

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

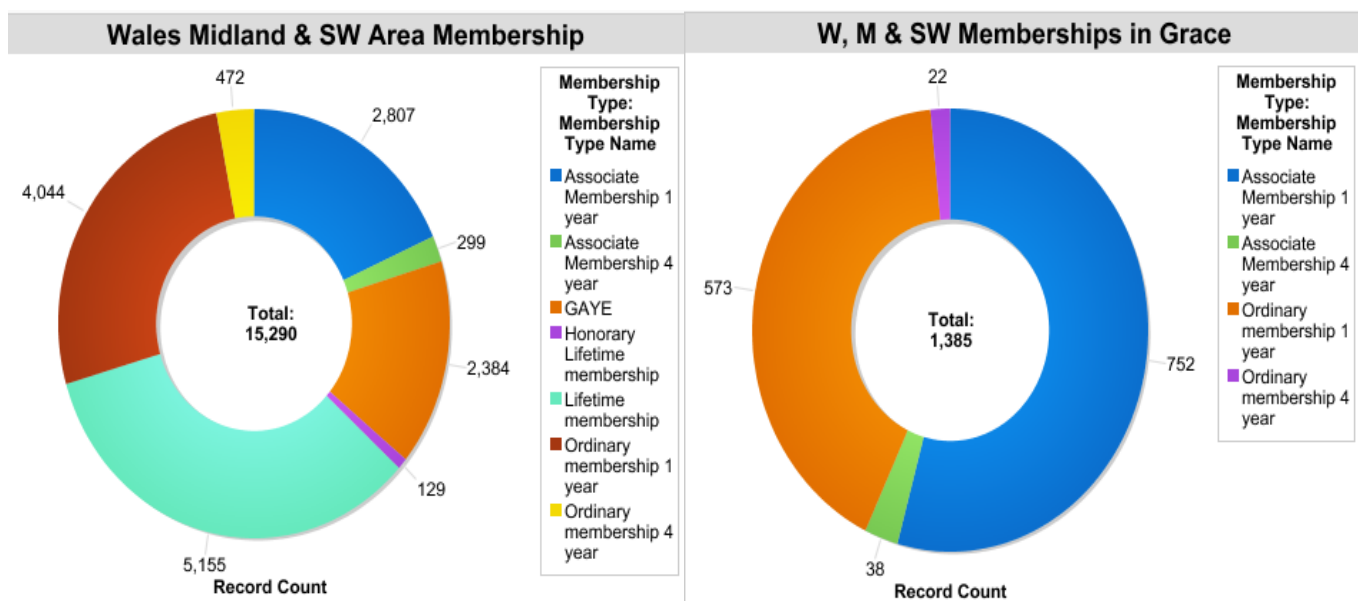
Newsletter

MARCH 2015

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. AREA MEMBERSHIP

Here is a different way of displaying our current Area Membership numbers – the donut! On the left you will see our whole Area membership figures as at 26 February 2015. These numbers include those on the right ‘in grace’ meaning yet to renew (or about to lapse on 31 March!). So our initial challenge is to drive down the total figure in the right hand donut of 1,385. Please seek out your members who have not yet renewed.



Please do all you can at Branch level to think about what may attract prospective new members such as a social programme that includes occasional speakers/lunches/coach trips and participation in Wings Appeal projects. Please remember Area HQ no longer processes membership applications. These must be sent to our colleague at Central Headquarters in Leicester at the following address:

- Mr Rishi Sheth, Membership Administrator, RAF Association Central Headquarters, 117½ Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5ND. Tel No: 0116-268-8785 or by e-mail rishi.sheth@rafa.org.uk.

2. WITH GREAT SADNESS

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of the following – all great friends and servants of our Area:

- Mr Gordon Mycock, former Chairman Cannock Chase Branch for many years.
- Mr Peter Johnson, former Asst HWO Solihull Branch for many years and regular Wings Appeal collector.

3. COME TO FLOWERDOWN HOUSE AND ENJOY YOUR PERFECT BREAK!

Rest and relaxation, convalescence or simply for a change of scenery with the family, everyone needs a break from time to time and our Wings Break Home, Flowerdown House in Weston-super-Mare is just the job. Spacious comfortable rooms with fully accessible en-suite facilities and delicious home-cooked food, you are sure to have a great time. Flowerdown House is pleased to offer short stay breaks. These can run for a minimum of 3 nights between Tuesday and Monday, subject to availability. Short stay breaks are charged at a rate of £45 per person per night B&B and £58 per person per night full board with meals prepared by the in-house Chef. All non-care rooms are available for short stay breaks and most dates are still available throughout March and April so why not call Flowerdown House 01934-621664 or flowerdown.receptionist@rafa.org.uk.



