

December 2019

Wales, Midland and South Western Area Newsletter



Merry Christmas from the Area Team



Once again, we have had a very busy year and whilst it may seem to have gone quickly, we have managed to be busier than ever.

As we approach 2020, we will be looking at how we can grow our membership and develop and sustain our branches going forwards. To that end, it would be helpful if all branches could contact their respective Branch Support Officers (BSOs) and dedicate some time to come up with a strategy to grow membership over the next 12 months.

Within this newsletter, you will be able to see that the governance workshops are taking place again, and this time with even more locations to make it easier for branches to attend. Getting governance right within your branch is essential, and if we want branches to thrive in the future, we must get the structures in place. Please make every effort to attend.

We will be contacting branches shortly with the final details of next year's Area Conference.

From everyone in the Area team, we wish you a very merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!

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/RAFA WMSW

AREA
MEMBERSHIP
18,524

BRANCHES
80

RMGS
10

CLUBS
20

AREA LAPSED
MEMBERS
932

Governance

Governance Workshops 2020

In late 2018 Council agreed that branch development workshops covering a number of different topics should be delivered in all Areas.

This programme is still being implemented. Where branches have not yet had the opportunity to attend one of these workshops a shortened version covering governance and finance will be offered. Vikki Hall, Director of Governance and Risk, will be leading these shortened development workshops and we hope that combining these two elements will allow you to make best use of your time.

This is a great opportunity for our branches, so please sign up, as understanding charity governance is imperative.

Where and When

8 Jan Neath

Adastral House, 16 London Road, Neath, SA11 1LE
1400-1600

9 Jan Bristol

Carlton Lodge, 38 Eastfield, Westbury on Trym, Bristol, BS9 4BE
1400-1600

14 Jan Sherborne

Slessor Club, Long Street, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 3BY
1400 -1600

15 Jan Plymouth

Raffles Club, 5 Ermington Terrace, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 6QG
1100 - 1300

21 Jan Llangollen

RAFA Club Llangollen, Canalside Gardens
Abbey Rd, Llangollen, LL20 8SW
1000-1200

News from around the Area

Squadron Leader Beryl Escott

The family of Sqn Ldr Beryl Escott would like to thank Ian Campbell, Heather Hearn and the women of the WRAF branch for their attendance and participation in the funeral of Beryl in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Beryl was born to Welsh parents in Newfoundland during a perilous snowstorm on 23 December 1929. Beryl became a Squadron Leader in the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) and a leading historian on women in war, painstakingly uncovering heroic exploits during WWII.

After her family's return to England in the 1930's they moved to Guernsey but escaped just days before the Nazi occupation. She continued her education in South Wales and then Yorkshire before leaving home to study at Durham University for a degree in History, English and Latin.

Although Beryl had always had a passion for writing, it was, perhaps surprisingly, her military career that actually gave her the opportunity to harness it. She was able to use her limited spare time to prepare histories of different stations, including RAF Halton House, originally built for the Rothschilds. In addition, she often advised on public relations and edited RAF newsletters.

Just before leaving the WRAF in 1986 it was suggested that she write a history of the Women's Air Force. It took almost four years to prepare this first book which was inspired by the thousands of WAAF personnel who responded to her newspaper appeals for information. In 1989 her book was published with a launch at the Imperial War Museum.

Her writing career then became the passionate focus of the next two decades, revealing for the first time the role women played in WWII, in particular the Special Operations Executive, as agents aiding the French resistance.

Beryl moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1980 after many years visiting the area, especially the local theatres.

After a long and debilitating illness, Beryl passed away peacefully aged 89 at the Scholars Lane Care Home.



News from around the Area

Shrivenham Santa Fun Run

On a crisp bright December afternoon something unusual happened down by the JSCSC east entrance; a sack of seasonal Santas, young and old (some old enough to have known better) gathered waiting to be released to run the RAFA Cheeky 5km Santa Fun Run. Wg Cdr Rob Hart, Shrivenham Station Commander and RAFA President, welcomed the Santas, thanking them for their support and wishing them the best of luck. He set the 210 Santas off on the first circuit of the two lap course before joining them and he was soon lost among the mass of red suited Santas.

In return for signing up, our RAFA team offered participants a Santa suit and an afternoon of seasonal fun, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. It was a truly brilliant sight as our Santa runners, walkers and even a skate-boarding Santa (apparently there's nothing against it in the rules) and it all added to the fun.

Our Santas came from across a diverse spectrum of the Shrivenham community. There were Directing Staff alongside UK and international students. RAF, RN, RM and Army personnel had signed up, but so too had many others from the Civil Service, Kings College London, Serco and our ESS partners all taking part in this remarkably satisfying event. Families joined the throngs pushing prams whilst others were also dragged around by their dogs.

Setting a brisk pace around the course, Lt Col Jack Crossley from ACSC 23, B Division was our first Santa across the line in a respectable time of 17 minutes 11 seconds. Chris generously donated his prize, the RAFA Wings Appeal teddy bear, to our youngest runner 3 year old Oliver, who ran the full course alongside his proud parents. With your support and generosity we have raised over **£2,200** for the RAF Association. Thank you.

The Shrivenham RAFA Chair, Sqn Ldr Tim Serrell-Cooke was delighted with the turnout: "It has been a great afternoon; everyone has got into the spirit of the run, which has been a truly inclusive event with Santas from across our community. Shortly after we set off I looked around me and there were Santas everywhere, beside me, ahead of me and back as far as I could see. It was a great spectacle".



Photographs courtesy of Hannah Baker – SERCO
©Crown copyright

News from around the Area

Swindon Branch Brew up

The Swindon and District branch are beginning to hold regular Veterans Coffee mornings. The first starts on 18 December 2019 at the Swindon Branch Club.

All veterans are welcome (even if you're not RAF)!

A poster is included at the end of this newsletter.



Everyone's Merry in Llandaff

Members from Llandaff and Ely were joined by branches from around the region to celebrate Christmas in style at the branch club.

Everyone that attended enjoyed the atmosphere and the festive hospitality.

Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda



Torquay celebrate with Alice

Branch Chairman, Steve Colhoun, was fortunate to have been able to attend the 100th Birthday celebration of an ex RAF veteran. Alice Rowe from Newton Abbot turned 100 on Friday 6 December 2019. Steve joined her and around 20 friends and family for afternoon tea in Dawlish Warren. Alice was in the RAF for 4 years during WW2 and has many happy memories of her time.

She initially joined as a driver but then remustered to a stewardess. She served at RAF Weeton near Blackpool and in the Palace Hotel in Torquay. The Hotel was requisitioned to be used as a rest and recuperation centre for personnel returning from the battlefields. The Branch presented Alice with a specially designed card to mark her 100th birthday and of course a telegram was also sent by HM the Queen.



Birthday Party for 'Sonny'

Edward 'Sonny' Davies was a rear gunner on Lancasters during World War II and was awarded five medals including the French Legion of Honour.

One of his best memories is that on one of his birthdays he was being shot at while over the intercom his crew were singing Happy Birthday. He would do it again in a heartbeat

Thank you to the branch members that attended and to the RAFALOs from MOD St Athan.



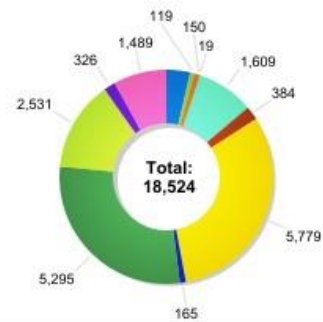
Membership Matters

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.

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

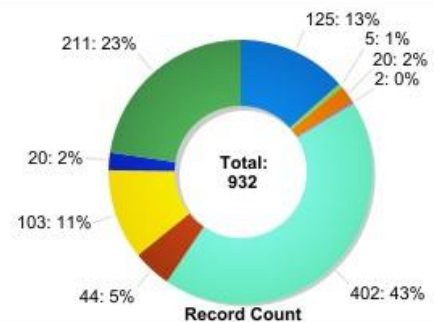
This 'doughnut' represents our biggest challenge – lapsed members.

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

So how can we reduce this number?

- As a branch official you can 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

Lapsed Members Last Year



Record Count

- 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

- Area Conference (18-19 April 2020) – details of Chesford Grange (www.chesfordgrange.com). Registration is now open and are on page 9 of this newsletter
- 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

Newsletter attachments

- Area Contact details
- Area Conference details

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 Wendy.Campbell@rafa.org.uk

Branch Support Officers

- **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
RAF Association Office, Sopwith Suite, MOD St Athan, Barry, Wales, CF62 4W
- **Mike Logue (BSO Mids and Mid/North Wales)** – 01939 250351 Ext 7394 or 07776392899.
Mike.logue@rafa.org.uk
RAF Association C/O Central Registry, RAF Shawbury, Shawbury, Shrewsbury, SY4 4DZ

Welfare Team

- **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)**

01934 313110 or WRW@rafa.org.uk

Please remember that all branch/club and general enquiries should be directed to your BSO in the first instance. The Exeter office is now closed for Area business.

