

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](mailto:southwestern@rafa.org.uk)  
[www.rafa.org.uk](http://www.rafa.org.uk)

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

**OCTOBER 2015**

# Newsletter

***PLEASE KEEP FINDING THOSE POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS – WE ARE ON COURSE FOR ONE OF OUR BEST RECRUITING YEARS!***

## **1. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

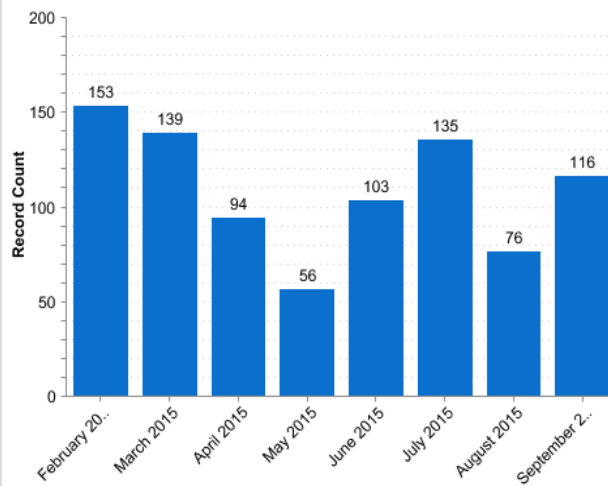
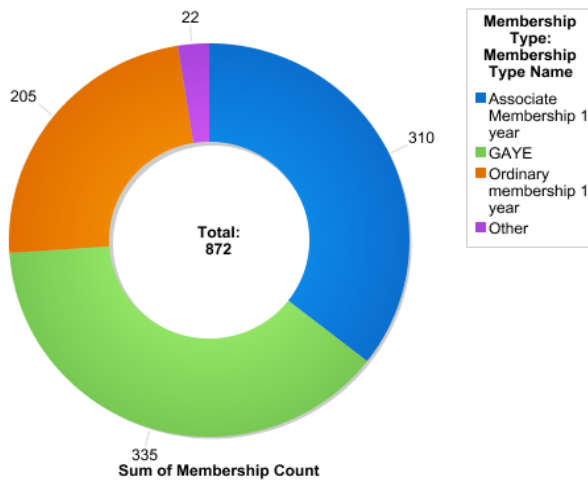
Good news. The number of new members recruited this year across the whole Association has now reached more than 3,800 surpassing the final numbers for 2014 – and still 3 months to go! Membership is showing growth in all age categories up to 75 years and we now have as many as 44% of today's serving RAF. It is also interesting to see that more than half our entire membership is aged under 65. Thank you for your recruiting efforts and for your determination as we continue to secure the future with younger individuals.

A message for those Branches that operate Clubs (whether they be Clubs that still operate under the Association's Standard Club Rules or independent trading under lease agreement). Is there anything more you can do to encourage all your local club goers to become fully paid up members of the Association? Get them signed up now and we can offer 15 months for the price of 12. Remember - £20.50 per year for ordinary members and £8.50 for full associates. We know that several of our Clubs have already taken this initiative.

**What can you do to help the Association grow?** We have found that just by asking people directly to join the Association we are getting great results! If all of us were out there getting just one Member, we would double in size; it is as simple as that. So please take a look at your Christmas card list this year (sending RAFA Christmas cards of course) and ask ex and serving RAF friends and family to join. In your email contacts you can send your friends a link to join online – just paste it in from the <https://www.rafa.org.uk/members/become-a-member> page. And if you use Facebook please ask your RAF and other friends to join AND also get them to ask THEIR friends. Make it easy for them by including the link to the joining page on the website.

Please don't let up – we are aiming to finish the year with our best recruiting numbers ever! Here's a snapshot of how the Area is shaping up with new members. You'll see September was a good month off the back of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorations.





