

# Branch News

*including Region, Area and Overseas News*

**October-December 2015**

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**1. Ellesmere Branch.** Flt Lt Cyril Swain from Wem, was a pilot from 105 Squadron shot down over Germany, and one of the 50 British troops shot dead by Nazis after taking part in what famously became known as 'The Great Escape'. 76 Allied Air Force POWs broke out from a tunnel known as "Harry". Only 3 men made it back to England. RAF Shawbury joined the branch to commemorate the brave servicemen who took part in this escape. Rex Cartwright (retired forester) and Wg Cdr John Lewis noticed some pine cones by the exit hatch of "Tunnel Harry" whilst on a tour visiting Stalag Luft 3 and decided to grow a sapling from a Scots Pinus Syvestrif. WO Dennis Severs approached RAF Shawbury with the idea of planting the tree as a living memorial. It was planted during the visit of the CAS, ACM Sir Andrew Pulford KCB CBE ADC RAF to RAF Shawbury in May. The spade has been signed and will be auctioned to raise money for the Association.



**2. Trowbridge Branch.** AM Sir Dusty Miller KBE, Area Director Paul Baker and Alan Goudge, Branch Support Officer were guests at the well attended May meeting. John O'Reilly was awarded the National Presidential Certificate for his work as Welfare Officer. There was a buffet and guests made themselves available for any questions members had.

John served in the RAF for 30 years as an Air Electrical engineer then joined the Branch and served as its Welfare Officer for 10 years. He has organised four visits for members to the Continent - three to Ypres and one to the Normandy battlefields. He also served on the Trowbridge Armed Forces Committee for 3 years and was in the forefront of the group organising parades of ex-Servicemen through the town. He has been an excellent ambassador for the Association and the RAF in the local area. His staying power and loyalty are an example to everyone and he deserves this very significant form of recognition.



**3. Malta GC Branch.** Every year the Branch organise a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial at Floriana, Malta.

This year the Branch was honoured to have Her Excellency President of Malta, Madam Marie Louise Coliero Preca and His Honourable Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat together with the British High Commissioner for Malta His Excellency Mr Rob Luke and the Hon Mayor of Floriana, Ms Davina Sammut as Guests of Honour for the ceremony. Also present were embassy representatives for the USA, Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. The Surrey Constabulary were also represented as amongst those on the Memorial were volunteers from the Constabulary. Trumpeters were from the Armed Forces of Malta.



**4. Jamaica Branch.** Barrington Beckford (left) and Mjr Victor Beek (2nd left), met US President, Barack Obama during a wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in National Heroes Park in Kingston during the President's visit to Jamaica.

Looking on are Col Torrence Lewis, Chairman Jamaica Legion (3rd left) and Mjr Gen Robert Neish, Branch President.

Prior to laying the wreath in honour of the thousands of Jamaicans who died during World Wars I and II, President Obama greeted the veterans and presented each with a souvenir coin engraved with the Presidential Seal on one side and an image of the White House on the other.

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**5. Letchworth, Hitchin & District Branch** visited RAF Halton and the Graduation Parade of Campion intake. They were hosted by Branch RAFALO Flt Sgt Shaun Griffin and shown round the James McCudden Flight Heritage Centre and given a guided tour of the Trenchard Museum. This was followed by lunch in the WOs & Sgts Mess hosted by SNCOs of 22 Groups Training Transformation Team.

The Graduation Parade capped off a wonderful day out for the Branch. Branch President 90 year old WWII pilot Gordon Collinson summed up his day. "It was marvellous to see the young men and women of today's RAF, it brought back great memories of my service."



**6. Ryedale Branch** members together with the RAFALO, serving personnel from RAF Fylingdales and friends from the RBL went to the National Memorial Arboretum to lay a wreath, a short service was conducted at the willow tree dedicated by the Branch in June 2008 in memory of the RAF family and friends now lost. Happily the tree appears to be flourishing. The Branch Standard was dipped in salute and a one minute silence observed.

Thanks are due to the anonymous donor who funded the cost of the coach and to the three motorcycle outriders from the RBL Riders Branch who escorted the coach and provided an almost Royal entry to the Arboretum!



