



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

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The Best of the Best

**The Best Fighters in the RAF
Operate on the Ground**

**The Royal Air Force Regiment
Ground-based specialists,
protecting RAF assets from
enemy attack.**

**NEWSLETTER NO: 268
OCTOBER 2011**

LETTER

11

Dear Readers.

Goodies for our Injured Boys

It is most important that we remember the dangers that our young men and women serving on operations are all facing, so please remember the appeal your Branch Committee have set up. Please send any donations you may wish to make, to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee and he will pass them on to the right place.

We still need money for the injured lads and lassies so see what you can do. It may be that due to the article that I published in last month's newsletter, some of you might have got the wrong idea that we have stopped collecting money for our injured troops. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We have stopped collecting for the Military Ward Welfare Fund as it has plenty of money. We are still collecting money for the further support of our injured troops.

However, it will be no good if we forget all about them after they leave Selly Oak Hospital or Headley Court, for those badly injured may need support and or assistance for the rest of their lives. The Royal British Legion is the best option for this and this year our new Lord Mayor's "Home for the Brave Appeal" is the best one for us to support this year.

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

A very Happy Birthday to the following Birmingham Branch members whose birthdays are this month, may you all have many more.

2nd October **Philip Ranford** Walsall West Mids

6th October **Neal Barber** Stoke on Trent Staffs

9th October **Frank Roberts** Birmingham West M

10th October **Ernie Bucknall** Nuneaton Wwicks

11th October **James Setter** Barnstaple Devon

21st October **Ken Lobley** Todmorden Lancashire

23rd October **Ray Hill** Nuneaton Warwickshire

27th October **Barry Howe** Clacton on Sea Essex

28th October **John Dolphin** Birmingham West M

31st October **Jeremy Hedges** Broadway Worcs

Last Month's Battle of Britain Parade

In last August's newsletter, as a Late Item, I said that due to unforeseen circumstances and at

this late stage, that the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Anita Ward, had asked our Branch President Dave Gooding, if he would organise this year's Battle of Britain Parade. In turn, Dave asked me if our Branch would take on the responsibility. As in practice, this would mean that Dave and I would carry out most of the organising, on your behalf I of course said yes we would.

Birmingham City Council shoulders the cost of organising this event and we owe our thanks to them for this, but due to the extremely late stage and in a much greater part, due to reorganisation of Birmingham Council staff as a result of the financial cut-back, inexperienced staff members had been left in control of the event.

As a result of this situation it was not possible for us to get a grip of the event and in the end, I did not assist in organising this year's Battle of Britain Parade. However, now that this year's parade is behind us, we will be organising the parade for 2012 and in due course, I will be calling for volunteers to assist on the day but anyway, here are a few photographs of this year's Battle of Britain Parade in Birmingham.



Above picture, in the centre is the Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councillor Anita Ward with on her right at the rear, our Branch President Dave Gooding wearing his chain of office as the Royal British Legion, Birmingham County Chairman. In front of him is his wife Debbie in her uniform as the Birmingham County Women's Section Standard Bearer.



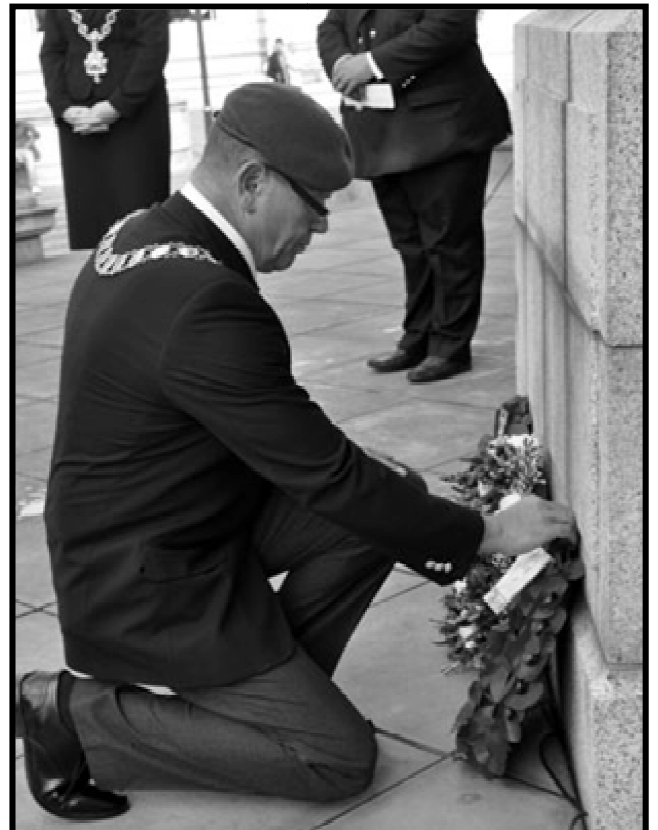
Above in the centre of the picture, is the Birmingham Branch Standard being lowered by our Standard Bearer Bob McGowran. Bob and his wife attended the parade and I understand that Bob did us proud as our Standard Bearer.



Above is a better picture of Bob but you can only see the back of his head.



Above is a better picture of Bob as you can see him this time although he has a fist covering part of his face. Flight Lieutenant Chris Wilson from Birmingham Recruitment Office and representing the Royal Air Force can be seen shaking hands with a veteran.



Above are the Lord Mayor Councillor Ward and the Birmingham County Chairman Dave Gooding laying wreaths. Dave's wreath was a RAF Regiment wreath and as Dave had to supply Flight Lieutenant Wilson with a wreath too that you can see him laying below, it was also a RAF Regiment wreath so as Dave told me, the RAF Regiment was well represented.



Those of you who know Birmingham City Centre will know that the ceremony takes place in front of the Royal Air Force Statue, sited at the Hall of Memory, as you may have noticed in the above photographs, and the Battle of Britain Remembrance Day wreaths are laid at the base of the statue. If you hadn't noticed or did not know, the above photograph shows the Royal Air Force Statue carved by William Toft.

