

ANNUAL REVIEW AND IMPACT REPORT 2014/15



Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund





“We are constantly looking to the future, to ensure that the support we offer is matched to modern needs, whether amongst the serving RAF or the older veterans.”

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

2014 was another very successful year for the RAF Benevolent Fund in our work of supporting members of the RAF family who need assistance. We continue to provide help across a broad range of areas to both young and old. The commemoration of the D-Day landings during the year once again reminded us of the ‘debt we owe’ to those who served all those years ago. While their numbers are steadily reducing, we believe that one of our most important tasks is to ensure that they and their loved ones can live out their final years with dignity and comfort.

But we are also constantly looking to the future to make sure that the support we offer is matched to modern needs, whether amongst the serving RAF or the older veterans. Our aim is to ensure that any member of the RAF family who needs assistance knows that we are here to help and that our response to their needs will be both sympathetic and rapid.

The RAF Benevolent Fund could not retain its position as the RAF’s leading welfare charity without the support of many others, especially the volunteers who give up so much time to raise vital funds for our work and the caseworkers from organisations such as SSAFA and RAFA who act as the key interface with many of our beneficiaries.

Of course, none of this could be achieved without a great deal of hard work by our staff, whose commitment and dedication to our work has been exemplary. It is truly a team effort – and I hope that readers will be encouraged to think about how they can support the work we do.

Lawrie Haynes
Chairman, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund



“Thanks to Airplay, Lennon has really grown in confidence and if I’m away I know he’ll be in a safe environment where he has lots of friends.”

CORPORAL BRENDAN GALLAGHER
RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

Brendan’s son, Lennon, eight, presented Her Majesty The Queen with a posy when she visited the station in November.

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OUR IMPACT ON THE RAF FAMILY

In 2014 we spent nearly
£19m
 supporting
 almost
40,000
 members of the
 RAF family

The money we raise goes directly into helping those who need it most – from the children who use our on-station childcare centres to the World War Two veterans who can live independently at home thanks to the support we provide.

“Being able to buy furniture for my son’s bedroom and school uniform made me feel like a proper dad. Your help meant I could carpet my hall which made life easier for my disabled wife.”

RAF BENEVOLENT FUND BENEFICIARY

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

In a recent survey* more than 1,600 of our beneficiaries told us we had significantly improved their quality of life, including:



93%

of people who had property repairs or adaptations



92%

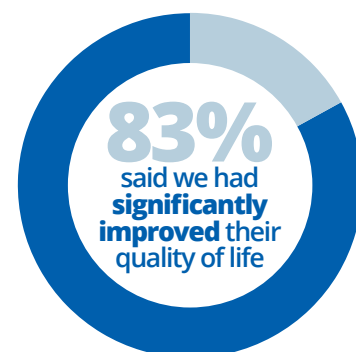
of people who received a mobility aid



80%

of those who received regular financial assistance

PROVIDING THE BEST HELP



HOW WE SPENT YOUR MONEY IN 2014



£2.8m

supporting serving RAF personnel and their families



£6.5m

supporting older veterans



£2.1m

supporting young veterans



930

elderly veterans received regular financial assistance



290

mobility scooters were issued with 1,580 now in use



£614k

spent topping up care home fees



244

Housing Trust properties



1,687

guests enjoyed a respite break at Princess Marina House and the Seaside Cottages

£690k

SUPPORTING FORMER RAF PERSONNEL IN MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING:



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We provide vital funding to charities which deliver much-needed support to RAF veterans, young and old, serving RAF personnel and their families.

CASEWORKING

These are just some of the organisations who distribute funds to beneficiaries on our behalf:

SSAFA **£3.2m**

RAFA **£1.7m**

TRBL **£429k**
The Royal British Legion

51 GRANTS/PAYMENTS MADE

Our grants and support enable these charities to provide crucial help and advice

Combat Stress
£491k

RAF Disabled Holiday Trust
£33k

Relate*
£90k

Citizens Advice Bureaux
£43k

4Children*
£1.3m

Armed Service Advice Project (Scotland)
£25k

RFEA (employment support)
£235k

RAFA
£332k

SSAFA
£100k

*Services delivered under contract

SUPPORT FOR ALAN AND ELLA

85%
OF OUR OLDER
BENEFICIARIES RATED
THEIR RESPITE BREAK AT
PRINCESS MARINA HOUSE
EXCELLENT OR
VERY GOOD



Flight Sergeant Alan Morgan’s fingers were ravaged by frostbite during a raid over Germany in 1944 but thanks to the pioneering plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe, his hands – and life – were saved.