## 2. AIR MARSHAL SIR PETER WALKER

It is with considerable sadness that the death of His Excellency Air Marshal Sir Peter Walker, Lieutenant Governor of Guernsey and President of the European Area of the Association, is announced. Air Marshal Walker died in the early hours of Sunday 6th September. A letter expressing condolence and sympathy on behalf of all members of the Association has been written by the President to Mrs Linda Walker and her family.

## 3. VOLUNTEERING UPDATE

After successfully deploying a large number of volunteers, from all over the UK, to collect donations for the Battle of Britain 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events, we'd like to thank you all for your help at all the many events that took place. Volunteers came from both the public as well as from serving and ex-serving personnel.

With your help, we have raised awareness of the work the Association does to help the RAF family as well as raised significant funds to support this work.

Thank you to all of you that volunteered in whichever role, much of which went on behind the scenes.

We will soon have our new webpages on volunteering, ready on our website where volunteers will be able to sign up for events near them, as well as find out information on the different volunteering roles available. We will continue to support requests from Branches for volunteers to join their teams and hope to have even more success once the new system is underway.

As part of the new volunteering information pages and registration system, volunteers will be able to access the Volunteer Handbook. This is currently being finalised and we will be consulting with representatives from Areas shortly for any final feedback.



In the coming months we will be writing to all our Branches to find out who we have volunteering in which roles, as well as asking how long they have been supporting us. In order to best recognise all our volunteers, we would like to find out who and where everyone is, as we know that a lot of great volunteering is taking place in our Branches every day. As part of our desire to recognise our volunteers, we will be aiming to send out long service volunteering pin badges to our volunteers in 2016. Please support us in this audit as this will help us to properly identify and recognise all our volunteers.



#### **4. NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM – REMEMBRANCE GARDEN MAINTENANCE**

We are currently in the process of enhancing and carrying out essential maintenance work in our RAF Association Remembrance Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. We envisage the entire project will take 4 weeks to complete starting from the 21st of September 2015 and therefore will not be accessible during this time. We thank you kindly for your patience and if you require any further information about the RAF Association Remembrance Garden, please do not hesitate to contact our Legacy and Memoriam Manager Vinny Manak on 0116 268 8791 or email [vinny.manak@rafa.org.uk](mailto:vinny.manak@rafa.org.uk).

#### **5. 2016 CARD AND DIARY ORDER FROM RAFATRAD**

A slightly different approach this year given there will be no October-December edition of Air Mail. Please find enclosed with this Newsletter a form to place your orders for Christmas cards/diaries/calendars and gifts – together with an advert showing all card designs this year. Please be sure to send your orders direct to Rafatrad.

#### **6. VACANCY ON AREA COUNCIL**

We are sending this out again as the response has been somewhat underwhelming.

Following a recent resignation from Council our Area is looking to co-opt a member from any of its Midland Branches, or indeed a member from our WRAF Virtual Branch, who might live in the Midlands area. Does this interest you?

As you may know, the purpose of 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 and his staff to make things happen.

Our Area Council is made up of 9 elected members, with 3 representing each constituent part of Wales, Midland and South West. Election to Area Council takes place on a 2 yearly cycle and will be contested again at the 2017 Area Annual General Meeting.

Please contact Paul Baker, Area Director, if you wish to understand more about the role of an Area Councillor and would like to represent the Association in the Midlands. Paul is contactable in the Exeter Office at 01392-462088 option 5 or [paul.baker@rafa.org.uk](mailto:paul.baker@rafa.org.uk). Thank you.

#### **7. BATTLE OF BRITAIN 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARADE AND SERVICE TRURO CATHEDRAL**

A huge thank you to those within the Association who helped make our Cathedral Service at Truro such a success; in particular the Cornwall Region Chairman and Branches. A special mention also to Warrant Officer (ATC) Liz Barnes for taking on the role of Standard Bearer Marshal and to our Standard Bearers who added real professionalism and dignity to the occasion. Thanks one and all!



