

The Royal Air Forces Association
Wales, Midland & South West
Area Headquarters & South Western Office
RAFA House, Chancel Lane
Pinhoe, Exeter, EX4 8JU
Tel: 01392 462 088
Email: southwestern@rafa.org.uk
www.rafa.org.uk

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

AUGUST 2015

Newsletter

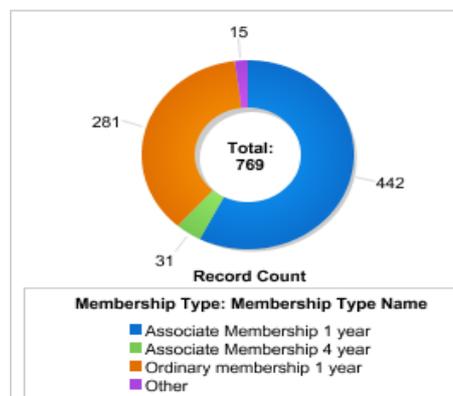
PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP – AND – DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN EVENTS

1. BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMBERSHIP TARGET – UPDATE

Our Membership total had reached 60,216, a net gain of 90 in the last 6 days meaning that we need just under 1100 to reach our Battle of Britain target by the 15th of September. While this was a relatively slow week, it is worth reflecting on July as a whole with 559 new Members recruited. Overall, July was our second best month for new Members. So what, you might say. However, 559 recruited in one month would have made July the best month in 2014 and 2013 and..... 2012 and..... In fact the best month in 10 years if we hadn't recruited 738 back in March! Another 250 Members renewed during July thus our net gain after the inevitable and sad losses through Members passing away was about 700. With 250 Members renewing their Memberships in July means that over 4000 Members have decided to come back to us so far this year. Only 10,000 of our Members pay by Direct Debit so with 20,000 Life Members and 3,000 Four Year Members it means that nearly 30,000 pay by cash (cash, cheque and credit card), so anything we can do to encourage payment by Direct Debit is welcomed.

Thank you once again for your support in driving up our membership numbers. This is how the Area looks on 4 August in respect of lapsing.

Lapsed Members Expired 2014



2. AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS BY JOHN TISBURY, AREA COUNCIL CHAIRMAN – A MESSAGE TO RAFALOs

Your Association grows from strength to strength, recruiting is buoyant thanks to the efforts of all our members, and in Service recruitment continues to drive up the % of those serving who are members; so many thanks. Financially we are also in a good position having turned an operating surplus each year for the last few years, thanks again to all of you who have gone that extra mile to raise funds for us. So with these extra members and financial resources the Association is well placed to deliver comradeship, friendship, help and welfare support to those in need which is fantastic. However, as a registered charity with over 400 Branches and in excess of 60,000 members there is a need to have some sort of structure.

The direction and policy for the Association is laid down by Central Council, members of who are Trustees of the Charity. They have the ultimate responsibility, and if it all goes wrong they are the ones that go to jail! Annual Conference gives the views of the membership to Council, but it still remains for Council to determine the direction of travel. Having decided on the way forward Council leaves the day to day management of the Association to the Secretary General, his management team and the staff of the Association.

Beneath Central Council the Association is divided into 5 Areas; European and Overseas; Scotland and Northern Ireland; Northern; East and South East and the very best Area, Wales Midland and South Western, our Area. Each Area has a Council, in our case with 9 elected members and the Area RAFALO. The purpose of the Area Council is to oversee the activities of the Association in its area. In our case that stretches from the Staffordshire Moorlands to Lands End and all of Wales and half way across the UK, a huge geographical area. Area Council elects a Representative from its number to sit on Central Council to pass on its views and to contribute to debate over the Association's direction of travel, and to report back on the rationale and background to decisions. The Representative is a Trustee of the Association; the remainder of Area Council are not. Each Branch within the Area has a nominated Area Councillor who feeds into Area Council meetings the views of his or her Branches. Area Council, having determined what they would like to see happen in their Area, then either task their Representative to raise the issue with Central Council; or tasks the Area Director (in our case the inestimable Paul Baker in Area HQ in Exeter) and his staff to make things happen. Paul reports on the staff side to the Director of Membership and Operations at CHQ, so Central Council tasking to the Secretary General comes down through Paul if they affect our Area. The system works well. An important member of Area Council is the Area RAFALO who feeds into our deliberations your views and concerns about the Association's activities in our Area, so please make sure that you keep him in the loop; muttering quietly to yourself will change nothing; muttering to Vince will get issues into the open so that we can continue to develop the Association, so that it can continue its great work into the future. This will mean that we will be able to continue to support those serving; and that when you young people are ancient like me there will still be an Association to provide **you** with Friendship, Help and Support in your retirement. Finally, I would ask that you take every opportunity that you can to visit the Branches; you will always be made welcome, and your presence always enthuses and encourages our members to greater things; that connection with our Service is one of the main reasons that retirees join and stay with the Association, I cannot stress too strongly the positive effect that visits by serving personnel have on Branches. We look forward to seeing you!

