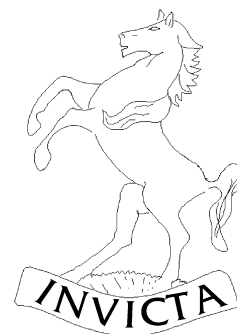




KENT COUNTY NEWS

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Welfare: 01622 722 292
Fundraising: 01622 722 296
County Secretary: 01622 722 293



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JANUARY 2011

LEST WE FORGET

Notification has been received that the following members have passed on:

Mr John Walker	Chairman, Paddock Wood Branch
Mr Maurice Hogben	Elham Valley Branch
Mr Ivor Crossfield	Goudhurst Branch
Mrs Joan Bowden	Kemsing Branch
Mr Edward Skinner	Kent RBL Branch
Mrs Hilary Tidmas	“
Mr Reg Crump	Lenham & Harrietsham Branch
Mr Frederick Healy	Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch
Mr Michael Bull	Sandwich & District Branch
Mrs Dorothy Beeching	Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Branch
Mrs Gladys Godfrey	Southborough & High Brooms Branch
Mr Roy Tungate	Whitstable Branch

BRANCH SECRETARIES: PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ITEMS IN THIS MONTHLY CIRCULAR SHOULD FORM PART OF YOUR REPORT

COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

I expect you were all as surprised as I was to hear the news of the death of John Walker. As well as being Branch Chairman he held other positions including Deputy County Standard Bearer and Conference Committee Secretary. I would like to thank the Parade Marshal, Standard Bearers and members who attended his funeral.

I would like to remind all Branch Officers, old and new of the Legion's dress code. I have seen some officers on parade wearing a large number of lapel badges. The rule is one badge only - the RBL Badge. The correct dress code is laid down in the Ceremonial Handbook.

I am disappointed at the low request for delegate tickets for County Conference and also the lack of motions being sent in. We have a lot of things bought up during the year but nobody brings them to Conference for discussion. Conference gives you, the members, the chance to discuss any matters of concern which, if carried, would be put forward for National Conference.

As you are aware, the County Vice Chairman, Mike Goodwin, resigned from his post and I requested nominations for a successor to be elected at County Conference. To date I have received no names. If anyone wishes to put their name forward please contact the County Secretary immediately.

We are looking for nominations for County Committee and our sub-committees. The appointment of County Youth Officer also needs to be filled. I would be grateful for the names of anyone interested in becoming involved with the running of County - again, to the County Secretary a.s.a.p.

I am expecting a number of questions about *The Way Forward* to be raised at Conference and we have a Legion Trustee, Jenny Rowe, attending who should be able to answer these. However, I would ask that any questions on this subject be submitted to the County Secretary in writing by Thursday 6th January.

May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Aussie Walker

DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS

The following donations have been gratefully received:

Seal Branch - £300

South Darenth & District Branch - £1,000

Mr P Cooper - £25

WH & A Hawkins Charitable Trust - £2,500

St Andrews Church, Shepherdswell - £123.01

The Kent Messenger Group - £51.07

VETERANS OUTREACH SUPPORT

Questions have been asked about the Veterans Outreach Support Kent days that appeared in the Forecast of Events for next year. This is a Welfare initiative that is still in the planning stages but it is envisaged that the CWOs will host a number of 'drop-in' days at various locations around the County. The programme and the locations have yet to be finalised but they are looking at holding them on the third Wednesday of each month. At present there are no plans to involve local branches but requests for assistance may go out once the plans have been put together and after the pilot session at County Office in February.

90TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT - CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

A concert in aid of the Legion's 90th Anniversary will be held at Canterbury Cathedral on the evening of Saturday 7th May 2011. There will be 600 tickets available at a cost of £15 each and these will be available to the public from the Marlowe Theatre box office from 21st February. Seats will not be numbered and there will be no reserved seats.

The purpose of this message is to give Legion members in Kent the opportunity to secure their tickets ahead of this date. Could branches please let me have their bids by 4th February to be sure of getting the numbers they want. Cash will not be required with the bid but payment details will be included with the letter of acknowledgement.

ASHFORD BRANCH

Thought you might like to know that we have collected the magnificent sum of £32,000 so far and still counting. This is £6,000 up on last year's figure - what a marvellous effort on the part of the people of Ashford and all our helpers. As I said previously, it is a wonderful reflection of the public's continuing respect and remembrance of our Armed Forces past and present.

