

Wales, Midland and South Western Area Newsletter

Good luck Paul and Welcome Ailsa!



As most members are now aware, Paul Baker has taken on the role of Clubs Development Officer for the Association and has been seconded into the role for 15 months. Those with clubs will continue to enjoy his continued support and assistance, but this means that the South East and Eastern Area Director, Ailsa Gough, has become the Divisional Manager as she takes on our Area too.

Ailsa joined the RAF in 1985, as an Education and Training Officer and retired as a Group Captain in 2013. During her RAF career, she served in Europe, the Middle East and across the United Kingdom. As an Education and Training specialist she had responsibility for training officers on the RAF's Flying training Schools, Operational Conversion Units (OCU) such as XV(R)Sqn the Tornado, OCU at RAF Lossiemouth and the Specialist Training Schools in HQ Strike Command. She later specialised in Media Operations and completed her RAF Service as the Commanding Officer of the Joint Information Activities Group.

Newsletter Articles

In order to keep our membership updated we would appreciate articles and pictures from our branches.

Please direct all submissions to ian.campbell@rafa.org.uk Branch Support Officer by 28 of each month.

All stories, where possible, should be accompanied by an image.

If you have events coming up then we can add these to the diary section.

All stories can be shared on social media and in particular on the area facebook page.

[Facebook.com/RAF AWMSW](https://www.facebook.com/RAFAWMSW)

AREA
MEMBERSHIP
18,449

BRANCHES
80

RMGS
10

CLUBS
20

AREA LAPSED
MEMBERS
904



Your Welfare Team

New welfare teams are now in place following the restructure of the Association's welfare delivery service for England and Wales.

To ensure the Association can deliver a needed, effective and efficient welfare service, Council made the strategic decision to move from seven Area Welfare Offices to three Regional Welfare Offices. These have been up-and-running since early September, with highly skilled people in place to co-ordinate welfare support for the Association's beneficiaries.

Demand for the Association's welfare support service is constantly increasing. To ensure that we are fit and ready for the future, we are very happy to welcome some new and some familiar faces to the restructured teams.

We also sincerely thank the staff who are leaving the Association for their hard work and dedication.

A Regional Welfare Manager at each office is organising all aspects of welfare delivery for their region. Two Welfare Support Officers, a Volunteer Cluster Officer and two Regional Welfare Administrators complete the teams at each office.

Who's Who

Barbara Howells – Regional Welfare Manager

Jodi Duncan – Welfare Support Officer

David Byatt – Welfare Support Officer

Rebecca Watts – Volunteer Cluster Officer

Kayleigh Clegg – Regional Welfare Administrator

Chloe Moore – Regional Welfare Administrator

Welfare Region West, based at Flowerdown House Hotel, Weston-super-Mare.

Regional Welfare Manager: Barbara Howells.

Contact: WRW@rafa.org.uk or 01934 313110.

News from around the Area

From wheelchair bound to surfer

The RAF St Mawgan Branch joined the Newquay Veterans Breakfast Club to present Jay Anson with his own Beach Access Wheelchair and modified Surfboard.

Jay, who served at RAF St Mawgan in the 1990's, regularly attends the Veterans Breakfast Club and affiliated Surf Club but could only watch his colleagues enjoy the water from the promenade, excluded by being wheelchair-bound.

The Branch, hearing of Jay's predicament, procured the specialist wheelchair and surfboard. Now able to join the Veterans Surf Club wholly in its activities, Jay commented "I'm thrilled to be able to get involved completely and I just can't thank RAFA and those that contributed enough for making this possible"



Barnstaple and North Devon Branch Concert

The concert band of the Royal Air Forces Association along with the Chivenor Military Wives Choir gave a concert at the Issac Hall in Braunton in September.

The event was well attended and those present enjoyed the variety of music themed on a commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of D Day which included "The Longest Day", The Dambusters and an arrangement Glen Miller tunes. The superb voices of the Chivenor Military Wives Choir rendered a selection of modern and nostalgic songs including a Dame Vera Lynn selection.

The event was supported by members of the Air Training Corps and all proceeds will go towards enabling the Association to continue providing essential welfare support for the RAF family.



Evesham 1940's Dance

On 28 September we held our first 1940's evening at Ecgwins PMC with a quiz, songs, dances and 1940's style food. Over 35 attended and we raised £323 for the Wings Appeal. We even had a Spitfire cake – it really was made of icing sugar and the propeller rotated! Some of our members entered into the spirit of the 1940s with appropriate dresses and uniforms. The evening ended with Land of Hope and Glory accompanied by much waving of flags.



Barry Branch makes pilgrimage to Guy Gibson grave

Members of the Barry branch made the journey over to Steenberg in the Netherlands last month to pay their respects to an RAF legend.

Guy Gibson served as Wing Commander in the 617 Squadron of the Royal Air Force. In 1943, he was selected to command the new 617 Squadron asked to destroy the Mohne and Eder Dams in the Ruhr area Germany. To accomplish this, they were provided with bombs designed and developed to be dropped from 60 feet from a predefined distance to skip to the dam's edge and explode. On the night of 16 May, 1943, despite the full moon, Captain Gibson led his squadron of 19 Lancasters carrying one bomb each. It took five attempts to breach the Moehne Dam, he then led the remaining Lancasters to attack and breach the Eder Dam destroying it.

