The Scotland and Northern Ireland Area Reunion 2017 will took place over the weekend of 7 to 9 of April, in the Marriott Hotel, Glasgow. The event kicked off with a meet and greet on the Friday night for those arriving that day.

On Saturday the Fundraising presentation and Wings workshop took place and was held by Rachel Huxford, Director of Marketing, Fundraising and Trading and Pete Brocklehurst, Community Fundraising Manager. After lunch, the conference part of the Area Reunion took place. A marketplace of stalls providing information about various departments of the RAF Association, branches and also various other organisations took part.

An Association update was provided by Council Vice Chairman Dr Bryan Pattinson, followed by an RAF update and RAF 100 presentation by the Air Officer Scotland and Air Officer Northern Ireland, Air Vice Marshal Ross Patterson and Air Vice Marshal David Niven respectively. Following this Air Vice Marshal David Niven was elected as our new Area President, the Area Council elections took place and then cheques and awards were duly presented.

Thank you to all who attended and worked on the Area Reunion to make it a successful and enjoyable event!

The following were awarded as part of the Area Reunion:

**DONATIONS**
- Airdrie and Coatbridge Branch
  - £100 to Rothbury House
  - £100 to the RAF Association welfare department
  - £100 to Richard Peck House
- Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch
  - £500 to Rothbury House
  - £500 to Richard Peck House
  - £500 to Area Reunion
  - £250 to Military Museum Scotland, Linburn West Lothian
- Glasgow Branch
  - £500 to the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area of the RAF Association
- Leuchars Branch
  - £500 to Scotland and Northern Ireland Area
- Perth Branch
  - £1000 to Rothbury House
- Reverend Neil Galbraith of Cathcart Parish Church
  - £90 to the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area

**AWARDS**
- Area Presidential Certificates
  - Dave Brewster — Angus Branch

Continued on page 4...

**Diary Dates**

May 12 to 14 — Annual Conference 2017
June 24 — Armed Forces Day, various events
July 22 — East Fortune Airshow
September 2 to 3 — Scottish International Airshow, Ayr

An amendment was made to page 1. of our Annual Report. Susan Kidston’s name was accidently omitted from the list of Area Councillors. Please accept our apologies for any upset that this may have caused.
Area Reunion 2017...Continued

The ATC standard bearer’s competition

Air Vice Marshal David Niven, the Area President, with the Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Chairman Bob Bertram MBE. The hard working Branch won several awards.

Air Vice Marshal David Niven presenting Fiona Mowatt with her Area Presidential Certificate

Our marketplace, presenting the work of various department of the RAF Association & also related charities & organisations.
Area Reunion 2017...Continued

Beatrice Clarke from the Scottish International Airshow & Area Chairman Bob Chandler BEM

Donna Hutchinson Volunteer Coordinator & RAFALO Ian Hutchinson

Bob Bertram, Susan Kidston & George Prentice from the ELB Branch

Members of the Glasgow Branch

Bobby & George Prentice from Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Branch

Maud & Sean Whitelaw from Ayr & Prestwick Branch

John Sharpe MBE from East Kilbride Branch

RAF members of staff, volunteers and ATC Cadets at the Sunday church service at Cathcart Parish Church

Shiela Laramore & Mike McCourt from the Scotland and Oversea Area—Welfare Department

Our piper, Ellie Hutchinson
Continued from page 1...

- Christine Hayes—Peterhead Branch
- Susan Kidston—Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch
- Fiona Mowatt—Leuchars Branch
- Arthur McCormick—Carrickfergus Branch
- Margaret Mullan—Causeway Coast Branch
- Rosaleen Corr—Carrickfergus Branch
- Caroline Trail—Fraserburgh Branch

Area Membership Competition
- Jim Nicholl Cup—Leuchars Branch
- Runner up—Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

Efficiency Competition
- Senior Efficiency Trophy—Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch
- Runner up—Ayr and Prestwick Branch
- James Ross Trophy (Jnr Effy) - Stornoway Branch
- Runner up—Carrickfergus Branch
- Branch Club Efficiency—Shetland Branch / Club

WINGS APPEAL TROPHIES 2016

Highest Gross
Amy Ward Trophy Carrickfergus Branch
Runner-up Larne Branch

J McLean Trophy Carrickfergus Branch
Runner-up Larne Branch

Highest per cent increase gross
A Wooler Trophy Perth Branch

Wings Appeal Certificates
Over £40,000 Carrickfergus Branch

Thank you to all who took part, attended and worked on the Area Reunion, a great time was had by all.