**7. RAFA Housing Ltd, Storrington.** This year member James Robinson attended his first RAF Association Conference in Eastbourne at the age of 94 and was the eldest member there. You can see him here celebrating his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends and neighbours at Storrington where he lives. James is a well respected member of the community and a role model for everyone. All enjoy listening to his afternoons of music when he shares his collection of over 200 vinyl records.

In June he attended a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace (once again a first for him) at the invitation of the Burma Star Association.



**8. Aylesbury & Halton Branch.** On the anniversary of D-Day, (6 June) the Branch held a commemorative dinner in the club house which had been turned into a NAAFI bunker with camouflage netting over the entrance with part of the Atlantic wall complete with gun emplacement.

Maps of the D-day coast showing the defences in minute detail were hung on the walls inside.

Tickets for the dinner were replica Ration Books entitling the holder to one meal. 40 attendees came dressed in period dress.

After the meal there was a raffle with the main prize being a duplicate Red Cross Prisoner of War parcel, complete with a false bottom containing escape gear.



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**1. Formby Branch** members and friends visited the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington spending an enthralling day enjoying the vast array of aircraft on display which stirred many memories, including refreshments in the on-site NAAF! The visit was the culmination of a lot of preparatory work by Secretary, Fred Jones (left) and David Williams and was led by Chairman Eric Parker (pictured second in on right).

The Branch recently lost the use of its club premises but now enjoy the use of the Officers Mess at RAF Woodvale thanks to the intervention of Station Commander Wg Cdr G P Hellard OC 611 Sqn. It's nice to feel "at home".



**2. Wales Area.** 13 members of Mid and West Wales Branches attended the Annual Remembrance Service at the National Memorial Arboretum in June. Branch representatives were from Llanidloes, Brecon and Knighton Branches. They attended a dedication of the new remembrance stones and crosses.

The first reading was made by AM Sir Dusty Miller KBE, RAF Association President. Music was provided by the RAF Association Band. A parade followed behind the Standards to the memorial garden for a service and to plant a cross to the unknown airman, followed by a fly past of the BBMF Dakota and two helicopters (Squirrel and Griffin).



**3. Barry Branch.** Little did Di Jones, Flowerdown Manager, know what hit her when the Branch descended on the Hotel. All received a warm welcome through those hallowed doors into the superbly comfortable surroundings. 6 months into her new job as Flowerdown Hotel Manager, she was bubbling with enthusiasm, telling the assembled members of the delights available.

Sandwiches were laid on, sadly not the spicy chicken wings (a firm favourite), the tour around the home saw some very eager customers wanting to arrange a visit, especially at Christmas. Cost of regular trips out? NOTHING! Cost of entertainment? NOTHING! Now what crossed everyone's mind is why so few people were not taking advantage of this 5 Star hotel?

This visit proved, without a doubt, that Flowerdown has so much to offer and one that the Branch will be making full use of. So a big thank you to Di Jones and Donna for showing everyone around.



**4. Sudbury Branch** attended the annual Independence Day service held at the USAAF 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group memorial outside St Gregory's Church in Sudbury. Also attending were 14 serving members of the USAF from a nearby Base. The 486<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (Heavy) based at RAF Sudbury (Station 174) flew 191 combat sorties losing 56 aircraft and suffering 77 wounded in action, 303 PoW'd and 408 war dead. The memorial is maintained by Sudbury Town Council.



Seven members of the Branch visited RAF Mildenhall in August where they were treated to viewing some of their Bell Boeing CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, a peculiar looking machine but very interesting to inspect and hear about. Picture shows members around one of the aircraft with their guide Lt Col Tyler Morton.

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**5. Stockton-on-Tees & Thornaby Branch.** Pictured right, Branch members and guests who enjoyed an interesting visit to RAF Linton-on-Ouse earlier this year.

The Chairman and Committee approved the laying of a wreath at the Association memorial at the National Arboretum, Alrewas and this was carried out by Branch member John Dyer in May to remember those who had lost their lives on D-Day.

**6. Weston-super-Mare Branch.** Photo taken at the recent Weston-super-Mare Armed Forces Day and Airshow.

ACM Sir Peter Squire GCB, DFC, AFC, DL, FRAeS, who was Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) for the RAF, took the salute at the Armed Forces Day in June at the Drumhead Ceremony attended by the local cadets.