## **8. 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR – POWs REMEMBERED IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

This year sees the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of allied prisoners of war from German camps. Many of them had been imprisoned for up to five years, often in harrowing conditions, but the process of gaining their freedom was for most, worse than what had gone before. In an episode that seems to be largely ignored in accounts of the Second World War, in the worst weather of January 1945, hundreds of thousands of allied prisoners were force-marched by their German captors for four months, away from the Red Army rapidly approaching from the east. Many did not survive, dying of cold, hunger, brutality or accidental allied air attacks by pilots who thought the columns of men were German troops.

Relatives of former Prisoners of War from all over the UK are gathering in Weston-Super-Mare on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October to commemorate their loved ones and to discover more about their experiences, and what life was like as a Prisoner of War. The event is so popular that it is fully booked and no more places are available. Helping them will be historian Dr. Anna Wickiewicz from the Polish Central Prisoner of War Museum, situated on the site of Stalag VIII B, one of the biggest POW camps for British and Commonwealth prisoners. Also on hand will be historical researcher Philip Baker, the organiser of this event, who has been researching prisoners of war for 15 years, and has taken many groups to visit former POW camps abroad. The Prisoner of War Weekend is taking place at the Royal Air Forces Association Branch Club HQ in Alexandra Parade, Weston-Super-Mare. It will include an exhibition entitled 'Stalag', which will be open to the public on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October from 10 am – 4 pm.

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October there will be an evening reception, presentation and viewing of the exhibition for local dignitaries and members of the RAF Association and other local organisations. Dr Anna Wickiewicz historian and musicologist, has been working at the Education and Exhibition Department of the Polish Central Prisoner of War Museum since 1999. Her PhD thesis was entitled 'Soldiers of the British Commonwealth in German Captivity during World War II'.

Philip Baker served in the Royal Air Force and is a member of the RAF Association. He began his research work into prisoners of war in 2000. His work attracts interest from all over the world, and his Prisoner of War website\* has received hits from more than 120 different countries. [www.lamsdorf.com](http://www.lamsdorf.com).

If you'd like more information please contact Mr Philip Baker [rafawingsweston@outlook.com](mailto:rafawingsweston@outlook.com).

## **9. COLLECTING AT MORRISON'S SUPERMARKET**

Our Fundraising Department have a message regarding collecting opportunities with the Morrison's supermarket:

A rumour was circulating that, in future, no military charities apart from the RBL will be given permission to collect in Morrison's at any time during the year. This is incorrect – in future stores have been told to allow only RBL collections during the period of the Poppy Appeal only (and therefore not to allow any other charities to collect at this time – military or non-military). However the remainder of the year is open for any charity to apply for a collection in their local Morrison's.

A number of branches had also been given the impression that, from 2016 onwards, Morrison's policy will change to a national partner approach whereby only their national charity of the year will be allowed to collect in store. This is also not the case. The change to their guidance is that they will not accept just a bucket collection on its own - they want to see an informative aspect to the charity's presence in store whereby the charity explains to customers how the money will be used. I know from experience that many of our branches are exemplars of excellent practice and always do this anyway. For those who don't, the Wings Team here stand ready to advise them – including explaining the marketing leaflets/displays which are available to order through the Wings order form/online.

The process of requesting collections/presence in store remains the same – it is devolved locally to individual stores and requests should be addressed to the store's local community champion. Should any branches experience any issues when requesting collections (some stores do seem to have interpreted the Morrison's policy incorrectly), please do refer them to the Wings Team at Leicester who will be happy to intervene on their behalf. Thank you.

## 10. NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO RAF ASSOCIATION TRUSTEE BODY, CENTRAL COUNCIL AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

For all Branch Secretaries – please bring this to the attention of your Branch Committee.

Central Council. Nominations are invited for suitably qualified members to fill the eight elected places on the Royal Air Forces Association's Trustee body, the Central Council.

Annual Conference Committee. Nominations are also invited for suitably qualified members to fill the three elected places on the Annual Conference Committee (ACC). The Annual Conference is the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and an important focus for networking, social events and discussion.

Please note the closing date for all nominations is 18 November 2015. Paperwork is enclosed with this Newsletter.

