



Royal Air Forces Association Republic of Ireland Branch

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GEN SHEET – JUNE 2017

Republic of Ireland Branch Hosting European Area Conference 2017 in Dublin

The Republic of Ireland Branch is delighted to announce that it will be hosting the 2017 European Area Conference from Friday, 6 October 2017 to Sunday, 8 October 2017 at the Marine Hotel in Sutton, Co. Dublin. In all our 70 years since our foundation, we have never hosted this conference, so we are very pleased. It is a fantastic opportunity for our members and supporters to meet our friends from all across the European Area and to discuss the special issues that affect all the RAF Association branches based outside the United Kingdom.

We are looking for maximum support from all our members. Please try your very best to attend the conference. Even if you can't attend the whole event, please try to attend one element of it such as the Gala Dinner. There are a number of variations to the package (see details on Page 7) specifically designed to make it as affordable as possible and allow as many of our members as possible to attend.

Full details of the costs and the programme are given on Pages 5, 6 and 7.

Branch Annual General Meeting 2017

The Branch held its AGM in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire on 28 March 2017. The AGM had one of the largest attendances for many years with approximately 60 people attending. We were honoured to have Flt Lt Sarah Waugh the RAFA Overseas Area Director as our special guest.

Our much loved and respected President Jim Kelly MBE stood down. Jim is recovering well from his recent illness and we were delighted that he was able to attend the AGM. Jim has given a lifetime of dedicated service to our Branch and we were all very sad to see him step down. However, our sadness is balanced by the good news that he is recovering well from his recent ill health and is almost back to his usual mischievous self. We elected Alan Harrisson BEM as our new President. Alan has given long years of dedicated service to the Branch including terms as Welfare Officer and Vice President. We are indeed fortunate to have a man of Alan's calibre as our President.

Our Treasurer Paddy O'Reilly stood down as Treasurer. Paddy did an excellent job and steered the Branch through many difficult and complicated processes. His knowledge and advice, especially on the subject of Branch insurance, was invaluable. We are very pleased that Paddy has decided to continue to serve on the committee. In Paddy's place, we elected Sqn Ldr John Burke RAF (retired) as our new Treasurer. John has vast experience in managing budgets for RAF projects and operations. You can be assured that our financial matters will be very well managed with John in charge. The remainder of the existing Committee members were re-elected *en bloc*. Jim and Paddy are hard acts to follow but we are confident that our Branch will continue to thrive under our new President and Treasurer and the rest of the committee.

Branch Outing to RAF Lakenheath & Blist Hill Victorian Village 19-22 April 2017

RAF Lakenheath is a major United States Air Force (USAF) base in the UK. On the 21st of April 2017, the Branch organised a visit to the USAF's 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. We had 28 members in our group and we were given a very warm welcome by Staff Sgt Emerson Nunez and his colleagues who escorted us throughout our visit, which included the Control Tower, Radar Approach, Weather Squadron, Fire Department and a Police Dog demonstration. The 48th Fighter Wing is the only U.S. operator of the F-15 Eagle fighter in Europe. We also visited the 494th Tactical Fighter Squadron where we were given a very detailed brief on the capability of the F-15, its weapons and systems, and on the rôle it performs. The tour concluded with a visit to one of the hangars to see an F-15 at close quarters and where the pilots were on hand to answer any questions. There was a lot of flying activity during the afternoon of our visit and everyone was most impressed by the precision demonstrated by the aircrew involved. All agreed that it was a most interesting and memorable visit. A big thanks to John Connolly, Branch Vice-Chairman, and to PAB Tours and to all at RAF Lakenheath who made our visit possible.

Feedback from the European (EA) and National Conferences 2017

Branch Chairman, Pete McWilliams, attended both conferences as an Elected Member of the EA Council, Frank Brien attended as Branch delegate. This year, both conferences were held at a new venue, Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire. The National Conference covers the entire RAF Association worldwide. The European Area includes branches from Belgium, Cyprus, France, Guernsey, Jersey, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands and of course the Republic of Ireland.

At the EA Conference, the main items under discussion were:

- *Branch Insurance:* The best solution that HQ could offer was to advise these branches to take out insurance policies appropriate to the risks and laws in their host country. Our Branch has already done this.
- *Venue for National Conference:* This issue was also included in the National Conference resolutions. EA interest was mainly around ease of access from outside the UK. It was agreed that Blackpool be supported.
- *Registration with the Charities Commission:* This came out of a resolution that registration should be Association policy. As with these UK-oriented issues such as insurance mentioned in item 1 above, they have limited or no relevance to EA Branches. Some EA Branches stated that they were not required to register or did not, for their own reasons, wish to register. Our Branch is already registered with the equivalent Irish authority.
- *National Conference Agenda:* Other discussions were related to resolutions on the National Conference agenda which will be covered under The National Conference heading below.
- *EA Awards and Trophies:* It was agreed that any European Area Trophies and/or Awards would be done at the EA Conference in Dublin in October 2017.
- *Simon Martin:* It was agreed unanimously that Simon Martin be made a Life Vice-President of the European Area. Simon was presented with a painting as a token of his dedication and hard work.
- *Absentees:* It was noted with much regret that all of the EA Council members of Air Rank were unable, due to other commitments, to attend the EA Conference.
- *EA Conference in Dublin:* Branch Chairman, Pete McWilliams, spoke to delegates about the Dublin venue. The intention was to give them an update on the latest plans and also to promote the event to try to attract as large an attendance as possible. PAB produced 100 brochures to help the promotion effort. Before the conference started, one was placed on each delegate's seat.

The National Conference

The main resolutions involved changes to the Royal Charter and the Rules and Regulations. It was agreed that the existing draft has the approval of the majority. The resolutions and decisions are as follows:

- *Resolutions 1, 3, 4 and 5:* These involved the Review of Standard Area, Branch and Branch Club regulations. These were all carried by over 90% of the electorate.
- *Resolution 2:* This proposed that the association policy that all Branches and Clubs be registered with the Charities Commission. This resolution was carried by over 90%.
- *Resolution 6:* This proposed that Branch Regulation 38 Branches be retained. Reg 38 authorised Branches to recruit Branch Associates as supporters of the Branch. Our understanding is that Branch Associates are people who help and support a Branch but do not wish any formal involvement such as becoming an Associate Member. We do not have any of these. This resolution was defeated FOR 38.6%, AGAINST 57, ABSTAIN 4.4%
- *Resolution 7:* This was a proposal that the venue continue to alternate between Blackpool and Eastbourne to maintain the equal North-South divide. The idea being that the travel be made as equal as possible for the whole of the UK. After some discussion and some amendments, it was proposed that the venue return to Blackpool in 2020. This resolution was carried - FOR 62%, AGAINST 32% ABSTAIN 5%
- *Resolution 8:* This proposed that the Trophy Review recommendations be accepted. Some trophies have been removed because they are no longer relevant or for other reasons. This resolution was carried - FOR 98%.
- *Resolution 9:* This proposed that Central Council (CC) should NOT make any further amendments to the logo strapline without the approval of conference. It changed the "Friendship, Help, Support" to "The charity that supports the RAF family". This was the most hotly debated issue. Some felt that CC overstepped the mark and were doing things without proper consultation. The CC reasons for change were sound. They did market research that showed that the change in the strapline resulted in the general public better understanding what the Association was and stood for, and as a consequence, were more likely to support the Association. This resolution was defeated - FOR 43%, AGAINST 54%.
- *Other Business:* At the end of the conference, Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller KBE stood down as President of the RAF Association and Air Marshal Sir Baz North KCB OBE FRAeS RAF was elected as the new President of the RAF Association. Our Branch delegate thanked Sir Dusty for his support for this Branch and wished him well for the future.

Wg Cdr Jack Simpson OBE, DFC, AE RAF (retd) Celebrates his 97th Birthday



Jack is a much loved and respected member of the Branch, and one of the Branch's longest-serving members. Jack celebrated his 97th birthday in The Club pub in Dalkey in the company of his family and close friends. Jack started flying, aged 18, from Sydenham in Northern Ireland. At the outbreak of WW2 he was called up into the RAF. He served with distinction in Coastal Command in WW2 on 223 Squadron, 221 Squadron and 38 Squadron. Early in WW2 he was based in Scotland and Cornwall and later in WW2, he took part in operations around the Mediterranean including Gibraltar, North Africa, Italy, Malta and Greece. It was a huge honour and privilege to spend time in his company. It was great to see him in such great form, he blew out all the candles on his birthday cake with one puff.

Official Launching of the Légion d'Honneur Chapter in Ireland,

Albert Sutton who is one of our much-respected WW2 RAF veterans was invited to the official launching of the Society of Members of the Legion d'Honneur Chapter in Ireland on 19 May 2017 at the French Embassy in Dublin.

Our President, Mr Alan Harrisson BEM, accompanied Albert on the visit. M. Thébault, the French Ambassador to Ireland, welcomed them and introduced Albert to General Gobillard who is President of the Society of Members of the Legion d'Honneur.



Photo: Marie Hackett, Vice Consul, Albert Sutton and Alan Harrisson

Retirement Lunch for Brigadier General Paul Fry

We combined our May monthly social gathering with a special lunch to celebrate Brigadier General Paul Fry's retirement from the Air Corps. It was a great privilege for us to welcome him and Mrs Gillian Fry. Brigadier General Fry was born in Dublin and joined the Air Corps on a cadetship in 1974. In January 2011, he was appointed General Officer Commanding the Irish Air Corps. He has over 5000 flying hour's flight experience which includes helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

Chairman, Pete McWilliams, gave a speech in Brigadier General Fry's honour in which he thanked him for his friendship and support for the Branch down the years. On behalf of the Branch, Pete presented him with a plaque emblazoned with the RAF badge and presented Mrs Fry with a pashmina, as well as an RAFA Teddy bear for their grandchildren to play with on their visits. We wish them well in their retirement and look forward to seeing them at functions in the future.



The former British Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, HE Dominick Chilcott, sent a letter to Brigadier General Fry to be read out. In the letter, Mr Chilcott thanked Brigadier General Fry for his efforts in building and nurturing relations between the UK and Ireland and between the Air Corps and the Royal Air Force. Special mention was made of the role that the Air Corps helicopters played in transporting Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall in 2011. Mr Chilcott also thanked the Brigadier General for his support for the RAF Association and its members here in Ireland.

Detailed Information on the European Area Conference 2017

Costs of Conference Package

Date:	6 th -8 th October 2017
Venue:	Royal Marine Hotel Sutton Cross Dublin 13 Website: http://marinehotel.ie The Marine Hotel is located at Sutton Cross, Co Dublin. The Marine is a hotel of great warmth and character, with its lawn rolling down to the shore of Dublin Bay. As well as meeting rooms and banquet facilities, there is a swimming pool and sauna.
Cost of package (<u>per person</u>):	Total cost per person sharing €468 Total cost per person (single) €597 * Total cost per person (non-resident) €265 * There is a limited number of single rooms
Additional nights on B&B basis (<u>per person</u>):	€109 (sharing) €178 (single) * * There is a limited number of single rooms
A minimum deposit of €100 per person is payable upon confirmation.	

The **Residents' Conference Package** includes the two nights' accommodation, two breakfasts, two prosecco receptions, one buffet lunch and two dinners (including the Gala Dinner). It also includes two excursions with an additional morning tour for non-delegates.

The **Non-Residents' Conference Package** includes all of the above, except hotel accommodation.

Note: Exclusive use of hotel is subject to minimum numbers. Hotel may well have lunch trade at the weekends/bar trade.

RAF ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Friday, 6 October - Welcome and European Area Council Meeting

- Check-in at Marine Hotel, Sutton Cross, Dublin 13
- European Area Council meeting
- Pre-Dinner Prosecco Reception
- Irish night to welcome everyone - Irish dancing school display by the Cooke school of Irish Dancing; may encourage a few of the guests to try a step or two!
- Dinner
 - ❖ Smoked Salmon & Guinness Brown Bread
 - ❖ Beef & Guinness Casserole
 - ❖ Dessert / Tea / Coffee

Saturday, 7 October - European Area Conference

- Conference Room open at 08:30hrs with tea/coffee break
- Morning local sight-seeing tour for those not participating in the Conference
- Buffet lunch in the Cucino's Restaurant:

Main courses:

- ❖ Rosemary marinated chicken breast
- ❖ Poached salmon fillet, baby prawn and chive cream

Salads:

- ❖ Pasta with sun-dried tomato, black olives, and parmesan shavings
- ❖ New potato, red onion and chive
- ❖ Broccoli, feta and hazelnut
- ❖ Dressed leaves with grated carrot

- Afternoon tour for delegates and non-delegates to **Malahide Castle & Gardens** (www.malahidecastleandgardens.ie). Malahide Castle is one of the highlights to any visit to Dublin. Located by the seaside village of Malahide, the castle is steeped in Medieval Irish history. The refurbished castle features an engaging castle tour, exhibition of Irish and local history, a botanical interpretive centre, a museum, secret walled gardens and an expansive West Lawns Walk, as well as local craft and souvenir shops. Lovely coastal drive back towards the hotel.
- Prosecco Pre-Dinner Reception:
 - ❖ Chicken Satay Skewers / Mini-Quiche / Filo Prawns / Spring Rolls
- Gala Dinner:
 - Starters
 - ❖ Chef's soup of the evening
 - ❖ Grand Marnier melon infusion plate
 - Main Courses
 - ❖ Roast prime sirloin of Irish beef
 - ❖ Duo of poached salmon and hake fillets
 - ❖ Dessert & Tea/Coffee

Half bottle of house wine per person

A super four-piece band

Sunday, 8th October – End of Conference Service at Glasnevin

Traditionally, the European Area Conference ends on Sunday morning with a formal parade to commemorate our comrades who lost their lives while serving with the RAF in conflicts and peacetime, and also to remember all RAF serving members, veterans and deceased members. Having taken timing and logistics factors into account, we decided to hold the commemoration parade at the **Cross of Sacrifice in Glasnevin Cemetery**.

The Cross is the first of its kind in Ireland and commemorates the many thousands of men and women from the island of Ireland who served in all the services and who died as a result of either World War One or World War Two. The Cross of Sacrifice was erected to ensure those Irish people who lost their lives in the two world wars are 'forever remembered'. All our comrades will be remembered at the ceremony.

Some Important Points about the Conference from your Chairman

It is a great honour and privilege for any Branch to be awarded the Conference. On behalf of the Branch, I appeal to you all very strongly to try to attend the conference. This package allows for anyone who wants to stay with relatives or in a cheaper hotel or B&B.

Attendance at the Sunday morning ceremony in Glasnevin is free and open to everyone irrespective of whether they have attended the conference.

Other veterans' organisations such as the RBL, RNA and the ONE as well as RAFA members are very welcome to attend. It would be a fitting end to the conference if there were a large attendance.

There are three separate packages within the overall conference package:

* The FULL CONFERENCE PACKAGE as described in the pages above. This is the normal package for the European Area conferences. It is designed mostly for delegates from overseas branches but is of course open to RoI Branch members too. This package includes hotel accommodation.

* The NON-RESIDENT PACKAGE. This package includes everything except the hotel accommodation. It DOES include the Gala Dinner and other meals and excursions and also allows full access to the conference itself. This package may better suit our RoI Branch Members and allows for anyone who wants to stay with relatives or in a cheaper hotel or B&B.

* The GALA DINNER PACKAGE which costs €60 per person. This is restricted to the Saturday evening, but will include the food and the live entertainment for the night.

The idea of the three options above is to try to make attendance at, and participation in, the conference as affordable as possible and as widely available as possible to everyone. So again, please try to attend.

Please make your booking for the conference and accommodation DIRECTLY with PAB Tours and Travel and NOT with the Branch. The contact at PAB is: Steven Furey, PAB Travel & Tours, 53 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1, Ireland EMAIL: steve@pabtours.com TEL: 01 871 9800 Ext 2142

Branch Annual Garden Party – Leopardstown Park Hospital – 12 August 2017

This year, Leopardstown Park Hospital celebrates its centenary. We were asked by the hospital to leave the months of June and July free for their celebrations. We were very happy to comply. This is why we are holding the Branch Annual Garden Party a little later than normal.

The hospital has very kindly allowed us to host our event in their premises and grounds. This is a major fundraiser for the Branch so please come along and support us. Entrance fee is €10. You can pay at the door on entry. The BBQ and refreshments are free. The Luas stop for the hospital is Central Park. You can walk from Central Park Luas stop to the hospital in about 6 minutes. There is also ample free car parking in the grounds. Please note that there is a new road layout in the area. To access the hospital, you must enter from Leopardstown Road.

A book **Leopardstown Park Hospital, 1917-2017: A Home for Wounded Soldiers** by Dr Eoin Kinsella on the history of Leopardstown Park Hospital has just been published.

Branch Annual Dinner – National Yacht Club – 13 September 2017

The Branch will hold its Annual Dinner on 13 September 2017 at the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. We are inviting HE Robin Barnet, the British Ambassador, but this far in advance, there are no guarantees that he will be able to attend. We also have other distinguished guests in mind but as yet we have not sent out invitations.

We have kept the cost at €40 per head. To book your place, please complete and return the enclosed Booking Form together with payment to reach the address below by the 4th of September 2017: Please send the form to:

Mr J Connolly, 3 Pinewood Villas, Glasnevin, Dublin D11 Y688

Cheques should be made payable to the Royal Air Forces Association. Please do not send cash.

Diary of Events in 2017 and 2018

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

The **Branch Annual Dinner** date is **Wednesday, 13 September 2017** at 19:00 hours for 19:30 hours start. This year it is BEFORE the Battle of Britain service in St. Patrick's.

Below is a list of events for 2017 and 2018, subject to change. Other events may arise as the year progresses and you will be notified as soon as details are agreed and confirmed.

Branch stand at Bray Air Display	22-23/07/17 Bray, Co Wicklow
RAFA Garden Party	12/08/2017 @ 14:00, Leopardstown Park Hospital
Inter-allied Military Organisation Sphinx Annual Dinner, Breda, The Netherlands	8-10/09/17 @ Van der Valk Princeville Hotel, Princenhagelaan 5, 4813 DA Breda, Netherlands Tel: +31 76 522 6055
Branch Annual Dinner	13/09/17 @ 19:00, National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire
Battle of Britain Service	17/09/17 @ 15:00, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin
EVENTS IN 2018	
100 th anniversary of the formation of the RAF	01/04/18
Service and RAF Band performance	29/04/18 St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast