

July 2019

Wales, Midland and South Western Area Newsletter

**ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**
The charity that supports the RAF family



The Association launches RAFA Kidz

The RAF Association has responded to the growing need of childcare over the past two years by training the partners of serving RAF personnel to become registered childminders. However, recent discussions with RAF Community Support have identified that more support is needed, which has led to the launch of RAFA Kidz, a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Royal Air Forces Association.

On Tuesday 2 July 2019, the Association opened the first RAFA Kidz nursery at RAF Odiham. Recognising the value of dedicated and professional employees and every child's need for continuity, we are being careful to ensure that all employees of the former nursery provider will be given the opportunity to work for RAFA Kidz.

When serving parents send their children to a RAFA Kidz nursery, they will also be supporting their RAF colleagues and the wider RAF family. Any additional income generated by their nursery will be invested back into the nursery and into RAF welfare activities delivered by the RAF Association. Projects such as free station wi-fi, Storybook Wings and childminder training will all benefit.

For more information visit rafakidz.org.uk

Battle of Britain Service Westminster Abbey - Sunday 15 September 2019

As is customary the Association has been allocated a quantity of admission tickets for the Battle of Britain Service at Westminster Abbey. Branch Standard Bearers are also invited to form a Lining Party.

Applications for admission tickets and Standard Bearers wishing to attend are to be sent Emma Houghton in the South East and Eastern Area Headquarters on 0116 464 5052 or e-mail emma.houghton@rafa.org.uk no later than Thursday 24 July 2019.

AREA
MEMBERSHIP
18,349

BRANCHES
80

RMGS
10

CLUBS
20

AREA LAPSED
MEMBERS
781

Does your branch have a Welfare Officer and Standard Bearer?

Two of the most prominent public facing positions for any branch are the Welfare Officer and the Standard Bearer.

These roles are pivotal in connecting your branch to the community. Welfare is why we exist and having a Welfare Officer locally is key to its effective delivery.

One of the final acts we can do as an Association is to pay our respects to those that have served in the Royal Air Force and our network of Branch Standard Bearers take up that duty by attending hundreds of funerals each year.

We would like to thank every volunteer that currently undertakes these roles and encourage all branches to actively recruit a Welfare Officer and Standard Bearer

Please contact the volunteering team if you require assistance – volunteering@rafa.org.uk

Our Area is challenging itself to have a Welfare Officer and Standard Bearer in each branch.

One Charity

Following the debate at Annual Conference, Council decided to set up a working group to further research the implications of One Charity. All Area Vice Chairmen were invited to be part of the working group, and our Area Vice Chairman, Roy Loblely attended the first meeting at Atlas House on 1 July.

The working group decided that, as the One Charity proposal would have a significant impact on the way that the Association conducts its business, ALL branches should have the opportunity, if they wished, to influence the debate. You are therefore invited to forward your branch's view on the One Charity concept to the working group at onecharity@rafa.org.uk before the 4 August 2019.

You are requested to indicate whether or not you are in favour of One Charity, just **yes** or **no**; and then, if you wish, to further expand on your branch's reasons for making that decision.

Colleagues, this is your opportunity to influence the debate, to highlight any concerns that you may have on the One Charity concept, or perhaps to put forward amendments. I would strongly encourage you to take this opportunity; after all it is our Association and we all have an interest in making it as efficient and as robust as possible, so your views are extremely important.

If you should require any further information to help you consider your response please contact the Area Office, your BSO or your nominated Area Councillor. Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation. I look forward to seeing how the debate develops.

John Tisbury – Area Chairman

Armed Forces Day 2019

The Area was privileged to host the National Armed Forces Day in Salisbury this year, with many attending their local events.

Below are pictures from the Dudley Branch and Cosford & District Branch at Himley Hall, the WRAF Branch being assisted by two Nepalese women in Leeds and the Swindon Branch in Royal Wootton Bassett.



News from around the Area

WRAF on tour

The members of the WRAF Branch recently visited Gibraltar and attend the Queen's Birthday parade.

The trip was expertly planned, months in advance by Patricia Welsh and was aimed at showing the history and culture in Gibraltar. Members came from the USA, Canada and UK for the visit and everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. A big thank you to everyone in Gibraltar that made us feel so welcome especially Wg Cdr John Kane, Station Commander RAF Gibraltar and Patricia.



War in the Vale

Despite the rain and very deep mud, the Evesham branch braved the elements to raise money for the Wings Appeal at this year's War in the Vale.

