

# ONE HEART

Celebrating your wonderful support for our **RAF Family**

**YOUR RAF BENEVOLENT FUND NEWSLETTER**

## QUEEN OF THE MOUNTAINS

DRIVEN ON BY THE MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND AND TWO CHILDREN, EIRLYS GREENOUGH CLIMBED THREE VOLCANOES IN FIVE DAYS.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING 71,700 RAF FAMILY MEMBERS DURING 2019



**FUNDRAISING HERO**  
Meet our youngest fundraiser, six-year-old Jacob Newson



**LIFE AFTER SERVICE**  
We owe brave WWII veteran, Mr Watson, a great debt



**CARING FOR OUR OWN**  
We provided vital support to the Carlton family

## OVERCOMING THE ODDS

# FROM PERSONAL TRAGEDY TO CONQUERING AN EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGE



Eirlys conquered three Italian volcanoes in her family's memory, including Mount Vesuvius



Above: Eirlys at Mount Stromboli  
Below: Eirlys at Mount Etna, the final volcano



Eirlys with her husband Andy and two children, Nia and Evan

### Super fundraiser, Eirlys Greenough took on three volcanoes in five days.

Thirteen years ago, Eirlys Greenough's life was turned upside down by a terrible tragedy. While her family were stationed at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, Eirlys'

husband Andy and their two young children Evan and Nia were killed in a house fire. Due to the support we receive from RAF Benevolent Fund supporters, we were able to be there for Eirlys to help her through this terrible tragedy.

As Eirlys says: "The RAF Benevolent Fund were there so quickly. They were one of the first organisations to give me support. I did not expect that. I remember feeling overwhelmed by getting it. There was no fuss, they were just there."

Last year, Eirlys decided to do something amazing to give back. Along with her sister, Bethan, and a group of 20 others she took on a sponsored trek to climb Mount Vesuvius, Mount Stromboli and Mount Etna in just five days. Conquering the three Italian volcanoes was a mammoth undertaking: altogether, the trek involved a total climb of 11,154 feet. Eirlys explains that it was her determination to raise money for the Fund and her memories of her family that kept her going:

"As we got closer to the top of Etna, the last volcano, I felt a lump in my throat. Everybody seemed to be the same. I think everybody was thinking of the people they were doing it for."

Reaching the summit of the final volcano was a hugely emotional experience. As Eirlys explains: "When we reached the top of Etna, there were a lot of tears. It was very emotional. We were all just so relieved that we had made it and the view was incredible, simply breathtaking."

So far, Eirlys has raised almost £6,000 for the Fund – both from the volcano trek and by taking on last year's Beaujolais Run, a historic car run which started just two days after Eirlys' son Evan would have turned 18.

Eirlys had these words to share with anyone thinking of taking on a challenge to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund: "Just do it! You only regret the things you don't do. I think sometimes you learn

a lot about yourself by taking on challenges like this, and it's always a good feeling to have helped somebody else and to have done something you can look back on and be proud of."

We are so grateful and inspired by Eirlys' determination to give back. The funds she has raised will help other members of our RAF Family who are facing their darkest hour, just as she did all those years ago.

**Will you help members of our RAF Family who are facing their darkest hour? Complete and return the enclosed donation form or call 020 7580 8343**



## THIS MONTH IN RAF HISTORY



**4 March 1964**  
The Ministry of Defence was established with three single service departments, thus signalling the end of the Air Ministry after forty-five years.



## TO OUR YOUNGEST FUNDRAISER – WE SALUTE YOU



Last year, Jacob got the chance to meet one of his heroes: Spitfire ace, Allan Scott DFM

Jacob Newson is just six-years-old, but his heart is set on giving back to our RAF veterans.

Last year, Jacob's father, Andy, tweeted asking pilots and officers to return Jacob's salute at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT). The father and son pair were thrilled when the Red Arrows organised a special surprise, saluting Jacob at the show.

Now, 100 years since Jacob's great-grandfather fought in the First World War, Jacob and Andy are taking on a special fundraising mission. As Andy explains: "We wanted to say thank you to everyone... and what better way to do it than by raising money for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund."

In August last year, Jacob and Andy



Jacob at Pen-y-Ghent

raised more than £6,000 with a sponsored climb to the summit of Pen-y-Ghent in Yorkshire. The intrepid father and son duo are not done yet though. On the 28 May, they are taking on an even bigger challenge: retracing the steps of RAF pilot Al Deere on the 80th anniversary of his crash-landing in Belgium and epic escape to Dunkirk.

So far, our youngest fundraiser and his father have raised more than £10,000 for the Fund. We are so grateful for the support they have shown our RAF Family.

## CARING FOR OUR OWN

### HELPING THE CARLTONS WHEN TRAGEDY STRUCK

After serving our country in the RAF for 23 years, ex-Propulsion Engineer Sergeant Laurence Carlton and his wife, Cathryn, were enjoying a peaceful retirement running a small shop. But one night, tragedy struck.

Cathryn suffered a sudden and devastating brain haemorrhage, followed by a stroke. She was rushed to hospital and it soon became clear that her life would never be the same.