Sir Peter Squire, who is now President of the ATC Cadets, is seen here with Charlie Hewson BEM, Chairman of the Branch.

**7. Gold Coast Branch.** Centenarian Ernest Fish celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June at BUPA Aged Care Facility, Tugan, Queensland.

Many relatives were present to mark this very important milestone in Ernie's life together with members of the Branch, including Chairman Jack Gamble, his wife Mary, Charles McDowell, Stan Pascoe, Rose Pearce and Alice Revell.

**8. Stevenage Branch** was recently part of an event held on King George's Playing Field, in the town.

The 'troops' arrived on site just after 8.30 am and "the few" arrived soon after to help set up the canopies etc.

Side shows included hand made greetings cards, soft toys and games, with dart competitions being as popular as ever, with a new addition - Highest Score to Win £5 - Highest score being 137.

The Branch was well represented in the town centre and covered market on Armed Forces Day. The weather was kind which attracted crowds to the event.

A marching band of local cadets paraded into the town centre and were well applauded. The various Wings aircraft badges were very popular together with donated military books.



When submitting Branch News to Air Mail, please note that the wording should ideally be around 100 words, accompanied supporting photograph(s).

Please ensure that you give as much information as possible about the event and those shown in any photographs and any copyright information relating to the photograph(s).

Regrettably due to space limitations, submission of an article does not guarantee automatic publication.

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**1. Huddersfield Branch** unveiled a memorial to the crew of Wellington Z 1327 of 460 Squadron stationed at Brighton which crashed on the outskirts of the town in February 1942 during a night flying exercise.

The memorial, which took several months to organise, was undertaken by Frank Smith, Life-Vice President of the Branch and is placed on the wall of the cottage in Farnley Tyas where the bomber crashed. 'Phoenix Cottage' was rebuilt after the crash and the present owner has renamed it 'Wellington Cottage' in honour of the crew.

Attendance was limited due to the location and many hours were spent trying to locate crew relatives without any results.



**2. Kidderminster Branch** commemorated the first day of the Battle of Britain. Chairman Phil Thurston received a certificate to mark the Branches 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary from Area Chairman Sqn Ldr John Tisbury.

Seven Standard Bearers were present from local service organisations: Tony Hinchcliffe (Kidderminster Branch), May Carter (Far Forest & Rock RBL) Mick Salter (Worcs & Sherwood Foresters), William Clarke (Cookley & Wolverley RBL), Ken Bradley (Kidderminster RBL), Adrian Beavis (Royal Naval Assn), and Dave Sands (Parachute Regiment Assn). Also present were cadets from 156 Kidderminster Sqn ATC with Flt Lt M Bullingham, serving members present were SAC Alex Brown 101 Sqn RAF Brize Norton and Cpl Kris Brown AEMTS, RAF Cosford.



**3. Harwich & Dovercourt Branch.** The Standard Bearer and Branch members attended a charity fundraising event staged at North Weald Airfield in July. They are seen standing by the memorial to two Norwegian Squadrons based there during WWII.

The theme of the event was the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain; North Weald having been the home of 50 Squadrons from 7 Nations between 1916 and 1964.

A large number of Branches from the South East and Eastern Area were represented along with members of other services and the public. They were treated to flying displays, static aircraft and a display by a Hurricane and Spitfire of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Standard Bearers present took part in a Parade and Sunset Ceremony, "A Salute to The Few".



**4. Birstall (Leicestershire) Branch** recently adopted No. 2229 (Loughborough) Sqn ATC. Along with the Birstall and Coalville squadrons, which the Branch had previously adopted, the cadets of 2229 Squadron help annually with the Branch's Wings Appeal effort, which last year raised £3624.30.

Picture shows Vice-Chairman, Brian Russell, presenting the certificate of adoption to OC 2229 Squadron, Flt Lt Adrian Garraway RAFVR(T), on the occasion of the squadron's Wing Commander's inspection in June. In fact, Chairman Julie Pears was one of the first female cadets in the squadron, when Adrian was the Squadron Warrant Officer!