Birmingham Hall of Memory



The Hall of Memory is in Centenary Square in the centre of Birmingham and features an octagonal hall with a domed roof. It is built of Portland stone on a Cornish granite plinth. Inside books of remembrance are contained within a glass case. There are also three relief panels showing war scenes "Call", "Front Line" and "Return". The relief panels are by William Bloye.

Birmingham's Hall of Memory was erected in the 1920s (before Baskerville House, in front of which it now stands) to commemorate the 12,320 Birmingham citizens who died in the "Great War", which we now know as the First World War (a further 35,000 Birmingham men came home from that war with a disability).

The Hall, made from Portland Stone, from Portland Bill near Weymouth, was opened by Prince Arthur of Connaught on July 4, 1925. It cost £60,000, which was raised by public subscription. Further memorials were added after the Second World War, and for subsequent campaigns, including Korea, Vietnam and the Falklands.

The Four Service Statues

William Toft carved the four statues around the exterior that represent the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Women's Services. Toft's figures, are allegorical figures representing:-

The Navy. The bare-chested sailor is crouching and holds a coil of rope in one hand and the wheel of a ship in the other.

The Army. A bare-chested soldier is also crouching and rests his right hand on the barrel of a machine gun. Under his left arm is a globe.

The Air Force. A bare-chested figure crouches and holds the blade and ailerons of an aircraft in his left hand.

The Women's Services. A woman crouches down whilst holding a wreath in her left hand with arm outstretched.



Above are the four statues. Top left The Women's Services, top right The Army, bottom left The Navy and bottom right The Air Force. These four statues are said to be Toft's finest works.

This Year's B'ham Poppy Appeal

As you know, each year we all show our support for The Royal British Legion's charity work through the Poppy Appeal. The emphasis this year is the need to help the Afghan generation of the Armed Forces and their families - today and for the rest of their lives. The target for 2010 is £36 million and people always give generously and we all wear our poppies with pride – when we can buy one that is.

There was another unfortunate result of Council staff reorganisation that affected the Poppy Day Collection in Birmingham - it is difficult to understand how this could have come about even with inexperienced staff for the Poppy Appeal is only a one-off event held on and around Remembrance Day every year.

But on the two most important days for the Poppy Appeal, Friday 11th and Saturday 12th November, Poppy Appeal collectors will not be allowed to collect in Birmingham City Centre. How on earth could this happen?

Each year the Legion applies to the Council licencing department for permits to carry out street collections for the poppy appeal. That means that Poppy Appeal Collectors can stand with their tins and trays in full view of the public for the licencing period that varies from ten to twelve days and historically, there has never been a problem.

But this year, due to staff cut-backs and the reshuffle of clerks and everything else, the Legion Street Collection Licence for the City Centre has been given to OXFAM. As only one collection is authorised for each day, this meant that the Poppy Day collectors will not be allowed to collect in the City Centre.

I have no problem with OXFAM for it is an excellent charity but OXFAM collect somewhere on every day of the year, and as I have said, the Poppy Appeal only takes place once a year. The Poppy Day Collection period should be sacrosanct for we are talking about support for those who have given up much to ensure that we can all live in safety. As I have said above, how on earth could this have happened?

My next article is about our Branch representation at the RAF Cosford Air Show and was sent to me in good time but I lost it in the system. I've since asked Roy Thomas who wrote it for me, to send it to me again and luckily, unlike me, he hadn't lost it in his system, so here it is at last but better late than never as they say.

Way back last summer

The day started out well as myself and a new member Gus Schrauwen travelled up the motorway in the early morning, and while the sun was not shining the sky was fairly clear and it was cool but not cold. We arrived at Cosford by 06.45 hours and it was already busy with pedestrian and cars queuing in readiness for the gates to open

later on. The staff and traders were busily turning the whole area into the Air Show grounds. The temporary one way system did confuse and surprise those living in the area or going home after nights shifts but we arrived at our pitch with no problems and unloaded our share of the kit.

Once Tom Magee arrived we pitched in to put up our display tent which was a clear sign to the Gods for it to start to rain and it did. It rained and rained and rained but in true Rock Ape fashion, we adapted our tent by hanging a plastic ground sheet as a sort of giant indoor gutter to repel and re-route the water that was finding various places to soak or drip through, but we did shy off drainage trench digging.

It was not all doom and gloom though as in true Brit fashion the visitors, and there were hundreds, made the day with determined looks of 'we have paid so we are going to enjoy it'. As was expected flying was very limited but it was not until the afternoon, apart from a helicopter ferrying passengers, so it was not until the Red Arrows team that we saw any real flying.

There was a valiant effort by a civilian display team to put on a show followed by a pair of military helicopters doing something like a square or ho down dance. Then the Red Arrows took control of the sky and I don't know how in the rain filled sky, they managed to complete an excellent display.

There was also a bombing run and fly by with either Typhoons or Euro Fighters, I am sorry I cannot be more specific as they all look the same to me but both the Battle of Britain Flight and Vulcan displays were obviously cancelled.

At our tent we signed in about 11 Rocks, ex and serving which made Tom happy as several visitors were ex 51 Squadron. We also had many visitors stop for a chat, to shelter or to ask for directions. One surprise but welcome face was Peter Swash our sort of retired President who had braved the elements to pop in to say 'hello'.

One bit of news was that the Regiment Flight based at Cosford may be getting new colours sometime later this year so watch future newsletters for an update.

Many thanks for your report Roy and I'll try to get it in on time next year.

One of our members sent me an e-mail giving me what seemed to be a very useful tip that he had found on the internet, about what to do if

you are ever mugged for your credit/debit card number but unfortunately, it just isn't true. Many untrue rumours get circulated on the internet but ever since I circulated an untrue story about a well-known coffee shop chain refusing to support veterans, I take such stories with a great deal of caution and will not circulate them until I have checked them out.

Just a rumour remember, it isn't true.

ATM PIN Number Reversal - Good to Know!!