Devoted husband Laurence made the 60-mile round trip every day to sit at his wife's bedside in hospital. This meant he had no choice but to close the shop they loved so much.

Soon, the couple were plunged into debt and set to lose everything they had worked so hard for.

The continued kindness of RAF Benevolent Fund supporters meant we could be there for them during this difficult time. We helped cover their mounting bills, ensuring Laurence and Cathryn did not have to give up their home.

Our support did not stop there though. When Cathryn was finally ready to come out of hospital, she was facing life with severe mobility issues. We provided her with an adapted wheelchair, which she could control with her head. We also helped the couple build a special lift in their home and buy a specially-adapted car. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of Fund supporters.

Despite the trials they have faced, Laurence and Cathryn are determined to enjoy their well-earned retirement. We recently



Laurence and Cathryn Carlton outside their home

helped them to have their first holiday in five years in London, where carers ensured the devoted couple could make the most of their time together.



### A PLACE TO REMEMBER

When a loved one passes away, their memory lives on in our hearts. You can now create a lasting dedication page for your departed loved ones. It is a place where you can share your most treasured stories of the people who meant the most to you. The dedication page is online, meaning you can share it with family and friends anywhere in the world by sending them a link, or through social media. It's entirely free to set up a dedication page, and we can do it for you. To request a dedication page to honour the memory of your loved one, please visit [rafbf.org/dedication](http://rafbf.org/dedication)



**10 March 1975**  
In the final hours of the Vietnam War, RAF Hercules were used to evacuate civilians from Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



**11 March 1940**  
The first U-boat was sunk during the war by an RAF aircraft without the assistance of surface vessels.

## LIFE AFTER SERVICE

### REPAYING OUR DEBT TO A BRAVE VETERAN, WITH YOUR HELP

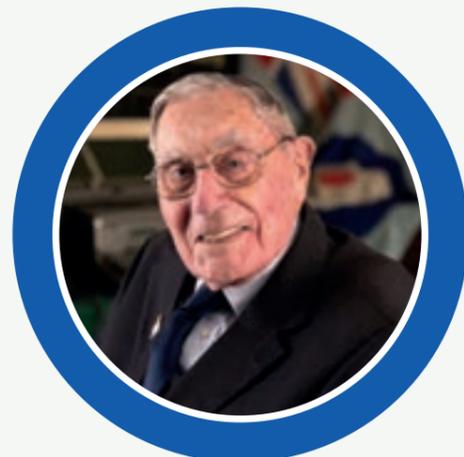
After surviving 77 missions as a flight engineer and bomb aimer, on demobilisation World War Two veteran Jack Watson resumed his apprenticeship as a printers compositor. All he wanted was to continue living independently.



Photo taken in 1944, Jack with his crew (third from right)



Mr Watson, in The Pathfinders



Mr Watson, today: Babcock International



Jack (far right) with two of his crew and another flight engineer

Ninety-six-year-old Jack Watson bravely served our country in World War Two, following in the footsteps of his father who served in World War One. Like so many other courageous young RAF recruits, Jack risked his life to protect our freedom.

As he explains: "After joining the RAF early in 1942, I was on a fitters' course when the call came for volunteers for Flight Engineers. After passing out at St Athan, my crew and I climbed into a Lancaster V-Victor with 12 Squadron at RAF Wickenby and took off on our first operation to Brunswick in East Germany. We had all only just celebrated

our 20th birthdays."

After 11 successful operations in just two months, Jack Watson was posted to 156 PFF (Pathfinders Force) squadron and in addition to his flight engineer duties, he became a bomb aimer. He told us: "In The Pathfinders Force, you had to do two tours straight off, of about 20 ops. The strange thing was, in The Pathfinders nobody counted how many ops they'd done!"

During this time, Jack served for fifteen months without a break, and without a single abortive trip. As he explains: "We did not think it was anything special but looking

back we know we were lucky to have survived."

Despite his advancing years, Jack Watson has maintained his independence – but issues with his mobility mean bending down to a low oven is now tricky. Low countertops were also making it increasingly difficult for him to use his kitchen. We were only

too happy to step in and help. The generous donations we receive from RAF Benevolent Fund supporters meant that we were able to fund a total kitchen redesign with higher countertops and other adaptations to ensure that this brave veteran can live out his twilight years with the dignity and comfort he deserves.

### WHAT A DIFFERENCE

### YOU MAKE: THANK YOU

It is only due to the generosity of Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund supporters like you, that we can continue to meet the changing needs of our RAF Family. We owe the brave men and women of the RAF a great debt – thank you so much for helping us to repay it.

- The support that we have given to members of the RAF family has increased from 53,000 to 71,700 members during 2019.
- 97% of guests at Princess Marina House told us their stay had a positive impact on their wellbeing.
- In the first year of the centenary campaign, we received over 10,000 new enquiries.



Any gift you send today, large or small, will help make a lifechanging difference to members of our RAF Family. **Please complete and return the enclosed donation form, call 020 7580 8343 or go online: [rafbf.org.uk/oneheart](http://rafbf.org.uk/oneheart)**