

AIR MAIL

WE'RE HERE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

APRIL-JUNE 2018

 ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association

The charity that supports the RAF family

*Happy
Birthday
1918-2018*



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales), SC037673 (Scotland).

ROYAL AIR FORCE *in Concert*



PRESENTS

THE CENTENARY TOUR

JOIN US FOR A ROUSING MUSICAL SALUTE TO YOUR ROYAL AIR FORCE

PERFORMED BY THE BANDS OF THE RAF

23 SEPT	LIGHTHOUSE	POOLE
26 SEPT	SYMPHONY HALL	BIRMINGHAM
29 SEPT	THEATRE ROYAL	NORWICH
03 OCT	ROYAL CONCERT HALL	GLASGOW
04 OCT	SAGE GATESHEAD	GATESHEAD
19 OCT	MILLENNIUM CENTRE	CARDIFF
23 OCT	WATERFRONT	BELFAST
27 OCT	ROYAL CONCERT HALL	NOTTINGHAM
28 OCT	MARLOWE THEATRE	CANTERBURY
31 OCT	BRIDGEWATER HALL	MANCHESTER
TBC	TBC	BRISTOL

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
RAFINCONCERT.COM



ROYAL AIR FORCE Charitable Trust
promote support encourage

BAE SYSTEMS

“Looking forward to my next visit”

Our Wings Breaks hotels offer breaks that are designed for the RAF family – so you can meet old friends and make new ones in a beautiful and relaxing setting.

Our specially trained hotel team know just what you need from your holiday and if you need extra assistance, they'll be on hand to give you the care and support you need.

Book your stay now

Get in touch with your chosen hotel or for more information visit:
rafa.org.uk/wingsbreaks

Richard Peck House, Lancashire
Tel: 01253 725 519
Email: richardpeck@rafa.org.uk

Rothbury House, Northumberland
Tel: 01669 620 235
Email: rothbury@rafa.org.uk

Flowerdown House, Somerset
Tel: 01934 621 664
Email: Flowerdown.Receptionist@rafa.org.uk

Give a loved one a Wings Break
Buy our hotel gift vouchers at
rafa.org.uk/shop



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales), SC037673 (Scotland).

ROYAL AIR FORCES Association
The charity that supports the RAF family



Useful contact details

AIR MAIL CONTACTS

editor@rafatrad.co.uk
BranchNews@rafatrad.co.uk

Editorial/Advertising and
Branch news:
0800 018 2361

Editorial Office
Postal Address:

RAFATRAD Ltd
Atlas House
41 Wembley Road
Leicester
LE3 1UT

Views expressed in Air Mail are those of the contributors alone and do not represent policy of the RAF Association, except where shown. Reproduction of any part of this publication, text, photographs or illustrations is strictly forbidden without written permission from the editor.

The editor regrets that it is impossible to respond personally to all submissions and letters received except where the subject specifically necessitates a personal response. Submission of unsolicited articles, news and photos does not guarantee inclusion.

While every effort is made to ensure information is accurate at the time of going to print, no responsibility can be accepted for loss or damage caused by published information found to be inaccurate.

Submissions for the
July – September 2018 issue
must be received no later than:

14 May 2018

Printed by:

Southern Print Ltd
17-21 Factory Road
Upton Ind Estate
Poole
BH16 5SN

ISSN 0002-2446

Average distribution
Jan – Dec 2017 = 51,017 per issue

COVER PICTURE

"Celebrating the 100th
anniversary of the RAF"

Design by Ade Wood
© The Design Factory South

Headquarters RAF Association

Atlas House
41 Wembley Road
Leicester
LE3 1UT

Telephone: 0800 018 2361

Website: www.rafa.org.uk

Area Office contact details

Northern

Area HQ and North West Office

Wings Centre
82-83 Fishergate
Preston
PR1 2NJ

Telephone: 01772 426930

North East Office

Halifax Block
RAF Linton-on-Ouse
YO30 2AJ

Telephone: 01347 847525/847496

South East and Eastern

South East Office

46-50 Coombe Road
New Malden
Surrey, KT3 4QF

Telephone: 0203 823 8130/31

Area HQ and Eastern Office

Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road
Leicester, LE3 1UT

Telephone: Office 0116 268 8784
Welfare: 0116 268 8781/8782

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Area HQ and Scotland Office

20 Queen Street
Edinburgh, EH2 1JX

Telephone: 0131 225 5221

Northern Ireland Office

21 Talbot Street
Belfast, BT1 2LD

Telephone: 02890 325718

Wales, Midland and South Western

Area HQ and South Western Office
RAFA House, Chancel Lane
Pinhoe, Exeter EX4 8JU

Telephone: 01392 462088

Wales Office

Celynyn Collieries Institute
Memorial Hall
High Street, Newbridge
Newport, NP11 4FH

Telephone: 01495 249522

Midland Office

The Windermere Club
110 Wake Green Road
Moseley
Birmingham, B13 9PZ

Telephone: 0121 449 9356

Overseas

21 Talbot Street
Belfast, BT1 2LD

Telephone: 02890 325718

The RAF Families Federation

13-15 St Georges Road
Wittering
Peterborough
PE8 6DL

Telephone: 01780 781650
Website: www.raf-ff.org.uk

Flowerdown House

55 Beach Road
Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1BH

Telephone: 01934 621664

Rothbury House

West End, Rothbury
Morpeth, NE65 7TT

Telephone: 01669 620235

Richard Peck House

1 St Thomas Road
Lytham St Annes, FY8 1JL

Telephone: 01253 725519

S T I N Z E T H N Z O C



From the editor

It's just a few days after 1 April, and the national RAF100 celebrations are getting into full swing. Air Mail is enthusiastically celebrating everything about the centenary in this issue.

From tasters of the Association events planned, to celebrating our members who are also 100 this year, and from opportunities to volunteer at centenary events around the country to air shows to visit this summer - I think we've got something for everyone.

If you'd like to toast the 100 years with us, fill your glass with Spitfire Gin and Supermarine Vodka (p51) or new wines (p36), all of which raise funds for our welfare work. There are more tasty recipes from the RAF100 cookbook and, to work off the calories from all this, we are also featuring the huge range of fundraising challenges on offer this year.

We have looked back into our own history in the Air Mail archive and this just swelled our pride in what we do. We would love to hear your news of the kind, curious or crazy things you are involved with as a member of the Association (whether it's looking out for other members, finding a Tornado next door, how you run your successful club, or what makes you support the Association). If we feature your news we'll do it modestly - so you shouldn't be 'slabbed' by your squadron or branch.

Annie O'Brian
editor@rafatrad.co.uk

Pick of the contents

NEWS

All the latest developments from the Association and the RAF family, including: new workshops at Conference, a last reminder to vote, more on the RAF100 plans, RAF100 stamps, and both a hotel manager and our volunteer training both get national recognition. All in the first few pages of your magazine.

FEATURES

RAF100 roundup 10

How the 'inspire' part of the celebrations is reaching the UK's school children, and you. And details of just some of the Association events planned.

Beach ready? 17

Take advantage of lovely, seaside Association holiday homes with your friends and families.

From Swanick to Sardines 18

Storybook Wings is 10, so we meet Neil, the volunteer editor responsible for more than 200 handcrafted tales.

Bearly Believable 28

A story of friendship and globetrotting with Marjorie, Sean and a bear called Bertie.

Cheers 36

Celebrate the centenary in style, and see Mistress of Wine Sam Caporn's taste notes on the Association's new merlot and sauvignon blanc.

100 years ago 52

A mystery crash in a wood exactly one hundred years ago sets Chris Goss on the latest historical trail.

Everything you want from a store and a little bit more 64

Meet the team bringing you merchandise for the Association, and the new RAF100 range.

REGULARS

Branch news page 44

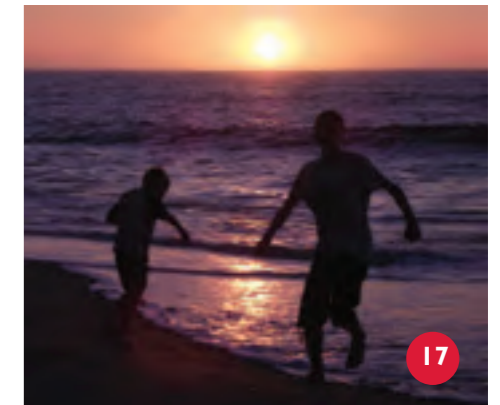
World Military Aviation News 54

Crossword 59

Obituaries 60

Notices 62

The charity that supports the RAF family



Message from the Secretary General

We are celebrating, almost to the day, the centenary of the Royal Air Force; all it has achieved and all it will achieve. In the coming months we will join the commemorations, thank everyone who has been part of its growth and celebrate everyone who was, is and will be part of its unrivalled existence.

I want also to commemorate the history and contribution of us, the Royal Air Forces Association. We are a strong, effective and wide-ranging group, dedicated to the welfare of others in our Royal Air Forces family. We do good. We work together to improve our comrades' lives. We remember lost colleagues. So also I celebrate what the Association has achieved and am inspired by what we can do in the future.

Though we can trace our roots back to 1919 and the Women's Old Comrades Association, it was in 1929 that Vernon Goodhand, Joe Pearce and Warrant Officer Bartlett met to discuss forming a single organisation dedicated to the welfare of serving and former RAF personnel.

From the inaugural meeting of the Comrades of the Royal Air Forces Association in 1930 to 1933, when the Air Ministry formally recognised us, growth in membership was slow. But soon afterwards, Lord Trenchard accepted the presidency. Under his banner of social mobility through education, funds were set up and welfare projects started.

Major progress came after 1936 when His Majesty King George V became Patron. We have been honoured with royal patrons and presidents ever since. In 1952 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II granted a Royal Charter to the Association and, with pride, we display it at Atlas House for all visitors to see.

By 1943 there were a million people serving in the RAF. That year the women's and men's Old Comrades Associations merged, bringing together 20,000 members and introducing our current name. The consolidation of our structure and welfare aims followed and we have formally been a charity since the 1940s War Charities Act recognised our work. The RAF's history is our history. The RAF's future is our future.

60 per cent of our membership are currently serving. Our Association now combines the wisdom and experience of former personnel with the strength and skill of current servicemen and women. I now want to inspire the next generation, and be inspired by them - perhaps for the next one hundred years of the RAF.

Nick Bunting
Secretary General



© Phil Greig



The Royal Charter and Seal. Its bestowal was one of the highlights of our own history.

©RAF Association



Voting for your Council – closes 7 May

Voting is taking place for election to Council and the last day for your branch to register its vote is Monday 7 May.

Voting is by post and must be received by noon on that day. Your branch received the ballot form and voting instructions in the new year.

Full details of the nominees for the eight Elected Member posts were published in the Jan-Mar issue of Air Mail and are also available online in the members' portal of rafa.org.uk. The ten nominees are (in alphabetical order): **Blackman**, Michael; **Dennett Stannard**, Beryl; **Gibson**, Dean 'Gibbo'; **Goss**, Chris; **Little**, Heather; **McEnnis**, Ian; **Millett**, Neale; **Pattison**, Bryan; **Ramrayka**, Peter; **Rees**, Anthony 'Taff'.

There is one nomination for one post on Annual Conference Committee – elected unopposed: **Evans**, Gail.

To find out more about the Association's governance, the work of Council and other issues, please see the 2017 Governance Handbook or look online in the resources folder of the Members' Portal.



Remember to vote for your representatives on Council

Celebrating reaching 100 this special year

In the year that the RAF will celebrate its 100th birthday, the Honorary President of the Sud Ouest France Branch will also be 100 years young. Frenchman **Henri Laronze** was born in the small village of Castelveil near Bordeaux in the French Department of the Gironde on 17 March 1918. As a young man during WWII he escaped occupied France and joined the RAF. After training, he became a sergeant flight engineer on the Halifax bomber. He was based at RAF Elvington near York on the mainly French-manned 347 (Tunisie) Squadron RAF.

Between 1943 and 1945, Henri flew 33 missions over Germany from both RAF Elvington and his subsequent French base of Merignac near Bordeaux. In 1945, 347 Squadron was relocated to Bordeaux where Henri continued to serve in the RAF and thence the French Air Force. He retired in the rank of lieutenant colonel and returned to his beloved village of Castelveil with his wife, Carmen, and their six children. Along with other returning French airmen, he helped form the Sud Ouest France Branch of the Association, based in Bordeaux. It is still thriving to this day under Henri's tutelage. Happy 100th birthday to Henri for 17 March!

The Association's records show that between now and the end of July, 30 members are expected to celebrate their 100th birthday. Congratulations and many happy returns to you all.



Henri Laronze, seated in front of the branch standard, with other members of the Sud Ouest Branch at their monthly lunch held in Bordeaux. © Sud Ouest Branch



One of the top three care managers in the UK

Colin with local MP Anne-Marie Trevelyan on the terrace at Rothbury House. © RAF Association.

RAF Association Hotel Manager Colin Lee was recognised as one of the top three leaders in the country in The 3rd Sector Care Awards 2017. His Leadership Award category celebrated hotel and care home managers who demonstrate an outstanding contribution to care and service excellence.

Manager of our Rothbury House Hotel since 2013, he was nominated by Mark Shields, the Association's Head of Care and Housing who said: "His total commitment to care and his outstanding leadership has led to a culture that puts people and quality first. His enthusiasm helps retain a large number of staff at the hotel. He has created a fun and enjoyable place for guests to be. He ensures their needs are met and family and friends are completely put at ease when they visit their relatives or come for a break."

Colin believes a good manager leads from the front, takes an interest in the guests and employees and even does the dishes when it's needed. He said: "I look at the nomination as a group effort and I'm standing on other people's shoulders. The heart of Rothbury House is the community and I'm here to ensure everyone else can do their job properly. If it wasn't for my team I would never have been nominated."

Colin didn't win the award on the night but said: "I felt very privileged to have gone to the ceremony and I recognise that I'm not acting alone in my job. The training and support I've had from the RAF Association has helped me to hone my skills and polish my craft."

Centenary stamps

The Royal Mail and the Isle of Man Post Office are marking the RAF's centenary with special stamps.

In January, the Isle of Man issued a set showing eight aircraft including the Chinook (pictured, below). Each also includes a medal ribbon and medal initials, the RAF Ensign, the name of a person associated with the Royal Air Force, and an RAF base and its GPS coordinates. Some details are so tiny that you will need to magnify the stamps to see them. They also feature the sonnet High Flight by John Gillespie Magee - printed in Morse code, in security ink visible only under UV light.

In March the Royal Mail launched a set of ten. Six show original artworks of iconic British aircraft, including the Vulcan B2 (below, right). Four paid tribute to the brilliance of the Red Arrows aerobatic display team.



© Royal Mail and
© Isle of Man Post Office

Honoured at new year

Our congratulations go to the following members who were recognised in the New Year's Honours list, announced while the January issue of Air Mail was at print:

John MACLEAN, Chairman, Peterhead Branch, RAF Association.
British Empire Medal (BEM)
For voluntary service to ex-service personnel.

Percy (Pip) Edwin ILES, Basingstoke Branch.
British Empire Medal (BEM)
For services to RAF veterans and the community in Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Air Vice-Marshal The Honourable **Richard John Martin BROADBRIDGE**, Q.H.S., Royal Air Force, 5204674R.
Companion of The Order of the Bath (CB)

Air Vice-Marshal (The Venerable) **Jonathan Paul Michael CHAFFEY**, Q.H.C., Royal Air Force, 5207619P.
Companion of The Order of the Bath (CB)

Brewing up for a win?

Two RAF Association clubs have been named as finalists in the Campaign for Real Ale's 2018 Club of the Year competition.

The Albatross Club in Bexhill-on-Sea, run by 1066 Branch, and the Real Ale Farm in Wales, linked to the Bargoed/Blackwood Branch, are on the shortlist of four.

The Albatross was a finalist in 2017 and won the national title in 2016. It regularly holds beer festivals and social events and is known for its collection of RAF memorabilia.



The broad wingspan of the Albatross Club building © CAMRA

The Real Ale Farm is housed in the oldest surviving building in Bargoed, dating back to the 17th century. It offers 'the best range of quality beers for miles around' and hosts numerous charity events.

Also in the running is the Appleton Thorn Village Hall in Warrington and the Flixton Conservative Club in Manchester.

Sean Ferris, Publisher and Managing Director of Club Mirror said: "Now, more than ever, clubs are proving to be at the heart of the community and we're proud to have been working with them to secure this position for the past 49 years."

CAMRA's 187,000 members are not simply real ale enthusiasts and regular pub-goers, but also sociable members, who want to meet like-minded individuals. It believes well-run pubs, whether in rural or urban areas, play a critical social role in UK culture as the centres of community life.

The four 2018 finalists were presented with a commemorative plate at the Club Mirror Awards in December 2017.

STOP PRESS: 28 February 2018. National winner announced - Flixton Conservative Club.



Two Association clubs get top class recognition from the Campaign for Real Ale © CAMRA

Linking up for veterans



The RAF Association is now a referral partner with the Veterans' Gateway.

The Gateway was launched in June 2017 and offers "a single point of contact for veterans seeking help". The service offers 24-hour support and online resources, and is partly operated by trained veterans. It brings together more than 30 referral partners to help the British armed forces community, which is estimated to be around six million people and growing by 20,000 annually.

"We are hoping that this will mean members of the RAF family seeking support will be directed to us much faster," said Jenny Eaton, Welfare Project Development Officer. "The Gateway will also be a vital tool for our volunteer welfare officers and befrienders, branches and members, and for our Wings Centre employees when they come across someone who served in the army or navy who needs support," she continued.

It's launch was a response to independent reports by the Forces in Mind Trust and Lord Ashcroft's 2014 Veterans' Transition Review. Both said guidance to welfare support services for veterans should be made easier to navigate. Lord Ashcroft's principal recommendation was the creation of a single 24/7 contact centre. A survey of 1,000 individuals from the armed forces community

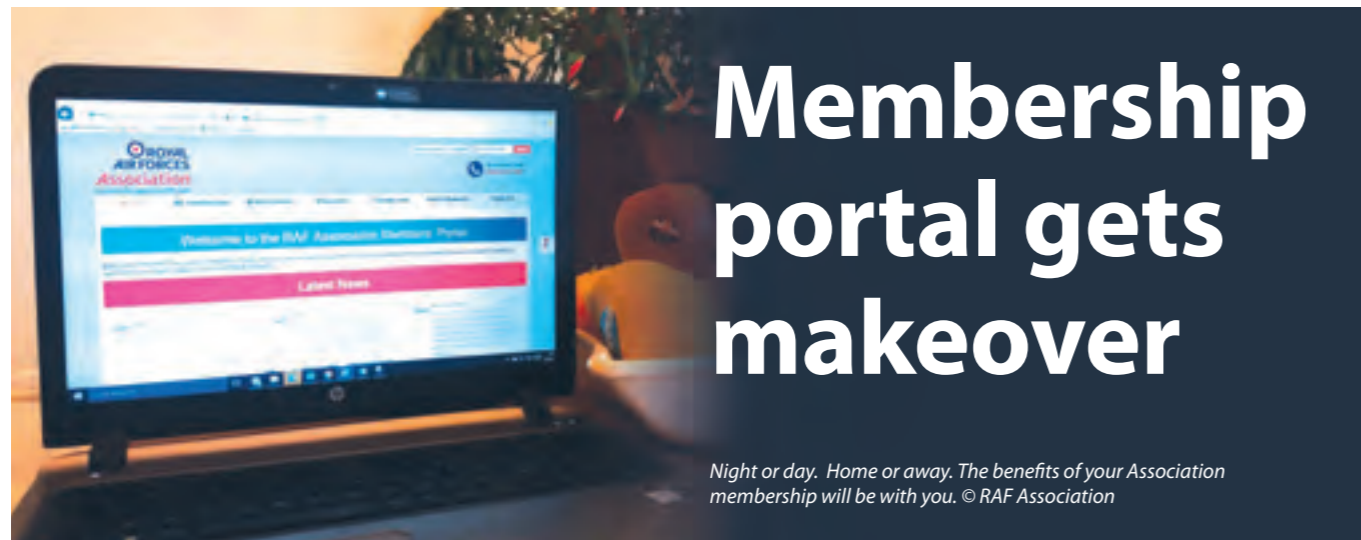
revealed that 20 per cent of respondents are referred to between three and ten charities before finding support, while 45 per cent are unsure where to get help. 54 per cent found the sheer number of registered armed forces charities confusing.

The Gateway is delivered by a consortium of charities led by the Royal British Legion, and includes Poppyscotland, Combat Stress, Connect Assist, the Ministry of Defence and SSAFA - the Armed Forces Charity. The Ministry of Defence, funds the £2 million service from the Covenant Fund.

To contact Veterans' Gateway call: 0808 802 1212, visit: veteransgateway.org.uk, or text: 81212.



Looking for the right support on the Veterans' Gateway.