In common with others, the Branch would find it difficult to carry out Wings Appeal collections without the help and enthusiasm of ATC squadrons.

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**5. Sud-Ouest Branch.** A friend of the Branch and ex-RAF colleague, David Balaam, attended a ceremony on behalf of TRBL in June in Brittany.

On 4 February 1943, a Wellington of 427(RCAF) Sqn took off from RAF Croft near Darlington to attack Lorient Airfield in the Morbihan area of Brittany. Although the aircraft was from a Canadian Sqn, all the aircrew were British. The Wellington was hit by flak and it is thought that a photo flare detonated whilst still in the bomb bay causing a catastrophic fire. The bomb aimer, Plt Off A J B Thompson parachuted to safety and managed to make it to the South of France before being captured. All the other crew perished in the crash at Plomeur 4kms west of Lorient.

After 72 years, local French citizens decided to honour all the crew in June this year by inaugurating a special memorial to their sacrifice. A local sculptor, Christian Lantin designed the memorial shown in the photo. The aircrew are buried in Guildel Communal Cemetery located a short distance away from the crash site and the new memorial is in their honour.

Although this story has been submitted by the Sud-Ouest Branch, it would be fantastic if all the ex-RAF living in Western France would not only support TRBL but also form a new RAFA Branch for the area. How about it everybody?

**6. Hexham Branch** Club Secretary, Trevor Cessford, has been elected Mayor of Hexham, Northumberland, after having served two years as Deputy Mayor.

**7. Poole Branch** "Armed Forces Day in the Purbeck" in June focused on the RAF. Events were held at Swanage Railway Station. Members and cadets from 2185 (Swanage) Detached Flight manned a stall on the platform. Space was limited, so members and cadets rotated throughout the day to raise funds for Wings Appeal.

The event helped raise the profile of the work of the Association and the Branch which generated interest from potential new members. It also provided an opportunity for local Air Cadets to count their volunteering hours towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Highlights of the day included the Battle of Britain Class Steam locomotive 'Manston' on static display at the platform; music by the Ramsgate and Manston Air Training Corps Band and concluded with a low level fly past by a lone Hurricane from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a poignant reminder of Dorset's involvement in the Battle of Britain in this 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

The event raised £474 for Wings Appeal, a good effort, as there were other local events marking Armed Forces Day in the area. Picture shows (l-r) Branch Wings Organiser Gary Brennan, Cdt Cpl Chester Williams, Cdt Ethan Ferrari and Branch Chairman Gp Capt Mike Davis.

**8. Basingstoke Branch** member Bill Lloyd has recently received the Chevalier Ordre National de la Legion D'honneur, awarded by the French Government to those service personnel who were involved in the liberation of France during WWII.

Bill was an aircraft fitter and served in various parts of Europe including Lille in France and Ypres in Belgium. He is 99 years old and still an active member of the Branch, attending meetings and social functions.

Photo shows Bill with his medal following the Armed Forces Day Flag-Raising Ceremony where he was chosen to hoist the flag.



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**1. Calne and District Branch** would like to thank all members of the Greater Calne community and motorcycle enthusiasts who visited its stand at the July show.

This is the first year the Branch presented a professional corporate style stand and had a fantastic response from visitors both home and abroad.

The Branch collects all year but this year a massive boost was received of £372 from the show, this is welcome as this year is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain and the welfare needs of service personnel is never ending.

Photo shows Paul, Linda and Gage Ellis, Ann Stackman and Sgt Dan Kemp (RAFALO).



**2. Ripon Branch** members visited the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, North Yorkshire in July.

Sqn Ldr Richard Cole (Dickles) (3<sup>rd</sup> from the left rear row.) has had 'hands on' experiences of most of the more modern aircraft in the display.

He regaled various service stories (some possibly a bit tallish!) but all were most interesting and amusing.



The visit ended with a NAAFI lunch which was rated better than national service experiences of NAAFI catering!

**3. Rotherham Branch** is proud to have John Watkins, a WWII Veteran as one of its members. John is 91 and was stationed at Scampton in 1943 as a wireless operator and gunner. He went along to Scampton's Open Day escorted by Andy Merris, Branch Welfare Officer. Photo is John sat in the cockpit of one of the Red Arrows aircraft.