To: All branches

Wales, Midland and the South Western Area Conference 18 - 19 April 2020 – Chesford Grange

I am writing to provide you with information on the Wales, Midland and South Western Area Conference 2020, which will be combined with the Welfare Seminar. You will be given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the current initiatives and future plans for the Royal Air Forces Association, in addition to having time to catch up with friends and colleagues.

The Conference will be held at the **Chesford Grange, Warwick (www.chesfordgrange.com) Kenilworth Warwick CV8 2LD** which is easily accessible from the M40 and M69 with Birmingham International Airport 13 miles from the hotel. Good car parking is available and we will be the main guests in the event centre. The venue also has access to a spa, swimming pool and fitness centre and is within easy reach of Kenilworth and Warwick.

The 2020 Conference will contain business relating to the governance and administration of your Association, but just as importantly, the weekend will give all members the opportunity to come together in comradeship and to have an enjoyable time with likeminded people. With this in mind, we have planned a formal gala dinner evening for the Saturday night, which will include entertainment and an awards ceremony.

A full agenda will be sent out to attendees in March 2020 but in brief the Welfare Seminar will take place on the Saturday morning, 18 April (0830 – 1230), along with some additional workshops, which will be confirmed nearer the conference date. Area Conference will start at 1330 on the Saturday, 18 April and finish by 1330 on Sunday 19 April.

I very much look forward to meeting you at the 2020 Area Conference, please remember you can invite any of your branch members to attend.

Yours sincerely,



Ailsa A Gough

Divisional Manager South East and Eastern and Wales, Midland and South Western Areas

Pre-Conference procedure

The following information is provided as a guide to the pre-Conference procedure and to advise on general arrangements.

Please note that delegate packs will be sent directly to the registered delegate and resolutions will be distributed to all branches and registered delegates from 25 March 2020.

1. Branch representation

All branches who wish to send a representative and/or a standard bearer to the Conference must register for Conference – see point 5 how to register.

2. Expenses

Conference expenses: In accordance with Byelaw 27, the reasonable expenses of a branch committee, including those of its members attending meetings and of any delegates from the branch to Area or Annual Conferences, may be reimbursed from the branch. If any branch is experiencing financial hardship they should contact their Divisional Manager for assistance. **No branch should be deterred from attending Area Conference because of financial challenges.**

3. Resolutions and Branch Efficiency Competition

Please complete pages 4 and 5 below and submit them to the Wales, Midland and South Western Area Office, Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road, Leicester, LE3 1UT or wendy.campbell@rafa.org.uk by 24 January 2020.

4. Key Dates for 2020

- 28 February 2020 - Closing date for Conference registration.
- 25 March 2020 - Distribution of the Conference pack to delegates.

5. Booking your accommodation:

The Chesford Grange has 205 rooms with five accessible rooms and the Association has negotiated a competitive dinner, bed and breakfast rate for the whole weekend.

The price below includes your Saturday lunch for those attending the Welfare Seminar, Friday dinner (informal), accommodation (Friday and Saturday night), breakfast and lunches (Saturday and Sunday), a formal gala dinner Saturday night, car parking and connection to the venue's WI-FI. In addition, refreshments will be available over the weekend and each bedroom offers an en-suite bathroom, TV, hairdryer, and tea/coffee.

Single occupancy: £224pp (2 nights) (£112 per person, per night full board as above)

Double occupancy: £220pp (2 nights) (£110 per person, per night full board as above)

Day Delegate Rate: For delegates not requiring overnight accommodation:

£35pp per day (to include teas, coffee and lunch)

£30pp formal gala dinner on Saturday evening

To register your attendance, please complete the accommodation form on page 6 below, by the **28 February 2020**. Here you can register yourself and any guests who wish to attend the Conference. Each attendee should be registered separately. Cheques for payment should be made payable to RAFA and sent for the attention of Wendy Campbell in the Wales, Midlands and South Western Area Office, Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road, LE3 1UT. Card payments can be made on 0116 3662048

On successful registration you will receive a confirmation email from the Area Administrator, wendy.campbell@rafa.org.uk

If you require assistance with registering your attendance please contact Wendy Campbell on 0116 3662048 and she will be happy to take your details over the phone.