Alan, affectionately known as ‘Fingers Morgan’ by friends, turned 21 on the day of the raid over Stuttgart when his Lancaster bomber was hit and the aircraft’s door blown open.

“A colleague went to close the door but passed out due to a lack of oxygen,” recalls Alan. “I took my gloves off to pick him up and close the door but then I passed out and my hands were stuck to the frozen fuselage. I lost eight fingers and almost died from gangrene.”

Alan, 92, and Ella, 90, have been married for 71 years and a few years ago the RAF Benevolent Fund bought Alan a scooter to help him get out and about. More recently we turned the couple’s bathroom into an easily accessible wet room.

“Having a room where Alan can bathe easily has been tremendous,” says Ella. “We were struggling before but this has made a real difference.”



£2.1m
SUPPORTING
YOUNG
VETERANS

“Without the Benevolent Fund’s support I would have found it difficult to pay for my driving course. They helped me get back into civilian life and into a whole new career.”

FORMER RAF REGIMENT GUNNER
LUKE WIGMAN

JOB DONE: HOW WE HELPED LUKE FIND A NEW CAREER

Former RAF Regiment Gunner Luke Wigman is now enjoying a career with East Midlands Ambulance Service thanks to support from the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Luke was mentoring a team of Afghan troops on foot patrol in Sangin, Helmand Province, in 2011 when he stepped on an IED. The blast burnt much of the skin off his left leg and Luke was not only forced to do his own emergency first aid but also arrange his own evacuation. Luke spent two months recovering in hospital and was unable to walk for a year.

After six years’ Service, he was medically discharged from the RAF in 2013 and faced the daunting prospect of finding a new career.

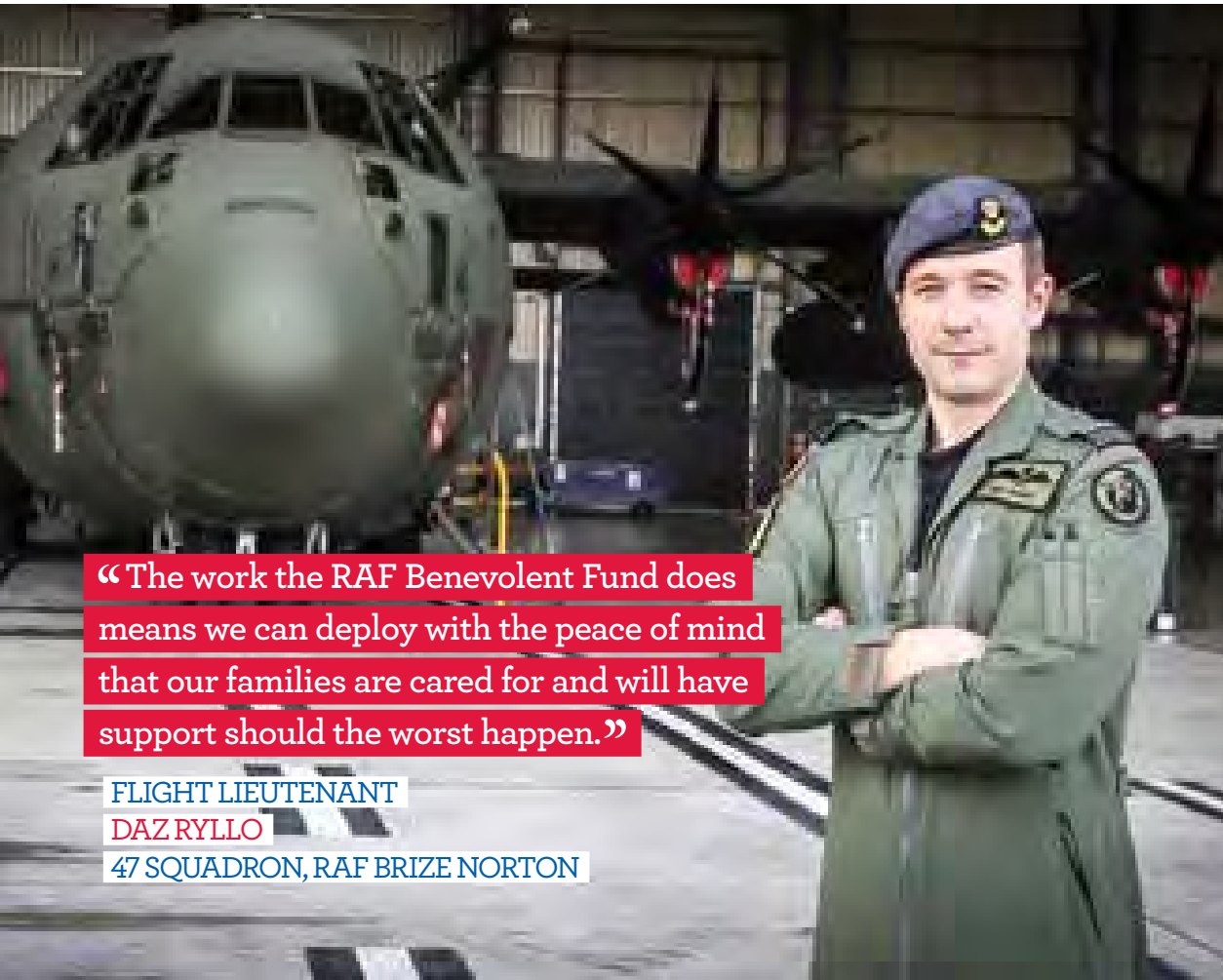
Luke has certainly turned his life around and last year he brought home gold at the inaugural Invictus Games in the 1500m. In 2015 he will be competing in the UVU Antarctic Ice Marathon, raising money for the Benevolent Fund.