If you should ever be forced by a robber to withdraw money from an ATM machine, you can notify the police by entering your PIN in reverse. For example, if your pin number is 1234, then you would put in 4321. The ATM system recognizes that your PIN number is backwards from the ATM card you placed in the machine.

The machine will still give you the money you requested, but unknown to the robber, the police will be immediately dispatched to the location. All ATM's carry this emergency sequencer by law.

This information was recently broadcast on Crime Stoppers however it is seldom used because people just don't know about it. Please pass this along to everyone. This is the kind of information people don't mind receiving, so pass it on to your family and friends.

It's a great idea that was developed in the US but for various reasons, the banks will not take it up. Unless you are absolutely confident of your source of information, then often the internet should be regarded with a degree of caution for as all gold prospectors know, "all that glitters is not gold".

EDITOR'S NOTE – Fool's Gold: The mineral iron pyrite, is an iron sulphide with the formula FeS₂. This mineral's metallic lustre and pale-to-normal, brass-yellow hue have earned it the nickname fool's gold because of its resemblance to gold and it has fooled many an amateur gold prospector who thought he had found a fortune.

This is a case of rumour getting slightly ahead of reality. Yes, the technology to make this a reality does exist and at least one lawmaker in the USA is championing the cause to have such a system put into action. Illinois attorney Joseph Zinger got the idea when he was in law school

and was using an ATM in a dangerous part of town. He patented his concept in 1998. Zingher proposed that every ATM account come with two PINs - the standard code to confirm ownership of the account and another, dubbed the SafetyPIN or PanicPIN, that would allow cash to be withdrawn, but also notify law enforcement that a crime was taking place at the location of the ATM.

The most likely source of this second PIN would be to reverse the first, however Zingher's plan allows for the card holder to specify any code as the SafetyPIN (which would get around the problem of PINs that are the same in reverse as they are forward).

The bank industry has been very resistant to Zingher's plan. They argue that the average consumer may not have the clarity of mind in such a situation to successfully enter their alternate PIN and that efforts to do so might be seen by the criminal as resistance, thus increasing the risk of violence. They also contend that law enforcement would likely not be able to respond fast enough to catch the thief.

But the real reason behind the industry's reluctance may be much more straightforward. Implementation of the system would likely be expensive and the relatively low incidence of ATM crime just doesn't justify the cost. Many industry experts hint that they have their own solution in the works, but offer no details.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

Maybe I'm Just a Philistine

I have often said that every time you visit the NMA there is something new to look at and it doesn't matter how often you make a visit, you will always see something new. Now there is another wonderful sculpture to look forward to going to be installed at the NMA.

Maybe I'm just a Philistine for I don't have much time for modern or contemporary art as I cannot see anything appealing in some works of art that to me, just seems to be anything that a child could do.

Subjects such as Tracy Emins' "Unmade Beds" or Carl Andre's sculpture, "Equivalent VIII" which is just an arrangement of 120 fire bricks laid down flat in a rectangle, just leave me cold, or maybe in fits of laughter at the sheer idiocy of some of the arty remarks made about such subjects - but as I have said, maybe I'm just a Philistine. I like real sculpture with figures you

can recognise instantly and the NMA has several beautiful sculptures with more being added every year. Another one is being planned for positioning in the NMA next year and in the following article you will see why I am really looking forward to seeing it.

First glimpse of DLI Memorial Statue

Veterans campaigning for a memorial to a military regiment have seen a miniature version of the statue. They hope a larger-than-life-sized bronze statue of a Durham Light Infantry bugler will be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum, in Staffordshire, next year, followed by a replica in Durham City.

After an appeal backed by The Northern Echo, they are now only £3,000 short of their £75,000 fundraising target to pay for the Staffordshire statue. Making a smaller statue for a yet-to-be-decided location in Durham could cost a further £9,000.

A miniature of the statue was presented to a meeting at the DLI Museum, in Durham City, on Saturday and approved, meaning sculptor Alan Beattie Herriot can begin work on the real thing. Appeal co-ordinator Colonel Arthur Charlton said:

"Everybody was perfectly happy with the statue. Hopefully, things will start moving now. We are all systems go."

The statue is based on a photograph of Cadet Colour- Sergeant Brandon Mulvey. The 18-year-old, from Chester-le- Street, who is the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for County Durham, posed in original Korean War uniform for the statue. Col Charlton said Brandon was delighted at the prospect of being immortalised in bronze.

The appeal was launched after two former DLI soldiers, Keith Straughier and Richard Softley, discovered their regiment was not honoured at the arboretum. Col Charlton said:

"People have responded very well to the appeal. We did not know how it was going to go. We thought it was going to be a real uphill struggle. Now we just need a push to get over the finishing line."

The sculpture will be cast at a foundry in Edinburgh by the end of the year and be ready for unveiling by April. Donations for the appeal, made payable to the Regimental and Chattels Charity of the former DLI, should be sent to DLI Memorial Appeal, The Rifles Office, Elvet Waterside Durham, DH1 3BW.

Another Project – Perhaps?

This is a project that I have often thought about - a statue of a RAF Regiment Gunner in the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden - but it would take much more effort to raise the money for it than we had to put in to organise the Memorial and Garden in the first place.

To finance the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden, the appeal fund first started by the Birmingham Branch Fund and then by a RAF Regiment Fund, raised £11,273.00 between us - out of which, the Birmingham Branch Fund raised £5,426.00 or 62% of the total and the RAF Regiment Fund raised £4,631 or 38% of the total.

Later, another £850.00 was raised between us to fund various improvements. That's a total of £12.123 and that is a very long way away from the £75,000 cost of the DLI statue. But just think about it – how marvellous it would be to have a statue of a RAF Regiment Gunner in the Garden.

The Birmingham Branch started fundraising for the NMA plot on 28th July 1998 when the Birmingham Branch Memorial Garden Appeal Fund was kick-started by a £100.00 donation from Birmingham Branch member Chris Baxter and it took us a further three years to raise the total amount.

