



NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 Issue 1 Jul/Sept 2021



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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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

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WHY NOT CHECKOUT THE RAFA GLOBAL BRANCH WEBSITE?**<https://rafa1370.org.uk/>****Password for Members Only Area is****Battleofbritain1940**

Disclaimer - The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the RAFA Global Branch, the Newsletter Editor, Branch Committee or membership and therefore should not be construed as such.

Welcome one & all

As many of our longer serving members of the branch will have noticed, earlier this year we had a massive influx of new members. The total number was actually around 160, with a full mixture of membership types, Life, Ordinary, Associate & of course those who are still serving (GAYE).

The vast majority of these came from two branches, Woking & Camberley, which unfortunately had to close for various reasons. We as a branch, welcome them with open arms to our number which is unique in it's own right. We hope that they will all soon feel at home with us and that their transfer to us will be as smooth as it possibly can be. We also hope that they will soon feel totally integrated with us to be able to interact with the more established members via our Facebook page etc. We could also soon be seeing a much smaller addition of members from the South Australia and Cape Town branches.

I therefore make no apologies for the fact that this interim newsletter carries a lot of links and adverts for the different things that we at the Global Branch take for granted. Saying that there are still many of our established members who do not partake in the different things we do that raise funds for the branch & the Wings Appeal plus of course raising public awareness of the Global Branch & RAFA in general. So I therefore request that you read all pages in this newsletter & act accordingly where the different items can fit you and benefit the branch at the same time, quite often at no or minimal noticeable cost to your pocket.

Looking forward, since this days it is definitely better than looking back, we are hopeful that, sooner rather than later, the vast majority of Covid restrictions will be lifted so that we, as individuals plus as a branch, can return to some kind of normality that will include physical meeting up on a branch outing and hopefully at next year's AGM.

Talking of the AGM 2022, it is worth mentioning that the location for next year is, hopefully the one which we had to postpone in 2021, RAF Valley. We have always been lucky, so far, in the history of the branch to be able to visit/hold our AGM on different RAF stations, which gets harder each year as the number of operational venues seems to get smaller as we progress through time. I am sure that Valley will make us as welcome as previous stations have done on our AGM weekend. So watch out for future updates on AGM2022 & make sure you get any accommodation booked early etc. We always look forward to meeting as many of our new & old members at these events as possible.

We are also trying to look forward with hopefully having a organized visit to the National Arboretum when Covid restrictions are lifted sufficiently for us to be able to run this safely for all our members. It has been 5 years since we held an organized trip there and I am sure it will be good to return once again to this national place of remembrance. The night is the pub afterwards isn't to be sniffed at either!!!!

So once again I would like to, on behalf of the Branch Committee, welcome ALL our new members and to remind our longer serving ones that we are still here, we are still growing and hopefully we will continue to do so in the near and distant future.

A Short Long Quiz

- 1/ The Crane Fly is also commonly known as?
- 2/ Song by Little Richard or a Ladies clothing brand founded in 1976.
- 3/ An English stately and the seat of the Marquess of Bath which was the first safari park outside Africa.
- 4/ A British politician and social reformer. A member of the Labour Party, he was one of its longest-serving politicians, he befriended a number of individuals who had committed the most notorious crimes, including child murderer Myra Hindley.
- 5/ A 1962 American epic war film starring, amongst others, John Wayne, Kenneth More, Richard Todd, Robert Mitchum, Richard Burton, Sean Connery, Henry Fonda.
- 6/ The Pirate in the book Treasure Island (1883) by Robert Louis Stevenson
- 7/ Australian School where HRH, Prince of Wales spent two terms in 1966.
- 8/ A Chinese Tea.
- 9/ A song by the Beatles from their 1970 album Let It Be written by Paul McCartney.
- 10/ Another Name for a Grandfather Clock.
- 11/ First World War marching song.
- 12/ Imperial Measurement one eighth of a mile.
- 13/ King Edward 1st was also known as.
- 14/ The Austin Motor Company and the British Motor Corporation Limited were based at where?
- 15/ The Ship the RMS Queen Mary is berthed where?
- 16/ 1980 Film starring Bob Hoskins and Helen Mirren.
- 17/ John Harrison (3 April 1693 – 24 March 1776) was a English carpenter and clockmaker who invented the marine chronometer, solving the problem of calculating what while at sea.
- 18/ 1973 hit song by the Doobie Brothers, released again in 1993.
- 19/ Matthew Lewis played which character in the Harry Potter films, often portrayed as a bumbling and disorganized character?
- 20/ The fourth book of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy "trilogy" written by Douglas Adams.