FARES4FREE
An organisation called Fares4Free provided free bus transport between the hotel and the church on the Sunday, which enabled those who required it to attend the church service and memorial service. Thank you to David Gibson!

The following is David’s outline of the service:

“FARES4FREE is working together with taxi companies and drivers, asking for four donated fares a month per driver. The ask is reasonable and the impact on the veterans’ community is considerable.

We have paired this project with a campaign to provide wheelchair capable vehicles staffed by trained ex service personnel. We feel that these will be the people best suited to befriend or care for others in need who share similar backgrounds and experiences.

Financial security will not be a barrier to using the service. The only criteria a person has to meet to use us is that they or a family member have served in the armed forces.”

Please contact David Gibson, Fares4Free if you are interested in using the service or becoming involved.

Email: info@fares4free.org, phone: 07708 299 399, website: www.fares4free.org

David Gibson
Perth Branch update

The Perth Branch visited the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance at Perth Aerodrome on Wednesday 19 April to make a donation to the charity.

Pictured in the photo to the top right, left to right, are: Jim Given, Ronnie Finlayson, Helicopter Pilot Russell Myles, Mike McEwan, Dick Duff, James Urquhart, all from Perth Branch.

On Tuesday 9 May members of the Perth Branch were invited to Errol Airfield to take part in the remembrance ceremony of the crew of a Russian aircraft which crashed in Loch Tay during WW11.

The date is also the commemoration of VE Day on the Russian Front.

Pictured in the photo to the bottom right, from left to right are: The Russian Consul General, Andrei Pritsepov with his attendant, Brigadier Mel Jameson Lord Lieutenant of Perth & Kinross supported by his cadet, the granddaughter and son of the pilot of the aircraft, Mr. Bradley Borland of the Morris Leslie Group Errol Airfield, and James Urquhart, Chairman, Perth Branch.
Member spotlight Susan Kidston—Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

Susan Kidston, could you outline your role within the branch and also the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area Council?
I hold the following positions: Branch Secretary, Wings Appeal Organiser and ATC Liaison (we have 17 ATCs in our area). I’m also an Area Councillor responsible media, PR and marketing.

How did you initially get involved in volunteering with the RAF Association?
I came across a copy of Edinburgh Lothian and Borders Branch quarterly newsletter in Leuchars in 2013 and read the advert for their vacancy for a Wings Appeal Organiser. I duly applied and was fortunate enough to be accepted by the Chairman and the Committee.

What do you feel the main benefits of volunteering are?
Volunteering offers vital help to the RAF Association in many ways, which can provide volunteers such as myself a sense of purpose.

Connecting with others is enjoyable and good for the mind and soul, allowing volunteers to broaden their network and meet like-minded people in situations which they may not usually encounter in their day job or day to day life, which can also help to support a healthy work/life balance.

Additionally, volunteering makes a difference in small ways, which adds to the bigger RAF Association picture. Just two hours per week or 100 hours per year is not much time to spend doing something you really enjoy.

What are you responsible for within your branch?
As Secretary, sending out the agendas and attending, and taking minutes at our monthly meetings.

As Wings Appeal Organiser/ATC Liaison, liaising with local ATC squadrons and local stores for back packs or can collections in question to arrange timings, insurance, volunteers and being on site myself.

I have responsibility for reporting the amount collected to the store, to the volunteer squadron and to my fellow committee members in addition to banking the amount collected because I work in a financial institution!

Which committee members do you work with most closely?
As Secretary, I report to our Chairman, who is a fount of RAF Association knowledge with which he keeps me right and is always very supportive.

As Wings Appeal Organiser, I answer to all our committee members, as I often need them to assist with our various fundraising events. Our events are not always local to me and geographically we all live fairly far apart which is advantageous to our branch area.

In addition, I work with the treasurer to relay the sums raised on each occasion we have a fundraiser.