It would take very much longer to raise something like £75,000 – at the rate we had raised the original amount it would be something like eighteen to twenty years but if I am to likely to see it come to fruition, it will have to be much shorter than that, so the fundraising would have to be much more effective.

Could we do it do you think? Sadly, I don't think we could, for although we have done it once, we are all now much older and I believe it would take someone a bit younger to take on such a much bigger challenge. We all know that nothing is impossible for the "Rocks" so maybe someone will take it on.

Royal guest at the Roadshow

Early last month the Duke of York paid a special visit to a national memorial site to war heroes as a special edition of a popular television programme was being filmed. Prince Andrew was at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas to unveil a new memorial for the Yorkshire Regiment, of which he is the Colonel-in- Chief.

After dedicating the memorial, which is called 'Keeper of the Souls' and was made out of

Yorkshire stone, he also visited several other monuments at the site. Spokesman for the arboretum Andrew Baud said: "Prince Andrew was in attendance at the National Memorial Arboretum to dedicate a new memorial to the Yorkshire Regiment.

He then visited other memorials on site before giving a short interview to Fiona Bruce for a special edition of BBC1's Antiques Roadshow."

The Keeper Of The Souls is a replica of an interpretation piece which appears on the East Front of York Minster. It was presented to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire by the Duke.

The original idea for the statue, which is made from Yorkshire limestone, came from the Duke himself. During a visit to the York Minster stoneyard in February, 2009, he suggested the carvers could include a tribute to the soldiers of the Regiment. The Duke said: "

I'm very pleased to see this monument to the soldiers of the Yorkshire Regiment come to fruition. I know it's a statue of tremendous significance to the Regiment, a fitting memorial to those it has lost and who are always remembered, and I hope it will become a place of quiet reflection for the soldiers of the Yorkshire Regiment and their families and friends in the years to come."

A special dedication service was led by the Rev Canon David Wilkes, and attended by 150 members of the Yorkshire Regiment, of which the Duke of York is Colonel in Chief.

The design is based on the 14 angels around York Minster's Great East Windows depiction of God in heaven, with an angel holding a shield to protect the insignia and souls of Regiment, and a column to represent the columns of the Minster.

BBC1's Antiques Roadshow which is due to air on Remembrance Sunday will feature presenter Bruce along with a small team of antiques experts. Visitors were invited to go along to the attraction to watch the show being filmed, but all participants in the filming had been selected in advance following an appeal at the end of a programme last year.

The show's resident arms and militaria specialists, Graham Lay and Bill Harriman, were joined by Hilary Kay and Paul Atterbury, both of whom have extensive knowledge of objects with an interesting social history.

Filming took place at several different memorials around the site, revealing the stories behind them and illustrating the wide diversity of the organisations and individuals represented within the 150 acres of wooded parkland. Curator Paul Kennedy said: “We feel incredibly honoured to host this special Remembrance Sunday episode of the Antiques Roadshow.”

Prince Andrew is not the only member of the royal family to have visited the site. Her Majesty the Queen recently attended to participate in a ceremony which saw the names of 112 fallen soldiers killed in action during 2010 added to the site’s centrepiece, the Armed Forces Memorial.

Prince William also visited the site in 2009 to launch an £8 million appeal to fund the creation of the memorial and to accept an invitation to become its patron.

RNLI Memorial Garden

On Thursday 8th September, the official re-opening of the RNLI Memorial Garden by TV Gardener Chris Beardshaw and RNLI Chief Executive Paul Bossier took place.

A garden dedicated to all the volunteers of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), who have made sacrifices while helping to save lives at sea, has undergone a redevelopment with the help of award winning garden designer and TV presenter, Chris Beardshaw.

The new design by RNLI supporter Chris Beardshaw serves to take visitors to the garden on a ‘rescue journey’ showing the relationship between the crew, the rescued person and their families – all of whose lives become woven together during a rescue mission.

The centre of the garden represents the harbour – seclusion, and safety,’ explains Chris. ‘And then, beyond that is a circular path that takes you on the journey that a rescuer would take – out into a more turbulent seas, and back into the harbour with those rescued.’

RNLI volunteers raised the funds required to create the plot at the Arboretum 10 years ago, establishing a garden which had a sculpture of a lifeboatman as its centrepiece. The sculpture, created by Andrew Fitchett, retains pride of place in the garden and was carefully integrated into the new design. Chris says of his involvement:

‘To me this is a project that I couldn’t say “no” to. I sail and dive and I’ve seen what the RNLI does first hand so I’m a great supporter of the charity. With this site – among so many other

memorial gardens – the design needed to be strong and provide its own presence. The design aims to remind the visitor that there are individuals prepared to put themselves at risk and sacrifice their time, effort and ultimately their lives, to save those in trouble at sea.’

Pastel blues and pinks dominate those areas representing the safety of land with subtle changes in the planting to tonally more turbulent colours of reds and yellows indicating the passage into more energised waters and the intensity of the rescue. Representing the RNLI volunteers who established the garden, Philip Theaker, comments:

‘It’s important for the RNLI to have a site here and it’s been a pleasure to see the garden develop over the years. The new design makes the garden incredibly user friendly enabling visitors to learn about the charity’s lifesaving work and to pay their respects to RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews, including those who have lost their lives while helping others.’

Pear tree symbolises rejuvenation and hope

Like so many of those killed in the September 11th attacks, the Callery pear tree is not American but the white flowering Asian tree became a symbol of hope after the devastating terrorist attacks and on 11th September, US ambassador Jeffrey Bleich planted a Callery pear tree in the National Arboretum as a memorial to the people who were killed in the attacks.

A burnt, severely damaged Callery was found in the rubble of Ground Zero in New York City several days after the terrorist attacks. It was cared for at a nursery in the Bronx for nine years before being replanted in 9/11 Memorial Plaza last year. Mr Bleich compared the creation of the arboretum after the 2003 Canberra firestorm to the rejuvenation of American society after September 11th. He said;

‘We’ve become stronger and we’ve become better from the experience. ‘Just as here, after the people experienced the terrible fire, people have come together and planted trees - there will be a new forest here. A better, stronger, forest. We do the same. The people who perpetrated the attacks on September 11th thought that we would turn inward, they would drive us inwards and we would lose our faith and confidence.