Membership portal gets makeover

Night or day. Home or away. The benefits of your Association membership will be with you. © RAF Association

Your membership account is now at your fingertips at any time of day or night, from anywhere in the world, thanks to the latest improvements to the members' portal.

The new, secure site lets you update headquarters about changes of address, check when you last paid your membership and see when it's next due. You can now also add or change secondary branches to your membership, check when you last made a donation or update details on how the Association can contact you. You'll also find information and resources - from past editions of Air Mail to Council minutes and governance documents, and helpful resources for your branch.

Alongside all this you'll be able to see latest news from the Association and other RAF social media. You can also check and

apply for all the latest RAFA Rewards, from events to online shopping and from Forces Cars direct deals to gym memberships.

If you are on holiday abroad, use it to find your nearest branch and see how easy it is to pop in and say hello to local members. If you were an existing portal user a link will have been emailed to you which you must follow to setup your new password. If you have any difficulties accessing the portal then please contact 0800 018 2361.

If a computer screen is not for you, if you have more complex requests or want to ask for support for someone you know, then there will always be our friendly contact team who you can talk to during UK office hours, on 0800 018 2361.

Maze runner

Vikki Hall: experience negotiating the maze of regulations facing local charities and branches. © RAF Association.



Vikki Hall has joined the RAF Association's team at Atlas House as our new director of governance and risk.

Part of her job is to help branches and clubs achieve the highest standards of governance and statutory compliance. This includes fire safety, Charity Commission requirements, property ownership and tenancy issues, insurance, health and safety, and data protection.

After studying law at Oxford, Vikki joined British Aerospace's Company Secretary graduate training scheme and qualified as a member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA). She has more than 25 years' experience in governance and risk roles, and has also provided in-house legal assistance for a broad range of organisations. This included developing skills in contracts, insurance, trademarks, and health and safety. She also has a background working in small, local voluntary organisations, overseeing community property such as meeting halls and clubs.

From 2014 to 2018 Vikki was the company secretary at the ExtraCare Charitable Trust, a UK-wide charity that provides a modern affordable alternative to nursing homes and care homes.

"I understand the 'pain' of negotiating the maze of regulations, and will be putting together some simple guidance for all branches - to signpost you to the best possible help," she said. "I will also be running workshops at Conference and developing routes for you to get the information you need. I look forward to meeting you."

Find out more about the workshops on offer at 2017 Annual Conference on pages 12 and 13.

Stranger things - Tornado in suburbia

It wasn't Sharknado - like the film. Nor even a meteorological tornado. RAF Association member Frank Titterton describes the view from the front garden of his home in a quiet street in Wirksworth, Derbyshire:

"It was a stunning one-third scale model of a Tornado GR-4. It had been lovingly built over many months by my neighbour, André Collins, who was helped by various donations and some genuine parts from museums."

"The idea came about when André and his son visited a show at Shobdon where his son spied a couple of small wings on a wheelbarrow. The obvious question was - 'Daddy, can you use these to build me my own aircraft, please?'"

"André's next project is to build two models of Red Arrow Hawks. Sadly we may not see these as he plans to move to France in the near future." (French branches, alert! Ed.).



Q: What will the neighbours think? A: "Stunning!" © Frank Titterton

UK first for welfare training

The RAF Association is now the only armed forces charity in the UK to train its welfare volunteers to nationally accredited standards listed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), the same framework that accredits GCSEs and NVQs.

Two of our courses have been awarded Level one and Level two accredited status. Our welfare support information and advice (caseworker) training course is now accredited at Level two, and our befriending course is accredited at Level one.

The training guides the volunteers how to support beneficiaries and the best ways to signpost to other help or financial assistance in local communities.

Alyson Hunter, Director of HR and Volunteering, said of the accreditation: "Our training courses are an integral part of our volunteers' initial experience giving them knowledge and security to undertake their roles well. We are very proud of our training and of our volunteers who do an amazing job."

"This accreditation reassures our beneficiaries that the volunteers we send to support them are fully trained. We are delighted that the RQF has recognised the high standards of our courses and awarded us this national accreditation."

The work of our welfare volunteers is overseen by employed welfare managers based in area offices; all of whom are trained to welfare diploma standards.

If you would like to attend the training courses to gain the updated accreditation please contact the welfare training team on welfaretraining@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361 to find out about upcoming training dates.

The Association recognises that other organisations may be interested in exploring the delivery of this training to their own volunteers. To explore this further contact Alyson Hunter, RAF Association Director of HR and Volunteering, 0116 268 8775 or alyson.hunter@rafa.org.uk.



Welfare training at Atlas House in late 2017. © Phil Greig

RAF100 round up

You CAN make it fly

RAF launches centenary youth and education programme

Rocket cars have been built, computer code written, aircraft riveted together and hot air balloon challenges taken up to launch a year-long programme of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) to inspire the next generation. Events in Glasgow in September 2017, in Birmingham at the end of January and in Cardiff in February 2018 launched The RAF100 Youth and STEM programme.

The youth engagement programme is expected to reach up to two million students aged between nine and 15 years old. The aim is to benefit the wider UK economy against the background of a serious skills shortage at the national level.

The programme will see 1,000 STEM boxes distributed to schools, 100 curriculum-based school activity days, residential courses at RAF bases and a new Air

Researcher Badge for Scouts UK. All of this is complemented by a range of historical initiatives in partnership with the First World War Charity, Never Such Innocence, the Historical Association and the Institute of Physics.

Air Vice-Marshal Sue Gray, Air Officer Commanding Number 38 Group and head of the RAF's Engineer branch, said: "For almost 100 years, the RAF has been a leading force in technological advancement and innovation. Today, through our youth engagement programme, the RAF is looking to the next generation for innovative ideas to shape our second century and ensure that we will always be first to the future".

Keep up on Twitter with @rafyouthengage, which posts updates from STEM days and residential courses.

Made for schools. Inspiring for all

A new website packed with resources to help school children (and anyone else, of any age, who is interested) to learn about history and physics connected to the RAF has gone live.

The Historical Association, the Institute of Physics and the Royal Air Force are using the story of the RAF to help schools explore concepts of history and physics on raf100schools.org.uk.

The first three sets of resources available cover the origins of the RAF and aircraft design, the development of radar and codebreaking. Each section has teaching notes and resources that are free to download. Three more sections will be uploaded shortly.

In the radar section, a video sets the scene, showing how the Battle of Britain could not have been won without the early warning systems and the diverse men and

women in the RAF. In its history activity, students explore the role of radar in British strategy and the importance of the Battle of Britain to the UK in 1940. In its STEM activity students build a ping pong ball model of a radar station to explore how the position of targets that they cannot see can be found. As an extension they can follow some of the steps that radar operators undertook in order to process the data.

The website also lists forthcoming schools events, has competitions and interactive maps, and much more.

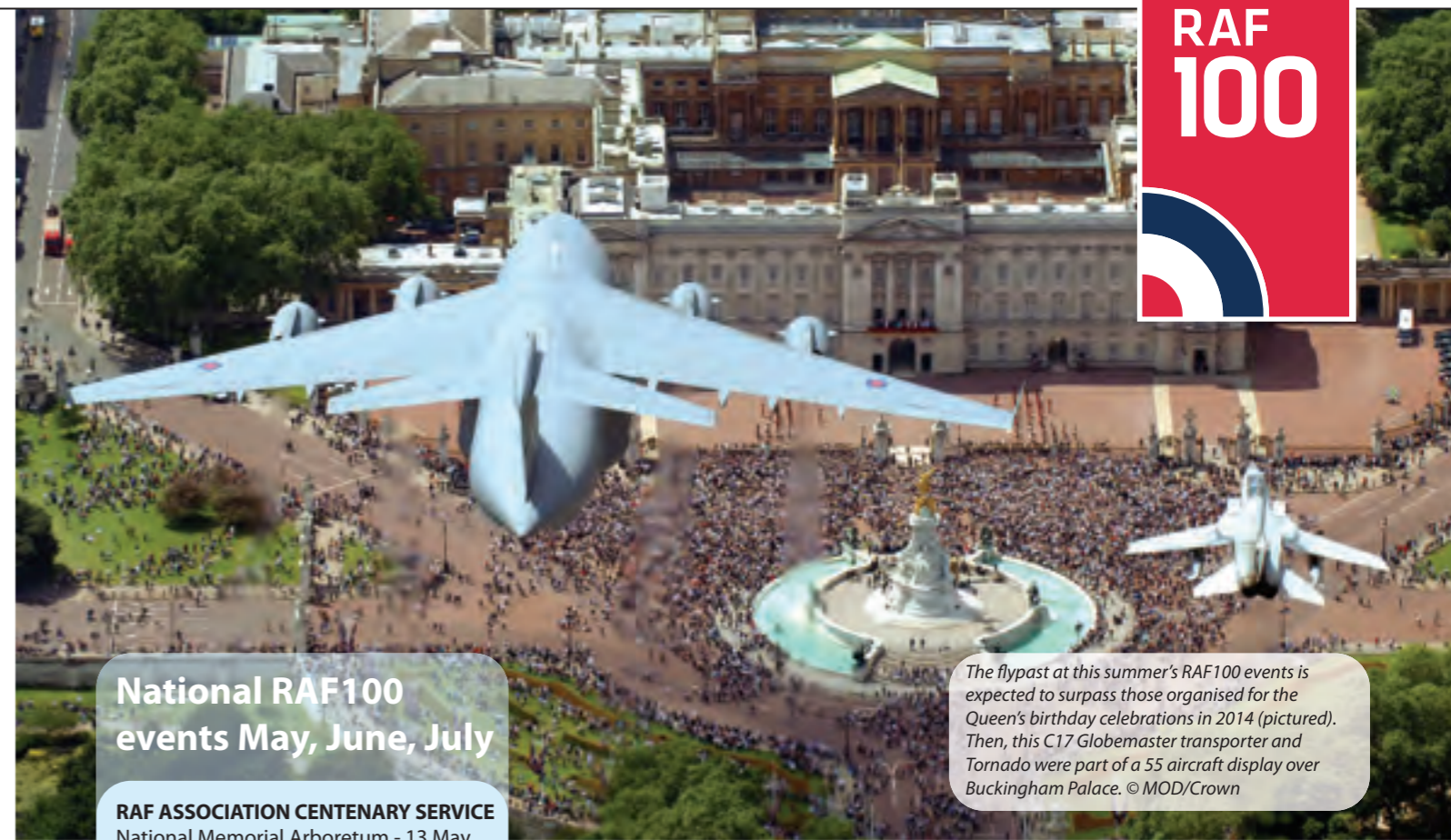
The RAF Association is also in collaboration with Rolls Royce and the RAF through the StaRRship to Mars project, featured in the January to March issue of Air Mail. You can keep up with the journey at: <http://starrship.space> or on social media at StaRRshipHope.



1. Building the basics. © MOD/Crown

2. It works! The wonder of STEM subjects at the England schools launch. © MOD/Crown

3. and 4. There's nothing like a real helicopter to inspire your model one. © MOD/Crown



National RAF100 events May, June, July

RAF ASSOCIATION CENTENARY SERVICE
National Memorial Arboretum - 13 May

NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR
Cardiff City Hall Gardens - 16/20 May

RAF COSFORD AIRSHOW - 10 June

RAF MUSEUM RE-OPENING CEREMONY
London - 21 June

NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR
Horse Guards Parade, London - 6 to 9 July

RAF100 PARADE & FLYPAST
The Mall, London - 10 July

ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO
RAF Fairford - 13 to 15 July

Astonishing array of Association events

Branches' and members' plans to commemorate the centenary range from the very private to the spectacularly public. Every day as Air Mail went to press we heard of more being organised. We cannot list every one of the hundreds of events across the Association, so here is just a very small taster to give you a flavour of what's planned in the next few months:

In Wales, Midland and South West Area:

In April, three tokens will be relayed around the area, connecting 87 branches, honouring the anniversary of the RAF, marking the centenary, and ending up at Area Conference. A parade and service at

Worcester Cathedral on 20 May will be followed in August by the Brize Norton Branch's involvement in Brize Fest 2018. Meanwhile, the Gloucester Branch and supporters will complete The Gloucester Tapestry. In February, the Towyn and Aberdovey Branch adopted a 1918-built Barclay 0-4-OWT No. 6 Douglas steam engine in RAF blue with RAF100 logos.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland:

On 6 April, area council is hosting a reception under the Supermarine Spitfire at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum for all branches and Scottish dignitaries. A number of Scotland branches are also holding centenary dinners. In Northern Ireland, branch and area representatives will be attending an RAF100 service of celebration and thanksgiving at St Annes Cathedral, Belfast on 29 April. In June County Fermanagh Branch and 502 (Ulster) Squadron are involved in a flying display and Royal Gun Salute. A number of Northern Irish branches are organising centenary dinners, exhibitions of memorabilia and other centenary celebrations.

In Northern Area:

Erewash Branch will hold a centenary service on 29 April. Rothbury House will stage a Northumbrian Salute to the RAF on 27 May. On 23 June major celebrations will take place as a train is officially named at Newcastle Station, a service of thanksgiving is held at Durham Cathedral, 606 (County of Durham) Squadron receive the freedom of the City of Durham, a wing review will be held for

The flypast at this summer's RAF100 events is expected to surpass those organised for the Queen's birthday celebrations in 2014 (pictured). Then, this C17 Globemaster transporter and Tornado were part of a 55 aircraft display over Buckingham Palace. © MOD/Crown

Durham and Northumberland Wing Air Cadets and the winner of the science, technology, engineering and maths competition for 18 air cadet squadrons will be made.

In South East and Eastern Area:

As Air Mail is arriving, Itchen and Hamble Branch will be organising an RAF100 concert at Abbey Hall, Netley. 20 May will see the Leicester Branch cathedral service. On 10 June the Area Committee is organising a celebration at the Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede - standard bearers are invited to attend. And on 22 June Scunthorpe Branch holds a dinner and cabaret. RAF memorabilia will be auctioned by Huntingdon Branch. Sheringham and District Branch and Sheringham Little Theatre are planning a weekend of RAF-themed films. Cleethorpes and Grimsby Branch will organise parades and a flying display for 1 July, and a group of 12 former military transport drivers are looking to undertake 100 miles by bike for RAF100, round eight stations.

Look out for more detail in area and branch newsletters, your local media, and especially on the RAF100 website events page.

To volunteer for the RAF100 Appeal fundraising collections, some of which are at the RAF's Static Aircraft Tour, see page 15.



Our Conference, 2018

Sharing best practice, meeting up, celebrating, and having your say. Book now to secure your place.

The Association standard during formal proceedings. © Heidi Burton

Air Marshal Julian Young has been confirmed as the guest of honour at Conference this May. He'll present the 2018 flying scholarships, including the 100th one ever to be awarded, and give a keynote speech. He is partially responsible for Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) alongside other senior staff from the Army and the Navy. He leads some 1,600 military and civilian staff and has an annual budget of around £4Bn for equipping and supporting all of the Ministry of Defence's fixed-wing aircraft. He also is the focal point of contact within DE&S for the Royal Air Force (RAF), is a Member of the Air Force Board and Chief Engineer (RAF) and has a MOD-wide role as the Defence Engineering Champion.

After successful trials last year, there will be nine new workshops running to help branches and members top up skills and share experiences in a range of areas, from the Wings Appeal to fire safety and how clubs can be good employers. The workshops will be run before the more formal programme of Association business, reports on the year's activities and voting on resolutions. Delegates will also get the chance to see the latest from support teams at headquarters, from Association partners and many others at the market place.

The results of the votes for Council membership will be announced, National Presidential Awards will be awarded by Air Marshal Sir Baz North, and the gala awards evening will see the presentation of hotly contested trophies. Music lovers will be treated to The Jazz Quintet of the Central Band of the Royal Air Force and a parade concert by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council.

Most of all, the Association's objectives of camaraderie, membership and welfare will be upheld.

Dates and venues

Friday 11 to Saturday 12 May 2018 - Conference Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre, Stone, Staffordshire. The Staffordshire venue is close to the National Memorial Arboretum, venue for our major service on Sunday to celebrate the centenary of the RAF.

Sunday 13 May - RAF Association service to celebrate the centenary of the RAF National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

Please note, registration on the Friday is 'from' 1400hrs. So if you are not attending an early workshop, feel free to arrive a little later or to relax over a cup of tea or a coffee and catch up with old friends before registering for your room key. One of the improvements to this year's organisation is to have assistance with your luggage in place from the start of the weekend. Please leave your bags and cases in your car until you have your room key. Not only will this save you unnecessary effort, it will allow the organising team to provide assistance if you would like it.

New for 2018

Learn from fellow members and specialist staff at the following workshops:

- Wings Workshop
- Governance and trustee responsibilities
- Being an employer (clubs)
- Finance support for branches
- Fire safety responsibilities
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Finance support for branches
- Membership



Standard bearers catching up as they prepare for parade in Yarnfield's beautiful grounds. © Heidi Burton

To book your place at 2018 Conference:

Online

Visit our online booking page: www.rafa.org.uk/annualconference. You can register delegate details for yourself and your guests. You will need an email account for this.

By phone:

Please contact our reception team on 0116 268 8750. They will happily take your details over the phone.

To book your accommodation at 2018 Conference:

Please contact our reception team on 0116 268 8750.

Accommodation is available in the conference venue at the same excellent rate as 2017. A single room will be £55 a night and a double/twin room based on two people sharing will be £75 a night. Prices include breakfast, lunch and dinner. Rooms have an en-suite bathroom, TV, hairdryer, tea/coffee and biscuits and wi-fi. Fully accessible rooms are limited and we would advise booking those early to avoid disappointment.

Pooled fares - travel expenses scheme:

All branch delegates are entitled to claim standard rail fares or economy air fares which will be reimbursed under our pooled fares scheme which ensures travel costs are equal, no matter how far branch members have to travel. Free transport will be provided from and to the local rail stations.

Financial assistance:

If any branch is experiencing financial hardship, they should apply to their area for assistance. More information is online and in the letter of early December to all branches. www.rafa.org.uk/annualconference



Great pride on show at the 2017 Gala Awards evening. © Heidi Burton



Meeting up - time to reacquaint, refresh and renew relationships. © Heidi Burton



Wings workshop - one of nine available in 2018. © Heidi Burton

AIRSHOWS 2018



1. Trying out the ejection seat
© MOD/Crown

2. Air Cadets helping out
© MOD/Crown

3. A young pilot tries out the mini Spitfire
© MOD/Crown

4. Fun for everyone
© MOD/Crown

Come under our wing at a 2018 airshow

We're going to be out and about this summer, celebrating all things RAF and all things good about our Association - and enjoying displays the length and breadth of the country. Maybe we'll have our mini-Spitfire that children can sit in, or simulators or all sorts of hands-on fun. Catch up and have a chat, replace a lost lapel badge, find out about volunteering or get your hands on the very special edition 2018 bath ducks - whatever you want, we'd love to see you. And if you're after RAF100 merchandise, we are the lead charity for selling it at shows and events - to raise funds for the RAF100 Appeal.

We are hoping to be at the following airshows and events (right). Find us in our RAF Association-branded vehicles, gazebos and t-shirts.

(Our attendance is subject to change).

6 May	Shuttleworth Airshow, Biggleswade
6 May	Abingdon Air and Country Fair, Abingdon
26 to 27 May	Duxford Air Festival, Cambridgeshire
2 to 3 June	Torbay Airshow, Paignton
3 June	Rutland County Show, Stamford
16 to 17 June	Haven Great Yarmouth Airshow, Norfolk
23 to 24 June	Weston Air Festival Armed Forces Day, Weston-super-Mare
30 June	Llandudno Armed Forces Day, Llandudno
30 June	Scarborough Armed Forces Day, Scarborough
30 June to 1 July	Wales National Airshow, Swansea
6 to 8 July	Southport Airshow, Southport
13 to 15 July	Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT)
14 to 15 July	Flying Legends Airshow, Duxford
14 July	Leeds Castle, Maidstone
16 to 22 July	Farnborough International Airshow, Farnborough
23 to 26 July	Royal Welsh Show, Llanelwedd
27 to 29 July	Sunderland Airshow, Seaburn
11 to 12 August	Blackpool Airshow, Blackpool
16 to 19 August	Eastbourne Airshow, Eastbourne
18 to 19 August	Biggin Hill Festival of Flight, Seven Oaks
18 to 19 August	Lytham St. Annes 1940's, Lytham St. Annes
25 to 26 August	Rhyl Airshow, Rhyl
25 to 26 August	Wings and Wheels, Dunsfold
30 August to 2 September	Bournemouth Airshow, Bournemouth
31 August to 2 September	Scottish Airshow, Ayr
10 to 15 September	Jersey Airshow, St. Hellier
22 to 23 September	Battle of Britain Airshow, Duxford

Volunteer: Support a century of service

This year, the Royal Air Force celebrates 100 years in the air. We're proud to support servicemen and women both past and present, and **we need your help.**

We'd love you to **be at the heart of** the celebrations in a city near you as we honour veterans and serving personnel with flypasts, parades and special events.