Thank you again for your continuing support.

3. SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKET COLLECTIONS

Branches may be aware that Sainsbury's have introduced a new approach to Community activity across their stores, which means charity activities involving their customers now take place on specific weekends across the year. This may have led to your Branch having a Sainsbury's collection cancelled as it was outside of the charity weekend for that month.

The Wings Appeal team have been in contact with Sainsbury's who have kindly offered to look at any collections which were cancelled and see whether there is an opportunity to arrange them for another date. If your Branch has had a collection cancelled please could you email wings@rafa.org.uk or phone 0116 268 8758 stating the store name, postcode, start date and end date of the collection. We will then discuss these further with the Sainsbury's team and feed back to your Branch at the earliest opportunity.

4. BATTLE OF BRITAIN 75 – UPDATE

The RAF Association continues to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. A Salute to the Few was well attended at North Weald Airfield and the rain held off for a parade by the Band of the RAF Regiment at the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff.

The Battle of Britain webpages can be found at www.rafa.org.uk/battleofbritain and here you can find more information about Battle of Britain commemorative events around the country and stories from those that remember this important time in history.

The Service at St Paul's Cathedral at 11am on Tuesday 15 September is open to all RAF Association members and tickets are also available to the public. Although we extended the closing date for applications the tickets are going fast and the last few tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. You can register your interest to attend the Service at St Paul's via the webpage or by writing to the addresses below and we will keep a waiting list if the Service is oversubscribed. Names and contact details are required for each individual that wishes to attend and due to security on the day, only those with tickets and photographic ID will be admitted to St Paul's. Tickets have been allocated to everyone who applied for them before 20 July and further information and tickets will be sent out later this month.

We are hoping for a good turnout of Branch Standards at the St Paul's Service and are inviting Branch Standard Bearers to participate in this event with a Parade and Salute after the Service. Any Standard Bearers who wish to be involved should contact Mick Larkman, Branch Support Officer at mick.larkman@rafa.org.uk or call 0208 286 6667.

Any other queries can be directed to Kate on 0116 268 8796, battleofbritain@rafa.org.uk or by post to:

Battle of Britain Commemorations
RAF Association
117 ½ Loughborough Road
Leicester
LE4 5ND

5. VOLUNTEERING UPDATE

Volunteer Spotlight – Kit Hayman

Kit Hayman is the new Treasurer for the Hythe and Romney Branch. Kit joined us after a call for support from the Branch Chair, John Wild, came through to the Volunteering Team at Leicester.

Kit's father was in the RAF for 25 years, which is why she has always had an interest in the RAF. Kit's son found the advert we had placed on a free and local volunteering forum, detailing some key information about the Treasurer position. He then told his mother about it and she gave us a call to find out more. When I spoke to Kit, she told me that her father was an air gunner in World War 2, became a Sergeant and finally came out of the Air Force in 1965. During his time in the RAF her father was also a prisoner of war and had many stories to tell Kit about his varied experiences before he sadly passed away. Kit and her family have been fascinated with her father's career and this is why she has been so keen to get involved with the Association and keep his memory alive. I asked Kit what her experience in getting involved with the Hythe and Romney Branch has been like so far. She replied, 'They are an absolutely lovely bunch of people and have been so welcoming. The Association is about comradeship and I couldn't have been more welcomed when I went to the 'Brew for the Few' event that the Branch organised on Saturday.'

John Wild, Chair of the Branch said, 'It has been a great success in welcoming Kit to the Branch. She is very enthusiastic and is a delight to work with. Kit has had a handover with the outgoing Treasurer and is quite happy to take everything in her stride. At our next committee meeting, she will be the Treasurer. Kit has met the members of the committee as well as other Branch Members and she has fitted in really well. It's important not only to have the ability to carry out the role but to have the personality to get along with everyone involved. Kit has both. We have sent off Kit's membership application and she will shortly become a member and has mentioned her husband is interested in becoming a member as well.'