“But it has brought us into the world to engage with the world, to break down religious differences to allow people to determine their own

political leadership and to promote liberty. So today rather, than turn inwards, we serve."

Callery pear trees are common in China, Japan and Vietnam. They are widely used around town squares in the US because of their attractive flowers.

New Lions Shelter Dedicated

On Wednesday 14th September, Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex dedicated the new Lions Shelter at the National Memorial Arboretum.

So that visitors to the National Memorial Arboretum can take a rest or shelter from the weather, Lions Clubs International in the British Isles and Ireland has risen to the challenge of creating a purpose-built new shelter at the site.

HRH The Countess of Wessex, as the patron of Lions Clubs International in the British Isles and Ireland, officially opened the shelter on Wednesday 14 September at midday. Following months of fundraising to pay for the building, Lions from across the four countries gathered for this special event.

The new building will have a screen where the names of members of the Lions family, who have passed to higher service during the last 12 months, will be placed. This will be renewed each year.

Lions Club International is also very proud of its work with young people in developing the ethos of peace around the world and, as such, they will be putting the winning picture from the annual Peace Poster and Poetry Competitions on a screen for people to read as they sit and reflect.

Chair of Council, Tony Gadsby, commented: "This is a wonderful occasion and particularly because our Patron was able to open the building. It shows the spirit of Lionism to Serve the community by providing them with a building so that they can shelter from the elements and take time to remember their relatives and friends who have died in whatever circumstances.

"The Lions from across the British Isles and Ireland have pulled together to raise over £30,000 to achieve this goal and I am sure that the visitors to the Arboretum will appreciate all the hard work it has taken to raise this money for such a worthwhile cause."

Charlie Bagot Jewitt, the Arboretum's chief executive, said: "We're very grateful to the Lions for their months of fundraising and their members' generosity. This shelter is a very

welcome new facility and it will be much appreciated by the many visitors who explore our expansive site."

Tony Gadsby, Lions Club council chairman, told visitors: "When I look back a few months to the cutting of the first turf and recall the strong winds which blew across the site on that day, it was clear there was a need for a shelter on this spot.

"Its location, on the edge of the new section of the arboretum soon to be developed, ensures it will serve its purpose well, providing protection for visitors for many years to come."

The idea for the shelter was sparked after Henry Woodgate, a Lions member from Kenilworth, Warwickshire, visited the arboretum with his wife, Barbara, and noticed the organisation was not represented there. He said:

"We wanted something that would not only publicise the Lions but would provide a shelter for the public. It's a really good design and I feel very proud to be here today."

Arboretum chief executive Charlie Bagot-Jewitt said: "It's very important that visitors are provided for as the weather can be quite inclement here. It's a useful space which can be used for educational purposes, and the swallows like it too so it's not just for humans."

Annual Ride to the Wall

On Saturday 1st October thousands of motorcyclists from around the country travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum for the fourth annual Ride to the Wall (RTTW) motorcycle event. RTTW, which recently attained charity status, gives motorcyclists the opportunity to show their support for the Armed Forces and is the UK's largest gathering of its type with a dedicated Service of Remembrance.

Individuals, groups and chapters from particular organisations, such as regional Harley Owners Groups, The Royal British Legion Riders Branch and a large number of other owners groups and motorcycle clubs are among those taking part.

The event raises considerable funds for the National Memorial Arboretum, part of The Royal British Legion family of charities, which provides a permanent home to the striking Armed Forces Memorial. The walls of the Memorial, at which the motorcyclists gathered for the Service of Remembrance at the end of their ride, are engraved with the names of more than 16,000

service men and women killed on duty or by terrorist action since the end of the Second World War. RTTW founder Martin Dickinson continues to be astounded by the level of support the event receives from the motorcycling community and he said;

"Participation levels have increased significantly since the first RTTW in 2008, with more than 5,000 riders registering for last year's event which raised a total of £50,000. Motorcyclists attend RTTW from all corners of the UK and from continental Europe, and this year for the first time there were seven different starting points at which they could assemble for the ride."

It is estimated that up to 15,000 people were present for the service which was conducted from the steps of the Armed Forces Memorial. Organisers say that over £100,000 will have been raised for the Arboretum, which is part of The Royal British Legion family of charities, and attracts around 300,000 visitors a year.

Joining the ride for the first time was Lance Bombardier Ben Parkinson. Despite being severely injured in a landmine incident in Afghanistan in 2006, Ben rode on the back of a Harley Davidson belonging to a member of the St Leger Chapter, Doncaster.

RTTW patron, Major General Lamont Kirkland CBE, Commander 4th Division, said: "This has become a truly national event and I'd like to thank the public who gathered on bridges and outside of their houses to support us. We must never forget those that can no longer ride by our side."

This year for the first time the motorcyclists departed from seven different locations for the ride to the Arboretum. Several of the routes passed through the M6 Toll, who generously agreed to waive the charge for all RTTW motorcyclists.

The RADC Memorial Stone

The Royal Army Dental Corps (RADC) has relocated its memorial stone to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, where it was rededicated on Wednesday 21st September 2011.

The memorial was transferred to the Arboretum from Aldershot - previously home to the Army Dental Corps School of Instruction. An additional inscription has been added to its base

plinth which reads: 'Dedicated to those who have served or are serving in the ADC and RADC.'

The rededication service was attended by RADC Colonel in Chief, HRH the Duchess of Gloucester. The roll of honour for the Corps' 82 fallen comrades was read out during the service and later, the Duchess was introduced to various RADC personnel, including 99 year old ex-Corps member, John Church MBE.

John Church MBE joined the Army Dental Corps in 1932 and he served for 25 years. He received his MBE in the 1945 New Year's Honours list, when he was Chief Clerk for Dental Branch Central Command. He was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One in 1951, six years before his retirement from the Army.