£2.8m
SUPPORTING
SERVING RAF AND
THEIR FAMILIES

HOW OUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO THE SERVING

After 13 years, operations in Afghanistan have drawn to a close but the pressures on our serving men and women and those leaving the Service continue. The grants we provide not only improve lives in the short term but they often assist personnel well into the future. Disability, bereavement, re-training, financial distress, childcare and family breakdown were just some of the issues we helped with.



“The work the RAF Benevolent Fund does means we can deploy with the peace of mind that our families are cared for and will have support should the worst happen.”

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT

DAZ RYLLO

47 SQUADRON, RAF BRIZE NORTON

HOW WE SUPPORTED THE SERVING RAF IN 2014

71%
of RAF personnel who used our Relate service said their relationship was 'good' or 'very good' after counselling, compared to 40% before counselling



3,813
children and young people participated in our youth support programme Airplay



429
people took a break at our Seaside Cottages



£43k
spent funding CAB outreach clinics on RAF stations



252
individuals received a grant to assist with emergencies



“My biggest fear was that Tracey would be living in rented accommodation and not have security if something happened to me. We were stunned when this bungalow came up – it has been a huge relief for us both as we deal with our illnesses.”

FLIGHT SERGEANT
JOHN TOMICZEK

A HOME FOR JOHN AND TRACEY

Flight Sergeant John Tomiczek and his wife Tracey enjoy spending time in their new home – like any couple. But for John their home is also a safe haven for Tracey in case a time comes when he is no longer there.

In 2013, John, who is based at RAF Wittering, was diagnosed with an aggressive form of oesophageal cancer. Just a year earlier Tracey had undergone treatment for follicular lymphoma – cancer of the lymphatic system. She was just 45, young to have this form of the disease.

The couple, who had been living in married quarters, were anxious to have a permanent home, in case the worst happened to John but were turned down for a mortgage.

The RAF Benevolent Fund stepped in and in 2014 John and Tracey moved into a Housing Trust property, close to Tracey's family. They now have the security they need as they face a challenging future together.



MARHAM MATTERS

While hundreds of RAF personnel finally returned home from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, personnel from RAF Marham were immediately preparing to deploy to other operational areas, in response to new hostilities.

With leave cancelled it was a huge readjustment for families who expected partners and parents home for the summer. But it is a situation that the RAF Benevolent Fund was able to support in many ways.

“When leave is cancelled at short notice that has a big impact on families,” explains Flight Lieutenant Gary Walker, Officer Commanding Community Support. “The RAF Benevolent Fund’s family support programme, Airplay, was crucial at this time. The childcare centre and summer youth programme provided facilities for parents who hadn’t anticipated needing them. It was a huge relief knowing that these facilities were available right on station at short notice.

