



RAFAGEN

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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ROYAL AIR FORCES Association

The charity that supports the RAF family

Letchworth, Hitchin & District
Branch

WINTER
2018

RAFAGEN is the winner of the SE
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www.rafa-leitchworth.org.uk

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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

Life President: Gordon Collinson

Vice President : Dennis Dawson

Chairman: Lisa Berry

Vice Chairman: Roy Newbury

Hon. Secretary: Ken Needham

Hon. Treasurer: Ken Needham

Committee:

John Airey: Rev. Lindsay Dew:

Marie Mahoney:

Branch R.A.F.A.L.O. Warrant Officer Shaun Griffin

RAFAGEN Edited by Ken Needham

Branch Welfare Officer: Sue Chester (Contact via Secretary)

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***Meetings are held at the Letchworth Rugby Club, Baldock Road, Letchworth Garden City Herts (Behind the Letchworth Leisure Centre) on the 3rd Monday of each month at 19.45 hrs.
Licensed Bar Ample Parking***

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT



The things people do for charity. That is our Chairman, Lisa Berry on the front cover, during her Wing Walk. Afterwards Lisa said, "Amazing!!! So very physically demanding though because of the air / wind speed. Killer keeping your arms up in the air. Lots and lots of layers too as it's cold up there!!" More of the Wing Walk later in this issue. Good 'on yer Lisa!!!

Due the large number of events that have taken place over the past three months, I am afraid I have had to postpone our part four of AN INVISIBLE WORKPLACE until the next issue in the Spring.

As you will see later in this issue some members of the Branch had a wonderful day visiting the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden, just outside Biggleswade. I certainly enjoyed every minute of our visit. I didn't realise it was so large, and I did get to see a real Deperdussin aircraft, which I researched in 2012 when arranging the ceremony of the accident at Willian, with Roy Newbury. Our guide was very knowledgeable on all the aircraft and vehicles, and was Robert Boss who not only is a regular guide for visitors to the Collection, is also a member of our Branch.

It's surprising what you learn over a cup of tea. Waiting to start our guided tour of the Shuttleworth collection, I enjoyed a nice cup of tea whilst chatting to member Gordon Overton. I learnt a great deal about Gordon during our chat, but one story I found enlightening, was the fact that he got his first job with the 'bribe' of a Cup Final ticket. I hasten to add that it wasn't Gordon who made the bribe.



Hitchin & District branch of The Royal Air Force Association

BRANCH CHAIRMAN, LISA BERRY AND HER FUN RAISING WING WALK.

THE AMOUNT RAISED AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS £578.00



Lots and lots of layers too as it's cold up there!



WELL DONE
LISA

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STANDARD BEARER.

Recently at a Committee meeting, Chairman Lisa Berry, reported that new member Mark Howell, had shown interest in becoming a Standard Bearer. The Committee agreed that due to the fact that our present Standard Bearer was not able to carry out the duties at the Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin Remembrance Day parades in November, as our current Standard Bearer was already committed to parades out of the area, was it possible to give Mark a try at our local event. All agreed that subject to our present Standard Bearer, Roy Newbury, giving a few pointers, and he was happy that he could do the job, we had a Standard Bearer for the first time at Letchworth and Hitchin Remembrance services.



Mark Howell awaiting the start of the Hitchin Parade

Roy gave Mark a brief training session, and with the help of the Remembrance Day Parade Marshal who ran through with Mark what would happen on the day, Roy reported back to the Committee that Mark was more than capable of taking on the job. So at the November Committee meeting Mark was appointed as the Branch Standard Bearer, subject to Roy carrying on keeping an eye on things, and standing in at funerals until Mark was able to take on this part of Standard Bearing.



Roy Newbury

At this point we must recognise the sterling work that Roy has done in carrying the Branch Standard at many occasions over the years since the passing away of Alan Wiseman. I am sure that Roy will not mind us reporting that he is in his 90th year, and carries that Standard as straight and proud as any man half his age. Roy takes the Standard of the Aircrew Association each year to France to ceremonies to remember those of Bomber Command who did not return home.

It was at the Letchworth Memorial Service on the 11th November that Mark was 'on his own' He tells me that he was a little nervous before the parade, but as soon as it started the fears were lost, and he was proud to be

carrying our Standard. As a bystander at this service I thought that Mark did a sterling job, for his first outing. But bigger things were to come in the afternoon. The Hitchin service is totally different from the Letchworth one, in so far that the parade starts at the Town Hall and marches through the streets of Hitchin to the church. At the church the all of the Standards are paraded through the church and deposited at the altar during the service, being collected afterwards and paraded back through the church. Speaking to Mark after the service he told me that "He had never felt so proud marching through the town and parading up the aisle with the Standard". He went on to say that his introduction into being a Standard Bearer was on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War one. What could be more fitting." Totally agree Mark, and thank you on behalf of the Branch.

THE SHUTTLEWORTH COLLECTION A VISIT TO REMEMBER



A small party of members had a great day in October visiting The Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden, near Biggleswade. We had a very knowledgeable guide taking us around the collection. He was non other that new member, Jim Box. The history of the Shuttleworth family and how the collection came about as well as full knowledge of all the aircraft was all given to us in full easy to understand

information. Thank you Jim. Great day. Would recommend a visit to anyone interested in vintage transport.

The aircraft I wanted to see was the Deperdussin. This aircraft virtually took over my life in 2012 when Roy Newbury and I arranged the memorial for the two men killed when this type of plane crashed 100 years ago near Willian. Jim Box informed us that this was a real aircraft, not a rebuild nor a replica. When the plane crashed it wasn't very high and was coming in to land, but when you see how flimsy the structure was you can understand why the pilots did not survive.



Jim Box explains all about the Deperdussin

Not only does the collection contain vintage aircraft, also on show are vintage vehicles, including steam driven ones, motorcycles, and cars.





Like the rest of Great Britain, Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City remembered

Large turnouts were expected at all Remembrance Services throughout the country, and large turnouts there was in the three major town in which our branch covers. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Branch in all three towns. Pauline Collinson laid the Baldock wreath, Lisa Berry (Chairman) laid the Letchworth wreath and John Airey laid the one in Hitchin. Hitchin had two services this year. The church wanted to mark the exact time of the armistice, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month. So an addition service was held in the morning, with large crowds attending. The annual remembrance service being held in the afternoon after a parade through the town. Our wreath being laid at the latter.

I attended both Letchworth and Hitchin ceremonies, and was pleased to see that at each service an official wreath was laid on behalf of the Royal Air Force by a uniformed serving member. In both cases the the R.A.F. Personnel laying the wreaths was from R.A.F. Honnington and both R.A.F. Police.

Honnington is not only the home of the R.A.F. Regiment but is now home to the R.A.F. Police, moving from R.A.F. Henlow a couple of years ago.

BALDOCK



HITCHIN



HITCHIN cont.



LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY



LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY cont



Member Gordon Overton proudly sitting beside a poppy display in a local care home.



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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.

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

13 Dec 18 - **Branch Christmas Bash.**

10 Jan 19 - Letchworth Sqn ATC Update Sgt Sarah Ward.

14 Feb 19 - Martin Johnson - Hertfordshire wildlife.

14 Mar 19 - **AGM & Social Evening**

11 Apr 19 - Chris Balmforth - Letchworth Model Aeronautical Society

18 Apr 19 - Branch Visit - **Cosford Aircraft Museum or Bletchley Park**
(Which ever has the bigger support)

9 May 19 - Dr Rudi Newman R101 Imperial Airship scheme 1924-30.

13 Jun 19 - Paul Jiggins The History of measurement.

11 July 19 - Gary Fisher BA The History of Hatfield House.

8 Aug 19 - David Davis - Letchworth Garden City cottages TBC.

12 Sep 19 - **Battle of Britain dinner night.**

10 Oct 19 - Shaun Griffin - History of The RAF Armoured Car Companies
in Transjordan and Mesopotamia.

17 Oct 19 - **Branch Visit - de Havilland museum**

14 Nov 19 - Ian Waller - Family history and genealogy.

12 Dec 19 - **Christmas Bash**



Letchworth Par 3 Family Golf Centre

- Enjoy a round of golf with family or friends
- Play the traditional French game of pétanque
- Cafe offering wide range of coffees, teas, cakes and hot / cold food
- Fully licensed bar with wide range of beers, ciders, spirits and soft drinks
- Ample parking and free wi-fi
- Everyone welcome



We support the R.A.F. Association and Wings Appeal

**Cafe open from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm
Late nights on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**

**Letchworth Par 3 Family Golf Centre
Willian Way, Letchworth SG6 2HJ
01462 483863
www.letchworthfamilygolf.co.uk**

SHUTTLEWORTH

AIRSHOWS

AT SHUTTLEWORTH

MAY-OCT
2019

THE PERFECT FAMILY DAY OUT

2019 AIRSHOWS

Shuttleworth is home to vintage vehicles, motorcycles, and over 50 historic aircraft, with an adjacent 19th century Regency Swiss Garden.

Ticket price includes entry to The House*, Swiss Garden, and play area, don't miss out!



*Sunday Airshows only

05 SEASON
MAY PREMIERE

18 EVENING
MAY AIRSHOW

02 FLYING
JUN FESTIVAL

15 EVENING
JUN AIRSHOW

07 MILITARY
JUL AIRSHOW

20 EVENING
JUL AIRSHOW

04 FAMILY
AUG AIRSHOW

17 FLYING
AUG PROMS

01 VINTAGE
SEP AIRSHOW

06 RACE DAY
OCT (FINALE)



New members of 2018

New names will be added each quarter. Let us see if we can fill the page by the end of the year

Miss S. Ward of Letchworth Garden City

Mr G. Ward of Letchworth Garden City

Mr M. Sawyer of Thetford

Mr D. Briscoe of Henlow

Mr J. Coleman of Tamworth

Mrs L. Higham of Henlow

Mr G. Luxton of Henlow

Mr A. Millard of Hitchin

Mr A. Morgan of Henlow

Mr G. Spicer of Chicksands

Mr D. Watson of Chicksands

Mrs A. Millard of Hitchin

Mr W. Richardson - Isle of Wight

PRESENT BRANCH MEMBERSHIP STANDS AT

155

The reduction from the last quarter is due to the fact that we have been notified of 7 lapsed members. These names are being followed up and hopefully will be back on the list by the end of the year.



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The Christmas and New Year season is with us once again, and we at the Branch would like to remind everyone of the perils of drinking and driving.

We all say that there is not so many police around nowadays, but I can almost guarantee that if you get behind the wheel of your car when you have had one to many, there is a police car round the corner.

Here is a little story I was told by a fellow 'snowdrop' which I hope will make you think.

The other evening I decided to pop down to a little pub I know just down the road. When I arrived I found a few of my friends there, and after only telling myself I would only have a couple of pints, one thing lead to another. By the end of the evening I knew I was not able to drive my car back home, so I left it in the pub car park and took a bus.

What a good job it was that I left my car behind, because just a short way down the road, the police were pulling vehicles over and breathalysing all drivers. As I was in a bus we were waved smartly through the road check. I arrived home safe and sound and went off to bed feeling a little light headed, but home safely.

In the morning I began to ponder my experiences from the night before. Two things I just could not fathom out. One, where did I pick up the bus and two, when did I learn to drive a bus!!!!!!

HAVE A GOOD CHRISTMAS AND KEEP SAFE

drinkaware.co.uk
for the facts