When fundraising, I always remind the cadets that the
reason for our fundraising is all about ‘welfare’. Therefore, I should like to include working closely with our Honorary Welfare Officer and his wife who also provide me with support, including taking me to and from the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area Reunion in Northern Ireland in 2016, an enjoyable and memorable journey.

Without all of our committee supporting me, which they all do, the more I fully appreciate this fantastic, collaborative and supportive clan since being involved!

What else do you like to do in your spare time?
Believe it or not, more volunteering. Once a year at General Assembly Scotland I am the Chief Steward on their event held in Edinburgh’s Princes Street Gardens. I’m supported by volunteer stewards and I am Catering Chief in Assembly Hall on the Mound where I am supported by a team of volunteers where we cater to the many commissioners who attend General Assembly from across Scotland.

In the summer, I enjoy pottering around my garden and in the winter, when gardening is not an option, reading on my Kindle. I must also mention attending various air shows too. I am all booked for Royal International Air Tattoo 2017 with my daughter which is an annual tradition for us.

You work full time and also give a lot of time to the RAF Association. How do you keep up your energy levels?
When I get home from work it can be tempting to just sit down and do nothing. However, being passionate about the Association gives me the motivation to dedicate my time. Whether it will take just a few minutes to a few hours or anywhere in between.

Volunteering for the Association brings me into contact with a variety of different tasks, meaning I am often doing something different, this helps me keep up my energy levels. Eating chocolate keeps me motivated before I sit down.

Do you feel that your work and volunteering tasks and ambitions closely align?
They do closely align and complement each other. As a PA, when my boss arrives in the office, I am tasked with responsibilities such as keeping on top of his diary as well as others’, making sure managers are well-informed for their week ahead and that they are in the right place, at the right time for meetings, events or conferences.

I also play a role in meeting preparation, which can see me liaise with other teams and often co-manage events with them, as well as keeping files up to date and taking minutes where necessary.

I do many of these tasks within volunteering as well, so whether I am arriving at my desk or arriving to volunteer, I have an idea of what I need to prioritise and what I need to organise. Knowing I need to be flexible, all usually with coffee in my hand.

What would you say has been your proudest moment?
Receiving an Area Presidential Certificate at this year’s Area Reunion. Many thanks to those who nominated me and to the very many appreciation messages I received on our branch’s Facebook page as a result of this award. So unexpected but gratefully received by me. Thank You.

I am proud to add that both my grown up children support me in all my endeavours and always encourage me to do the things that I enjoy. My daughter is now an Associate Member of our branch and graciously puts up with my over-excitement as soon as I can hear the sound of a Typhoon!

I know that you love Typhoons a great deal, what interests you about them in particular?
The totally amazing sound and deafening roar as they hurtle down the runway before take off. I am always thrilled and delighted to see full afterburners being used after take-off.

Thanks to the Association, I was able to get up close and personal with a Typhoon on a personal tour of a Typhoon at RAF Lossiemouth which was totally amazing and left me speechless. I even got to open the canopy. There just are not words to describe the experience. The best fast jet ever!
Volunteering Update—Headquarters

The Association is delighted to announce a joint pilot project taking place between Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) and the Association.

Rotary is also a membership organisation and shares similar values to the Association of service, fellowship, diversity, integrity and leadership.

Starting in April, Rotary in and around north and west Wales, Merseyside, the Wirral and parts of Cheshire, Shropshire and Lancashire, have been actively supporting the befriending project.

Involvement will include sharing information and helping to recruit Rotarians in the area to become befriender training courses for new befrienders. A large number of courses are already planned from May onwards, to accommodate local training requirements for all our new befriender volunteers.

The volunteering team will keep branches updated on progress with the pilot.

Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland are part of a global network of 1.2 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who come together to make positive, lasting change in communities at home and abroad. We are therefore pleased to be working with such a like-minded organisation for the benefit of the RAF family.

A number of Rotarians have already expressed an interest in volunteering as a befriender and have completed application forms.

At the time of producing this article, we expect many to have already been booked onto one of our befriender training courses through the Area Newsletters.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact us on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361.

Donna Hutchinson, Volunteer Coordinator for Scotland, visiting Falkirk Rotary Club in March.
Personal data privacy—branches and clubs

The Association has a legal obligation to protect personal data in conformance with UK data protection legislation (currently the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998).