**4. Nazeing Branch's** Annual Dinner was held at the Highland Restaurant, Broxbourne. This was attended by RBL Nazeing Branch members and guests, Memorial Group and ATC Squadron.



During the very enjoyable evening, Roy Howe (second from left on photo), who served as Secretary of the Branch for 26 years and a great servant of the Association, was thanked for his service and was invited to present a beret to the new Standard Bearer, Roy Pearson. Roy is about to spend a well-earned holiday at Richard Peck House.



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**5. Mansfield & District Branch.** The Branch Standard was recently paraded by Mike Hughes at the unveiling of a memorial to the crew of an EF127 Stirling Aircraft at Broomhill Grange Farm near Edwinstowe in Notts in June. The memorial commemorates the four RAAF crew members and one RAF crew member who perished in the crash and the two other RAAF crew members who survived. They were: Flt Sgt W V Manuel Pilot RAAF, Flt Sgt C Bird Navigator RAAF, Flt Sgt G Macoun Bomb Aimer RAAF, Flt Sgt S Christie W. Op RAAF, Flt Sgt G Davison, Flt Engr RAF, Flt Sgt W Taylor Mid Upper Gnr RAAF, Flt Sgt Taylor survived the crash but went missing over Germany in 1944, Flt Sgt R Plath Rear Gnr RAAF survived the crash and later flew in active service before returning to Australia.

The service was conducted by AVM The Venerable Robin Turner and Sqn Ldr The Reverend S J Bradley.



**6. Mablethorpe & Sutton Branch** raised funds at the Sutton on Sea Carnival in July. Thanks to Station Officer Geoff Burton who provided the very welcome shelter of the pop up gazebo. The specially made table covers helped spread the message. Combined with the coffee morning held previously, over £320 was raised for Wings Appeal.

**7. Bodmin Branch** accepted a cheque to the value of £50.00 from ASDA, Bodmin.

Photo shows (l-r) Mrs O Beaton, Jacki (Communities Manager ASDA), Colin Stevenson (Chairman/Secretary), Alistair Quinnell and Mike Stephenson accepting the cheque on the Branch's behalf.

**Costa Blanca Branch.** Bob Hunt, (Chairman of European Area) accompanied by his wife Margaret, presented the Branch with a £5000 certificate for its donation to Wings Appeal. In his address to Branch members he congratulated them for the great effort put in to raise the funds in a climate of austerity. He continued by saying that the involvement of Branch members for 'Wings' put in since the Branch was formed in 2004 was a great example to all.

**8. SE and E Area.** One of the events the Area promoted to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain was a Parade and Sunset Ceremony at the North Weald airfield during the Community Day in July. RAF North Weald was one of the main airfields used by fighter aircraft during the Battle of Britain so it was an appropriate venue for the commemoration. Around 6,000 people turned out to enjoy the events of the day.

The Parade was headed by the RAF Waddington Voluntary Band. The Area's reserve Standard was carried by Pip Iles as the main Standard was at Caple le Ferne that day. Then came two banners of ATC Squadrons Nos 56 and 249 representing two of the squadrons that flew from RAF North Weald during the Battle of Britain. RAF Honington provided the Parade Marshal for the event, Sgt Tom Price, and a flight of RAF Regiment personnel marched behind the Association Standards. Members, led by Barry Furness, Area Chairman, followed. Next a band formed by the ATC cadets from the London Wing led a splendid flight of 22 ATC banners and a large supporting flight of cadets from the London Wing. Finally, the Epping and District Pipe Band brought up the rear with RBL Standards. All of this produced a spectacular parade. Lord Lieutenant of Essex and the SE & E Area President AM Sir Roger Austin jointly took the salute.



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**1. Alresford Branch.** Members of the Branch visited the RAFBF Care Home Princess Marina House at Rustington where Chairman, Derek Sweetenham, presented a cheque for £1000.00 to the General Manager, Shirley Steeples.

