

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

APRIL 2016

Newsletter

Updated Branch Membership Lists are on their way – if you haven't already received it!

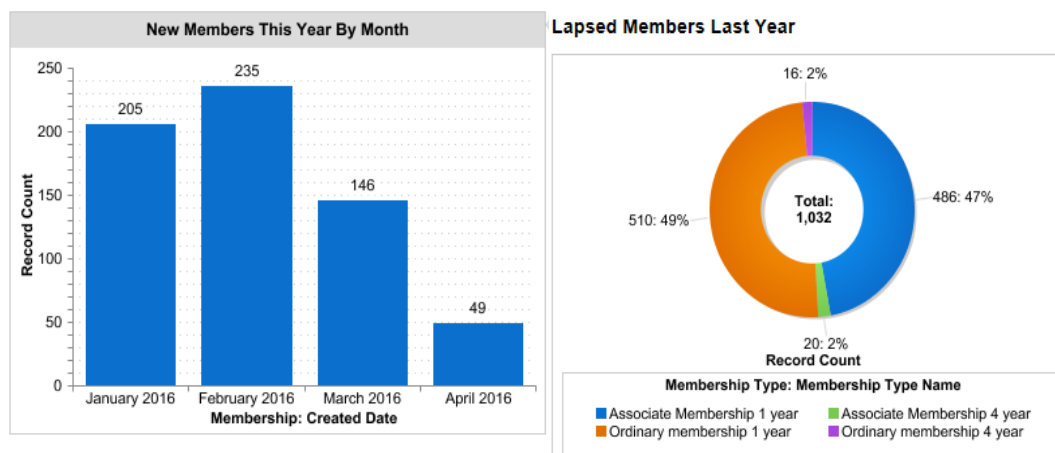
1. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A very sincere thank you for your patience as we now look to ensure every Branch has an updated Membership List. Please don't forget – we can only do this if your Branch has returned a signed data protection agreement form to Debbie at the Exeter Office.

The good news! March saw the Association's total recruiting in 2016 reach 2,016 (a bizarre coincidence of the numbers!) which means in 3 months we have recruited as many new members as we did in the first 6 months of last year - a fantastic result – thank you! The station recruiting efforts and the conversion of club members to Associate Members is working and the month of March alone brought in 750 new Members making it the best month for some time. In respect of our Area recruiting efforts, these numbers show we are doing our bit. The real task once more is to reach out and connect with those whose membership lapsed on 31 March and you'll see we have as many as 1,032 in this category. In May the Association will launch the 'Keeping in Touch' campaign that will see our lapsed members being contacted to check on their welfare. Please don't let this get in the way of your local initiatives.

A question! From the following - which do you think is now the largest age group of members across the Association? 25-30 years old, 45-50 years old, 70-75 years old. *Answer is at the foot of this Newsletter (which means you have to read everything in between!).*

Membership



2. BRANCH NAME CHANGE

Please note that with effect from 1 April 2016, our Trowbridge Branch has changed its name by the authority of Central and Area Council to Trowbridge and West Wiltshire.

3. TURN TO STARBOARD

Many of you will know the Association is a very keen supporter and partner of the registered Charity Turn To Starboard which uses sail training to support Armed Forces personnel affected by military operations as well as retired and serving personnel and their families. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a breakdown of opportunities coming up this year.

4. VOLUNTEERING UPDATE

The Volunteering Team will be present at Annual Conference at Blackpool next month and look forward to meeting many of you there. The team will be in the market place during the weekend to hear from you about your volunteering and to discuss any requirements you may have for your Branch.

Come prepared! Please bring along details of any volunteering vacancies you may have for your Branch. You can pick up a copy of the 'Branch Volunteer Vacancy Details Form' on the Member Portal or by contacting the team in Leicester.

As you know, we have been undertaking a Branch Audit so we may recognise all of our volunteers and have had many of the volunteer audit forms returned. Thank you for your help with this. If you are yet to return the forms for your Branch, please do bring them along with you to Conference and pass them to the team.

We are very excited to show you the new website and registration system that we have created for volunteers and we will demonstrate how the vacancies search works, where we can advertise the requirements for your Branch. If you are able to complete volunteer vacancy form whilst at the event, we can advertise it on our site for you during the weekend and begin recruitment straight away!

During the weekend, we will also have a number of resources for you to have a look at or take away with you to hand out to potential new volunteers for your Branch. If you would like to contact the team before Conference, please do so on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or call 0116 266 5224.