Talking about what Kit is most looking forward to being involved in next year, she told me she is most looking forward to 'getting it right and getting everything in place.' Kit went on to say that, 'With the help of the Branch it will come and I am looking forward to being able to cope with everything and get it right.'

Branches are encouraged to let us know if they have a vacancy for a volunteer, using the Branch Volunteer Vacancy Details Form, which is on the Member Portal or can be obtained by contacting volunteers@rafa.org.uk.

In other news...

We have started recruitment for ten Fundraising Team Leaders, in key areas, where it has been identified by the Fundraising and Membership Teams that no Branches are carrying out collections. In order to maximise our Wing's Appeal fundraising, we are going to be asking small teams of fundraisers, led by the Fundraising Team Leader volunteers, to undertake both street and premises collections on behalf of the Association.

The ten locations have been identified as: Blackburn, Burnley, Crewe, Brighton, Hemel Hempstead, Southend on Sea, Great Malvern, Hereford, Newport and Falkirk. If you would like to help with any collections in these areas, please let us know by emailing volunteers@rafa.org.uk or calling 0116 268 8794. Katharine Montgomery, Volunteer Manager
volunteers@rafa.org.uk

6. RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND – KEEPING BUSY!

Our Association Concert Band has been out and about, banging its drum on our behalf. Their latest update is enclosed with this Newsletter.

7. CALNE MOTORCYCLE MEET – RAF ASSOCIATION FRONT AND CENTRE!

Our Calne and District Branch would like to thank all members of the greater Calne community and motorcycle enthusiasts who visited their stand at the Annual Motorcycle show recently. This is the first year the Branch has presented in a more professional, corporate, style with a marquee and the result was a fantastic response from visitors both home and abroad. As a Branch Calne & District collect all year but this year they received a massive boost to the fund of £372 from the show, this is especially welcome especially in the 75th Battle of Britain Anniversary year. Many congratulations to those who made this happen.



8. RED BULL AIR RACE 2015

On the 15-16 August 2015, The Red Bull Air Race World Championship will be returning to Ascot Racecourse in the UK for the second year running. Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group, on behalf of Red Bull Air Race GmbH are delighted to offer RAFA a 10% discount on tickets. The enclosed leaflet may be of interest.

9. CONGRATULATIONS TO KIDDERMINSTER BRANCH



Taking an opportunity at the Severn Valley Railway in Kidderminster to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain and a wonderful 75 years of unbroken service from the Kidderminster Branch, Mr John Tisbury, Area Chairman, was pleased to present a certificate to the Branch Chairman, Mr Phil Thurston. Several Standard Bearers were present representing other Service organisations as well as members of No 156 (Kidderminster) Sqn ATC and serving member of the RAF. Well done to Kidderminster Branch!

10. KEY EVENTS COMING UP

Please do all you can to support these key events. Here goes:

First up is a Concert at **Wells Cathedral on Friday 21 August** starting at 7.30pm. This very special event will mark the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain with a performance by the RAF Association Concert Band accompanied by the Cheddar Male Choir. Tickets are now on sale with proceeds going to Wings Appeal. Please call the Wells Cathedral Box Office direct on 01749-672773. We really need your support. See you there!

Next up is a fabulous opportunity to commemorate the Battle of Britain once again with a Service at **Truro Cathedral on Sunday 13 September**. You'll see from the information enclosed with this Newsletter, we are looking to take up all 150 seats that have been allocated to the Association and, just as importantly, get as many Branch Standards on show as possible. Please take a moment to consider the details and get back to us as instructed.

And finally.....

Battle of Britain Service Westminster Abbey – Sunday 20th September 2015

As is customary the Association has been allocated a quantity of admission tickets for the Battle of Britain Service at Westminster Abbey. Twenty (20) Branch Standard Bearers are invited to form a Lining Party. Applications for admission tickets and Standard Bearers wishing to attend are to contact Naz Angha at South East Office Tel: 020 8286 6667 no later than **Monday the 17th August**.

11. CENOTAPH CEREMONY – LONDON – 8 NOVEMBER 2015

The Royal British Legion, on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, will be organizing the ex-service contingents attending the Parade and Service at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, on Remembrance Day, 8th November 2015. **Civilians are not permitted to parade in the Ex-Service columns.**

A representative of the Scotland & Northern Ireland Area will lay this year the Association's wreath; Stewards will also be positioned at the Cenotaph to lay wreaths on behalf of the detachments as they march past.