Can you do your bit? Help us collect for the charities that care for the RAF family:

Everyone can be a part of history. Find your nearest collection and volunteer at rafa.org.uk/raf100volunteer

Volunteers must be 18+

The RAF100 Appeal is a joint venture that supports:

Be at the heart of the RAF100 summer events – volunteer

If you want to be more than just an onlooker at the historic RAF100 events this summer, read on.

From 18 May to 14 September, events will take place in eleven UK cities. The RAF Association is looking for volunteer fundraisers to be a part of the fundraising street collections that will run alongside the RAF's static aircraft tour, the RAF100 parade and flypast in London and at various regional events and venues.

The charity is contributing to the commemorations by recruiting thousands of people to help fundraise. All the money you collect on the day will go to the RAF100 Appeal and be shared between the RAF, RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF Charitable Trust and the RAF Museum.

Cameron Wilson, a fundraising volunteer with the RAF Association, says: "I would recommend volunteering as I have seen first-hand what the Association does and the support it provides. I'm looking forward to getting young people like myself involved in volunteering."

No experience is needed for the fundraising roles as full training is provided, but volunteers must be 18 or over.

Katharine Montgomery, Volunteer Manager at the Association says: "We are looking for people who have a few hours to spare and who are passionate about raising money to support the RAF family, veterans and serving men and women in the Royal Air Force."

So if you or anyone you know is interested we'd love to hear from you."

Collections are being planned between 0630 and 1930 hrs, in:

Cardiff	Friday 18 May
Newcastle	Saturday 19 May
York	Friday 8 June
Reading	Friday 15 June
London	Tuesday 10 July
Bristol	Friday 27 July
Peterborough	Friday 3 August
Edinburgh	Friday 17 August
Birmingham	Saturday 25 August
Glasgow	Friday 31 August
Manchester	Friday 14 September

How to apply

Currently serving RAF personnel should apply as per the RAF Manning volunteers' web page.

Everyone else – please go to rafa.org.uk/raf100volunteer to register your interest for an event, find more information and get answers to any questions.

Or you can contact the Association's volunteer team at raf100volunteers@rafa.org.uk or 0800 018 2361.

All our Christmases coming at once

In far flung parts of the world at the end of last year, hundreds of Santas got together to raise funds for the Association's Storybook Wings project.

Throughout December, from Kabul to Cranwell, service men, women and children (and a dog or two) ran in the first RAF Association Santa Runs. They were open to anyone with a station pass and their families.

The inaugural Scampton Santa Run took place on a floodlit runway on 14 December. Sergeant Paula Murphy, RAF Association Liaison Officer, described the day: "A photo of all the Santas in front of a Red Arrow was followed quickly by the warm up, taken by the physical training instructors (PTIs), also in their Santa Suits. But you know what PTIs are like - they have to stand out from the crowd so they wore their PTI vests on over the Santa jacket (Station Warrant Officer permission received).

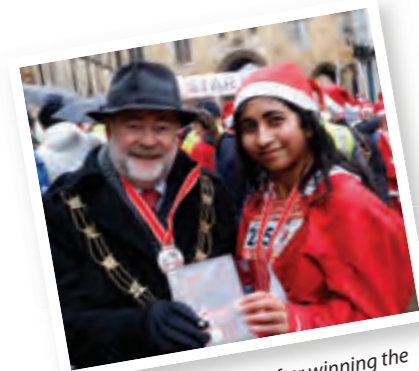
"The warm up had everyone singing along to Christmas songs and dancing around the hangar. Then the race was on. Three laps of the runway for adults and one lap for the children. Special congratulations to young James Niven who did not want to be outdone by the adults and ran all three laps. It was a great performance.

"Mince pies, mulled wine and medals were handed out in the warmth of the hangar afterwards.

"Special thank yous went to the PTIs for organising and setting up the route and Station Commander for allowing the event. And a big thank you was given to all the participants," she said. The Scampton Santa Run raised £550 for Storybook Wings.

A further £300 was raised at each of RAF Cosford and RAF Leeming. And last but definitely not least, a Santa Run open to the general public was staged by the Rotary Club of Lincoln Colonia in Lincoln city centre in December. Three thousand people ran the 3.5km course, and the 'race' was won by Air Cadet Sudakshina Basu of 1461 (Wigston & District) Squadron.

The Association's challenge events team would like to hear from anyone who wants to host a run in winter 2018. Contact jules@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361 for more information. Individuals who would like to take part in any challenge events (summer or winter) this year can see the full range on page 33.



Sudakshina Basu just after winning the Lincoln city Santa Run. © Rotary Club of Lincoln Colonia



Worldwide appeal - and Santa wears shorts in Kabul. © MOD/Crown



Everyone is welcome to join in. © MOD/Crown



Even the dog got involved at RAF Cranwell. © MOD/Crown

Beach ready?

Book now for summer 2018



All you need at Hemsby. © RAF Association

The RAF Association has self-catering holiday homes in Norfolk and West Sussex, available to all serving and retired personnel in the RAF family.

Close to the beach and perfect for families, the rates are very affordable. The season runs from May to October and bookings are allocated no more than 10 weeks ahead to give priority to those with identified welfare needs. So now is the perfect time to enquire about a July/August holiday. Or put a note in your diary to enquire next March if you are thinking ahead for May half term 2019.

Hemsby holiday chalets, near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Our Hemsby Holiday Chalets offer fantastic value and are on Norfolk's popular east coast, just north of Great Yarmouth. It's well-placed for The Broads and very close to the big, sandy beach.

There are six very well-equipped chalets at the Seadell Estates site. Each chalet sleeps up to four (sorry, no pets) with two bedrooms, sitting room, kitchen area and modern shower - one also has a bath. Push-chairs, cots, high-chairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters are available for hire from the on-site shop.

Selsey holiday home, near Chichester, West Sussex.

The Association also has an attractive self-catering static caravan at the Green Lawns holiday park run by Bunn Leisure at Selsey.

The fully wheelchair accessible caravan accommodates up to six people in a double bedroom, twin bedroom and stowaway bed in the lounge. There's a well-equipped kitchen and lounge/dining area with TV and DVD player.

Local attractions include Tangmere Military Aviation Museum, Goodwood, Arundel Castle, Bognor Regis, Chichester and other coastal delights.

To find out more about either holiday option call 0800 018 2361.

Coming up in Scotland: Thanks to the Glasgow Branch, a new static holiday caravan has been bought in Dunbar and is being made ready for visitors later in 2018. Look out for more details in future Air Mails and other Association communications.

Correction: Please note in the 2018 RAF Association diaries the Selsey holiday home is mistakenly listed as being in West Suffolk. This should read West Sussex.

"We had a great week and it was painless and easy to organise. Thank you."

Frank, serving RAF. Spent a week with his family at Selsey



Pretty, and easy for pushchairs and scooters in Selsey © RAF Association

From Swanick to sardines

Neil Blewett was putting the finishing touches to his record-breaking 221st story for RAF children separated from their parents when Air Mail caught up with him to talk about life after the RAF, and his life as a volunteer editor for Storybook Wings.



© Heidi Burton

Age and occupation

57. Aeronautical Operations Controller for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Home life

Portsmouth. Wife Alison. Two sons; Matthew aged 23, and Jamie 25.

In the RAF

35 years. Flight Operations Manager (Warrant Officer). I've been on many deployments and detachments including Falklands, America, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq and Afghanistan. I also did two tours of Germany and one of Cyprus.

Did Storybook Wings exist when your children were young?

No. Or maybe it did but I didn't know about it. If I had known about it, I would certainly have used it.

I was away so many times and at the time there was no social media really - it was a 'Bluey' or nothing in the early days. Sometimes being out of contact is the best thing. As harsh as it sounds and being selfish you sometimes don't want to hear things when you are far away. But I've always appreciated how hard it is for your partner left behind.

When I'm editing, I put myself in the parent's shoes. I was there [away with the RAF] and I did it - so I can empathise. One Christmas I was at the departure lounge at Brize. I saw a mum going away and saying goodbye to her daughter. It was so hard. I know what they are going through. When you are editing and listening to the stories being read, you can sometimes hear the parent's voice break at the end...when they say 'seen you soon' or 'love you'.

Why do you edit for Storybook Wings?

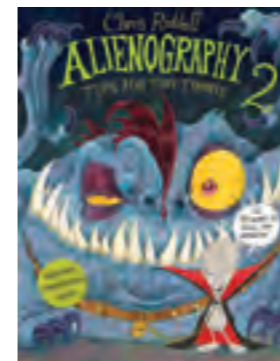
My volunteering for Storybook Wings started at Swanwick, where another person was already editing. I had seen posters up and it being advertised. I have always read stories to my children and I really like to help others.



The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (Macmillan)



The Princess and the Pig by Jonathan Emmett and Poly Bernatene (Macmillan)



Alienography 2 by Chris Riddell (Macmillan)



Freddie and the Fairy by Julia Donaldson and Karen George (Macmillan)



What would a sardine sound like? Neil's view as an editor. © Heidi Burton

How long have you been editing?

My first story was edited on 31 July 2013; I was still serving and it was The Gruffalo. I've done that one 45 times out of the 221 total so far; and I've done 69 different stories. I do about one a week, sometimes two a week during summer time. (Figures correct as of end January 2018, Ed.)

What is the longest story you have edited?

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. I've done that once. It's about 20 minutes long. Usually they are five to six minutes long before they have been edited. Ali Baba was really good for sound effects.

Do the stories get edited exactly the same each time, or do you have artistic licence?

We have complete freedom and do them exactly as we want to. While each story can be basically the same, I always alter something, add something or change it entirely. If something is mentioned about a pet or team I always try to use that as an excuse to throw in a soundbite as well. So the stories are also completely unique to each child.

What do you enjoy most about editing?

I enjoy the fact that even though the parent is reading a story, they have their own 'story' too. When the reader adds an introduction and farewell, it adds meaning to the story and shows that the person has put love into it, and makes me want to make the story even more special.

Do the readers ever get emotionally affected - and do you have to edit that out?

It's important not to edit all of it out, but you also want the child to enjoy the story and not be sad so it is a fine line. But I do edit out the coughing, page turning and bad language when they make mistakes! It's a real person reading and can be funny.

So many parents say 'goodnight', 'sleep well', 'love from me', 'kiss your mum/dad goodnight' when they have finished reading. Some don't do that - I guess the recording environment is false and they forget. I always stick in a kiss sound at the end - so the child can hear something.

continued overleaf

What's your favourite story to edit? Why?

The Pirate Penguins and the Sardines of Doom, because of the sound effects that can be added to the story: pirates, creaking ships, the noise of pirates making coins and a smithy furnace in the background. I haven't ever done sardine sounds though!

Do you ever get or create your own sound effects or do you always use the effects library?

I haven't made my own effects – but I've thought about doing it. But in the end I've always found what I want in the audio library.



- ...is 10 years old this year
- ...has 17 editors volunteering at the moment
- ...has just set up the latest overseas recording device, in Oman
- ...has recorders on 95 per cent of UK RAF stations, as well as the Falklands, Cyprus, the Netherlands, and Afghanistan
- ... is looking for a volunteer administrator to be based at RAF Wittering. Interested?

Contact: shameera.mandhu@rafa.org.uk

Other hobbies and interests?

Football and running. I did ultra stuff – I walked from Lands End to John O'Groats (for MacMillan). I tried to run the same route a year later for the Association, but was injured at Aviemore (see previous Air Mails). I've done five London marathons and three others. I also did the Lykewake Course, across the Yorkshire Moors. It's 42 miles and took me seven and a half hours. I still do 10ks every other day to keep fit and I do the Great South Run each year.

What was the favourite book to read to your own children?

My wife did most of this – and she was an Usborne Books rep, so the house was always full of books. We read to the children always, every night on the sofa. It was part of the bedtime regime and helped to calm them down before they went to bed.

Postings do have an impact on a family routine. When you're going away and also, strangely, when you're coming back. You find the routine has changed while you've been away!

Is this editing something you could have done while you were serving? Or does it fit better with your civilian life?

I was doing it while I was serving and on deployment. Going away didn't stop me editing in the Falklands, or when I was away from home in Kinloss for six months on a course.

Do you get feedback?

Not directly, but the Association does pass on any thanks it receives. It's nice to know that it's worked. And I know in my heart of hearts that it is making a difference.



Editing out the bloopers and adding in favourite sound effects. © Heidi Burton

Day at the museum – exclusive invitation



Meet the RAF at a special day for veterans and serving personnel.
© RAF Museum

On Thursday 10 May the Royal Air Force Museum is inviting veterans and serving RAF personnel from across the world to celebrate at a special RAF Day.

Hosted by museum staff, the day is exclusively for RAF personnel and veterans. Events run from 1000hrs to 1600hrs and include a flypast (details to be confirmed), live music, tours, refreshments and the chance to catch up with colleagues old and new. Guests will also be treated to a special preview of the museum's brand-new Hangar 1, which houses two innovative galleries exploring the first 100 years of the RAF, showing its roles today and inviting visitors to imagine its future contribution and technology. With servicemen and women joining from across the country, it is set to be a truly memorable and sentimental gathering.

The invitation to attend is open to all who have served and who are serving in the RAF, and the museum hopes all squadrons and bases can be represented on the day at the museum's London base in NW9.

The event is free. To register your interest contact Anji Patel or Odette Harris via email on groups@rafmuseum.org or 020 8358 4849.

Not only but also:

As part of the museum's RAF Centenary Programme, a new digital project called RAF Stories will be launched. This online digital project aims to inspire participants to share accounts of the Royal Air Force. RAF Stories wants to find tales and records, not just from former and serving personnel, but also from their friends and family and partners who work closely with the RAF. More about this project in the July issue of Air Mail. Or keep an eye on the RAF Museum's newsletters and website for earlier announcements: <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london>.

New services from the Benevolent Fund



Alongside the RAF Association's established range of welfare support for serving people and veterans in the RAF family, our sister charity, the RAF Benevolent Fund, has launched a range of new services for younger and older RAF veterans and their dependant family members experiencing emotional difficulties.

Anxiety or depression

Free online and face-to-face support is available for anyone affected by depression, anxiety, panic attacks or stress, in partnership with Anxiety UK. It includes:

- A dedicated helpline and email services for emotional support
- Therapy provision for those experiencing anxiety and/or depression
- Self-help material and subsidised membership to Anxiety UK

Bereavement support

Face-to-face or telephone support is available, in partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care, for those in need of bereavement support.

Listening, counselling and wellbeing service

The listening and counselling service is available for anyone experiencing a range of wellbeing issues, from low mood or confidence to low self-esteem or loneliness, or even isolation felt due to caring for a loved one. Includes a dedicated helpline, email support and access to telephone or face-to-face counselling sessions. Home visits are also available.

Relationship support

Couples and families experiencing relationship problems can access up to six free relationship counselling sessions through Relate. The Fund also provides subsidised mediation sessions for couples going through separation or divorce.

Support for carers

The RAF Benevolent Fund has also recently launched a package of support for anyone who is caring for a loved one. This includes access to all of the services mentioned above as well as welfare breaks, financial assistance and advice and advocacy support.

For further details on the above initiatives, including how to access them, please visit www.rafbf.org/help

Read more about the RAF Association's work to tackle isolation in Marjorie's case study on page 28.





YOUR LOCAL EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION SPECIALIST



Cornerswell Road, Penarth

Is Your Home Hard to Heat? Solid/Cold External Walls? Cracked or Blown Render? Damp/Condensation Problems? Excessive Energy Bills?

Benefits of External Wall Insulation:

- Saves you **HUNDREDS** per year on your energy bills (Source: Energy Saving Trust)
- Prevent damp and mould from taking hold.
- Enhances the appearance of your home with a completely new facade.
- Maintenance-free.
- Will significantly increase the value of your property.
- Provides a high level of thermal efficiency, making your home warm and cosy.
- All work is covered by a Manufacturer's Guarantee.
- Free new window sills included.
- A variety of finishes available, including coloured render and pebbledash options.
- Provides a waterproof, protective barrier and seals your building against the elements, solving your cracked and blown render problems.

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FOR ALL RAFA MEMBERS!



Highly sought-after official coin

Special offer celebrating the Royal House of Windsor
Limited edition – only available for a short time

Reserve yours now at first-issue price - limited availability

Special offer!
£9.95
Instead of £56.00

2018 will mark not just one, but three significant milestones for the House of Windsor, the dynasty of our monarchs for the last century: Great Britain will celebrate a new Royal baby, a Royal Wedding and the Sapphire coronation jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
Celebrate with us and commemorate the House of Windsor with this sought-after official crown coin!

Postage **FREE**

Secure yours now for just £9.95
The British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar has honoured the House of Windsor with a stunning official coin issue featuring the head of the House of Windsor, Queen Elizabeth II, who will celebrate her Sapphire coronation jubilee this year. Be amongst the few British collectors to own this significant official coin issue, layered in 24-carat gold and finished with the most precious coin metal - platinum -, at the special jubilee price of just £9.95 - postage FREE.



- fully layered with pure 24-carat gold
- official British territory coin issue
- Highly sought-after - limited availability
- Finished with platinum, the most precious coin metal
- limited edition

PLUS:
FREE wristwatch worth £39.95 with every order (Style may vary)

Customer Service Office: Windsor Mint®, 11 Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester, WR1 2RS
Dedicated order line: 01905 886220 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, Weekends 8am-6pm Email: service-uk@windsormint.co.uk

WINDSOR MINT®, a brand name of HMK V AG, Leubnerstrasse 6, CH-8280 Kreuzlingen
Trade partner: HMK V AG, Leubnerstrasse 6, CH-8280 Kreuzlingen

ORDER NOW AND SAVE OVER £45.00

YOUR ORDER INFORMATION:
Reservation No: **T18B-01**

YES! I want to take advantage of this opportunity to own the strictly limited official 'Queen Elizabeth II' commemorative coin (Item-No. 168-323-5) for just £9.95 instead of £56 (FREE post & packaging). **There will be no further shipments and no further obligations.**

Title _____ First Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone No: _____

Email: _____

My payment of **£9.95** (postage FREE) is made by:

Cheque/postal order made payable to Windsor Mint Mastercard Visa

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: ____ / ____ Please debit my card for this delivery

For faster delivery call our dedicated order line: **01905 886220**
Mon-Fri 8am-11pm, Weekends 8am-6pm
or order online: www.queen-one-crown.co.uk

All orders are subject to our Terms & Conditions, available on request or at www.windsormint.co.uk

Signature _____ Today's Date _____

All orders are subject to availability and acceptance. All items are sent under Windsor Mint's 20-day NO OBLIGATION GUARANTEE. By placing an order you are confirming you are 18 years or older. All prices include VAT at the current rate. Please tick if you do not wish to receive further offers from us by telephone email or from carefully selected third parties If you do not wish to receive further mailings from us please contact us at: Windsor Mint, 11 Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester, WR1 2RS.

SPRING! FREE WINDOW SILLS, GUTTERING AND PIPEWORK

01446 731 150 OR 07482 182527

www.warmerhomesinsulation.co.uk info@warmerhomesinsulation.co.uk



Registered Office: 38 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9LL Sales Office: 176 Holton Road, Barry CF63 4HN

Please fill in your details above and post in an envelope to: Windsor Mint, 11 Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester, WR1 2RS.
Or, for faster delivery, order by phone: 01905 886220 • www.windsormint.co.uk

Highlights of the European Area conference - Autumn 2017

6 to 8 October 2017 saw the steady arrival, by land, sea and air, of councilors, delegates and visitors to the Marine Hotel in Sutton Cross, Republic of Ireland. Of the 18 Area branches, 12 (66 per cent) were represented.

A Friday afternoon meeting of the Area Council was followed by a 'meet-and-greet' and a show of traditional Irish dancing.

Area Conference opened on Saturday morning with a reading of the Association's dedication by Chairman of the Ireland Branch, Pete McWilliams. Bob Hunt, Area Chairman, welcomed attendees, including His Excellency Mr Robin Barnett, British Ambassador to Ireland (who later gave the conference a warm welcome to the country), Air Marshal Sturley, Area President, Air Marshal Sir Baz North, Association President and guest speaker, Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville and Dr Bryan Pattison, Area Life Vice Presidents and Mr Nick Bunting, Secretary General.

The Area Council's report by the Area Chairman addressed BREXIT, accidental injury insurance for Association volunteers working in Europe, RAF 100 and lapsed members. Further discussion on BREXIT and insurance cover for volunteers was deferred until the 2018 Annual Area Conference.

Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville spoke on ongoing RAF operational commitments and its new equipment procurement programme.

Area Representative, Brian Darke reported on the work of Council.