“As a station we could not provide anything like this programme or the level of individual support and the morale of our personnel would undoubtedly be affected without it.”



HAPPY FAMILIES

The on-station RAFBF-funded Relate service offers advice in times of crisis. Deployment and separation can take their toll on family life but the six free sessions with a trained counsellor can often stop issues escalating.

“The Relate caseworker has been stationed at RAF Marham for over two years and understands the particular issues faced by personnel – many are to do with deployment and the stresses that can bring for families. Having this confidential service is so important for our families,” says Gary.

“Personnel can get expert advice on anything from finances to housing – having this service on station really is the jewel in the crown.”

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT GARY WALKER,
OFFICER COMMANDING
COMMUNITY SUPPORT



RAFBF-funded Citizens Advice appointments providing much-needed advice and support in 2014





Members of the RAF Spitfire Choir deliver a copy of the Christmas single to No.10 Downing Street

REMEMBERING OUR HEROES

We joined commemorations marking the centenary of the First World War, launching a very special Christmas single.

Raising money for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and ABF The Soldiers' Charity, 1914 - *The Carol of Christmas*, received airplay on a number of national and local BBC radio stations as well as a live performance on BBC Breakfast.

Composed by Chris Eaton, (who wrote the 1990s Number One Christmas hit *Saviour's Day*) and Judd Field, the song was sung by an ensemble of military voices and soloists including Flight Lieutenant Matt Little, Abby Scott and 12-year-old Canterbury Cathedral chorister and BBC Radio 2's Young Chorister of the Year Finalist William Inscoe, and accompanied by the RAF Spitfire Choir.



RAFBF Controller Air Marshal Chris Nickols and RAFBF staff plant poppies at the Tower of London in memory of those who lost their lives in the Great War



Front (l-r) veteran Jack Lyon, author Simon Pearson and veteran Charles Clarke are joined by cadets from 282 Squadron, East Ham, bushcraft expert Ray Mears and comedian Al Murray at the *Great Escape* film screening



2014 saw us commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Great Escape – one of the most audacious prison breakouts ever.

Online content told the stories behind the escape from Stalag Luft III, including that of Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, the escape's mastermind and Jack Lyon and Charles Clarke, who were prisoners in the camp.

We hosted a special screening of *The Great Escape* film in London which was followed by a Q&A with Jack and Charles and hosted by Times Reporter and author of the *The Great Escaper*, Simon Pearson. Simon donated copies of his book which were signed and auctioned on eBay, and along with other memorabilia and online donations, we raised £10,000.

Our website hosted a fantastic archive of footage and images and became a 'go-to' website for the public and reporters. The Government asked permission to link to our site on the actual anniversary and used some of our images.

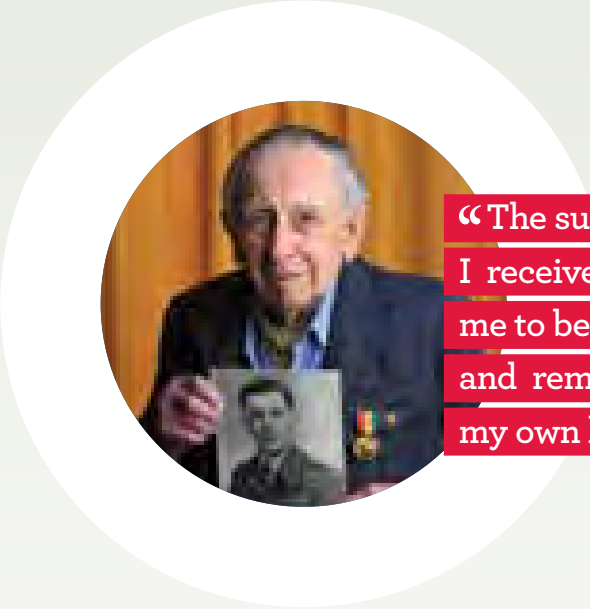
The Great Escape pages and blogs had a total of 18,000 views in March while our Facebook posts reached 500,000 people in the same period.



In the run up to the 70th anniversary of D-Day [6 June 1944] we launched a special section on our website featuring stories and information about the RAF's involvement in D-Day.

