

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

# Newsletter

**NOVEMBER 2014**

**THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS**

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 3 November 2014 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 14	Losses Ann/Life/Ass 14
6568	5392	2570	14530	786	1157

For those amongst you that look at these numbers, you'll see we have hit our annual brick wall! This is not a surprise as fewer events are taking place that attract new members and, sadly, this time of year brings on the inevitable increase in those who have passed on. Nonetheless we continue to do all we can to achieve our Area membership target:

- Area Membership as at 31 December 2013 – 15,168.
- Area Membership as at 3 November 2014 - 14,530.
- Minimum target by 31 December 2014 - 14,788.
- Still required to achieve minimum target - 258.

## 2. A HUGE THANK YOU TO JIM RITCHIE

It is with sadness that we bid farewell to our Branch Support Officer, Jim Ritchie, who is leaving the Association for pastures new. Jim was the first incumbent of the BSO position and played a huge part in developing the role as we look to support our Branches. Jim says:

*It is with a heavy heart that I leave the Association. I would like to thank you all for your Friendship, Help and Support during my time as your Branch Support Officer. It has been truly humbling to witness your dedication, enthusiasm and passion to the Association and to ensuring welfare is delivered to those in need. Without doubt, the most enjoyable aspect of my role has been meeting so many of you and having the opportunity to assist with your great work. I have no doubt you will offer my successor the same support you have been kind enough to show me and I wish you all the very best for the future. Yours in Friendship, Help and Support.*

Arrangements are in hand to recruit Jim's successor.

## 3. A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL - INCOME TAX ALLOWANCES FOR NON UK RESIDENTS

The Government has produced a Consultation Document relating to Income Tax Allowances for non UK residents which may become law in the Budget of 2015. This consultation is about the Government potentially removing the personal tax allowance from those non UK residents, who are in receipt of Government service pensions, including those retired from the Health Service, Fire Service, Police Service, Education, Central and Local Government, Prison Service and the Military.

We believe that this will be detrimental to our overseas members and all those non-resident, ex-RAF veterans in receipt of a UK Government pension. The consultation is designed in such a way that if there are insufficient responses received it is likely that this measure will come into operation at next year's Budget. Even if it does not affect you directly, I would ask that you use the link below and sign the e-petition to show your solidarity for our overseas members, so that the Government receive as large a number of replies as possible?

This will help those who have spent their lives working for the U.K. armed forces in one way or another and a good many of whom are living on dwindling pensions.

The link to the Petition is:-

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68507>

The link to the Government Web Site is:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-non-residents-entitlement-to-the-uk-personal-allowance/restricting-non-residents-entitlement-to-the-uk-personal-allowance>

The link to send comments to the U.K. Treasury is:-

[nonresidentspersonalallowanceconsultation@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nonresidentspersonalallowanceconsultation@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk)

Or to write to:-

Specialist Personal Tax consultation

HM Treasury

[1 Horse Guards Road](#)

[London SW1A 2HQ](#)

Many thanks for your help

#### **4. THE LAST DAMBUSTER – JOHNNY JOHNSON**

The following information may be of interest:

The Rotary Club of Yeovil – The Last Dambuster, Johnny Johnson, sharing his experiences, his memories and answering questions at The Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster on Saturday 22nd November 2014.

Tea, Coffee and Biscuits will be available from 10.30 am. You will then have the opportunity to meet and hear a living legend and relive a heroic mission of World War 2. Admission £5 - any excess funds will go to The Bomber Command Memorial Fund. Please contact Rotarian David Crossland on 01935 475448 to let him know numbers by midday on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **5. AREA WELFARE SEMINARS**

This is just a quick line to thank those who took the time to attend our recent Welfare Seminars during October, held at the Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare and RAF Cosford Families Centre. Feedback has been positive and these Seminars continue to be well supported and of great value to our volunteers in all functions, with a total of 30 Branches sending representation. Please continue to help us shape the content of future Seminars. Thank you!