The Army Dental Corps (ADC) was formed in 1921 and, at its peak wartime strength, had 3,653 members, all of whom had passed through the Army Dental Corps School of Instruction in Aldershot.

During World War Two, the availability of dental treatment contributed significantly to the health, efficiency and morale of the Army in action and in 1946, the value of the Corps was acknowledged when King George VI approved the change of title to the Royal Army Dental Corps.

In recent years RADC dental teams have seen action in the Falklands, the Gulf Wars and in Afghanistan. They have been deployed extensively to help local communities, providing much needed medical relief to those ravaged by war or natural disasters. Major John Sharp (Rtd), Regimental Secretary of the RADC, spoke of the significance of the rededication service, he said:

"This event celebrates the move and rededication of our Corps' Memorial to the UK's year-round site of Remembrance. We expect that in its new location, the memorial will become a focal point for veterans, families and friends. We will maintain a Corps presence in Aldershot, within The Royal Garrison Church of All Saints, where the Corps Standard and Book of Remembrance are to remain."

Support for Battle of Britain Monument

Lord Shuttleworth, the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, has given his support for the Battle of Britain Historical Society's bid for a new monument at the National Memorial Arboretum. According to Mark Andrew from the society, the new monument is scheduled to be unveiled on

15th September 2012 and would provide a "fitting memorial to the Few".

Lord Shuttleworth said: "This monument will help people to understand the continuing debt we owe to those few who fought in the Battle of Britain and the pivotal role it played in the outcome of the war."

Future Events at the NMA

Sat 1st October 2011 to Mon 31st October 2011

In October the UK Armed Services will have been active in Afghanistan for 10 years, to mark this occasion a photographic exhibition supported by The Royal British Legion will be held in the Long Gallery in the visitor Centre.

A photojournalist's journey back to the frontline - a photographic record of three weeks in Afghanistan by Sean Power, an ex-Royal Marine, who spent three weeks embedded with one of the forward line fighting regiments in Afghanistan

This exhibition is an honest portrayal of the front line in Afghanistan, from the perspective of someone who understands and has experienced modern warfare. Sean Power served in 40 Commando Royal Marines between 2002 and 2007, completed operational tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, and left as a Corporal. His empathy and sincerity is clearly discernible in these special photographs.

Time from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the last admissions at 4.30 p.m. There will be no fixed charge but donations will be appreciated.

Sunday 9th October 2011

On Sunday 9th October from 11.00 a.m. onwards, the National Service (RAF) Association will hold short wreath laying ceremonies and a parade. The parade will be led by the RAF Halton Pipe Band. Venue: onsite at the National Service obelisk, Armed Forces and RAF Association memorials. For further information contact Neil Trotter, Ceremonial Committee Member and Parade Marshal, on 01472 233919 or <costa.rei@ntlworld.com> or on the website: www.nsrafa.org.

Friday 14th October 2011

On Friday 14th October at 1.30 p. m. in the Millennium Chapel the RAF Air Loadmaster Association will hold a service of Remembrance to dedicate their new memorial. For further information contact Derek Smith (Deputy Chairman) on 01538 306 243 or at <derekandrosemary@live.co.uk>.

Friday 11th November 2011

The annual Armistice Day Service of Remembrance will be held on the Armed Forces Memorial on Friday 11th November. Venue: Armed Forces Memorial. Time: at 10.30am for the start of service at 10.45 a. m. Due to expected visitor numbers we suggest visitors allow ample journey time.

A limited number of tickets will be allocated for this special outdoor service on a first-come-first-served basis.

Applications should only be made to the Arboretum using the form (limit of four per application) which is available to download on the NMA website. Successful ticket holders should then receive confirmation and instructions no later than Monday 31st October. Once issued, the tickets are not transferable.

The Armed Forces Memorial will be closed to the general public until 12.30 p. m. A screen beside the Visitor Centre will relay the proceedings for non-ticket holders who are very welcome to attend. Seating will not be provided in this area.

Standard bearers wishing to take part should contact Lynne Barkas on 01283 792 333 for details of how to register.

Car park: A free park and ride shuttle will operate via the Catton Hall estate which is approximately 2 miles from the Arboretum. All visitors on the day should allow sufficient time to park and transfer to site ready for the start of the service. There will be no parking on the roadsides surrounding the Arboretum as this will be enforced by Staffordshire Police.

For more information call 01283 792 333 or email <info@thenma.org.uk>.

Please note: All arrangements are subject to change.

Sunday 13th November 2011

Remembrance Sunday is commemorated each year at the National Memorial Arboretum. In 2011 it falls on Sunday 13th November, after Armistice Day. Join us for our special outdoor commemorative service beside the Visitor Centre (no seating will be provided).

Time: At present arrangements are provisional, however the service is expected to commence around 10.45am. The parade will form up to start from the Millennium Shelter at 12pm – standards welcome. Cost: The event is open to all – no booking required, however donations are welcomed.

Car parking arrangements are yet to be confirmed. Due to expected visitor numbers we suggest visitors allow ample journey time. For additional information please contact 01283 792 333, or email <info@thenma.org.uk>. Please note: All arrangements at present at provisional and subject to change.

Sunday 13th November 2011

On Sunday 13th November at 12.00 noon onsite at the Allied Special Forces Grove, the Allied Special Forces Association will hold a service of Remembrance and open the newly constructed sun room. For further information contact Mike Colton (Secretary) on 07929 118598 or at <mikecolton@hotmail.com>.

Saturday 10th December 2011

On Saturday 10th December at 11.30 a. m. in the Millennium Chapel and later onsite, a memorial service and dedication of memorial stone will be held for HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse.

The service commemorates the 70th anniversary of the loss of the ships. Standards are welcome to attend. For further information contact Mrs Helen Rickard (Secretary) on 0208 657 3915 or <hrickard1000@aol.com> or see the website <www.forcez-survivors.org.uk>.