The branch took the opportunity to speak with visitors about the Association and joining the Evesham Branch.

As you can see from the picture the ladies came suitably dressed, unlike their BSO.

Project Propeller

The Coventry Branch were honoured to be asked to this year's Project Propeller, held at Coventry Airport. The day saw RAF veterans flown in from all over the country to get together, reminisce and have their yearly catch-up.

The Area trailer was centre stage, giving information to visitors about the Association and the team got seven new members on the day.



Llandaff and Ely out in Cardiff

On a sunny Saturday, the Llandaff and Ely Branch prepared their gazebo and stood in Cardiff city centre speaking to shoppers about the RAF Association.

The branch has more days out coming up and will be collecting for the Wings Appeal and trying to increase their membership.

So, if you're in Cardiff, go and buy a duck or three!

Please send all branch news articles to Ian Campbell (BSO) ian.campbell@rafa.org.uk

News from around the Area

Anglesey honour Lionel Rees VC

Members of the Anglesey Branch attended the naming of a Bae 146 from 32 squadron at RAF Valley. The honour was the first for 50 years for the RAF and the name given was that of Group Captain Lionel Rees VC from Caernarfon and was a founding member of the Royal Flying Corps.

He received the Victoria Cross for his actions on the 1 June 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, after single-handedly taking on ten enemy aircraft.



Barry Branch showcase their new kit

The Barry Branch recently made the investment in a new Association branded gazebo and quickly put it to use at this year's Scout fete.

As always, they raised money for the Wings Appeal, as well as speaking to the community about the fantastic work being done in the Vale by its branch members and volunteers.



Swindon raise over £5,000!

Over the Armed Forces weekend the Swindon Branch were invited to the flag raising ceremony at Royal Wootton Bassett and Armed Forces Day in Swindon.



Shrivenham supports the Association

Once again the RAFALOs from Defence Academy Shrivenham were out in force to raise money for the Wings Appeal and speak to personnel and their families about the work of the Shrivenham committee and the wider Association.

Members of the Swindon Branch were on hand to help throughout the evening, cadets from 878 Highworth squadron Air Cadets carried buckets and the day raised over £400!



Membership matters

Here's our latest membership status.

Please continue to do all you can locally to attract new members to your branch. More members will provide more eyes and ears for our RAF community.

The more members you have the larger your rebate and the more support you can get for fundraising and events.

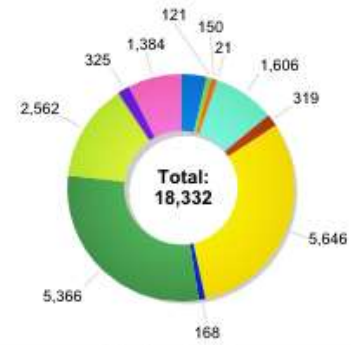
This 'doughnut' represents our biggest challenge – lapsed members.

If we can work to drive this number down together, then we will be doing exceptionally well.

So how can we reduce this number?

- Keep in regular contact with all of your members via letters, emails, social media and in person
- Request membership lists from your BSO to make sure you regularly know what is happening with your members
- Keep meetings relaxed and enjoyable to harness your members' interest in the work of the branch and the wider Association

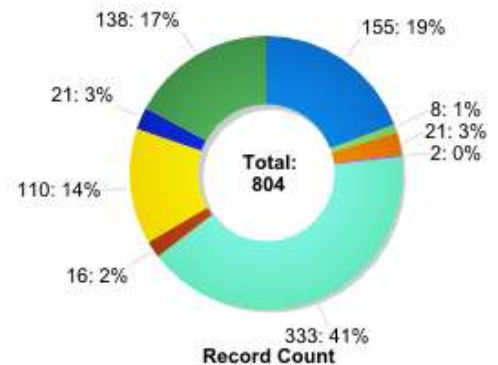
Active Members by Type



Membership Type

- Associate Membership 1 Year
- Associate Membership 1 Year with Airmail
- Associate Membership 4 Years
- Associate Membership 4 Years with Airmail
- Associate Membership Anniversary 1 Year
- Associate Membership Anniversary 1 Year with Airmail
- GAYE Membership
- Honorary Lifetime Membership
- Lifetime Membership
- Ordinary Membership 1 Year
- Ordinary Membership 4 Years
- Ordinary Membership Anniversary 1 Year

