

NEWSLETTER  
OF  
THE GUILDFORD BRANCH



November 2012

**The Dedication  
of  
The Royal Air Forces Association**

**In friendship and 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 the Air Forces of the  
Commonwealth.**

**In their name, we give ourselves to this  
noble cause.**

**Proudly and thankfully,**

**We will remember them.**

**THE OBJECT OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**

Is to promote, through the comradeship engendered by its members, the welfare by charitable means of all serving and former members of Her Majesty's Air Forces, their spouses and dependents, together with widows

## BRANCH CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The summer, what there was of it has now gone, and what we have to look forward to is our winter fuel allowance, more aches and pains, Christmas, and there is another year gone. Our monthly lunchtime meetings in the 'Y' Centre will continue giving you the opportunity to meet, chat and raise any issues you may have with the Committee. Don't forget our Christmas lunch on 12<sup>th</sup> December 12:30 at the 'Y' centre.

**Upcoming Events:** Geoff Bloomer's health continues to improve and I am pleased to report that he retains his sense of humour. Although he is unable to attend meetings or organise any events at present but we look forward to his return to full health and return to duty. Other notes for your diaries are, Christmas lunch, 12<sup>th</sup> December, and Remembrance Day on the 11<sup>th</sup> November, where I shall be laying the wreath on behalf of the branch.

**Fundraising:** Battle of Britain Wings day appeal and collection 2012. This year only 5 members of the Branch took part in the street collections. Anne and Bill Wallace did their own collecting at Squires, Connie Walker collected from her block of flats, and the ATC provided support in Dorking and Guildford. Here are the results

Anne and Bill Wallis	£1036.00
Connie Walker	£ 61.14
Guildford Street	£ 373. 85
ATC Squadrons	£ 663.4
	£2134.45

I am disappointed that the Branch did not do better, but if we cannot put the boots on the street, we won't get the results. For the effort put in this is a fair result and thank you to all those who played their part.

**Harold Smith**

**The Desk of the Secretary:**

**Membership Subscriptions 2013/14**

Central council has agreed the following membership subscription rates for 2013/2014

<b>Category</b>	<b>2013/2014 Membership Fee</b>
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**Ordinary Member**

1 Year	£19.50
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4 Year	£73.50
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**Associate Member**

1 Year with Air Mail	£13.50
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1 Year without Air Mail	£8.50
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4 Year with Air Mail	£52.50
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4 Year without Air Mail	£29.00
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**PLEASE PAY YOUR SUBS EARLY.**

If you pay your subs by Direct Debit then please contact your bank and amend the payment to meet the new rates.

If you do not pay your subscriptions by Direct Debit then please consider doing so as it saves an awful lot of hassle.

Whilst you are paying your subs please "Gift Aid" the subscription as the Associate will get a rebate.

Hon Sec

## **Talking Air Mail**

For the blind, partially sighted and disabled members (ie stroke victims), the Yorkshire Region of the Association produces each issue of Air Mail, the quarterly journal, on cassette or CD in the style of talking newspapers for the blind. The recording plays for about 3 hours.

If you or you know of any member who is partially sighted, disabled, or ex RAF, who would like to receive Talking Air Mail then please advise me and I will co-ordinate applications for the Branch. Alternatively you can contact the person below:

Geoff Middleton  
5, Frizley Gardens  
Frizinghall  
BRADFORD  
BD9 4LZ

02174 778102

Production costs are met by the Yorkshire Region, but donations are always welcome. Cheques should be made payable to "The RAFA Yorkshire Region".

Talking Air Mail is posted free to Registered Blind/Partially Sighted/Disabled, in other cases the recipient is expected to pay. In some cases the Branch may be willing to support some cases

## **Newsletter update**

I hope that you enjoyed the last copy of the revised newsletter; it is my intention to keep it going in the new format for as long as possible. I have had several contributions from members and I will publish them all in the next few editions. Your memories and experience are all worth sharing, and make for interesting reading for WW2 was the most socially cataclysmic event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the 6 short, but desperate years the effects of which are with us today. Please keep the articles flowing.

