

Basingstoke

Branch (406)

Newsletter November 2011



Recent Branch activities

Branch Summer Ball

Our annual Branch Summer Ball took place on Saturday 13th August at the Red Lion Hotel. As usual it was a wonderful occasion and was attended by 29 members from our Branch and 36 friends from other branches (Alresford, Camberley, Alton, Farnborough and Aldershot), Fleet, the RBL and the Bramley and Romans Flower Club. See the centre fold for a selection of pictures of the evening.

Watercress Line - Cream Teas

This event was organised by our friends at the Alresford Branch. On Thursday 15th September branch members congregated at Alresford

railway station to board the Watercress line steam train on a round trip to Alton. During the journey to Alton we were served a yummy cream tea. A rather nostalgic way to enjoy a cream tea while we were entertained by the very smart and imposing ticket inspector - see photos on the centre-fold.

Battle of Britain Memorial Service

The annual Battle of Britain memorial service was held on Sunday 18th September at St Gabriel's Church, Popley. The Rev Arthur Botham presided over the service. There was an excellent attendance with 21 ATC cadets and their new CO, Fg Off Ian Bruce. The Mayor of Basingstoke, Cllr David Leeks and the Mayoress also attended - picture below.



Recent events continued

RAF Squadronaires

Last year's performance of the RAF Squadronaires at the Worthies Club was so successful that they were invited to perform again on Friday 30th September. Once again every seat was taken and everyone enjoyed a fantastic evening of big band jazz. The event raised £900 which was shared equally between Alresford and Basingstoke Wings Appeal accounts.



The Squadronaires playing at the Worthies concert

During the evening a picture of a wartime scene showing a York taking off from Gibraltar was presented to the Worthies Club. This picture had been donated to RAFA by Air Commodore John Mitchell who navigated Winston Churchill around the world in the York.



The picture of the York



The Squadronaires and keyboard

Air Cdr Mitchell has written a book on his wartime experiences called, "Churchill's navigator", it was published last year by Grub Street.

Anvil Concert RAF Central Band Our annual visit to the Anvil to hear the RAF Central Band in Concert that is staged in support of the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust was on Thursday 17th November. The Anvil was sold out with over 50 RAFA members included. The band played to the usual very high standard that we have come to expect. The show has been refined over the years and is now a very professional event. This year many of the numbers played had their origins in works arranged or written by former RAF Directors of Music with themes to depict various RAF units or activities in this year's unsung heroes theme. Alan Dedicoat's script (he is the voice on the Lottery show) seemed to be a more overt commercial for the RAF.



Bill Lloyd

Also celebrating recent birthdays are:

- Maureen Shepherd on 6th Nov
- John Smith on 8th Nov

Obituaries

Sadly we have to report the death of Dawson Thompson. Pip paraded the Branch Standard at his funeral. Dawson was a Branch member who lived in Baughurst. He served in Burma and was a member of the Burma Star Association. He was a keen amateur radio enthusiast and used a morse key until he died aged 91 on 21st September. He was cremated at West Berks Crem, Thatcham on 11th October.

Anniversaries

Our best wishes go to quite a few members this month, but pride of place must go to Bill Lloyd who celebrated his 95th Birthday on August 13th. Many congratulations Bill and we look forward to many more.

Please note that we do not keep formal records of members' dates of birth and so we apologise if we have missed anyone. (Please let us know and we can catch up in the next edition.)

Have you heard this one?

We are familiar with the names of the Battle of Britain aircraft and they all do seem so appropriate. However, if it had not been for Annie Penrose, RAF pilots might have found themselves piloting Shrews instead of Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. Annie's father, Sir Robert McLean, was chairman of Vickers between the wars and worked closely with R J Mitchell who was designing a new single-seater fighter. Mitchell had

wanted to call the new plane the Shrew, but McLean insisted it was called the Spitfire, the nickname he had bestowed on his somewhat headstrong daughter. Can you imagine a Shrew taking on the Luftwaffe? Would we still enjoy watching BoB Flight Shrews doing air displays? Mitchell was a genius aircraft designer, but he was obviously not so good at names.

Future Events

St Gabriel's Carol Service - Our annual Carol Service by candle light will take place at St Gabriel's Church Popley on Thursday 8th December starting at 7.30 pm followed by seasonal refreshments. All are welcome.

Alresford Bangers and Mash - The Alresford Branch have once again extended an invitation to their Bangers and Mash evening at the Swan Hotel on Saturday 10th December starting at 7.30pm.

Branch Christmas Drinks Our Christmas drinks evening will take place at the Ex-Services Club on Wednesday 14th December starting at 7.30pm. All are welcome. Please bring a plate of food and raffle prizes will be welcome.