Lapsed Members Last Year



Record Count

Membership Type

- Associate Membership 1 Year
- Associate Membership 1 Year with Airmail
- Associate Membership 4 Years
- Associate Membership 4 Years with Airmail
- Associate Membership Anniversary 1 Year
- Associate Membership Anniversary 1 Year with Airmail
- Ordinary Membership 1 Year
- Ordinary Membership 4 Years
- Ordinary Membership Anniversary 1 Year

Dates for your diary

For more information please contacts detailed below -

- Llandudno RMG first anniversary dinner – 10 August
James Paddington - llandudnorafabbranch@gmail.com
- Bristol Branch Veterans' lunch – Wednesday 14 August
Tony Peters - 07971242845
- Swindon Battle of Britain Ball – Saturday 7 September
Andy Ormston - rafaswindon@yahoo.com
- RAF Cosford Battle of Britain parade and service - Sunday 8 September
Mike Logue - mike.logue@rafa.org.uk
- Bristol Branch Veterans' lunch – Wednesday 11 September
Tony Peters - 07971242845
- Barnstaple Branch concert – 14 September
Visit www.eventbrite.co.uk and search "Royal Air Forces Association Concert"
- Battle of Britain Service Westminster Abbey – 15 September
Emma Houghton - emma.houghton@rafa.org.uk
- Tribute at Sea (Bodmin) – Sunday 22 September
- Evesham Branch 1940s dance – Saturday 28 September
Jenny Johnson - 01386 442264
- London Remembrance Parade – Sunday 10 November
Emma Houghton - emma.houghton@rafa.org.uk

TARRANT RUSHTON AIRFIELD
75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION of D-Day
2 JUNE 2019

From across the country and even abroad, more than 600 people gathered at the windswept Tarrant Rushton Memorial site in front of the World War Two hangar to mark the former airfield's historic part in the 1944 D-Day invasion of France.

The special service of commemoration on 2 June 2019 was staged by the Wimborne Branch of the RAF Association, and took a sizeable amount of planning and organisation.

HM The Queen's Representative in Dorset, Lord Lieutenant Angus Campbell attended on behalf of Her Majesty.

Also attending were Air Chief Marshall Sir Roger Palin , Lt.Col.Paul Williams and the Mayors of Wimborne, Blandford and of Ferndown.

The service was conducted by the Rector of Wimborne Minster the Rev.Andrew Rowland. Music provided by the Verwood Concert Brass. The Last Post played by Marcus Adams (RBL. Wimborne) A Dakota aircraft of the BBMF opened the event with a flypast and circuits of the old hangar and airfield site.

The Wimborne Branch would like to thank everyone who helped to make the event a success as well as all who attended to remember those very brave servicemen from 75 years ago.

Branch Chairman Eddie Robertson said "The RAF Association Wimborne Organising Committee wish to recognise and thank the huge and generous individual and community support, encouragement, response and shared affinity that assured a very special and poignant event here today"

Recalling the events of 5/6 June 1944

Six Halifax bombers from RAF Tarrant Rushton each towing a Horsa glider departed shortly after 2300hrs on the 5 June to successfully deliver 181 men of the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. The first soldiers to land in Normandy. Thanks to the skill and bravery of the glider pilots, and after a 75 minute flight across the English Channel, five of the gliders landed less than 50 yards from their two targets, the vital Caern Canal and Orne River bridges, just 16 minutes into D-Day. Both bridges were taken after just ten minutes of fighting.

The 6 June glider operations from Tarrant Rushton into Normandy saw 34 Halifax towing Horsa and the bigger Hamilcar gliders into Normandy on Operation Tonga. One aircraft with Horsa or tank carrying Hamilcar in tow took-off every 30 seconds, the first at 0123hrs, the last at 0145hrs. One Halifax aircraft failed to return.

Later on the 6 June 32 Horsa and Hamilcars departed on Operation Mallard bound again for Normandy. A Halifax tug and its glider airborne at 30 second intervals from 1928hrs. The final departure on the day was at 1951hrs. One Halifax failed to return.

Article and photographs by Andrew Wright.

RAF Association Wimborne Organising committee wish to thank the following for their generous support at this event; Mr Nick Harding - Landowner, Alan Goudge - Branch Support Officer SW Region, Philip Webster - ForestFM Radio, Spencer Hare - RBL Wimborne Parade Marshall, Fl.Lt. Nigel Winton RAF(VR) - O/C 1069 Sqn Air Cadets, Alan Courtney - Logistic Support, Daniel Avey-Hebditch - Vehicle Control, David Maidment - Vintage Tractor, and of course all members of Wimborne Branch for their continuing support.