#### **6. RED ARROWS PRINTS FOR SALE**

In a collaboration between the RAF Association and the Red Arrows RAF Aerobatic Team a painting was commissioned to mark the Reds' fiftieth display season. Five hundred prints of the resulting painting are now available for sale, each signed by all 10 of the 2014 Red Arrows team.

It is hoped that sales of the print will raise £50,000 for the Association – a fitting amount for the Reds this year. The painting itself was presented to the RAF Club earlier this month. Facsimile copies were also presented to the Red Arrows, Nick Bunting and ICAP, which is sponsoring the painting.

Nick said: "The Association is thrilled to be working with the Red Arrows, especially in this special anniversary season. They are an iconic team, one of several representing the excellence of the Royal Air Force in the UK and around the world. We are grateful that the Reds have chosen the Association as the beneficiary for this fundraising endeavour. They are part of the RAF family, helping to look after those who need us."

Sqn Ldr Ruth Shackleton, Red Arrows Team Manager, said: "Mike Rondot's magnificent painting not only captures the excitement of the Red Arrows brilliantly and celebrates the team's 50th display season, but it also provides a wonderful opportunity to raise vital funds for the Royal Air Forces Association. We hope the public will wish to purchase this unique limited edition print as a splendid reminder of the world's most famous display team."

The picture was painted by well-known aviation artist, Michael Rondot. He said: "Sqn Ldr Jim Turner, the team leader, knows my style of painting from the days we flew Jaguars together. When he suggested a painting of the Reds we were both keen to show what the team does, rather than a 'pretty' scene with a lovely blue sky with nine aircraft in perfect formation. I have painted an imagined situation showing the synchro pair in front of the other seven Hawks on a blustery, difficult flying day. The Reds turn out and display in all weathers and I wanted to capture that."

Prints are 700 x 500mm overall and cost £100 plus postage and packaging (£4:40 UK or £6:05 Europe). Framed prints are available for £200, which includes postage and packaging.

If you'd like to buy one, framed or otherwise, you can phone Rishi on 0116 268 8785 and he'll take payment. For more info, call Nicola on 0116 268 8790.



## 7. FINAL WINGS RETURNS FOR 2014

Please have your Branch's final Wings monies returned to the Wings Appeal team at Leicester by **Friday 14 November 2014**. This will enable them to process all 2014 income and close your Branch Wings account for the year in preparation for producing the annual Wings statement.

You can return Wings monies either through the new Wings Portal or by using the new Wings Returns (WR) packs. Instructions on both of these methods are below with the WR packs having been sent to your Branch Wings Appeal Organiser in their August Newsletter.

### Wings Portal

The Wings Appeal team is pleased to announce that the Wings Portal is complete and ready for use. It enables branch committees to complete their Wings Appeal returns online, saving time and getting the branch welfare rebate back quicker.

Full instructions on the use of the system will be available on the portal itself in the form of a video tutorial but in summary:

- One committee member populates the portal with the details of the branch's Wings Appeal return and states whether the branch wishes to claim any expenses or welfare rebate from the monies being submitted.
- The portal then automatically emails another member of the branch committee who logs into the system to check the submission. If the second committee member agrees with the details then they simply click 'Authorise'.
- A Direct Debit authorisation is built into the system so the monies the branch are submitting for the Wings Appeal are collected automatically from the branch account. Any requests for expenses or welfare rebate are paid back to the branch via electronic transfer within 28 days of the submission, with receipts being sent to the branch officials.

All branches are encouraged to register with the portal at their earliest opportunity in order to benefit from the following:

- The ability to fill out Wings returns from home on your PC, Mac or tablet device at a time convenient to committee members.
- The process is simpler with the portal validating and checking the figures as you input them.
- It saves on paperwork and postage as no cheques or paper forms are needed.
- It helps with branch finances as it allows branches to claim for expenses or welfare rebates when submitting Wings monies, rather than waiting until the end of the year.
- It affords better visibility of the branch's Wings Appeal returns as the system allows you to view previous submissions from the current or previous Wings years.

Any members of your branch committee can register with the portal, but the system does require a minimum of two committee members per branch. It is easy to access and register with the Wings Portal. Simply log in to the members area of the RAF Association website at [www.rafa.org.uk/Account/logon](http://www.rafa.org.uk/Account/logon) and choose 'Wings Portal' from the list on the right hand side of the screen.