Association President, Air Marshal Sir Baz North gave an enlightening guest speech – on his experiences with Support Helicopter Force and on providing emergency relief aid during the Mozambique flooding in 2000. Sir Baz also spoke on his vision of the Association over the coming years and the need to meet its strategic aims for the future.

Dr Bryan Pattison presented the proposed revision to Association Area Regulations that will be applicable to the European Area. Delegates unanimously approved.

A second resolution, proposing the employment of an officer to signpost and advise the Area on matters relating to BREXIT was withdrawn as assurance had been received from the Secretary General that the soon-to-be-appointed Director of Governance and Risk would be undertaking. [Vikki Hall took up the post at Atlas House in Leicester in January 2018].

Members of the European Area Council with the British Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Robin Barnett (center) and Association President Air Marshal Sir Baz North (4th from left).

© Regis Pizot



The 2018 Area Autumn Conference is to be held in Brussels. No proposal has been received to host the 2019 Autumn Conference and branches were encouraged to submit bids as soon as possible.

The following people were recognised:

- Mr Frank Brien of the Ireland Branch – an Area Presidential Certificate in recognition of his outstanding support to his branch
- Mr Bill and Mrs Pauline Laverick, Costa Blanca Branch – Area Presidential Certificates (already presented locally)
- Mr Michael White, Costa Blanca Branch – The Dennis Emes Shield, presented annually to the ordinary or life member judged to have displayed the best all-round performance during the current year
- Mr Noel Cork, Costa Blanca Branch – the Area Individual Membership Trophy
- Mr Tony Breen, Ireland Branch - The Wally Marriot Trophy, awarded by the Area Council to the full or ordinary member judged to have contributed the most to the benefit of their branch, the Area and to the Association
- Jersey Branch – a Wings Appeal Certificate, awarded in recognition of the exceptional funds raised in support of the 2016 Wings Appeal. Jersey raised £10,000
- Guernsey, Republic of Ireland, Luxembourg and North Costa Blanca Branches - each received a £5,000 Wings Appeal certificate

A visit to Malahide Castle in Dublin, and a gala dinner attended by the British Ambassador to Ireland, followed the close of conference business.

On Sunday morning, delegates went to Glasnevin Cemetery for a service of remembrance – performed in a venue that, until a few years ago, would not have been possible.

The Ireland Branch, ably led by Pete McWilliams, ensured that all those who attended this memorable conference had an enjoyable, trouble-free and productive weekend.

Bob Hunt, Chairman, European Area

The full set of minutes has been circulated to branches and delegates.

Area President, Air Marshal Philip Sturley, presenting an Area President's Certificate to Mr Frank Brien of the Ireland Branch.

© Regis Pizot



Extra wide or swollen feet?

try **Cosyfeet**[®] extra roomy

AS ADVERTISED ON TV

BY OVER 1,000 HEALTHY PROFESSIONALS RECOMMENDED

STYLES SHOWN: Arabella, Isabelle, Sandy from £79

TO REQUEST YOUR FREE CATALOGUE CALL **0800 731 0148** OR VISIT **cosyfeet.com**

ROOMIER THAN ANYTHING you'll find on the high street

FREE UK DELIVERY & RETURNS with your first order • USE CODE **AM0318** • OFFER ENDS 11/05/18

FREE UK DELIVERY & RETURNS with your first order • USE CODE **AM0318** • OFFER ENDS 11/05/18

Replace your old night storage heaters with modern, dynamic heat retention radiators

Call 0800 103 2708 or visit www.fischerfutureheat.com

Maintenance free (no pipes)

No noisy convection fans

Economy 7 compatible

Unique 40mm fire clay core

10 YEAR GUARANTEE

70 YEARS EST. SUPERIOR QUALITY GERMAN MANUFACTURING

0% APR REPRESENTATIVE Available on all our heating systems

Request your FREE catalogue today

Call us FREE on **0800 103 2708**
Quote discount code **AMAPR18**
or post the coupon

Address the envelope to: FREEPOST FISCHER FUTURE HEAT (No stamp or address required)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Your information will not be sold to a third party. AMAPR18

*With a two year guarantee on the electronic controls (thermostats and receivers). **Credit is subject to application and status. Terms and conditions apply. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Fischer Future Heat UK Ltd, The Waterfront, 19-20 North Mills, Leicester, LE3 5DH act as a credit broker and only offers products from Barclays Partner Finance. Barclays Partner Finance is a trading name of Clydesdale Financial Services Limited a wholly owned subsidiary of Barclays Bank PLC. Clydesdale Financial Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (Financial Services Register Number: 311753). Registered in England. Registered No. 2901725. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London, E14 5HP.

Grand designs to help families and visitors

Financial grants and elbow grease have helped bring some grand designs to fruition on RAF stations around the UK. But the results are not only aesthetic: they also improve wellbeing, reduce isolation, and help keep families connected.

From gardens at RAF Lossiemouth to flats at RAF Coningsby, more than 70 contact houses have had makeovers and wi-fi thanks to grants from the Association.

A £25,000 gift to RAF Coningsby saw three flats and houses brought back into circulation. Audra Bishop, HIVE Information Officer, described how they started out: "One was gross: totally run down, needed gutting, emptying of old furniture, carpets worn, stained, curtains so old they fell apart, walls needed stripping and refilling before they could even be considered painting. The whole flat was like something from 'Homes under the Hammer!'"

With only single living accommodation on station and local B&Bs costing £60 to £80 a night, there was a desperate need for somewhere for visitors to stay. Now the house and two flats are used by service personnel and their families, MOD civilians and contractors associated with the RAF. They cost between £20 and £35 per night and the largest can accommodate up to nine people.

Audra continues: "Committee members cleared out the flat and encouraged serving volunteers to help clean, fill and paint. The carpenters on station made radiator covers (we provided the materials). A flying officer on station used to be a plumber. He's still qualified and fitted the bathroom and did all the tiling. The kitchen was fitted by a committee member. The carpets, blinds and fire doors were fitted by professionals. There are a few small jobs to complete then the fire regulations to be approved and Bob's your uncle!"

Nearly every weekend and holiday the houses are full and at the moment they seem to have back-to-back bookings. Audra adds: "They are a vision of welcome and home when people arrive. People comment on how nice the new furnishings are."

At RAF Lossiemouth serving volunteers ensure the smooth running of one contact house and six contact flats in the town. Many of personnel on station live in single living accommodation which is simply not suitable for children. The flats provide an environment that both parents and children can enjoy and are

used by serving parents who may have separated from partners. Lossiemouth can be many miles away from loved ones; so the flats are also booked by wider family visiting the area. Among other items, the station successfully bid for grants for white goods, microwaves, kettles, toasters, beds, and sofas.



Looking after a house and six flats in Lossiemouth. © MOD/Crown

Dave Mowatt, Branch Support Officer, recently gave the station more good news. Funding has been approved to landscape the rear garden of the flats and upgrade the existing tired-looking patio area.

Wing Commander Dan Lunnon-Wood Officer, Commanding Base Support Wing at Lossiemouth, said: "Without the continued support from the Association it would be difficult to continue to provide such an excellent welfare. Our servicemen and women who give up their spare time to support both the running of the contact houses and the Association should be proud of their contribution in support of welfare to the station."

RAF stations can apply for a welfare support grant to be considered by emailing us at grants@rafa.org.uk

A warm welcome and a chance of good family life. © MOD/Crown



Keeping families connected © MOD/Crown



Still got it: Putting plumbing and tiling skills to use © MOD/Crown



The Committee at RAF Coningsby celebrate another completion © MOD/Crown



Bearly believable

How an adventurous soft toy is helping our befriending project

by Mike Curtis



Marjorie with Bertie. © Thomas family



Bertie pulls G with The Blades Aerobatic Display Team.

There is someone new in the life of 95 year-old Marjorie Thomas. She has a job keeping up with him. One day he may be doing aerobatics, the next he may be up in a helicopter. He travels the world and keeps in touch as a busy blogger – but he doesn't say a word. He remains silent even when he joins Marjorie on her 'hot dates' with a retired Air Vice-Marshal.

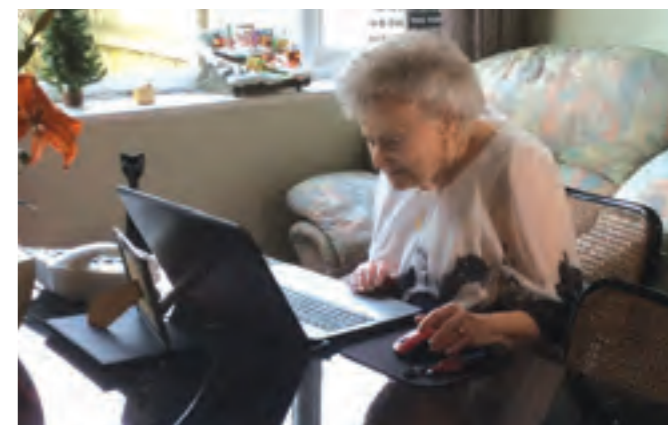
Marjorie's new friend is Bertie the Bear and he is helping to highlight the befriending scheme of the RAF Association. Bertie's growing reputation is down to Association ambassador Air Vice-Marshal Sean Bell who got to know Marjorie through working with one of her daughters.



Marrying in 1949 after Colin completed his national service © Thomas family

Marjorie met her husband Colin at a dance academy just after the war. They were married in 1949 after he completed his national service with the RAF. Colin worked in the stores as an auditor and was involved in the build-up to the Berlin airlift. After his RAF service, he joined the Rover car company in Birmingham. They were together for 65 years before Marjorie lost him to cancer in 2014. Sean heard about Colin's illness and his RAF service. He invited him to visit the RAF Club in London but Colin died before

he could accept the offer. Instead Sean read at Colin's funeral and, in full uniform, saluted the coffin. He subsequently invited Marjorie to tea at the RAF Club and she said they chatted as if they had known each other forever.



The friendship continued with the exchange of letters. Marjorie got her first computer and iPad and was soon swapping emails with Sean – so far more than 1,000, often on a daily basis.

"Up to about a year ago Marjorie could travel - and she has travelled really widely in her life to places like the USA, Barbados, Greece and Finland. But due to age and not being able to move around so much, get travel insurance and things like that, she was no longer able to," says Sean. "I can't change that but what I can do is give something else that can travel the world and she can live through that bear travelling. What we wanted was something small enough that could be packed in a briefcase or hidden away but also big enough to capture a bit of public spirit - and Bertie the Bear came up."



Centre: Colin and Marjorie travelled widely throughout their married life. © Thomas family

Right: Marjorie with befriender Sean, at the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, London. © Thomas family

The idea has taken off. People are offering venues and opportunities for Bertie to experience life and give some feedback to Marjorie through the blog. Bertie has gone flying with The Blades aerobatic team and with one of the Red Bull air race pilots. He has travelled to Bali and Malaysia via Dubai, and has recently been spotted "stateside" on the West Coast. He went to Kemble airfield for a flight in a helicopter which he described as 'looking like an angry palm tree' and announced that it would never fly as it had no wings! He has also been offered a trip with the holder of the land speed record. His adventures are providing an insight into the outside world for Marjorie and giving her a distraction from the long lonely evenings since Colin died.



Hot and humid near the rice fields in Bali – but still properly dressed

“Colin made me happy for 65 years. When I lost him it was a big hole. It took a lot out of me. It was very difficult,” Marjorie remembers. “My life is filled with family and friends during the day. But then you have the evening, and that drags. And if something goes wrong you don’t know how to put it right – but Colin would have known. It’s like losing part of you – you feel lost without him. Some people go days and days and days and don’t do anything, no conversation, just four walls and the telly – but that’s not conversation. Some people get an animal, like a cat, but it’s not the same; there’s no conversation, no human contact. My evenings are a little bit hard to fill.”

“It’s amazing – Bertie’s just a little bear but everyone we have asked to look after it has absolutely bought into the whole idea and really embraced it. It has taken off very, very well,” says Sean who held several senior posts in the RAF including commanding the Harrier force between 2005 and 2007.

Marjorie adds: “Sean thought of Bertie. He sent the bear and some photos to start him off and he’s expanded it. I think a lot of old ladies would be delighted with Bertie and follow it if they’ve got an iPad or a computer. You sort of enjoy it and feel as if you’ve been on that adventure with him. When you’re on your own, you can fill your time with something stupid! He’s just a stuffed toy, but he feels alive!”



JJ Chalmers interviewing Marjorie and Bertie for the BBC. © RAF Association

Bertie the Bear’s blog reaches out to everyone but especially to those who are lonely or isolated. He is now described as a bear who loves travelling with unlimited access to adventures. He reports back on his experiences in his blog which aims to help ‘break the ice’ in developing friendship and companionship through the befriending scheme of the RAF Association.

He was recently introduced to another bear who had been the mascot of an RAF pilot in Burma during the Second World War. They were shot down and parachuted into the dense jungle where they got stranded hanging from the top of the trees. A Gurkha unit found them five days later and they were taken to hospital where the pilot recovered and a nurse repaired his bear mascot. Bertie has also met a 99 year-old Dunkirk veteran and appeared with Sean on BBC Breakfast television where he was given his own BBC visitor pass.

PREPARE FOR PARADE



AWARD provide a comprehensive and professional medal replacement, cleaning and mounting service. For details of available full-size and miniature medals and related items contact: AWARD, (Dept. AMCL), PO Box 300, Shrewsbury SY5 6WP, UK. Telephone: 01952 510053 Fax: 01952 510765 E-mail: info@awardmedals.com or visit:

www.awardmedals.com

RAFA MEMBERS

To claim 10% medal mounting discount, please quote your membership number and code: 10MAIL when ordering by post, over the phone or at checkout online.

AWARD
PROUD TO SERVE

Proud supporters of Veteran Groups and Charities for over 30 years.

The friendship between Marjorie and Sean is an excellent example of the Association’s befriending scheme. The pair email each other regularly and set each other quizzes and topics to research. In addition to following Bertie’s adventures, Marjorie has been a guest of honour at a Birmingham City football match (she used to be a season ticket holder) and she meets Sean for lunch in an Italian restaurant a couple of times a year – what she calls their ‘hot dates’!

“Befriending, as Marjorie now knows, really can make a huge difference to the lives of those left behind, and it is also tremendously rewarding for the befriender,” adds Sean.



Befriender Sean

You can keep up with Bertie on his blog at rafa.org.uk/bertie, or on Facebook and Twitter @BefrienderBear - and everyone is welcome to share his adventures.

Loneliness

Recent research has found that isolation and loneliness are particularly acute within the ex-military community, with one in six individuals reporting relationship/isolation issues.

Tackling loneliness is a key part of the RAF Association’s mission for the 21st century. Research indicates at least 170,000 RAF veterans could be living alone, or experiencing isolation issues and according to the Campaign to End Loneliness, it’s a bigger threat to life than obesity and more dangerous to health than smoking. The lonely are more likely to need medication, suffer from depression or dementia and end up in residential care.

Befriending pairs volunteers with veterans or members of their family experience from loneliness and isolation.

If you would like further information about befriending, either to volunteer or as something you might benefit from, please call us on 0800 018 2361 or go to rafa.org.uk.



LIKE THIS? YOU CHOOSE

Whether you're into gruelling, muddy, physical challenges or the cosy, fun family ones you'll find a fundraising event to suit you this year.

Last year more than 700 people took part in sponsored challenges for the RAF Association and raised more than £100,000 to support our welfare work.



Colour Chaos

Gloriously colourful and messy – there won't be an inch of you that's not affected. Run it, walk it, roll around in it. Dates and locations to be confirmed – but these are uniquely held 'behind the wire' on RAF stations
Registration fee: £25
Minimum sponsorship: £25

Santa Run

The Christmas silliness that is sweeping the nation. Santa suit and beard provided.
December, Lincoln
Registration fee: £12
Minimum sponsorship: £25
See more on page 16

RAF100 Rutland Border Epique

Serving or retired RAF, families and friends can join Association Ambassador, Air Vice-Marshal Gary Waterfall on this 100 mile cycle ride around Rutland, with 'proper food' stations and a BBQ with beer at the end.
10 June, Rutland
Registration fee: £40
Minimum sponsorship: £100

V100 Parachute

Be one of 100 veterans sky diving to celebrate the centenary of the Royal Air Force.
9 August, Brackley, Northamptonshire
Registration fee: £20
Minimum sponsorship: £500

Wing Walking

Strap yourself firmly to the top of an aircraft wing, and challenge yourself not to scream all the way round. Exhilarating stuff. September (exact date to be confirmed), Cirencester, Gloucestershire
Registration fee: £50
Minimum sponsorship: £650

Wolf Run

A unique combination of mud runs, trail runs and obstacle runs, this is hardcore, wild running at its best. From now to November. Various dates and various locations
Registration fee: £15
Minimum sponsorship: £150

Charity Walk for Peace

A truly multi-cultural coming together for peace and humanity. 4,000 people took part last year.
29 April, Runnymede, Surrey
No registration fee
No minimum sponsorship – just raise as much as you can.

Dog Jog

No times, no competition, just a 5k with wo/man's best friend and a few hundred human and canine others. Various dates and places from now to October
Registration fee: £10
Minimum sponsorship: £50

Edinburgh Marathon Festival

Everything from a 5k junior race to a full marathon in stunning city and beachside scenery.
26 to 27 May, Edinburgh
Registration fee: varies depending on race
Minimum sponsorship: varies depending on event

Skydive

Harness yourself to a professional freefall parachute instructor and enjoy everything from the rush of adrenaline, to the wind in your face and then the peace of swinging gently to earth under the canopy.
Now to December. Various dates and locations.
Registration fee: £79
Minimum sponsorship: £500

Inflatable 5k

Do a 5k with real bounce and slide.
Now to October (various dates and locations)
Registration cost: £25
Minimum sponsorship: £50

Simplyhealth Great North Run

The famous half marathon across the Tyne and out to South Shields, with 57,000 other runners and a flypast by the Red Arrows.
9 September, Newcastle upon Tyne
Registration fee: £25
Minimum sponsorship: £500

Bournemouth Marathon

What are the south coast roads for if not to run a marathon by the sea? Great atmosphere, well marshalled, great route and stunning scenery.
6 to 7 October, Bournemouth
Registration fee: £25
Minimum sponsorship: £500

Hell Runs

Hell Down South

24 November, Hampshire

Hell Up North

13 October, Cheshire

HellRunner events that are not for the faint hearted.

Registration fee: £15

Minimum sponsorship: £150

Multi activity challenge – bike, hike kayak

One for the really outdoors type – in Snowdonia. Dates in April, August and September
Registration fee: £75
Minimum sponsorship: £375

Overseas challenges

From cycle rides in Angkor Wat or London-Paris to Sahara Dunes treks and walks along the Great Wall of China - feed your travel bug here. There are loads of others to choose from, so get in touch to see if we have a challenge to suit you.
Registrations fees: varies from challenge to challenge
Minimum sponsorship: varies from challenge to challenge

Scottish Half Marathon

A flat, fast course, so whether you're doing your first or your 50th marathon, you can aim for an amazing time.
23 September, Edinburgh
Registration fee: £15
Minimum sponsorship: £250

If you have independently registered for a challenge event (even one that isn't listed above) and you want to raise money for the RAF Association, please let us know. Our friendly challenge team are on hand to give you tips and help you on your fundraising journey. Contact them as below.

Sign up online for 2018 and beyond at: rafa.org.uk/challenges

Email: jules@rafa.org.uk Telephone: 0800 018 2361

PERFECTLY PRESERVED

Seven decades of our history

Air Mail's archive arrived at its new home in Leicester in autumn 2017, just as plans for RAF100 were being finalised. And it got us thinking about the significant record of the Association it holds. As a small contribution to the centenary celebrations of the Royal Air Force, and to acknowledge the long history of our own organisation, we've looked back through the pages of time.

From the very beginning there were stories of the heroism and compassion of members. We also found 1940s tales of homing pigeons that flew the wrong way, and curious news of squadron goats and dogs. In the 1950s we uncovered double page spreads of jokes and cartoons. Lost dates and early history was unearthed as we discovered more about Richard Peck and Flowerdown House hotels.

We saw deep into the days past of the Association - from the 1960s and 70s Miss RAFA winners to the reports of the first WRAFs to win worldwide recognition for their skills, and the 2017 announcements that women would serve in every area of the RAF.

Quarter by quarter, the pages recounted the thoughtful concerns of members: letters pages crammed with comment and ideas, reports of hard fought resolutions at Conference and endless welfare achievements. We celebrated when membership reached 100,000, and regularly thanked donors and fundraisers for the millions of pounds raised through the Wings Appeal.

Among its fragile pages, the news, humour and remembrance brought us closer to the members who have been before us. We look forward to bringing you more snippets from the past in your Air Mails of the future.



1947



1948



1959



1946



1946



1947



1970



1976



1982



1998

There's a hole in my archive, dear members, dear members ...

Then mend it dear editor!

