



(Kilmington Branch)

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2008

Member's Second Visit to Buckingham Palace

The only serving member of the Branch, Commander Stafford Seward, MBE, was able to take his wife Di and children, Garth, Vicki and Craig to Buckingham Palace on 13 January to see him receive the OBE from HRH The Prince of Wales. Congratulations again to Stafford on this well deserved second Honour.

Sad Loss of Two Branch Members

The oldest member of the Branch, Mrs Mary Warlock, died just before Christmas at the age of 103 in Silverleigh Care Home, and a Thanksgiving Service for her life was held at Taunton Crematorium on 4 January 2008 at which Janet Robertson and Betty Baskett represented the Branch. Mary was an ambulance driver during the war and a great character who was a generous supporter of the British Legion and the Kilmington Branch. Many members did not realise that the bottle of whiskey in every Branch Spring and Autumn Coffee Morning raffle was donated by her. She retained her joie de vivre and sharp intellect right up to her last days.

After a long fight against cancer, Joyce O'Flaherty, wife of our Secretary Michael, died on Tuesday 29 January. She had suffered enormously over many months but was comforted by the devotion of Michael and the family. The funeral Service will be held in St Giles' Church on Friday 8th February at 12 00 hours, conducted by the Rev'd Nigel Freathy. The Chairman has sent a message of sympathy to Michael on behalf of all Branch members. Joyce will be sadly missed in the Branch and in the Village.

RBL Devon County Annual Conference – 12 Jan 08

The Chairman and Secretary represented the Branch at the Annual Conference held in the Royal British Legion Club in Honiton. Following the entry of Standards and the Exhortation, the Chairman of the East Devon District Council, Paul Diavani, bade the civic welcome following which the County President, Major General A Keeling, ex-Royal Marines, gave his Address and read a message from HM The Queen. The new Director General of the RBL, Mr Chris Simpkins was then introduced and he gave some very clear views on the policy of the Legion and gave thanks to all Branches within the County which would have helped raise the estimated £27.5M this year for the Poppy Appeal. He attributed this record to a much greater recognition of the part played by our Armed Forces in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan and the Campaign to "Honour the Covenant" which had led the Government to pay much more attention to supporting our Service personnel and veterans. Although Chris Simpkins is not a military man, it was obvious that his vast experience in the Civil Service and years as Chief Executive in the Falkland Islands had given him a sound recognition of what is required at the heart of our organisation.

The County Secretary, Dick Jennings, reported that County HQ would be moving to Alphington this year which would provide more adequate space for the staff and would allow visitors to park in the vicinity of the HQ. The Treasurer, Mr E Rulton, reported on the Annual Accounts which were in good shape, pointing out that £1063 was raised from the Poppy Train ride on which 25 of our members travelled last year. The County Field Officer, John Pentreath, reported that welfare spending from the County Welfare Fund had trebled in the last six years, and he asked Branches to support the Fund when they could. The County Chairman, Brian Cummins, reported that it had been a very successful year with membership in Devon totalling 12,985. The 140 volunteer case workers and 52 specialist case workers had been kept very busy in meeting the demands of the increasing number of referrals for which grants totalling £30K had been paid. The Poppy Appeal in the County had been extremely successful and £703K had been raised in Devon already. He congratulated and thanked all Branches for their magnificent efforts. During the presentation of awards, the South Molton Cup for the best recruitment was awarded to the Kilmington Branch and was received by our Chairman.

A motion to grant temporary membership of the RBL to partners of Service personnel serving in operational theatres was passed. A motion to integrate the Women's Section of the RBL into the main body was defeated probably due to heavy lobbying by the women's Branches; the Kilmington Branch representative supported the motion on the grounds that it would reduce costs significantly and the fact that women are fully integrated into the Armed Forces. A motion to allow a National Holiday on 11 November each year was defeated; delegates thought that Remembrance Sunday had sufficient impact. A late motion to the effect that the RBL Board of Trustees should ensure that there was more consultation with Counties and Branches before introducing changes to the organisation and procedures was passed which should give the new Director General something to think about!

The Conference ended with Major General Keeling announcing his retirement as President due to a family move to Sussex, and he handed over the baton to Rear Admiral R F Cheadle for the march out of the Standards.

"Shepherd" Stand Down

At the Branch meeting on 3 Dec 07, the Chairman announced that Harry Price had decided to stand down as a Branch "Shepherd" after many years of helping in that respect. Our thanks to him, and to Susan Moore who drove him round on his deliveries in later years. His round has been absorbed among the other "Shepherds" who will make themselves known to the recipients.

Spring Coffee Morning

The Branch Spring Coffee Morning will be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 26th April starting at 10.30 hours. Please support this fund raising event with gifts/cakes/plants/books for the stalls, and donations for the raffle. Your attendance on the day would be most appreciated.

Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum

A visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is being organised by the Exmouth Branch with a coach costing £12 per head for the day trip. Don Jellard, the

organiser, estimates that he can fill a 55 seater and the visit will be timed for the Spring. Members interested should contact the Chairman on 01297 34922. If there are sufficient takers, we could always arrange our own coach and make it the annual outing. The Arboretum has featured in the media a lot recently and is well worth visiting.

Monthly "Get Togethers"

The next meetings will take place at 1800 hours on the following Fridays: 1 Feb- New Inn, 7 Mar – Old Inn, 4 Apr – New Inn. Please join us for a convivial chat on a " buy your own drinks" basis.

Membership

Although the Branch won the recruitment Cup, please encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Legion so that we can provide better support for our Armed Forces and their dependents.

1 February 2008
(B W LAVENDER)

Chairman