

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

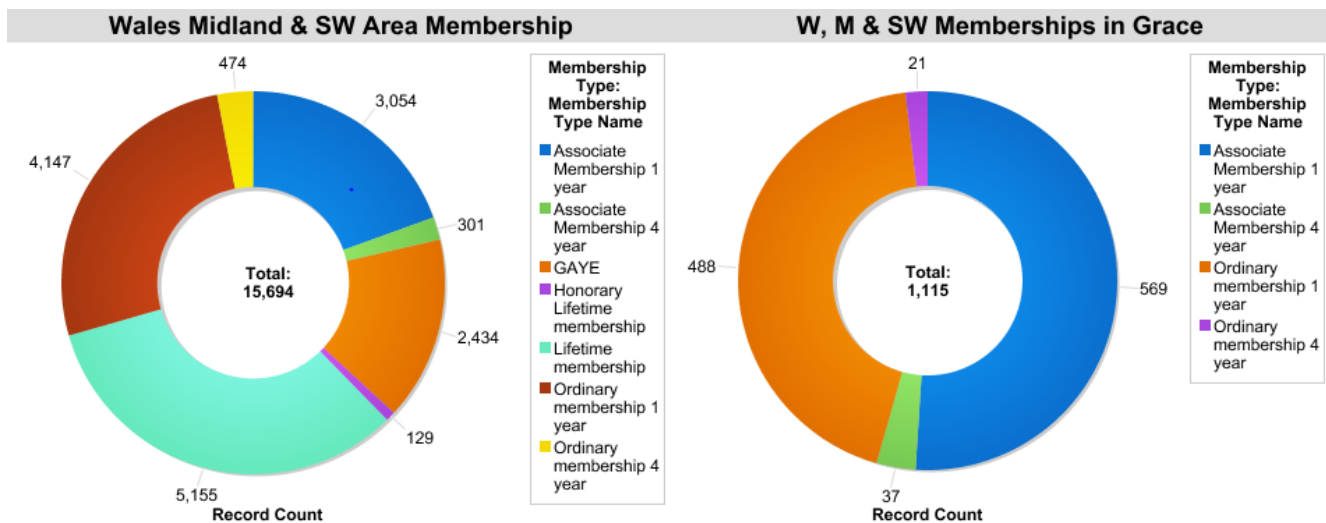
Newsletter

APRIL 2015

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. AREA MEMBERSHIP

It is great to see new members joining our Association and thank you for your efforts so early on in the year. However, we are about to move past the 'In Grace' or 'lapsing' period and I would expect our donuts to change and the total Area membership figure to reduce significantly. So – it is looking like we have around 1,115 lapsing members and that's our challenge. Good luck with your recruiting and please remember that direct debit payments are the way forward! Here are the numbers as at 26 March 2015.



Some members are still unsure about the services we can provide from Exeter in respect of membership. Please direct all your requests to Exeter if, for instance, you need an up-to-date Branch membership list, or notify a death, change of address or transfer.

Please remember Area HQ does not process 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 – great friends and servants of our Area:

- Mr Ken Evans, former Llanidloes Branch HWO.
- Mr Stuart Voden, former Chairman and HWO of the North Cornwall Branch.

3. THANK YOU FROM OUR AREA PRESIDENT!

The Area said goodbye to its President, Air Vice-Marshal Pat O'Reilly, at the Annual Reunion Weekend in Torquay and he wished for the following words to be promulgated:

I have been honoured to serve the Wales, Midland and South Western Area of the Royal Air Forces Association as its President for the last 7 years. Christine and I have greatly enjoyed the comradeship of all of the members and we were so sorry that she was unable to join me at our Reunion this weekend when John Tisbury presented me with such a magnificent farewell gift. I was simply lost for words when I tried to say thank you for the sword, so beautifully engraved, and apart from when Christine's father gave her away some 40 years ago, it is the best thing I have ever been given. Mind you, Christine tells me that that was a double edged sword.



Minutes of the Eleventh Area Annual general Meeting are enclosed with this Newsletter.