Branch Annual Dinner This will be held in the second week of January 2012 on Friday 13th at the Red Lion Hotel; 7.0pm for 7.30pm. If you were unable to attend the meeting on 5th December, but would like to attend, please call Pip who will send you a menu.

Future Visits

We have had a couple of disappointments with our visits programme for we have had to cancel visits to Bletchley Park (war time home of the code breakers) and the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. We simply have not been able to fill the coach seats. In future we will try to get a firmer idea of interest before we book a coach and we will consider smaller coaches.

Places on our list of potential visits next year include:

- Greenwich (Maritime Museum, Painted Hall and Royal Observatory)
- Thames Barrier
- Duxford (another try)
- Chineham incinerator

Beach Arms lunches

Don't forget we meet for lunch at the Beach Arms hotel on the third Monday of the month at 1200 hrs prompt (it fills up quickly). Please come along to the next one on Monday December 19th. Turkey will be on the menu, but then it always is!

Any one interested in details or in attending any of the above events should contact Pip Iles urgently on 01256 880559 or email Pip at pip.ilene@tiscali.co.uk

Apology

An apology to our President for misspelling his name in the last edition.

It should have been “Shepherd”. Sorry Bob.

A gross injustice has been put right at last.

Welfare

Members will wish to know that Win Bruce was taken ill during a recent cruise in the Mediterranean. He was initially taken to a hospital in Athens where he was quite poorly. However, he was medevac'd home and is now in Basingstoke hospital. His condition is more stable now, but he is still quite poorly - we understand only family members are permitted to visit him at the moment. Our best wishes to Win and to Joyce at this difficult time.

On a more general note, requests for welfare are welcomed - it is part of what we do. Every case is dealt with in total confidence and for further information on any aspect of welfare please contact Pip on 01256 880559. Also please note that information on RAFA Welfare homes is on their new website at:

www.rafa.org.uk/homesfromhome

Chinook Board of Enquiry (BoE)

In case anyone missed the recent announcement in the media on 13 July, Liam Fox, the Defence Secretary (at that time), has apologised to the families of the RAF pilots in the June 1994 Mull of Kintyre Chinook crash after an independent review cleared them of gross negligence. The families' 17-year battle to clear the names of Flight Lieutenants Richard Cook and Jonathan Tapper who were based at RAF Odiham finally paid off.

Branch Standard

Pip paraded our Branch Standard a number of times in the last 4 months:

- Bramley RBL 90th Anniversary Service at St James Church on Sunday 4th September.
- At the BoB memorial service at St Gabriel's Church, Popley on 18th September.
- Royal British Legion 90th anniversary ceremony at Guildford Cathedral on 9th October.
- As already mentioned, at the funeral of Dawson Thompson.
- Unveiling of a memorial on 19th October to the passengers of a chartered Eagle Aviation Viking aircraft that crashed after take off at Blackbushe airport in 1957. The memorial is at Blackbushe airport, the passengers were military personnel being flown to RAF Idris in Libya.
- Remembrance day 13 November, Basingstoke.
- Basingstoke crematorium for the funeral of Harry Reddy on 24th November. (Not a branch member but requested by his family).

Thank you Pip for your dedication and enthusiasm for this time consuming task. The Standards are the visible face of the RAF Association to people at large and so Pip's professionalism and high standards (forgive the pun) do credit to the Association and the Branch.



Watercress Line Cream Tea outing



Branch Membership summary

At the Branch meeting on 7th November, Maureen provided a breakdown of the current branch membership. Our membership currently comprises

146 members in total comprising:

- 74 full Annual members (who pay annually)
- 49 Life members
- 8 Full Associate members
- 15 Branch Associate members.

Vulcan Update

The Vulcan had a run of bad luck this summer starting on 16 August with a fuel tank leak. These are not unheard of, but the tank has to be completely drained of fuel and then ventilated with an air blower overnight so that a small fitter can then enter the tank (through a 14in by 14in opening) and release the securing buttons of the flexible fuel bag that lines the tank cavity. After that, the tank liner can be gently removed from the aircraft and dispatched to Fireproof Tanks of Portsmouth. Repairs were completed on Friday 26th August. However, after take off on Sunday 28th, en route to the Dunsfold Wings and Wheels display, the aircraft suffered a hydraulic problem that necessitated a precautionary landing at RAF Conningsby. Although the aircraft was repaired and ready to display on Sunday 4th September, the weather took a turn for the worse and XH 558 (with only a VFR clearance, i.e. clear of cloud) was grounded for the weekend.

