



RAFA Caduceus Branch

Volume 3 of 2026

President's Address



Welcome to our Autumn 2026 Newsletter. I hope that you have had an opportunity to enjoy something over the summer, despite the heat and lack of rain endured by many of us. Autumn brings a quiet shift. The air turns cooler, the leaves change colour and nature slows down. Watching the leaves fall can remind us of how to let go gracefully. But the autumn term can also be a time of excitement: a new school year, high resolve and fresh enthusiasm. Whichever perspective you have; autumn is often a time of change. So, whatever lies ahead, I hope that the new season is one of kindness: from you to others, and from them to you. The season of Remembrance will soon be upon us. From grand events to quiet reflection and memories, freedom is highly valued but is

not free. However, not everyone bears the cost or pays the price. RAFA is there to engender the spirit of camaraderie and also be there for us. Please join in our activities when you can and reach out if you need support. We are a medical community but our welfare activities are separate and confidential.

Thank you to everyone who have supported our Branch over the last 10 years. I am delighted the often hidden efforts of some of our team has been recognised with RAFA Area Awards – well done. But to everyone who helps our Branch to thrive I would like to personally acknowledge how much your contributions are valued and make a difference. A selection of the things that you all do will be covered in the following pages. I am delighted that our Branch is thriving and thought I would close with a photograph that was taken when our first RAFA Standard was blessed at the National Memorial Arboretum on the 4th October 2016.



Air Cdre Steve Kilbey (Retd)
President of the RAFA Caduceus Branch

Chairman's Report



Wow.. newsletter time again. Seems like summer passed in a flash! There's lots to tell and some real positives for both Branch members and our group as a whole.

Firstly, I have broadcast my intention to step down as Chair. So far, NO ONE has shown an interest in the position. Whilst this is disappointing, it isn't to late! If anyone is interested in the position and would like insight into what's involved, you're very welcome to get in touch and have an informed discussion about what's involved, the commitment and the time involved.. I have personally found being Chair an amazing experience and it has helped me develop as a listener, thinker and leader. I feel I've taken the Branch to a good place, but ideas run out and innovation, invention and fresh input can reinvigorate the Branch. PLEASE have a think about whether you can take the Branch forward.



So, what's going on? I'd like to congratulate William Morris, our Branch Treasurer who has been awarded an Area Presidents Certificate and Pin. This reflects his hard work and diligent volunteering on behalf of the Branch. Further details provided by William under the heading Treasurer..

Don't forget, you can nominate any RAFA member for the Area or National President's Awards any time throughout the year. Information is available on the member portal or by contacting RAFA member services. Another of our members has also received an award, but as yet haven't had their presentation, so that needs to wait until the next newsletter, but it shows that our volunteers are both valued & recognised for their time and efforts.

AGM 2027 is currently in the planning stages and we are looking at several locations with the support of some of our serving members. If you have any ideas for somewhere PLEASE get in touch as soon as possible as we're always open to suggestions, help and ideas.

Cenotaph 2026 is nearly upon us! This year I'd like to thank our members for their cooperation about the event. We have had some people withdraw and this is always disappointing, but this year all those who've withdrawn have let us know in plenty of time and due to that we have a full contingent! Looking forward to seeing everyone on the gravel.

Now for some news

Following on from communications with The Last Post Association we will be parading the Standard and laying a wreath as part of the Last Post service performed each night at the Menin Gate. On the 1st April 2027, 109yrs since the formation of the Royal Air Force, the Branch will be there! This will be a self funding event, but it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in a world renowned and recognised event. Plans will be updated on a regular basis, but anyone interested in participating should let the Branch know now..

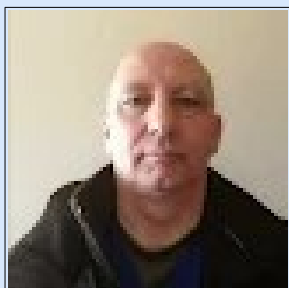
With conference looming, one member- one vote matters. You should have all had the resolutions to you from RAFA. 2 things if you haven't.. either your contact details are incorrect with RAFA or your membership has lapsed and you need to renew it. Vivienne Newton, as our conference delegate has a vast knowledge of all things RAFA, so if you need help or support to understand the resolutions or have questions to ask prior to making a decision she's the person to speak too.

As always, I thank you for your continued membership, without it the Branch wouldn't exist! Your membership monies help support both the Branch and wider RAFA to undertake its main principles of preventing social isolation and providing welfare support to the beneficiaries.

Nec Aspera Terrent

Paul M Newton
Co-Chair RAFA Caduceus Branch

Welfare



I have received a couple of enquiries recently where there has been some confusion on who is entitled to welfare support, so I thought I would include an eligibility check list from the RAF Benevolent Fund. RAFA and the RAF Benevolent Fund are dedicated to supporting not only serving and ex-serving personnel, but also the whole of the RAF Family, including dependants and carers.

The information below outlines who qualifies for support. If for any reason you're unsure about whether the Fund can help you or a loved one, please give them a call 0300 102 1919.

Eligibility checklist

Who's eligible:

1. All serving members of the Royal Air Force and members of the Royal Air Force Reserves.
2. All former members of the RAF who completed one day's attested service (including Royal Auxiliary Air Force and Reserve personnel).
3. The immediate family members of those who serve or have served (spouse, civil partner, widow/widower and eligible children:

Children are eligible up to the age of 18 or to the end of secondary education if later. Children who, because of illness or disability, remain or become dependent on their parents after the age of 18 retain eligibility until they regain their independence.

Widows/widowers/surviving partners whose date of marriage/civil partnership was during their partners RAF Service or if their partner died in service retain lifetime eligibility based on need even if they remarry (eligibility does not extend to the new partner).

Widows/widowers/surviving partners whose date of marriage was not during their partners RAF service remain eligible for fund assistance until remarriage/partnership.

Divorced spouses/separated partners are eligible for fund assistance only if their committed partnership was during their partners RAF service. Eligibility ceases on remarriage/partnership. Should the subsequent marriage/partnership end in bereavement, separation or divorce, eligibility is restored.

Divorced spouses/separated partners whose committed relationship was not during their partners RAF service will be eligible for fund assistance for 1 year after separation.

Partners may be treated as a spouse/widow where there is satisfactory evidence of a committed relationship. For example, duration of relationship, children, joint ownership of property, or joint financial arrangements.

Live-in carers (related or not), who have demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the needs of the beneficiary, are eligible for assistance for up to six months after caring arrangements have ceased.

4. All currently serving members of University Air Squadrons.

5. Former members of the Royal Observer Corps and Air Transport Auxiliary, their partners and dependent children.

6. Certain foreign nationals or former members of the Commonwealth and Dominion Air Forces who served in the Second World War. This includes their partners and dependent children.

7. RAF Air Cadets, including members of the Combined Cadet Force, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis for emotional wellbeing, counselling and bereavement support. Financial support is also given if a member is killed, on or off duty. This also extends to staff cadets and uniformed volunteers.

The range of support is varied and includes financial assistance, care and independent living, family and relationship support, emotional wellbeing, and friendship and connections aimed at reducing isolation

Please note that some of the services are means tested such as care home top-up assistance or wider financial support.

If you need any further information on this or any welfare matter you can contact me at john.radnedge@hotmail.co.uk or any of the contacts below:

www.rafa.org.uk

RAFA Serving RAF personnel and families 0800 018 2361, www.raf-ff.org.uk

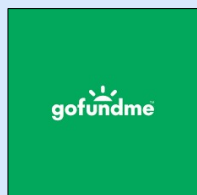
RAF Benevolent Fund 0300 102 1919

RAF Benevolent Fund 24 hour wellbeing support line 0808 1751 365

www.rafbf.org

John Radnedge, Welfare Officer

Go Fund Me



As many of you will know, every year we send out Christmas boxes to our RAF Medical Services colleagues who are detached to forward operating areas over Christmas as well as our members aged over 75. But with increasing costs, we need your help. Do you know a business that would sponsor our Christmas boxes or donate items we could include? If you do, please get in touch. We are also asking members if they will share details of our Go Fund Me appeal via their social media so we can reach as many people as possible who might be able to donate. Thank you.
<https://gofund.me/6f158d3a>

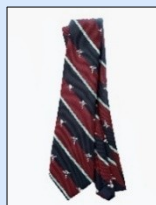
EASYFUNDRAISING



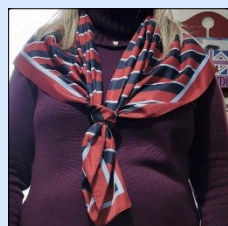
Don't forget you can sign up to Easyfundraising and raise money for us whilst you shop, all at no cost to you. From holidays and travel to your supermarket shop, everything you buy donates a % to the Branch.

Ties and Scarfs

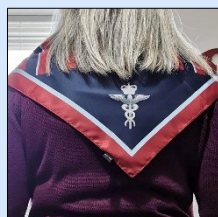
You can now purchase a Medical Branch tie and/or scarf on our branch website using PayPal.



Ties cost £17.50 and includes the Caduceus emblem.



Scarfs cost emblem as



£18.50 and include the Caduceus shown in the image.

Caduceus Branch Air Cadet affiliated Squadrons



2497 (Cosford) Squadron



209 (West Bridgeford) Squadron



2458 Shipley & Baildon Squadron



On Wednesday 8th July 2026, Air Marshall C Walton paid a visit to 2497 (Cosford) Squadron on Behalf of the Branch for the formal affiliation between the Squadron and Caduceus Branch.

The evening was a great success as AM Walton addressed 50 cadets, the Squadron uniformed staff and members of their Civilian Welfare Committee. Squadron Officer Commanding



Flt Lt Giles Vince and his staff greeted the Air Marshall and had some positive introductory words from all welcoming her to the Squadron. Air Marshall Walton then spoke about the purpose of the evening, and there then followed a very positive Question and answer session where cadets took turns in asking her about her career pathway, her journey through the RAF and memorable moments from her career.



The Squadron and the Air Marshall then cut into two cakes. One adorned with the 2497 crest and the other cake with the Caduceus Branch Logo. Tea and cake was then served to all.

For the second part of the evening the Air Marshall was shown several key displays of cadet syllabus training including a very spectacular flight simulator training session, a first aid session and a display "fly past" from the Squadron's Red Barrows.



Despite the extreme heat the conclusion of the evening was a full Squadron March Past led by the Squadron Band, where Air Marshall Walton took the salute.



A fantastic event in every respect.

Robbie Cormie
Cadet Liaison Officer

Membership

MEMBERSHIP and RENEWAL



Just a gentle reminder to everyone about annual membership subscriptions/renewals.

By far the easiest way to renew is by setting up a direct debit, whereby your subscription is automatically paid direct from your bank account when due. This is covered by the Direct Debit Guarantee, which indemnifies you against any incorrectly claimed payments – details of this can be found at:

<https://www.directdebit.co.uk/direct-debit-guarantee/>.

Alternatively, you can manually renew your membership online at:

<https://www.membership.rafa.org.uk/renew/> or by phone via 0800 018 2361 (0900hrs – 1700hrs Mon-Fri).

We are all aware that money can be tight at times due to the current financial climate, and would ask that if you are experiencing difficulties which may impact your decision over continuing your membership you reach out to me or John Radnedge our Branch welfare officer. Any such contact would be treated in the utmost confidentiality.

Also, please can I remind you to ensure your personal details, including address, email and telephone contact number(s) are kept up to date to ensure you receive your AirMail magazine and any communications from RAFA centrally or the Branch in particular. You can manage this information either online using the membership portal:

<https://royalairforcesassociation.my.site.com/community/s/login/> or by calling the number mentioned above.

Finally, if you have any questions or issues concerning membership, please contact me directly – markdenton@hotmail.co.uk

Mark Denton
Membership

Treasurer

On the 30th of May 2026 I was presented with an Area Presidents certificate for services to the Royal Air Forces Association by Martin (Taff) Turner. Chairman South and Eastern Area on behalf of Air Commodore Alan Opie, Area President.



William Morris
Treasurer

Social Media



Our public page can be found at
<http://www.facebook.com/RAFACaduceusBranch>

To join our private branch members only group search 'RAFA Caduceus Branch Group' request to join and answer the questions.



@rafacaduceus



@rafacaduceusbranch



You can always email us at rafacaduceusbranch@gmail.com

Editor



Starting next year I will be producing 3 editions of the newsletter in April, September and December. With most of the branch volunteers still working it can be difficult for them to find the time to write a report 4 times a year.

You can help by contributing to the newsletter. Snippets of your time in the RAF Medical branch or a full history of your military service.

Foot note



The RAFA Caduceus Standard be be at the following events:
Wednesday 09th Sep Battle of Britain Illogan 1330 Illogan Cemetery then onto RHH Portreath
Friday 11th Sep the Rick Rescorla 09/11 memorial parade Hayle meet at 1030
Saturday 12th Sep National Memorial Arboretum Northern Ireland Veterans Service meet at 0930
Sunday 13th Sep Westminster Abbey the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Service

The Standard is always available for members to request to attend their events, but must be agreed by committee before accepting.

In the event of a members passing, the Standard, a wreath and Bugler can also be requested as irrespective of length of service we can and will be there to see you on your final flight.

Lastly, as a virtual branch we are always looking for volunteers, so if you can help with Standard Bearing and increase our national coverage, please contact the Branch.

Some humour to round things off

An 80 year old women was interviewed by a newspaper following her fourth marriage. She was asked what her first three husbands did for a living. My first husband was banker, the second was a circus ring master and the third a vicar and now I'm marrying a funeral director. When asked why they had such diverse occupations she explained. I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go.

Ray Bunnage
Communications Officer

Branch Volunteers

Steve Kilbey – President

To be elected – Service Representative

Paul Newton - Chairman rafacaduceusbranch@gmail.com

William Morris – Treasurer
John Gouldie – Deputy Treasurer

Vivienne Newton – Secretary rafacaduceusbranch@gmail.com
Margaret (Maggs) Simpson – Deputy Secretary

John Radnedge – Welfare Officer john.radnedge@hotmail.co.uk

Ron O'Hare - Fundraising & Wings Appeal

Mark Denton—Membership caduceusmembership@gmail.com

Emma Wilkins— Safeguarding Officer

Kelvin Kettleby – Standard Bearer

Robbie Cormie – Cadet Liaison Officer

Ray Bunnage – Communications Officer rafagloucester@gmail.com