

Branch Membership

186

**SPECIAL
ELECTRONIC
EDITION**

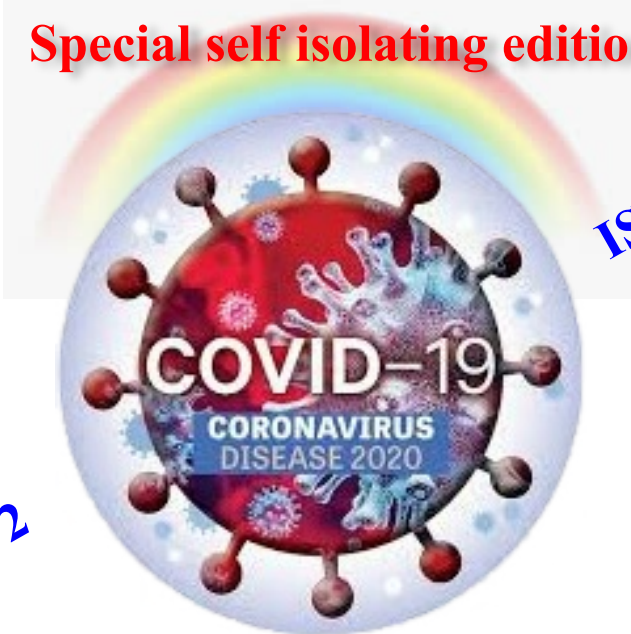
 **ROYAL
AIR FORCES**
Association

The charity that supports the RAF family

RAFAGEN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LETCHWORTH, HITCHIN & DISTRICT BRANCH

Special self isolating edition



ISSUE 2

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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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RAFAGEN

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



ROYAL AIR FORCES' ASSOCIATION LETCWORTH , HITCHIN & DISTRICT

BRANCH OFFICIALS FOR 2020

Vice President:- Dennis Dawson

Chairman:- W.O. Shaun Griffin

Vice Chairman:- Alan Millard

Secretary:- Ken Needham

Assistant Secretary:- Marie Mahoney

Treasurer:- Ken Needham

Wings Appeal Officer:- Roy Newbury

Branch Welfare Officer: Mark Howell

Contact details :- Tel :-07874015229 email :- markhowell65@gmail.com

Membership Secretary:- Headley Parkins

Branch Padre:- Rev. Canon Lindsay Dew

Contact details :- Tel :- 01462742165

email :- lindsay.dew@btinternet.com

General Committee:

Dean Meek ; Donna Cook ; John Airey ;

Lesley Starr ;

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

Monthly 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. Licence / Bar / Ample Parking

NAAFI BREAK is held at The Par 3 Golf Centre, Willian Way, Letchworth Garden City on the 1st Tuesday of each month 10.00 hrsn 'til 12.00 hrs

Part of something special



Another Special Forward from our new Branch Chairman, Shaun Griffin

As most of us now enter our third week of making major adjustments to our lives, I'm sure you're all starting to think about when all this might end. If, as in my house, where working from home is as alien as social distancing your 'e finding adjustments difficult, its normal, if a little frustrating to focus on when we can go back normality. I sat with my wife Donna last evening reviewing our summer holiday plans for our July boating trip in Burgundy in France, hoping that we will be able to travel by then.

I would again like to thank the team of Branch volunteers (Lisa, Dixie, Donna C, Donna G and Mark) who are reaching out weekly to our over 70s, it's fantastic to know that our RAF Family within the Branch still hold dear the values and beliefs of the Royal Air Force - Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence. Huge thanks also to Ken Needham, for his great work in communicating with you all through this excellent newsletter, we are in deed very lucky to have Ken in such a pivotal role of Secretary, he is the glue that binds us all together.

A final reflection – I genuinely hope that through adversity, we will be a stronger society, healthier and more appreciative of each other and life's simples pleasures. If like some I have spoken to, you've found time to read more, reflect more, exercise more and take quality time out with family then this can't be all negative. Stay safe folks and give the Branch a call should we be able to assist you in anyway.



All correspondences regarding the RAFAGEN to
Ken Needham, 68 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth Garden City,
Hertfordshire, SG6 3HJ.

Telephone: 01462 671534

E-mail Secretary@rafa-Letchworth.org.uk

When I was overseas, we would make calendars to mark off the number of days left before we returned to Blighty. I am thinking of making one for the number of days left 'Self Isolating' No I think not! Self isolating is not the same. It's worse. Overseas we could go to the Corporals Club, go to the Astra. Even go off camp. Now I can't go to a pub, can't go to the cinema, and am limited to a quick walk around the block.

I am not a great TV watcher, so I am much appreciating the man who invented the computer, and I can sit and do things on mine, like preparing a newsletter for you. With no branch activities, that's about all I have to do. I've done the garden. My wife and I have spring cleaned the house, twice.

Are you all being looked after? If not there is a group of volunteers from the Branch who call themselves the 'Letchworth Covid-19 volunteers'

They are already in contact with branch members over 70 on a regular basis to make sure they are alright, and are willing to help any member in need. If you want their services just give me a call, and I will get one of the volunteers to call you back.

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May I say a big “thank you” to the team which is under the supervision of our new chairman, Shaun,. They are doing a sterling job.

Are you trying the RAFA weekly quiz? I have done it for three weeks now. I feel I have done quite well with getting one wrong on the first two weeks and two wrong on the third week. Trouble is I am not getting on with the Tie break question..... It really gets you, and they don't give you the answer.

Want to try your luck (no prizes) then log onto

<https://www.rafa.org.uk/operation-connect/operation-connect-entertainment/>

Just heard from one of our Branch Covid-19 support volunteers that one of their members is now finding it difficult to have the groceries delivered, as more and more self isolators are contacting the supermarkets for deliveries. Not very good for those over 70 who are instructed not to go out, but in this case there is no problem, as that is what our team of volunteers are there for. Out of the 56 branch members they are looking after, this is the first time they have been called upon for help. It appears that the old British wartime sprit is back, where neighbours are looking after each other. People are even talking to one another, at the legal distance naturally.

One of the things I have found very moving, and I am not a sentimental sort of person, is at twenty-hundred hours every Thursday, people leave their homes and clap for the care workers. In the part of the Garden City were I live, you can hear the applause all around you.. Moving, and they are not even clapping for me.



Brain Exercise

Twenty fairly simple question to help exercise the old grey matter.

Answers on the last page

1. WHICH CITY HAS A LEANING TOWER?

- a) Milan b) Pisa c) Rome d) Turin

2. WHICH RIVER FLOWS BETWEEN GATESHEAD AND NEWCASTLE?

- a) Tees b) Trent c) Tyne d) Thames

3. ST ANDREW IS THE PATRON SAINT OF ENGLAND!

- a) True b) False

4. WHICH IS THE LARGEST CITY IN WALES?

- a) Swansea b) Merthyr Tydfil c) Cardiff
d) Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch

5. HOW MANY PLAYERS ARE THERE IN AN ICE HOCKEY TEAM?

- a) 5 b) 6 c) 8 d) 11

6. HOW MANY EDGES DOES A CUBE HAVE?

- a) 6 b) 8 c) 10 d) 12

7. WHAT COLOUR IS A HIMALAYAN POPPY?

- a) Red b) Blue c) Yellow d) White

8. HOW MANY TEETH DOES AN ADULT HAVE? PROVIDING THEY HAVE A FULL SET.

- a) 28 b) 32 c) 36 d) 72

9. HOW MANY LETTERS ARE THERE IN THE ENGLISH ALPHABET?

- a) 26 b) 27 c) 28 d) 30

10. HOW MANY MONTHS OF THE YEAR HAVE 31 DAYS?

- a) 5 b) 7 c) 9 d) 11

11. WHICH TWO PARTS OF YOUR BODY NEVER STOP GROWING?

- a) Ears/nose b) ears/chin c) fingers/toes d) knees/nose

12. WHO INVENTED THE TV?

- a) Masara Ibuka b) John Logie Baird c) Nate Flicks d) Albert Einstein

13. IN WHICH YEAR DID ENGLAND WIN THE SOCCER WORLD CUP?

- a) 1954 b) 1960 c) 1966 d) 2018

14. HOW MANY STRINGS DOES A VIOLIN HAVE?

- a) 3 b) 4 c) 5 d) 6

15. WHICH COUNTRY GAVE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY TO UNITED STATES?

- a) Canadab) England c) France d) Denmark

16. WHICH SEA ADMIRAL HAS A MONUMENT IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE?

- a) Andrew Browne Cunningham b) Cloudesley Shovell

- C) W.O. Shaun Griffin d) Horatio Nelson

17. WHICH METAL MAKES THE STRONGEST MAGNETS?

- a) Iron b) Brass c) Copper d) Stainless Steel

18. HOW MANY LEAVES DOES THE SHAMROCK HAVE?

- a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5

19. HOW MANY SISTERS DOES BURT SIMPSON HAVE?

- a) 1 b) 2 c) 0 d) 4

20. WHAT IS A BABY KANGAROO CALLED?

- a) Joey b) Ross c) Chandler d) Gunter



REQUIRE THE SERVICES OF OUR NEW WELFARE OFFICER?

Here are the contact details of the branch Welfare Officer :-

Mark Howell

Tel :-07874015229

email :- markhowell65@gmail.com

If you need to contact Mark urgently and he is not available, contact the branch secretary, Ken Needham



LETCWORTH COVID-19 VOLUNTEERS

A group of volunteers from the Letchworth, Hitchin & District branch of R.A.F.A.

A group of volunteers from the branch, and under the direction of the branch Chairman, took on the task of contacting all branch members over the age of 70.

There are over 50 members that fall into this category, and with details given by R.A.F.A. H.Q. (under their strict confidentiality rules), the volunteers were given contact details.

Most of the members over 70 have been contacted, and found to be in good spirits. Their needs on the whole are being looked after by relatives, friends and neighbours. Some shopping has been done, but in the main it appears that making contact has been the most important thing.

The volunteers will continue to make regular contact to make sure things continue to be O.K. Until such times that we are "back to normal"

On problem that this branch has found, and it appears other branches on the same task, are finding, and that is the contact information supplied by H.Q. is not up to date.

Please remember in times like this, your contact details with any organisation like R.A.F.A. are most important. So if you change your address, phone number or e mail address please let either your branch or H.Q. know. We don't want to be in a situation like this again, but if were, we would like to know that at least R.A.F.A. are ready. With correct contact information we can serve you better

We are trying to obtain the missing information from our members by mail, and we are getting some results.

The volunteers are tasked to look after members over 70's, but if you are an ex airman or woman under that age are needing assistance in some way, please do not hesitate to contact your branch secretary, or H.Q. in Leicester.



PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Padre's Hour - Easter 2020

Hello again,

I hope you are well and safe. For all of us the world continues to be a very strange place in which to live. I suspect that many of you like me and my family sat down to listen to the broadcast by Her Majesty The Queen on Sunday evening. She spoke, as she always does, with great dignity and understanding; reflecting on the momentous time in which we live and thanking all those who serve the nation especially the NHS staff. Indeed we owe a huge debt to all of them and Her Majesty led us in giving thanks to them. She spoke of the way in which in years to come people looking back on this time will say that our generation have been as resolute and determined as those from other times. The words she used struck a chord with the war time song 'We'll Meet Again'. She was referring to the years of the 2nd WW. Every national emergency in time of need seems to bring out the best in us. The people of the War generation both those who went away to fight and those who stayed at home lived in constant fear, many faced death, everyone made sacrifices. Similarly today everyone is being called to make sacrifices. We will get through this with the support of friends and family even though for the time being we are restricted from having physical contact with the ones we love who live away.

I've discovered Zoom – an on line conferencing service which can allow up to 100 people to meet live via our pc screen. Churches have started using this, as well as YouTube and Facebook, to keep in touch with congregations. Services have been live streamed and people have been able to join in. But you can't beat the sound of the human voice speaking personally to us, through a phone call to friend, a family member or a neighbour. Zoom (like Skype) does this because it also allows us to see the person we're speaking to. We need human connection and interaction – it's



the way we're made. In a profound way it's God's gift to us because He is always connecting if we give the time and space to hear. The church worldwide is travelling through Holy Week leading to Good Friday then into Easter. Christians are invited to reflect on this story of Jesus as He makes His way to the Cross. Holy Week leads us to Easter and is the principal moment of the Christian year – it marks for us the supreme act of communication and connection. In Jesus God shares our human existence both in life and death and through Jesus proclaims His love by word and deed. The joy of Easter brings hope to a lonely and desperate world that in our fear and isolation we can know God's presence with us.

Please remember that RAFA is reaching out to communicate with those who need help and support. As a Branch we are trying to make sure that no one is left out and completely on their own. If you know of any who perhaps needs a phone call to help please let us know.

A prayer to use at this time:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Whether you are someone with a faith or not, I am more than happy to be contacted if you think I can offer support and friendship, help or advice. I will usually be at the monthly Branch meetings, and the NAAFI Break, (once they re-start) as well as serving on the Committee. For the time being you can ring me on 07545878082 or email me at lindsay.dew@btinternet.com

Kind regards & blessings

Lindsay

Revd Canon Lindsay Dew



Enquiry :

Corporal Needham on the case

Request from David Lewis

We are trying to find out a bit more about the war service of my wife's

mother, Marie Olive Armiger who served in the RAF (Service Number 446429) and received the Defence Medal and War Medal.

She was Secretary of the local (Letchworth and Hitchin) branch of the Royal Air Force Association for many years, and my wife and I enjoyed many a RAFA Dinner-Dances at The Broadway Hotel, in the 1970s.

Her husband (my father-in-law) was Denis Vernon McCormick who piloted Halifaxes ver Malta, Italy and Yugoslavia during WW2 (1943-44).

He was in 148 Squadron (Warrant Officer, Service Number 160243).

We have his pilots log-book together with many photographs and documents, etc.



He received the 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal and War Medal.

Firstly, are you or any of your branch members interested in any information we can supply, and secondly do you know if (and how) we can access RAF records ?

I am aware from your very interesting Facebook site

that your monthly meetings are suspended, but I would be delighted if you could help and perhaps keep in touch.

Regards

David Lewis Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

Any member with memories of Marie Armiger, please give me a call so that I can collate any info we get and pass on to David.

No UPDATE so far on the 1941 wall art



Forces Association

Casevac from Dover Strait

Memories of Jim Box

I returned from Malta after 38 Squadron, Shackletons, was disbanded in 1967, and was posted to the Search and Rescue Training Unit at Valley.

After completing the winchman course on Whirlwind helicopters, I was initially posted to "B" Flight 22 Squadron at Chivenor. However, I was only at Chivenor for 6 months before moving to "D" Flight at Manston near Ramsgate, Kent, in November. Our Squadron CO needed to replace a winchman at Manston so I volunteered to go as he was able to arrange a service quarter for me.

The first month at Manston I was on shift, and carried out various training sorties and area familiarisation. This included getting to know the coastal and sea conditions from the Thames Estuary to Sussex, which included sand banks at low tide, the various cliffs around North Foreland, and the particular problems with the mud flats around Isle of Sheppey. Getting to know the locations of the local hospitals was also very important. This was before the days of helipads at hospitals, so landing sites near by had to be constantly checked out, usually a park or a sports field, ensuring it was not obstructed.



Jim is the one in the helmet. Yes that is what I thought.

I was on shift during the first week of December when a scramble call was received from the Coast Guard to lift a seaman of a ship in the Dover strait. This was to be my first scramble from Manston. The ship was the Norwegian tanker "Boette", and the casualty was a Canary Islander with suspected appendicitis. Duly arriving on scene, I was winched down to the deck and transferred him from the tanker crew's stretcher to ours.

30 minutes later we landed at Margate general and handed him over to the care of the hospital. This was one of the easier pickups that I was able to do.

The following day we checked with the hospital on the condition of the seaman and were told he was suffering from constipation not appendicitis and had recovered. This was a most expensive trip to the toilet!

I am looking for more little stories like this to lighten us up a little in these unusual times. There are plenty out there. I just need them here. You don't have to be a budding author. I'm not, but this programme I use has a spell check and proof reader, but even that gets it wrong sometimes, as many of you have already mentioned.

A WORD FROM THE ASSOCIATION

These are very challenging and unprecedented times. By pulling together we will do all that we can to support each other and meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society in the RAF family and we should all be proud of that, as the Association focuses on the four main projects within Op CONNECT.

The Secretary General writes:

‘We are committed to doing everything we can to keep our Association strong during this challenging period, and in making sure that we can maintain the support we exist to provide to our members and wider RAF community. Everybody’s part in this is as important as ever. Together, we will ride out this difficult time and emerge stronger than ever.’

Very few of us could have put it better, so let’s get through this together.

With heartfelt thanks and pride,

Del Rowlands

Director of Membership

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TELEPHONE NUMBERS YOU NEED TO KNOW - JUST IN CASE

LOCALLY

MARK HOWELL WELFARE OFFICER

0787 401 5229

E MAIL [*markhowell65@gmail.com*](mailto:markhowell65@gmail.com)

REV. CANON LINDSAY DEW - BRANCH PADRE

0754 587 8082

E MAIL [*lindsay.dew@btinternet.com*](mailto:lindsay.dew@btinternet.com)

KEN NEEDHAM - ACTING BRANCH COORDINATOR

01462 671 534

EMAIL [*secretary@rafa-leitchworth.org.uk*](mailto:secretary@rafa-leitchworth.org.uk)

NATIONALLY

R.A.F.A. HEAD QUARTERS -

0800 018 2361

Or

0116 266 5224.

ANSWERS TO OUR MINI QUIZ

1. Pisa

3. False

5. Six

7. Blue

9. Twenty-six

11. Ears/Nose

13. 1966

15. France

17. Iron

19. Two

2. Tyne

4. Cardiff

6. Twelve

8. Thirty-two

10. Seven

12. John Logie Baird

14. Four

16. Horatio Nelson

18. Three

20. Joey

Did you get them all right?

Now for the tie breaker

How many gulls in the picture?