The loss of 10 scheduled displays over 3 weekends due to 2 separate technical problems and then bad weather put an immediate and enormous strain on the Trust's cash flow, leaving it with a £100,000 hole that no-one expected. The Trust has had to bring forward its plans for the Winter and have announced how supporters can become directly involved in supporting XH558 through some new initiatives, e.g.

- Membership of the 'Component Life Register' for supporting the winter service (see more details on page 11)
- The opportunity to send Her Majesty The Queen a country-wide message of good wishes for her Diamond Jubilee through a unique 'Salute to Her Majesty' campaign.
- A 'Friends Scheme' that will honour past donors and give priority and privileged access to events and XH558 herself.
- Hangar Tours and Events, where visitors can meet members of the dedicated engineering team and get close to the aircraft.
- Special 'limited edition' merchandise and aircraft parts

XH 558 is always hungry - for money. All the transitional problems of turning a retired military bomber into a civil air display aircraft have been solved. However, the Vulcan was never built for economy and so the main task of the Trust now is thinking up new ways to get people to part with their money. That was never going to be an easy task, but in the current economic

climate it is extremely difficult. For further details of the project status and how you can help, go to their web site at:

<http://www.vulcantothesky.org/>

Duke of Cambridge letter

Last December, following a suggestion made at the December Branch meeting, Pip sent a letter of congratulations and good wishes to the Prince of Wales on the announcement of his engagement to Catherine Middleton. At the end of October, Pip received a letter bearing a Buckingham Palace post mark with a large "E II R". What could it be? A bit late for an invitation to the wedding.

The letter contained a post card with a wonderful picture of the married couple on one side and a short note of thanks on the other. It is reproduced on the right for members to share.

WINGS APPEAL RESULTS *Message from our Chairman*

The 2011 collections are now finished and I am delighted to report that this year's total is £7,355:28 I would like to thank most sincerely the following members who stood and collected and made this total possible: Jim Pearman; Neville Smale; Bob Shepherd; David Swan; Maureen Shepherd; Bob Fowle; Bob Ingram; Mick Blake; Chris Blake; Jean Case; Brian Wilson; Bill Hauxwell; John Thornton; Arthur Condon; Barbara Cope; Mike Pountney. Thanks also to the members who ran the stall in Festival Place and to the Cadets and Adult Staff from 443 (Basingstoke)

Details of the Royal Thank You Card



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were immensely touched that you should take the trouble to write as you did on the occasion of their Wedding and have been overwhelmed by the kind letters and cards that they have received.

It really was most thoughtful of you and Their Royal Highnesses wish to send you their warmest thanks and best wishes.

Squadron ATC. I would also like to thank those who helped in other ways by running projects, having Home Collection Boxes, and making general

donations. The Branch can be justly proud of this achievement.

Pip Iles.

Wings Appeal Organiser.

Newsletter Distribution. *Message*

from our President When Pip and I started to produce the Branch Newsletter again, we agreed that due to distribution costs we would only make the newsletter available to those living in close proximity to Basingstoke. With the progression to our excellent Newsletter Editor, Bryan, with his award winning copies, we agreed to make the circulation branch member wide, with all the postage costs involved, to places as far away as Canada and the USA. The last issue was sent by post to members living at UK addresses outside of the Basingstoke area and overseas with a letter from myself explaining that because of distribution costs the mailing was a once only shot and inviting the recipients to contact me with their e-mail addresses if they wished to receive future copies of the Newsletter. I am extremely disappointed to report that not one of those circulated have replied and so they will not be receiving future issues of our wonderful Newsletter.

Distribution of the Newsletter is a problem. I thank those members who take on the task of delivering copies to our members who do not attend our monthly meetings. I have personally been driving round parts of Basingstoke putting copies through letter boxes, but there are still some that we have to resort to the use of

Royal mail with subsequent costs. I made an appeal to our members earlier to assist with the distribution problem, could they please let me have their e-mail address so that I could e-mail their copy. To date I have 22 e-mail addresses on my distribution list, there must be many of you that have e-mail facilities to be able to receive your copy of the Newsletter electronically and so save on our distribution costs. Please let me have your e-mail addresses by contacting me on:

bobmoshepherd@btinternet.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Transport to meetings

Tom Finn has offered to transport people to and from meetings and social functions (including Beach Arms). A kind offer particularly for those that find getting to the Ex-Services club on Monday evenings or to the Beach Arms a problem. He can be contacted on:

01256 330945 or 07846 421369.

Thank you very much Tom.

Letter from the Chairman of the Central Council

A recent letter to members from Nigel Bairsto, Chairman of the Central Council, first referred to the 2010 Annual Review, "Making a Difference" which tells the stories of the Association's work. (This is available online at:

www.rafa.org.uk/annualreview

or through Branch Secretaries).