4. PLEA FROM THE FUNDRAISING EVENTS DEPARTMENT

In previous years the Leicester based Fundraising Events Team have asked that if any Branches have stock of old-brand pin badges can they please pass them on to staff at the Area Conference in Torquay (20-22 March), or alternatively at Annual Conference in Eastbourne (15 – 17 May). Stock can also be handed to your BSO at any time when visiting. The Fundraising Events Team recycle these badges into boxed sets which are sold at air shows and we have now exhausted our stocks. Your assistance in this matter in order to recycle “old” branded stock is very much appreciated.

5. UPDATE FROM OUR VOLUNTEER MANAGER

We are very much looking forward to Annual Conference, in May, where we will celebrate the work of our current volunteers and share with you the work we have been developing to recruit and welcome new volunteers to the RAF Association. This work will also be shared at your Area Conference in Torquay and I look forward to meeting you then.

We are planning on having an interactive stand with some information that we are providing to new volunteers and an opportunity for you to find out more about our online fundraising training for volunteers that we’re excited about delivering. If you are going to Annual Conference, come and see us on our stand. We will be around to answer your questions about how we can support you with recruiting new volunteers.

To ensure that we deliver the best service to our beneficiaries and our volunteers, we've been working on plans for the new database system and how this will support volunteer recruitment. The system will allow us to manage the various training aspects for new volunteers, including ensuring they are fully inducted and informed about the Association, as well as train them for the roles they will be undertaking. This will complement the existing accredited face-to-face training that currently exists.

We've been really fortunate to have been working with Area and Branch volunteers as part of a group looking at how we introduce a national volunteering programme and they have been heavily involved throughout. Within this group we've been discussing how to best recognise the amazing work all our volunteers do. We plan to use the inspiration from what branches currently do to motivate and recognise volunteers, to help us shape our plans to celebrate the work of our new volunteers.

If you are going to Area or Annual Conference, or both, we look forward to meeting you. If not and you would like to speak to us sooner you can contact, Katharine Montgomery, Volunteer Manager, on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or on 0116 268 8794.

6. RAFA YOUTH

Don't forget our Youth Engagement Programme, RAFA Youth, which is a great way to strengthen your Branch ties with local ATC and GVCAC Sqns. If you haven't had a visit from Helen Gibson, Youth Community Manager, then give her a call on 0116-2688789. These Cadets are on board from Pontypridd, Mountain Ash and Abergavenny.



Does your Branch have a relationship with the local ATC Sqn? Have you officially adopted them? Please let Area HQ know – we are compiling a list!

7. AREA CONFERENCE AND REUNION – THE DERWENT HOTEL, TORQUAY, 20-22 MARCH 2015

We look forward to seeing many of you in Torquay for our Eleventh Area Conference and Reunion over the weekend 20-22 March. Yet again you have indicated your enjoyment of this event with 44 Branches sending delegates – a great turn out! Information packs are on their way to Delegates and Branches (they may arrive before you read this!), but for now we are enclosing a copy of the Programme for the Weekend.

Please remember to book your blue badge parking bay with the hotel (01803-400500) – first come first served - we all know how the parking goes at the Derwent!

Another option might be to travel by train and our brilliant friend and colleague, Mr Steve Colhoun, Torquay Branch Chairman, has offered to collect any guest from the Torquay Railway Station and drop you down to the Hotel – what a guy! Steve is happy for you to call him on his mobile 07899-964241. Steve may also encourage you all to pop into the Torquay Branch Club HQ for a swift one (open on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Conference from 1100hrs). See you soon!

8. AREA PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

In recognition of their meritorious service to the Association, the Area President has been pleased to award his Certificate to the following:

Mrs Annette Williams	- Towyn & Aberdovey Branch.
Mrs Ruth Davis	- North Cornwall Branch.
Mr John Griffiths	- Tamworth Branch.
Mr Doug Leighton	- Birmingham Moseley Branch.
Mr John Watch	- Poole Branch.
Mr John Mason	- Worcester Branch.
Mrs Betty Dominiy	- Weymouth & Portland Branch.

Certificates will be presented at the Area Reunion in Torquay or as individually arranged. Many congratulations to all.

9. AREA MEMBERSHIP TROPHIES - 2015

Trophies have been awarded to the following Branches for their membership achievements in 2014. The trophies will be presented at the Area Reunion:

<u>Highest % Increase in Membership</u> (Branches with 150 Members or less)	WRAF Branch.
<u>Highest % Increase in Membership</u> (Branches with over 150 Members)	Wrekin Wellington Branch.
<u>First Branch to achieve 100% Renewal of Members</u>	Dursley & South Glos Branch.

10. AREA WINGS APPEAL TROPHIES - 2014

Trophies have been awarded to the following Branches for their Wings Appeal achievements in 2014. The Trophies will be presented at the Area Reunion:

<u>Highest Gross Per Capita</u>	North Cotswold Branch.
<u>Highest Gross Collection</u>	Torquay Branch.
<u>Highest % Increase in Gross Collection</u>	Llandaff & Ely Branch.

