

## Cérémonie Parc Mon Repos – 8 November 2015

### The Great War, the war to end all wars!

*Alain Dardelin*



On the Sunday nearest to 11<sup>th</sup> November, the city of Geneva observes the end of World War One and remembers the soldiers from Geneva who died in the service of Switzerland at the memorial in the *Parc Mon Repos*. It is also a time to pause and honour the dead of so many other conflicts and acts of terrorism in the world since 1918.

This year, the ceremony took place on 8<sup>th</sup> November on a bright sunny day. As usual, the procession contingents formed up casually in the front of the Kemp-

inski Hotel – a few tens of meters away from the spot where Empress Elisabeth of Austria aka ‘Sissi’ was stabbed – before taking up their positions on the road as *Premier-Lieutenant* Rollin Ferrier, the Swiss Army’s parade organiser for the day checked them off from his clipboard. It was 11.00 as the parade, led by a contingent of *Gendarmes*,



moved off to the beat of the drums of the *Cadets de Genève* and the music of the *Corps de Musique de la Landwehr* towards the memorial in the *Parc* one kilometer away.

Behind the lead group are over twenty military and civilian organisations, associations in different coloured uniforms all carrying their respective banners and flags. Our small delegation of six members of RAFA Swiss Branch accompanied with four RBL members, had John Hannon carrying the Union flag, Alain Dardelin the RAFA Swiss Branch standard and David Macgeorge the RBL standard.



When entering the *Parc's* grounds, the drums beat became more marked, we straightened up and marched with pride, standards dipped to the horizontal and "eyes left" as we passed the saluting base. Once in place on the platform in front of the memorial where wreaths had been placed, the President of the ceremony, *Capt* Guillaume Genoud announced the programme and invited the audience to sing the first verse of the anthem of the Republic and Canton of Geneva "*Cé qu'è lainô*". This year, the main address was given by Mr Serge Dal Busco, member of the Geneva state council. His message concentrated on the duty to remember (*devoir de mémoire*) the soldiers who died one hundred years ago and called for a better and free world for all. Following the keynote speech and a music interlude, *Sgt* L. Thurneherr took the Oath of Allegiance on behalf of the Swiss Forces.

Moments before the end of the service, flags were dipped and a one-minute silence observed followed by the audience singing the first verse of the Swiss national anthem. After this, the ceremony was declared closed and the guard of honour marched off followed by all participants to the nearby field canteen where mulled wine and sandwiches were served.

Now, honestly, admit it. Would you associate Switzerland with Remembrance Sunday and generally commemorating world wars? When I first arrived in these parts it didn't click. Then, one Sunday in November... Now I carry a standard and hope they'll keep the speeches short, but I stand still for all who can't and I dip the standard because it's what we do. Mon Repos is quintessentially Swiss, and they have the depth of vision to invite nations who were once enemies. Of course, my voyage of discovery didn't stop with Mon Repos. I learned we honoured crews of downed RAF bombers, here, there and everywhere, Genevan volunteers for the French Army in World War One, Victory in Europe (I like the fact the Germans are invited and turn up to that one) and numerous little roadside stones to members of the *Résistance* in all its iterations. All very humbling—as well it should be.

*John Hannon*

Welcoming new members:

Transferring in from the St. Albans Branch, now closed, we welcome warmly **Dennis and Mary Sprake**, Dennis as a Life Member and Mary as an Associate Member. Welcome both!

Obituary:

Sadly we announce the passing of:

**Sheila Jegge**, Life Member, 3 August 2015

**Hugo Zehner**, Associate Member, 2 September 2015

**Michel Besson**, Associate Member; this is a belated announcement. Michel passed on on 7 March 2014. *Roundel* was only recently informed.

### Competition:

Would you recognise this handsome devil in RAF uniform, a Swiss RAFA branch member since the 70s? Regrettably, there are no prizes for the right answer.



### Message from the Chairman

It is regrettable that many of you were targeted by CHQ Leicester in November and December and perhaps over the Christmas period with requests to pay your annual subscriptions for 2016. This was most unprecedented and led to confusion amongst Association Members of Branches, particularly in the Overseas Areas.

Quick emails, to those on email, suggested ignoring the requests as the annual Branch subscription letter would be issued as usual in January helped to allay some of the confusion. So, as far as the Swiss Branch is concerned 'Normal service has resumed'. Thank you for your understanding.



## Our Annual Brunch

We started 2015 with an informal **Brunch** gathering on 18 January, again held in the Crowne-Plaza Hotel, Geneva.

Margaret Duff, Bryan Pattison and James Cathcart



Simone and Nick Meyer.

Andrew Culliford and Arlene L'huillier



Maria Christina Reeves, with her son, David, and Dick Brooks in the background.



Stefan Bowen, Sheila Nicole and Alan Baker







Alain Dardelin, John Heptonstall, Barry Williams



Pat Richter, Roland Nicolet and Rosemary Billinge



Kris Budé and Helen Cathcart.



Di and Graham Robertson



Sonia and John Heptonstall



Jane and Régis Pizot



## RAFA SWISS BRANCH. Commemorative Items for Sale

As a result of a number of generous donations, the RAFA Swiss Branch has the following items for a one-off sale in aid of the Branch Welfare Fund. The prices given below are the reserve prices. Branch members are invited to submit bids for those items they are interested in. The highest bid received by the Summer Lunch on 4 June 2016 will be the winner. Any item not sold to Branch members will be offered for sale elsewhere.

