

ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250) 2018 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member

1. Well that was a busy year – the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force and the 75th Anniversary of the Royal Air Forces Association - there were parades and events across the Country, across the County and across Shrewsbury and District. I do hope that you managed to attend or witness at least one of the events during the year. As usual I indicate below the activities that involved your Branch during 2018, but outside of that we need to thank our Branch Standard Bearer, Shawn Marston, who I am sure that you recall was elected as the Wales, Midland and South Western Area, and then National Standard Bearer. He was not always carrying our Standard (having 3 to chose from), but he has had a very busy 2018 representing the Association at many high profile national events; and we are very proud that a member of our Branch has risen to such a high profile position, and as a result he has many interesting tales to tell. Mind you with Shawn away a lot, attendance at many local events fell to our Deputy Standard Bearer Eric Blackie, who has also had a busy year. Well done to them both.
2. So what else have we done? During the year we made a further donation to the RAF Shawbury Contact Houses to enable them to obtain some play equipment for the house gardens; partly in response the Station invited members to attend a BBQ at RAF Shawbury in May which was much enjoyed by those who attended. At the same time we made a donation to the Midland Area Welfare Fund. Both these donations are visible manifestations of the work carried out by our Honorary Welfare Officers who have both had a very busy year providing assistance to those in need. The nature of their work requires confidentiality so they are unable to 'shout' about what they do, but your Committee is well aware of the outstanding support that they have provided through the year. Our thanks to both Paul and Iain.
3. To continue to provide the Welfare service we do, of course, need to raise money through the Wings Appeal; and Alex Madeley our redoubtable Wings Appeal Organiser has had a great year coordinating collections during 2018 that exceeded five thousand pounds, our highest total for a number of years. Alex is standing down at the end of 2018 after 9 very busy years as our Appeal organiser, our thanks to Alex.
4. Another issue that is running through the Association at the moment is the need to ensure that Branch Committee members are provided with appropriate training to enable them to meet the increasing legal requirements associated with running a charity, and I can report that your committee has attended the required training. The Chairman has also been involved with the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant Group to ensure that our voice is heard as this important initiative moves forward, please speak with the Chairman if you have any views on the effectiveness of the Covenant.
5. April again saw Branch members and cadets from 1119 (Shrewsbury) Sqn RAFAC attending the annual memorial service to the fallen at the Shrewsbury War Graves, our thanks to those who attended. In May some members attended a Wales Midland and South Western Area event at Worcester Cathedral to mark the RAF's 100th Anniversary. We also ran a coach to take a number of members to the National Memorial Arboretum for the Association's big memorial event to mark the 100th Anniversary; the sun shone, the provided tea and cakes was most enjoyable, and the event itself very moving. In June we participated in the Mayor's Service to mark the change of incumbent, and then at the end of July we held a great event in Shrewsbury Town Square to mark the arrival of



the Wales Midland and South Western Area 100th Anniversary Token as it passed around the Area's Branches. It was delivered to us by the Wrekin/Wellington Branch in front of a large crowd of well wishers; we had the Mobile Exhibition Trailer in attendance which made a big impact and enabled us to raise quite a good sum for Wings, and also to recruit some new members – including the Shrewsbury Mayor and MP! Whilst the Token, and Area spotlight was on us at the beginning of August, we held a 100th Anniversary Lunch at the Wroxeter Hotel before passing the Token on to the Ellesmere Branch at an event in Ellesmere. In September members participated in RAF Shawbury's 100th Anniversary parade and memorial service at St Chad's, and later in the month back at St Chad's for the Annual Battle of Britain Service. During September the Branch also provided assistance to RAF Shawbury for their 10K Airfield Run. November brought the Remembrance Day Parade and Service which, this year was very well attended, and many members of the public turned out to mark and support the event. Our President attended a Service at Shrewsbury School to remember one of their past pupils, Edwin Pugh who was killed at the very end of WWI; you may have noticed his memorial plaque on the wall of the School Boathouse. Then at the end of November our Standard was paraded with pride and aplomb by Eric Blackie in front of 20,000 spectators at the Birmingham International Tattoo. The diary for 2019 is already filling up so please keep an eye on our excellent Web Site where you will always find up to date details of upcoming events.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