Visiting the NMA

For those of you that have never had the opportunity of visiting the NMA it is well worth it for as you will have seen from the above, there is something new being added all the time. It's situated in the centre of England on Croxall Road, Alrewas in Staffordshire and is easy to reach from any part of the country being close to all the Midlands motorways. It is open day except Christmas Day between 9am and 5pm but during the winter months the Arboretum grounds close at dusk. The visitor centre remains open until 5pm. During the summer months last admission to the Arboretum is 4.30pm (unless otherwise stated).

You are welcome to visit the Arboretum free of charge but donations are appreciated to help with the maintenance and upkeep of the site. visitors arriving independently by car should be aware that a maximum parking charge of £3.00 per day applies (pay and display) with lower prices applying for half a day and during winter months. There is no charge for coaches or motorcycles.

Please note: all monies from parking fees are given directly to the charity and help to ensure the Arboretum remains a free entry site.

The National Memorial Arboretum Guidebook is available from the Visitor Centre for £5.95. As well as helping to explain the many memorials across the site, it makes a wonderful memento of your visit. A new edition (Edition 4, August 2011) is now available. You can order your copy or reserve it for collection on your day of visit by calling our shop on 01283 792 333 or email shop@thenma.org.uk. A detailed map of the site is also available from the Visitor Centre for just £3.00, to help you find your way around the 150 acres and over 200 memorials.

Accessibility - there is level access to the Visitor Centre where disabled toilet facilities are available. There are also firm level paths giving good access to much of the site.

Mobility - for less mobile visitors, wheelchairs and electric scooters are available on loan from the visitor centre. To ensure availability they should be booked in advance. The NMA respectfully ask that a suitable donation is made for use of a manual wheelchair and there is a charge of £5.00 for a motorised scooter. Working assistance dogs accompanying their handlers are welcome at this site.

Chief Coroner – The RBL New Social Media Campaign: 'Leave it out Ken'

The Royal British Legion are asking for your urgent help with an important new social media campaign that they have just launched and which aims to ensure that bereaved Armed Forces families get the support they deserve.

Parliament, the public, and bereaved Armed Forces families all agree that the Chief Coroner is a vital post that will drastically improve the experience of bereaved Armed Forces families going through the military inquest process.

However, if Ken Clarke, the Secretary of State responsible, includes the Chief Coroner in the Public Bodies Bill (a law currently going through Parliament), the Chief Coroner will not be appointed. This would deprive bereaved Armed Forces families of the independent leadership essential to the reform of the coroners system.

The Legion believes bereaved Armed Forces families deserve better. They have suffered enough. Please do two things to support their

campaign and be a part of what they hope will be another significant success both for the Legion and for their beneficiaries. Please email your MP now to ask them to tell Ken Clarke to leave the Chief Coroner out of the Public Bodies Bill, and spread the word by notifying your friends via Facebook or email.

If you have a Facebook account, you can email your MP by visiting <http://www.facebook.com/MaxRes>. You will also be given the opportunity to set customised 'dog tags' as your display picture as a clear public demonstration of your support for bereaved Armed Forces families and the campaign. Alternatively, if you do not have a Facebook account, you can visit www.leaveitoutken.org.uk to email your MP from there. You will be able to find more information about the campaign at the above addresses.

You don't need to know who your MP is. Just type in your postcode, and the rest will be done for you. Thank you for supporting this important campaign. Your MP could be voting on this issue very shortly, so please email your MP today.



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY

IMPORTANT:

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR REGTL SEC

Please note that the Regtl Sec has a new Internet Email address - HON-HQRAFRegtSec@mod.uk - with immediate effect and that any Emails sent to the old address from 12.00 on Thu 28 Jul 11 will not have been received. Please note that all other Email addresses to other individuals/appointments at RAF Honington will also be subject to change.

EMAIL TRAFFIC DISRUPTION AT RAF HONINGTON

RAF Honington is currently undergoing a migration of one Information Technology (IT) system to another, a process that will carry on into Sep 11.

During this time, some incoming Emails may be lost and, if a timely response is not received to any Email sent to Honington during

the period, alternative follow-up action should be considered.

DEATHS:

HOUGHTON MILTON. Former RAF Regt Gnr Cpl Milton Joseph HOUGHTON, born 14 Feb 30, died on 27 Jul 11 aged 81. He enlisted in Feb 51, served as an instructor and during the Suez Crisis in Egypt. He was discharged in Feb 54. No further Service details are currently available.

The funeral was held in Loughborough on 12 Aug 11. He is survived by his son, Keith Houghton, of 31 Coniston Crescent, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3RQ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

NEW NOTICES:

CHANGE OF CG RAF REGT

It has been announced that Air Cdre R W La Forte CBE MA BA RAF, Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS) FP and CG RAF Regt - HQ 2 Gp, will assume the appointment of ACOS Trg - HQ 22 Gp in Dec 11. His successor has yet to be announced.

1 SQN RAF REGT STANDARD PRESENTATION - UPDATE

The presentation of a new Standard to 1 Sqn RAF Regt, scheduled for Wed 2 Nov 11, is likely to be postponed until early 2012. Further details will be issued in due course. The Sqn will celebrate its 90th Anniversary on 19 Nov 11.

RAF REGT OFFICERS' DINNER CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS

The RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club annual subscriptions were, in fact, rescinded in 1994, when the Club was opened up to all RAF Regt officers - serving and retired. However, a generous few continued to pay their annual Standing Orders (SOs) despite regular notices advising their cancellation.

With the change of bank from Lloyds to Holts Military Bank this year, those with still-active SOs will find their donations being declined when they are submitted to Lloyds. There is no action required other than to enjoy the increase in the annual bank balances.

CORPS DIARY DATES:

* Provisional Dates

27-28 Oct RAF Armd Car Assoc Autumn Reunion (Morley Hayes, Derby)

3 Nov 1 Sqn RAF Regt 90th Anniversary Families' Day (RAF Honington)

4 Nov RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club Annual Dinner 2011 (Royal Automobile Club, London)
 10 Nov Garden of Remembrance (Westminster Abbey, London)
 13 Nov Remembrance Day (Nationwide)
 18 Nov RAF ACC 90th Anniversary Commemoration Service (St Clement Danes)
 19 Dec - 90th Birthday of 1 ACC / 1 Sqn RAF Regt.

