

Royal Air Forces Association

# Vuelos

Costa Blanca Branch 1359

Newsletter

Spanish Charity Number G54288329



The Branch played it's part in the Flower Parade held in Torrevieja on Saturday 1st December 2007. RAFA's three standard bearers, Colin Broad, Len Welch, and Dougie Lynn, as smart as ever, joined with other standards to lead the way.

**EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION** – Our first Vuelos for 2008 which I hope you enjoy. In the main I have include articles covering some of the major events the Branch has been involved in, plus a few added articles submitted by the membership. I apologise to those of you whose articles have not been included in this issue but assure you that they have not been forgotten.

## **The Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting**



Firstly I would like to thank you all for your loyalty and support during 2007. We have had many successes with the odd disappointment and of course no year passes without it's sad occasions.

One of the major successes of the year was of course acquiring our Spanish charity status which has been ongoing for 2 years. The important thing was that we persevered in spite of many obstacles that we were faced with. Once again we raised the wonderful sum of 5000 pounds towards our Wings Appeal; having a dedicated Wings team was an important factor in achieving this goal. The first International Veteran's Day was a success, as was our Open Day held in the Club grounds, with the array of classic cars proving to be a great attraction. Another, yours truly, 'House Party' went down very well, putting in an extra €730 into Branch funds, a big thank you to Hilda and her chain gang!

There were many other successful functions held throughout the year for which we must give a very big thank you to Norman Scotting, and his wife

Speaking of Norman we must now have one of the best web sites on the Costa Blanca (ED'S NOTE! See the back page for the web site address). We must also give praise to our devoted standard bearers who are always respond when called upon to attend various church functions and flower processions which take place each year.

As I said at the beginning of this report we did have the odd disappointment, one being the Homes and Gardens Exhibition, where , although we were able to man a stand thanks to the hard work put in by John Reid, we were unable to benefit from the big charity auction staged at the event. The other disappointment was the last minute cancellation of the Royal Air Force Central Band. Although, as good fortune would have it we were not out of pocket. However, I feel our President, Brian Hewett, bore the brunt of frustration and disappointment having put in so much time and effort into getting the whole thing organised.

Sadly in 2007 we saw the demise of three loyal members, which of course included our ex President John Johnston, whose untimely death left many of us dumb. I am sure as we join in the dedication of our meeting we will also remember them and other members who have passed on.

**Noel Cork MBE – Chairman**

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**The Presidents Piece** – *This issue starts the new year for our Association and I would like to begin by thanking all the present members of the Committee for signing on for another tour of duty. None of the tasks are easy and to take on another stint is commitment above and beyond; thank you one and all. However, we have completely worn out the previous Wings Appeal Team and they do need replacing; volunteers may step forward.*

*It promises to be another outstanding year; maybe even a RAF Band Concert. Please support your hard working Committee and enjoy your membership.*

*Yours Aye – Brian H.*

# AGM Presentations



Colin Broad with, his wife Mary, collects the Presidents Trophy, from President Brian Hewett MBE, for his outstanding support of the Branch during the past year.



John and Gladys Reid with their RAFA Plaque presented to them as a memento of their time with the Branch

## A Special Celebration

*It was a special celebration for Dave and Gwynne Poolman, from Quesada, on the 8<sup>th</sup> March as they celebrated their "Golden Wedding". Dave served in the RAF for 27 years as an Armourer from 1950 until 1976*



*Many congratulations to you both*

A British businessman visiting an office in Madrid at 3pm one week-day was disconcerted to find no one on duty. He roused the caretaker from the basement and asked: "Do they not work in the afternoons in Madrid?" "That is not correct" came the answer. "It is in the mornings that they don't work. In the afternoons we have a siesta"

# Remembrance



The Branch joined, with colleagues from the Royal Naval Association, and the Royal Marine Association, in the Royal British Legion's 'Service of Remembrance'. The Service was held in La Siesta church and was conducted by the Reverend Canon Terence Sampson, who in his address emphasised the need that at all times we should be remembering those who gave their lives for us



We Will Remember Them

# Remembrance Sunday

## In a French Hamlet

(From John and Gladys Reid)

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November whilst at our new 'Place in France', Gladys and I attended a Remembrance Event at our hamlet's war memorial. Not knowing what to expect we donned our fineries and went to the square where we were told, by our bar owner, Patrice, that people would gather. Gladys and I got there at 1030hrs and by 1045hrs a total of about 30 people had gathered including the Mayor complete with sash of office. We were wide eyed with confusion until an English expat introduced himself by way of wearing the Red Poppy. He introduced us to the President of the Ancien Combatants and after a donation in the tin, provided us with a sticker of support.



John at the Saint Front la Riviere Memorial

At 1055hrs we all followed the Mayor and two elderly standard bearers round the corner to the Memorial. Here we gathered around with the Mayor, President, standard bearers and two young children. At the side of the memorial an old Citroen was parked and on the bonnet was an ancient stereo being attended to by an old gentleman. At 1100hrs music was played via the stereo including the French National Anthem. The president of the Ancien Combatants then read out the names of all those listed on the memorial

and after each name the assembled group said aloud "Morts Pour la France" (Died for France). After this the Mayor laid a wreath of flowers

draped with the French colours on the memorial and two letters were read out. Then it was my turn.

I approached the Mayor and in my best French asked his permission to lay a cross on behalf of the Royal Air Force Association. Well you

would have thought I had handed him a million pounds. He and the President were so chuffed it made me feel quite humble. They said it would be an honour, to which I replied that the honour was mine indeed (or at least I think that is what I said!). Both Gladys and I then laid 2 crosses, one written in French and the other in English with the simple words “**Thank You**”.

We all then all proceeded to the Salle de Fetes (local hall and very nice to) a short walk away where we were treated as minor celebrities

with people coming up to introduce themselves and to thank us for our participation. In fact one man asked me if at a later date I would consider being Mayor! I think he had had several whiskies by then. Food and drink were laid on and it was hard to say yes to the large measures of whisky, port and wine at 1130hrs but we did our best!!!. At the end of the event the Mayor and President came over to bid farewell, thanked us again and to welcome us to the community – all very nice. After a couple of hours it was all over for another year.

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## **Another Celebration**

**Four of our members celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays during the last 2 months, Brian Bourdon, Norman Scotting, Graham Distin and Bruce Heath. For**

**Graham and Bruce it was a little extra special as they first met in 1955 as 17 year old Aircraft Apprentices at No 1 School of Technical Training. From 17 to 70 who would believe it!**



# Christmas Lunch



The Branch Christmas lunch held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at the Casa Nicolas restaurant was attended by 58 members and guests who enjoyed a traditional Christmas meal. Our Vice President, Bill Butler gave a vote of thanks to those attending and to the restaurant staff for providing a most enjoyable lunch



He gave a special thanks to Josie Welch and Dougie Lynn for conducting the raffle which raised €220 towards the Wings appeal

**One for the Ladies** - A couple laying in bed. The man says, "I'm going to make you the happiest woman in the world." The woman replies, "I'll miss you".

Although numbers were small those who attended the Christmas Sing-a-long at the Social Club on 13<sup>th</sup> December thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Alan 'Reginald Dixon' Cox provided the music and our President and his wife, Sheila, provided the mince pies and mulled wine, with the latter helping to lubricate the singing voices

# Carol Sing-a-Long



## CAROLS IN THE SQUARE



Several members attended the International Carol Concert staged in Torrevieja Constitution Square on the evening off Friday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. prior to the start of the concert those members placed bags of non-perishable produce in the Church of the Inmaculada to be distribute to those in need over Christmas

# Flower Parade

On a fine evening on Saturday 1st December 2007 several members took part in the annual Flower Parade held in Torrevieja.

Disappointingly, the total who attended from the four Associations was small, some 40 in total. Significantly however, of these, over half were members of RAFA.



The parade itself was well worth attending as the large crowd lining the streets of Torrevieja were most enthusiastic towards us.



At the end of the parade, the Services contingent was stopped just before reaching the Church of the Inmaculada to be announced to the large crowd waiting. Then with standards held aloft we marched past the church to spontaneous applause. A proud moment indeed

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A man decides to spend a lazy week-end reading, goes to a bookshop and selects a book entitled "How to Hug". His disappointment can be imagined when he realised, when unwrapping it at home, that it was Volume VI of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

(Taken from 'Pass the Port' a book on the best after dinner stories)

## MORAL WOMEN

The FBI had an opening for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews, and testing were done, there were 3 finalists. Two men and a woman. For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun.

“We must know that you will follow your instructions, no matter what the circumstances. Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair. Kill her!” The man said “You can’t be serious, I could never kill my wife,” The agent said “Then you’re not the right man for the job. Take your wife and go home.”

The second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes. “I tried , but I can’t kill my wife.” The agent said”You don’t have what it takes. Take your wife and go home.

Finally it was the woman’s turn. She was given the same instructions to kill her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing and banging on the walls. After a few minutes all was quiet. The door slowly opened and there stood the woman. She wiped the sweat from her brow and said. “This gun is loaded with blanks so I had to beat him to death with the chair.”

THE MORAL OF THIS STORY - Don’t mess with women!

*Bigamy is having one wife too many. Monogamy is the same*

Oscar Wilde

*Happiness is having a large, loving, caring close knit family in another city*

George Burns

*“I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury”.*

Groucho Marks

*The secret of a successful marriage is not to be at home too much.*

Colin Chapman