

Letchworth, Hitchin & District
Branch



RAFA GEN 'E'

WINTER
2016

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Association**

The charity that supports the RAF family

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RAFAGEN



*The official newsletter of the
Letchworth & District Branch of
the Royal Air Forces' Association*

The charity that supports the RAF family

ROYAL AIR FORCES' ASSOCIATION LETCHWORTH, HITCHIN & DISTRICT BRANCH OFFICIALS

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*Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at
the Conservative Club, Birds Hill, Letchworth Garden City,
Hertfordshire, at 20.00 hrs Guests are welcome*

Supporting something special

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT



I was in a 'memory lane' mood the other day, and was looking at the Christmas menus for R.A.F. Negombo in Ceylon. My first menu was from 1948, three years after the end of the war, when everyone in the U.K. was restricted by rationing. The menu was a 4 course meal starting with **Tomato Soup**. This was followed by a **Cheese Omelette**. The main course was **Roast Pork, Apple Sauce and Forcemeat Stuffing**. Accompanied by **Roast Potatoes, Green Peas, Vichy Carrots and Brown Sauce**. Note, no turkey. Christmas tradition also went out of the window when the dessert offered was Fruit Gateaux. To round off the meal coffee was on the menu. I would imagine that there would have been many homes in Britain that would have loved to have sat down to that meal on Christmas Day.

The next menu I pulled out was for Christmas 1953, five years later. This time the cooks had really pulled out the stops, five courses this time, plus a few extras. As before **Tomato Soup** started the proceedings., Followed by **Fried Fillet of Seer & Lime**. The main course was traditional. **Roast Turkey with Chipoltas, Roast Pork, Apple Sauce, Stuffing, Baked and Creamed Potatoes, Peas and Cauliflower**. Now on the menu **Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce** or, for those not liking Christmas Pud, **Fruit Salad and Cream**. More to come, **Mince Pies, or Dessert, nuts, Chocolate or Cheese and Biscuits**. Now for the extras, and remember this was 1953. **Beer, Minerals and Cigarettes**, and if the beer didn't wash down all that food, **Coffee** was available. To prove that it wasn't just the overseas airman eating well at Christmas, I have a menu from Christmas 1951 at R.A.F. Netheravon in Wiltshire, and is exactly the same as the 1953 Negombo menu with the exception of the Fried Fillet of Seer and Lime.

Remember all this was served to the Airmen, airwomen, and N.C.O.'s by the Commissioned Officers.

I hope you all have an enjoyable Christmas Day dinner and a Happy Christmas.



More From The Editor

When I left the Royal Air Force, I have to admit that it took me a long time to adapt back into civilian life. I thought in today's Royal Air Force things might be different, as serving members today live a different type of life as we did 60 years ago. It came as a bit of a surprise when Lisa Berry said that she was sorry she had not attended meetings since leaving the forces, because she was finding it difficult to settle into civvy street, and I was able to sympathise with her. She tells me she is a lot more settled now, and will be attending meetings on a regular basis. She has also agreed to join the Committee as a co-opted member, until the next elections at the A.G.M. in March.



BRANCH VISIT TO THE R.A.F. MUSEUM AT HENDON



BRANCH VISIT TO THE R.A.F. MUSEUM AT HENDON

We had a very enjoyable day out when over 20 of us went down to Hendon to have a guided tour of the exhibits. It doesn't matter how many times one goes to Hendon, it is always an enjoyable visit.



I just couldn't resist going along and saying "Hello" to one of my old colleagues. The poor chap has stood under the wing of that Vulcan for many a year now. Has anyone ever told him that the maximum working day for a dog and therefore his handler is only 6 hours in 24.

Our next visit out is to The Wartime Bunker ay Uxbridge. This will be in April next year. This is another 'not to be missed' trip. There is a problem though. There are a lot of steps down and even more coming back up (or that is what it seems like). It is well worth the decent when you finally arrive in the Ops room. You can see all that Winston Churchill saw whilst overseeing the Battle of Britain. Because of the Health and Safety laws, over a certain number is allowed in the Bunker per visit. So if you are interested, names are being taken of those interested. We have a lot of outside interest in this one, so make sure that your name is on the list.





In September we had Squadron Leader Alan Huyton come along from R.A.F. Henlow to talk to us about the “Open Sky’s Agreement”.

When Alan began his talk, I think he thought we were all aware of this agreement. To be honest I think that most of us had never heard of it, but we certainly knew a lot about it when he had finished his very informative talk. I don’t think he told all for security reasons.

I cannot explain here what we were told, a lot more space would be needed, but the result is that Alan and his team are certainly helping the world to be a safer place to live in, taking the risk of all out war that little bit further away.

Alan made what was a very serious talk very easy to listen to, especially with the inclusion of the lighter side of his work.



A CHANCE TO PAUSE A MINUTE IN QUIET CONTEMPLATION FOR OUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE RECENTLY PASSED AWAY

It was with deep regret, and shock that we learnt in September of the passing away of Jemma Macfarlane. Jemma, although not a current member, was until recently an Associate member and a Committee member. During her time with the Branch she made many friends, and it was with deep sorrow that the news was announced to members.



Although not a current member, the Branch offered the Branch Standard to be present at the funeral, as Jemma had been very keen on what the Branch did. The family accepted the offer, and Roy Newbury went along and did a sterling job which was appreciated by all those who attended.

The Branch Standard was also requested by the current Chairman of the North Herts District Council to be present at his Civic Service at St Hugh's Church Letchworth Garden City.



This was something new to Roy, who carries the Standard for us. Roy has procedures for all events involving the Standard, but this

was going into uncharted territory. At the service Roy was accompanied by Standards from the local Naval Association and the Letchworth Branch of the Royal British Legion, along with a number of Cubs and Brownies.

No one knew what to do, so Roy took charge and lead the way. The event went off without a hitch. At the reception afterwards Roy came to me and told me that it could have been done to make it better. That is Roy. It may have been perfect to those watching, but Roy was sure with a little time to prepare it could have been better. That is why we are proud of Roy and the work he does for us at ceremonies. If we get invited to another Civic Service it will be even better.



Get your diaries out, because our R.A.F.A.L.O. W/O Shaun Griffin has been busy ensuring that our Branch Social evenings are entertaining.

DECEMBER 2016

8th - Branch Christmas Dinner at the Gardener's Arms.

JANUARY 2017

12th - Josh Tidy - L.G.C.H.F. Curator - provisional

FEBRUARY 2017

9th - Flight Sergeant Emily Campbell from 1066 Hitchin Sqn ATC.

MARCH 2017

9th- **Branch AGM and social evening.**

APRIL 2017

13th - W/O Shaun Griffin - The R.A.F. Regiment a short history and recent operations.

20th - Branch visit to R.A.F. Uxbridge WWII Bunker. Details nearer the date.

MAY 2017

11th - Sgt Sarah Ward 248 Letchworth Sqn ATC - flying scholarships and Air Experience Flights.

JUNE 2017

8th - Gary Fisher - The Magna Carter.

JULY 2017

13th - Josh Tidy - L.G.C.H.F. Curator - provisional

AUGUST 2017

10 th - David Taylor - Amy Johnson - provisional.

SEPTEMBER 2017

14th - To be confirmed

OCTOBER 2017

13th - To be confirmed

17 th - *Branch visit to R.A.F. Regiment Heritage Centre at R.A.F. Honington.*

NOVEMBER 2017

10th - To be confirmed

DECEMBER 2017

14th - *Branch Christmas Social.*

Please note that speakers may change at short notice due to circumstances, especially those members of the Armed Forces.

UXBRIDGE BUNKER - THE NEXT VISIT



WE PROUDLY FLY THE R.A.F. ENSIGN



You may have noticed that your Branch, in association with the North Herts District Council, fly the Royal Air Force Ensigns on the mast at the Letchworth War Memorial, the Baldock War Memorial and the Hitchin Town Hall, during the month of September. The flying of the Ensigns denote the celebrating of the anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and the R.A.F.A. Wings Appeal. Along with the flying of the ensigns we hold a small service at the war memorials in Letchworth and Hitchin to denote anniversary of the “Battle

of Britain”.



OCTOBER SPEAKER

Our October Speaker was Major Squbb of the Salvation Army, who gave us a talk entitled, “I was only putting out the Chamber Pot”. His talk turned out to be amusing and thought provoking on things that happened to him as a soldier in the Salvation Army.

New R.A.F. Association scheme rewards members

The R.A.F. Association has just launched a new scheme to give members discounts on a wide range of products and services. Whether it’s a meal out with friends, your weekly grocery shop or renewing your car insurance, RAFA Rewards could save you money.

If you're a member, you can start using your RAFA Rewards straight away, if you've not yet renewed your membership for next year, make sure you renew now to continue enjoying your benefits in 2017.

You can renew by calling 0800 0182 361 and pay by debit or credit card. Alternatively, if you have access to our members portal you can renew online: <https://rafa.force.com/login>

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Christmas Cracker Jokes

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claustrophobic.

Why does Santa have 3 gardens?
So he can ho-ho-ho.

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?
Because he had low elf esteem.

What do you call an elf who sings?
A Wrapper!

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?
Frostbite.

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
Ice Crispies.

A wonderful Christmas song told me to Deck The Halls....so I did. Mr. and Mrs Hall were not very happy.

Don't you hate that awkward moment when Santa Claus has the same wrapping paper as your parents!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
Nothing, it was on the house!

What's red and white and gives presents to good little fish on Christmas?
Sandy Claws.

What do you get when you cross an archer with a gift-wrapper?
Ribbon hood.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

A copy of the cover of RAFAGEN from December 1952. 64 years ago, some newspapers don't last that long. This copy, along with a few more, although a little worn is in the archives of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Museum.



RAFAGI

the Royal

All Forces Association