6. The Chairman writes:

I am sitting down to compose my entry for our Christmas Newsletter having just returned from The Shrewsbury and District Branch Christmas Social Meeting where our Honourable Secretary reminded me that my input for this year's entry was perhaps a tad late! However, it does give me an opportunity to thank those of you who were able to join us, at Harlescott Social Club, as we hosted Shrewsbury Deputy Mayor, Councillor Phil Gillam, and OC Base Support Wing from RAF Shawbury, Wing Commander Al Jones. It was a very enjoyable few hours and I think that guests and members alike appreciated the excellent buffet and lively conversation. This was the first time that I have had to encourage people to depart at the scheduled end time so that the Club could close the bar and renew stocks before there evening activities! For those of you who were unable to join us on this occasion I urge you to try to do so in the future. Should you have difficulty in getting to the Club and back if you let me know we will try to arrange some method to help?

Our monthly meetings have remained the focus of our year, with a buffet and drinks available. Mike Bradbury continues to make an excellent job of providing us with interesting and varied speakers in addition to running the raffle and providing excellent quiche pies to supplement the buffet. Attendance at the meetings remains quite strong but I am always keen to hear ideas on how they might be improved or varied to satisfy your wishes.

As you all know this year marked the 100th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force and our Branch has been involved in many events over the period including a very successful week where we held the Area Token which was used to raise awareness and generate funds. This is in addition to the ongoing Wings collection activities which now take place throughout the year. I am personally very grateful to all of you who are able to support these activities and other events during the year.

We are fortunate to continue to benefit from strong support from RAF Shawbury and in particular our hardworking RAFALOs. We have also had very kind and enthusiastic support from our Town Council and local politicians with both the Mayor and Shrewsbury and Atcham MP joining our Branch this year, welcome to both of you and we would be delighted if you are able to join us at one of our social meetings.

Sadly, it has been another year where we have lost some old friends who will be missed but we have been fortunate in gaining some new members who support our meetings and to you I say welcome and I hope that you enjoy your time with us.

Finally, I pass my thanks to all the Committee members who work hard throughout the year on our behalf and I wish them and you and your loved ones a peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Paul Sharp
Chairman

DETAILS OF YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

7. 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
Paul Martin
- g. Assistant Welfare Officer
Iain Davison
- h. Membership Secretary
Paul Martin
- i. Wings Appeal Organiser
Paul Sharp
- j. Social Secretary
Mike Bradbury
- k. ATC Liaison Officer
Mike Bradbury
- l. Web Master
Mike Farmer
- m. Alex Madeley

RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer – Squadron Leader Gary James

The Branch Standard Bearer is Shawn Marston and his deputy is Eric Blackie.

8. The Branch also benefits from the wisdom of our Life Vice Presidents, Mr Jim Penny, Mr Brian Beattie, Mr Roger Fylde and Ms Rose Davies.

9. Please contact any of the above if you have any questions or concerns about the Association or your Branch.

DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10. The following events are programmed:

2019 **7 January** - Praise Bee Research – Viv Marsh

- 4 February** - **Tracing your Family History – Graham Bradbury**
- 16 February - SAFC Event at STFC
- 4 March** - **Annual General Meeting**
- **Life on an Aircraft Carrier – Wg Cdr Michael Kennedy**
- 22 – 24 March - Area Reunion and AGM at Plymouth
- 1 April - Atlantic Lady – Dianne Carrington**
- 1 April - Shrewsbury War Graves Service at 1800 hrs
- 10 – 12 May - Association Annual Conference at Birmingham
- 13 May - Protect yourself from Scams – Sharmila Klair**
- 3 June** - **History of Shrewsbury Drapers – Nigel Hinton**
- 1 July** - **Hearing Aids for Ex-Service Personnel – Adrian Ashley**
- 5 August** - **Midlands Air Ambulance – David Hart**
- 9/10 August - Shrewsbury Flower Show
- 2 September** - **Battle of Barking Creek – Mike Bradbury**
- 7 October** - **Historic Hostelries – Nigel Hinton**
- 4 November** - **The Aries Flights from RAF Shawbury – Dai Lawrence**
- 2 December** - **Christmas Social**

Programme subject to change; however there will always be a talk or event at each meeting.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

11. Social meetings are held at the **Harlescott Social Club, Roseway, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4HW** meetings are held 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 every one of you to our meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