Several stories were based on interviews with D-Day veterans including 94-year-old Lee Wrake, who was recently helped by us. Lee was just 23 when he landed on Omaha beach on D-Day. Amongst chaotic scenes, he saved a man from drowning after he had been hit in the stomach and Lee himself was later hit by shrapnel. Lee's story had 5,700 likes on Facebook and was shared more than 500 times.

On the anniversary itself, we had our highest level of engagement on social media of the year. The D-Day blogs were picked-up and featured on the Huffington Post's homepage. An image of RAF vehicles posted on the day was re-tweeted 236 times, while on the day we got more than 500 new Facebook fans.



“The support I received helps me to be independent and remain in my own home.”

D-Day veteran Lee Wrake lives in his own home and enjoys his independence. After a few falls, Lee contacted us for assistance and we turned his bathroom room into a wet room and provided a riser recliner chair. Now life for this veteran is a little easier.

OUR SUPPORTERS REACH NEW HEIGHTS!

2014 was an exciting year for us. We were delighted to have on board new corporate supporters including Disney, Casio and eBay for Charity while maintaining strong partnerships with long standing supporters including BAE Systems who funded CAB outreach clinics on ten RAF stations in 2014.

The serving RAF donated £1.6m through payroll giving and a further £382,000 through various fundraising activities in 2014.



DISNEY'S SOARAWAY SUCCESS

Following the successful screening of *Planes 2: Fire and Rescue* to RAF families in London, Disney gave other RAF families around the country an opportunity to watch the high-flying comedy at RAF stations. Nine RAF stations took part including RAF Cosford (pictured).



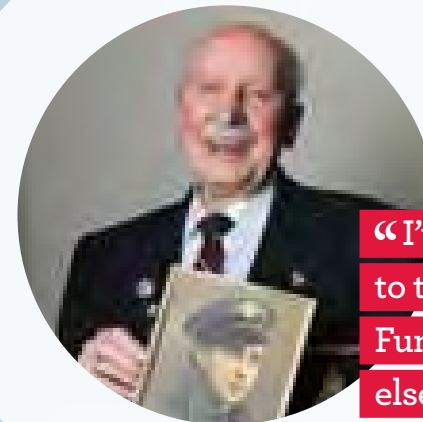
NIGHTRIDER

A team of ten from Air Command High Wycombe Med Ops took part in the Nightrider London – a night time 100km cycle through the city. The team raised more than £3,000 for us through collections and sponsorship, and enjoyed it so much they're doing it again for us in 2015 – along with 20 new fundraisers!

“The RAF Benevolent Fund really helped me and my family get through a dark time. We wanted to give something back to thank them for being there for us.”

Kevin and Amie Ogilvie were supported by the Benevolent Fund after Kevin was paralysed in a bomb blast in Afghanistan in 2012. The couple have raised £10,000 for us so far.

**Want to fundraise or volunteer for us?
Get in touch at fundraise@rafbf.org.uk**



“I’ve left a gift in my will to the RAF Benevolent Fund to help someone else in the RAF family, because I have been helped by the Fund.”

Bomber Command veteran Dennis Wiltshire is just one of the thousands who have left us a gift in their will. We helped Dennis, 94, with a monthly grant and an electric wheelchair, which Dennis says is a ‘life-saver’.

£16.4m
RECEIVED IN
VOLUNTARY
INCOME INCLUDING
DONATIONS AND
LEGACIES

“The Fund is the reason I joined the RAF and I am currently a successful and well-respected serviceman.”

CORPORAL MARTIN ATKINSON, RAF BRIZE NORTON



SOUTH DOWNS TREK

A team from No. 99 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton, set out on a 100-mile trek from Eastbourne to Winchester, raising more than £4,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Corporal Martin Atkinson, who took part in the trek, said: “My father was in the RAF and unfortunately passed away in 1986 when I was two years old, leaving behind my mum, my big sister and me. The RAF Benevolent Fund stepped in to help fund our education – that’s why I wanted to support this amazing charity.”