Quiz Master is Ken Herts, so don't blame me!!!

Answers on Page 10

Chairman's Ramblings



2020? A year to forget? Or one to remember?

Well now we are halfway through 2021 maybe it is a good time to look back at the previous year without the benefit of wine/beer tinted goggles that can often change our view of the previous year.

The year of 2020 could well be a year that, many of us, for different reasons, would rather forget. For many it has been a time that our lives were put on hold by various Government decisions and fluid dates.

Even now, as we hopefully are nearer the end of restrictions than the start, will we ever lose the memories of long queues outside supermarkets, having to wear a facemask on buses, trains, at work, in shops, self isolation etc. The memory of 8pm on Thursdays being outside clapping for the NHS and all other key workers. The roads with hardly any cars on them. Deserted streets. No crowds at the footie or worse, all sport being cancelled!!! Catching up on all those household jobs that you no longer had an excuse for not getting done any longer!! Oh and of course there was Capt. Tom Moore!!

I have to be honest and admit that "lockdown" didn't affect me much as I had just retired and was volunteering for the NHS even before the pandemic started, so for me it was very much as case of carry on as before, but I know that for many others it was a massive change to the way they had planned their retirement and everyday life.

Which ever way we look at it, the year 2020 will go down in history for one reason or another. Hopefully we will view 2021 as the year of change, but I am not holding my breath.....yet!!!!

Meet Your Committee



Hello, my name is Andrew Thomson, 59 years old and married to Irene. I am the Secretary of the RAFA Global Branch committee, having been so since September 2020. I served in the RAF for 16 and a half years as a Telegraphist, finishing my career as a Telecommunications Controller.

Now living in North Yorkshire, I work as a Senior Communications Operator, essentially the same job I had while in the RAF, just with a more modern twist. I have done this now for 17 years plus and likely to remain so until I retire - no reason to change. I have made a foray into the technical side of communications, but didn't really enjoy software engineering as I tend to like pulling things to bits and putting them back together, can't really do that with software!

In the past and within the RAF I took the chance to enjoy some of the more 'exotic' sports i.e. flying and horse riding. I only took up horse riding due to being posted to Berlin as there was no private flying/gliding in those days, I have a lifelong pastime of model making, particularly anything aircraft and vintage vehicles and enjoy walking around the Yorkshire Dales.

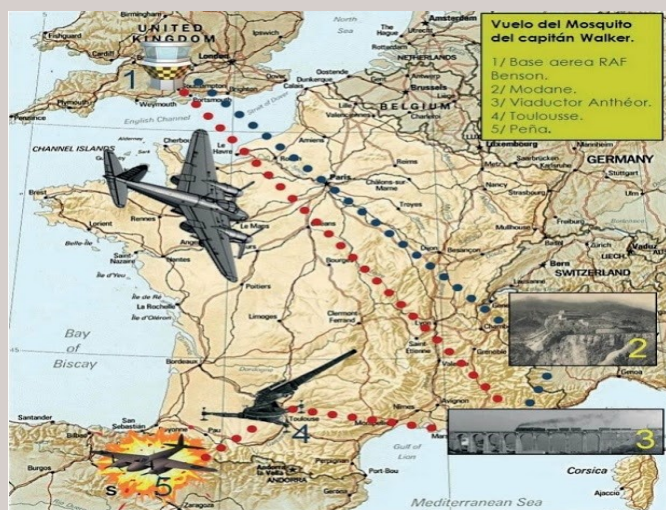
We definitely enjoy living up here away from the 'rush' of the South and I believe will happily retire up here (eventually!)