Can you help us complete our set? We believe it is important to try to complete this unique historic record of the Association and the Royal Air Force. We appeal to anyone who may be having a clear out, who would like to have a clear out, or who has finished with their editions to help. We are looking for:

- December 1948
- April 1951
- March 1960 to March 1970 inclusive
- Winter 1979
- Summer 1982
- All editions from 1985 to 1991 inclusive
- January to March 2005

If you think you can help, please email editor@rafatrad.co.uk in the first instance or call our contact team on 0800 018 2361. Thank you for your interest and support.

CHEERS!
ŞEREFİ! SLÁINTE!
OSALUD! YAMAS!
Techyd da!
NA ZDROWIE! À votre santé!
SALUT!

Celebrate a centenary in style

Two new wines are now available to help us celebrate the RAF's centenary year. They'll also help the Association raise funds. They are being supplied by Thomas Ridley Foodservice – a company celebrating its own centenary in 2018.

"We wanted to mark our one hundredth year by supporting a charity," said Shane Fazackerley - Category Manager (wine, spirits, beer and cider) of Thomas Ridley. "When we saw that the Royal Air Force was set up the same year as us, we started looking for an RAF welfare charity so we could help veterans and serving personnel. We're delighted to have discovered the work of the RAF Association and to have started up this partnership to help raise funds for your work."

The partnership between the Association and the company formally kicked off in autumn 2017. Initially it runs for a year, but there is an option to continue it indefinitely if all goes well. The company has been based in Rougham, a village outside Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, since 1918. It now supplies a wide range of customers across the UK, from social clubs to pubs, restaurants, hotels, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, colleges, leisure facilities, county councils, local

authorities, garden centres and contract caterers. Though it is well-known for its food supplies, it is in the considerable drinks section where we find the support for the Association.

"We'll donate ten pence from every bottle of our special Merlot and our Sauvignon Blanc to the Association", Shane continued. "And we also hope to significantly raise the profile of the charity's work with the distinctive label designs. You can't miss the wings on them!"

"We selected wines that would have a broad appeal in the hope that they will help raise a lot of money in our centenary years," he added.

The wine, which retails at £5 per bottle can be supplied to individuals, and can also be bought in bulk at trade prices.

On the nose with the Mistress of Wine

Sam Caporn MW is a regular contributor to the BBC television's Saturday Kitchen programme, a member of the Institute of Masters of Wine and the 2011 winner of the Madame Bolinger Medal for excellence in oenology and quality in education, professional qualifications and ethics in 'all matters relating to wine'.

She tasted 'our' wines and gave us notes on each to help you decide how best to drink them:

Paso del Marte Sauvignon Blanc

"This is zesty and fresh, bursting with green fruit flavours as well as notes of grass and green pepper with citrus acidity. This would be delicious with different types of green salad and fish cakes."

Paso del Marte Merlot

"Appealing aromas of baked summer pudding and plump red fruits, this is full of soft, juicy red berry and cherry flavours. Medium bodied and well balanced this can be enjoyed with meat based pasta dishes such as lasagne or stews."



Sam Caporn © Mistress of Wine



Sauvignon blanc
Zesty and fresh – and raising funds for the Association.
 © Thomas Ridley



Merlot
Medium bodied and well balanced – and available wholesale or for individuals.
 © Thomas Ridley

Rebecca Davies, Corporate and Major Gifts Manager at the Association explains the agreement that has been set up. "Any Association member can order the wine. In fact any member of the public or catering outlet can order as few or as many bottles as they like. And we hope this will raise significant funds for our welfare work. But we are also delighted that our clubs and branches will be able to raise funds locally by buying wholesale from Thomas Ridley and keeping the profits of their sales. The ten pence per bottle will benefit the national welfare work of the RAF Association, but all the local profits will benefit local clubs and branches."

So, whether you enjoy a good bottle with family and friends, or are ordering on behalf of an Association club, we hope these wines will help everyone raise a toast to the Association and the RAF in 2018.

Buy a bottle or six: thomasridley.co.uk. One 75cl bottle: £5. Six 75cl bottles: £28.80. All prices exclude VAT.

Buy in bulk for a club, branch, restaurant, etc: go to www.thomasridley.co.uk or call 01359 270536 for wholesale prices and delivery information.

If beer's more your thing: Thomas Ridley also stocks the Wolf Brewery Battle of Britain ale. For each bottle sold our longstanding supporter, Wolf Brewery, will give 5p towards our Wings Appeal.

Thomas Ridley
FOODSERVICE

Flight Lieutenant Chris Vine

Our team of RAF Association Liaison Officers (RAFALOs) provides a link between serving personnel and our wider branch network, and raises thousands of pounds for the Association every year. We speak to Chris, station RAFALO for RAF Northolt.



Tell me a bit about your RAF career.

I re-joined the RAF as a Logistics Officer in 2014 having initially joined in 2009. I have spent time at RAF Coningsby, Akrotiri and Brize Norton. I am currently on the Air Movements Squadron at RAF Northolt as the Deputy Senior Air Movements Officer.

How long have you been a RAFALO?

I have been a RAFALO since my first tour at Coningsby, so four years now. I was the second in command of the Station RAF Association Committee there and I am currently the Officer in Command of the RAF Northolt RAF Association Committee.

Why did you decide to become a RAFALO?

During my four year stint on 'civvy street', I worked for a military charity and saw the great work they did to support serving personnel and veterans. As soon as I re-joined the RAF, I wanted to continue to support and help the military community and becoming a RAFALO was the obvious way to do that. I would encourage anyone serving to do the same.

What sort of events have you been involved with?

I have helped organise and run Brew for the Few coffee mornings, run the Association stalls at numerous events including the station night photo-shoots and welfare days. I have also organised a number of RAF Association branch visits to different stations. The RAF Northolt committee is currently working really hard to increase Association membership across the station and looking to run a number of fundraising events throughout the RAF100 year. We have very good links with the Association's Harrow Branch and we want to continue that as well as support any other local branches in the London area however we can.

What makes you so passionate about the Association?

The great work that the charity does in supporting the RAF family. Having seen first-hand the impact that support from the Association can give to someone, it would be hard for anyone not to be passionate about it.

Being in the RAF is more than a job and the bond you have with colleagues throughout your career is extended by being a member of the Association. Hosting branch visits on station always reminds me that, regardless of when people served or in what job, we share a similar outlook and sense of humour which is continued through the link with the Association.

What do you enjoy most about being a RAFALO?

The two things I enjoy the most are promoting the charity to serving personnel on station who are unaware of the great work it does, and supporting branches - showing them that station RAF Association committees are active and enthusiastic when it comes to helping the RAF family.

It is great to be able to forge links between the station and the local RAF community and to be able to raise funds and provide welfare support. Too many serving personnel are not aware of the work the RAF Association does, so to be able to do something about that is great.

If you were running a Brew for the Few, what would your first choice of cake be?

Anything with chocolate would be just fine but as long as it doesn't have fruit in it. Why do people put fruit in cake?

Tea or coffee?

Coffee in the morning, tea in the afternoon.



Employee spotlight

Maggie Hill, Warden at Wexford House

Tell us a little about you.

I will have worked for the RAF Association 15 years this August. I'm the Warden at Wexford House one of the RAF Association's sheltered housing schemes. I work with Mandy, the Deputy Warden and two relief staff, Sue and Tessa. It's a small homely team.

What does a sheltered accommodation warden do?

My main job is cooking the meals for the day, running the house in general, doing all of the shopping and paying the bills. Also making sure everyone is nice and happy and content - and if they want to come and have a chat then they always know where I am.

Is there such a thing as a typical week? If so, what is it like for you?

Not really, I suppose looking after all of the residents, making sure they're comfortable and having nice meals in front of them daily.

What are the best parts of your job?

All of it really. I love my job, interacting with the residents, cooking for them, making sure they're all okay. It's good traditional home cooking, roast dinners and bangers and mash.

What's the most challenging part of your job?

I don't find anything challenging, anymore, I think I've been here so long that not a lot phases me. But I do find it difficult if one of the residents is unwell. Because it's such a small home we're like a close-knit family, so when one person isn't doing well it does bother me.

What do you feel are the benefits of sheltered accommodation like Wexford House?

They've still got their independence, but they can come and go as they please: doing their clubs and going out walking. I think without services like Wexford House, lots of veterans would be stuck on their own and feel lonely. Here they're part of the family unit again and have company when they want it - and I think that's what they like. As well as having their meals cooked.

Why do you think Wexford House is so popular with residents and their families?

I think because it is such a small place people like that. They get treated as themselves and it's nice and homely. Everyone gets treated as an individual and I've got time to speak to every one of them.

With modern and updated rooms, a great atmosphere and supportive and caring staff there has never been a better time to be part of the Association's sheltered housing community.

The RAF Association currently has vacancies at Wexford House in Leicestershire, Lord Tedder Court in Northumberland and Dowding House in Moffat. If you would like to find out more about sheltered housing visit rafa.org.uk/sheltered-housing or call the welfare team on 0800 018 2361.



Above: Maggie Hill chatting with Jack at Wexford House.



Top right: The kitchen and dining room.



Bottom right: A newly refurbished bedroom.

All photos © Phil Greig

Hotel news

Richard Peck House has reached an incredible milestone. This year it turns 60. The building itself has an even longer history. The house was bought and converted in the late 1950s and named after a former president of the Association, Air Marshal Sir Richard Peck KCB OBE. Originally a convalescent home, it is now a hotel and today welcomes RAF family of all ages to stay in the lovely seaside resort of Lytham St Annes. The hotel has recently celebrated Burns Night, with the traditional piping in of the Haggis by Bill Bissett of South Fylde Branch.

It has been all change and celebrations at Flowerdown House as we welcomed Registered Manager Nicholas Rickwood. Flowerdown House will also be celebrating its 20th birthday this year, with lots planned to incorporate the RAF's centenary year.

Rothbury House has been very busy, with Colin Lee, Registered Manager, nominated and shortlisted for a national award (see news on page 6), New Year's Day with the Rothbury Highland Pipe Band and their annual Burns Night Supper.

We are also delighted to welcome new employees to the Association for each hotel. In a rare opportunity to meet up, nine new care assistants, two new housekeepers and a new kitchen assistant got to know each other at their corporate induction day in Leicester in February before travelling back to Somerset, Northumberland and Lancashire. Welcome Charlotte Wright, Kimberley Palk - Mickle, Maria Gelyor and Tracey Betts from Flowerdown House; Alison Young, Jillian Smith and Leah Hope from Rothbury House; and Carole Rigby, Elizabeth Brennan, Magdalene Curran and Rob Luke from Richard Peck House.

Upcoming events:

Flowerdown House
14 April

23 to 24 June
30 August

31 October

Richard Peck House

6 to 8 July
Week commencing 9 July

18 to 19 August

Rothbury House
27 May

Week commencing 3 Sept
5 to 11 November
8 to 9 December
10 to 16 December

Token Fair to celebrate the RAF Centenary
Weston Air Festival
Black Tie Party celebrating 20 years of Flowerdown House
Hallowe'en

St Annes Carnival
Richard Peck 60th birthday
Garden Party
Lytham 1940s Wartime Weekend

Tea on the Terrace (RAF100 Themed)
Dedication of Cheviot Memorial
Remembrance Week
Xmas Fayre
Turkey and Tinsel Week

Colin Lee of Rothbury House with Esther Rantzen at the 3rd Sector Care Awards.
© Care Management Matters



Piping in the haggis on Burns Night at Richard Peck House.
© RAF Association



All set for Burns Night at Rothbury House.
© RAF Association

Under the skin

- of precision engineering in the RAF



Simon Seath at work on the Red Arrows' Hawk.
© MOD/Crown

The Red Arrows were flying in the north of England last year when a bird struck the side of a Hawk jet. The pilot landed the aircraft as planned and the fuselage skin did not seem severely disturbed, but closer inspection revealed damage to the structure beneath.

It was time to call in specialist expertise.

71 Inspection & Repair (IR) Squadron is headquartered at Royal Air Force Wittering. There, RAF technicians learn the skills needed to repair aircraft structure.



Bloodhound - assembly of the delta fins and tail took thousands of man-hours and hundreds more to complete them and integrate them with the rest of the car. © Stefan Marjoram

71 (IR) Squadron's main role is to repair damaged structure on UK fixed wing military aircraft in deployed locations. The squadron has its own designers, who devise solutions where ordinary fixes may not be effective. Occasionally its technicians also contribute to projects outside the RAF. They built the tailfin and floor of the Bloodhound supersonic car which will attempt to travel at 500mph in South Africa this autumn, on its way to challenging a new world land speed record.

Once the damage to the Red Arrow had been assessed, the manufacturer supplied a repair scheme and the technicians, Corporal Angus Lambie and Senior Aircraftman (Technician) Simon Seath, started work. It was precision work, with many of the replacement parts crafted by the technicians specifically for this job.

Senior Aircraftman (Technician) Seath said: "This was a very detailed process. New components must be adjusted until they fit exactly but we're trained to understand schematics, produce components and install them perfectly."

The work needs total concentration. In addition to the newly manufactured components, more than 70 holes had to be precision drilled to securely fit the new parts. When finished, the skin was as smooth as the surrounding surfaces and the structure beneath was better than new.



A close up showing the precision work on the Hawk.
© MOD/Crown

Wing Commander Craig Watson is the principal engineer at RAF Wittering. He said: "The Red Arrows and 71 Squadron highlight the engineering expertise that is critical to the Royal Air Force. For young people who might want to work on amazing aircraft it all starts with STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths."

You can read more about the Bloodhound project and the squadron's involvement in it at: www.bloodhoundssc.com/news/rear-deltas.

RAF news

by Mike Curtis

The Royal Air Force is now into its centenary year with many events planned throughout 2018. At the launch of the RAF100 programme, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said the legacy of the centenary must be a "springboard into our next century."

He added: "Our first 100 years of excellence is down to the remarkable dedication and achievements of the men and women of the Royal Air Force. This is why - through the RAF100 Appeal - our associated charities have come together to support our veterans and current service people. Together with our nationwide set of public events and education initiatives, the RAF100 Appeal will help to ensure that we have a legacy which will take us beyond 2018 and long into our second century."

An RAF Voyager aircraft made one of the longest flights in UK military history during the multi-national search for a missing Argentinian submarine. The aircraft flew 8,000 miles to a base in the south of Argentina carrying kit for a Royal Navy specialist Submarine Parachute Assistance Group. Media reports in Argentina welcomed the arrival of a British military aircraft in the country for the first time since before the 1982 Falklands War. The RAF is sending three Chinook helicopters to the African state of Mali to support French anti-terror operations. It is part of a new treaty agreed between Prime Minister Theresa May and the French President Emmanuel Macron. Meanwhile RAF Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers (remotely piloted aircraft systems) continue to provide close air support to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), clearing Daesh from the Euphrates valley.

Preparations for the introduction of the new F-35B Lightning aircraft into RAF service are well under way. In early February, the Queen visited RAF Marham where she opened the Lightning Operations Centre. This is the first building to have been completed as part of Project Anvil which is delivering the new infrastructure to support the F-35. The first aircraft are being operated by 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) and are due to arrive at Marham this summer.

Her Majesty The Queen, Honorary Air Commodore of the Station, visited RAF Marham to inspect the new Lightning Operations Centre. © MOD/Crown



In December, the new Officer Commanding of 617 Squadron made his first flight in an F-35B. Wing Commander John Butcher said: "This was a memorable day and climbing into the cockpit for the first time felt really familiar as the simulator I have been training in is so realistic. This flight certainly marks the beginning of the end for 617 Squadron's time at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort as we already look forward to our arrival back at RAF Marham in the summer."

Two pilots - one from the RAF and the other from the Royal Navy - recently became the first in their services to fly the F-35 Lightning straight from training on the Hawk. There are currently around 200 British personnel based at Beaufort in South Carolina, testing the aircraft and getting them ready to arrive in the UK. Preparations are also being made for the first trials flying off the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth later this year.



One of three RC-135W Rivet Joint aircraft lands at RAF Waddington. It's multi-disciplined crews can intercept and exploit emissions across the electromagnetic spectrum and the group has been declared fully operational ahead of schedule. © MOD/Crown

Another newcomer to the RAF has been declared as having full operational capability ahead of schedule. The three RC-135 Airseeker/Rivet Joint aircraft and a ground-based analysis unit, which are based at Waddington, replace the Nimrod R1 which was retired in 2011. They will sustain the UK Airborne Electronic Surveillance capability against an evolving target set to 2035.

A £70 million hangar, which is large enough to contain three of the RAF's new Atlas transport aircraft at the same time, has been officially opened by Defence Minister Guto Bebb MP at RAF Brize Norton. The Atlas maintenance, repair and overhaul facility is bigger than three football pitches and is now fitted out and fully operational in support of RAF transport operations all over the world. The UK has ordered 22 Atlas aircraft for the RAF, 18 of which have been delivered. The entire fleet is due to be delivered by 2022.

The RAF is returning to what used to be its most northerly base in the British Isles. With the increase in Russian military activity to the north of the UK, the radar facility at Saxa Vord on the island of Unst is being reinstated. The new £10 million Remote Radar Head will improve RAF and NATO coverage of the airspace north of Britain and further out across the Norwegian Sea. It will see the base return to the role it performed during the 1960s and 1970s, when the site was used as an early warning radar on NATO's northern flank.

Hungry for more frequent news of the RAF? Can't wait until the next Air Mail? If you are based in the UK, your membership of the Association gets you a discount on subscriptions to the fortnightly RAF News. Find out more on your members' portal. Call RAF News at Sheffield Web on 01909 517 331 or email rafnews@jpress.co.uk. You will need to give your membership number to subscribe. There is no way to sign up online.



Left: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, (in yellow hard hat) is shown round the site for the new remote radar head at Saxa Vord, Unst, Shetland. © MOD/Crown

Bottom left: Underslung load training with a Chinook helicopter at RAF Odiham. The aircraft will soon be used in Mali. © MOD/Crown

Bottom right: Voyager transport tanker on the tarmac at Mount Pleasant airfield in the Falkland Islands. The aircraft has been welcomed in Argentina for the first time since 1982. © MOD/Crown



One of the UK's first F-35B Lightning II aircraft after take-off at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The first aircraft are due at RAF Marham this summer. © MOD/Crown



BRANCH NEWS

including region, area and overseas news



Barnstaple and North Devon Branch 1

Members of the committee welcomed Steve Colhoun at their recent branch meeting. Steve gave members an update of regional affairs which was well received. Branch members will have by now a schedule of social events for 2018. Photo - Steve Colhoun [centre] with members of the branch committee

Barry Branch 2

Six members of the Barry Branch were recently invited to Steenbergen, Netherlands to make final preparations for the visit to Barry of the Dutch town's ABS choir and to pay homage to Wing Commander Guy Gibson and his navigator Jim Warwick.

The choir's visit in September 2018 will form part of RAF100 and the Barry Branch's and MOD St. Athan's 80th anniversaries, all to be celebrated in 2018.

The members visited the local cemetery and held a short service in memory of Guy Gibson and Jim Warwick. Wing Commander Gibson was killed alongside his navigator, Jim Warwick, when their aircraft crashed in Steenbergen, on 19 September 1944. Both had taken part in a raid over the German city of Rheydt and Moenchengladbach.

Both the branch and Glamorgan and Gwent regional standards were paraded and dipped in honour. The poem High Flight was also recited. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the branch and the Vale of Glamorgan Council Mayor, Councillor Janice Charles. The council has agreed to work with the branch to promote the visit.

The photograph shows members at the crash scene, now marked by a Union Cross laid into the pavement on the nearby industrial site (left to right Howard, Jim, Terry). Jim, Howard and Terry were accompanied by their wives, respectively Lynda, Carole and Margaret.



Beccles and Southwold Area Branch 3

On Saturday 13 January 2018, the branch held their annual Christmas and New Year luncheon at the Wherry Inn, Geldeston. Branch President Brian Vousden commented: "Our usual annual celebration was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all our members. Good companionship and excellent food and service by the staff at the Wherry, followed by the presentation of an award certificate to our Life Vice-President Mr Eddie Earl for his contribution to the Wings Appeal and for services to our branch over many years. His dedication to our charity is an example to us all."

Picture shows; Mr. Eddie Earl receiving his certificate of appreciation from Branch President Brian Vousden.

Cheltenham Branch

In April, the Cheltenham Branch will host an exhibition at the Staverton Jet Age Museum to commemorate the formation of the RAF in 1918, together with the contemporary creation of the aircraft industry in Cheltenham. The exhibition forms part of the Cheltenham Borough's "Cheltenham Remembers World War 1" programme.