In addition, £10,000 Wings Certificates will be presented at the Area Reunion, or as individually arranged, to Cannock Chase, Cheltenham, North Cotswold, Plymouth, Swindon, Tamworth, Weston-super-Mare and Weymouth & Portland. A £15,000 Certificate will go to Birmingham Moseley, Christchurch, Cosford & District, Dursley & South Glocs and Poole Branch, a £20,000 Certificate will go to Solihull and Torquay. Many congratulations to all these recipients.

11. AREA BRANCH EFFICIENCY COMPETITION – 2014

The Winners of the Area Branch Efficiency Competition 2014, who have been put forward to the National Competition were as follows. Trophies will be presented at the Area Reunion.

Branches with 150 Members or less @ 31 Dec 13	Cannock Chase Branch.
Branches with over 150 Members @ 31 Dec 13	Barry Branch.

12. AREA BRANCH CLUB EFFICIENCY COMPETITION - 2014

The Winners of the Area Branch Club Efficiency Competition 2014, who have been put forward to the National Competition were as follows. Trophies will be presented at the Area Reunion.

Clubs whose parent Branch had 200 Members or less @ 31 Dec 13

Dawlish Branch.

Clubs whose parent Branch had over 200 Members @ 31 Dec 13

Tamworth Branch.

13. AREA WELFARE TROPHY - 2014

This is our sixth year that the Area has been pleased to present the Lightning Trophy for the individual or organisation which has made the biggest contribution to welfare in the Area over the past 12 months. Congratulations this year goes to Mr Hugh Thompson, HWO at Swindon Branch. Hugh is a most deserving winner of this award in recognition of his welfare work.

14. INTERESTED IN THE TYPHOON AIRCRAFT?

Repeat Article. We are running this again because the e-mail address was printed incorrectly last month. Here goes again! Would your Branch be interested in receiving a talk on the Typhoon aircraft? Mr Alan Woolley is very happy to oblige with a lively presentation that lasts approximately 45 minutes and includes 3 video clips. Yes – moving pictures! Although based in the South West, Alan would be happy to consider a journey. Feel free to contact Alan direct on 01398-332195 or at aawoolley@yahoo.co.uk.



15. RAFA CONCERT BAND

A very busy time approaches for our RAFA Concert Band as they look to support the Area with traditional performances and, of course, the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The Band is happy to offer music support for concerts, fundraisers, formal dinners and ensemble engagements. Here's a flavour of their upcoming activity:

- Sat 14 March – an Ensemble for a Reception, preceding the Mayors Ball at Weston-super-Mare.
- Sun 22 March – Area Conference and Reunion, Torquay.
- Sat 18 April - 'Music in the Air' Concert at the Blakehay Theatre, Wadham Street, Weston-s-Mare. Tickets on Sale now £10 & £9 from the Box Office 01934-645493 or at www.blakehaytheatre.co.uk



16. E-MAIL ADDRESSES.....



Repeat article.....Do we have your e-mail address? If you are not sure and you are happy to allow us to update your membership record then please get in touch. Electronic communications are so much more efficient and enable us to drive down our postage costs. Debbie Byam in the Exeter Office will be pleased to take your details (Debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk - 01392-462088 option 4).

17. WINGS APPEAL 'BANGER' CAR RUN TO VENICE

How do you fancy driving an old banger from Folkestone to Venice – and back maybe – all in aid of Wings. Please see Steve Colhoun's flyer enclosed.

18. AREA STAFF UPDATE

We are pleased to announce the arrival of a new Branch Support Officer. Alan Goudge will commence work in early March and is looking forward to meeting as many Branches as possible. Make sure you say hello at Area Conference! Alan is leaving the Royal Air Force after 37 years of service, having been a very active RAFALO and supporter of the St Mawgan Branch and Cornwall Region. His remit will be to cover the South West (as we know it in the Association) and the M4 corridor of South Wales. Work continues to recruit a second BSO who will cover the Midlands and Mid and North Wales.

Finally, we are pleased that Jan Elders will also be joining us as the new Assistant Area Welfare Officer in the Midlands, supporting Tracey out of our Moseley Office. Jan has a wealth of experience both in welfare delivery and with the RAF Association. Please say hi at Conference!

19. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

West Glamorgan Region AGM at Conservative Club, Llanelli – 2 March.
Falmouth Branch AGM at the Turn 2 Starboard Conference Room, Falmouth Marina - 1030hrs – 7 March.
Service of Remembrance at the St Nazaire Memorial, Prince of Wales Pier, Falmouth – 1045hrs - 8 March.
Area Conference and Reunion at the Derwent Hotel, Torquay – 20/22 March 2015.
Sherborne Branch and Club AGM, Slessor Club, Long Street, Sherborne – 7.30pm – 25 March.
Cornwall County Armed Forces Day Thanckes Park (The Lawn) Torpoint – 20 June 2015.

Please contact the Exeter Office if there are significant events/dates you would like promulgated that maybe of interest to the wider membership. Many thanks.

Paul Baker - Area Director

My wild oats are mostly enjoyed with prunes and all-bran....

Enclosures:

1. Area Conference and Reunion Programme of Events.
2. Wings Appeal 'Banger' Run to Venice.