### **Wings Appeal paper returns**

Not all branch committees will want to submit their Wings returns online. Therefore, the branch Wings Appeal Organiser received a new Wings Returns (WR) pack in their August Wings newsletter. This pack will replace the old Wings Appeal forms which were coded WA1 – WA5. Please do not continue to use these previous 'WA' forms.

The new Wings Returns (WR) pack captures the same information as the previous format but is laid out differently to mirror the layout of the Wings Portal. Instructions on how to fill in the forms are included in the pack. Please relay this information to the branch committee at your earliest opportunity, especially to those involved in the completion of Wings returns.

### **8. CLARIFICATION FOR BRANCH CLUBS IN WALES – ALLERGENIC INGREDIENTS**

Last month's newsletter contained information at Item 6 regarding a change of law in respect of making information available on allergenic ingredients. One or two of our Clubs in Wales have asked for clarification that this includes Clubs in the Principality. The Food Standards Agency for Wales has advised that the new food allergen law that comes into effect on 13<sup>th</sup> December is applicable to the whole of the UK including Wales. If you need any further guidance, please feel free to contact the FSA Wales at:

11th Floor, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW, Tel: 02920 678999

### **9. AREA RAFALO UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2014**

Please find enclosed the latest Area RAFALO Newsletter.

## 10. INTERNATIONAL CONKER CHAMPIONSHIP

Recently at RAFA Brecon Branch Headquarters, an International Knock-Out Conker Championship Match took place (one of the contestants was from England). Money raised went to the local Welfare fund.

The competition was run under a Brecon version of the Ashton World Championship rules - the Brecon version includes - "no biting, gouging, or kicking". After a series of knock out matches, the home champion, Peter Abbott was defeated in an exciting final bout by Mrs Sarah McGenity, wife of Flt Lt Chris McGenity of 33 Squadron RAF Benson. The huge cash prize for the winner was also donated to the Welfare Fund. With a Horse Chestnut tree in our neighbours garden, which sheds its conkers into our garden, this event is set to become a regular annual feature of the social calendar of Brecon Branch.

The photograph shows the finalists in laid back mode before their titanic struggle which cost Mr Abbott his title.



## 11. NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL TROPHY COMPETITIONS

I should be pleased to receive nominations, by 9 January 2015, for the Trophy Competitions mentioned below. Full details are given in Chapter 10 of the Association Admin Handbook, and the awards will be made at Annual Conference 2015. These trophies are an important mechanism for us to recognise the efforts of our RAFALOs, serving units and GVCAC.

- **Wally Marriott RAFALO Trophy.** Awarded to the RAFALO judged to have made the most outstanding contribution to the Association.
- **Sir Geoffrey Bromet Trophy.** Awarded to the RAF Unit which has made the most exceptional contribution in support of the Association.
- **The Andrew Humphrey Trophy.** Awarded to the Girls Venture Corps Air Cadets Unit making the greatest sustained effort and overall contribution to Wings Appeal.

## 12. BRANCH NEWSLETTER COMPETITION

Entries for this Competition must be received at CHQ no later than 31 January 2015. Entries must be printed or duplicated and state how many issues are produced during the year. These conditions must be met prior to consideration by the Judges. I hope that Branches will decide to enter themselves into this competition (I know there are some great examples out there!). Please submit entries via this office.

### 13. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Cornwall Region Meeting at the Kernow Club, Truro (2pm) – 15 November 2014.

East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Penarth Branch (2pm) – 22 November 2014.

Northern (Midland) Region Meeting at County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 26 November 2014.

North Wales Region Meeting at Llangollen Branch HQ (2pm) – 29 November 2014.

Devon Region AGM at Dawlish RAFA Club (2.30pm) – 7 February 2015.

Area Conference and Reunion at the Derwent Hotel, Torquay – 20/22 March 2015.

*Paul Baker - Area Director*

***If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?***

Enclosures:

1. Area RAFALO Newsletter.