La Tumba del Piloto Ingles (The English pilot's grave) continued

We rejoin the continuing story of Wing Commander Donald Cecil Broadbent Walker LR 478. (See Newsletter Jul/Sept 2020 for 1st instalment)

Wing Commander Walker had followed the normal procedures as the pilot; he waited for his navigator to scramble out of the stricken craft first. The navigator, F/Lt Crow, jumped & got clear of the stricken aircraft, landed in the hills of the Pyrenees. The cramped confines of the cockpit offered few options for Walker and as he attempted to leave the stricken aircraft he became jammed in the exit trapdoor of the cockpit, hung up by the straps on his parachute harness. He was killed in that position when the kite hit the ground on Mount Verduces.

Peña's neighbors' in Sos del Rey Catolico were leaving Mass at that time, as they were celebrating their patron, St. Martin of Tours and amazingly watched the outcome. Some rushed to the scene of the accident, but could not do anything for the Wing Commander Walker. Hours later, as is the tradition in Spain, he was buried in the small cemetery of the town, which was and is near the top of Mount Peña.



F/Lt Crow had struck out through neutral Spain by way of the Pyrenees but was soon captured. The following day F/Lt Crow was taken to the crash site, remarkably, still wearing his poppy for Remembrance Day. He was then interned by the Spanish before repatriation to British control in Gibraltar & thus succeeded in eventually making his way back to "Blighty". Indeed at one stage in his internment by the Spanish Guardia Civil he was traded between areas for some "Jerry cans" of petrol. Within a year of returning to England, whilst again flying over enemy territory, he had to bale out yet again where he was lynched & killed by a mob of farm workers in Lower Saxony.

Peña has changed over the years, with all of the inhabitants leaving the village. Today it is just a collection of dilapidated houses that are clinging to a rocky slope at an altitude of 1070 meters. For years, nobody has lived there. Just the church and one house have been restored. A narrow mountain road leads to the old cemetery, hidden by vegetation. Inside you find some steel, several slabs with blurred letters, a rusty pair of crucifixes and a Commonwealth War Grave stone tablet that reads written in English: **Here lies the pilot Donald Cecil Broadbent Walker.**

Each year, November 1, the Spanish Día de todos los Santos (All Saints Day), mountaineers from the nearby village of Sanguesa decorate his grave with flowers.

Fast forward some 63 years to 2006 whilst I was researching the story of Major Martin, "The Man Who Never Was", who is buried in Huelva, Spain when I came across a listing of a solo British grave high in the Pyrenees. So began a 10 year obsession of getting to Peña to honour a British airman buried alone with no-one to visit his grave, or so I thought at the time, and no-one to mark his passing with a wreath of poppies. I made a vow to myself that one day I would get to climb up to this cemetery to prove that someone did care about his passing in the service of his country and on such a symbolic date.

One has to remember that back in 2006 although there was the internet it was nothing like it is today. Information on certain subjects was scarce and trying to trace relatives just by the common surname of Walker. I kept hitting brick walls on any information concerning Donald Walker. Yes, I had the information that he was from Malton in Yorkshire and that he was mentioned on the war memorial there but with a name as common as Walker this was not going to be an ordinary task.

Many months passed by with very little progressed although I had purchased a RAFA wreath ready to take up to Peña should I ever get the opportunity. That wreath was to be staying in my possession for almost 10 years before it actually made the trek up the foothills of the Pyrenees. When I returned to live in the UK I actually drove within a couple of hundred miles of Sos del Rey Catolico and I swear that the steering wheel of the car twitched in that direction so that I could fulfil my promise to the Wing Commander, but it was not to be at that time.