12. The Membership Secretary writes:

The membership of our Branch remains generally strong with over 300 members; made up from Life, Ordinary and Associate Members. We are fortunate to be so close to RAF Shawbury that we benefit from Serving Members stationed there, which boosts our membership total. However, 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 that, for most of us, our membership fee for 2019 will be due for renewal on 31 December 2018. Paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership; alternatively, please pay by sending a 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 or Pam Small, our Treasurer, who will forward it to RAFA HQ. The Membership fees from 1 January 2019 are:

Ordinary: £23.00, Ordinary 4 Year: £86.00,
Associate: £16.00 (Non-Air Mail: £12.00). Associate 4 Year: £61.50 (Non-Air Mail: £48.00)

We are very pleased that so many of us manage to get to our monthly meetings at the Harlescott Social Club, [17-43 Roselyn, Shrewsbury SY1 4LP](#). We meet on the 1st (non-holiday) Monday of every month. Our Monday lunch-time meetings are a most enjoyable way of spending time with friends over a light meal and a drink in a warm and pleasant environment. The meetings include a raffle and an interesting talk by a guest speaker. 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.

We have been very fortunate to have several new members join us in the past few months. However, information about new members has not always been received by your Branch. Please accept our sincere apologies for not contacting you (new members) directly to welcome you to our Branch. Please be assured of a warm welcome at our

monthly meetings. Please contact the Membership Secretary, or any member of the Committee, if you have any questions about RAFA or the Branch. Please see the Branch's Website: <http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk>

Paul Martin
Membership Secretary

WINGS APPEAL

13. The Wings Appeal Organiser writes:

As Roy and I step down from the Wings fundraising, it is a great pleasure to see that the final total collected this year has comfortably exceeded £5,000. The RAF 100 commemorations have helped enormously, of course, and by raising the profile of the RAF have brought us new collecting opportunities.

The largest proportion of income has come from our consistently supportive stores – Tesco, Morrison's, Asda and the Co-Ops at Church Stretton and Radbrook, Shrewsbury. It is reassuring to note, in addition, that money raised by the smaller local supporting businesses has continued to contribute around 6% of the final total.

Particularly welcome this year was the offer of a free stand at the Shrewsbury Flower Show and we are hopeful this might prove a more permanent offer. If the weather had been kinder we might have had two very successful days there, instead of one! Our event in the Square was well supported by Mike Logue in his Met van and our RAFALO Sqn Ldr Gary James. The RAF Shawbury Families' Day also added to our total.

Roy and I have been extremely grateful for the support of our committee who have not only stepped in on so many occasions when collecting slots have needed filling but also helped in many other practical ways. Our thanks must also go to our regular collectors, without whose support we would not have been able to fulfil all of the collecting opportunities offered to us by the stores.

Among the other many jobs that already keep him busy, Paul Sharp has kindly offered to take over the Wings Appeal for 2019. Please don't forget, if you can't go out to collect, there are other ways you might be able to help: by asking your local newsagent or independent business if they would like to keep a RAFA tin on the counter, by having a home collecting box or two in your own hallway for visitors to drop in some change. There is also, of course, the Brew for the Few – an opportunity to get together with friends in your own home over tea and cake and raise funds for Wings at the same time.

Wishing you all a very good New Year.

Alex Madeley and Roy Dolton

WELFARE

14. The Welfare Officer writes:

Our Branch's welfare work has been progressing quietly throughout the year. Your Welfare Officers are responsible for helping all members of the "RAF Family", in the local area who are in need of practical assistance to improve their lives. Please note that your Branch Welfare Officers are permitted to help only those who personally ask for assistance; if you know of anyone from the "RAF Family", who might like assistance, please advise them to contact your Branch Welfare Officers. Please note that being a member of the "RAF Family" does not need an individual to be a member of our Branch or of RAFA

One aspect of your RAFA's welfare work is "Befriending". Befriending encourages people who would like to visit members of the "RAF Family" who may be lonely and in need of social contact; possibly in their home, hospital or nursing home. We are very fortunate in having 3 Befrienders in our area. This means that if we know of a member of the "RAF Family" who may feel isolated and lonely it is up to all of us to take the initiative to take the first steps to re-include them in to society. Should you know of anyone from the "RAF Family" who might like assistance, please advise them to contact your Branch Welfare Officers.

Paul Martin
Honorary Welfare Officer

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Harlescott Social Club on Monday 4 March 2019 commencing at 1230 pm.***

NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS

16. 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

17. 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 during 2019.

In Friendship One to Another

John Tisbury

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

Shrewsbury and District Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association is Registered Charity No: 1073201