The Association’s Personal Data Privacy Policy, together with the associated Standard Operating Procedures, describe the measures necessary for the Association and its members to comply with the DPA.

At branch level this means that any personal data held about branch members must only be used for legitimate Association purposes and that all personal data must be kept under strict control and not inadvertently shared or made available for unauthorised use.

The Association is only able to share personal data with branch officials who have agreed to use such data in compliance with the Policy and have signed the annual Certificate of Compliance for the protection of personal data.

Some of our branches and clubs have not yet returned the signed certificate regarding compliance with the Data Protection Act, which was sent out earlier this year.

Until these certificates are returned, we are not able to provide those branches or clubs with membership lists.

We would request those branches that have not yet returned their certificate to do so as soon as possible.

If required, further copies of the certificate can be found on the members log-in section of the RAF Association website or from the area headquarters by email request to: anna.lawton@rafa.org.uk

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nick Bunting CDir FiD MCIM
Secretary General

Donna Hutchinson—Volunteer Coordinator update

April saw me attend my first Scotland and Northern Ireland Area Reunion. Thank you to all who came and saw me in the marketplace.

Lots of branches filled in request forms and these have now been advertised locally as well as online, including on the Association’s website.

Saturday 22 April took me to Newmains Community Trust Centre where I showcased the RAF Association and volunteering opportunities that we have on offer.

Lots of interest was shown from veterans and members of the community. From this event we recruited a new Fundraising Team Leader for Motherwell. They will join other volunteers in this role in Livingston, Kilmarnock and Inverness, where we have filled Fundraising Team Leader vacancies and are now recruiting for fundraisers to join these groups.

We are still looking for Fundraising Team Leaders in Dumfries, Fort William and Falkirk.

Can you help or do you know someone in these areas who could help? Full training and support is provided by the team and no specific experience is required. Simply enthusiasm and a willingness to undertake the role.

The next befriending course will take place on 16 June at Lossiemouth. If you would like more information on how you could give a little time to be a friend to someone facing loneliness in your community, please contact us on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361.

My next event is at Leuchars Station Open Day on 3 June please come and say hello if you are in the area!

Donna Hutchinson
Area Volunteer Coordinator
Service member appointments—
pensions appeal tribunals (Scotland) - part-time appointments

Applications are invited from persons with knowledge or experience of service in Her Majesty’s naval, military or air forces to join the panel from which service members of the Pensions Appeal Tribunals for Scotland are selected. There are vacancies for three part-time members.

The function of the Pensions Appeal Tribunals is to hear and decide upon appeals concerning disablement pensions (known as War Pensions) arising from service in the Armed Forces, Mercantile Marine, Civil Defence etc.

The appointments are made by the Lord President of the Court of Session under Section 6 and under paras 2 and 2A of the Schedule to the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Act 1943 as amended.

All tribunal sittings are held in Edinburgh. The fee per sitting is currently £222.38. Travel expenses are paid within Scotland. You are likely to be allocated up to ten sitting days per year.

Interviews are scheduled for late June 2017. Successful candidates will be able to take up their appointments by October 2017.

Expressions of interest, and a letter giving details of experience, should be sent to: The Secretary, Pensions Appeal Tribunals for Scotland, George House, 126 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4HH by Wednesday 31 May.

Further information about the posts may be obtained from the secretary by email on: PAT_Info_Mailbox@scotcourtrttribunals.gov.uk or call 0131 271 4340.

Burns Supper—Airdrie & Coatbridge

Recently members of the Airdrie and Coatbridge Branch, along with our Area Director Joe Stanfield, attended a Burns Supper hosted by the Coatbridge Tesco store.

On behalf of all members of the Airdrie and Coatbridge Branch, the Chairman, Mr Vincent Grant, would like to commend the store for the effort they put in to assisting and advising the branch and also for the warm welcome the store gave to the branch during this event.

To the right is a photograph of Joe Stanfield with members of the branch, including Vincent Grant (centre).
Royal Observer Corps news

Many former Royal Observer Corps (ROC) posts are being re-opened by volunteers for public viewing occasionally, including two in Scotland. Arbroath and Skelmorlie. Many re-enactors take part in events in the former posts.

The former ROC Sector HQ in Dundee is being completely restored by volunteers. This is an incredible effort on their part and may be open occasionally soon.