Bids should be emailed to: [g.robertson@orange.fr](mailto:g.robertson@orange.fr) or sent to;

Graham Robertson, 143 Chemin de la Milliere, F-74200 Marin, France



1. Qty 4 Limited Edition Plates of WWII aircraft donated by Ove Lilljequist.

a. The Lancaster.

Bohemia China. Price CHF 15

b. Spitfire over St Paul's.

Royal Doulton China. Price CHF 15

c. Evening Sortie.

Coalport China. Price CHF 15

d. Stirling Home Run.

Royal Doulton China Price CHF 15



2. Limited Edition 711 of 850 Print "Winter of '43 somewhere in England" by David Shepherd.

Price CHF 120





3. Limited Edition 57 of 850 Print "Look - No Hands" by Frank Wootton, donated by John Edwards. (signed by artist Frank Wootton and pilot Wg Cdr Geoffrey Page. Certificate of Authenticity included.). The late Geoffrey Page was a Life Vice-President of the Swiss Branch.

Price CHF 120



4. RAF Square Scarf (76 x 73 cm) (unworn), donated by Ian Ferguson.

Price CHF 12



5. RAFA Swiss Branch Ladies Headscarf (unworn), donated by Pauline Nicholls

Price CHF 12



6. RAFA 50th Anniversary Souvenir Plate, donated by Pauline Nicholls

Price CHF 30



7. RAFA Car Badge (Old style), donated by Pauline Nicholls.

Price CHF 20



8. RAF Matchbox Holder, old-fashioned style with Churchill quotation.

Donated by Pauline Nicholls

Price CHF 15



9. Qty 3, RAF Wings Ladies' Brooches. Known as sweetheart brooches, this style was popular during and after WWII.

10. In addition, the Branch has a number of RAFA items such as hats, berets, messenger bags, T-shirts, bookmarks, post-cards and squadron lapel badges for sale. Details will appear on the Branch website.

### (Carl) Giles OBE – Cartoon Annuals.

Who amongst us cannot recall receiving each Christmas a glossy annual of Giles cartoons? Members of the mythical Giles Family could often be personified amongst people known to us! Who, for example, could ever forget Grandma Giles, her handbag and her patriotism?

These annuals are nowadays amongst the most collectable cartoons and second-hand sale values have rocketed. Our Branch is therefore extremely lucky to have been donated, by Member Andrew Culliford, complete sets from the 1950s until Giles ceased drawing them (He died in 1995). They are all in impeccable condition.

Readers are invited to make offers for this once in a lifetime chance to laugh again at Giles and to add value to your library. Please contact Alan Baker at rue du Village 16, CH-1274 Grens ([alanbaker@bluewin.ch](mailto:alanbaker@bluewin.ch)), as soon as you can. All proceeds will be banked to the benefit of the Swiss Branch Welfare Fund.

#### Swiss Branch Annual General Meeting

5 March 2016

Members are already aware the Annual General Meeting of the Branch will be held on Saturday, 5 March at the Crowne Plaza Hotel near Geneva Airport starting at 10 o'clock. As usual tea, coffee and croissants will be available, free of charge, from 9.15 and the meeting will be followed by a three course lunch costing CHF 60 which includes limited wine and tea/coffee.

The business of the meeting includes the Annual Report of the Committee and the Statement of Accounts as well as the election of the Committee for 2016 and an update on the RAF Association.

We look forward to an excellent presence at the meeting as well as receiving nominations for the Committee and any matters that you would like to discuss under Any Other Business which can be sent either to the Honorary Secretary [Margaret.duff@hotmail.com](mailto:Margaret.duff@hotmail.com) or myself [bryan.pattison@cern.ch](mailto:bryan.pattison@cern.ch).

Many thanks. Bryan Pattison, 9 ch du Bois Contens, 1291 Com-mugny.

#### List of Events in 2016

5 March	10.00 Annual General Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel Geneva
3 April	72nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Plateau de Glières
23 April	10.45 61 Sqn Lancaster Commemoration, La Chapelle Thècle + Lunch
25 April	ANZAC Day, CWGC Cemetery, Vevey
8 May	(TBC) VE Day, French Consulate General, Geneva
13 May	10.00 European Area Conference, Blackpool
13-15 May	RAFA Annual Conference, Blackpool
4 June	RAFA - RBL Joint Summer Lunch, Yvoire
17 July	11.30 207 Sqn. Lancaster Commemoration, Le Bouveret
Aug (TBC)	Plateau des Daines Commemoration
18 Sept	10.40 Battle of Britain 76th Commemoration, CWGC Cemetery, Vevey
23 Oct	10.30 78 Sqn. Halifax Commemoration, Montcony + Lunch
4-6 Nov	European Area Conference, Malta
5 Nov	Joint BRA/RAFA/RBL Lunch, Kongresshaus, Zurich
6 Nov	10.15 Remembrance Sunday, Parc Mon Repos, Geneva
11 Nov	10.40 Armistice Day, CWGC Cemetery, Vevey