



Devon County Newsletter

Winter 2007/08

Diary Dates:

County Conference
Sat 12 January 2008

Train Trip
Buckfastleigh
Tue 10 June 2008

Golf Day
Fri 1 August 2008

Legion Race Day/
Poppy Launch
Tue 21 October 2008

Festival of
Remembrance
Thu 6 November 2008

Parracombe WW1
Railway /Armistice Day
event.
Tue 11 Nov 2008:

Inside this issue:

National Conference	2
National Training	
CM Notes	3
Secretary's Column	4

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN

As I come to the end my first year in office, I wish to thank everyone for their tremendous cooperation and support. I am extremely encouraged by our members dedication to our fundraising and welfare activities and I thank you all for your commitment. I take this opportunity to wish you all the seasons greetings and may you have a prosperous New Year.



COUNTY WELFARE FUND

In an effort to reduce the amount of funds held by Devon Branches, the County Committee last year, asked all Branches with funds in excess of £2k to donate 10% of all available funds over the £2k threshold to the County Welfare Fund. The County Committee are most grateful to the Branches that complied with the request and can report that over £45k has been donated by Branches since the scheme was introduced. The County Committee are agreed that these funds generated from Branches is the ideal opportunity for money to be used immediately, instead of lying dormant in Branch accounts. It is with this in mind that the County Committee would ask all Branches to continue with their donations.

Whilst some Branches may still have concerns about donating funds to the County Welfare Fund, there is the assurance that all monies raised locally, will only be used for Devon generated welfare cases. The County Welfare Fund remains one of the few outlets approved by Head Office for the disposal of welfare funds and Branches are encouraged to donate any surplus funds which can be used for immediate relief.

DEVON COUNTY WEB SITE
<http://rbldevon.co.uk>

BRANCH REPRESENTATION AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

It is often claimed that the Annual Conference is the expression of the Legion's 'representative democracy', however, only 15% of those that could attend Conference actually do. In fact, in many cases it is the same delegates that appear year after year, which would indicate that the opinions offered in the decision making process come from a very narrow, restricted base rather than the broad representation of the Membership as a whole. Conference tends to be strongly influenced by a hard core of 300 traditional delegates who openly boast that they haven't missed an Annual Conference for the last 20 years. Although we need a sensible proportion of experienced delegates, it could be argued that the concentration of power is in the hand of a small elite and largely self elected group that may not be representative of the Membership's wishes. Decisions are often made, not on the basis of fact but sometimes coloured by prejudice and self interest.

As the Legion moves more towards centralised membership and we see the reduction in the number of members, it is important that Branches take the initiative to develop the Royal Charter, Rules and Governing Regulations to the benefit of the Legion. This can only be achieved with active involvement of providing motions for Conference and participation in the debate. Delegates are the voice of the Branches and are required to exercise proper judgement having listened to the pros and cons of the argument. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that Branches are represented at Conference if the Membership is to survive in its present form.

NATIONAL TRAINING COURSES

Details of national training courses available are listed below, for more information contact the County Training Officer or the County Secretary.

Course	Location:	Dates
Branch Treasurers' 1-08	Bracknell	8 - 10 Feb 08
Branch Management 1-08	Leeds	22 - 24 Feb 08
County Conference Committee 1-08	Bracknell	7 - 9 Mar 08
Parade Marshals'	Hermitage	14 - 16 Mar 08
County Management 1-08	Leeds	28 - 30 Mar 08
Independent Examiners' 1-08	Leeds	18 - 19 Apr 08
Branch Treasurers' 2-08	Leeds	6 - 9 Jun 08
Branch Management 2-08	Bracknell	20 - 22 Jun 08
Qualified Panel Members'	Leeds	4 - 6 Jul 08
County Conference Committee 2-08	Leeds	18 - 20 Jul 08
County Management 2-08	Bracknell	5 - 7 Sep 08
County Instructors'	Leeds	19 - 21 Sep 08
Standard Bearer Judges'	Hermitage	19 - 21 Sep 08
Independent Examiners' 2-08	Bracknell	17 - 18 Oct 08
Branch Treasurers' 3-08	Bracknell	21 - 23 Nov 08
Branch Management 3-08	Leeds	5 - 7 Dec 08

The County Directory, Photo Album and the Newsletter are published on
Devon County Web Site: <http://rbldevon.co.uk>

FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER (CM)**(yes, his job title has been changed from CFO !)****WELFARE**

Caseworker Statistics 2007: 103 Volunteers and Specialist Caseworkers attended Update Courses, 42 received Update Packs, and 45 attended Training Courses. 5 will lose their qualification unless they attend training on either 5 Dec or 16 Feb.

Volunteer Welfare Caseworker Training Course: Scheduled for 16 - 17 Feb 08. Plymouth and Torbay nominations to the CM, please. Most other areas do not require additional caseworkers.

