

Royal Air Forces Association

Vuelos

Costa Blanca Branch 1359 Newsletter

Spanish Charity Number 654288329



Some of the group of Branch members gathered outside the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostella during their visit to the Galicia region in North West Spain

Issue 19 July 2010

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM NOEL CORKs Dear Members, as you read this most of you will be aware that, regrettably, I have resigned as Chairman. You may wish to know why, so soon after taking over the post. To save further embarrassment I do not wish to go into details, suffice to proclaim it as a lack of tact. I have received sincere apologies from the members concerned and as far as I am concerned the matter is closed.

Before I sign off I wish to take the opportunity to thank all those who gave so generously at Noel's House Party. A thousand thanks also to those members, who donated towards the raffle, bar and desert course and the help in setting up. Well done.

Noel

President's Piece — A very busy quarter has whizzed by and here we are in the middle of July in the sweltering heat but already planning our Battle of Britain programme.

The Annual Conference, this year at Blackpool, went fairly well, in that we made ripples which should affect most overseas branches in time. However, it is unfinished business at present but if you are interested in the details, Secretary Pat has a full transcript which she will lend out. We still have work to do but will be given further direction at the Autumn Conference in Gibraltar later this year. We are making our mark!!

We have attended a couple of local parades this quarter at which we, as an Association, again attracted favourable comments from officials and bystanders alike. My thanks to all of you who attended and stoically put up with the rain at one and fairly warm conditions at the other. We are nothing if not flexible.

May I put a marker down now for all of you to provide MAXIMUM support to your Committee during 'Wings Week'. We need bodies on the ground for collections at 'Iceland' and we need your support at the Church Service and Dinner Dance.

You will see a report on our recent trip to Galicia which for those who were able to attend was a fantastic experience. Many thanks to Ken and Pamela Booth for their superb organisation and initiative to set it up in the first place.

Brian

RAFA CONFERENCE REPORT

Blackpool May 21/23

Ken Booth was the Branch's representative at this year's Conference where he put to the Conference the question "Why had membership fees for this year been increased when there was a recession which was causing most individuals to be very careful about managing their income. Coupled with this, for those living in the euro zone, the depreciation of the pound against the euro, some 20/25% over the last 18/24 months is adding further pressure on incomes. This was not only affecting present membership but was impacting on the ability to recruit new members."

The answer received from the Chairman said in effect that RAFA were still having to ensure that the deficit inherited over the last decade was not allowed to become worse. Therefore, there was no choice but to increase subscriptions to balance the books on the membership account.

Ken also put to the Conference a motion that asked that the insurance cover afforded to RAFA Branches in the UK by RAFA HQ, be extended to overseas branches. This motion failed as the RAFA Treasurer convinced the Conference that this would be very expensive, not only to purchase adequate insurance but also to administer it. However, Ken put a counter motion that asked that a proportion of

Annual Subscriptions, paid by overseas branches, be retained to offset the cost of obtaining local Insurance cover. This motion was narrowly defeated but the Conference Chairman agreed that further research be implemented into this proposal.

Ken also seconded a Resolution put forward by the Aylesford & Malling Branch that asked that branches be encouraged to participate in the RAFA Grand Draw and that any proceeds be included in the Wings appeal gross proceeds as was originally intended. The premise was that originally the 'Draw' was regarded as being part of the Wings effort, but in latter years it had become disassociated from the Wings movement and now is part of the general fund. Many small branches wanted this income to be considered as part of their overall effort to fund raising. The President described it as a discretionary account that filled many gaps (Subscriptions?). The resolution was lost. **(This is a much abridged report. Anyone wishing more details please ask the Secretary or Ken.**



Ken met up with some of the members who have returned to the UK. From left to Right: Eileen Hay, Anise & Don Cole, Tove & Alan Cox and **Page 10**

The Sea and Salt Museum



Thankfully the weather, although rather overcast, stayed dry for the visit of the Branch to the Sea and Salt Museum in Torrevieja.

The first port of call was to the floating part of the museum where the ex-customs boat, the Albatross 111, and the Delphin submarine were moored.

The guide for the tour, Jacinto, first showed the party over the Albatross which had been superbly restored and contained all the equipment that had been used during its operational duties. Although a little cramped, life aboard must have been quite comfortable. This could not be said for the submariners on board the Delphin submarine which was subsequently visited. With a total compliment of 56 personnel cramped on board they must have been a hardy bunch, especially as they all had to share just one shower which used cold sea water. It was nothing like that portrayed in the films with plenty of space. In reality space was very restricted, with every nook and cranny filled with



equipment. The second part of the visit was to the land based part of the Museum located in Calle Patricio Perez close to the Municipal Theatre, where the group were met by the Director of the Museum, Lola Sanchez Roca, who was accompanied by Graham Knight of the Foreigners Office who acted as interpreter. The Group were very surprised to learn what a fascinating history



Torrevieja has.

Overall the visit proved to be very worthwhile as it not only helped the group to understand more about local history, but also gave a great insight into the very taxing lifestyle of a submariner, something that didn't pass the notice of the ex-RAF.

A visit to the Sea and Salt Museum is to be thoroughly recommended

San Cristobal Celebrations

WHAT A SHOWER! No not the contingent of Branch members who attended the San Cristobal celebrations on Friday 23rd April, but the unseasonal weather that put a dampner on the whole event. With the musical entertainment cancelled many thought that the march-past and wreath laying ceremony would also fall foul of the weather, especially as the marching area was like a muddy field.

However the sun came out and eventually, after much 'Is it on' and 'Is it off', a new route was agreed to take place on the quayside adjacent to the 'Delphin' submarine. And so, after the arrival of the guest of honour, Lieutenant General Jose Emilio Roldan Pasqual, head of the emergency services in Spain, those members who had remained prepared for the march-past.



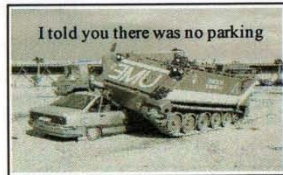
As the sun was setting and in line with Spanish custom, wreaths were laid, including one from the Branch. Standards were lowered and the Spanish National Anthem played. Then followed the march-past which was warmly applauded by the many Spanish and other nationalities who were present. As seems the norm, the RAFA contingent received special praise from the dignitaries attending



Which way are we going?



Oh! It's this way.



I told you there was no parking



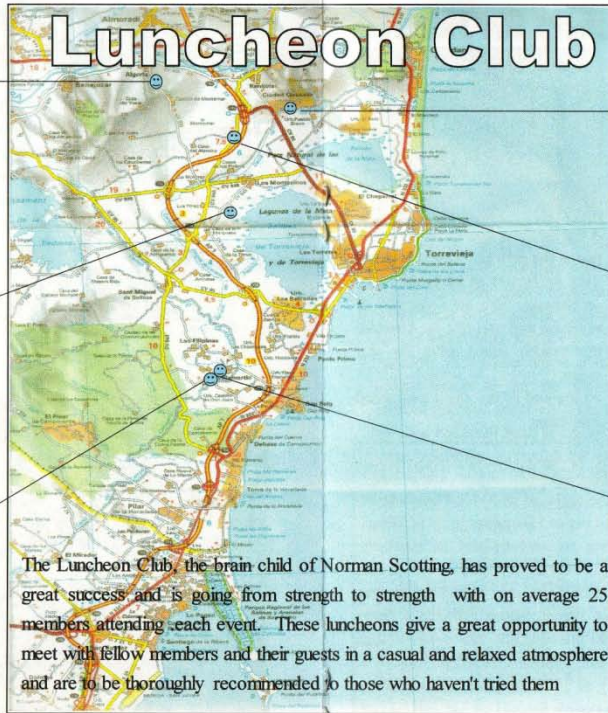
Baybrooks



El Rancho



La Piazza



Quesada Fish & Chips



Greenlands



Chillies

Two Chelsea Pensioners were reminiscing about their experiences in the Boer War. First pensioner to the other: "George, do you remember them pills they used to give us – you know them pills which they told us would help us to keep our minds off girls ? ". George "Aye come to think of it, I do". First Pensioner "Well I think mine are beginning to work."

A lost and exhausted climber was walking across a snow plateau when he suddenly became aware of a strong smell of fish and chips. Through the mist ahead he sees a Monastery and a priest standing in the doorway. "You must be the friar." "No he's the frier I'm the chip monk."

This is Spain Exhibition



Once again the Branch flew the flag at the latest 'This is Spain' exhibition held at the Onlueta Costa Resort. Although clashing with the San Cristobal celebrations, enough willing members still managed to find time to ensure that the RAFA stall was manned throughout the exhibition

Help for Heroes



A few members from the Branch took part in the activities staged in aid of 'Help for Heroes' at La Zenia village on Saturday 29th May. As well as marching and parading the standard the Branch raised €178 for this cause.

At the end of the day a total €64650 was raised

Beyond the Call of Duty



Before

After

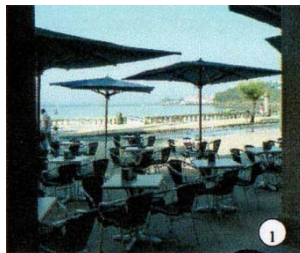
In celebration of his joining the ranks of an OAP, Dougie Lynn decided to carry out a sponsored run of 5 kilometres in aid of 'Wings Appeal'. However, before doing so he completed an extremely demanding 6 week training regime, devised by the OK Gym in Los Dolses. At the crack of dawn (8am) on Sunday 13th June, Dougie, supported by Doris and several Branch friends gathered at 'Bill's Open Lounge' in Los Dolses for this epic run. Just before 8.30am Dougie started his run, whilst his supporters, sustained only by a full 'English' breakfast, courtesy of Doris, sat in anticipation of his return. **In** just under 45 minutes Dougie finished his run, looking just as fit as when he started (Well almost)

As a result of all his efforts Dougie raised the magnificent sum of €542 towards the 'Wings Appeal' and for this we must applaud him



A Week in Galicia

In the early hours of Sunday 26th June, fifty four Branch members and guests, set out, by coach, for a weeks tour of the Atlantic coast in the Galician region of Spain. After about 15 hours and with the sun setting, the coach finally reached it's destination, the Hotel Marycielo in the port of Sanxenxo (Sanchencho) located very close to a golden beach. (1)



The holiday started in earnest on Monday and continued until Friday with organised trips to a wide range of most interesting places. These included a trip to the Isla de Toca where there now stands a museum built on the site of the factory that used to produce the 'TOCA' brand of perfumes. Adjacent to the museum is a small church which has a unique feature in that the whole of it's outer walls are covered in oyster shells. (2)



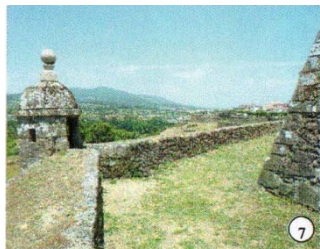
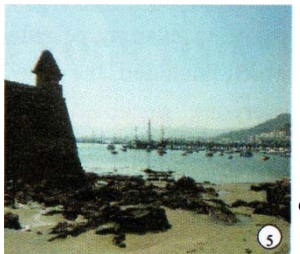
The trip continued with a visit, by glass bottomed boat, to one of the many hundred family owned rafts dotted around the bay. Here the group were shown how various sea food is harvested (3)



Then followed a treat of fresh mussels washed down with plenty of wine, all courtesy of the crew. (4)



A full day trip to Portugal included on the way a short stop to see the replica of Christopher Columbus's ship 'Pinto moored at Biona.' (5)



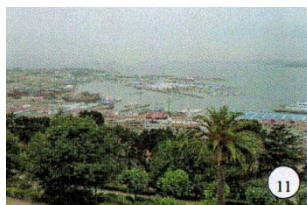
Next day included a visit to the nearby town of Pontevedra with its magnificent museum, which has a great collection of ancient gold jewellery (6) and the port of Combarro where a selection of 'Orios' or grain stores, which most families had built in their gardens, were on display. (7)



Another full day trip on Thursday visited Santiago de Compostella (Saint James in a field of stars). Which not only has a magnificent Cathedral (8) but is surrounded by a multitude of very ornate buildings. (9) Inside the cathedral it was packed with the many pilgrims who had made their pilgrimage and were awaiting Mass. (10) The final visit was made on Friday to the City of Vigo, and was the only day that rain fell, but this did not detract from an interesting visit which included a visit to the El Castro Park which looked over the port and city. (11)



All too soon the visit to Galicia was over and in the early hours of Saturday morning the group started the long journey home from what was a most enjoyable and very interesting holiday thanks to Ken Booth who organised the trip.



NOELS HOUSE PARTY On a very warm and barmy evening on Saturday 10th the crowds gathered at the Chairman's house, 56 members and friends to be precise, to enjoy an evening of entertainment. With a variety of games, which included the now infamous Horse? Racing to keep everyone occupied, coupled with a good selection and quantity of food and liquid refreshment, no one could say that they did not have their moneys worth. The great success of the evening was due in no small part to the hard work of Noel, Hilda and all those helped and contributed on the night.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AUGUST

TBA - Luncheon Club — La Piazza, Punta Marina

SEPTEMBER

7th — **RAFA** Concert, Virgen del Carmen Theatre, Torrevieja

12th to 18th — **'Wings' collection at ICELAND stores**

15th - 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, La Siesta Church

18th - Battle of Britain Dinner & Dance, Orihuela Costa Resort

OCTOBER

Luncheon Club - TBA

NOVEMBER

11th - Remembrance Service, La Siesta Church

14th - Remembrance Sunday Service, Mil Palmeras

ICELAND COLLECTION FOR WINGS WEEK.

Last year's Wings collection at the three Iceland stores was a huge success with the public generously donating around €2500. Hopefully, with this year's collection being made over a slightly extended period, the collection will be greater. However, to try and achieve this, the Branch will need volunteers to attend at the stores for

a few hours over the period, so please make a note to help out at this time. This is the one opportunity in the year when we can ask the general public to support this worthy cause.

**PLEASE GIVE A FEW
HOURS OF YOUR TIME**