The visit was timed to coincide with the first of several Great British Sunday Lunch fundraising events to be held at PMH which was also attended by residents, their friends and relatives and local supporters. After an introductory talk, a tour of the home and gardens followed, five star facilities and service at greatly subsidised levels. An excellent lunch was partaken and on a sunny but very windy day, the Branch departed this haven by the seaside resolved to continue its support for, and encourage its' members to make better use of Princess Marina House in the future.



**2. Ile de France Branch.** A moving ceremony took place in Massy, Seine Maritime in June to unveil a plaque to the memory of 3 aircrew of 49 Squadron Lancaster LM572 (EA-P), who were killed 71 years ago when the aircraft was hit by a German fighter during a raid to destroy V1 launching sites in the region. Three of the crew were captured. Those who died and for whose memory the ceremony had been organised, were Fg Off J F Judd (Wireless Op/AG), Sgt R Thompson (AG) and Sgt D.A. Wilson (AG).

The ceremony was made possible by the determination of Adam Heath, great grandson of crew member James Judd. Recalling the stories related by his great grandmother when he was a child, he decided that he wanted to know more. His investigations, through contacts with the 49 Sqn Assn and with Mme Daniele Capot, President of the Association "Le Souvenir Français", culminated in Adam and his father Andrew, being invited to

attend the ceremony.

27 Standards from French veteran Associations in Normandy surrounded the Branch Standard carried by Geoff Lyon, as the procession moved from the Town Hall to the monument where, after speeches and the laying of floral tributes, the children from the village school sang God Save the Queen and the Marseillaise.



**3. North Cotswolds (Chipping Camden) Branch.** On 19 July at Moreton-in-Marsh Church, Air Cdre Mike Barnes, Branch President, together with Mike Munt, Branch Secretary, presented member Toni Middleton with a bouquet of flowers and a card to commemorate her long and eventful life having reached 100 years of age. Toni joined the WAAF in 1941, after initial training she moved to HQ 3 Group Bomber Command. Promoted to Corporal she was posted to RAF Hullavington and then returned to Bomber Command as a Sergeant Watch Keeper. She was then posted to RAF Tempsford which was the base for contact with SOE and French Resistance Forces using mainly Lysanders for agent drop offs and pick ups. Following the war, Toni lectured in Christian Education and, following retirement moved and became involved with the Branch. Toni (real name Grace) is shown with her telegram from HM the Queen.



**4. Lossiemouth Branch.** It is with great sadness that the Branch has to report the death of Malcolm Collie BEM, one of its long standing members and a dedicated wings Coordinator.

Malcolm received his BEM for his tireless fundraising work undertaken for the Association in 2013. Malcolm succumbed to cancer and in typical selfless style that he always possessed, his legacy to humanity was donating his body to medical research, RIP.

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**5. Diss & District Branch.** The annual RAF Veterans Day was held at Flixton Air Museum, Bungay, Suffolk in August on a beautiful summer's day.

The well attended event was supported by the Branch and proved most enjoyable and successful.

In addition to the usual stalls, classic motor cycles, 1940s music and dancing in the main hangar, the day was concluded by a flypast from a Spitfire from the BBMF.

This was the latest in a number of events and fundraising activities by members of the Branch who are attempting to beat the record breaking fundraising of last year,



**6 Cranwell Branch.** July was a busy month for the Branch. Activities commenced with a stall at the RAF College Education & Wellbeing Day, attendance at the adopted Sleaford ATC Sqn Open Day and the annual Branch BBQ (which took place at the farmhouse of the Welfare Officers), followed by the normal Branch lunch in the WO & Sgts Mess where Mimi Gunn was presented with a cake to celebrate her centenary, a visit to Cleethorpes, based at the Grimsby & Cleethorpes Club and culminated with a stall at the Cranwell Families Day.

Mimi (Amelia Ingram) was born in Sleaford and remained there, apart from moves associated with her husband Bill's RAF service. Mimi has remained in her house with a large garden and just two years ago employed a gardener and only recently accepted help in the house. She has two grandsons and two great grandsons and spent her birthday with her son-in-law in Gloucester where she received her telegram from the Queen.



She was initially an Associate Member of the Sleaford Branch and when it closed, joined the newly created Cranwell Branch and rarely misses any of its events.

**7 Keyworth Branch,** as well as having monthly meetings with guest speakers, enjoys regular outings. The last one was a two hour cruise and carvery meal on the River Trent aboard the 'Nottingham Princess'.