La Tumba del Piloto Ingles (The English pilot's grave) cont'd

I seemed to have come to a dead end with my enquiries as to whether there was any family left alive, as the RAF & the Commonwealth War Graves Commission quite rightly do not give out that information.

When back in the UK my interest in the case of "La Tumba del Piloto Ingles" was renewed after having joined Facebook I discovered some people who had the ability to actually trace possible relatives of the Wing Commander. So off I went re researching all I could about him and the details around his life and possible family links that might still be alive. Thanks to a young lady called Jenny Dias on Facebook I was given a short list of "possible" living relatives of Donald. Can you imagine getting a phone call from a complete stranger asking you about a possible dead relative from over 70 years ago? They were not easy calls to make.

Thankfully I struck lucky in a way on just my second call. I ended up talking to the wife of one of Donald's brothers, Alastair, who unfortunately had recently passed away so talking about things that had happened many years ago were not high on the agenda plus the memories opened too many wounds. She was however able to put me in contact with his only surviving sibling, Jack, a retired Justice of the Peace, who had made his own pilgrimage to Peña back in the 1950's. Now in his 90's it would be impossible for him to make a return trip to this inhospitable area.

But the main point was I had made an important contact in the Broadbent Walker family.



Talking to his brother I was able to discover that Donald was never married but his extended family have never forgotten this WW2 hero & indeed as recently as 2009, one of his nieces, Emma, visited Donald's resting place with her own family, but most of his family had never been to the last resting place of Donald up on Peña. I was further put into contact with one of Donald's nephews, Marcus. There was obviously much suspicion as to why, I, a person who

had no family connection to Donald, had taken it upon himself to go up to Peña to honour one of those "forgotten" heroes of the Royal Air Force. I was fortunate enough to be able to meet up with Marcus as he was a teacher at a school near to Reading which set his mind at ease as to my intentions.

About this time I also received an e-mail from a Spanish man called David Marañón from Pamploma who had visited Peña whilst pursuing his hobby of mountain biking. The grave there intrigued him so much so he researched Donald & came across the website concerning my proposed trip to Peña to honour him.

We had since been in contact & whilst I have continued my search back here in England, he searched for any links he could find over in Spain. He had been somewhat successful in tracing details of a José Antonio Landa who had accompanied Emma, when she made the trip in 2009. José was still alive in 2013 so David was now trying to contact him as his is possibly the only person still alive that was there the night Donald passed away.

There is also a local man of the cloth, the pastor of Sangüesa, a José María Martincorena who holds a service in the church a Peña every November 11th, the day of St. Martin. He is responsible for a Mass at the Church of Peña, which is followed by a small lunch outdoors. It is a day when life returns to the place.

The Mass is unique in that because Peña was a medieval village, with no electricity, any water is rainwater, and the service is held in near darkness. It might be good if we can get in contact with him to possibly hold a small service for Donald as & when I manage to get to travel there.

It now seemed that the trip to honour Donald was on and a date was set for the start of May 2016. In February of that year it was confirmed that three of Donald's nephews Marcus, Donald & Nick would also be making the trip. The plan is to go to Mount Peña, clean up the area around the grave & lay a RAF wreath to mark Donald's passing.

We would hopefully be joining the local people of Gaberderal who go up to the Peña cemetery each year on a local Saint's Day. It will also be nice, if it is possible, to meet with those people & their families who remember that night in 1943 when Mosquito LR 478 came calling. We are also going to meeting members of the YBarra family; who are the current owners of the land where Donald lies.

