



Royal Observer Corps Association

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

SNIPPETS

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24th May 2020

Covid19 Impact - News & Information for All Members

The spring weather for most would have been ideal to be outside for some of our very busiest months of the year that included very significant Veteran Parades, Reunions, social gatherings and a whole host of special local and national events. One of the first to go within days of the 17 March lockdown announcement was the Southern Area Reunion. However I am not surprised and indeed heartened to hear from around the UK how Groups and you, individual ROCA members, have continued to use your initiatives, ideas, skills and knowledge to keep in touch through local small clusters and the social media platforms.

A reflection of the full diary events published in 9th March snippets reminds us how vibrant the Association remains and continues proactively to support the Nations Remembrances, Commemorations, and through our displays at national and local events to inform and educate the current and future generations.

Parades Ceremonies Events Planned at 9th March 2020

*******ALL EVENTS CANCELLED*******

20th 22nd March Friday / Sunday. Southern Area Reunion Telford Shropshire
19th April Sunday. St Clement Danes Service - All ROCA tickets allocated
8th May Friday. VE Day 75th Anniversary National & Local Parades / Events TBA
9th May Saturday Guernsey 75th Anniversary Liberation Parade
16th May Saturday. ROC Grove National Arboretum Alrewas meet 1200 -
80th anniversary Battle of Britain & 95th anniversary of the ROC
2nd June Tuesday. Broadway Tower Remembrance Service (3 Grp for details)
7th June Sunday. Newhaven Fort Museum ROCA Open Day
14th June Sunday. RAF Cosford Air Show + ROCA Heritage Display
27th 29th June Saturday / Sunday. Weston Super Mare Air Festival Parade
ROCA Display in the Veterans Village.
27th June Saturday. Armed Forces Day Scarborough and Parade.
4th 5th July Saturday/Sunday. Swansea Air Show + 13 Group ROC Display
12th July Sunday. Capel Le Ferne + ROCA Heritage Display
12th July Sunday. Croome Court Worcester Battle of Britain Service + ROCA Display
17th 19th July Friday / Sunday. Royal International Air Tattoo Fairford

National Reunion – 9th to 11th October – The date remains firmly in our calendar. We are very dependent on the Adelphi Hotel Liverpool opening and the Government guidelines. At the time of writing the phased easing indicates a potential opening for the tourist industry from July. If the Reunion does go ahead the booking forms will be issued at short notice for immediate return. **There may be restricted numbers** you have time as the lockdown guidance on travel and vulnerability evolve for you to decide if at all possible that you do want to join us than be ready to return your bookings quickly to avoid disappointment.

ROCABFLO – All groups should have one. Please check ROCA web site to confirm we have your correct contact details very important members and John Sharpe as the single point of contact for all your queries know who to contact

Heritage ~ Edwina's, latest report enclosed. All the team continue to work tirelessly behind the scenes to publicise our roles and history. Pass on any snippets of heritage news contact team members or use the contact button via the heritage website: www.roc-heritage.co.uk.

Cenotaph Remembrance Parade ~ TRBL have warned there is no guarantee at this stage the format, number of tickets and even if it will go ahead. However the plans and security details have to be collated – I will send to all Groups full instructions & excel spreadsheet to provide me the security details. Individuals even if unsure at this time please apply for a ticket you can change your mind at any time prior to the event, *to avoid unnecessary admin please apply only if you are highly sure you will attend.*

GROUPS - DEADLINE TO COLLABORATE AND SEND SECURITY FOR INDIVIDUALS ON ONE LIST TO ME BY MONDAY 3RD AUGUST 2020. NO INDIVIDUAL OR LATE REQUESTS.



R E M E M B E R! www.rafbf.org

The **Royal Observer Corps Benevolent Fund** is still there for those that are in need.

It may not be you, but it could be someone that you know

Visit www.rafbf.org/help or contact RAF Benevolent Fund on 0800 169 2942

Dates for your 2020 Diary Subject to Government Guidelines at the time
Full up to the minute details available at www.rocattwentytwelve.org, for specific heritage related items see www.roc-heritage.co.uk

*******ALL DATES TO BE CONFIRMED*******

12th September Saturday. Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Commemorative Day
National ROCA Display

12th / 13th September Saturday/Sunday. RAF Uxbridge Museum BoB + ROCA Display

9th to 11th October Friday /Sunday. National Reunion the Adelphi Hotel Liverpool

8th November Sunday. Cenotaph Parade.

Vernan Bunkers Open days 2020 - Monday 17 August and Sunday 27 September. To be confirmed full details Lawrence Holmes.