The former ROC Group HQ and Ops Room in York City is now owned by English Heritage and open for viewing.

The latest former ROC Ops Room to be restored and will be the Old Guildhall in Bury St Edmunds.

It is a listed building and may receive grant assistance which will hopefully be received well by the town council.

The ROC is pounding ahead across the UK and participating in so many events.

The ROC Association National Standard will be at the ROC Grove (Nat Arboretum Staffs) along with many ROCA Group Standards on Saturday 13 May 2017. Hopefully 31 Group Standard too.

This event will Commemorate the 70th anniversary of the 1947 re-call of the ROC on the onset of the "Cold War" and all who served until 1995 final stand down. From then on, there are many national events including:


-24 June—Plymouth Armed Forces Day on the Hoe.

-9 July—Battle of Britain Parade Capel Le Ferne.

-14 to 16 July—Royal International Air Tattoo Fairford.

-17 Sept—The Battle of Britain Service, Westminster Abbey.

John Sharpe Awarded MBE

For his volunteer work, which includes serving as National Chairman of the ROC services to the Children’s Hearing System, work as an invigilator for exams in Scottish high schools and also his work with the Association as an Honorary Welfare Officer (HWO), John Sharpe will be awarded an MBE on the 12 July 2017 at Holyrood Palace.

John has been National Chairman of the ROC for nineteen years, working with the Children’s Hearing Services for twenty six and a half years and has been working with the East Kilbride Branch of the RAF Association for more years than he can remember. John is Branch Chairman for East Kilbride, A HWO and now an Area Councillor for the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area.

He says that he will be attending the ceremony with three very important women in his life, his partner, his daughter and his granddaughter. John said that he is “delighted, humbled and proud” to receive the award.

He works very hard in each of these positions. He described his work as an HWO as: “extremely rewarding”, and said “I have a great deal of work on but I’m loving every minute of it”. “The great thing is you can put in as much or as little time as you like, at the moment I’m working every day really”.

We’d like to say congratulations to John from everyone in the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area!

-6 to 8 Oct—ROCA National Reunion - Palace Hotel Buxton.

In addition, very many ROCA groups will attend their own local Battle of Britain Parades across the UK as always.

I will be parading our own 31 Group Standard at Aldergrove Battle of Britain Parade in September.

Paddy Malone
(Hon Sec 31 Group ROCA)
( RAF Association Member)

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales). SC037673 (Scotland).
Edinburgh Marathon Festival Weekend—27 to 28 May 2017

ABOUT THE EVENT

Edinburgh Marathon Festival 5K – Saturday 27 May 2017 11am

The EMF 5K is a great start to your running journey and a chance to be part of the biggest running festival in Scotland.

Edinburgh Marathon Festival 10K – Saturday 27 May 2017 0900 hrs

The EMF 10K is an increasingly popular race distance, a great step-up for those who have completed a 5K in the past, but aren’t quite ready for the half marathon distance.

Edinburgh Marathon 2017 – Sunday 28 May 2017 0950 hrs

Fast and flat, this course was voted the fastest marathon in the UK by Runners World. Ideal if it’s your first marathon or you are looking for a personal best. Places for the Edinburgh Marathon have sold out since 2008 and it is the second largest marathon in the UK, behind London.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register your interest in any of these events, or for further information, please contact jules@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361.*

*Cterms and conditions apply

COSTS

We ask that you raise a minimum of £100 for the 5k and £500 for the marathon.
Falkirk Golf Tournament—21 September 2017

The Falkirk Golf Tournament will take place on Thursday 21 September this year.

The tee off times are: 1000 hrs - 1040 hrs

Coffee and a roll will be provided on your arrival and a two course meal will be provided after the round, which will be main and a dessert.

There are places for 20 players, so please get in touch as soon as you can prior to the event.

If you are interested in attending and would like more details, please contact Dave Mowatt (contact details available on the last page of this newsletter).

The cost for the event is £32, this includes a deposit of £10pp.

Please make deposit cheques payable to RAF Association Scotland and Northern Ireland. A place will be secured once the deposit has been received.

Her Majesty The Queen turns 91 years old

The Royal Air Forces Association would like to wish our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen a very happy 91st birthday.