The exhibition will include a three quarter scale SE5a model WWI fighter; a replica airfield workshop; an operational airfield tableau; log books, diaries and photos of RAF men at Rendcomb and of flight cadets and WRAF in Cheltenham; aircraft guns and other memorabilia; illustrations and accounts of the Gloster Aircraft Company factory, especially the employment of women; and a display from GCHQ including previously top secret cryptographic and other items, marking its long association with the RAF. The exhibition opens to the public at 1100hrs on Saturday 31 March. It will run over Easter weekend and three subsequent weekends until Sunday 22 April from 1000hrs until 1600hrs. Local schools have been invited on weekdays for a special programme which will include an exercise depicting RAF operations in France,

practising basic aircraft repairs and competing in an aircraft recognition test.

The free exhibition has been generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cheltenham Borough Council, local charities and businesses. All RAF Association members, their families and friends are most welcome to attend.

City and Central London Branch 4

Members were delighted to honour one of the stalwarts of the branch, Eddie Duke Low, who after 30 years as a member, welfare officer, standard bearer and champion Wings Appeal Collector decided to 'retire'. At a well attended dinner last November, members presented a certificate of appreciation to Eddie to add to his 2017 Area Presidential Certificate. Eddie continues to attend branch meetings, giving advice and support when needed. In thanking the branch for honouring him Eddie asked for his thanks to be conveyed to Association colleagues in other branches especially those in standard bearer and welfare officer fraternities. Picture shows Eddie Duke Low receiving the branch's certificate of appreciation from Peter Ramrayka (Chairman) and Mike Saunders (Secretary).

Cranwell Branch 5

The RAF Association Christmas lunch was held in 2017 in a Sleaford restaurant, instead of the normal location at the Cranwell Warrant Officer and Sergeants' Mess, because of the mess's heavy commitments. It was an opportunity to invite air cadets from the Sleaford Squadron. The Cranwell Branch adopted the squadron some years ago and the liaison is very strong - shown by the cadets' support on Wings Saturday. At the lunch it was the first opportunity to entertain the new squadron commander, Flight Lieutenant Phil Clements. The Branch Chairman, Tony Crossman, presented a certificate of thanks to Corporal Cadet Matthew Mayers who paraded the branch standard at the remembrance day parade in Sleaford.

At the January morning meeting the Wings Appeal Organiser confirmed that in 2017 the branch collected £8,063 for the Wings Appeal. The meeting continued with a fantastic interactive presentation given by the PREVENT officer of the East Midlands Special Operations Unit - Special Branch. PREVENT is the government's initiative to counter terrorist threats, an initiative unknown by the majority of members.

Diss and District Branch 6

For many years our meetings were held in Grasmere, the local Conservative party headquarters in Diss. However, uncertainty over the future of the building caused the committee to consider other options.

Accordingly a decision was made to hold future meetings at the Diss Bowls Club. This modern building has more convenient ample car parking and facilities.

In January the first meeting was held there and Branch President Richard Youngs thanked members for their sterling efforts which resulted in raising nearly £4,000 in 2017. He outlined plans for the current year and wished the branch every success in the new premises.





Fraserburgh Branch 7

Greetings from Bonnie Scotland and the Fraserburgh Burns' N'icht. Stan Green, Honorary President of the Fraserburgh Branch and Life President of Fraserburgh Burns' Club, led this fine body of men (pictured) for an excellent evening in the Fraserburgh Leisure Centre. 270 members celebrated their national bard's birthday on 27 January, ensuring members "That Man to Man, the world o'er, Shall brithers be for that".

Frome Branch 8 9

Pictured are members of the Frome Branch committee collecting for the Wings Appeal in the town of Frome. We also had a lucky 'name me claim me bear' winner. I'm very proud of the commitment and enthusiasm of our small committee who deliver so much for our members during the year.



Leamington Spa, Warwick and District Branch 10

Each year, the branch's December social evening is used to invite our members to come to our Christmas party and presentation evening. A buffet is laid on with all the 'goodies' provided by the members themselves, as are the excellent set of prizes for the raffle.

Before the buffet is opened, certificates and trophies are awarded to Wings Appeal collectors who have been diligent in 'shaking tins' for the Association during the year.

It was unfortunate that our star collector, Miss Margaret Kite, could not attend the party in 2017 (with a total of £1,260.54). The photograph shows our chairman, Stuart Powney, on the left, with a second place collection of £333.78. He received the Bomber Command tankard from the branch Wings Appeal officer, John Dawe.

The whole evening, as usual, was a great success and included a brain teasing quiz with very valuable chocolate coinage as prizes for the winners.



Morecombe and Lancaster Branch 11

The Morecombe and Lancaster Branch sadly said goodbye to one of its most energetic members in December. Gerry Maguire came on a branch coach trip to the Yorkshire Air Museum in 2013 and subsequently joined as a branch associate member. The following year he joined the Association as a member, entering energetically into the life of the branch, and was elected to the committee in 2015. His particular forté was persuading local shops, pubs and businesses to take one of our Wings Appeal collecting tins and he was diligent in checking and collecting them for counting. He also gave up his Sundays once a month in the summer of 2015 to do table top sales at the local sports centre (pictured) and two years running helped on the Association trailer at Blackpool Airshow. His efforts over the last three years have raised £978.48 for the Wings Appeal. He continued to support the branch to the end, before losing the battle to cancer just before Christmas. Thanks Gerry, for all.

North Cotswold Branch

To celebrate the RAF's 100 birthday the North Cotswold Branch is organising two events to which all are warmly welcome. The first is an exhibition of RAF memorabilia in Stow on the Wold's Town Hall on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 April. Secondly, on Friday 27 April, in St. James Church, Chipping Campden there will be a band and choir concert starting at 1930hrs.

It is with sadness I have to report the passing of Bill, aged 92, who was stalwart member of the branch and, who over the years, was involved in the Wings Appeal and the annual Willersey coffee mornings. Squadron Leader Bill McGough of 100 Squadron RAF Bomber Command served in the RAF during the Second World War as an air gunner on Lancasters, surviving 32 sorties.



12

Overseas Branch 12 13

The RAF Association was prominent in our annual commemoration service held in Helsinki this year. We were privileged to have a 92 year-old former sergeant, WWII Wellington and Lancaster air gunner, Fred "Freddie" Brown lay our HM Armed Forces Veterans - Finland wreath. Freddie (pictured right, front) completed the 30 compulsory operations over occupied Europe. I should add that at the time of Freddie actually laying the wreath I was ably assisted by Flight Lieutenant Richard Carter RAFVR in uniform, who is also a member of our joint services group of veterans in Finland.



13



14

Poole Branch 14

The photo shows some members of 2185 (Wareham) Air Training Corps at their annual dining-in held recently at the Dorset Golf and Country Club. Adult staff and air cadets were presented with RAF Association certificates of appreciation for helping to raise £558.87 in Wareham and Swanage on Armed Forces Day for the Wings Appeal by Poole Branch Chairman, Group Captain Mike Davis RAF (Retd). The principal guest for the evening was Major Kevin Fox Royal Artillery who was himself an ex-cadet warrant officer with 2391

(Parkstone) Squadron back in the 1980s. Each year adult staff and cadets from the four local air cadets units, 149 (Poole) Squadron, 2391 (Parkstone) Squadron, 2185 (Wareham) Squadron and 2185 (Swanage) Detached Flight provided excellent support to branch members during the Wings Appeal. It is extremely important that we recognise their efforts not just in the monies they help raise but also in the investment of the time they give to our cause.



15

Sale Branch 15

In July members of the committee at Sale Branch supported a stall at the Manchester Airport Aviation and Transport Festival raising funds for the RAF Association, and recently the enclosed photographs came to hand. I am sorry that the quality is not good, but we were placed under one of the engines of the Concorde in the Concorde Hangar at the airport and it is obvious there was little or no light.

St. Austell Branch 16 17

These two photos were taken at St. Johns Methodist Church, St. Austell as part of their Christmas festivities. Members from the branch donated books and toys and placed them under the branch's tree, very effective. The congregation also donated books and toys from under their Christmas tree. The St. Austell Children's Centre was the grateful recipient of the presents.



16



17

Swindon Branch talk - update

Following a report in the Branch News section of Air Mail (Jan-Mar 2018) on a talk at the Swindon Branch, the Association has been approached by members raising concerns that the speaker may have misrepresented his military experience. At this stage the Association headquarters team and the branch committee does not believe any criminal or civil offence has been committed. But the Association would encourage all branch and club committees to check the service history of speakers invited to events, to avoid later embarrassment.

18

Sud Ouest France Branch 18

Henri Laronze, seated in front of the branch standard, with other branch members at the monthly lunch held in Bordeaux. Henri is a founder member of the branch and celebrated his 100th birthday on 17 March. More detail about his service and other Association members who turn 100 in the centenary year of the RAF on page 5.

Wisbech Branch 19

The branch recently invested in new signage on the front of Astral House and re-launched the branch club as the De Havilland Club. We were joined by Ailsa Gough, Area Director, and Steve Webb, Branch Support Officer from the Association's South East and Eastern Area office, and also by our local MP, Steve Barclay, who is very supportive of our work. Ailsa and Steve had the chance to talk with the members who were able to attend. Pictured are Branch Chairman, George Carruthers, Area Director, Ailsa Gough and our MP Steve Barclay.



19



Branch news photo competition launches

For your chance to win your choice of a bottle of either RAFA Spitfire Heritage Gin or RAFA Supermarine Vodka, simply submit the 'best Branch news photo' in the next issue of Air Mail.

What makes a great photo?

One that shows the dynamism, humanity and range of people involved in the Association. One that shows emotion or interaction between people, or them doing something fun. Or one that has a real sense of place and time. Often they are natural and unstructured photos. Seek out great backgrounds – sunsets, lovely architecture or an amazing view - and look out for terrible backgrounds such as computer wires, pylons and a load of microphone stands or rubbish. If there are lots of people who want to be in the photo, try to arrange yourselves in an interesting way, not just in straight rows all facing the camera.

It's a fun competition, but there are some terms and conditions. Only branch news photos will be eligible for the prize. The editor's decision will be final and no correspondence about the decision will be entered into. If you win, your image will be identified as the best and your choice of a bottle of gin or a bottle of vodka will be posted to you by our friends and supporters at Spitfire Heritage Gin. If you are under 18 a non alcoholic alternative will be offered. To buy a bottle of the gin or vodka, go to spitfireheritagegin.com/rafa. Each specially liveried bottle will raise £3.50 for the RAF Association.



We welcome all submissions for Branch news, preferably by email to BranchNews@rafatrad.co.uk. Your word count should be around 100 words. Please submit just one accompanying photograph, as a separate jpeg, tiff or gif file and at a size and quality of at least 300dpi. Submissions can also be accepted by Royal Mail to the address on page 2. Unfortunately photographs submitted by post cannot be returned. Due to space limitations, submission does not guarantee inclusion and where there are too many reports for an issue, the editor reserves the right to select the broadest range of news and photos to reflect the geography, people and different activities of the Association.

York Branch 20

2017 saw much activity at the York Branch. One highlight was the very successful 2017 Wings Appeal which raised £12,463.39. 2018 fundraising is already in full swing by the Branch Wings Appeal team leaders - husband and wife Ian and Maureen Smith. There were organised collections in shops and over 130 collection tins in pubs. Maureen and Ian offer a huge "thank you" to all branch members who gave up their own time to help and also to the businesses in and around York who looked after our collection tins or donated to the cause. The year ended with the Christmas draw taking place at the branch headquarters, where over 130 prizes were drawn.

In January, one of the four Turning of the Page ceremonies in York Minster (pictured) was attended by serving RAF personnel from RAF Linton-on-Ouse and York Branch members. The RAF memorial page is turned by representatives of the past, present and future RAF. At the club there have been film shows and auctions, always popular during the winter months. On 27 January, the branch held its traditional Burns Night supper, including the piping in of the haggis.



100 YEARS AGO

A photo of the remains of a British aircraft in a wood. Written on the back in pencil is the date, "8.3.18" – just 23 days before the Royal Air Force was created. It's the only clue. Chris Goss scoured the archives to reveal the people and the machines behind a 100 year-old story.



Above: An SE 5. © Author

K.G. 100


NEW ZEALAND
CERTIFIED COPY OF ENTRY OF BIRTH
IN THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S OFFICE

Place of Registration: Christchurch N: 056391

1. Surname (When shown in error)	Randal Henry
2. Christian or first names (If two, give surname, else as shown; if unknown, state so)	
3. Sex	M.
4. When born	1 November 1894
5. Where born (Town or locality only)	Christchurch
6. Father	
7. Name and surname	Henry James Topliss
8. Profession or occupation	Engineer
9. Age	39
10. Birthplace	Christchurch
11. Name and surname	Mary Topliss
12. Maiden Surname	Cosley
13. Age	38
14. Birthplace	Lytelton

Certified to be a true copy of the above particulars included in an entry of birth in the records of the Registrar-General's Office.

Given under the seal of the Registrar-General at Lower Hut, the



Above: Official registration of Randal Topliss' birth in New Zealand. © Author.

The black and white photograph, bottom left, reveals a letter B and the first three numerals of a serial - 826. Serials B8231 to B8580 were allocated to 350 SE 5a single-seat fighters, built in Birmingham by the Austin Motor Company Ltd.

Adding this partial serial to the date, there was only one aircraft that matched - B8264. It had been delivered to 64 Squadron on 28 January 1918. Coded 'X', it was flown by New Zealander Second Lieutenant Randal Henry Topliss, and was lost on 8 March 1918.

Topliss was born in Christchurch, on the south island of New Zealand, on 1 November 1894 to Henry and Mary Topliss. He began work at his father's engineering firm. On the outbreak of war he was just 19 but expressed an interest in being a pilot. He joined up and trained at the Bournemouth School of Flying and was commissioned into the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) on 25 September 1917. In November that year, he was posted to 64 Squadron, which was based at Le Hameau in France and commanded by Major Bernard Smythies. Smythies had joined the Royal Engineers in 1905, became an experienced pilot, and transferred to the RFC in 1915. He commanded 64 Squadron from August 1916 to December 1918 - making him the longest serving RFC/RAF squadron commander of the First World War. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and survived the war.

Before March 1918, 64 Squadron had been equipped with DH5s and used for ground attack missions. But due to high losses the squadron was re-equipped in January 1918 with SE 5 fighters and, after some weeks of conversion training, was declared operationally ready at the start of March 1918.

On 8 March 1918, Randal Topliss took off on a patrol at 1000hrs and engaged a German aircraft. Records show he went into a dive, gave chase and was reported at 9,000 feet, heading west. He was then attacked by Leutnant Wolf Magnus Freiherr von Manteuffel-Szöge of Jasta 35, which was based at Emerchicourt, north-east of Cambrai. Von Manteuffel-Szöge damaged the SE 5's engine which soon stopped and the aircraft force-landed at Bourlon Wood at 1140hrs. Randal Topliss was captured suffering slight wounds and spent the rest of the conflict as a prisoner of war in the infamous camp at Holzminden. He returned to New Zealand after the war, settling at Inchbonnie where, with his father, he became a farmer. He married and had twin sons, John and David. However, his health began to fail and he passed away on 27 January 1954, aged 59. He is buried at Karoro cemetery.

As for von Manteuffel-Szöge, his engagement with Topliss was the first of what would be three air combat claims. He was born in Capschjoken, Russia on 12 March 1895 (just over four months after Randal Topliss). At the outbreak of war he was serving as a cavalry officer with the 2nd Bavarian Uhlans, and was awarded the Iron Cross on 18 October 1914. In 1916, he was serving with the 3rd Bavarian Chevaux-Leger Regiment before he transferred to the German Air Service. After flying training he joined Schlachtstaffel 24b (a ground attack unit) before transferring to Flieger-Abteilung (A) 292b. He then became a fighter pilot, joining the Albatross D.III-equipped Jasta 35 via training at Jastaschule II. However, like



Leutnant von Manteuffel-Szöge at the seat of an Albatross. © Author.

Randal Topliss, his career as a fighter pilot was short. On 21 March 1918, he claimed either a Sopwith Camel or Pup north of Bapaume at 0900 hrs and the same again at Bertincourt at 1620 hrs. His victims were from 3 Squadron. The first was probably Camel serial B5450 flown by 2nd Lieutenant Henry Stewart. The second was probably B9155 flown by Captain Cyril Leman; both survived. On 11 April 1918, his fighter was damaged in combat with an unidentified two-seat RAF aircraft and he force-landed near Croiselles. But on 8 May 1918, he was shot down in combat with ten Sopwith Camels, probably from 208 Squadron, and was killed when his fighter crashed at Biaches-St Vaast.

Baron von Manteuffel-Szöge's grave. © Author



World Military News

by J.M. Henderson



KC-46A Pegasus. © Boeing



Tornado GR4 of 41(R) Sqn at RIAT 2011. © J M Henderson



Mil Mi-8 of the Lithuanian Air Force at RIAT 2005. © J M Henderson



Embraer Phenom for the RAF at RIAT 2017 in Brazilian delivery marks. © J M Henderson

Argentina



The Argentinian Navy is to receive five former French Navy Super Etendards for use as spares in resurrecting the surviving eleven aircraft in Argentina's fleet. All have been grounded for some years. Some of the original fleet were used to devastating effect during the Falklands War, including in the sinking of the Atlantic Conveyor with Exocet missiles.

Canada



The Royal Australian Air Force is to sell 18 of its original FA-18 Hornets to the Royal Canadian Air Force once its re-equipment with F-35 Lightnings is under way. The first two should arrive in 2019 and will supplement the RCAF's existing fleet pending their acquisition of a new fighter in the next decade.

France



The French Air Force's first J model of the C-130 Hercules was delivered just before Christmas last year. Another one will be received this year and two tanker/transport versions will arrive in 2019. Meanwhile, Marshall Aerospace of Cambridge have received a contract to support the fourteen original C-130H models already in French service.

Greece



The Greek Army plans to acquire 70 Bell OH-58D Kiowa armed helicopters from the US Army's surplus stocks in 2019. Thirty six will be fully operational aircraft and 24 will be used for training; the remainder will provide spare parts for the fleet.

India



The Indian Air Force retired its fleet of Russian Mil Mi-8 transport helicopters in December last year. Since 1971, some 107 of the type have served in India's military campaigns in the region and been used extensively on disaster relief and humanitarian missions. The last machine was delivered in 1988.

Ireland



The Irish Air Corps is to acquire three Pilatus PC-12s in the next two years to replace its long-serving fleet of Cessna FR172 utility aircraft. The aircraft will undertake a wide range of tasks including reconnaissance, logistics support and medical evacuation.

Japan



The Japanese Air Self Defence Force is in the process of upgrading its current fleet of E-2C Hawkeye airborne early warning aircraft to the latest E-2D version that has recently entered service with the US Navy. The first aircraft for Japan was test flown recently for the first time by the manufacturers, Northrop Grumman. Two should be delivered to Japan this year.

Three Boeing KC-46 Pegasus tankers are to be added to Japan's existing fleet of four Boeing 767-based tankers. A contract for the first KC-46 has just been awarded through the US Air Force under the Foreign Military Sales programme; all three will be delivered in the next decade.

Lebanon



The first two of the Lebanese Air Force's fleet of six Super Tucanos have been delivered from the US training base in Georgia. The balance will be delivered later this year.

NATO



The NATO Airborne Early Warning Force at Geilenkirchen Air Base in Germany has retired a second E-3 aircraft to storage at Davis Monthan AFB in Arizona. The first one arrived there in 2015 as part of a cost-cutting measure and the last will follow later this year. The remaining active fleet of 14 aircraft should see up to another two decades of service.

Oman



The Royal Air Force of Oman received its last two BAE Hawks in December last year, completing the order for eight that have been produced at Warton in Lancashire over the past two years.

Qatar



Qatar is to buy 24 Eurofighter Typhoons from BAE Systems in a deal worth £5 billion. Deliveries will start before 2023. This order came shortly after Qatar confirmed that it had ordered an additional 12 Rafales from Dassault to add to the 24 already on contract. The country has also got 36 multi-role Eagles on order from Boeing.

UK



The F-35B Lightning II has been cleared to use the 'ski-jump' fitted to the Royal Navy's new carriers. The tests took place at the US Navy's test centre at Patuxent River, Maryland. Seaborne trials will be conducted later this year from the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

All five Embraer Phenom business jets have now been delivered to RAF Cranwell for training multi-engine, fixed-wing crews under the Military Flying Training System contract with Affinity Flying Services. These aircraft are replacing the Beechcraft King Air in this role.

Two pilots – one from the Royal Air Force and one from the Royal Navy – have become the first from the UK to fly the F-35 Lightning II straight from flying training on the Hawk. They are currently training on the F-35 with the UK detachment at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina, along with colleagues who have transferred from other aircraft.

Thirty three years of Tornado operations came to an end at RAF Coningsby in November last year when the last aircraft of No 41 (Reserve) Squadron left the base on transfer to RAF Marham. The Squadron stopped using the type as part of the Tornado force rundown that has been under way for some time.