WARM HEARTED GREENHITHE & SWANSCOMBE

The following message was received at Head Office and I thought it was worth sharing:

Dear Sir / Madam,

Would you be so kind as to pass on my gratitude to your staff at the Greenhithe & Swanscombe Branch of The British Legion.

During this very bad weather I was travelling home from work on Tuesday 30th November and due to roads in the North Kent area being gridlocked, I found myself trying routes off the main roads, this turned out to be pointless.

After approx 3 hours to travel some 10 miles I found myself in the proximity of the branch and your staff were offering to stranded motorists cups of tea and coffee at the side of the road. This gesture was very welcome and most appreciated by myself and many others.

My journey of some 40 miles took 7 hours in total but the cup of tea was a boost to carry on and your staff are a credit to your organisation and please thank those involved that day.

Yours sincerely

Mr Les Harrod

RECRUITER TRAINING

I have received the following from Head Office:

I need to prompt you and your County Chairmen to start thinking about your nominations for the County Recruiting Officer Course to be held in York from 4 - 6 Mar 11. From the presentations and correspondence of both John Graham and Bob Gamble, you will be well aware of the decline in membership and this needs to be redressed. Training more County Recruiting Officers can only help the process. I urge you all to take advantage of this forthcoming training opportunity. Within the Southern Region we should be aiming to get around six people on the course who you believe can help to turn things around.

Becoming part of the County recruiting team would involve, amongst other things, attending events such as the War & Peace Show and the Military Odyssey to spread the word about what the Legion does and actively recruit new members and supporters. Anyone interested should return the attached application by no later than 14th January.

STANDARD BEARER TRAINING

The County Parade Marshal will be holding further training days for Standard Bearers from 12.00 noon - 2.00 pm on Saturday 8th January and Saturday 29th January. The venue is Seal Village Hall (postcode TN15 0AN) located at the junction of High Street and Zion Street in Seal, near Sevenoaks. Parking is available at the recreation ground just a few minutes walk to the west of the village hall or there is limited on-street parking to the rear of the hall. Dress is casual but those attending must wear proper shoes not trainers, and have their gauntlets, sling and, of course, Branch Standard. Please pass this information to your Standard Bearers and let me know as soon as possible names, contact telephone numbers and email addresses of those who wish to attend.

LEGION MAGAZINE

You will be pleased to hear that the membership will have more of an input into the Legion magazine so that more stories and pictures about the membership can be included. An editorial panel is to be set up with the Director of Corporate Communications, the new Head of Membership, Bob Gamble and possibly the Chairman of the Membership Council. Their role will be to shape future editions of the magazine.

To help make it your magazine we need your input for good news stories, branch or individual recruiting successes and simply excellent examples of best practice that others may find of value. Please send me any news or stories you think will be of interest in the Legion magazine and I will forward them to Head Office. This is an ongoing request so please keep sending any news through. Put simply, we have the opportunity to improve a situation which we were dissatisfied with. It is now important to demonstrate that we can work together to create meaningful change.

BOWLS COMPETITION 2011

In an effort to increase the number of entries in the four competitions entry forms have been sent to all competitors who entered in 2009 and 2010, plus some people who indicated that they were not receiving details from their Branches.

There is only one form and I will accept entries for all competitions on that form, but do please indicate which competitions you are entering. If necessary entries can be added on a plain piece of paper attached to the form. If you know of any members of the Royal British Legion who would like to enter please include them in your entry. The entries should still be sent to the County Secretary at the address at the top of County News.

For your information Finals Day will be Saturday 24th September 2011 at Westerham Bowls Club, and the County match against Sussex RBL will be on Saturday 6th August 2011 at Chatham BC. Chatham BC will also be repeating the Charity match against Kent RBL in support of the Poppy Appeal and this will be held on Saturday 11th June 2011.

Kent will also be staging the RBL South-East Region Finals in 2011 on the rota arrangement and this will be on Saturday 10th September 2011 at Westerham BC.

Derek Edwards

DECEMBER TELEMARKETING

I understand that during December a number of existing and lapsed supporters will be contacted on behalf of the Legion and asked to donate via direct debit. Those who already donate by direct debit will be asked to increase the amount. Supporters will be contacted by professional fundraising telemarketers from Pure Associates Limited, Brighton. I'm sorry this has come so late but I have only just found out about it.

I know how many members feel about being constantly pushed to give more and more but all I can advise is:- if you are unhappy about receiving unwanted letters then please return them to the originator with a request to be taken off their distribution list. Do the same if you get any unwanted phone calls. This won't affect existing donations but means you shouldn't receive any more requests.

Tony West

County Secretary

Email: twest@britishlegion.org.uk