Photo shows (l-r): John Stansfield (President), Hazel Jones, Bob Jones, Norman Yates (Secretary), Sheila Seymour-Smith, Lauren Hulican, Jean Meredith, Stella Macdonald, Roger & Rae Allton and David Baugh.



**8. Knighton Branch.** An exhibition was held in July and August entitled Early Birds and Boys in Blue (flight in Radnorshire 1912-1990) at the Museum in Llandrindod Wells raising awareness of the flight connection with the county. A memorial service opened the exhibition where the Branch Standard was displayed. 80 guests attended (many with family connections to featured airmen) including the Mayoress and Deputy Mayor.

Photo: Rev Petra Beresford Webb (front centre); Phillip Jones (back centre); Roy Williams (front right), Hamish Stonebridge (front left -RBL) and members of 579 Sqn ATC. Copyright Marina Gallery Photography.



Phillip Jones has spent many years researching and has been spurred on to write a book as more information and photographs have been donated. This should be available in 18 months. He thanks all who attended the exhibition.

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**1. Darlington Branch** Chairman Norman Athey presented a new (Token) drum to a cadet of 405 Sqn Darlington ATC at a recent RAF College Band Concert held in the Dolphin Centre.

The Branch donated £2890 to the Squadron to purchase a new set of high quality drums to further the success of the ATC Sqn Band in the area and to show the people of Darlington the support the RAF Association gives to young people.

The Branch are grateful to Flt Lt Matthew Little, Director of Music of the RAF College Band, for the kind speech he gave about the RAF Association and the Branch during the concert.

**2. Haverfordwest Branch** members set up a Wings stall at the "Wings over Carew" weekend in August. There was a memorial service and the RAF Falcons and Red Devils "dropped in" with all being entertained by a Scottish Pipe Band.

The following week members were present at Marloes and Dale where six Polish air crew were remembered after losing their lives in Wellington HX384. The propellor of the aircraft was presented to the Coastland Heritage Society.

**3. RAF St Mawgan Branch.** A busy year started with a Band Concert in May held in the St Columb Major Church in aid of the RAF Association, the RBL and church funds. The Church was packed to capacity and a great evening's entertainment was enjoyed by all. Cornish pasties, provided by a local bakery, were served during the interval.

Music was arranged by The Waterloo Band and Bugles of the Rifles. A wide range of music was performed from the classics to musicals. Two lucky youngsters from local Cornish bands were given the chance to play - a great opportunity. The evening raised nearly £3000. Grateful thanks go to the band and organisers for a fabulous evening.

The next event was the Royal Cornwall Show in June. A great success as over £2,500 was raised for Wings Appeal. The Show was blessed with excellent weather, running over three days and there was plenty of support from members to man the stall.

Photo shows (l-r): Paul Hedge, County Standard Bearer and PRO; Al Goudge, Secretary; Steve Richards, Chairman and John Beal, Entertainments Director. Well done all for your support.

**4. Beccles & Southwold Branch** held a Wings collection at Southwold Pier in August. President, Brian Vousden (third from right), commented "This Wings collection is one of many that our Branch carries out throughout the summer and we are constantly striving to exceed our previous year's totals at every opportunity for the benefit of our less fortunate colleagues." Photo shows the Branch team supported by Town Councillors led by Deputy Mayor Cllr Ann Betts (l).



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**5. Leamington Spa, Warwick & District Branch** recently organised and attended a small commemorative gathering at the grave of Flt Lt Ian Cruickshanks who was killed in a flying accident and is buried in a local church graveyard.

Flt Lt Cruickshanks joined the RAFVR in 1937 and flew in the Battle of Britain. He was injured in a combat and had to make a forced landing, later posted to No 4 Ferry Pilot's Pool before becoming a test pilot with Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft at Coventry.

In 1943 he became a supernumerary test pilot with No 41 Group. A month after VE Day, he delivered a Halifax aircraft to Hooton Park for scrapping but on arriving on only three engines and having been given a red flare to 'go round again', the aircraft clipped a local church and crashed, killing the crew. He was buried in the family plot at Milverton. Although this did not qualify for a military headstone, the RAF Association placed a marble tablet on the grave in 2005. The ceremony this year was attended by Branch and family members. Photo shows everyone gathered at the graveside.