Her Majesty attended Newbury Racecourse near Windsor Castle on her birthday, 21 of April. There were also celebrations in central London. The Royal Horse Artillery staged a 41 gun salute to Her Majesty in Hyde Park.

There was also a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London and a 21 gun royal salute fired from Edinburgh Castle.

The Queen celebrated her 65 year Sapphire Jubilee this year too and is the world’s longest reigning living monarch.

Her Majesty’s official birthday takes place on the second Saturday in June, due to the potential for better weather.
Alfie Martin—97th birthday celebration

Member of Lisburn Branch, Alfie Martin, recently celebrated his 97th birthday surrounded by RAF Association friends.

Alfie’s experiences in the RAF are incredible and he published a book describing his story.

Alfie was from 102 Squadron taking part in Operation Pilsen taking off from Ockington on 16 April, 1943. While home bound, the aircraft was attacked which set both engines on fire. There were seven crew members on board including Alfie. One was killed, two became prisoners of war and four escaped. Alfie’s escape was made possible by encountering the Comet III group of the French Resistance. It has given his permission for his story to be published here:

“Then the pilot came on "All OK? All OK?" and I replied, "Yes." As far as I know every member replied "Yes" - of the crew. But a few minutes after that the pilot said, "Bail out! Bail out! The engine's on fire. We're in real trouble."

“So, I put on my parachute and the navigator, he took his seat away and sat over the escape hatch. I lifted up the escape hatch which when it came to the vertical, was supposed to come off the hinges and you pushed it down through - jettisoned it out through the hole. I did that but the air screw jammed it in, sort of the air coming in kept it tight against and I couldn't reach across with enough strength to clear it. I couldn't get the navigator who was in the far side of it to give it a kick."

“Then the pilot came on pleading, "Please get out!" and so forth. We went down to about 7,000 feet I think at that time. So I quickly unbuttoned my intercom and my helmet and I just stood up and I jumped on the edge of the door and out it went and I went out too."

“My first impression was just the black tail of the aircraft going over the top of my head. Anyway I got down safely, without any problem, I tried to see if some of the others were getting out, but I couldn't get my chute turned. You come down very slowly and very quietly and it's amazing just how much of a difference there is from having had an engine in your ears for 10 hours, absolute silence, and you come down, drift down very slowly and suddenly then the ground rushes up and hits you. I just rolled on to my back and I was fine."

“I then began to think of what they tell us when we were training. We did have people who had escaped and evaded capture and so forth, speak to us on the squadron. The thing was, first of all there was help to be obtained but you had go and find it. You had to remember that those people were subject to death if they helped, so you should not take notes about who they are and so forth. We were also told the best time to escape is immediately when you land in territory and also that you should hide your parachute and get as far away from the aircraft as possible.”

“I did that, and I walked, and wandered through fields at night for a couple of nights, getting more and more miserable to tell you the truth, and not being able to sleep very well and did try to talk to several people, but they were either afraid or they couldn't help. On the Sunday morning (it was Friday night we were shot down) I sort of hid up in a gate, in a hedge and dozed off because I was determined to only walk..."
Alfie Martin...Continued

at nights and off the roads and so forth. I was as I say I dozing and I was sitting on my cap, or my flying boots and suddenly there was an awful crashing and a noise and a cow came down upon me, followed by a little boy.”

“He stopped and looked at me, and I think I got up, and we both looked at each other. Then, wonder of wonders, he saluted! I still feel emotional that did a great deal for my morale because I had been feeling kind of miserable and that wee fella Andre, I still have Christmas cards from him. He and his family helped me as much as they could, gave me an idea where to go and so forth.”

“Later that evening I wandered on and thought about taking the train, but was too scared to do so. So I wandered over a hill there was, just to keep away from the traffic and suddenly ahead of me were 2 Gendarmes talking to a lady. They had been looking in my direction so there was no point in trying to run off the other way. I went down and tried to brazen it out. I got level with them and one said, “Carte d’identité Monsieur?”

“I stopped and started running through my pockets as if I were searching for something and acting dumb, I didn’t speak. Anyway, after a minute or two they kind of talked a wee bit to the other, and the lady she drifted into the background a little, and they sort of indicated for me to go with them. So we started walking back up the hill. I had just about made up my mind that I was going to make a run for it, when the two of them stopped and talked one to another, then the one I talked to I took to be the senior of the two said, “Anglais?” I said “Oui.” And he said, “Allez vite!” I ‘allez-ed vite’ very ‘vite-ly’ indeed.”