***A couple of images from the RAF Cosford Battle of Britain Parade and Service held on Sunday 6 September. A well-attended Service on a beautiful sunny morning! Thank you to everyone who took part.***



## 11. DO YOU KNOW MASTER PILOT BROOKFIELD

A request from a member.

I am looking for a way of contacting Master Pilot Brookfield or his family. He was an instructor at RAF Linton on Ouse in my time May to August 1959, who was instrumental in launching my subsequent career in aviation, and who deserves my thanks for pointing me in the right direction in landing a Piston Provost! If you could assist I would greatly appreciate your help.

Tim Bolt. [timbolt321@gmail.com](mailto:timbolt321@gmail.com) 01626772794.

## 12. LATEST RAFALO UPDATE

Here's the latest information on changes to the RAF, provided as ever by one of our senior RAFALOs, Sqn Ldr Ady Morris.

## **EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER**

**Tornado GR4 Squadron Extension.** It had been announced that the Tornado Force would reduce from 3 to 2 front line squadrons in March 2015, in line with the planned drawdown of the RAF Tornado Force. Subsequently, it was announced that the third front line squadron would be retained for a year due to the key role the Tornado Force was playing in current operations. Due to the sustained nature of the coalition air campaign against ISIL in Iraq, a decision has been made to retain the third Tornado GR4 squadron for an additional year. This will sustain 3 front line squadrons based out of RAF Marham until 31 March 2017.

**Renaming of the Ministry of Defence Hospital Units (MDHUs).** Following the closure of UK Military Hospitals the concept of MDHUs embedded within the National Health Service (NHS) was formulated to provide peacetime treatment for Service patients and to assist with training of Service secondary healthcare personnel. Further changes in the NHS under the Health and Social Care Act (2012) have driven significant changes to the way secondary healthcare for military personnel is now commissioned from the NHS. Primary healthcare providers now refer all Service patients into standard NHS secondary healthcare pathways when required. Consequently, the role of the MDHU has moved away from delivering patient care and is now primarily focused on coordinating the delivery of suitably qualified and experienced military secondary healthcare personnel for operations. Accordingly, there is no longer any requirement for the Military Patient Administration Cell (MPAC) and this has been disbanded. Reflecting the changes above, MDHUs were renamed on 1 Aug 15 to 'Defence Medical Group'.

**A400M.** The third UK A400M took off from the assembly plant in Seville, Spain and landed at its new home at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire on 5 July. Delivery of the third operational aircraft will allow the RAF to start developing its use, whilst continuing to grow the experience of the aircrew, who will see four more A400M Atlas delivered in the next few months.

**Air Seeker.** The second Airseeker (Rivet Joint) Signals intelligence plane is expected to be delivered to the RAF in Sep 15, seven months early and will be operational shortly after that in the skies above Iraq and Syria.

**Regulation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) and Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS)** In recent years there has been a significant growth in the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) both for military and civil purposes. In the military context there are a number of Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) that were acquired urgently for use in Operations that are now being brought into core and which deliver a range of vital military capabilities. In the commercial context, advances in mobile and cellular technology have enabled development of small RPA such that they can now be purchased cheaply by any enthusiast online or in electronics and toy shops. These small RPA are being used to fulfil a wide range of tasks from casual leisure use, professional media and journalism, survey and inspection to the provision of security services. In the coming years it is expected that both military and civil usage of large and small RPA will continue to grow and proliferate and, while it is entirely appropriate that they do so, the increased use of these RPA is not without risk which must be managed appropriately; examples of such risks include the threat posed to manned aviation, the potential danger to parties on the ground and privacy concerns associated with the data they may collect in civil use. The Military Aviation Authority (MAA) is the regulator for the Defence Air Environment (DAE1) and the regulations covering military registered RPA and RPAS are available at the MAA's website

**The Defence Technical Training Change Programme** The Secretary of State for Defence announced on the 9th September the future of the Defence College of Technical Training (DCTT) and its Defence Technical Training Change Programme (DTTCP).