**6. Dover Branch** members attended the Battle of Britain Air Show and Sunset Ceremony at North Weald in July. Photo shows (l-r): Alex Reynolds, Roy Huckle (committee), Reg Lohan (Chairman), Peter Hudson (President), Roy Lacy (Secretary), James Francis (Treasurer and membership) and Greg West (RN Falklands Veteran).

**7. City & Central London Branch** was pleased to adopt 1921 (Lewisham) Squadron ATC on the eve of Armed Forces Day 2015.

The Branch and cadets shared in the Armed Forces Flag Raise at London's Guildhall and the presentation of a commemorative plaque to a local school to celebrate their two heroic Battle of Britain pilots. The association was cemented by a visit from Chairman, Peter Ramrayka, and Secretary, Mike Saunders. Peter and Mike were shown around the Squadron before trying their hand in the Squadron's flight simulator.

They were delighted to be able to present First Class cadet badges – marking the start of the journey for several new cadets of the Squadron. On behalf of the Branch, they then presented a Certificate of Adoption to Fg Off Wesley Pollard and the Squadron's cadets. Picture shows left to right: Cdt Sgt Dhanyshen Ramen, Peter Ramrayka, Branch Chairman, Cdt FS Dominic Paul, Fg Off Wesley Pollard, RAFVR(T), Mike Saunders Branch Secretary, Cdt Sgt Archie Forster

**8. Birmingham Sheldon Branch.** Branch members, with the help of 2030 (Elmdon & Yardley) Squadron ATC, made a collection / bag packing visit to the Tesco Extra Store at the Swan centre in Yardley, Birmingham. The staff at the store were very helpful and made it a pleasant and worthwhile visit.

Photo shows Bridget Vanes (centre) Branch Vice Chairperson and Wings Appeal Officer, Cdt Sgt (ATC) James Wakeman (left) and other members of 2030 Squadron ATC. Thanks go to all those who helped and everyone that donated.



# Branch News

including Region, Area and Overseas News



**1. Grimsby, Cleethorpes & District Branch** Club Vice-Chairman Gavin Marshall did a virtual cycle ride starting from outside the Branch in Cleethorpes all the way to the Union Jack Club in London, a total distance of 160 miles. He started at 0920hrs and finished 6 hours and 56 minutes later, still smiling and more importantly, still able to walk!

He was supported by his family and Branch members as well as members of the public who stopped to watch and to donate money for his fantastic efforts. In total, he raised over £2000 which will be used to make improvements to the Branch and benefit all members and visitors. Well done from all.

**2. Thurrock Branch** have made several award presentations recently to three local ATC squadrons.

The first was to 106 Orsett Hundred Sqn. Chairman Jim Gooding and Wings Appeal Officer Eddie Coull presented the Les Wakeling Trophy (awarded to the cadet who has done something outstanding) to Cpl Joseph Kilduff and a Wings Appreciation which was accepted by Flt Sgt Georgia Regan.

The second was to 582 Sqn - trophy to Cpl Monica Leyland and Appreciation accepted by Cpl Leyland and Cadet Ben Cook (now both having been promoted).

The third was the presentation of a bugle to Cpl Callum Fearne of 2243 Sqn. Roy Cox, Branch member, asked the Corporal if he had his own bugle - he did not. In 1945 Roy joined the Aveley Branch Boys Brigade and his bugle had hung in his shed since 1961 never having been played since. After it was cleaned up Roy made the presentation to a delighted Callum.



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**3. Barrow in Furness Branch.** In August, seven of members made the trip to Richard Peck House in Lytham St Annes. A cheque for £500 was presented to Tony Lyons, Home Manager. The welcome and the hospitality given by Tony and his staff was wonderful and the day was enjoyed by all.

Photo features (l-r): Lynda Boulton, Secretary John Dunkerley, Treasurer/Wings Officer Jean Frame, Publicity Officer Mike Boulton, President and minibus driver Mick Garnett.

Front: Chairman Des Murphy presenting the cheque to Home Manager Tony Lyons.



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