4. TURN TO STARBOARD

The RAF Association is very proud to be supporting Turn to Starboard (T2S) which offers a sailing experience for service personnel and families (serving and ex serving). There is an opportunity for some to achieve sailing qualifications. Those with a specific welfare need are prioritised. This is a Tri-Service charity and we are keen to increase the number of RAF Families attending. Please find enclosed a useful leaflet.

5. HERE'S SOMETHING THAT MAY HELP YOU!

This veterans hip and knee surgery service is operating across the UK as a NHS referral scheme. Please take a look at the enclosed leaflet.

6. VOLUNTEERING WITH THE RAF ASSOCIATION - UPDATE

We have been busy over the last month progressing with the Pilot, to recruit five new Caseworkers in the South East, working on the Recognition Policy for all volunteers and working on the plans for Annual Conference.

A report recommending ways to recognise our volunteers, will be submitted to Central Council on 18 April. We want to be able to credit your tireless work, as well as make plans for how we will thank new volunteers joining the team, alongside you. From the feedback we have gathered so far from you, we appreciate that many of you desire no recognition and a simple and genuine 'thank you' is enough. However, we want to be able to suggest to Areas and Branches a range of ways they can thank and recognise their volunteers. Examples include: certificates for Cadets, thank you cards for volunteers who you know will appreciate it and Area/regional celebrations to help welcome new volunteers. It will be down to individual Areas and Branches to decide what would work best for their volunteers.

At the Area Reunion for Wales, Midland and South West in Torquay we ran a workshop and met many active and enthusiastic members. Thank you for all the comments, suggestions and questions about how we take volunteering forward over the next year.



A word cloud created by members at the Wales, Midlands and South Western Area Reunion. *'Why do you volunteer?'*

7. HELP SHAPE THE ASSOCIATION'S RULES, REGULATIONS AND BYELAWS

As reported in the January issue of Air Mail, the group set up by Central Council to ensure that the Association's Rules, Regulations and Byelaws are 'fit for purpose' is looking for submissions.

The Governance Task and Finish Group, chaired by Dr Bryan Pattison, Vice-Chairman of Central Council has two objectives: to examine and comment on the Rules, Regulations and Byelaws of the Association and produce recommendations suitable for debate by Council, which can then be recommended to Conference 2016. The group will make recommendations following a three phase approach. The first is evidence gathering, to which all members are encouraged to contribute. The second phase is deliberation, reporting and recommending amendments to Council. The third phase will be consultation with Areas and Branches on these recommendations. The first two phases will be carried out this year, with the final submission to Council being circulated for discussion at Area Conferences in February 2016. Any necessary resolutions will be submitted to Conference 2016.

If you would like to make a submission to the group, you can email: rules.review@rafa.org.uk

or write to:

Rules Review Group
FREEPOST NEA 15647
117 ½ Loughborough Road
Leicester
LE4 5ND

This is your chance to influence the Association's Rules, Regulations and Byelaws for the benefit of members and our welfare beneficiaries, so please do take the opportunity to have your say.

8. THANKS TO OUR RAFALOs

It was great to see such strong RAFALO support at this year's Annual Reunion Weekend, pictured here with our National and Area Presidents. Thank you, RAFALOs, for your valuable support.



9. RAFALO UPDATE

This is the latest edition of the RAFALO Update, which includes information on changes to the Service.

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS LIST

Air Vice-Marshal I C Morrison CBE was promoted Acting Air Marshal with effect from 5 January 2015 and remains in post as Director Saudi Armed Forces Projects.

Air Vice-Marshal E J Stringer CBE to be Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) in the Ministry of Defence in March 2015 in succession to Major General P N Y M Sanders DSO CBE.

Air Commodore The Honourable R J M Broadbridge QHS to be promoted Air Vice-Marshal and to be Director Healthcare and Training, Headquarters Surgeon General with effect from 19 December 2014. This is a new post.

Air Commodore R J Knighton to be promoted Air Vice-Marshal and to be Assistant Chief of the Air Staff in the Ministry of Defence with effect from 23 January 2015 in succession to Air Vice-Marshal E J Stringer CBE.

Air Commodore I W Duguid OBE to be Typhoon Force Commander Royal Air Force Coningsby with effect from March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore P J Beach CBE who is leaving the Service.