Thatcham Families Fun Day



Sunday 27th June finally saw the branch start to take some small steps forward towards normality, by having two stalls at the Thatcham Families Fun Day in Berkshire. Four members of the branch, along with one willing volunteer, Marie Simpson, made the early start of getting everything set up to greet the expected hoards that were going to descend on us. Well that was the hope. With one

eye kept on the sky for the forecasted rain showers, Steve and Julie Mullis were joined by Ian Kirk and Clive Simpson at the first Wings Appeal money raising event of the year, indeed of the past 18 months. Running two stalls, side by side was also a first for the branch. Our normal gazebo was soon filled with RAFA pins, pens & 100's of DUCKS!!! These are always sure fired winners with the kids. The other gazebo had nearly 200 large, small and medium sized cuddly toys from a



massive Reindeer to little coloured slugs in a tombola it was definitely going to be an unusual day.

Two hours after starting to set up, we were ready or so we thought!!! The tombola stall went MANIC!!!! We were complimented on it being the best stall at the event as well as the best value. Over 160 of the prizes were won over the day, and the best thing was the prizes cost

the branch NOTHING!!!

The RAFA pins side was also doing brisk trade so all of us were kept on our toes from dealing with the willing public to making up over 400 plastic RAFA windmills.

The whole event finished at 16.00hrs which was perfect because the heavens then opened!!!!

Overall though over £500 was raised on the day!!!



Abingdon Air & Country Show

ABINGDON AIR & COUNTRY SHOW



Saturday 11th September 2021



Car Parks are
open 7.30am

Showground
opens at 10am

Show closes
5.30pm

Airfield closes
7pm

Just off the A34
Marcham inter-
change

Abingdon Airfield, Dalton Barracks, Oxfordshire

OX13 6JQ (Barrow Road 'Gate A') - Last entry is 12.30pm there after gates are shut.

- Flying Displays & Static Aircraft
- Ground attractions
- Free Car Parking
- Dogs on a lead are welcome



TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM OUR WEBSITE:

Adults (16+) £19
OAP (60+) £9
Children (5-15) £5
Children under 5 free

All ticket bookings are subject to a £1.50 fee
per transaction as set by Ticketline.

www.abingdonairandcountry.co.uk



Global Branch Will Be There

What EVERY member needs

CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE FOR 2021 NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR RAFA HOME COLLECTION BOX!!!!



Its so simple folks, just get one of these home collection boxes and just pop your odd change into it. Come Battle of Britain Week 2021, count it up and bank it for the Global Branch's Wing Appeal.

Remember it doesn't matter where you live in the world, money is money & it all adds up no matter what the currency!!!!

Contact the Chairman now to ask for one of the boxes and get collecting the easy way. Don't wait for it to come in post, have a look in your pocket today and see how much shrapnel you have in there now!!!

In 2020 we raised over £1,000 despite all the problems we have had with Covid 19, so I am hoping that in 2021 we can improve on that with more people having boxes!!!

20/ So Long, And Thank You for all the fish.
19/ Neville Longbottom
18/ Long Train Runnin'
17/ Longitude
16/ The Long Good Friday
15/ Long Beach, California
14/ Longbridge
13/ Edward Longshank
12/ Furlong
11/ It's a Long Way to Tipperary
10/ Long Case Clock
9/ The Long and Winding Road
8/ Oolong Tea
7/ Geelong Grammar School
6/ Long John Silver
5/ The Longest Day
4/ Lord Longford
3/ Longleaf
2/ Long Tall Sally
1/ Daddy Long Legs

Page 4 Quiz Answers



Help raise FREE funds for RAFA Global Branch 1370 whenever you shop online!

We currently have just over 115 people raising over £1,418 since we started using it. Imagine how much we could raise if ALL our members were to join!!!

It doesn't cost you a penny more to use easyfundraising BUT it will raise money for the branch for FREE!!!

Use easyfundraising to shop with over 4,000 big name retailers including John Lewis, Very, Uswitch, GoCompare, Just Eat, Expedia, and ASOS – when you shop, you'll raise a free donation for RAFA Global Branch 1370 every time, it's that easy!

Please help support us:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rafaglobalbranch1370/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=fb5

Now Available



A unique metal pin made for
Global Branch members

£3 each + p & p

Contact Steve Mullis for details