6. Cancellation Policy

The Chesford Grange requires us to submit final accommodation and meal requirements for Area Conference by 20 March 2020, any cancellations after this date will follow the same process as in 2018. Individuals or couples will be advised to find a replacement representative for the branch otherwise the full cost of the accommodation will be charged.

Delegates are also advised to take out the appropriate travel and personal insurance, as they would do for any trip and/or holiday in the UK or overseas.

THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA CONFERENCE 2020

Branch or Region **No**

At the Annual General Meeting of this Branch/Region on..... it was resolved that the following resolution(s) be submitted for inclusion on the Agenda of the Wales, Midland and South Western Area Conference.

Signed

THE LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF RESOLUTIONS AT **AREA HEADQUARTERS, RAF ASSOCIATION, ATLAS HOUSE, 41 WEMBLEY ROAD, LEICESTER, LE3 1UT** FOR THE 2020 WALES, MIDLAND AND WESTERN AREA ANNUAL CONFERENCE WILL BE **FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2020**.

THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA
BRANCH EFFICIENCY COMPETITION 2019

To: The Divisional Manager
 South East and Eastern and Wales, Midland and
 the South Western Area

Date:.....
 RAFA
 Atlas House
 41 Wembley Road
 Leicester
 LE3 1UT

AHQ USE ONLY	
ENTRY REC'D	
MEMBERSHIP	
A/C REC'D	
COMP CLASS	

The undermentioned Branch, having submitted its **2018** Accounts, by **31 March 2019** wishes to enter in the above Competition.

Signed

Branch

NB. The Rules of this Competition require that a Branch can only enter if the Accounts of the Branch have been received within the prescribed period.

This Pro-Forma is to be returned to Wales, Midland and South Western Area Office by **Thursday 28 February 2020**

DO NOT DETACH LOWER PORTION OF THIS PRO-FORMA
AHQ USE ONLY

THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA

Date:

From: The Divisional Manager
To: Branch Secretary

..... Branch

Receipt is acknowledged of your entry into the Wales, Midland and South Western Area Branch Efficiency Competition.

.....
and

Mrs A A Gough
Divisional Manager
South East and Eastern and Wales, Midland
South Western Areas

THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION
WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERN AREA CONFERENCE 2020
CHESFORD GRANGE – 18 – 19 APRIL 2020
ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS

To be submitted to Wales, Midland and South Western Area Office not later than 28 February 2020

Accommodation has been reserved for Delegates and Visitors at Chesford Grange, Kenilworth

If you have to cancel your attendance you will need to find a replacement to take your place and if no replacement can be found a charge will be levied.

N.B. Cheques made payable to “RAFA”

Will you please complete the Pro-Forma overleaf as follows:

Use one space for each room required.

- 1. State whether Single, Double or Twin Room is required.
- 2. Insert one or two names according to the type of room required.
(If names are not known at present please forward as soon as possible).
- 3. State whether Delegate (D) – Standard Bearer (SB) – Visitor (V) – RAFAALO (R)
Honorary Welfare Officer (HWO)

..... FULL PAYMENT FOR ALL ACCOMMODATION MUST ACCOMPANY THIS PROFORMA

THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WESTERNS AREA CONFERENCE – 2020

CHESFORD GRANGE – 18-19 APRIL 2020

ACCOMMODATION RESERVATIONS

D = Delegate

SB = Standard Bearer

BRANCH/RMG _____

V = Visitor

REGION _____

R = RAFALO

Single Double Or Twin	NAME	D, SB, V, R, HWO	SB attending Sunday Service Y/N

PLEASE REMEMBER

FULL PAYMENT FOR ACCOMMODATION MUST ACCOMPANY THIS PRO-FORMA.

Please complete and return to: Wales, Midland and South Western Area Office, Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road, Leicester, LE3 1UT

To all Branch Chairs, Area

Chairs
Cc Area Presidents, Council, OCWG

22 November 2019

Swindon & District RAFA VETERANS COFFEE MORNING

18th December
1030 till 1200

41-43 Belle Vue
Rd, Swindon
SN1 3HN



ALL WELCOME

Info; rafaswindon@yahoo.com

07921 529599