“Anyway, I followed on, I continued down the railway track to some extent further down, by keeping off the road. About 8 o’clock that evening I came to a little crossing. I went out onto the road to walk across. Just after I’d cut across I saw there was a lady in the Crossing Keeper’s house and I went back and asked her, and told her who I was and could she help. She was very frightened but I persisted and eventually she took me in and gave me a glass of wine and a biscuit. She then said I’ll take you somewhere you can spend the night. She had wanted to know where I was going to spend the night, I had thought I’d just spend it in the fields.”

“So we walked up about half a mile, went up to a farmhouse, knocked the door and we were taken in and I was told that they were friendly. They asked me various questions and they said I could stay the night but they’d have to see what they could do for me in the morning. The result was I stayed there 6 weeks, during which time I heard a programme on the world radio - news from Newforge. And strangely enough I’ve come across a lady here who was in the particular concert they were playing there! That and also the Dambusters raid was on too. I heard it on the World Service.”

Alfie was later assisted to leave by train to travel over the Pyrenees to San Sebastian to the British Consul. He had to dye his red hair black, although this plan experienced difficulty as the dye ended up running out. As Alfie described “I wasn’t a very attractive Spaniard!”

It is Alfie’s hope that telling of his experiences gives people an idea of what people went through during this time, this includes great highs and lows as well as strong bonds most of all.

Alfie published a book about his experiences, named: Bale Out!: Escaping Occupied France with the Resistance.

The book is available for purchase through Amazon or via the Waterstones website here:

HELP US TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU

By far, the quickest and easiest way for us to get in contact with our members is through email. This method of communication also saves money on postage – money that we can instead spend on providing welfare support to members of the RAF Family. Please update us on your current email address by sending a quick note to Anna using the details on the right.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Let Anna know what your branch is up to, so that it can be included in next month’s newsletter. You can contact Anna by calling the office, or you can email your updates and photographs to her using the details on the right.

MEDIA PLATFORMS

Please follow the RAF Association Scotland and Northern Ireland Instagram, Twitter and Facebook pages. These are faster and varied ways in which to keep up to date with our news!

Instagram: raf_association_scot_and_ni
Facebook: RAF Association—Scotland and Northern Ireland
Twitter: @RAFAScotaNI

Area Supporters & News

An organisation called Fares4Free provided free bus transport between the hotel and the church on the Sunday, which enabled those who required it to attend the church service and memorial service. Thank you to David Gibson!

Please note that as from the 31 Mar 17 Freeths Hub (employment support service) portal is no longer available.

Please take a look at the Royal Observer Corps website on:
http://www.rocatwentytwelve.org/

MEDIA PLATFORMS

Please follow the RAF Association Scotland and Northern Ireland Instagram, Twitter and Facebook pages. These are faster and varied ways in which to keep up to date with our news!

Instagram: raf_association_scot_and_ni
Facebook: RAF Association—Scotland and Northern Ireland
Twitter: @RAFAScotaNI

AREA STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Glasgow Office

Joe Stanfield, Area Director
07585 508 016 | joe.stanfield@rafa.org.uk
Russ McMillan, Branch Support Officer
07887 746 260 | russ.mcmillan@rafa.org.uk

Edinburgh Office (Area HQ)

General: 0131 225 5221
Mike McCourt, Area Welfare Officer
07462 474 777 | mike.mccourt@rafa.org.uk
Sheila Laramore, Assistant Area Welfare Officer
07788 245 275 | sheila.laramore@rafa.org.uk
Anna Lawton, Area Administrator
anna.lawton@rafa.org.uk

Leuchars Office

General: 01334 838 812
Dave Mowatt, Branch Support Officer
07419 295 454 | Mil: 95151
Donna Hutchinson, Volunteer Coordinator
donna.hutchinson@rafa.org.uk

Belfast Office

General: 028 9032 5718
Sarah Waugh, NI Regional Manager
07920 193 733 | sarah.waugh@rafa.org.uk
Carol Titterington, NI Regional Support Officer
carol.titterington@rafa.org.uk

Follow us on: