



## Royal Air Forces Association Republic of Ireland Branch

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## GEN SHEET – AUGUST 2016

### RAFA National Conference 2016 – Blackpool – 13 to 15 May 2016

The 2016 Annual Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel, Blackpool. Our Chairman, Pete McWilliams, represented the Branch and he also represented the Branch on the European Area Council as an elected member. There were 40 Resolutions for discussion but roughly only 75% of them were covered because we ran out of time. There is not room in this Gen Sheet to give even a summary, but details of resolutions carried and those that were lost can be found in the Members' Portal of the RAFA website. To see this report, go to: <https://www.rafa.org.uk/blog/2016/05/31/more-on-conference>.

### Wings Appeal Garden Party

The annual Wings Appeal Garden Party was held at Leopardstown Park Hospital (LPH) on 18 June 2016. Once again, we were very lucky to have good weather for the day. We had a good turnout with approximately 90 people attending. The Catering Staff at LPH provided a superb BBQ with delicious burgers, rolls and trimmings and they also provided a range of delicious sandwiches. A very big "Thank You" to all the LPH staff and all who supported us.

### RAFA at the Bray Air Display

This year, for the first time, the event was held over the weekend of 23 and 24 July 2016 with displays on both days. The weather could have been less cloudy but it didn't spoil the displays. Given our RAF connection, we were very proud and excited that the Red Arrows flew on the Sunday and gave their usual spectacular display. This event gets better and better every year with every participant displaying the highest aviation skills and professionalism. Our Branch was permitted to have a stand at the event from which we sold Wings Appeal merchandise. We had a very successful fundraising day. We are most grateful to Bray Town Council for allowing us to have a presence at the display. Thanks also to all members who helped at our stand on both days.

### Branch Vice-President Alan Harrisson awarded the British Empire Medal (B.E.M.)



His Excellency Dominick Chilcott, British Ambassador, presented Vice-President Alan Harrisson with the British Empire Medal (BEM) at a special reception at the Ambassador's residence. Congratulations Alan and well done, this award was hard-earned and well deserved. Alan has worked with total commitment and tireless dedication for many years for the Royal British Legion and for the RAFA Republic of Ireland Branch. But not only that, he has done great work for many other charities and organisations throughout his life. Alan's wife Carmel and members of his family attended with Alan to celebrate his achievement.

### **British Ambassador's Farewell to Veterans**

His Excellency Dominick Chilcott and Mrs Jane Chilcott very kindly held a reception at their residence to say farewell to veterans resident in the Republic of Ireland. The Ambassador and Mrs Chilcott have been hugely supportive of veterans during their stay in Ireland and have touched the hearts of every veteran they met during their time here. They will be sadly missed, but they will live long and fondly in our memories. Our Branch organised the event and our Chairman presented the Ambassador with a shillelagh to help him with his future diplomatic work. The Ambassador was advised that "*diplomacy is fine, but diplomacy with a shillelagh is better*".



### **Visit by Air Commodore David Prowse**

We were honoured and privileged to welcome Air Commodore Prowse to our Branch monthly social gathering on 31 July. This was David's first visit to our Branch. David is Director of Membership and Operations at the Association's CHQ in Leicester. He gave a detailed presentation on the current (2015) state of membership. The positive messages are that membership has increased for the first time in 25 years, with overall membership at 61,900. In 2015, 5109 new members joined. More than 70 people attended the gathering. We were delighted to welcome our members as well as members of the Royal Naval Association, Royal British Legion, and all arms of the Organisation of National Ex-servicemen and women (ONE). We were pleased to welcome back Flt Lt Sarah Waugh, Overseas Area director, who accompanied David. Our thanks to all of you for your support and your generosity.

### **VERY IMPORTANT – Membership Record Audit**

Enclosed is a Membership Record Audit Form for you to complete and return to our Membership Secretary so that we can improve the ways we stay in contact. Please would EVERY MEMBER complete this slip and give as much contact detail as possible. This information will be kept within the RAF Association. **Please return the completed form in the addressed envelope provided.**

### **Annual Dinner, Tuesday, 20 September 2016**

Please see enclosed the booking form for this year's dinner. We look forward to welcoming as many members as possible. **Please return the completed form, with payment, in the addressed envelope provided.**

### **Raffle Tickets for the Grand Raffle – Sunday, 30 October 2016**

Enclosed are books of tickets for the Grand Raffle. This raffle is one of our main fundraisers for the Wings Appeal. If you need more tickets to sell, please call: **087 2767368**

**Please return stubs and payment to:**

**Mrs Roche, 45 Cardy Rock Crescent, Balbriggan, Co Dublin K32 T998**

28 August 2016	12:30 – 14:30	Monthly Social, NYC, Dun Laoghaire
18 September 2016	15:00	Battle of Britain Service, St Patrick's Cathedral
20 September 2016	19:00 – 22:00	Branch Annual Dinner, NYC, Dun Laoghaire
25 September 2016	12:30 – 14:30	Monthly Social, NYC, Dun Laoghaire
30 October 2016	12:30 – 14:30	Monthly Social & Grand Raffle, NYC, Dun Laoghaire
4-6 November 2016		RAFA European Area Conference 2016 – Malta
27 November 2016	12:30 – 14:30	Monthly Social & Xmas Party, NYC, Dun Laoghaire