



THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



(Kilminster Branch)

NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

Death of Lt Col John Speller

Kilminster's John Speller sadly died on 8 May 08 at the age of 84 having had a remarkable career. A member of the RBL (Exeter Branch), he always supported Kilminster Branch activities with his wife Joan. Born in Calcutta where his father was in the Civil Service, he was educated at Norwood and Exeter Schools. Commissioned into the Dorset Regiment he was quickly posted to the Parachute Regiment in 1943 and was one of the Pathfinders dropped at Arnhem. At the end of the war he served with both the Devon and Dorset Regiments until they amalgamated, before joining the 5th Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment. He served in Korea, Hong Kong, Germany, Malta and Borneo before retiring in 1970. His distinguished service resulted in the award of 10 General and Service medals and decorations. During the next 23 years he worked in the Health Service. He had many interests – sailing with the Royal Dart Yacht Club, Friends of Exeter Cathedral, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Parish Clerk at St Mary at Hill Church in London. He had the distinction of being made a Freeman of the City of London in 1985 in view of his valuable work. He was also created a Commander in the Order of St John of Jerusalem and was a dedicated Freemason. A Service of Thanksgiving for his life was held in Exeter Cathedral on 20 May 08 attended by family and many friends including the Chairman and two other Kilminster Branch members.

Annual Outing to Portsmouth – Monday 30 June 08

At the time of writing, only 29 members have signed up for the visit departing the Village Hall at 0900 hours to the Historic Dockyard which includes HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, the Mary Rose, Royal Navy Museum, the Harbour Boat Trip and many other attractions all for £20 a head including gratuities. Unless the break-even figure of 40 members is reached, the annual outing will have to be cancelled. Refreshments are available within the dockyard and a new shopping centre has been developed in Gun Wharf Quays close by with spectacular views across Portsmouth Harbour. The new Spinnaker Tower soaring 560ft above the harbour is only a 10 minute walk from the dockyard. Please sign up urgently with your "Shepherd" or with the Treasurer, Roger Lovegrove on 01297 631091 making cheques payable to RBL (Kilminster Branch).

Poppy Steam Train – Tuesday 10 Jun 08

Only 3 seats were available at the time of writing on the 24 seat coach departing the Village Hall at 1730 hours to catch the steam train from Buckfastleigh Station at 19.00 hours for Totnes. While a buffet car is on board, you might like to bring your own picnic/wine/beer to enjoy while the musicians entertain us as we wind alongside the

River Dart. The World War II Sing Song on Totnes Station is always great fun, and the train should be back in Buckfastleigh by 21.30 hours so we can get back to the Village Hall by 22.30 hours. Please contact the Secretary on 01297 35876 to secure the remaining places.

Annual BBQ 25 Jul 08

Tickets are on sale at £5 from "Shepherds" or the Chairman (01297 34922) for the popular annual BBQ in the New Inn starting at 6.00 pm on Friday 25 Jul. Lets hope for better weather than last year!

Spring Coffee Morning

Thanks to everyone who gave such good support at the Spring Coffee Morning on Saturday 26th April which raised over £546 for the Poppy Appeal. Particular thanks are due to the stallholders, those that contributed to and ran the Draw which raised £179, and to those who provided the refreshments.

Committee Meetings

At the meetings on 12 May and 2 June it was mentioned that the RBL Annual Report for 2006/07 showed that annual income for that year was £95.2M of which £88.2M was spent on welfare and grants to those in need. The Secretary reported on the Recruiting Advisers Course which he attended on 10 May 08 saying that our Branch was already carrying out most of the recommendations that were made. In fact, our recruiting methods were reported in the last Devon County Newsletter as an example for other small Branches to follow. However, we should not be complacent and members are encouraged to persuade friends and neighbours to join the cause of supporting our Armed Forces, Veterans and their dependants.

Somerset Legion House

A new "Poppy Branch Centre" in Western-Super-Mare was recently opened by HRH the Duke of Kent which offers up to two week breaks for serving and ex-Service people and their dependents. Those recovering from illness or major life effecting events or coming to terms with bereavement, might wish to apply. There are 47 spacious bedrooms with en suite facilities overlooking the sea equating to a high class hotel.

Monthly Get-Togethers

The next meetings are on Friday 6 June in the New Inn and Friday 4 Jul at the Old Inn. About 20 members were present at the last one and the Secretary of the Lyme Regis Branch came along to observe at his request and decided to institute a similar system in his Branch.

(B W LAVENDER)
Chairman
2 June 2008