He then addressed how the Association intends to deliver on the 6 strategic objectives of the Association. These are:

1. **Membership** - we all need to work hard at recruiting (and Basingstoke Branch has met its target of 8 this year)
2. **Welfare** - adapting our services to meet the changing needs of the RAF family
3. **Fundraising** - increasing our Wings Appeal donations and developing new sources of income

4. **People** - investing in volunteers and staff to support our work
5. **Business performance** - ensuring that time and money given by our volunteers and donors is used efficiently
6. **Reputation** - making sure that we are recognised as a strong, effective charitable Association.

The letter ended by emphasising the importance of having people with the right skill sets on the Central Council Committee. A new way of electing members to this Committee must reflect a requirement to work

Vulcan component shares - status as at 18 Nov

The component share scheme sells shares for each of the major components needed for the Winter service. For example, in the table below they need to raise £50,000 for serviced Brake Parachutes and there are 1,000 shares @ £50 each. So far they have sold 242 shares, i.e. 24% of shares available.

Overall, the component budget is £195,000 and 1,620 shares have been sold 7,300 still available. So funding to date is £45,410, only 23% of what is needed. Fire Suppression, NDT Inspections and Oxygen Systems remain the components well behind all others. The Vulcan Trust say, "Can you support us and make the ideal Christmas present? All three of these share prices range from £20 to £25." Go to www.vulcantothesky.org

Component	Budget – £	Shares Issued	Sold	% Taken	Cost £	Remaining	Income
Brake Parachutes	£50,000	1,000	242	24%	£50	758	£12,100
Braking Systems	£10,000	500	202	40%	£20	298	£4,040
Ejection Seats	£15,000	500	226	45%	£30	274	£6,780
Fire Suppression	£50,000	2,000	294	15%	£25	1706	£7,350
Engine Swap	£15,000	300	108	36%	£50	192	£5,400
NDT Inspections	£20,000	1,000	148	15%	£20	852	£2,960
Oxygen Systems	£20,000	1,000	156	16%	£20	844	£3,120
Pneumatic Cylinders	£15,000	1,000	244	24%	£15	756	£3,660

professionally and effectively in what is a very crowded and competitive charitable environment. Details of the 2012 elections are now with Branch Secretaries and are on line at:

<http://www.rafa.org.uk/elections>

A report detailing the resolutions of the 2011 Annual Conference is at:

www.rafa.org.uk/annualconference

Who said, "The Good Old Days"?

Office regulations for a Burnley Cotton Mill in 1852

- * Godliness, cleanliness and punctuality are the necessities of good business.
- * This firm has reduced the hours of work and the clerical staff will now only have to be present between the hours of 7am and 6pm.
- * Daily prayers will be held each morning in the main office. The clerical staff will be present.
- * Clothing must be of a sober nature. The clerical staff will not dispose themselves in raiment of bright colours, nor will they wear hose, unless in good repair.
- * Overshoes and top-coats may not be worn in the office but neck scarves and head wear may be worn in inclement weather.
- * A stove is provided for the benefit of clerical staff. Coal and wood must be kept in the locker. It is recommended that each member of the clerical staff bring in four pounds of coal each day during cold weather.
- * No member of the clerical staff may leave the room without permission from Mr Rogers. The calls of nature are permitted and the clerical staff may use the garden below the second gate. The area must be kept in good order.

- * No talking is allowed during business hours.
- * The craving for tobacco, wines or spirits is a human weakness and as such is forbidden to all members of the clerical staff.
- * Now that the hours of business have been so drastically reduced, the partaking of food is only allowed between 11.30am and noon, but work will not, on any account, cease.
- * Members of the clerical staff will provide their own pens. A new sharpener is available on application to Mr Rogers.
- * Mr Rogers will nominate a senior clerk to be responsible for the cleanliness of the main office and the private office, and all boys and juniors will report to him 40 minutes before prayers, and will remain after closing hours for similar work. Brushes, brooms, scrubbers and soap are provided by the owners.
- * The new increased weekly wages are as hereunder detailed: Junior boys (up to eleven years) 1s 4d, Boys (to 14 years) 2s 1d, Juniors 4s 8d, Junior Clerks 8s 7d, Clerks 10s 9d, Senior Clerks (after 15 years) 21s.

The owners recognise the generosity of the new Labour Laws but will expect a great rise in output for these near-utopian conditions. (Thanks to Jean Case)

The next edition is planned for March 2012. Please let me have any contributions, ideas, adverts, good stories, photos by mid February.

Note that the January Branch Meeting is on **Monday 9th**.

Thanks. Bryan Jenkins (Editor)
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