Air Commodore S P Rochelle OBE DFC to be Assistant Chief of Staff Capability Development Headquarters Air Command in March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore G G S van den Berg whose next appointment is yet to be announced.

Air Commodore S J Shell OBE to be Chief of the Defence Staff's Liaison Officer to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington in June 2015 in succession to Brigadier F G Gedney OBE.

Acting Air Commodore J E Linter OBE was promoted Air Commodore on 18 November 2014 and is appointed Head Defence Engagement Strategy in the Ministry of Defence in February 2015 in succession to Commodore W Entwisle OBE MVO.

Group Captain J C Prescott to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Head Carrier Enabled Power Projection in the Ministry of Defence in March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore S P Rochelle OBE DFC.

Group Captain M J Blackburn to be Officer Commanding Royal Air Force Akrotiri in June 2016 in succession to Group Captain P D Kennett.

Group Captain J J Stringer to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Chief of Staff Operations Headquarters Air Command in July 2015 in succession to Air Commodore S J Shell OBE whose appointment as Chief of the Defence Staff's Liaison Officer to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington has previously been announced.

GENERAL

EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER

The Re-Forming of Number 12 (Bomber) Sqn As part of the planned drawdown of the Tornado GR4 Force, No II(AC) Sqn was due to disband as a Tornado unit in March 2015, when the Sqn number was to be re-established as a Typhoon sqn (see [IBN 46/13](#)). The decision to run on the Tornado GR4 Force with three frontline sqns until March 2016 means that an unused sqn number must be brought back into service.

No 12(B) Sqn disbanded as a Tornado sqn at RAF Lossiemouth in March 2014, where it had been based since January 1994 (see [IBN 24/13](#)). The Sqn first formed in February 1915 and has served with distinction in WWI and subsequent conflicts, including WWII, Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been based at RAF Marham previously and on re-forming it will deliver day and night precision attack, support to ground troops and tactical reconnaissance capabilities to UK Defence.

No II(AC) Sqn formed in 1912, making it one of the oldest fixed-wing flying sqns in the world. It has flown Tornado aircraft from RAF Marham since 1989. Its re-establishment as a Typhoon sqn is an element of the wider change programme in the RAF's combat air forces that includes the growth of the Typhoon Force and the introduction of the F35B Lightning II aircraft.

US Basing Footprint in Europe The US has selected RAF Lakenheath to be the first location in Europe to host 2 squadrons of F-35 aircraft. The first aircraft are scheduled to arrive at RAF Lakenheath in 2020. This will ensure the continued close collaboration between the RAF and the USAF and indicates the strength of the continued shared commitment to transatlantic security.

The Department of Defense has been reviewing its requirement for bases across Europe as part of their European Infrastructure Consolidation Review. The review confirms that the US has decided to close RAF Mildenhall and to consolidate the activities it undertakes at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth at RAF Croughton, resulting in the closure of RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth. Activities at RAF Fairford, Feltwell, Welford and Menwith Hill are unaffected by the review which, overall, demonstrates a US commitment to basing in the UK into the 2050s.

10. 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).

11. NEW HONOURS AND AWARDS PROCESS

In an effort to strengthen the honours and awards system and give our people the best possible chance of recognition a new form has been developed which Branches are encouraged to use when considering the submission of citations – enclosed with this Newsletter. Please don't hesitate to call Paul at the Exeter Area HQ if you wish to discuss a potential narrative.

12. COME TO FLOWERDOWN HOUSE AND ENJOY YOUR PERFECT BREAK

Repeat Article. 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.



12. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Cornwall County Armed Forces Day Thanckes Park (The Lawn) Torpoint – 20 June 2015.
Northern (Midland) Region Meetings at the County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 29 April, 27 May, 24 June, 29 July, 30 September, 28 October, 25 November.
East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at the Aberdare RAFA Club - 6 June 2015 (2pm).

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

Funny – I don't remember being absent-minded.....funny – I don't remember being absent minded

Enclosures:

1. Area Eleventh Annual General Meeting Minutes.
2. Turn 2 Starboard.
3. Honours and Awards Form.
4. Hip and Knee Surgery Service.