Battle of Britain Parades and Services

Thank you to all branches, RMGs and members that attended or organised Battle of Britain services and parades this year. Below are some of the images we have been sent from around the Area.



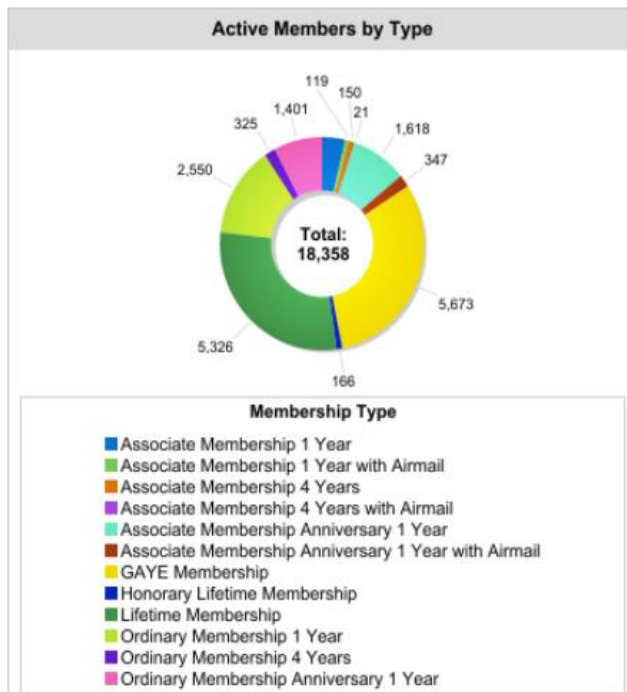
Please send all branch news articles to Ian Campbell (BSO) ian.campbell@rafa.org.uk

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.

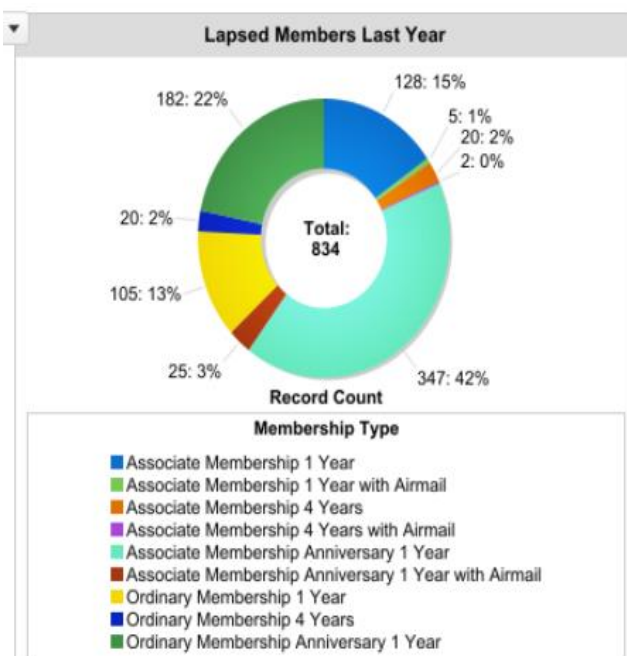


This 'doughnut' represents our biggest challenge – lapsed members.

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



Dates for your diary

- Area Conference (17-19 April 2020) – Venue to be confirmed
- Annual Conference (26-28 June 2020) – Grand Hotel, Blackpool – Registration is now open via www.rafa.org.uk/annual-conference Accommodation is booked directly with the Grand Hotel on 01253 627977

Any queries regarding Annual Conference, please contact Kelly Brotherhood on 0116 268 8770 or Kelly.Brotherhood@rafa.org.uk

The Area Team

A quick reminder that you can call the team direct:

- Ailsa Gough (Divisional Manager) – 0116 2688780 or 07796873263.
Ailsa.gough@rafa.org.uk
- Wendy Campbell (Area Administrator) – 0116 3662048

Branch Support Officers

RAF Association C/O Central Registry, RAF Shawbury, Shawbury, Shrewsbury, SY4 4DZ

- Alan Goudge (BSO South West) –07827962766. Alan.goudge@rafa.org.uk
Alan's office will be moving to RAF St Mawgan shortly.
- Ian Campbell (BSO Central) –07584577064. ian.campbell@rafa.org.uk
Alan's office will be moving to MOD St Athan shortly.
- Mike Logue (BSO Mids and Mid/North Wales) – 01939 250351 Ext 7394 or 07776392899.
Mike.logue@rafa.org.uk

Welfare Team

(Tel no: 01934 313110)

- Barbara Howells (Area Welfare Manager Wales)
- Jodi Duncan (Welfare Support Officer)
- David Byatt (Welfare Support Officer)
- Rebecca Watts (Volunteer Cluster Officer) Kayleigh Clegg (Regional Welfare Administrator)
- Chloe Moore (Regional Welfare Administrator) Tel no: 01934 313110

Ailsa

Ailsa A Gough

Divisional Manager



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales). SC037673 (Scotland).