As an aside I thought I would let you know a little about how this letter gets produced. Firstly I believe that the Branch newsletter is a fundamental piece of communication with the members and so deserves to be preserved. Writing the articles is not too much of a problem, members stories are always acceptable, even contentious ones. The real issues lie with the production and distribution, printing costs are, as I have a deal here should be kept at a sustainable level. There are 131 members in the branch all of whom I believe should receive a copy of the newsletter. Material costs are £60 per issue, printing and collation is free if I distribute all by snail mail the postal bill would be £80 per issue, this gives us a total outlay of £60 + £80 = £140 x 4 per year = Approximately £600 annually, with no annual income to offset this cost, our meagre Branch funds are going to take a beating. I am urgently seeking ways to sponsor the publication so that our net costs are as close to zero as possible. I can reduce the postal bill a wee bit by using email, but as only 30% of members have email addresses this only solves part of the problem. I further propose to:

- 1 Utilise members who are willing to hand deliver a small number of newsletters to members within their same postcode - - **I need volunteers**. I can work out a rota
- 2 Those who wish to receive the newsletter supply me with 4 x A5 Envelopes, SAE'd, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class large stamp per year.
- 3 Collection at monthly meeting.

I hope that you enjoy this edition, I will endeavour to keep the newsletter going. I do you need to let me know how you wish to receive the branch news letter

The Ed

## **AIR FORCE NEWS**

*SOUTH EAST AREA RAFALO UPDATE - AUGUST 2012*

### **Diamond Jubilee**

In her letter to the Armed Forces following the parade and Muster for her Diamond Jubilee HM The Queen states;

*I send my thanks, admiration and pleasure for the parade and Muster for my Diamond Jubilee and my congratulations to all who took part including the bands for their music, and those in the very impressive fly past. It was a very moving tribute from all three Services and the large watching crowds from far and wide reflect the interest and importance attached to the Armed Services of today.*

Those of you fortunate enough to have participated in or been present at the Muster witnessed a magnificent and very public spectacle; the Armed Forces at their very best. The coming months will see the Armed Forces maintaining this high public profile with significant support being provided to the XXX Olympiad and continuing Jubilee celebrations. With our support to operations continuing unabated, the Service understands that the tempo is unusually high and many will have had to adjust their personal lives to meet these commitments. But this is an extraordinary year and it

presents many opportunities to reinforce the reputation and standing of the Armed Forces in general and the RAF in particular.

## **The Diaspora.**

In 2008 AMP identified a need to improve support and communication to "those RAF personnel serving in non-RAF organisations". The Diaspora, a word that succinctly describes this disparate group, amounts to some 15% of the total RAF strength. Since June 2010 all numbered RuxAF and Reserve units have also been included. A small Diaspora support team was established that, unique within the 3 Services, communicates through regular Diaspora Updates which are supplemented by occasional special releases of important and time sensitive information.

### **SDSR / RE-ORGANISATION**

**Joint Force Air Component Command (JFACC)** . On 1 April 12, the RAF established the One Star (Air Commodore) post of Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) under Air Officer Commanding No1 Group. The primary role of the JFACC is to deploy as the RAF's 1 Star (Air Commander). In addition, the Joint Force Air Component (JFAC) is responsible for:

## **The planning and execution of contingent airpower force generation.**

**Joint Capability (Jt Cap) Disbandment** – 31<sup>st</sup> Mar 12. The Jt Cap Directorate within MOD Main Building disbanded on 31 Mar 12. Previous Jt Cap responsibilities migrated on 1 Apr 12 to other MOD Main Building organisations, to HQ JFC and to the single Services.