Contingents will assemble and disperse at Horse Guards Parade

Due to the number of personnel on parade the overall length of the march past has increased and I would ask you to ensure that your members are aware of the physical demands of standing in Whitehall for at least 1 hour and then marching for a distance of 1.5 miles, possibly in inclement weather. We have been asked to remind all on parade to help to ensure that behaviour and dress standards match the dignity of the occasion. There have been a few rather regrettable lapses that have offended the majority of those marching and the general public. In view of the current security arrangements, only holders of admission tickets will be allowed to join the parade. All participants are liable to a security search on the day.

The South East Office will be administering the ticket allocation for the event this year. Naz Angha would therefore be grateful to receive applications for tickets at your earliest convenience. Contact details: Naz Angha, RAFA South East Office, 3-5 Old Bridge Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 4BU Tel: 020 8286 6667 E-mail: naz.angha@rafa.org.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications for tickets at the South East Office is Tuesday 25th August

12. BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO – SATURDAY 28 AND SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2015

The RAF Association will be taking centre stage at this year's Birmingham International Tattoo which will take place in the Barclaycard Arena (formerly the NIA) on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 November 2015. Working together with RAF Music Services and our own Concert Band, the Tattoo will offer a final opportunity to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. In due course we shall start to make contact with as many Standard Bearers as possible – wouldn't it be great to have 75 Standards in the arena!

But for now – **don't miss this fabulous opportunity** to purchase tickets for the Tattoo through the Exeter Area Office. Priced at £15 per ticket on a first come, first served basis, every ticket sold will attract a 50% donation to Wings Appeal. A 'win-win' for our members and our Wings Appeal! If you wish to purchase tickets we can only accept debit/credit card transactions and we will dispatch your tickets forthwith. Please call on 01392-462088 options 3, 4 or 5.



13. OUR TEAM AT MOD ABBEY WOOD – READY TO TEE OFF ON 2 SEPTEMBER!

Repeat Article. MOD Abbey Wood is currently a hive of RAF Association activity which now includes a super charity golf day in aid of Wings Appeal. Please consider supporting this event and take a look at the enclosed poster!

14. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- North Wales Region Meeting at RAF Valley on 15 August, Wrexham RAFA Branch HQ on 21 November and Llangollen RAFA Club on 9 April 2016 – all starting at 2pm.
- East Glamorgan & Gwent Regional Meeting (2pm) Bargoed Blackwood Branch HQ – Sat 15 August 2015.
- RAF Association Concert Band performing at Wells Cathedral (7.30pm) – 21 August 2015.

- Falmouth Branch will be holding a Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Service at the Falmouth Parish Church of King Charles the Martyr at 1030am on the 6th of September 2015, followed by an unveiling Ceremony at the Falmouth Water Sports Centre of a Monument dedicated to the RAF 1102 Marine Craft Unit and Coastal Command Flying Boat Squadrons 209 & 240.
- Wreath Laying at Sea. Bodmin Branch will be holding their annual Wreath Laying ceremony at sea on the 6 September 2015, assembling on the Quay at Padstow at 1315hrs for sailing at 1345 hrs. For further details contact Parade Co-ordinator Peter Marlow at whippet258@btinternet.com or 01208 76373.
- Ellesmere Branch Garden Party and BBQ in aid of Wings Appeal at Nesscliffe Three Pigeons Hotel/Pub – (1.30pm to 6pm) 12 September.
- Barnstaple & North Devon Branch and North Cornwall Branch Battle of Britain, VE and VJ Parade at Kilkhampton Church on 20 September 2015. Muster Parade 10.30 March to a Church Service at 11.00 hrs.
- Weston-super-Mare Branch Battle of Britain Church Service – St John's Baptist Church, Lower Road – 10am on 20 September 2015.
- Northern (Midland) Region Meetings at the County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 30 September, 28 October, 25 November.
- Mid Wales Region Meetings at Brecon on 24 October, Tywyn on 26 March 2016 all starting at 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

Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back.

Enclosures:

1. RAF Association Concert Band – Newsletter.
2. Red Bull Air Race 2015.
3. Truro Cathedral Service of Commemoration – 13 September 2015.
4. MOD Abbey Wood Charity Golf Day – 2 September 2015.