5. RAF & ALLIED AIR FORCES MONUMENT SERVICE – PLYMOUTH HOE – SATURDAY 25 JUNE

Repeat Article. This is an early 'heads-up' to all Branch and Regional Standard Bearers.

The RAF & Allied Air Forces Monument Service Committee is looking to swell the numbers of Association Standards and invite Branches to consider this Service which will be held at Plymouth Hoe on Saturday 25 June commencing at 0930hrs. Clearly there is likely to be some diary conflict with local Armed Forces Day

celebrations, but if you are interested in parading your Standard then please make direct contact with the Committee Chairman, Wing Commander Francis Reis RAFVR(T) at francis.reis@plymouth.ac.uk.



6. AIR CADET ORGANISATION 75TH ANNIVERSARY – TORCH RELAY

To mark this very special 75th Anniversary year for the Air Cadet Organisation, a UK-wide Torch Relay has been organized that will engage Sqn Cadets from all four corners of the country. Wouldn't it be great if your Branch could support their efforts as the Torch passes through or close to your town during the Summer. Please give some consideration as to how you or your Branch could help the relay on its way. Enclosed with this Newsletter is the latest plan – please remember – it's not our plan – we are simply getting the information out there.

More can be obtained from either Sqn Ldr John Goggin (ratto.waleswest@aircadets.org), or Sqn Ldr Graeme Hughes (ACO-WHQ-HantsIOW-WexO@mod.uk).



7. IMAGES OF AREA CONFERENCE AT THE CHELTENHAM CHASE

Here's a couple of images (to wet your whistle) from our recent Area Conference Reunion Weekend at the Cheltenham Chase. More to follow!



8. P&O CRUISES – MILITARY BENEFITS

One of our stalwart members has spotted a new opportunity with P&O cruises who are offering additional 'on board' spending money for serving and retired personnel. The amount of on board spending money per person, is applicable for the 1st and 2nd passengers only (1st only for Princess), and is available to UK citizens, depending on the duration of the cruise. As with everything there are conditions, one of which is proof of Service so an RAF Association Retired Service Card might help some of you - available through our website at the following link - <https://www.rafa.org.uk/members/membership-types/retired-service-card> or through Brian Fare at CHQ on brian.fare@rafa.org.uk.

If you already have proof of service then you might wish to contact P&O Cruises direct on 01246-819819 and speak to your cruise consultant. Happy sailing.

9. RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND ENGAGEMENTS FOR 2016

Lots of great opportunities are coming your way to enjoy our Concert Band; here's some of their engagements (more to follow!):

- Saturday 23 April (7.30pm start) at the Blakehay Theatre in Weston-super-Mare. Music in the Air, Spring Concert.
- Saturday 21 May (7.30pm start) at the Helicopter Museum, Weston-super-Mare. A Classical Concert.
- Date to be decided, Playing at the opening of the refurbished 'Ferry Pilots' Crew Room and Control Tower on the old Weston-super-Mare Airfield.
- Friday 17 June at the National Memorial Arboretum in support of the RAF Association Annual Service of Dedication.
- Saturday 25 June supporting the Armed Forces Day at Whitchurch nr Bristol.
- Sunday 31 July on the Bandstand in Grove Park at Weston-super-Mare (other bandstand performances in other towns are very likely!).

10. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- North Wales Region AGM at Llangollen RAFA Club on Sat 9 April at 2pm.
- Mid Wales Region Meeting at Cardigan on Sat 16 April at 2pm.
- The Trebah Military Day will be held on Sunday the 5 June 2016 at Trebah Gardens Nr Mawnan Smith, gates open at 10.00 am.
- Royal Cornwall Show – 9-11 June 2016.
- RAF & Allied Air Forces Monument Service will be held on Plymouth Hoe on Saturday 25 June 2016 at 9.30am.
- RNAS Culdrose Air Day 28 July 2016.
- Red Arrows display - Falmouth Wednesday 10 August 2016 at 6 30pm.
- The Falmouth Branch Battle of Britain Service will be held at the Falmouth Parish Church of King Charles The Martyr on Sunday 4 September 2016 at 10.30am.
- Wreath Laying Service at Sea on Sunday 11 September (date change from 25 Sep) sailing from Padstow Harbour at 11.30am (organised through our Bodmin Branch – this is a unique Service. Real flowers please as part of any wreath).

Anything we've missed or you'd like published – let us know!

Paul Baker – Area Director

25-30 years of age.....

Enclosures:

1. Turn To Starboard Sailing Opportunities.
2. Air Cadet Organisation 75th Anniversary Torch Relay.