The DCTT comprises of four schools: the Defence School of Aeronautical Engineering (DSAE); the Defence School of Communications and Information Systems (DSCIS); the Defence School of Electronic and Mechanical Engineering (DSEME); and the Defence School of Marine Engineering (DSMarE). These schools are based in locations across the UK, at HMS SULTAN in Gosport, RAF Cosford, MOD St Athan and Blandford, Bordon and Arborfield Garrisons.

The Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME) schools are in the process of moving from Bordon and Arborfield to MOD Lyneham, under Tranche 1 of the DTTCP.

The DTTCP was originally established to take forward one of the key outcomes from the Defence Training Review; the need to transform the way technical training is delivered to the Armed Forces. The programme continues to seek ways to: rationalise the training estate in line with Defence objectives; reduce the military manpower involved in the delivery of training; reduce the time taken for personnel to be trained; and maintain training to the standards required by all three Services.

Rationalisation of the technical training estate was being implemented in a phased manner, split into a series of 'tranches', the first being the relocation of the REME Schools from Bordon and Arborfield to MOD Lyneham. For the subsequent tranches of the programme, the intent had been for consolidation of additional DCTT elements at MOD Lyneham. It had been planned that three subsequent DTTCP tranches would see the move of DCTT training delivered at the four schools located at RAF Cosford, Blandford Garrison, HMS SULTAN and MOD St Athan onto MOD Lyneham. Re-evaluation of the future tranches of the programme, however, has determined that the consolidation of the whole of DCTT onto a single site at MOD Lyneham is not the best solution.

The revised DTTCP will result in the Defence School of Marine Engineering and the Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School remaining at HMS Sultan. It will also see No. 1 School of Technical Training, the Aeronautical Engineering & Management Training School and the No. 1 Radio School remaining at RAF Cosford and subject to further work, these schools will be joined at RAF Cosford by No. 4 School of Technical Training from MOD St Athan.

### **13. MONUMENT PLAQUE UNVEILING – RAF MARINE CRAFT AT 1102 MCU FALMOUTH**

6 September was a day to remember for many who gathered at the unveiling of the Monument Plaque to mark the service of the RAF Marine Craft at 1102 MCU Falmouth. With Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller in attendance together with Cornish dignitaries, a dedication to the Monument was made by Reverend Wing Commander Andrew Turner. Grateful thanks go to Lance Smale from our Falmouth Branch who played a key role in ensuring the Association was front and centre!



### **14. FOR BRANCH MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES – NOTIFICATIONS OF ANY CHANGES**

#### **Repeat Article.**

We really do need one functioning e-mail address for every Branch whether that is the Branch Secretary or in some cases the Branch Membership Secretary so that notifications regarding membership can be communicated quickly and efficiently. Debbie Byam at the Exeter Office will send notifications **only if there are changes** electronically to the Membership Secretary as her first option and then to the Branch Secretary. Please get in touch if you are a Branch Membership Secretary and we do not have your e-mail address - [debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk](mailto:debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk).

## 15. AREA CONFERENCE AND REUNION WEEKEND – 4 TO 6 MARCH 2016

How time passes! Did you know that next year's Area Annual Conference and Reunion Weekend will take place at the Cheltenham Chase Hotel in Brockworth, Gloucestershire, over the weekend 4 to 6 March 2016. You do now.....

We've negotiated a super deal and now invite you to make a direct booking with the hotel by calling the central reservations team on 0845-074-0060 or go direct to the hotel on 01452-519988. **This bit is important.** When making your booking please be sure to say **RAF Association** (there is an RAF Reunion taking place later in the year and we'd hate to find you booked into the wrong event!).

The deal:

- Based on a double or twin room for double occupancy, 2 nights dinner, bed and breakfast, 3-course dinner on Friday and Saturday evening - £125 per person per weekend.
- Single occupancy supplement - £30 per room per night.
- Saturday only – 1 night stay, 3-course Saturday evening dinner and breakfast - £77.50 per person.
- Dinner only on Saturday evening - £35 per person.

We hope to offer a full and informative programme over the Weekend and Area Council is considering the content. One initiative we are hoping to take forward is the scrapping of the Pooled Fare Scheme – a rather cumbersome and out-dated approach. Instead we hope to cover the full costs of one delegate per Branch so that Branches do not have to pay. Although participation at Area Conference is relatively strong, we want to encourage as many Branches as possible. We'll come out for delegate details in due course. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you struggle with your accommodation booking.

## 16. RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND – ARMISTICE DAY CONCERT – WED 11 NOVEMBER

Here's a superb opportunity to enjoy another performance by our Association Concert Band as they take part in this world-wide wave to mark the music of the Great War.

Get along to the Blakehay Theatre, Wadham Street, Weston-Super-Mare on Wednesday 11 November. Starting at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced at £5 and available from the Box Office 01934-645493 or go online at <http://blakehaytheatre.co.uk/>. **Music of the Great War** is a five year project to use music of the period to educate and engage schools, colleges, town bands, and the wider public across the UK and the world to learn in a positive way about the events, the experience of the troops involved from all sides, and how music played its part.

This year, to commemorate the centenary of the Great War a specially arranged medley of songs of the Great War has been created. The medley has been arranged for bands to rehearse and eventually perform on the 11 November 2015. It brings together some of the most popular tunes played, sung and performed by the men and women of the time – in the trenches and on the various home fronts.

With the support of many countries and organisations, on the 11 November the medley will be first played in New Zealand and Australia. It will ripple east across the world being performed in countries like India and Pakistan before hitting Europe and onwards to include performances in Canada and the Caribbean. This could become one of the most played pieces of music in a 24-hour period. In Britain, there will be performances across the country, including some at key events and sites involving a wide range of military and non-military personnel. The medley includes: It's a Long Way to Tipperary; Your King and Country Want You; Good Bye-ee; Oh! It's a Lovely War; Hello! Hello! Who's Your Lady Friend; Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty; Mademoiselle from Armentieres; There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding; If You Were the Only Girl in the World; Pack Up Your Troubles (In Your Old Kit Bag); Old Soldiers Never Die/Last Post. We are pleased to be supporting various service charities from profits on sales of this publication.





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

### Repeat Article.

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 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Our Area is leading again on this event and the team will be making contact with as many Standard Bearers as possible so that we have a very colourful and fitting presence.

### DON'T FORGET

You have a 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 will accept debit/credit card transactions as well as cheques and will dispatch your tickets forthwith. Please call on 01392-462088 options 3 or 4.



## 18. AREA WELFARE SEMINARS – LAST MINUTE.COM!

By the time this Newsletter hits the streets there will be just days before our first Area Welfare Seminar at Llandaff & Ely Branch HQ on Thursday 8 October. Are you booked in? Please join us by calling Debbie Byam in the Exeter Office on 01392-462088 Option 4 or at [debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk](mailto:debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk). It's not just for Branch HWOs – anyone is welcome! We'll be providing updates on general welfare, volunteering and befriending as well opportunities to discuss Branch and Club related activity. We also have external speakers from RAFBF and Age UK. A buffet lunch will be provided at a cost of £10 per person (legitimate Branch expense).

## 19. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Area Welfare Seminars on 8 October at Llandaff & Ely Branch and RAF Shawbury on 29 October.
- Northern (Midland) Region Meetings at the County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 28 October and 25 November.
- Mid Wales Region Meetings at Brecon on 14 November, Tywyn on 26 March 2016 all starting at 2pm.
- North Wales Region Meeting at Wrexham RAFA Branch HQ on 21 November and Llangollen RAFA Club on 9 April 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**

***An old friend is better than two new ones – unless they are new RAF Association Members!***

Enclosures:

1. 2016 Card and Diary Order from Rafatrad including advert.
2. Nominations for Election to RAF Association Trustee Body, Central Council and Annual Conference Committee.