2012

26 Jan Presentation of new 58 Sqn RAF Regt Std.
 1 Feb 70th Anniversary of the Formation of the RAF Regt.
 2 Feb RAF Regt Operational Review (RAF Honington).
 3 Feb RAF Regt 70th Anniversary Commemoration Service (Bury St Edmunds).
 3 Feb Corps Officers' Briefing and Corps Formation Dinner 2012 (RAF Honington).
 7 Apr 90th Birthday of 2 ACC / II Sqn RAF Regt.
 11-14 May RAF Regt Assoc Spring Social (Nidd Hall, Nr Harrogate)
 12 May Annual RAF Regt Chapel Commemoration (Catterick).
 4 Jun * Naming Ceremony (for those killed in 2011) at the National Armed Forces' Memorial NMA Alrewas.
 8 Jun RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club Annual Reception 2012 (provisional date - tbc)
 15 Jun 63 Sqn RAF Regt Assoc Reunion (Union Jack Club, London).
 30 Jun UK Veterans' Day + RAF Regt Annual Memorial Commemoration NMA
 19 Jul II Sqn RAF Regt 90th Anniversary Families' Day (RAF Honington).
 1 Aug Centurion Journal 2012 - Article Deadline
 26 Oct RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club Annual Dinner 2012 RAF Club London
 11 Nov Remembrance Day (Nationwide)

2013

31 Jan Corps Operational Review RAF Honington.
 1 Feb 71st Anniversary of the RAF Regt.
 1 * Feb Corps 71st Anniversary Commemoration Service Bury St Edmunds (Provisional).
 1 Feb RAF Regt Operational Review and Corps Formation Dinner 2013.
 11 May Annual RAF Regt Chapel Commemoration (provisional date, Catterick).
 28 Jun RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club Ladies Dinner Night (Morley Hayes, nr Derby).

29 Jun UK Armed Forces Day + RAF Regt Annual Memorial Commemoration (NMA)

Joke Time

Why I'm Divorced - a woman's tale

Last week was my birthday and I didn't feel very well waking up on that morning. I went downstairs for breakfast hoping my husband would be pleasant and say, 'Happy Birthday and possibly have a small present for me. As it turned out, he barely said good morning, let alone 'happy Birthday.'

I thought....well, that's marriage for you, but the kids.... they will remember. My kids came bouncing down stairs to breakfast and didn't say a word. So when I left for the office I felt pretty low and somewhat despondent.

As I walked into my office, my handsome boss Rick, said, 'Good morning, lady, and by the way Happy Birthday!' It felt a little better that at least someone had remembered. I worked until one o'clock, when Rick knocked on my door and said, 'You know, it's such a beautiful day outside, and it is your birthday, what do you say we go out to lunch, just you and me.' I said, 'Thanks, Rick, that's the greatest thing I've heard all day. Let's go!'

We went to lunch. But we didn't go where we normally would go. He chose instead a quiet bistro with a private table. We had two martinis each and I enjoyed the meal tremendously.

On the way back to the office, Rick said, 'You know, it's such a beautiful day...we don't need to go straight back to the office, do we?' I responded, 'I guess not. What do you have in mind?' He said, 'Let's drop by my place, it's just around the corner.'

After arriving at his house, Rick turned to me and said, 'If you don't mind, I'm going to step into the bedroom for just a moment. I'll be right back.' 'Ok.' I nervously replied. He went into the bedroom and, after a couple of minutes, he came out carrying a huge birthday cake, followed by my husband, my kids, and dozens of my friends and co-workers, all singing 'Happy Birthday'.

And I just sat there....on the couch....stark naked. Ooops !!!

Next time take me to a Vet

Two patients limp into two different medical clinics with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement.

The FIRST patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The SECOND sees his family doctor after waiting 3 weeks for an appointment then waits 8 weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn't reviewed for another week and finally has his surgery scheduled for 6 months from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients? The FIRST is a Golden Retriever. The SECOND is a Senior Citizen. Next time take me to a vet!

Well that's all for now, keep smiling if you can and stay happy.

Malcolm

PS. Remember to watch the Antiques Roadshow on Remembrance Sunday next month.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



16

Fri 30 th Sep–Mon 3 rd Oct	'11 Ass AGM & Reunion	Thursday 8 th December 2011	Branch Night
Friday 21 st October	2011 Trafalgar Day	Thursday 12 th January 2012	Branch Night
Thurs 20 th -Fri 21 st Oct	2011 Arm Car Ass Reunion	Saturday 21 st January 2012	NEC Meeting Venue TBA
Sunday 6 th November	2011 Midlands Fest of Rem	Wednesday 1st Feb	2012 70th Ann of the RAF Regt.
Thursday 10 th Nov	2011 Branch Night	Wednesday 1 st Feb	2012 Branch Subs Due
Thursday 10 th Nov	2011 Field of Rem London	Thursday 9th Feb	2012 Branch Night and AGM
Saturday 12 th Nov	2011 B'ham Poppy Ball	Thurs 8 th March	2012 Branch Night
Sunday 13 th November	2011 Remembrance Sunday	Thurs 12 th April	2012 Branch Night
Wednesday 30 th Nov	2011 St Andrew's Day	Fri 11 th -Mon 14 th May	2012 Spring Reunion Nidd Hall
		Sat 12 th May	2012 Annual Chapel Comm.
		Thursday 14 th June	2012 Branch Night
		Saturday 16th June	2012 24th Ann B'ham Branch
		Sunday 24 th June	2012 National Service Day
		Sunday 24 th June	2012 Allied Air Forces Mem
		Sat 30 th June	2012 Regt Ann Comm NMA
		Thursday 14 th July	2012 Branch Night
		Sunday 6 th October	2011 Merchant Navy Day

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