**Review of the UK's Reserve Forces.** In future Reserve Forces will have a greater role and will be more integrated with the Regular component of the Armed Forces. An additional €1.88n is being invested in the Reserve Forces over the next 10 years. The trained strength of the Reserves of all 3 Services will grow by 50% or more by 2018 to 30,000 in the TA, 3,100 in the RN and RM Reserves and 1,800 in the Royal Auxiliary Air

**Force. (RAuxAF).** The principal growth in the RAuxAF will be in the specialist areas of logistics, flight operations, medical, intelligence,



media, RAF Police and cyber. Individual augmentees will be trained to a sufficient standard to be fully integrated with the Regulars as part of the Whole Force Concept. Five new Reserve Squadrons will be established: No 502(Ulster) Squadron will form at JHC Station Aldergrove; 611(West Lancashire) Squadron will form in Liverpool and 614(West Glamorgan) Squadron will form in South Wales, most likely at RAF St Athan.

These squadrons will be general service support squadrons representing various trades and branches from within the RAF. At RAF Brize Norton 2624(County of Oxford) Squadron will re-form in the force protection role and 622 Squadron will stand-up as the Reserve unit for aircrew augmenting the RAF's air mobility force.

Delivering this step-change in the size and role of the Reserves will require a change in the relationship between Defence, the employer and the Reservist that gives us the confidence that trained Reservist manpower will be available when it is really needed. The government is examining how this might work through, for instance, the 'Partnering for Talent' programme. A consultation paper will be published in the Autumn setting out the detailed proposals.

## EQUIPMENT

**The Carrier Strike Programme.** The Defence Secretary announced on 1<sup>st</sup> May that the MOD will move away from the Carrier Variant (CV) JSF and our Armed Forces will instead operate the short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) variant JSF. Although the range of the STOVL variant is lower, it is a 5th generation stealth aircraft and represents a step change in the UK's combat air capability. Air to air refuelling will enable the range to be extended, and stand-off weapons also mitigate this risk. The STOVL variant of the JSF has been "derisked" since the SDSR, and flight trials from United States Marine Corps ships have taken place. MOD is much more confident in its future than at the time of the SDSR. This change achieves an earlier in service date than the alternative.

**BAE 145-200QC.** Two BAE 146-200QC(Quick Change) aircraft, purchased by the MOD, have arrived at Hawker Beechcraft in

Broughton for conversion from civilian to military specification. "The two aircraft will be used by 32 (The Royal) Squadron at Northolt to transport operational passengers and freight, once they are handed over next spring.

**In-flight Protective Helmet System**, A new don-in-flight chemical biological and radiological protective mask and integrated helmet system has been delivered into service. The system has been delivered with a full support solution to maintain the capability in service until 2015.

**Lightning II**. At a ceremony in Fort Worth, Texas, CofS formally accepted the first Lightning II, the first of UK's STOVL F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. The UK is the first country outside the US to receive these aircraft. MOD intends to order a fourth Lightning II aircraft next year to add to the three already on contract. The RAF and Royal Navy will conduct flight trials of the jets. Lightning II will be operational from land-based airfields from 2018 when it will also commence flight trials off the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier.

**New Boots**, MOD personnel will receive a new range of brown combat boots to replace the current black and desert combat footwear. Part of an f 80m contract there will be five different boots as follows:

**Desert Combat \*** - for dismounted troops in high activity desert environments exceeding 40°C

**Desert Patrol** -for mounted troops on lower levels of activity in desert environments exceeding 40°C.

**Temperate Combat** - for dismounted troops at high levels of activity in temperate climates.

**Patrol** - worn by mounted troops conducting lower levels of activity in temperate climates.

**Cold Wet Weather** - worn by dismounted troops for high levels of activity in temperatures down to – 20°C.

Each of the five boot types comes in two different styles and two width fittings. Black boots will continue to be worn with most non-camouflage uniforms such as RAF and RN blues, and by units on parade. (Will this be the end of complaints about boots?)

