

## National Heritage Report – July 2022

The reports from Paddy for Northern Ireland and Cheryl for Scotland are appended separately, they both continue to be very active in their areas after the restrictions of recent times.

Jenny's report on the display which she organised at RIAT is appended separately because there was so much involved in putting on the history to the public.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June Keith, John Shere and Andrew, ably helped by David Peace and Peter Owen of Coventry Group, mounted the wartime display at the Open Day at RAF Cosford. The marquee was sited on a thoroughfare which attracted many visitors including two senior officers from the Embassy of the State of Qatar, Brigadier Ali Mohamed A Al-Fadala and Captain Khalid Nasser Al-Sulaiti who wished to have a photograph with the Team, this is on the membership website [www.rocatwentytwelve.org](http://www.rocatwentytwelve.org).

On 18<sup>th</sup> June John Shere gave his presentation 'The ROC above and below ground' to the BDAC Old Sarum Open Day. The event was organised by Neville, ROCA members enjoyed coffee/lunch/tea, the presentation was also attended by members of the public. The ROCA display set up by Jenny and Neville last year has expanded to include a 'Darky' radio believed to be the only one still in existence. This special radio, sited on strategic Posts, helped our pilots in trouble with damaged instruments to get to their nearest airfield.

On 7<sup>th</sup> May John Shere and I went along to the Open Day of the Bury War Room taking the opportunity to present Andy Bowles with a Heritage Certificate to further recognise his skill in bringing the wartime history so vividly to the public. On these open days he is assisted by volunteer John Terris, an Associate member, also in authentic wartime uniform. We also met Bob Mackintosh, an ex-member of the Corps. Photograph on membership website.

During the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> July the Bury War Room was host to some 1,638 visitors including Americans and a lady giving a live video chat to her son in Switzerland.

The Arborfield 'boulder' which commemorates the Post has been in position for a year. Due to the restrictions no unveiling ceremony has yet been possible but this will be held in conjunction with an ROC display in the village hall which we hope to attend. This Post also had a Seaborne member. The road names commemorating the Corps on the footbridge and new road are in use.

Negotiations are still taking place with Bentley Priory to set up a workshop in conjunction with SubBrit. This follows the successful workshop in 2014 set up by John Shere at the Bury War Room to show Post members how their information was used in Controls. There would be a charge for this, split three ways.

Our relationship with both the Bentley Priory and Uxbridge Battle of Britain Museums are excellent. We have again been invited to take the Wartime Post to both Museums in September.

I have been delighted, on a recent visit to Bentley Priory, to see the Nuclear Reporting Cell so very well portrayed on the road to the Blast Doors which are the only remaining part of the underground Bunker. The members of the Cell have been interviewed and their memories can be heard by clicking on a number associated with the member on something which resembles a siren. As you

will know a photograph of Obs Lt John Simmonds, NRC Officer, is on the memory board within the Museum.

Some time ago we were given the Wartime/Cold War collection of a W/Obs which contained many historic items. These are now with Bentley Priory to decide whether they would wish to make a personal history to display. As the history is not part of the Battle of Britain we await their decision.

In the last few days we have received an enquiry about a member who was part of the 'Special Branch' of the ROC in June 1944 – I immediately assumed it concerned Seaborne. As is usual I sent the email and attachment to Neville to check he had the name on his records. This turned out to be a member of the Radio Security Service who was given the ROC uniform to hide his true work. We also know these uniforms were worn by signallers at Bletchley Park.

We have been given a pewter tankard presented to Walter Williamson, G Crew No 7 Centre, Manchester, in 1943. We have no provenance, however we were pleased to receive it, I will be taking it to lunch meetings where it, along with other items, will be a talking point.

The Wykham Post in York Group, renovated beautifully by a mother and daughter duo will be receiving a film crew on 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> July. Hopefully we will hear news of where this may be viewed.

The model 'planes made in wood by a C/Observer in Cambridgeshire, donated by his daughter, are now flying high in the newly updated Waterbeach Museum.

We heard from Andy Briggs who had been a volunteer showing Wartime Plotting at Broadway Tower, he recently moved to Yeovil Group and wished to be put in touch with like-minded people in the area. Chris Shire has taken him under his wing.

When we displayed at Llandudno Clare Forrester found us, she was not aware of the existence of the Association, she then joined North Wales Group. She has become a regular correspondent and keen to further the interests of the Association in the area.

This is but a small précis of activities of the Team. Heritage could not be active around the country without the great commitment of the small Team. I am sure that members in Groups join me in thanking them for their great enthusiasm and commitment to keeping 'the flame burning'.

We also thank Neville Cullingford of the Winchester Museum and Lawrence Holmes, Chairman of Exeter, for sharing their expertise so willingly whenever we need advice.

*Edwina Holden. National Heritage Officer.*