



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Cheltenham Branch

Newsletter

March 2010

Potter House, St Anne's Road,
Cheltenham, Glos GL52 2SS
Tel/Fax 01242 254428
Email: info@rblcheltenham.org

The office is open 1000-1230hrs on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The Branch meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 1930hrs. If calling outside these times, please leave a message on the answer-phone, we will come back to you as soon as possible.

At the Annual General Meeting held on 19 November 2009 the following were elected as officers of the Branch:

Chairman.	Mr Dave Martel (01242 511889).
Vice Chairman.	Wing Commander Roy Roberts.
Secretary.	Mrs Carol Sharrock.
Treasurer.	Major John Hawthornthwaite.
Welfare.	Mrs Moyne Blake.
Membership Secretary.	Major John Hawthornthwaite.
Committee.	Mr Peter Collins. Mr Phil Fisher. Mr Mike Brookings. Mr Walter Meigh. Major Andy Worsely.
Standard Bearer.	Mr Mike Brookings.
Poppy Area Organiser.	Ms Lyse Lewis.



New Branch President, Cll Lloyd Surgenor with Mike Brookings, Standard Bearer, and Branch Chairman, Dave Martel.

As a result of continuing ill-health, our President Roy Clark expressed his desire to stand back from everyday Legion business. Consequently the Branch Committee voted unanimously to invite the Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Lloyd Surgenor to become our President. We were delighted to receive his acceptance, and on Friday 15 January he was presented with the Branch President's chain of office. I and all members of the Branch Committee wish to thank Roy and Mary for all the hard work they have put into the Branch. Indeed the Branch would not have survived this long had it not been for Roy's efforts over the years.

Highs and Lows.

The Poppy Appeal in the Cheltenham area has, this year, raised a record sum in excess of £70,000.00. Thanks have been extended to the PAO, Lyse Lewis and the ever increasing band of volunteers that included Army and Air Cadet units and serving soldiers from the Joint Services Signals Unit Cheltenham (JSSU) as well as Legion members and supporters. Well done everyone.

On the debit side however, the Branch is in dire financial straits. Renovation work was undertaken in an effort to revamp the ground floor in order to bring it to a standard that would enable us to earn income from letting rooms out for private functions etc. All of you who have seen the ground floor in recent months have admired the work that has been done. Peter Richards must be thanked for his tireless efforts in driving forward this work which unfortunately ran over budget and had to be stopped before completion. As a consequence we barely have the funds to cover the running costs of the Branch for the next 6 months.

We are in discussions with Legion HQ in order to decide on the best way forward. As the Christmas recess has been followed by exceptionally bad weather working patterns and communications have been severely disrupted so decision making has inevitably been delayed.

The Way Forward.

We need to activate the membership via social and fund raising activities. The Branch needs to raise money just to pay its way through the year. Whilst the Branch membership fee helps, it only manages to clear about a quarter of the bills. (Heating lighting, Council tax etc.) At the AGM the members unanimously agreed that there would be a small rise in the membership fee from £13.10 to £15, the first rise in many years. Your committee is committed to raising the extra funds in order that we can continue to help those in our district who need our help. (and there are quite a few)

Some suggestions have been made and we need to know if you would be prepared to support them. Would you be willing to come and listen to talks during the day, or even give one? Would you go on organised visits, say, to the Arboretum? Would you come to coffee mornings at Potter House? The Riders Branch is the largest of the Legion's branches. They are willing to come and help but they want ideas. Do you have any?

More importantly, have YOU any suggestions for fund raising? If we had 10 functions in the year which each raised £200 then the branch would survive. With your help we can do it. The well-being of our ex-service colleagues is worth it. We need to show them that we care. I know many of you are in your third age, but don't let that be a barrier to helping.

Please note that the Branch telephone number and email address have changed. This is because our line was closed down by someone telephoning BT (an action that is called slamming) and leaving the Branch with no communications and a possible bill of £100.00 to restore a link, not to mention the inconvenience to people who wanted to seek help from the Welfare Section. A website is under construction at www.rblcheltenham.org where you may find more contact details and branch news.

Dave Martel
Branch Chairman.