To add to your reading list Battle of Britain RAF Airfield Ground Attacks in 1940 -James Robertshaw 1 Kingswalk Cottages High Street Witney Oxon OX28 6ES. Price £16.95 + postage & package £3.05 each. There is reference to the Observer Corps role. From the book sales donations to RAF Benevolent Fund Details on his website: www.dday-wardiaries.co.uk

Area Reps Committee Meeting ~ the next scheduled issue of snippets will follow the Area Reps meeting to be held **4th July 2020.** **AREA REPS FACE TO FACE MEET DOUBTFUL MAY BE A VIRTUAL ONE - TO BE CONFIRMED.**

National Heritage Report – from our ‘Isolation Cells’

In these strange times I thought I should let you know that the Heritage Team are well and as active as ever.

Paddy commemorated VE Day very well as will be seen from the attached photographs on my email message. He is particularly active in keeping in touch with other organisations, publicising the ROC, recently submitting an article to the UAS Magazine about the VI. He recently asked me whether the ROC were permitted to wear the Cold War medal? My understanding is that this can be purchased and worn on the right hand side of the blazer.

Cheryl too commemorated VE Day – she managed to get to the Museum in the extremely bad weather to raise the flag, she couldn't put up bunting as it was too windy and wet, see attached photographs. Frank and Bob lit a Beacon with sound effects of a siren and music at Skelmorlie. Cheryl keeps in touch with the Post Restorers and her team of helpers in Scotland.

Simon has added a new strand on his excellent website www.roc-heritage.co.uk under 'Further Research'- 'Urban Exploration', they have similar aims to us. There has been a problem with the Post map on the website which Simon will rectify. Simon and Nicki are both key workers, Simon with his Red Cross volunteering and Nicki working in a hospital.

John Shere's presentation to History Groups etc are on hold but he is busy replying to questions from the website. Recent replies have been to a chap in Italy who is writing about the Battle of Britain and the involvement by the ROC, and a USAF chap based at Mildenhall who wants to buy a Post Instrument as he is doing a degree on military history, John has sent him a great deal of information but not a Post Instrument! Another from an architect who needs to know the dimensions of Post as a Post in a garden seems to extend into next door, and many more interesting questions. He is currently in communication with Heritage England to pursue the preservation of the Orlit B Post in Cambridgeshire, this is a much rarer version than the A as it sits on legs.

Keith has accepted a great deal of aircraft recognition memorabilia from a chap who was not a member of the Corps, before getting in touch with us he had put some on eBay but when he learned of our interest he removed it. This gentleman advised us to get in touch with sellers if there was something we required on eBay, saying we have the ROC archive and ask whether they would donate it? Apparently this is happening and some people will donate free of charge to those saying they have collections etc. The ethics of the Heritage Team would never allow us to beg for items, but interesting to know it is happening.

Andrew's wife had the 'virus' and has made a slow recovery, this meant Andrew had to isolate too. With the lock-down he has been unable to go to the archive to unload the boxes of memorabilia I gave him some time ago or to work with Keith on logging and filing the documents. Hopefully Janine doesn't mind all the boxes being stored in her home.

There are very few days when I do not receive a forwarded enquiry from the Heritage website. If I am unable to answer a question it is forwarded to the appropriate member of the Team. When enquiries for membership records are received I now have to send the 'Membership enquiry form' to the enquirer who must fill it in and post it to Neville, some need a little help if they can't print or don't have a cheque book.

Me Today I have received an enquiry from an ex-Group Chairman, he is writing an article on National Grid, UTM and Georef used in the Group Controls. Fortunately, having considered these recently for Tim when he needed a refresher before his TV broadcast from York Ops Room it was an easy reply to make.

It is heartening when Groups put the Heritage Report in their newsletters. I mentioned Arborfield Post and the Boulder which Balfour Beatty have commissioned, this caused a member in Horsham to ask for further information as he had researched the Post in the past. Andrew visited the Arborfield History Group some 18 months ago, met the Group and took photographs of their ROC display, reading old Journals I have now discovered that a member of the Post went on the Seaborne mission. The History Group are keen to know more.

I am currently trying to trace the 4 names plates from the 'ROC trains' together with the badge and ribbon. We can account for 3 plates and will continue the research. I was reminded of the plates when Tony Whittle died recently because he had suggested the naming of the train in 1982 and it was taken up by Air Commodore Black who took it forward.

Unfortunately the Martello Tower event could not take place during VE weekend however we will honour our promise of sending them a wartime pop-up for their Open Days when they are able to open again.

I can't finish the report without mentioning **Jim Mackie** who is doing the most fantastic research on the newspaper history website – it is absolutely amazing what he is finding every day. As he made the folders of 'ROC members who died in the war but not on service' so he is to make folders of the history he is now finding to include in folders for the archive. As appropriate I am passing on to Newsletter Editors something which applies to their Group, to be credited to Jim Mackie.

As ever, I thank the fantastic Heritage Team who always go the extra mile and never tire of the amazing service they give to the Association.

Edwina Holden

National Heritage Officer - May 2020.