

October 2018



# Wales, Midland and South Western Area Newsletter

The charity that supports the RAF family

The Royal Air Forces Association  
Wales, Midland & South Western  
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PLEASE GIVE US YOUR VIEW  
[www.mi-vote.com/rafa](http://www.mi-vote.com/rafa)

We would like your opinion on an important issue.

Whether you actively participate or not, you are a member of an Association branch. Currently, each branch has a delegate who represents all the branch's members at Annual Conference. In some cases, that delegate represents the view of hundreds of members. Individual members do not have a personal vote.

At the Association's 2018 Annual Conference, held in May, the delegates passed a resolution by 82% for the Association to undertake a study into the way Council elections and Annual Conference resolutions are carried out. It said: "This Conference resolves that Council should undertake a study into the feasibility, whereby, all members of the Association have the right to vote on Association elections and resolutions, through a plebiscite (a direct vote) of all the membership. Reporting back its findings, along with any details of any proposed changes (if appropriate) to the Association's governance documents and administrative structure to effect the findings, to Annual Conference 2019."

We are therefore asking if you think members of the Association should have the right to vote on Association Council elections and Annual Conference resolutions through a plebiscite (the vote of the membership). This means that each

member would have the opportunity to vote directly on any raised issue, rather than being represented by their branch delegate.

To undertake this study on behalf of Council, we are working alongside an independent election provider called Mi-Voice, who will help us find out what our members think. You have from 2 October through to midnight on 4 November 2018 to express your view. We have endeavoured to contact every member, but do spread the news: every member's view counts and we want to hear from you.

To respond online, have your membership number to hand and visit the Mi-Voice website: [www.mi-vote.com/rafa](http://www.mi-vote.com/rafa). For technical support, contact Mi-Voice on: +44 (0)2380 763 987, or email: [support@mi-voice.com](mailto:support@mi-voice.com).

For any other membership enquiries, including any query you may have concerning your membership number, please call the Association on: 0800 018 2361.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**Air Vice-Marshal John Cliffe** CB OBE  
Chairman, Royal Air Forces Association

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[www.mi-vote.com/rafa](http://www.mi-vote.com/rafa)

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen  
Registered Charity 2286686 (England & Wales), 5C037673 (Scotland).



## **AREA CONFERENCE AND REUNION WEEKEND – MARCH 2019**

Please sit tight for just a little longer as we put the final elements of the 2019 Area Conference and Reunion package together, so that you can go ahead and book your accommodation.

Keep the weekend free please (Friday 22 to Sunday 24 March 2019) – Crowne Plaza Hotel on the Plymouth Hoe. Package costs will be as competitive as we can make them and we hope to also provide a link to discounted rail travel for conference goers.....let the train take the strain!

We'll get back to you as soon as we are able

### **UPDATED STANDARD BEARER TRAINING VIDEO**

Calling all RAF Association Standard Bearers! You may wish to know that an updated training guide has been prepared to help standard bearers when on duty. The following You Tube link will cover the main topics such as care and maintenance of your standard and equipment, standard bearer dress, ceremonial positions and drill movements. A DVD copy will be available in due course and we shall let you know when these are ready to order.

<https://youtu.be/3M7a-tNzqf8>

## **THE BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SATURDAY 24 AND SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2018**

Standard bearers have already been invited to attend this year's Birmingham International Tattoo which will be held at the 'Arena Birmingham' (formerly Barclaycard Arena).

Several Branches in and around Birmingham take part in the Tattoo every year – but 2018 provides a fabulous opportunity to create something special and 'sign off' this unique year in style.

Many standard bearers will remember the last time we gathered on mass for the Tattoo in 2015 where we paraded as many as 59 standards. It looked amazing and most definitely coloured the Tattoo light blue!

2018 is our opportunity to do it all again and bring together as many as 100 standards from across our Association as a final salute to this RAF centenary year.

Your Branch standard bearer will be in the spotlight and in front of a 10,000 strong paying audience!