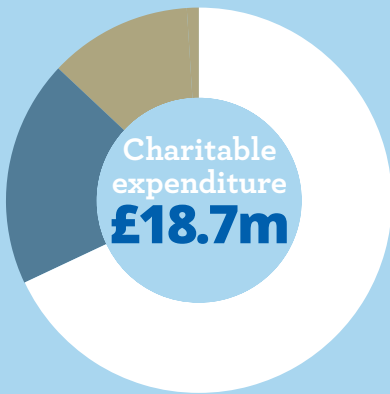
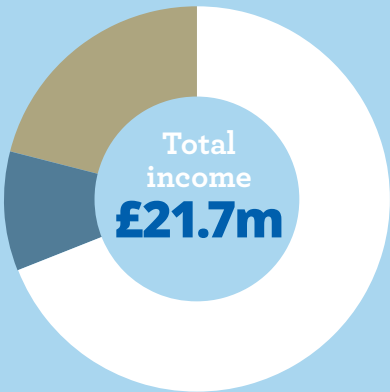
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2014 saw significant increases in fundraising including more than £10.7m raised through legacies. We are extremely grateful to those who take the time to remember us in their will, leaving gifts both large and small.

We were delighted to receive almost £1m of Armed Forces Covenant support, including a successful application to the Veterans Accommodation Fund to adapt and enhance kitchens and gardens in properties for wounded, injured or sick RAF veterans.

WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM

	2014	2013
Donations and legacies	£16.4m (75%)	£13.2m
Investment	£1.9m (9%)	£2.0m
Other income	£3.4m (16%)	£4.0m
Total income	£21.7m	£19.2m



HOW WE HELPED OTHERS

	2014	2013
General welfare	£12.6m (68%)	£12.6m
Residential and respite care	£4.0m (21%)	£3.4m
Housing	£2.1m (11%)	£2.2m
Charitable expenditure	£18.7m	£18.2m

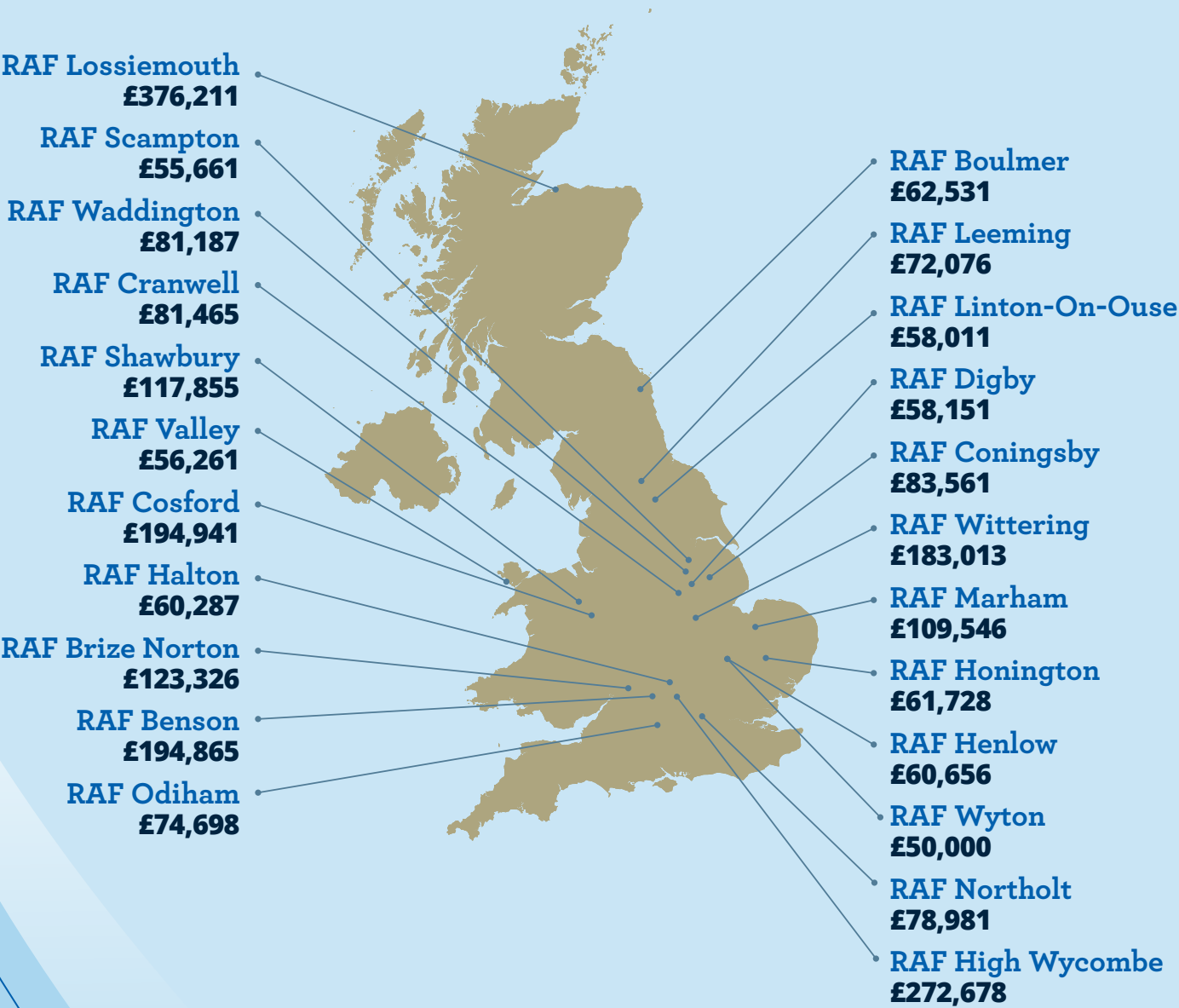
TOTAL EXPENDITURE

	2014	2013
Charitable activities	£18.7m (84%)	£18.2m
Generating funds	£3.1m (14%)	£3.3m
Other expenditure	£0.4m (2%)	£0.4m
Total expenditure	£22.2m	£21.9m



WE SPENT £2.8M ON THE SERVING RAF IN 2014

This map indicates how the money has been spent on RAF stations, including support to individuals and the Airplay and Relate programmes.



“We are planning many other initiatives in the near future to ensure that we address today’s needs and future requirements.”



A YEAR OF PROGRESS

2014 was a year of significant progress. We completed a two-year programme of cost reductions, enabling us to maximise our welfare spend on our beneficiaries. We also saw significant increases in most areas of our fundraising, boosted by successful bids for LIBOR fines money made available for support to the Armed Forces community.

Our financial performance has allowed us to implement several important new initiatives. We ran a new media campaign aimed at ‘reaching out’ to those people in need; this resulted in many new applications for support and will be continued. We also undertook extensive research on the RAF community to make sure that, in future, we apply our resources to where they are most needed. One of the early outcomes has been a new Advice and Advocacy Service to assist those who find it difficult to access the welfare support to which they are entitled. We are planning many other initiatives in the near future to ensure that we are addressing today’s needs and future requirements.

The RAF has remained very busy operationally, with associated pressures on its personnel and their families. While we have a very strong record of support to RAF stations over the past few years, particularly through our children and youth programmes, we will continue to consult to see where we can help to alleviate particular pressure points in the future.

So many people help us to achieve our aims through most generous donations, in particular through legacies in their wills. We are immensely grateful for all of the support we receive, no matter how large or small. It allows us to continue our vital work for the RAF family.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Nickols'.

Air Marshal Chris Nickols
Controller, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

Air Marshal Chris Nickols opens the new play park at RAF Benson

ONE OF A KIND

ROGER MOREWOOD,
1916 ~ 2014

Wing Commander Roger Morewood was one of a kind. An experienced pilot, he flew Bristol Blenheims during the Battle of Britain and undertook many dangerous missions over Holland and Norway.

He remembered how Blenheims were slower than Hurricanes, with machine guns strapped to their bellies. “It was damn dodgy,” says Roger. “We had a high loss rate.”

Later, after three years away from the RAF, he returned as an instructor at the Central Flying School.

But Roger fell through a crack in the system of RAF commissions, so when he retired he found he was not eligible for a Service pension.

Financial problems followed, so we were only too pleased to support him with a small, regular maintenance grant, which we did up until his death in December, aged 98.





GOLDEN GOODY!

We were delighted when Mike Goody scooped four gold medals and one silver in the swimming events at the inaugural Invictus Games in September.

Mike, a former Senior Aircraftman with the RAF Regiment, was supported by us after he was seriously injured in a bomb blast in Afghanistan.



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

For more information on how the RAF Benevolent Fund can help you or a family member, or to make a donation, visit **www.rafbf.org**

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The RAFBF is a registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SCO38109)



Corporate
Covenant



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The Confederation
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