Specialist Welfare Caseworker Training Course: Scheduled for Wed 05 Dec 07, this will be the second such course for 2007.

New Cases. Averaging 76 per month we received 917 new cases in the financial year Oct 06 - Sep 07. This figure is nearly double that of 5 years ago.

County Staff.

County Welfare Officer. Mrs Deborah Swift leaves us at Christmas after 32 months in post. We thank her for her outstanding work during this time, and will be very sorry to see her go. We are delighted to welcome Ms Tricia Kyne into this post, effective 20 Dec 07.

Client Support Officer (Homeless). We are delighted to welcome Mr Mark Rickman into this new post, that focuses upon Devon's ex Service street homeless, homeless and potentially homeless populations.

FUNDRAISING

Combined Devon and Cornwall Poppy Appeal Launch, Fri 26 Oct, HMS Raleigh, Torpoint. This event was a huge success and achieved the aim which was to get wide TV coverage; both TV channels gave us an excellent plug. We thank our colleagues in Cornwall for hosting this event, and we thank also all those from Devon RBL, especially the 'local to Plymouth' Standard Bearers, who supported the Launch.

Early Indications for 2007 ? At the risk of being premature, early indications County wide point to a very promising Poppy Appeal. The general feeling is that the RBL's Broken Covenant Campaign, combined with a high level of media interest, have caused a bow wave of public sympathy and support for our Armed Services, with resultant generosity towards the Poppy Appeal. As ever, we are indebted to our Organisers and Collectors for their colossal labours over the last few weeks.

Falklands Football Match, Plymouth Argyle, 03 Nov 07. Congratulations to Crownhill Branch for their input into this event that paid homage to the Falklands fallen, and gave free seats to Falklands veterans. The Cadet forces assisted with a half time

collection, that was most generously contributed to by very supportive spectators.

Combined Services v Barbarians Remembrance Match, Plymouth, 14 Nov 07. RBL were delighted to be the invited charity for this event, and to receive a cheque from the organisers for £5000, and from the Barbarians for £1000. We were also delighted that the Combined Services won 27-24! Our thanks go to the Sea Cadets who ran a most successful bucket collection.

Caseworker Annual Updating 2008

All caseworkers are invited to attend one of the following courses in 2008:

Saturday 26th April, at Braunton RBL Club.

Saturday 7th June, at Crownhill RBL Club.

Saturday 4th October, at Wyvern Barracks, Exeter.



**THE ROYAL
BRITISH LEGION
DEVON COUNTY**

3 Barnfield Crescent
Exeter
EX1 1QT

Phone: 01392 272211

Fax: 01392 273444

rjennings@britishlegion.org.uk

<http://rbldevon.co.uk>

**REMEMBRANCE
VISITS**

Remembrance visits to
cemeteries off the
beaten track, both
home and abroad can
be arranged or
advice given by:

Dr D Wolfe

01409 281454

derek.wolfe@virgin.net

County Secretary's Column

Membership Application Forms

The current version of the Membership Form is MS4/07 which can be obtained from Supply Line on 01622 795815. Membership applications on any other type of form now have to be returned to the Branch Secretary because the Data Input Centre will not accept any other version of the form. The main reason for the change of form is the requirement to comply with the Data Protection Act. Recent changes in the Data Protection Act, has meant that legally the only acceptable version of the MS4 is the latest version - MS4/07.

County Conference

The County Conference will take place at Honiton RBL Club on 12 January 2007 at 1pm. Branches are reminded that only Motions of Urgency can now be submitted. This year's speaker will be the Director General.

Broken Covenant Campaign

Many thanks to those Branches and individuals who have lobbied their MPs on this matter, to some useful effect already. Please keep up the momentum and continue to keep this subject alive. If you have not done so please lobby your MPs, demonstrating to them the strength of feeling of their constituents, about the raw deal that our Service personnel are currently receiving from the State that sends them so readily into operations. What can we do? By using the information provided for us (by either consulting www.britishlegion.org.uk or asking the County Office for information):

Personal level: Write to your MP, or better still visit him / her, and state your feelings

Encourage others to do as above.

Branch level: Invite your MP to visit your Branch, and state your collective feelings.

County level: Lobby however / whenever possible.

COUNTY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The 2008 County Committee Meetings will be held in the Alphington RBL Club on:
Saturdays: 1 Mar 08, 14 Jun 08, 27 Sep 08 and 29 Nov 08 at 1030 hours.

To allow transparency of County business and to provide Branches an open forum, the County Meetings are now open to all members and Branches are encouraged to send a representative.

The National Memorial Arboretum

It is proposed to arrange a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum which is situated in the National Forest of Staffordshire and is devoted to the concept of Remembrance in the Spring of 2008. Any Branches or individuals who wish join the trip should contact:

Don Jellard 01395 273704

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION

