

Dear Friends,

New Year greetings to one and all. Let us hope 2013 will be a healthy and prosperous one, both for us and our families and for our Association. It has been some while since our last newsletter and for that, my apologies....things got in the way!

Our branch AGM in September was soon followed by the dedication of the RFA Memorial at The National Memorial Arboretum. I know Ian Hall spoke about the dedication ceremony at the October lunch in Porchester (which I was unable to get to). It was a splendid occasion, and the RFA and the Association can take pride in a fine monument; if you haven't been to the Arboretum it is well worth a visit.

Remembrance Sunday saw our customary wreath laid at Marchwood and RFA Black Rover was eventually allocated but was unable to cope with many guests for a reception, so some members joined the Sir Galahad Association and Marchwood Council members for lunch ashore. The reduced flotilla numbers is becoming noticeable!

Christmas Lunch 2012 saw a change from our usual venue to the Maritime Club in Portsmouth. This was driven largely by the numbers we need to accommodate for this popular gathering (53 this year), while retaining the convenience for a variety of travel options. The feedback has been entirely positive so this may well be taken up again in the future. We were sorry to have to move from the Ship Anson where we have been well looked after since the branch was first formed, so we have decided to put an extra social lunch in the programme on January 30th at the Ship Anson. Those of you on email will have seen the menu already but please put your orders in to Alan ASAP. Many thanks. Many thanks too for your usual generosity at our events which has seen plenty of pounds raised for the RFAA.

Our programme for 2013 looks like this

- 30 Jan Social Lunch. The Ship Anson, Portsmouth.
- 13 Mar Social Lunch. The Ship, Swanwick TBC
- Friday 24 May RFA Reunion and AGM, at the Liner Hotel, Liverpool.
- 10 Jul Summer Banyan at Emsworth (hosts: Stuart & Margaret Pearce).
- 4 Sept Pre-AGM Committee Meeting
- 11 Sept Solent Branch AGM - Venue TBC
- 16 Oct Social Lunch. Maypole Inn, Hayling Island TBC
- 10 Nov Remembrance Sunday. Wreath-laying at Marchwood & lunch.
- 11 Dec Christmas Lunch – Venue TBC.

Many of you will be aware that Maureen Williamson suffered a bout of ill-health towards the end of last year. Bearing in mind the great debt we all owe her for the work she puts in, with Alan, to making our branch the success it is, I know you will want to join me in sending her in particular, and any other members and friends not enjoying the best of health, our very best wishes for the coming year. Having been smitten with a dose of shingles myself, I can now attest to the great work Jack H-J does as Almoner in keeping in touch and generally raising morale! Thanks again Jack.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the end of the month for The Ship Anson Lunch, and to all our members, good wishes,

Aye, Brian