mare where all guests are provided with full-board accommodation at significantly discounted rates for those in need. You will find all our accommodation is maintained to high standard and we will even get you there and back if it helps. Just contact me if you want more information on booking and travel arrangements.

We have access to all sorts of support for those who are less able; the list is endless so please just ask. We never say 'no' but sometimes we know someone who can do a better job, so we will ask them to help you. Often we find that it is just a need for some companionship and a chat and this is where you can come in and give us a helping hand too. We are not asking for more than a few minutes each week. We can put you in touch with people in similar circumstances and all you need to do is give each a ring to have a weekly chat to see how they are getting on. You will be surprised how many successful friendships come from such contacts and the amount of difference it makes to, not only the person you are calling but also to you. We recognise that loneliness is a very unpleasant experience for all of us and, only by making, keeping and contacting friends can we help to eliminate the problem. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in community groups in the area where you live or, even further afield, on the telephone so just

pick up the phone and call me, any of our branch committee or, even, or Headquarters in Leicester and we will all be able to put you in contact or even help you get to make contact just for a regular chat. I know of people right now who would appreciate a call from someone!

We know that we have over 200 members in our branch yet only about 40 of you regularly attend meetings or make contact and I would really like to hear from you all. Please try and find time to give me call and talk about what you are doing or anything else for that matter.

Well, it is time I left you to get on with your day and it only remains for me to wish you a Happy Christmas and a successful, healthy New Year

With my best wishes

Alan

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

16. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Perkins Club on Monday 2 March 2015 commencing at 1230 pm.***

NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS

17. Attached to this News Letter is a nomination form for Branch Officers. Branch Officers, who are nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting in March, organise the various events, and manage the assets of the Branch. Your Committee would be pleased to welcome new members to the Committee.

CONCLUSION

18. In conclusion, and on behalf of your Committee, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas, and all the best for the New Year. We do hope that you will find time to attend our monthly meetings (Reman Club, Albert Road, Sundorne, Shrewsbury on the **first Monday** of each month. Meetings commence at 12.30 pm) during 2015

In Friendship One to Another

John Tisbury

Keep up to date with your Branch by visiting our website at www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1073201

SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH
ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
NOMINATIONS FOR BRANCH OFFICIALS
AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015

The following individuals are nominated for the posts shown:

NOMINATED FOR THE POST OF	NOMINEE	ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SIGNATURE OF PROPOSER	SECONDER	SIGNATURE OF SECONDER
CHAIRMAN						
VICE CHAIRMAN						
SECRETARY						
TREASURER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						
COMMITTEE MEMBER						

Notes: See Over.

Notes:

1. Volunteers for any post other than those named (ie. Wings Appeal Organiser or Membership Secretary) should stand as a Committee Member as these are posts that the Committee appoints from within its number.
2. Completed forms should be passed to the Secretary before 15 February 2015.
3. Full Associate Members may stand for the Committee, but must be proposed and seconded by Full Members.