

REPORT TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE – FEBRUARY 2018

Although a quiet time for displays the whole Team continue to work tirelessly for Heritage. Paddy continues to keep the Corps at the forefront of the public in Northern Ireland and gave his excellent report to National Committee.

Cheryl also has worked tirelessly in Scotland answering enquiries to the website and looking after her Museum and Post which will again be open on selected days to the public.

The project on the Dymchurch plaque has been concluded. The current dilapidated brass plaque is in the area of Romney Council near the site of the Littlestone Satellite Post, they will renovate or replace the plaque themselves. The Dymchurch History Group and Parish Council are delighted to have a plaque to match the colour of their Heritage Trail to recognise the sighting of the first V1 to enter this country in 1943. The plaque will be situated on the walkway to the Martello Tower on which the Post was situated. The cost of the plaque has kindly been paid by National Committee. The daughter-in-law and two granddaughters of the Head Observer at the time of the first V1 are on the Committee of the History Group, they have much information and photographs of the time. I am indebted to Bill Warwick of Lincoln Group for his help in finding the contacts in Kent. Bill sourced a letter from the Air Ministry to ROC Abel 2 dated January 1943 saying they have been informed by the French Resistance that Germany have developed a new design of fighter aircraft believed to be rocket powered, this turned out to be the V1, although I understand the first was not rocket-powered.

On 11th February Stan Robinson of No 7 Group organised a Ceremony near Watford to commemorate the death of a young Royal Flying Corps pilot killed in 1918. Viscount Trenchard, various senior RAF Officers and other services were in attendance, the No 7 Group Standard was in attendance with No 7 Group members. As with the Kelway project I have assisted with administration. Two Heritage Team members, together with other ROCA members will be visiting the grave of this young airman in France in May.

Neville has continued to supply information for the continuous stream of membership enquiries which we receive on the Heritage website. Keith Arnold is helping the two Paul's at Newhaven Fort to add another pair of hands following the sad demise of Ian Burrows.

The Bury War Room is taking shape, we are loaning wartime counters, documents and photographs. Andy Bowles and Kitty will continue to give their wartime displays on special Open Days of the Guild Hall. Memorabilia received recently included a large photograph of an ROC War Room taken in 1943, copy has been sent to Bury for their records.

A new display is taking shape in the Rotunda at Bentley Priory replacing the many medals and history of the Battle of Britain pilots.

A large Visitor Centre will be opened shortly at RAF Uxbridge, we are in discussions about the ROC display within the Centre including an audio tape which Keith has 'lifted' from the Sentinels of Britain DVD which featured Joyce talking about her wartime experience on a Post. This Centre is in addition to the ROC Room in the underground Battle of Britain bunker.

All members of the 'southern' Team will be staying at a Hotel in Llandudno for the weekend of the Armed Forces Weekend in June, again at their own expense. Elaine and George Norris of Preston Group will be joining us again. Following the success of last year it is expected that Jenny and Keith, together with members from the local Group, will take the national display to Fairford in July.

We are looking into taking the display to an event at Newbury in September, Keith will attend the planning meeting. We have been invited to attend a Parade at Windsor Castle in June, however this is the date of the Armed Forces Weekend so it has been offered to others. Jenny and Keith are arranging a display for RAF 100 at Boscombe Down in May – we are considering the Cosford event in June.

As difficult as it is to believe, we are still receiving at least one enquiry a day through the Heritage website. These are fielded to the member of the Team most experienced in the subject or to one of our 'consultants' if necessary. The responsibilities of each member of the Heritage Team are attached, we currently have a full complement but are grateful to be able to call on the services of others as necessary.

Unfortunately we still continue to receive the odd detrimental remark on Facebook, we have too many friends in the membership who support us in our work to allow us to be concerned about the few.

We have sent Aeroplane Spotter Magazines 1942/43 and other documents to the Malta Museum and a very kind acknowledgement has been received from Gabriel Micallef.

We have recently seen the sad demise of many notable people, including full-time officers. We are fortunate in being offered items from their collections, many of which will be shown at the Reunion in October.

Simon will be updating, in the next few days, the Benevolent Fund leaflets and display items to show the change to the RAF Benevolent Fund. It is noted that the telephone number should appear on any mention of the Fund to allow those not able to access the RAFBF website, this includes all Group newsletters.

Edwina Holden - National Heritage Officer.
February 2018.