## **Other News**

### **RIDE AROUND THE SOUTH EAST**

You will recall the notice within the May 201-2 Newsletter concerning the efforts of Sqn Ldr Ady Norris, the South East Area RAFALO, who was about to ride around the outer ring of the South Eastern part of the Area, a distance of over 700 miles over a 7 day period, in order to raise awareness of local RAF Association Branches within the South East. We are glad to report that Ady finished his ride, in one piece and as scheduled, on 28<sup>th</sup> June at High Wycombe, having visiting 42 Branch locations and managing to raise over £5000. Ady wishes to pass on his sincere thanks to all Branch Members, and RAFALOs, who supported the event, particularly those who provided overnight accommodation to Tracy and Andy, both of whom thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet with members and chat about the Association. Whilst the generosity of those met was clear, there is still time to donate, either by contacting by e-mail [adymorris@live.co.uk](mailto:adymorris@live.co.uk) or by using the following site: - <http://www.justgiving.com/Andy-Morris>

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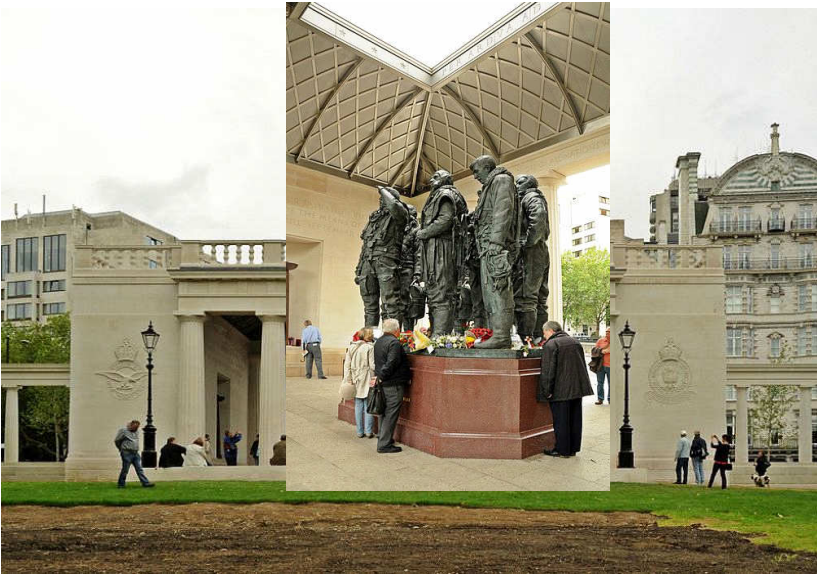
As an aside I thought I would let you know a little about how this letter gets produced. Firstly I believe that the Branch newsletter is a fundamental piece of communication with the members and so deserves to be preserved. Writing the articles is not too much of a problem, members stories are always acceptable, even contentious

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Be that as it may, I hope that you enjoy this edition, I will endeavour to keep the newsletter going

The Ed

## **RAF Bomber Command Memorial**



### RAF Bomber Command Memorial

For the aircrew of Bomber Command killed during the Second World War Designed by Liam O'Connor Unveiled 28 June 2012 by HM Queen Elizabeth II

The RAF Bomber Command Memorial is a memorial in Green Park London, near Hyde Park Corner, commemorating the aircrews of RAF Bomber Command who embarked on missions during the Second World War. The memorial was built to mark the sacrifice of 55,573 aircrew from Britain, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries of the Commonwealth of Nations, as well as civilians of all nations killed during raids.

Elizabeth II officially opened the memorial on 28 June 2012, unveiling the bronze sculpture. The ceremony was attended by 6,000 veterans and family members of those killed, and the Avro Lancaster of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight dropped red poppy petals over Green Park.

## Sculpture within the memorial

Liam O'Connor designed the memorial, built of Portland stone, which features a bronze 9-foot (2.7 m) sculpture of seven aircrew, designed by the sculptor Philip Jackson to look as though they have just returned from a bombing mission and left their aircraft.

Aluminium from a Royal Canadian Air Force Handley Page Halifax of No. 426 Squadron RCAF that had crashed in Belgium in May 1944 was used to build the roof of the memorial, which was designed to evoke the styling of the Vickers Wellington. The Halifax, LW682 OW/M, had been removed from a swamp in 1997 with three of the crew found still at their posts. They were buried with full military honours in Geraardsbergen and the remains of the aircraft were sent to Canada.



## The Flypast

The controversy over the tactics employed by RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War meant that an official memorial to the aircrews had been delayed for many years. Despite describing bombers as "the means of victory" in 1940, Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not mention Bomber Command in his speech at the end of the war.

Note from the editor,

The following poem is a contribution from Ron McGill and is a tribute to the 55,573 young men of Bomber Command who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we enjoy today. Until recently vilified by the press and public for carrying out their duty, and still no campaign medal.

**LIE IN THE DARK AND LISTEN** - *By Noel Coward, inspired by a night in 1944 he spent listening in bed to a stream of RAF Bombers droning overhead for a raid, which he later discovered was Cologne.*

Lie in the dark and listen  
It's clear tonight so they are flying high  
Hundreds of them, thousands perhaps  
Riding the icy, moonlight sky  
Men, materials, bombs and maps  
Altimeters and guns and charts  
Coffee, sandwiches, fleece-lined boots  
Bones and muscles and minds and hearts  
English saplings with English roots  
Deep in the earth they've left below  
Lie in the dark and let them go  
Lie in the dark and listen

Lie in the dark and listen  
They're going over in waves and waves  
High above the villages, hills and streams  
And little citizens worried dreams  
Very soon they'll reach to sea  
And far below them will lie the bays  
And coves and sands where they used to be  
Taken for summer holidays  
Lie in the dark and let them go  
Lie in the dark and listen  
Lie in the dark and listen  
City magnates and steel contractors  
Factory workers and politicians  
Soft hysterical little actors  
Ballet dancers, 'Reserved' musicians  
Safe in your warm civilian beds

Count your profits and count your sheep  
Life is flying above your heads  
Just turn over and go to sleep  
Lie in the dark and let them go



Theirs is a world you'll never know  
Theirs is a debt you'll forever owe  
Lie in the dark and listen

## Member's Contribution

*Probably the busiest tradesmen in the wartime RAF were the Armourers, (affectionately nicknamed "Plumbers") a little understood employment, often taciturn men, very superstitious, possessing a unique sense of humour, resulting from dealing with explosives and weapons. Frequently the butt of crew-room humour, they shared the same status amongst other airmen as RAF Policemen, and slightly above the Regiment. But in reality their 'Trade Group 1' status lifted them above such insults to those who really knew. So I am very pleased to get a plumber to contribute to our news-letter. ED*

## A Plumbers Tale

Volunteering in 1941 for the RAF at age 17, I was enrolled in Guildford and after "Square Bashing" in Bournemouth it was off to RAF Melksham for trade training. Having qualified as an Aircraftsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Bombs and Guns) I was posted to RAF Wattisham, (18Sqn Blenheims), just in time to fuse, arm and load for the first 1000 bomber raid (30/31<sup>st</sup> May 1942 – Cologne). This was a marvellous opportunity to clear out the dump of the entire 'old scheme' ordinance accumulated during peace time. We cared not whether or not they detonated; together with all the new stuff dropped so long as they gave the enemy a headache. The Flight Sergeant was well pleased as he had clean and tidy (but empty) bomb dump for a short while.

After a few months the opportunity came to get my knees brown with a posting overseas. Embarking at Liverpool on the HMT (His Majesty's Troopship) "Rangitiki", a short cruise up the Clyde for "degaussing" and then out into the Atlantic heading for the USA (we thought we were on to a good thing – no such luck). Turning to port (left) we joined a convoy with a Frigate as escort we set sail south for Durban (South Africa), what a dreadful journey, 'No Lights, No Smoking on deck, no rubbish overboard', zig zagging all the way to avoid the Uboats. Safe arrival at Durban and a spot of shore leave. South Africa, land of milk and honey, no rationing, plenty of good food it was paradise after wartime Britain. The RAF

obviously thought we were having too much fun because two weeks we were off cruising again, this time by the "Oransay" to Cape Town. More shore leave and off to Bombay in the "Franconia". At this point I was starting to wonder which branch of the Services I was in, The Navy? The RAF?, or the perhaps Merchant Navy? A hot and dusty train journey to southern India to an airfield called Tanjore where I arrived in October 1942. Tanjore was still under construction, no aircraft, runways, hangers, how typical I thought, but we were at least formed into 36 Squadron to await the arrival of our aircraft Wellington 1C's in the anti-submarine role. The Wimpies began to arrive in December 42, and as tradition dictates the customary airfield low level beat up was performed to announce their arrival. This caused almost panic amongst the natives as most of them had not even seen a white man before let alone a flying machine.

Mid December patrolling began in the Bay of Bengal in order to get closer to the enemy were again moved to Dhubalia, just north of Assam, and in the middle of the jungle. I was part of the advanced party which took forever by train, living on bully beef, biscuits and tea made from hot water from the locomotive. After a while at Dhubalia, I managed to get some leave in Calcutta and stayed at the YMCA, nice place good food, good beds, (NO BEDBUGS). Returning to Dhubalia in early June 43, I was told that the lack of enemy activity had caused the RAF to redeploy the Squadron to Algeria. This time by train to Calcutta and ship, SS "Almanzora" to Suez, where we were issued with new lorries for our self-drive to our new home at Blida in Algeria an old peacetime French Air Force Station. A two week journey, living off hard tack and bully beef, sleeping under the lorries, occasional R&R swims in the Mediterranean, subsistence rations, absolutely dreadful.

Arrival at Blida I was a relief not only to find an airfield, but runways, peritracks, hangers but even some of our aircraft which had made it from India, sadly some had not. We began to re-equip with Wellington Mk 14s specially fitted with the Leigh Light and ASV Radar, which arrived almost daily from the UK. The Squadrons' preferred method of operating was a night; stooging around with the Leigh light and ASV catching subs on the surface charging their batteries. We despatched few subs with depth charges to Davy Jones this way. The Squadron ranged all over the Mediterranean, which meant wherever submarine activity was reported we

dealt with it, we detached aircraft and ground crews all over the Mediterranean, giving opportunity for us to visit and have fun in such places as, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia. In September 44 the Squadron was recalled to UK to look after the Atlantic Western approaches and the ground crew were left in Italy. These were good happy days with good friends. I came home eventually to a humdrum civilian life, for me the war was over.

Jack Chaplin 2012

**Letters to the Editor:**

*Note: articles for inclusion in this section should be passed to Tony Rushton ([fastrushton@btinternet.com](mailto:fastrushton@btinternet.com)) for publication*

**Members Forum:**

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**Sales and Wants:**

*Note: articles for inclusion in this section should be passed to the editor ([fastrushton@btinternet.com](mailto:fastrushton@btinternet.com)) for publication*

**Births, Deaths and Marriages:**

*Note: articles for inclusion in this section should be passed to the editor ([fastrushton@btinternet.com](mailto:fastrushton@btinternet.com)) for publication*

Colin Hales                      Deceased    Oct 2012    Guildford

Where are you now?

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editor ([fastrushton@btinternet.com](mailto:fastrushton@btinternet.com)) for publication

**Useful Websites:**

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) Useful contact for health matters

[www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk) All you ever wanted to know about local services

## **BRANCH DIRECTORY**

**PRESIDENT: Harold Smith**

**Vice-President: Vacant**

### **Branch Committee:**

Chairman	Harold Smith	01483 560404
Vice Chairman	Vacant	
Secretary	Tony Rushton	01306 880900
Treasurer	Tom Oversby	01483 830672
Membership Secretary	Tony Rushton	01306 880900
Welfare Officer	Tony Allenby	01483 892362
Wings Organiser	Bill Elliot	01483 574540
Events' Organiser	Geoff Bloomer	01483 222416
Publicity Manager	Ron Trueman	01483 570879

### **Office Holder:**

Standard Bearer	Vacant	
Deputy Welfare Officer	Vacant	
Deputy Wings Organiser	Vacant	
ATC Liaison - 261 Sqn	Jack Chaplin	01483 302537
ATC Liaison – 1254 Sqn	Vacant	
ATC Liaison – 1268 Sqn	Vacant	
ATC Liaison - 1408 Sqn	Vacant	
News Letter Organiser	Tony Rushton	01306 880900

### **Committee Members**

