

GEN SHEET – MAY 2016

Visit by Air Marshal Philip Sturley CB MBE BSc FRAeS CCMi

AM Sturley is President of the European Area of the Royal Air Forces Association. The Branch was honoured and privileged to have AM Sturley and Mrs Sturley as our guests at our monthly social gathering on Sunday, 13 March 2016 at the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. AM Sturley presented the Dennis Emes Shield to our Welfare Officer and Membership Secretary, Gilly Beare. The Dennis Emes Shield is awarded annually at the European Area Autumn Conference by the European Area Council to the Ordinary or Life Member who is judged to have displayed the best all-round performance during the current year. AM Sturley also presented Presidential Certificates to our Treasurer Paddy O'Reilly and our long-term supporter Ivor Moloney for their work on managing the Conway Fund. We are delighted that all their efforts have been recognised not only in Ireland, but across the European Area. There was a large attendance at the event which helped to raise significant funds for the Wings Appeal. A huge thanks to all those who attended and congratulations and well done to Gilly, Paddy and Ivor.

Branch Annual General Meeting 2016

The Branch held its AGM in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire on 15 March 2016. The AGM had one of the largest attendances for many years with over 50 people attending. We were honoured to have Col Max Walker the British Defence Attaché from the British Embassy and Flt Lt Sarah Waugh the RAFA Overseas Area Director as our special guests. We were very pleased to welcome representatives from the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association and the Organisation of National Ex-servicemen and women (ONE). Three members of the outgoing Committee, Lorraine McWilliams, Don Wallace and Jack McGuinness, did not go forward for re-election. We are very sad to lose such outstanding members who have contributed so much to the Branch and we thank them for all their efforts. The remainder of the existing Committee were re-elected *en bloc*.

Branch Visit to the Listowel Military Tattoo and Foynes Flying Boat Museum

Members of the Branch travelled to Listowel over the May Bank Holiday weekend to attend the tattoo. The organisers had a model Spitfire on display similar to the one that Gp Capt Victor Beamish DSO (Bar), DFC, AFC flew in WW2. Gp Capt Beamish was killed in action on 28 March 1942 while leading the Kenley Wing. Victor was one of the four Beamish brothers from Co Cork, Victor, George, Charles and Cecil, all of whom who served in the RAF. We were honoured and privileged to meet members of the Beamish family who attended the event. The Seanchaí Centre in the town housed a remarkable display of photos, documents and memorabilia related to the Beamish brothers. On the way home from the Tattoo, we visited the Flying Boat Museum at Foynes. One of our members, Flt Lt Ted Jones, who is 93 yrs old and who flew Catalinas in WW2, was in his element. He was a hugely interesting source of knowledge to all of us on the peculiarities of these craft. Foynes is reputed to be the first place where Irish Coffee was invented. Our President, Jim Kelly MBE, was awarded a medal for his outstanding abilities as an Irish Coffee maker on the day. Despite our best efforts, none of us was awarded anything for our performances as drinkers of the stuff!

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

The 2016 Annual Conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel, Blackpool from 13 to 15 May 2016. Our Branch will be represented at the Conference by Chairman, Pete McWilliams. He will also represent us on the European Area Council as an elected member.

RAFA Garden Party – 18 June 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

The annual Garden Party will be held at Leopardstown Park Hospital on 18 June 2016. This event is one of our major Wings Appeal fundraising events, so, please try to attend and support the event. The more people that attend, the more we raise for the Wings Appeal. Everyone is welcome, members and non-members, so please persuade your friends to come along. There will be a FREE BBQ and light refreshments prepared by the Catering Section of the Hospital. Please note that, unlike previous years, we are NOT allowed to take our own food onto the Hospital premises. However, donations of raffle prizes are always much appreciated. Entrance fee is €10 per person. The Luas stop is "Central Park" on the Green Line. For motorists – please note that there is a new road layout to get into the Hospital.

Bray Air Display – 23 and 24 July 2016

This is a fantastic event and it's FREE. This year will be the best ever with the display running over two days. This year, the Red Arrows are scheduled to perform at the event. I'm sure you'll agree that their performance will be tremendously exciting for all to see. Our Branch will have a stand on both days and we hope that we shall raise significant funds for the Wings Appeal. We would appreciate very much any volunteers who would like to help us on either or both days. If you can help, please contact our Secretary, Pam, on 086.353.1771.

Visit to Ipswich and RAF Duxford – 23 and 24 August 2016 t.b.c.

The Branch is planning to travel to Ipswich to attend a dedication ceremony of a headstone for Flt Sgt Cecil E Higgins who was killed in an air accident in 1939. Cecil was from Co Wexford, hence our involvement. Cecil's grave lay unmarked until discovered quite recently by his great-nephew, Bruce. We plan to have a funeral parade including our Branch standard. A senior officer and a padre from RAF Honington are hoping to attend in uniform, as are members of Ipswich Royal British Legion with their standard.

As part of the trip, we hope to organise an overnight stay to allow us to visit the Imperial War Museum at RAF Duxford. Travel plans and detailed arrangements have not yet been finalised, but it is envisaged that we shall fly to/from Stansted. If you would like go on the trip, please ring our Secretary, Pam, on 086.353.1771.

Further Dates for your Diary

18 August 2016	15:00 hrs t.b.c.	Battle of Britain Service, St Patrick's Cathedral
20 August 2016	19:00 hrs	Branch Annual Dinner, National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire
4-6 November 2016		RAFA European Area Conference 2016 – Malta