If your Branch standard bearer wishes to participate then please contact me, Debbie, in the Exeter office on tel: 01392-462088 or email: [debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk](mailto:debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk)

Branches will be required to cover the cost of standard bearers' accommodation and a proportion of travel. Partners, wives and families will need to buy a ticket. Please see next paragraph and link for tickets at a reduced price of £16 plus £1 booking fee.

### **TICKETS FOR THE BIRMINGHAM TATTOO**

By purchasing a ticket from us you will be making a significant contribution to the RAF Association Wings Appeal which enables us to support those in need. We have managed to negotiate reduced ticket prices at £16 per ticket including a £1 booking fee.

Secure your tickets - <https://rafa.ticketlight.co.uk>

For either Saturday 24 November or Sunday 25 November. Your transaction will provide an event e-ticket which must be exchanged for your seating tickets when you arrive at the Arena Birmingham Box Office (RAF Association Desk) located immediately next to the Box Office on the Arena Floor level to the right of entrance E. This is accessible from both the north and south car parks.

If you are unable to purchase tickets online then please call Ian Campbell, Branch Support Officer, on 07584577064, who will provide assistance.

### **AREA VOLUNTEER UPDATE**

Please see attachment/enclosure for updated information.

Our Area Volunteer Coordinator, Lucie Paddison, has provided a useful update – attached.

### **SPEAR PHISHING – DON'T TAKE THE BAIT**

With the increase in potential scams the enclosure/attachment is most definitely worth a read!

## ST ATHAN (BRECON RAFALO) CPL MATT PICKERSGILL

Corporal Matt Pickersgill from St Athan (Brecon RAFALO). Hiked in Norway raising money for the branch.



On a cliffs edge...an amazing photograph, raising funds for the RAF Association.



## MID-SOMERSET SHOW RAF AIR CADETS ART COMPETITION

Continuing the series of events to mark the centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force, the Mid-Somerset Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) reports on the Mid-Somerset

Show and the Battle of Britain Service at St Cuthbert's, Wells:

The high spot, of the Mid-Somerset show held at Shepton Mallet on 19 August 2018, was the RAF Air Cadets Art Competition sponsored by the RAF Association Mid-Somerset Branch, in memory of the former President Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Severne. Cadets from the local Somerset Squadrons of the Air Cadet Organisation (including 914 – Glastonbury/Street, 1182 – Shepton Mallet, and 1955 – City of Wells) were invited to offer works of art (painting, photograph or 3-dimensional work) on the theme of 'Flight'.

Paul Branson, Branch Chairman and well known local artist carried out the judging. Group Captain Dick Whittingham, (RAF Retired), Branch President, presented the prizes. First prize was the magnificent Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Severne Memorial Cup (held for one year), plus £50 was awarded to Cadet Stanley Baker of 1182 (Shepton Mallet) Squadron.



## BATTLE OF BRITAIN SERVICE AT ST CUTHBERT'S, WELLS, 16 SEPTEMBER 2018



In this Centenary Year of the formation of the Royal Air Force, a Service commemorating the Battle of Britain and the Royal Air Force's contributions to subsequent conflicts was held at St Cuthbert's Church Wells at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday 16 September 2018. The Service was held in association with local RAF Air Cadets and 36 Air Cadets from 914 (Glastonbury and Street), 1182 (Shepton Mallet) and 1955 (City of Wells)



Squadrons were on parade led by Squadron Leader John Heath. The Standards of the three Squadrons were paraded together with that of the RAFA Mid-Somerset Branch.

For this principal Royal Air Force Memorial Ceremony of the year in the Mid-Somerset Area, Deputy Lieutenant Dr Nicholas Hooper represented the Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset and Mr James Heapey Member of Parliament for Wells together with the Mayors of Wells and Glastonbury, the Chairman of Shepton Mallet Town Council, Vice-Chairman of Street Parish Council and the Chairman of Mendip District Council also attended. The Service was well supported by members of the RAFA Mid-Somerset Branch as well as representatives from



the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association and members of the public. The special Service included a sermon on an RAF theme by Reverend Morris and personal reflections on the realities of the Second World War for a young boy by Paul Branson Chairman of the Mid-Somerset Branch and on the post-war RAF by Branch member Paul Long. Together these thoughts were very effective in capturing the realities of war and life in the post-war RAF which were most meaningful to Veterans and Cadets alike.



The Service was followed by a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Church War Memorial. Reverend Sam Denyer, the Vicar of St Cuthbert's and Reverend Lyn Morris Chaplain of the RAFA Mid-Somerset Branch officiated.

Seen in the photograph below, a short moving ceremony at the War Memorial. The silence was interrupted by the haunting tones of The Last Post and wreaths were laid by the Deputy Lieutenant on behalf of the Royal Air Force, by Group Captain Dick Whittingham, local Branch President, on behalf of the RAF Association and Cadet Corporal on behalf of the RAF Air Cadets.

*Photos: Jess Whittingham*

## BRECON BRANCH

The token arrived at Brecon from Chepstow on Saturday 1 September. This coincided with Brecon's "Patio Party". It was 20 years since the patio at the rear of the Club opened. Efforts were made to contact as many of the donors who gave £5 to "Sponsor a Slab" as possible, and those who could be reached were invited for light refreshments.



It was hopeful that the Cadets would be able to photograph the token at the top of Pen y Fan, at 2,907 feet, the highest mountain south of Cadair Idris. However, for various reasons this was not possible, so two oldies volunteered (great work from Mike and Pam Chappell!).



A Titanic moment seen in the photo below

contact the musical director on 01934 820205.



## MID-SOMERSET BRANCH ANNUAL CONCERT

Our Mid-Somerset Branch pulls together a fabulous concert each year at Millfield School. Please take a look at the enclosed information sheet.

## HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF BRANCH OFFICER TRAINING WORKSHOPS?

A letter has already gone out to all Branch Chairs requesting the attendance of as many branch officers as possible to attend the next round of training workshops (Plymouth on 23 October, Sherborne on 24 October, Neath on 30 October and Birmingham Sheldon on 31 October). Please call the Area office as soon as possible, if you wish to attend.

## Upcoming engagements for the RAF Association Concert Band

- Saturday, 27 October, Joint Armistice Concert in Taunton.
- Thursday, 1 November, the Poppy Appeal Concert, Galleries, Bristol.
- Tuesday, 20 November, Band 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner in the Winter Gardens, Weston-Super-Mare. Tickets cost £24, and include a meet and greet. Please

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Our members, in over 400 branches worldwide, are at the heart of the Association. We're 72,000 people, all standing together because it's the right thing to do.

It's safe to assume that we all agree on our mission to support the RAF family in times of need, but we are individuals and we have our own opinions and we all act in different ways.

A variety of views, beliefs and behaviours is healthy and to be encouraged, yet sometimes things can go awry. For this reason, our members, through Council, have developed a Code of Conduct, which is based on the shared values of the RAF and the Association: Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence. The Code sets out the standards members would expect of each other and it's there to protect our Association and all its stakeholders. It applies to all members, whether as an individual or as a member of Council, area council, regional, branch or branch club committees.

Please do have read the **Code of Conduct**. If you feel that someone has breached the code, you can make a complaint by following the **complaints policy**. Where a complaint is upheld, sanctions may be applied in accordance with **the members' administrative procedures**.

These documents can be found here:

[www.rafa.org.uk/conduct/](http://www.rafa.org.uk/conduct/)

## NEW BLAZER BADGES

For those who are interested, new blazer badges depicting the Association's latest crest are ready to order.

Please see link to order these as follows:

- <https://www.rafatrad.co.uk/product/rafa-blazer-badge-new-crest-hand-embroidered-wired-silk/>

*Debbie Byam*

Area Administrator

Wales, Midland and South Western area.

Enclosures:

1. Spear Phishing poster
2. Mid-Somerset Branch Annual Concert
3. Area Volunteer update.