USA



The first production Boeing KC-46 Pegasus tanker made its maiden flight towards the end of last year. Boeing hope to deliver the first batch of this vital aircraft to the United States Air Force during this year, having failed to meet an earlier 2017 deadline because of developmental problems.

The last F-16 Fighting Falcon to be produced at Fort Worth, Texas, by Lockheed Martin was rolled out in November last year and was destined for the Iraqi Air Force. This marked the end of 40 years of such activity there. Future F-16s will be built at another Lockheed Martin plant in Greenville, South Carolina; production is likely to continue there for another five years to meet overseas orders. The Fort Worth factory will now be dedicated to building the F-35 Lightning II.

Draken International, which provides adversary air services from their base in Florida, have acquired 12 former South African Air Force Atlas Cheetah fighters from the state-owned Denel Aeronautics in South Africa. The Cheetah is a development of the French Mirage III. These jets will be based in the USA and comprise nine single-seaters and three twins.



French Navy Super Etendard at RIAT 2012. © J M Henderson

The F-35B Lightning II aircraft. It will soon be starting ski-jump take-off trials on HMS Queen Elizabeth following successful initial trials in the USA. © MOD/Crown



Great Taste

Recipes for April to June are tricky to choose: they might have to warm you through April blizzards, or cool you through a flaming day in June (or vice versa if you are one of our South African, Australian or other southern hemisphere members). Thankfully the RAF100 Cookbook has such a range that we were spoiled for choice. So here are two that will work whatever the season. And don't forget, if you buy the book (available from rafatrad.co.uk) you'll also get 100 RAF history stories, from 100 countries, to read while you are cooking (or freezing).



Bulgogi Korean Barbecue Beef

A popular Korean dish, bulgogi (literally "fire meat") is traditionally cooked in a perforated inverted dome over hot coals. It is important to use a good tender cut of beef such as fillet, sirloin or rib-eye. Bulgogi is generally served with whole lettuce leaves so it can be wrapped up with rice to eat.

Ingredients Serves 4

600g beef (fillet, sirloin or rib-eye)

For the marinade
1/3 medium onion, finely diced
1 ripe pear (or red apple), grated
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1cm ginger, grated
75ml dark soy sauce
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 tbsp mirin (optional)
50g light soft brown sugar
1/4 tsp dried chilli flakes
black pepper

To cook
2 tbsp peanut oil or sunflower oil
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
2 spring onions, finely sliced
1 small carrot, peeled and cut into thin roundels or thin batons
1 tbsp sesame seeds

Looking good –
the RAF100 Cookbook



To serve
whole cos lettuce leaves
boiled or steamed rice
combination of sliced peppers, cucumber, carrots, red onions, garlic, spring onions or coriander leaves
Ssamjang (spicy sweet Korean sauce) or sweet chilli sauce (ideally chojang)

Method

To prepare the beef

- Wrap the beef in cling film and place in the freezer for a couple of hours until firm.
- Remove any excess fat and finely shred the beef as thin as possible and place in a non-metallic bowl.

To marinate

- Place the onion, grated pear or apple, garlic and ginger in a food processor and blend to a smooth purée.
- Mix the purée with the rest of the marinade ingredients, add to the beef, mix well, cover and leave to marinate in the fridge for at least two hours or, preferably, overnight.

To cook

- Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan over a high heat. Add the marinated beef with the sliced onion, spring onions and carrot.
- Stir-fry until the meat has browned, reduce the heat and simmer for a few minutes until the liquid from the marinade has reduced.
- Add the sesame seeds and stir to combine.

To serve

- Transfer the bulgogi to a warmed serving dish.
- Serve with the lettuce leaves, rice, sauce and any other accompaniments on the side so your diners can stuff their own lettuce leaves with their choice of fillings.

Vegetarian alternative

Mushroom Bulgogi

- Substitute the beef for 500g of sliced chestnut mushrooms (or a mix of mushrooms e.g. button, chestnut, Portobello, shitake, enoki).
- Use the same marinade, vegetables, accompaniments and cooking method as above.

While you are cooking, read about: Korea

The cookbook gives the account of the RAF's role in the conflict either side of the 38th parallel between the Soviet Union in the north and the United States in the south. Includes summaries of the role of the Far East Air Force, 77 Squadron, 1903 Independent Air Operations Post Flight and 1913 Light Liaison Flight, and the involvement of aircraft from Sunderlands to MIG-15s.

Hokey Pokey ice cream

This Kiwi favourite is a vanilla ice cream combined with pieces of honeycomb or cinder toffee. This recipe uses a sabayon base mixed with whipped cream and beaten egg whites and, although not traditional, a butterscotch sauce that goes very well, warm or cold, poured over the ice cream.

Ingredients Makes 2 litres

For the honeycomb
4 tbsp caster sugar
2 tbsp golden syrup
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

For the ice cream
4 eggs, separated
200g caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
500ml whipping cream

For the butterscotch sauce
(optional)
vanilla pod or 1 tsp vanilla extract
100g butter
100g light brown sugar
300ml double cream

Method

To make the honeycomb

- Line a baking tray with a silicone baking sheet or baking parchment.
- Place the sugar and golden syrup in a deep saucepan, place over a low heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved.
- Once the sugar has dissolved, continue to heat until the mix starts to simmer. Leave the sugar and syrup mix simmering on the heat, without stirring, for around 3 minutes until the colour darkens slightly.
- Remove from the heat, add the bicarbonate of soda and stir until the mixture froths up. Tip immediately onto the lined baking tray and leave at room temperature to set completely.
- Once cooled, break the honeycomb into small rough-shaped pieces and shake in a colander over a sheet of greaseproof paper to separate the fine crumbs. Keep the fine crumbs to sprinkle on top of the ice cream when serving and store in an airtight container.

To make the ice cream

- Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and vanilla extract together in a bowl, place over a saucepan of simmering water and whisk until the mixture forms thick ribbons when trailed over the surface; this is known as a sabayon.
- Set the sabayon aside to cool, meanwhile whip the cream until it forms soft peaks and beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks.
- Fold the sabayon into the whipped cream, then fold in the egg whites.
- Transfer the mix to a container and place in the freezer for an hour until it starts to firm up.

To finish the ice cream

- Fold the pieces of honeycomb into the soft ice cream, transfer to a 2-litre container and freeze until firm.

Right: Another recipe from the RAF100 Cook book.
Mango and passionfruit fool for a healthier bite of something more tropical.



To make the butterscotch sauce

- If using a vanilla pod, halve the pod lengthways and scrape out the seeds from both halves.
- Place the vanilla seeds and pod (or extract) into a heavy based saucepan with the butter, sugar and 250ml of the cream.
- Place the saucepan over a moderate heat and, stirring frequently to ensure the butter has melted and the sugar has completely dissolved, bring to a gentle boil.
 - Continue to cook the sauce at a gentle boil for around 10 minutes until the sauce has thickened and noticeably darkened in colour.
 - Strain the butterscotch sauce into a container through a sieve and set aside at room temperature, stirring occasionally, for about 20 minutes.
 - Once cool, stir in the remaining cream for a thick but pourable sauce.
 - Cover and store in the refrigerator until required.

To serve

- Take the ice cream out of the freezer and leave at room temperature for about 10 minutes to soften slightly.
- Scoop the ice cream into bowls, pour over the butterscotch sauce and scatter over some of the reserved crushed honeycomb.

While you are cooking, read about: New Zealand

The distant islands of New Zealand made them perfect for the Empire Air Training Scheme throughout World War II. They were also involved in 'what was probably the last "Great Air Race" from London to Christchurch, as well as being the location for training crews of RAF Nimrods and P3 Orions. Read more while your ice cream freezes.

All recipes and photographs reproduced by kind permission of St James's House publishers. ©St James's House.

Get your copy of the RAF100 Cookbook for £25 from rafatrad.co.uk or call 0800 018 2361



Culture Vultures

BOOK REVIEW:

“elegant ... sumptuous ... well thought out and sobering”.

‘The Royal Air Force – A centenary of operations’
by Michael Napier

Osprey Publishing. £30. ISBN: 978 4728 25407.

Reviewed for Air Mail by Andy Thomas

“This sumptuous and very reasonably priced 340-page hardback describes the operations over 100 years of the world’s first independent air force. The author, a former RAF pilot and veteran of operations over Iraq, has done the RAF and its veterans a great service with this concise and well-thought-out book. He has wisely concentrated on operational activity and starts from the desperate days of 1 April 1918 when the German spring offensive was at its height. Ten well-illustrated chapters describe Empire policing between the wars, WW2, post-war policing and the long years of the Cold War. The author is to be congratulated for not over-hyping some campaigns or operations and for keeping everything in proper context.

“If there are criticisms they are that the splendid selection of photographs might have benefitted with more detailed captioning, rather than the more generic text. Also there are few photographs of named individuals and it would have benefitted to have seen more of the people, rather than machines.

“It is sobering to see 50 pages devoted to the RAF engaged in live operations since the fall of the Berlin Wall. As these words are written, aircraft of the Royal Air Force are engaged on live operations in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere to make the subtitle of this splendid book truly accurate.

“This is thoroughly recommended to serious historians and should also especially appeal to the many thousands of former RAF servicemen and women, without whom none of this would have happened.”



Above: “The lines of rivets speak of everyone who worked on them...”
© RAF Association

Left: ‘The Royal Air Force – A centenary of operations’

© Osprey publishing

POETRY: War Planes

Winter light pours in on old planes,
Slides along smooth dull flanks,
Skips over lines of sturdy rivets,
Unfurls down outstretched wings,
Reads names, gleams on dull windows.
They seem so frail and light, dormant,
And yet these are the legendary planes
Which defended our ancient islands,
Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster,
Names of myth, names to revere -
Patched up, welded again and again,
Hurling down the flowing fens,
Hastily rewired, refuelled, rolled out
To roar into flight, taking off fearless
To hurl against the leaden invaders
Of the sky, their only voice on plaques,
Memories of the pilots who flew them.
The lines of rivets speak of everyone
Who worked on them, night and day,
Worked through air raids and death,
Bereavement, sadness and love,
Heat and cold and pouring rain,
Human DNA melded into the worn skin.
And now they slumber, their task done,
Their engines still, the peace is won,
And the winter light caresses them.

Liz Davies was inspired to write this after a visit to the Imperial War Museum Duxford, where she also learned about the RAF Association. She says: “Well done for the great work you do”.

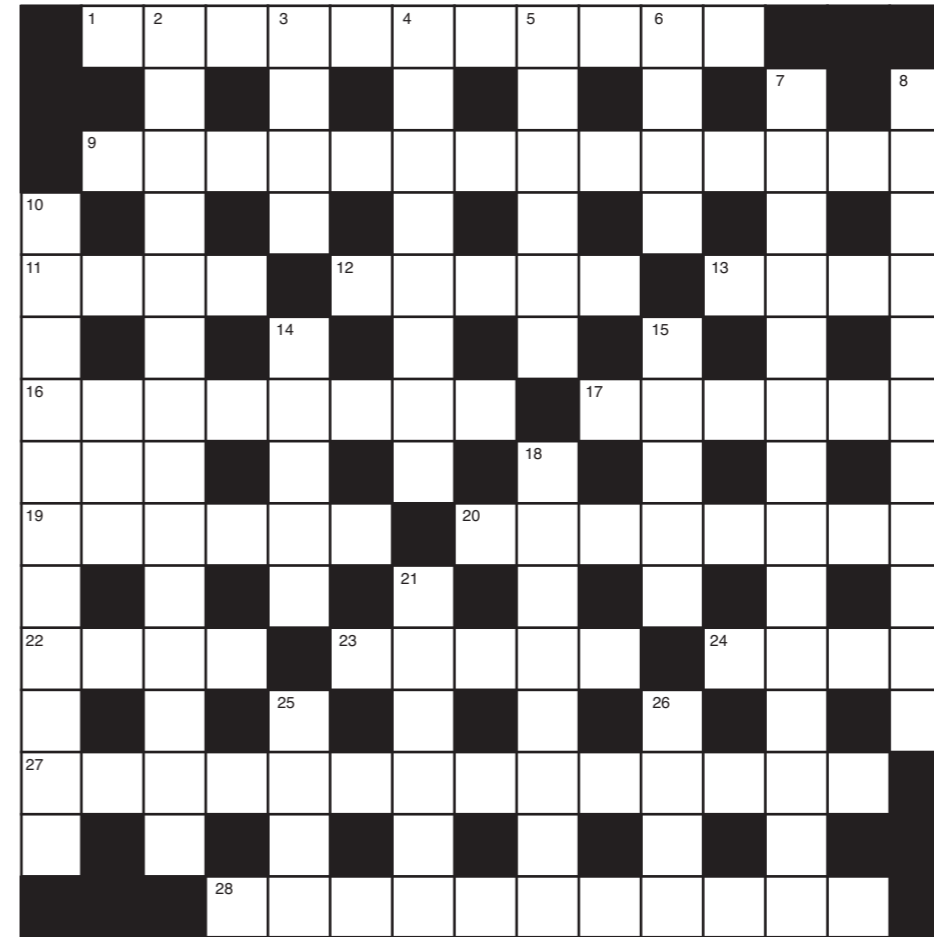
UPDATE:

The premiere of ‘Spitfire: The Feature Documentary’, due on Sunday 1 April, has been put back to early July. Look out for more information in branch news and other communications to get involved with hosting local premieres.



Easter 2018 crossword

by Enigma



Across

- 1 A boulder at this time of year! (6,5)
- 9 Tenure of diplomat of highest rank (14)
- 11 Sir ... Murray – tennis player (4)
- 12 A way into the chalcedony! (5)
- 13 Spoken test (4)
- 16 Helped fool with fussy diets (8)
- 17 Design of small pieces of coloured marble (6)
- 19 Stick a penny to this place (6)
- 20 Keep a rat instead of a parrot (8)
- 22 Consumes (4)
- 23 LII in a pack (5)
- 24 Either way he could be Turkish (4)
- 27 Science of relation of heat to other forms of energy (14)
- 28 To proceed unsteadily (11)

Down

- 2 Completely nutty! (2,3,2,1,6)
- 3 Side with mate, perhaps (4)
- 4 Engaged for a further period or gave up (8)
- 5 Bring to the latest version (6)
- 6 He is of a type (4)
- 7 Relating to art of preparing medicines (14)
- 8 Formal request for a post (11)
- 10 Motorised mobile home (11)
- 14 The taking of interest on a loan (5)
- 15 System for locating underwater objects (5)
- 18 Type of number or chief compass point (8)
- 21 A bicycle made for two (6)
- 25 Send out as time is up (4)
- 26 ‘So let it be’ (4)

Solution to this crossword can be found on page 63

anagrams • samarang • naga arms • anam rags • nama rags • aram sang • mara sang • masan gar • mana rags • aram sang • aram snag • samarang • naga arms • anam rags • nama rags • aram sang • mara sang • masan gar • mana rags • aram sang • aram snag • samarang • anagrams • samarang • naga arms • anam rags • nama rags • aram sang • mara sang • masan gar • mana rags • aram sang • aram snag • samarang

We record with sadness the passing of the following members of the RAF Association

Mr G Agius Malta GC
Mr E Aldred Christchurch
Mr K Ambridge Rushden
Mr J Andrews Shrewsbury
Mr F H T Angus Cheltenham
Ms M Ashby Huntingdon and District
Mr B H Attewell Uxbridge
Mr H Badcock South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr J Bailey South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr M E Bailey Banbridge
Mr C Baker-Duly Johannesburg
Mr K Banks Northern Area HQ
Mr J Barker Melbourne
Mr L M Barker Llandaff and Ely
Mr C M Barling Abbots/Kings Lang
Mr B Bastiani Gloucester
Mrs I Bayes Colchester
Mr D H Bell Nottingham
Mr P Berges Sud-Ouest
Mr P Berry Scarborough
Mr R Birch Woodbridge
Mr A W Birkett Lincoln
Mr D Blackmore Taunton Deane
Mr J J Blowers Sale
Mrs I L Bolan Llandaff and Ely
Mr R Bolton Rothbury
Mr C M Boon Spalding
Mr P M Bourne Horsham and Storrington
Mr A A Bovaird Thornton Cleveleys
Mrs A W Boyd Morecambe/Lancaster
Mr B Bradley Redcar and District

Group Captain J R Bradshaw Beccles and Southwold Area

Mr K Broadbridge West Bromwich
Mrs J M Brooks St Albans
Mr W Brown Orkney RMG
Mr D Brown Stockton/Thornaby
Mrs D Brown Cranwell
Mr J A Burchall Costa Blanca
Mr G E Burniston Hythe/Romney Marsh
Mr D W Carr Cheltenham
Mr G Cartaud Sud-Ouest
Mrs J A Carter Shoreham-By-Sea
Mr P Caudet Sud-Ouest
Mr D Champion Uxbridge
Mr L R Chapman South Shields
Mr H S Chappell Retford
Mr G B Claridge Wales, Midland and South West Area HQ

Mr D Clark Leuchars
Mr A D Clements City of Bristol
Mrs D Clifford Coventry
Mr T Codling Wisbech
Mr J S Colhoun Londonderry
Mr A Cook Witham and Rivenhall
Mrs E Cooper Birstall (Leics)
Mrs R G Copeman Horsham and Storrington
Mr T S Cottle Harrogate and District
Mr H Cowie Overseas Area HQ
Mr L H Cowley Bletchley (M K)
Mr J T Crome Sale

Squadron Leader P Crouch Christchurch
Mr C Cuthbertson Ayr and Prestwick
Group Captain J I S Digman OBE DFC Orpington

Mr L J Dinwiddy Teignmouth
Mr T Dobinson Penrith
Mrs M Driver Kettering
Mr W J Du Feu Jersey

Squadron Leader G D Duncan Uxbridge

Mr L J Dunn Eastbourne
Mr A J Dunsdon Norwich
Mr R Dutch Bodmin
Mr D Edwards Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders

Mr G V Eld Wales, Midland and SW Area HQ

Mr G Eley Brighton and Hove
Mrs S Ellis Batley and Birstall
Mr D Erskine Melbourne
Mr G Evans Llangollen

Mr A Fairclough Sheffield
Mr F Ferguson Carrickfergus
Mr P M Fisher North Costa Blanca
Mr R Fletcher Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders

Mr W Floate AE South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr J Fowler Sillith
Mr C Francis Stamford RMG
Mr A G Fuller Wales, Midland and SW Area HQ

Mr H Funnell Addlestone/Chertsey
Mrs G Gallimore Eastbourne
Mr G Garrett Colchester
Mr B Geddes Carrickfergus
Mr J A Gill South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr E Godden Basingstoke
Mr R H Grant Yeovil and District
Mrs A Green Leyland and District
Mr R C Grennell Frinton and Walton

Mr E Griffin Lincoln
Mrs J P Guthridge Seahaven
Mr J Hagan Ormskirk
Mr C Hall Coventry

Mr M Hall Headquarters Branch
Mr P Hall Lewes
Mr V Hall Apollo (Cyprus)
Mr F J Hamilton Coningsby and District

Mrs B Hanson Pontefract
Mrs K Harding Teignmouth
Mr F Harrison Headquarters Branch
Mr W G Hart Haverfordwest

Mr A Hartley Coventry
Flight Lieutenant A Hay Dunfermline and Stirling

Mr P Heavens Medway Towns
Mr J H Henbury Romford
Mr H Henderson Londonderry
Mr R Hernberg Antrim
Mr P K V Hicks Perth

Mr C Higgs Faversham

Mr J Hill South Australia
Mr A Hilton Windsor and Eton
Mr K Hockey Yeovil and District
Mr S G H Hoddinott Aldeburgh and District

Mr S Hollands Orpington
Mr D L Hollely Windsor and Eton
Mr P Hond-Stiff Worcester and District
Mr P Hopkins Basildon
Mr N Hulett Leicester

Mr N Hull Northampton and Dist
Mr G W Hunt Stamford RMG
Miss J O Hunt Cambridge
Mr S G Hunt Solihull

Mr C Hunter Irchester and District
Mr R Jeffries RAF (Ret'd) RAF St Mawgan

Mr J R Jephcote Uxbridge
Mr A John Hailsham
Mr N Johnson Headquarters Branch
Mr C Johnston MBE Wokingham/Woodley

Mr D Joiner Shoreham-By-Sea
Mr M Jones South Eastern and Eastern Area HQ

Mr S Jones Overseas Area HQ
Mr G Keeling Erewash
Mr J Kelly MBE Rep of Ireland
Mr E G J Kelly Porthcawl and Kenfig

Mr R Key Leamington/Warwick
Mrs D Kidman Christchurch
Mrs A Kilpatrick Rep of Ireland
Mrs K Kington Costa del Sol

Mrs E Kirby Woking
Mrs M Laing Inverurie
Mrs B Lees Bromsgrove/Redditch
Mr A Legge Rushden

Mr L Lemaire Ile-de-France
Group Captain R W Leppard OBE Ceng Wales, Midland and South West Area HQ

Mr M Lewis Dartford
Mr W Lloyd RAF (Ret'd) South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr V Lloyd Llanidloes
Mr D Lock Bognor Regis
Mr M F Lodge Bognor Regis
Mr R Logan Paisley and District

Air Chief Marshal Sir D Lowe GCB DFC Woking
Mr K Lucas Peterborough
Mr F Lund Sheffield

Mr G Maguire Morecambe/Lancaster
Mr D Mahoney Letchworth/Hitchin
Mrs M Manthorpe Ryedale
Mr F Marshall Haywards Heath

Mr D Martin Horsham and Storrington
Mr J H Martin Shetland
Mr A Martin Lisburn
Mrs M Mathieson Paisley and District

Mrs D Matkin Nottingham
Mr J Mayes Colchester
Mr K McCormick Gloucester
Mr T McGrath Stevenage
Mr W McGuire MBE Dereham and Swaffham

Mr C W McIntyre Causeway Coast
Mrs M McKinnon Abbots/Kings Lang
Mr J A McReddie Stockton/Thornaby
Mrs M E Meyer Worthing
Mr R Middleton South Australia
Mrs F Midgley Huddersfield
Mr J A Miller Armagh
Mr D Moody South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mrs M Moore Horsham and Storrington
Mr A Moore Northern Area HQ
Mr T Moore Costa Blanca
Mr A Morris Worthing

Squadron Leader J Morris Huntingdon and Dist
Mr F M G Moule Cambridge
Mr M Munt North Cotswolds

Mr D Murkin Huntingdon and Dist
Mr R Myin Ile-de-France
Mrs H M Nairn Norwich
Mr D Neal Eastbourne

Mr W J Nichols Frinton and Walton
Mr M S Owen RAF St Mawgan
Mr D Palmer Costa del Sol
Mrs M R Parsons Oxted and Limpsfield

Mr M G O Payne Leamington/Warwick
Mr K W Payne Burnham-On-Sea
Mr B E Pepper South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr B Pepper Biggin Hill
Group Captain D H Phillips OBE Doncaster

Mr A Picknell Harrow District
Major T P Pink TD Huyton with Roby and Liverpool

Mrs I S Powell Worthing
Mr G Powell Tywyn and Aberdovey
Mr L Pratt East London
Mrs D Prior Wisbech

Mr B Prout Market Drayton
Mr W Pryce Basingstoke
Mr J D Reeve Shoreham-By-Sea
Mr G D Reid Tywyn and Aberdovey

Squadron Leader B Reynolds RAF (Ret'd) Taunton Deane
Mr W Richardson Morecambe/Lancaster
Mr W H Robinson Bognor Regis
Mr G L Rogers South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr G W Roost Taunton Deane
Mrs D M Rotchell Cannock Chase
Mr C B Rowe Wales, Midland and South West Area HQ

Mr R Salmon Basildon
Mr K T Saxton South Fylde
Mr W Sayer Johannesburg
Mr C R Scaife CBE JP Batley and Birstall

Mr A Sheraton Bognor Regis
Mr F A Sheridan Southgate/Wd Green
Mr G Siggs Huntingdon and Dist
Group Captain A E Silvester MA FCMJ Huntingdon and Dist

Mr R J Simpson Wolverhampton/Dist
Mrs M Skoumal Colchester
Ms J S Slack Huyton with Roby and Liverpool

Mrs P M Smith Costa del Sol
Mr T A Smith Leicester
Mr R Smith South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr A Smith Grantham
Mr D R Smith Harrogate and Dist
Mr S Smith Hailsham
Mrs B Sneddon Clacton-On-Sea

Mr D Solin Gold Coast
Air Chief Marshal Sir P Squire GCB DFC AFC Torquay
DL DSc FRAeS Eastbourne

Mr R Spice Eastbourne
Mr R B Spratley Tywyn and Aberdovey
Mr C Spry 1066
Mr R S Stewart Fraserburgh

Mr E Still Romsey
Mr E Stocks Batley and Birstall
Mrs D Stoker Dover and District
Mr J I Swallow Isle of Wight

Mr C Swann Northampton and Dist
Mr J Tabor Dunceswell/Honiton RMG
Mr C Talbot Eastbourne
Mr R Taylor Hailsham

Mr G Terry Uxbridge
Mr R Thompson Guildford
Mr J P Thompson Shoreham-By-Sea
Mr P Thompson Stowmarket

Mr D Thompson Costa Blanca
Ms J Thompson Tamworth
Mr K J Thompson Rutland
Mrs J A M Thomson Grantham

Mr P D W Thurston Kidderminster

Squadron Leader G J Thwaites MBE MBIM Headquarters Branch
Mr M A Tidy South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr R J Timlett Ayr and Prestwick
Mrs N I Traynor Morecambe/Lancaster
Mrs B M Turner Aylesbury and Halton
Mrs D P Tuxworth Hull

Mr D F Usher Harrogate and District
Mr R Venable Romsey
Mrs P M Venable Weymouth/Portland
Mr G J Wakeley Cheltenham

Mr R Walker Cranwell
Mr P F Walsh Newbury and District RMG
Mr F Ward Stowmarket
Mr D Watts Kenley and Caterham

Mr K West Batley and Birstall
Mr A West Morpeth
Mr B West Horsham and Storrington
Mr D G Wheatley Morpeth

Mr I Whitmore Woodbridge
Mr A Whittaker Swansea
Mr S Whitworth Ryedale
Mr S Wilmshurst Kenley and Caterham

Mr K Wilson Braunstone
Mr P S Wood South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mr A Wood North Weald/Ongar
Mrs E M Woodhams Downham Market
Mrs D C Worcester Horsham and Storrington
Mr P R Wright South East and Eastern Area HQ

Mrs J K Wykes Biggin Hill

We specially remember those who had reached or passed their 100th birthday:
Mr W O Lloyd Basingstoke
Wing Commander J Tipton DFC South East and Eastern Area HQ

Please note: Air Mail cannot accept any obituary notifications direct. They must be notified to the member's branch or area office. Alternatively, call our contact team on 0800 018 2361.

The Royal Air Forces Association
 In friendship and in service one to another we are pledged to keep alive the memory of those of all nations who died in the Royal Air Force and in the Air Forces of the Commonwealth.
 In their name we give ourselves to this noble cause.

Proudly and thankfully
 We will remember them



Notices

Help

Seeking family of 'SQUADDIE' who lodged with my family Loudwater, Rickmansworth, Herts c1945. Such a positive influence on my life. If you can help call 01923 775091 or email alysonsylvester@gmail.com Bill (81)



Wanted: Photographic Interpreter to assist with interpretation of WWII aerial photographs of RAF Faygate. 077141 333 88 or robhunter@balpa.org

I am researching the history of RAF Stratford (Atherstone on Stour) and would love to hear from anyone who served there. Contact Hannah on 07983066817 or lightonecandle339@gmail.com

Seeking family or friends of Pilot IV David Alan Peak, RAF Chivenor, killed in Spitfire crash at Woolsery, Devon, 18 Jan 1949. Email cpomeroy@aol.com



My name is Stewart Kerr, a retired RAAF Ground Defence (your RAF Regt) Officer and I am researching my family history. The attached photograph is of my cousin Peter Kerr who served in the RAF during WWII. Our family came from Stranraer, Scotland and I hope someone may be able to provide information about Peter or his family. My address is 168 Manse Rd Mullumbimby NSW 2482 Australia or email mullumm@gmail.com

Old Colleagues

RAF Administrative Apprentice Association. Did you train as an apprentice supplier or clerk at either RAF Ruislip, St Athan, Bircham Newton, Halton or Hereford? Please contact www.rafadappasn.org for details of your association.

Welcome extended to anyone who served at **RAF Changi, including HQ FEAF between 1946 and 1971.** See www.rafchangi.co.uk for joining information or apply to Malcolm Flack, Membership Secretary 01494 728562 memsecchangi@telco4u.net for free enquiry pack.

6 Sqn (RAF) Association – serving and ex-member. We await your application to join if you have served on 6 or have a link with the squadron. Attend annual functions either at the squadron's home base or in London. An online magazine has all the latest squadron news and contributions from past members. Apply to 6sqnassociation@gmail.com or go to www.sixsqnassociation.org.uk

Seeking info Den Harris. Served CLK/Pay Accts RAF Leconfield 1946-48. Please contact Les Howard 01255 432575.

Seeking contact with anyone who served with my father, **William (Bill) McGibney**, a Wireless Operator during WWII, stationed in Castel Benito and other locations. Please contact Ken McGibney on ken.mcGibney@gmail.com

Walter Coleman ex-RAF REGIMENT 2830 Squadron 1940-1946 Service no 1350079 would like to make contact with any surviving members. W.Coleman, 12, Hele Gardens, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 3JU. Tel: 01752 339953

In 1957 John Yeo led a motley crew of trainee **Instrument Fitters in RAF Melksham** so could any of you contact lawriemarson@yahoo.com or call 01480 462479.

Reunions

RAF Administrative Apprentice Association. Our 21st AGM and reunion is to be held in Swindon 22-24 June 2018. For more information please visit our website: www.rafadappasn.org

313 Entry Admin RAF Hereford 1968. Interested in a reunion? Please contact David Johnson dcj440.313@btinternet.com

609 (West Riding) Squadron Association. Welcomes members and friends. Annual Reunion 16th June 2018 at Yorkshire Air Museum, York. For more information contact Hugh Mulligan 01388 607007 or mullihm@hotmail.com

103rd Entry RAF Halton Apprentices' Reunion. 23rd/24th June 2018 in Lincoln. Contact Ken Bannister on 01476 593120; 07704 403931; kbannister8546@outlook.com ; or through www.103rd-entry.org.uk

The Kirkham Ex Boys & Armourers Association are holding their next AGM and reunion in Bristol from 8th to 11 June 2018. The Association is open to all serving and ex RAF Armourers and for more details please contact des.stewart@ntlworld.com

RAF Photographers Association reunion 13th October 2018. National Service, Boy Entrant or Direct Entry, WAAF, WRAF or RAF, all welcome. Details www.rafpa.org.uk or from Gerry Linstead – secretary@rafpa.org.uk - 01366 380143

OTHER

WE'LL MEET AGAIN WW2 MUSEUM, Freiston Shore, Boston, Lincs. Open to the public 10.00 hrs. to 16.00 hrs Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Schools and groups Tuesday-Thursday booking essential. Charity No. 1176638. Tel. 07903529614

Classified advertising



The Blenheim Society

HELP US TO KEEP HER FLYING
Want to preserve living history? Want to help raise money to keep the only airworthy Bristol Blenheim in the world maintained and flying, as a fitting memorial to all the ground crews and those that flew and fought in Blenheims during World War Two, but especially the many that lost their lives doing so? Then why not join **THE BLENHEIM SOCIETY**, her support organisation, for a mere £15 annual subscription (£7 for juniors)? Members receive three journals a year and there are several activities organised throughout the year to enjoy as well.

For more information, please contact:
The Hon. Treasurer, 25 Herongate Road, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 0TU
Tel: 01992 442608
www.blenheimsociety.com
E-mail: r.j.scott@ntlworld.com

BOOK PUBLISHING

Authors invited to submit manuscripts, all categories including Poetry
New Authors welcome
A.H. STOCKWELL LTD,
Dept. 827 Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8BA.
Tel 01271 862557
www.ahstockwell.co.uk
Publishers For 100 Years

CHELTENHAM RAFA HQ & CLUB

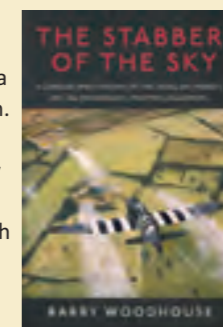
WELCOMES VISITING MEMBERS
Thursday-Sunday Lunchtimes
Thursday-Saturday Evenings
(Wings Coffee Bar Thurs/Fri 10am-12 noon)
1 ROYAL CRESCENT, CHELTENHAM
(Off Promenade to rear of Coach Station)
Branch Admin: Mrs Adlam 01242 516285
Branch Treasurers: Mrs Blake 01242 233225

WRITE YOUR LIFE STORY

Whether you are starting from scratch, or have already written something. Bound Biographies can work with you to produce a handsomely bound book for your family. Call Wendy on 01428 643591 or e-mail WendyBB@compuserve.com

The Stabber of the Sky

A war-time history of No. 266 Rhodesia Fighter Squadron. All known pilots and ground crew are listed with a biography of each where known. Much more information is



included, too much to list here. Many photographs. Signed soft-back copies are available from the author at £12.99 +postage. Contact Barry Woodhouse at biggles1941@virginmedia.com or 07789 221103. Also available from Amazon.

NOTICES

To place a notice, email your text to adverts@rafatrad.co.uk and we will get back to you with the cost and ways to pay. Or call 0800 018 2361 and ask for the Air Mail advertising manager. If you have no access to the internet, please write to Air Mail Advertising, Atlas House, Wembley Road, Leicester, LE3 1UT. Please enclose a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to RAFATRAD Ltd

HELP AND OLD COLLEAGUES Members:
maximum of 30 words £3.50

Non members:
maximum of 30 words £20.00

Extra words: 80p each word

REUNIONS All:
maximum of 30 words £10.00

Extra words: 80p each word

FLYING CLOTHING and KIT WANTED: Helmets, goggles, masks, boots, gloves, uniforms, parachutes, life jackets, rations, escape kit, log books etc. Anything considered. Contact: D Farnsworth, 192 Broadway, Derby. DE22 1BP Tel: 01332 345729 or email david.farnsworth@virgin.net

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING PRICING

Boxed

8cm £113
7cm £98.99
6cm £84.75
5cm £70.62
4cm £56.50
3cm £42.38

Linage

Private
£21.95 (max 25 words)
Extra words (each) £0.86

Trade

£25.82 (max 25 words)
Extra words (each) £1.03

Classified prices shown are per issue and include VAT

Call us on
0800 018 2361
(ask for Air Mail)
for more details.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH CLUB

Open Tuesday - Sunday
Telephone 01323 723551
Opening hours 11.00am - 3.00pm
and 7.00pm - 11.00pm - Free Wi Fi
E-mail dave@condor1.co.uk

Solution to the Easter crossword

Across:
1 Easter bunny, 9 Ambassadorship, 11 Andy, 12 Agate, 13 Oral, 16 Assisted, 17 Mosaic, 19 Adhere, 20 Parakeet, 22 Eats, 23 Cards, 24 Otto, 27 Thermodynamics, 28 Stumblingly
Down:
2 As mad as a hatter, 3 Team, 4 Resigned, 5 Update, 6 Norm, 7 Pharmaceutical, 8 Application, 10 Caravanette, 14 Usury, 15 Sonar, 18 Cardinal, 21 Tandem, 25 Emit, 26 Amen

Everything you want from a store, and a little bit more



Ian Hubber, left and Dan Greaves, right – the new RAFATRAD retail team. © Phil Greig

RAFATRAD's contact team can take merchandise orders over the phone if you don't have access to the internet. © Phil Greig

What do a bath duck, a lapel pin and an inflatable Red Arrow have in common? Punchlines on a postcard please.

Ok, that was a joke. But merchandise sales are a very serious consideration for the Association. And these items are much more than just Christmas stocking fillers or 'nice to have' birthday gifts that help raise our profile. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of the RAF Association's income now comes from merchandise sales and it's a vital part of the charity's funding.

Daniel Greaves is Retail and E-Commerce Manager at RAFATRAD Ltd, the trading arm of the Association. Since taking up his post in October 2017, he has got to grips with more than 700 stock lines in the warehouse at Atlas House. As well as managing the online shop he also supports the events team with stock and orders for airshows and fundraising events, and the Wings Appeal supplies for the whole organisation.



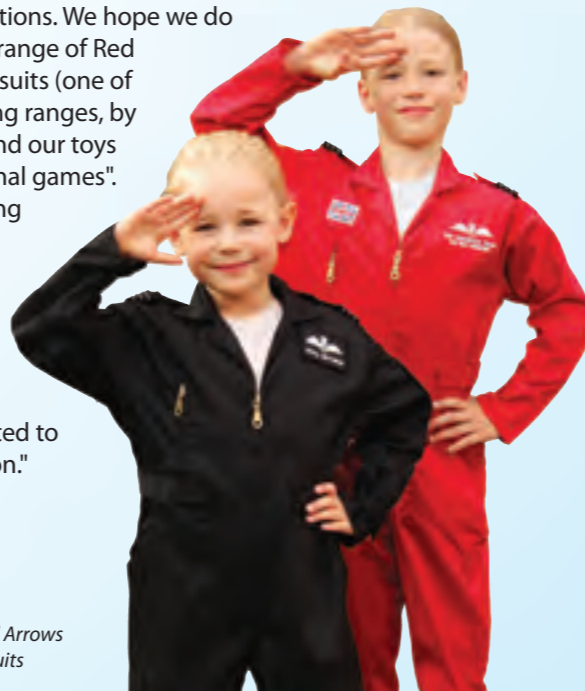
Best sellers: 2017 bath ducks



3D puzzle of a Lancaster

He says: "I came to RAFATRAD Ltd from LoveDIY Ltd where I oversaw 100,000 stock items and turned over £1.4 million a year. I'm looking forward to building on the great work of Colin and Louise Pullen, continuing to grow the business here, and helping raise money for the Association.

"The difference with RAFATRAD is that it's so much more than just an online shop. The tastes and interests of the Association's members and supporters are very important to us. We want people to be able to wear their lapel badges, or drink from their RAF100 mugs with pride. And the range we provide for children is also very important in inspiring future generations. We hope we do that with the range of Red Arrows flying suits (one of our best-selling ranges, by a long way) and our toys and educational games". The best-selling items in 2017 were pins, flying suits and ducks. Every penny of profit we make is donated to the Association."



Typhoon and Red Arrows children's flying suits

Dan works closely with the contact team, who take orders and payments over the phone. But the vast majority of sales are made online. And all products are carefully picked, packed, wrapped and shipped out by Ian Hubber, Customer Services and Warehouse Supervisor. Deliveries generally arrive within three days of your order being processed.

"A recent innovation was updating and upgrading the rafatrad.co.uk website". The new look website went live in February 2018 to better show off the great range of merchandise on offer. It also complies with the latest in data protection and online shopping security.

One of the main opportunities in 2018 is, of course, the RAF100 Appeal merchandise. The range to celebrate the RAF's centenary includes everything from commemorative key rings, cuff links and diaries to limited edition Emma Bridgewater mugs and collectible commemorative coins. They are all on sale at the Association's online shop.

And once RAF100 is over, there are the stalwarts to rely on ... ducks, clothing and gifts. And new ranges to develop. "We are always looking at expanding the stock to make it even more appealing to our members and our supporters," says Dan. "We want to provide something for everyone from kids to a 100 year-old, and from serving RAF personnel to their youngest children and their proudest civilian relatives. If anyone's got ideas, we would love to hear from them - email me at daniel.greaves@rafatrad.co.uk".

Look out for the merchandise adverts that will be appearing in future issues of Air Mail, or go online now and see what is on offer (bargain Christmas cards and a cracking range of memorabilia, clothing and toys. When we last looked!). And if you don't have access to a computer, call Lauren, Harpreet, Zahida and Ishwari in the contact team. They can talk you through the range as well as take your order.

Order at
www.rafatrad.co.uk
0800 018 2361



RAF roundel cufflinks



RAF cucumber band



75th anniversary Battle of Britain pilot keyring



Typhoon keyring



RAF100 merchandise

Fly in a Spitfire!

Book now at www.flyaspitfire.com



EXCLUSIVE
SPRING OFFER
**£100
OFF***
PROMO CODE
AM418

"The breathtaking flight was a truly awesome experience that will live with me for the rest of my life."

© Richard Paver 2015

*Book by 30th June 18

© Richard Paver 2015

Our Fly A Spitfire Experience at historic RAF Biggin Hill is an aviation adventure like no other.

Enjoy the flying adventure of a lifetime as you soar through the sky in a legendary Supermarine Spitfire, the most famous and charismatic fighter aircraft in the world.

You choose how you want to fly: straight and level or twisting and turning as the onboard camera catches the action. You may even have the opportunity to take the controls!

Finally, for you and your accompanying guests take a guided tour of the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar, home to a fleet of Spitfires and other visiting WW2 fighters.

*Depending on the package chosen, additional charges apply for extended flights.



"I want to express my warmest thanks to everyone at the aerodrome who made my Spitfire flight something I will always remember and cherish..."

... from first to last, everyone was wonderful, and the flight itself - well, it defies words, but you have never had a happier or more delighted passenger."

Keepsakes of the big day also include:

- A free digital video of your big adventure
- Photos taken next to the aircraft
- A souvenir flight patch
- A framed certificate featuring your spitfire and signed by your pilot



Flying experiences start from just £2,750

Book today, visit: www.flyaspitfire.com or telephone 01959 576 767

Quote Promo Code AM18

